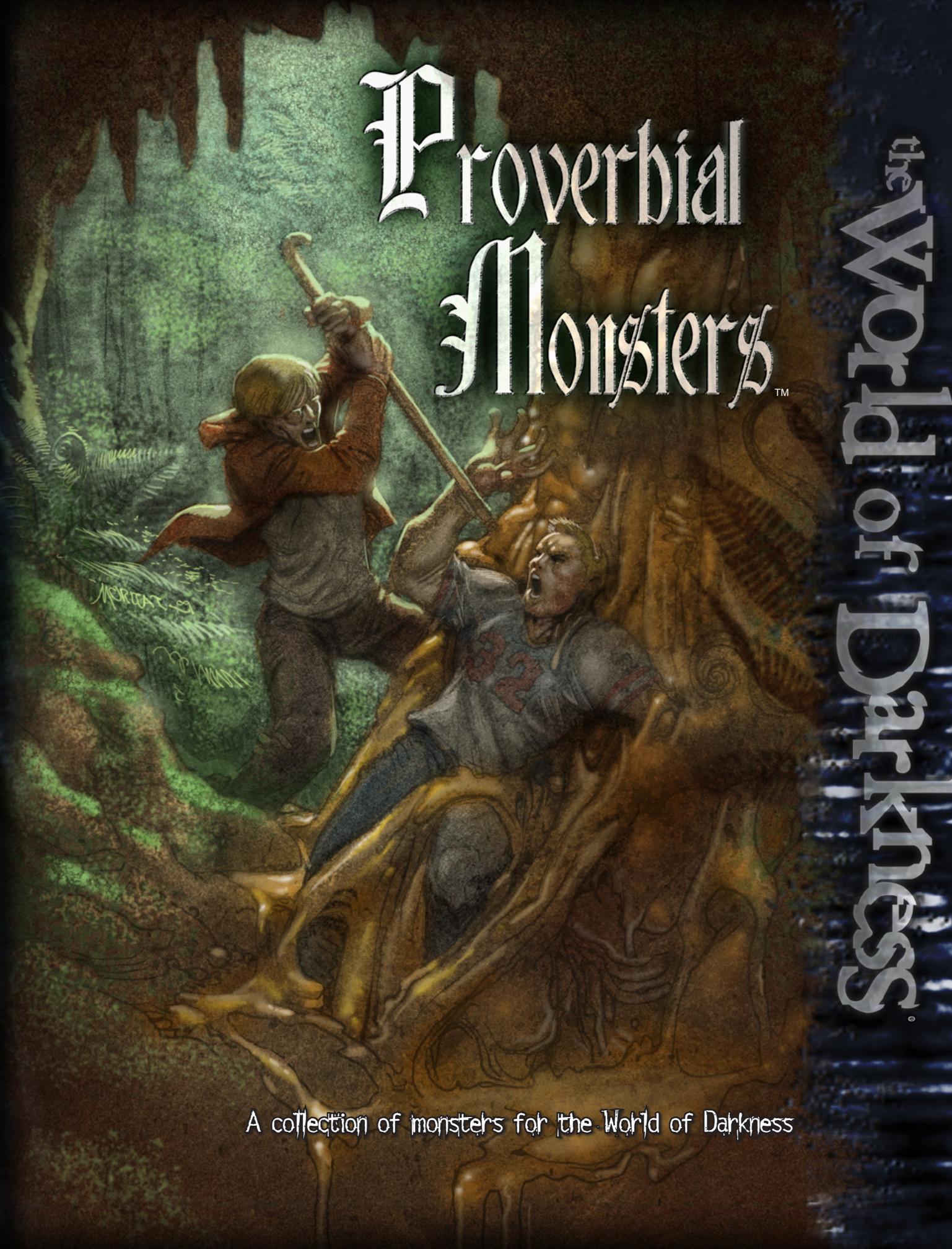


# Proverbial Monsters™

the World of Darkness®



A collection of monsters for the World of Darkness



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the **World  
of Darkness®**

For use with the  
World of Darkness Rulebook

# Proverbial Monsters

MORTAR 19

BY  
**JENNIFER BROZEK**

# Fool's Gold

"What's that you got there?" It was Jason, Tony's roommate.

Tony instinctively closed his hand and hunched over his treasure. "Nothin'," he muttered. He winced as Jason swung a meaty fist and connected with his shoulder.

"What is it?" Jason loomed over him, not used to being denied.

"Just a rock. Probably not real anyway." He let Jason pry open his hand and take the shiny, gold colored stone from him.

"Whoa. What's this? Gold?"

Tony shrugged. "Probably just pyrite."

"What?"

"Fool's gold. Not real gold. Just looks like it."

"Where'd you get it?" Jason examined the stone with some curiosity. It looked like gold. It even smelled like it. Not that he actually knew what gold smelled like. It was a metal smell. *Looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, probably is a duck...*

"Nowhere." Jason didn't immediately respond to Tony's feeble answer. The silence stretched between them until Tony couldn't help himself. He looked up at Jason. Jason was smiling. It never boded well for anyone when Jason smiled... especially not for Tony.

Jason handed back the gold stone without another punch or even throwing the stone at him. Then Jason sat down across from Tony, just looking at the smaller man. Tony could almost see the tiny wheels in Jason's head click over what he thought the stone was and Tony's reluctance to talk about it. He watched the big man come to a conclusion and waited for the onslaught.

"You found something, didn't you?" Jason's voice was casual and friendly.

It wasn't really a question and Tony knew it. "Maybe."

"Something big."

"Maybe," Tony repeated.

"Is it what I think it is?" Jason gestured to the stone that Tony had cupped possessively in his hand.

Tony looked away and pushed his glasses up his nose. When he glanced back at Jason, he saw the storm clouds gathering there but also saw Jason's control – the same control he always used to get what he wanted from women. The man had the cunning patience of a predator when he really wanted something and realized that "right of might" wasn't going to cut it. Jason was smart when he needed to be.

Like now.

"C'mon, buddy," Jason coaxed. "You can tell me. We've been best friends for years. Haven't I always protected you?"

Tony shrugged, noncommittal.

"Where'd you find it? The gold. You're a smart guy. You're the brains of the outfit. You know it. I'm kinda big and dumb. You' found something, and people are gonna want it. I'll be here to protect you from them."

Tony thought about it a bit more and finally nodded. Jason was right in that one respect at least. "Yeah, it's gold. I found it in one of the deep caves in the hills."

"A lot?"

"Enough. Enough to make one... or two... people comfortable for the rest of their lives."

Jason's smile stretched wide, "Where?"

Tony shook his head. "It's complicated. I'd have to show you." He paused. "But we'd share, right? And you'd make sure that no one hurt me, right?"

"Right. I promise. No one'd ever hurt you again." Jason's smile grew wider and more predatory. "In fact, we'd move out of Olympia to Seattle. New place. New people. None of the old bastards from town begging for money. We'd be new people and I'd make sure it happened that way. I promise. This could be the break we've been looking for."

Tony looked at Jason, calculating how much of what he was saying was the truth and how much of it was a lie. Jason seemed pretty sincere and it would be great to leave this tiny damn city. Capital of Washington state or not, it was still in the ass-end of nowhere and filled with bigoted hicks who looked at him and his cane like his arthritis might be catching.

Finally, Tony nodded. "Ok. I'll show you tomorrow. It's kind of a hike. So, we'll get up early and go."



It was a cloudy, misty day in the Olympic National Forest, which wasn't unusual. The two men tromped through the forest and up a hill on a barely-there trail. It was slow going with Tony and his cane, but Jason was in good spirits and feeling patient. If his little buddy was right, all of their money woes would be over with. If Tony was wrong, well, his personal woes at Jason's hands would just be beginning.

After about half a day of easy hiking, Tony made a sharp left directly into the forest. Jason followed. "Dude, how'd you find this place anyway?"

Tony shrugged. "Sometimes I go wandering to get away from town, in order to exercise my legs and help me get over the use of this damned cane." He shook the cane to emphasize his point. "There's nothing there for me. I like it up here."

"Ok." He paused before he asked, "So, how much further?"

Tony heard the clear suspicion in Jason's voice. He paused and pointed with his cane to a copse of trees about a hundred meters away. "It's just through those trees over there."

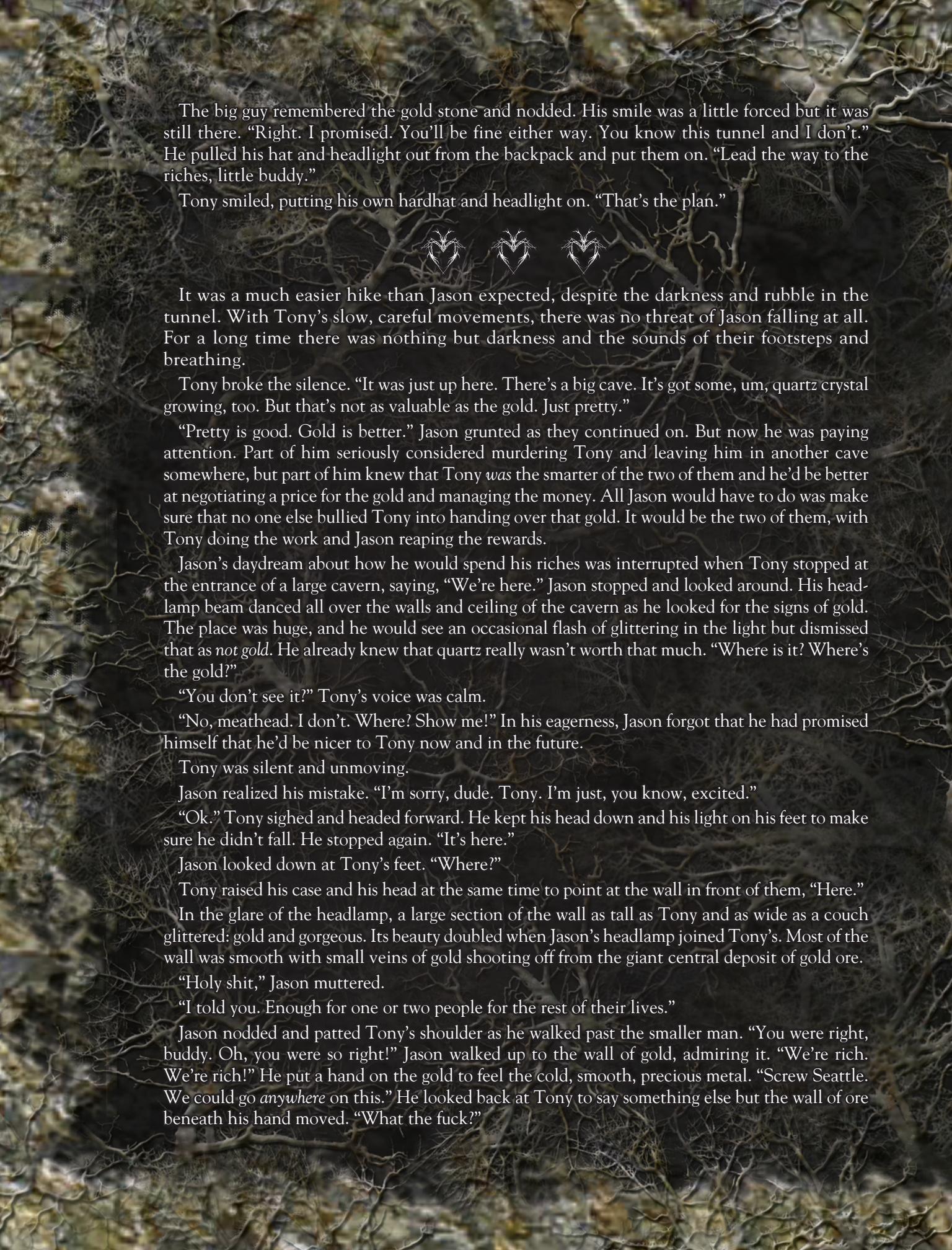
"I don't see anything."

"You will." Then he added, "Promise."

And like Tony promised, just as they broke through the copse of trees, there was a large opening in the hillside. Tony stopped. "We're here. Well, sorta. We gotta get our lights on and stuff."

Jason shrugged off his pack and peered into the cave entrance. "You sure about this? Is it safe?"

Tony gave him a disbelieving look. "I walked in with only my cane and flashlight. We'll be fine." He couldn't keep the touch of scorn at Jason's concern out of his voice. He changed his tune as soon as he saw Jason register it. "Besides, you're here if I get into any trouble. Right? You promised."



The big guy remembered the gold stone and nodded. His smile was a little forced but it was still there. "Right. I promised. You'll be fine either way. You know this tunnel and I don't." He pulled his hat and headlight out from the backpack and put them on. "Lead the way to the riches, little buddy."

Tony smiled, putting his own hardhat and headlight on. "That's the plan."



It was a much easier hike than Jason expected, despite the darkness and rubble in the tunnel. With Tony's slow, careful movements, there was no threat of Jason falling at all. For a long time there was nothing but darkness and the sounds of their footsteps and breathing.

Tony broke the silence. "It was just up here. There's a big cave. It's got some, um, quartz crystal growing, too. But that's not as valuable as the gold. Just pretty."

"Pretty is good. Gold is better." Jason grunted as they continued on. But now he was paying attention. Part of him seriously considered murdering Tony and leaving him in another cave somewhere, but part of him knew that Tony *was* the smarter of the two of them and he'd be better at negotiating a price for the gold and managing the money. All Jason would have to do was make sure that no one else bullied Tony into handing over that gold. It would be the two of them, with Tony doing the work and Jason reaping the rewards.

Jason's daydream about how he would spend his riches was interrupted when Tony stopped at the entrance of a large cavern, saying, "We're here." Jason stopped and looked around. His headlamp beam danced all over the walls and ceiling of the cavern as he looked for the signs of gold. The place was huge, and he would see an occasional flash of glittering in the light but dismissed that as *not gold*. He already knew that quartz really wasn't worth that much. "Where is it? Where's the gold?"

"You don't see it?" Tony's voice was calm.

"No, meathead. I don't. Where? Show me!" In his eagerness, Jason forgot that he had promised himself that he'd be nicer to Tony now and in the future.

Tony was silent and unmoving.

Jason realized his mistake. "I'm sorry, dude. Tony. I'm just, you know, excited."

"Ok." Tony sighed and headed forward. He kept his head down and his light on his feet to make sure he didn't fall. He stopped again. "It's here."

Jason looked down at Tony's feet. "Where?"

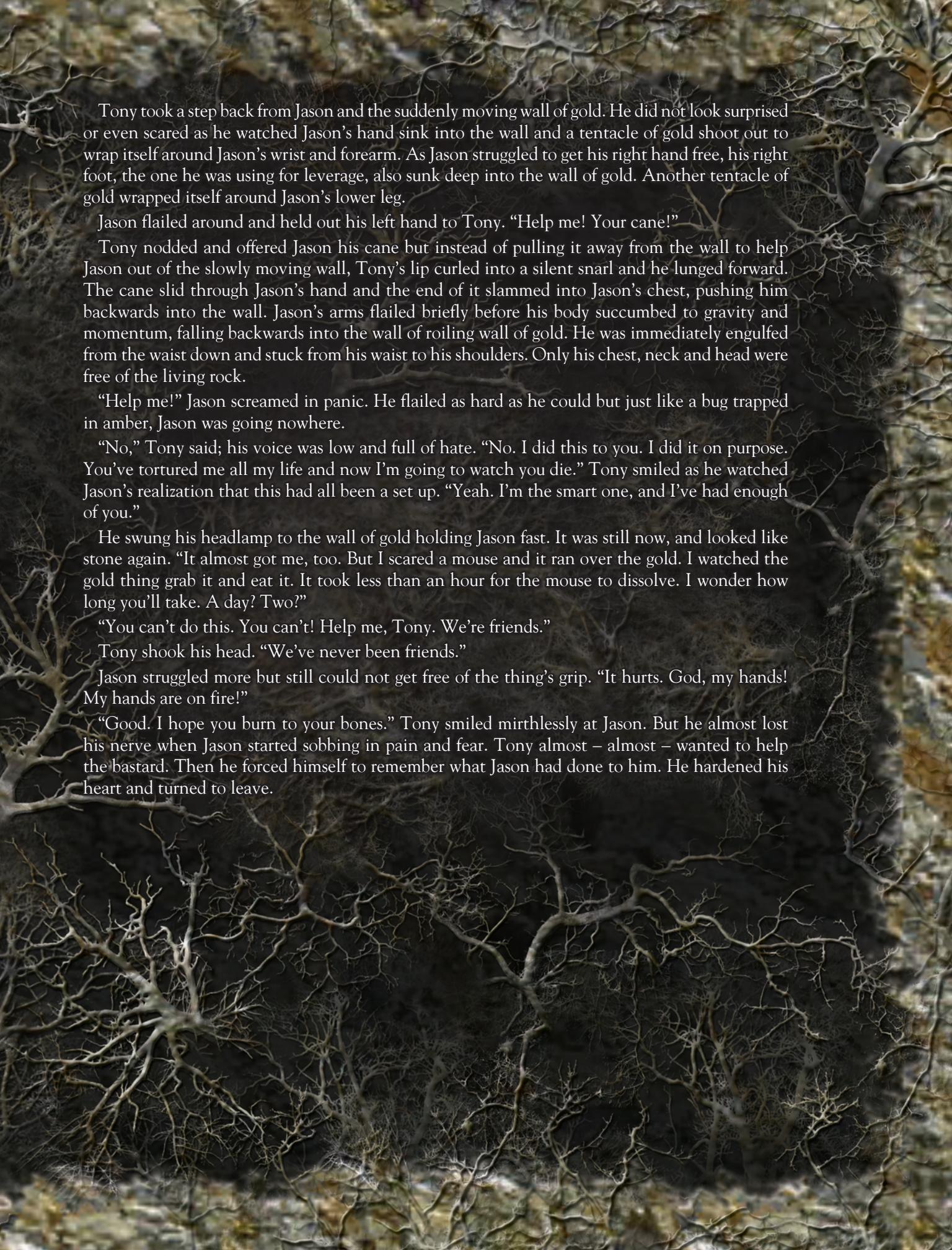
Tony raised his case and his head at the same time to point at the wall in front of them, "Here."

In the glare of the headlamp, a large section of the wall as tall as Tony and as wide as a couch glittered: gold and gorgeous. Its beauty doubled when Jason's headlamp joined Tony's. Most of the wall was smooth with small veins of gold shooting off from the giant central deposit of gold ore.

"Holy shit," Jason muttered.

"I told you. Enough for one or two people for the rest of their lives."

Jason nodded and patted Tony's shoulder as he walked past the smaller man. "You were right, buddy. Oh, you were so right!" Jason walked up to the wall of gold, admiring it. "We're rich. We're rich!" He put a hand on the gold to feel the cold, smooth, precious metal. "Screw Seattle. We could go *anywhere* on this." He looked back at Tony to say something else but the wall of ore beneath his hand moved. "What the fuck?"



Tony took a step back from Jason and the suddenly moving wall of gold. He did not look surprised or even scared as he watched Jason's hand sink into the wall and a tentacle of gold shoot out to wrap itself around Jason's wrist and forearm. As Jason struggled to get his right hand free, his right foot, the one he was using for leverage, also sunk deep into the wall of gold. Another tentacle of gold wrapped itself around Jason's lower leg.

Jason flailed around and held out his left hand to Tony. "Help me! Your cane!"

Tony nodded and offered Jason his cane but instead of pulling it away from the wall to help Jason out of the slowly moving wall, Tony's lip curled into a silent snarl and he lunged forward. The cane slid through Jason's hand and the end of it slammed into Jason's chest, pushing him backwards into the wall. Jason's arms flailed briefly before his body succumbed to gravity and momentum, falling backwards into the wall of roiling wall of gold. He was immediately engulfed from the waist down and stuck from his waist to his shoulders. Only his chest, neck and head were free of the living rock.

"Help me!" Jason screamed in panic. He flailed as hard as he could but just like a bug trapped in amber, Jason was going nowhere.

"No," Tony said; his voice was low and full of hate. "No. I did this to you. I did it on purpose. You've tortured me all my life and now I'm going to watch you die." Tony smiled as he watched Jason's realization that this had all been a set up. "Yeah. I'm the smart one, and I've had enough of you."

He swung his headlamp to the wall of gold holding Jason fast. It was still now, and looked like stone again. "It almost got me, too. But I scared a mouse and it ran over the gold. I watched the gold thing grab it and eat it. It took less than an hour for the mouse to dissolve. I wonder how long you'll take. A day? Two?"

"You can't do this. You can't! Help me, Tony. We're friends."

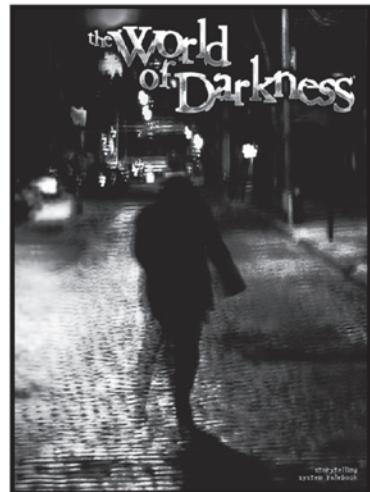
Tony shook his head. "We've never been friends."

Jason struggled more but still could not get free of the thing's grip. "It hurts. God, my hands! My hands are on fire!"

"Good. I hope you burn to your bones." Tony smiled mirthlessly at Jason. But he almost lost his nerve when Jason started sobbing in pain and fear. Tony almost – almost – wanted to help the bastard. Then he forced himself to remember what Jason had done to him. He hardened his heart and turned to leave.

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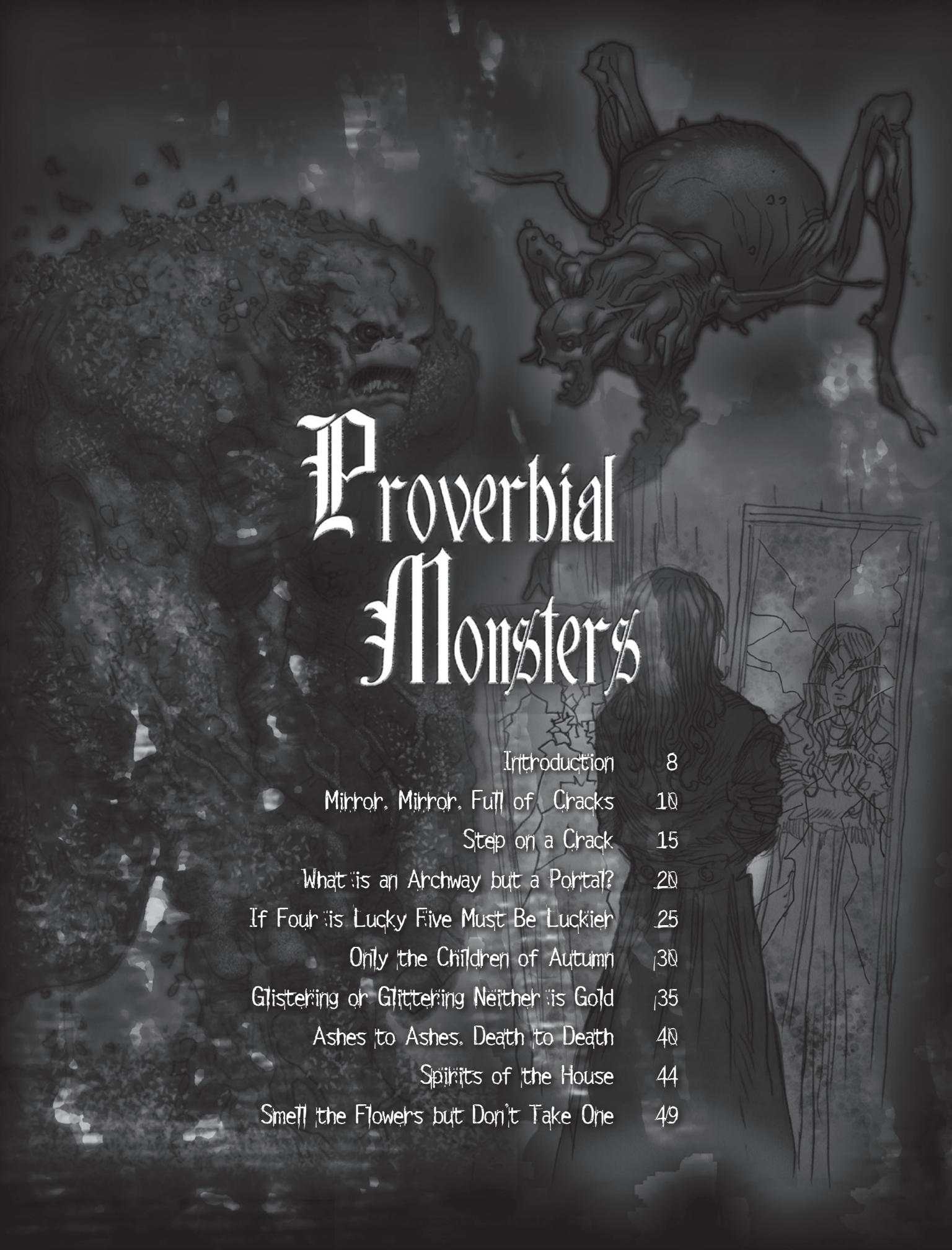
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# Proverbial Monsters

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# Introduction

Prayers and superstitions have been around since man could speak. Dire warnings and advice to perform certain actions to ward off evil are recited in easily-remembered phrases so that even children can remember them. Most of these adages were born from ignorance or misunderstandings, but some carry a very real warning hidden within them. Sometimes it's best to remember why all that glitters is not gold and that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck.

**Proverbial Monsters** plays upon common fears and superstitions. It can be used in almost any of the World of Darkness games, but works especially well with the themes detailed

in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, **Innocents**, **Hunter: the Vigil** and **Changeling: the Lost**. The obscurity of the proverbs' origins is the main tool for you as the Storyteller to enhance your game with mystery, danger and terror. Maxims and folk wisdom have been around for so long that many people don't know – or care – what they refer to or even what they mean anymore. At the core of every legend and every superstition is a grain of truth that has been lost to time through disbelief or misunderstanding. This book gives you an idea of where these proverbs might have come from, and how you can use them in your game.

Presented here are nine monsters based on traditions and superstitions that range from the well-known to the esoteric.

- You will have seven years of bad luck if you break a mirror. *You might just call a strange creature to you.*
- Step on a crack and break your mother's back. *The monster within the earth will hear you, and your mother will break her back carrying your dead body to its grave.*
- Walking under a ladder is bad luck. *It may not be a ladder you walk under – or through – and who knows what you will bring through with you.*
- Picking a five-leaf clover brings bad luck. *It doesn't belong to you. Its owner wants it back, and it wants revenge for your theft as well.*
- Unless you were born in October, the wearing of an opal will be ill-fated. *Only the Children of Autumn may wear my sigil. Those who dare to wear what is not their birthright will pay.*
- All that glitters is not gold. *Greed calls to greed. Those who seek to steal my treasures will become my feast instead.*
- It is bad luck to completely rake out a fire on the hearth – a few embers should always be left burning. *Bright and shining, you call to me and I come. Snuff out the burning guardian and I will bring you a death of burning ash for my own pleasure.*
- Never open an umbrella inside a house or you will draw back luck to you. *Do you mock me, you mortal of flesh and bone? Do you think I do not care for you and this house well enough? Fine. I'll show you what a cursed house can do.*
- Never take flowers from a grave or you will be the next to be in a grave. *Never take from the dead, for we are angry and vengeful and have long memories.*

Most of these monsters are subtle, cunning creatures that will not attack something or someone more powerful than they are unless they are. This does not mean the characters of your chronicle will not be targeted. However, these monsters understand that they should not attack the hungry lion while there's a lamb nearby. Why attack the hero when the hero's mother is easier prey and just as tasty?

The monsters presented herein may be used in any number of ways: a distraction or red herring (the death of a contact), a catalyst for change in

a player character's background story (why the player character ran away from home or becoming a hunter in response to witnessing a death at the hands of one of these monsters) or the reason for a particular phobia (the player character cannot stand to look at her own reflection at night).

Each monster is given statistics, specific powers and hints on how the characters in your chronicle can discover it. Also, each monster has a story idea with statistics, goals and consequences for failure. If you like the monster but don't like the mechanics, modify them to suit your game's needs.

# Mirror, Mirror, Full of Cracks

*Jane suppressed an expletive as her hand mirror slipped from her grasp and shattered on the tile floor. It was the second one this year. "Great. That's fourteen years bad luck," she muttered as she bent down and picked up the plastic frame with its broken pieces of glass. She almost dropped it again when she saw her own reflection turn and smile at her. Curiosity stayed her hand, and her own strangely smiling face drew her in.*

## You will have seven years of bad luck if you break a mirror.

The belief that the soul projects out of the body and into mirrors in the form of a reflection underlies the most widely-known mirror superstition: that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. Some people believe that breaking a mirror also breaks the soul of the one who broke it. The soul, angered at being hurt, exacts seven years of bad luck in payment for such carelessness.

One apocryphal story says the Romans, who were the first to make glass mirrors, attributed the seven years of bad luck to a belief that life renewed itself every seven years. To break a mirror meant to break one's health, and this "broken health" could not be remedied for seven years. This was Roman orator Servius Tilentius Costa's explanation to his friends and family on why they should never break a mirror. It was easier to tell them this than explain his encounter and research into dangerous creatures that he named Miraree (mir-RAH-ree) after the Latin word *mirari*, which means "to wonder at."

## Miraree

**Quotes:** "Look at me!"

"Can't you see I'm beautiful? I'm you. See how lovely I am. Look at me and know I am you."

"Look at yourself! I know what you do at night, hidden from the world. I know. Look at yourself and see what there is to see. Don't make me force you!"

**Background:** Man has looked into reflective surfaces for as long as there have been reflective surfaces to look into. Miraree occasionally look back. They are jealous, hungry creatures who envy man's physical body and crave his immortal soul. They may also have helped spawn legends about deadly but beautiful water nymphs luring men to their deaths by drowning them within ponds and lakes.

Once glass mirrors were created, the Miraree found a way into our world – for a short time. Should another mirror break nearby within seven years, a temporary tunnel of sorts is created into our world.

Once a Miraree comes through, it has only one goal in mind: consuming as much of a soul as possible. They will gorge themselves until it is time to return home. A confrontation with a Miraree can be deadly. If the Miraree can consume enough of its victim's essence, the victim will die. The death will look like natural causes: a heart attack, a brain aneurism or something similar. A Miraree can only terrorize and attack its intended victim through her own reflection in mirrors. Some intended victims delay the attack by an instinctual fear and avoidance of mirrors that they do not understand but obey nonetheless. However, in these days of ubiquitous modern glass buildings and reflective screens, no one can avoid mirrors forever.

**Description:** No one really knows what a Miraree looks like, since it assumes the reflection of its intended victim who can see it within the broken shards of a mirror. Every shard of mirror will show the exact same thing no matter where it is in the room.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Miraree always looks like its victim. If there are multiple people in a room, the shards of the broken mirror will only reflect the one it is attacking. While attacking, the Miraree will try to entrance, trick and beguile its victim into continuing to look at himself in the mirror shards. It

will use the victim's own image to do it. This monster prefers to lure its victims with honey rather than beat them with a stick. However, if entreaties do not work, the Miraree is not above dire threats of terrors gleaned from the victim's mind.

Once it is able to come through, it may use any mirror in a building. It is a cunning creature that will stalk its prey from room to room and mirror to mirror within the building. It cannot leave the structure where the last mirror was broken: While a broken mirror may be moved to another location, there must be at least one broken mirror on the premises for the Miraree to be able to hunt and feed there. Abandoned homes and buildings are favorite hunting grounds for the Miraree, and more than one may congregate in an abandoned structure that has many broken mirrors.

There are two ways a person can protect himself from the attack of the Miraree. First, he must not be able to see himself in any of the broken pieces of mirror. How they do this is up to him, and you decide if the way the character chooses will work or not. Once the victim can no longer see himself in the mirror shards, he is free to flee the scene, leaving the mirror shards and Miraree behind for the next unwary passerby.

Secondly, all of the shards of the broken mirror must be completely destroyed to the point that no one looking at any one shard can see any part of themselves, even a shadow, in them. Once the mirror shards are utterly destroyed (damage to the mirror does an equivalent amount of damage to the Miraree, due to its symbiotic connection to the mirror), the tunnel between worlds is closed and the Miraree is banished.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** None

**Social Skills:**  
Empathy 1,  
Intimidate 3,  
Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** None

**Willpower:** 6

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Health:** 8

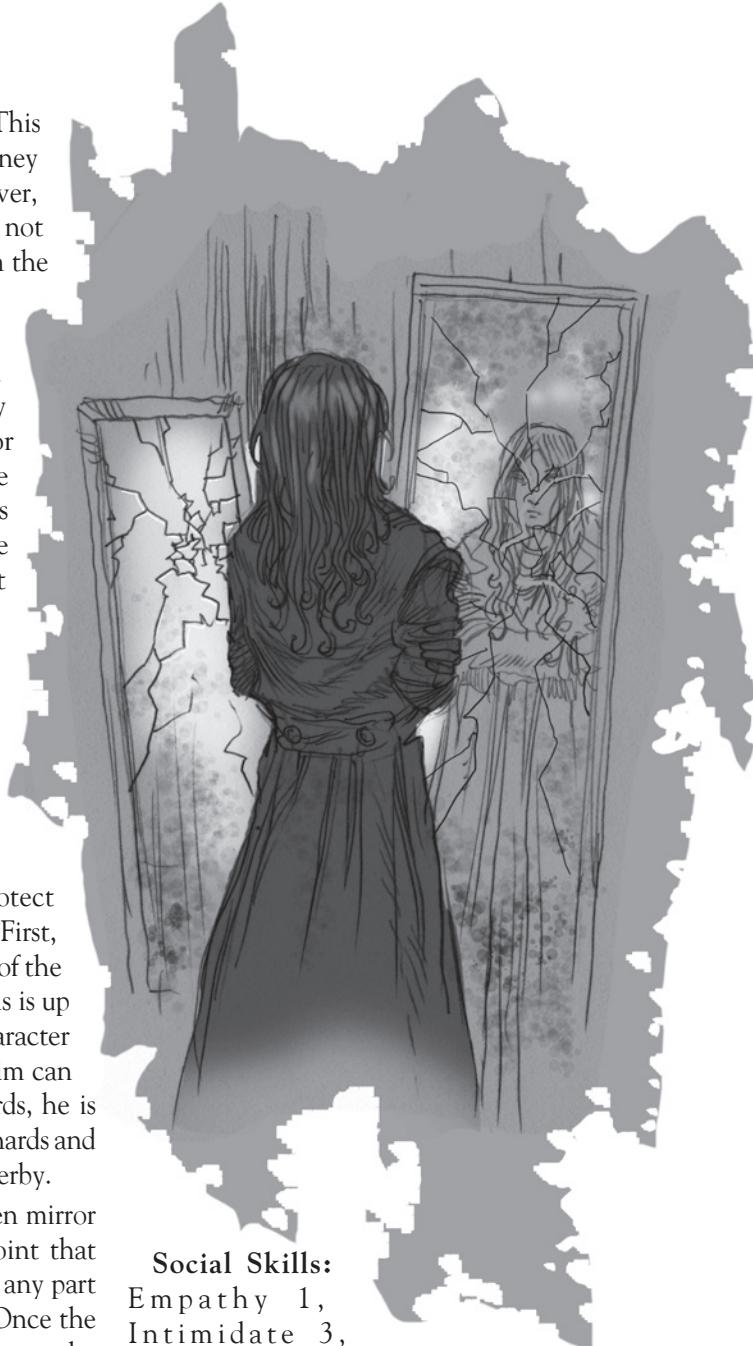
**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Powers:** Beguile and Consume



## Special Powers

Miraree have two special powers, Beguile and Consume. These powers revolve around the creature's ability to eat a sentient creature's soul or essence.

**Beguile** (Manipulation + Persuasion or Intimidate versus victim's Resolve + Composure): The Miraree will use the victim's reflected visage and voice to entice its victim to stay and look at herself in the mirror. This can be in the form of entreaties or threats. For every success, the victim is beguiled for that number of turns, and can only stare at her reflection (dropping her Defense to 0). After the initial beguilement, the victim may make a contested Resolve + Composure roll to attempt to break free of the enchantment. She must gain at least one success to break free from this power.

**Consume** (Resolve + Empathy versus the victim's Resolve + Composure): Once the Miraree has set its sights on its victim and has beguiled her, it may begin to consume the victim's essence. The character will feel herself being drained and will see her reflection grow weak and seem to age. The victim must be beguiled before she may be consumed. For every success on the monster's Consume roll, the victim loses a point of Willpower and gains a -1 penalty (up to a maximum of -5) to all her degeneration rolls for a number of days equal to the Miraree's Resolve. If the victim loses all her Willpower points, all additional successes translate into points of lethal damage instead.

## Story Idea: An Ugly Reflection

Stefano is a sullen, angry teenager who believes that the world owes him a good life, whether or not he actually deserves one. Three weeks ago, he broke his mother's makeup

mirror while stealing money from her purse. He hid the compact in his room to cover up his theft, but attributed the intense feeling of being watched to guilt. Last week, he punched his bedroom mirror in a fit of anger at his father's sharp words about waking his baby sister.

The next morning, his own reflection turned to look at him. It was no longer just his reflection, but something different, malevolent and hungry. As Stefano felt himself losing pieces of his soul to the thing in the mirror, he cried out to it and made a deal with the monster to save his own pathetic life. The thing in the mirror, greedy and hungry for as much as it could get, agreed. As long as Stefano fed it, he was safe.

The first victim was his squalling baby sister. She died quickly and quietly while Stefano held the cracked compact mirror above her. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is what the death certificate said. He's making plans for his next victim: Sharon, that stupid tease who not only won't go out with him, but still expects him to help her with her homework. Stefano left his mother's broken compact mirror under Sharon's dresser, and broke her hand mirror. He apologized, promising to replace it as he put the cracked hand mirror back on Sharon's dresser. He knows he will never have to fulfill that promise; she'll be dead soon enough.

Now, Sharon is having nightmares about her reflection, and refuses to look in any mirror in her home. She doesn't know why she's having these nightmares, but she feels deep down they will come true. She needs help before whatever is lurking behind the mirror gets her. She turns to the only people she thinks she can trust – the characters. She needs to go home and get her stuff, but she's too afraid to go alone. She needs someone there to protect her.

# I See You. Do You See Me?

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •••

## Overview

Sharon has begged the characters to come home with her while she packs to stay elsewhere. She cannot stand the thought of being alone in her home. In the house, everyone will feel a sense of foreboding and of being spied on. If the group decides to leave without investigating, the Miraree will attack Sharon from the hallway mirror, beguiling her and then beginning to consume her. If the player characters investigate Sharon's home, they will find the two broken mirrors. Once both broken mirrors have been found, whomever is holding (or is closest to) the broken compact mirror will be attacked.

## Description

*"I've never seen that compact before. It's not even my shade. But the hand mirror is mine. Stefano, this kid from school, accidentally broke it a few days ago. He said he was going to buy me a new one." Sharon reaches out her hand for the compact mirror and then freezes as her reflection turns to her. The rest of you realize that only Sharon's reflection can be seen in all of the mirrors in the room, but doesn't reflect her movements. The Sharon in the mirror is talking but you cannot hear what she is saying. The real Sharon is staring at her reflection with a mixture of terror and fascination.*

## Storyteller Goals

The main goal of this scene is to introduce some subtle horror, and show that even normal people can sometimes control unusual creatures (although usually not every effectively). The Miraree will try to consume everyone it possibly can before the characters can escape or destroy the mirror. It is a predator. It will not leave while there is food to be had, and anyone's fair game. If Sharon is not the closest potential victim or is not the person holding the compact, the Miraree will go after the one that is. It will fully focus on that one victim.

## Character Goals

Discover that Stefano is the reason behind the Miraree being at Sharon's house. This may be discovered through mundane or supernatural analysis of the makeup compact, or by discovering that Stefano broke the hand mirror just before the incidents at Sharon's house began. Figure out how to stop, banish or destroy the Miraree while saving Sharon (and themselves) before she is consumed.

## Actions

The scene begins either when Sharon heads out of the home or after the two broken mirrors are found. The characters have choices to make: Do they flee the scene to come back and fight another day or do they stand and fight? If they choose to fight, they can either try to destroy the Miraree before it eats any of them or to figure out how to thwart the monster (such as blinding each person from seeing his own reflection in the mirror) even if they don't have the knowledge to banish it immediately.

### Who is the Fairest of Them All?

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion or Intimidate (dice pool 6) versus victim's Resolve + Composure.

**Action:** Instant and contested

More information on the Miraree's Beguile power can be found on [p. 12](#).

**Hindrances (victims):** No occult knowledge (-1). Exceptional eyesight (-1).

**Help (victims):** Poor or hindered eyesight (+1). Blind characters are immune to the Miraree's power.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, the Miraree not only fails to beguile its victim, but there is something about

her that makes her unpalatable to the Miraree. The Miraree will choose a new victim on the next turn and ignore the first victim for the rest of the scene. If the player of the victim rolls a dramatic failure, the Miraree has a hold on the victim, and may begin to consume her in the same turn it has beguiled her.

**Failure:** If the Miraree fails to beguile its victim, the victim may act, including fleeing the scene – which is what Sharon does.

**Success:** If the Miraree has successfully beguiled its victim, she may take no actions other than to watch her reflection in the mirror.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, the Miraree has such a hold on its victim that it may begin to consume the victim in the same turn that it has beguiled her. If the player of the victim rolls an exceptional success, the Miraree will fail to beguile the victim and ignore her for the rest of the scene.

### What a Tasty Morsel

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Empathy (dice pool 6) versus the victim's Resolve + Composure.

**Action:** Instant and contested

More information on the Miraree's *Consume* power can be found on [p. 12](#).

**Hindrances (victims):** A beguiled victim will take no physical actions, and has a Defense of 0 (making it easier for others to attack, grapple or otherwise move her).

**Help (victims):** The victim must be beguiled before it can be consumed.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, the victim not only breaks free of the Miraree's beguiling charm and is

undamaged, but there is something about her that makes her unpalatable to the Miraree. The Miraree will choose a new victim on the next turn and ignore the first victim for the rest of the scene. If the player of the victim rolls a dramatic failure, the victim takes an additional -2 penalty on her next attempt to break free from the beguilement.

**Failure:** If the Miraree fails, the victim manages to fight off the attack.

**Success:** If the Miraree succeeds, the victim is successfully attacked, as per the *Consume* power on [p. 12](#).

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, the victim not only suffers from a successful attack, but she takes an additional -2 penalty to her next attempt to break free from the beguilement. If the player of the victim rolls an exceptional success, the victim not only breaks free, but the Miraree will ignore her for the rest of the scene.

### Consequences

If the player characters do not go to Sharon's home within two days, at least one person who lives there – Sharon, her brother or her parents – will die of a "heart attack" or from some other mysterious but plausibly natural cause of death. If they flee the scene without completely destroying the broken mirrors, the Miraree will go back to Stefano through the home's second broken mirror. Stefano then tries to sacrifice one of his parents in order to save himself. If the characters manage to banish the Miraree back to its realm by completely destroying the broken mirrors, the Miraree will be gone, but they will always know what a cracked or broken mirror could mean.

# Step on a Crack

Step on a crack, Joe thought as he stepped over the large crack bisecting the hiking trail. Break your mother's back. He wondered at the inanity of the childhood rhyme. As he turned back to Barry to comment on it, he heard his friend cry out in pain. Joe's heart hammered in his chest as he realized that they were not alone on the hiking trail. Barry was on the ground with one foot buried up to the ankle in dirt. Next to him, a strange humanoid creature was growing out of the ground. It resembled the golems Joe had read about, but he didn't think golems were supposed to have sharp, bloodstained teeth. Suddenly, Joe thought he knew what happened to the other missing hikers here on Echo Mountain.

## Step on a crack and break your mother's back.

Most people believe that the proverb of not stepping on cracks it is nothing more than a rhyming ritual that children use to frighten their peers. Some people connect it with the childhood game of hopscotch, where landing on a line (instead of in the middle of a square) is considered a foul and the player must start all over again. The very real warning of the proverb has been forgotten, but it still protects cautious children today.

The real meaning behind the warning of rhyme comes from the translated Greek warning of "Do not step on cracks that cross your path." For thousands of years in remote parts of the world, this warning has been said from native to foreigner and from guide to tourist. The reasons for giving such warnings have changed over time based on who gave the warning and who listened – or did not listen – to them. Those who obeyed the warnings had nothing to fear. Those who did not were lucky most of the time. Those who were not lucky usually didn't live to tell the tale of the Doliochthon (doh-lee-OKH-thon).

## Doliochthon

**Background:** In a manuscript purporting to date from ancient Greece, the author Agathon Charis stepped over a crack in the road while his slave did not. A sudden noise startled him, and he turned to find his slave being attacked and eaten by the golem-like creature. Fleeing for his life, Agathon ran to the next hill over. He paused to look and see if the creature had followed, and was relieved that it had not. Instead, it had torn the hapless slave to pieces and was eating him, skin, bones and all.

The document explains that Agathon remained where he was and watched the creature, curious at how such a large creature could have snuck up on them when there was nothing to hide behind near the road and the grass was only knee-high. He soon had his answer. After the creature was finished eating the slave, leaving nothing but splatters of blood, Agathon watched the creature move down the pathways and then suddenly disappear. In its place a large crack appeared, crossing the trail he had followed. Agathon dubbed the creature "dolio chthon," or "deceitful surface of the earth." Over the years, the two words have been shortened to the single name of Doliochthon.

The Doliochthon is a primordial, solitary creature that exists in all parts of the world and in all climates. The single consistent factor in all Doliochthon stories is a remote territory to live in, away from human civilization. Unfortunately for everyone, such territories are becoming smaller and harder to find.

**Description:** A Doliochthon is a large humanoid creature standing between seven and eight feet tall. Its body is made up of the earth, grass, leaves, twigs and weeds found in its territory. It has a prehensile tail that lies flat against the body when it is not being used. A fang-filled mouth that takes up almost half of its head dominates its flat, oval face. There is only an impression to show where a nose would be, and its eyes appear to be a pair of stones. The creature is a master at camouflage when it is still, and it is incredibly strong.



**Storytelling Hints:** The Doliochthon is more animal than man, but in essence it is neither. It is intelligent and cunning, cautious rather than reactive. It prefers to hunt solitary game, but will go after small groups. It always hunts in areas of remote trails – animal or manmade. The “crack” that is placed across the trail is actually its prehensile tail that is camouflaged to look like a crack. When something steps on it, the tail reflexively wraps around the limb that triggered it, holding it fast. Once the prey is caught, it is the Doliochthon’s main focus unless something else attacks it. Then it will disable the prey and attack the attacker.

The Doliochthon cannot be reasoned with, but it can be frightened away by a greater threat to its life and territory. It can be soothed by supernatural means and sent away, but it will never willingly become a pet or servant. It is a wild creature, and a large fire will usually make it flee in fear.

The Doliochthon’s goal is to feed. It is a hungry, cunning creature. It will go after the last person in a line, the pet on a leash or a solitary target.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** None

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 2, Giant

**Willpower:** 6

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Greed

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 8

**Size:** 6

**Armor:** 2

**Power:** Camouflage

**Notes:** The Doliochthon does not use weapons.

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

• **Werewolf:** The Doliochthon will instinctively determine that a werewolf is a competitor for food and will attack with fierce protectiveness of its territory (+1 to its attack dice pool). If there are three or more werewolves in the party, the Doliochthon will sense that the party is too much of a danger to its life and not attack at all.

• **Mage:** The Doliochthon is considered a cryptid (**Mage: the Awakening**, pp. 338-340), which means it cannot endure capture or confinement away from the place it’s encountered in – the magic of the area sustains it.

## Special Powers

The Doliochthon has a single special power called Camouflage, which is its supernatural ability to blend into its surroundings.

**Camouflage** (Wits + Stealth versus the target's Wits + Composure): The Doliochthon has had hundreds of generations to perfect its ability to blend in with its surroundings and become invisible. The contested check should only come if the player characters are looking for the creature or something unusual. If the creature is not moving, observers have a -1 penalty to see it, even if they are actively looking for it. If the creature is in motion, there is a +1 bonus to the roll to see it (although it gives -1 to anyone attempting to follow its trail, since it naturally integrates into its environment). Blending or not, the creature is not invisible while in motion. This is a supernatural ability that does not fool thermal scanners or other applicable equipment. This is similar to the Glitra's power, mentioned on p. 37.

## Story Idea: The Hungry Jungle

An Aztec pyramid has been newly discovered in southern Mexico. It appears to be undisturbed. However, the locals refuse to take a group of archaeologists past a certain border in the jungle. It does not matter how much the archaeological team bribes them or threatens them, the native guides always say the same thing: This land belongs to the *boca oculta* or the "invisible mouth." The archaeologists feel that such superstitions must not be allowed to get in the way of the find of a lifetime.

The team has brought in outside survival experts to scout ahead and find a path to this temple. Each one of them has listened to the local guides about where the pyramid is and what the dangers of the jungle are – mundane and supernatural.

The first scout team did not return.

One survivor of the second scout team returned but his story was too insane to be believed. All he would say was, "Something was out there. The jungle came alive and took him! Dragged him away! He's gone! Gone!"

Now the investors of the archaeological team are getting impatient. Too much time and money has been spent on this with no reward. Word of the pyramid's existence has gotten out, and there is a worry that grave robbers or competitors will get there before their team can. It is time to call in the big guns.

You are hired to make a path to the pyramid and get the team in before the competition gets there first. However, something about this "invisible mouth" story tells you that you will need to be on high alert to get the job done and your team paid. You are required to take at least one member of the team with you so they can identify the pyramid and gather an artifact in order to make a claim on the site. You hope that the archaeologist can hold his own in a crisis – especially when things start going wrong and people start dying.

## Variations

- Your player characters are part of the archaeological team.
- Your player characters are hired guns.
- Your player characters are a mix of both teams.

# It's Alive!

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL ••

## Overview

It is the morning of the last day of the hike through the jungle. It's slow going, and everyone's on high alert. There is only one scout team left. After one of the three scouts didn't make it back, your team leader instituted the buddy system – for everything. There is no room for modesty or privacy. You are all under siege by something unknown. Something has been watching the group from afar, but no one has been able to spot it yet.

The camp has been packed up, and everyone is more than ready to go. While tensions are high, so is hope that today you will reach your destination – an untouched Aztec pyramid with all of its secrets and riches still intact. One more day of marching; that's all it should take. But a few hours into the hike, the Doliochthon attacks.

## Description

*The jungle is hot and humid. Your hair and clothing stick to you in uncomfortable clumps as sweat pours from your body. Everywhere you look there are more trees, more vines, more undergrowth to block your way, despite the man at the head of the line with the machete making the hard going a little easier. All you can hear is the panting of the people around you and the beating of your own heart. Something about this strikes you as wrong. The jungle should be alive with sounds – cries of primates, calls of birds, buzzing of insects. Just as you this wrongness penetrates your heat-fogged brain, one of the men in your party screams.*

## Storyteller Goals

There are a lot of potential objectives with this scene. You may choose to invoke fear of the unknown, emphasize the deadliness of the natural world or punish the hubris of meddling with unknown things. It can also serve as a lead-in scene to a larger story involving ancient ruins touched by the supernatural.

The main goal of the Doliochthon is to feed and escape with the captured prey. These interlopers did not listen to the warnings, and now they are on its territory – fair game. The first person attacked is the last man in the marching line, Gunny (though he can be replaced with any suitable Storyteller character). Gunny will put up a fight but not much of one, because he is caught completely by surprise. Once Gunny is disabled, the Doliochthon will leave Gunny to the side and go after the next closest, smallest person in the party. Once that person is disabled, it will take both bodies and flee into the jungle with them.

## Character Goals

First, to survive the initial attack of the Doliochthon while making sure that no one else other than Gunny is hurt. Gunny will be mortally wounded, but if they can't save him, perhaps they can recover his body for burial.

The second goal is to get the archaeologist to the pyramid site so he can collect his data (and any artifacts his investors might be interested in), and then get him back out of the jungle again.

The third goal is to kill the Doliochthon if they can, either in the initial attack on the group or during the trek out of the jungle.

## Actions

The player characters can choose to flee the scene while Gunny is being attacked, or they can choose to attack the monster. If the monster flees with Gunny or any other character, they will need to track it down to where it lives if they want to rescue him.

## Brawl

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Brawl (dice pool 9) minus the target's Defense

**Action:** Instant

**Hindrances:** The Doliochthon is being fired on (-1). Thermal scanner, motion sensor, or other high-tech surveillance gear allows the target to dodge more accurately.

**Help:** The Doliochthon is in motion (+1).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the Doliochthon fail to hit its intended target, it fails bad enough that the creature considers the group too great a threat to its existence and flees the scene with the intention of picking them off one by one until they leave its domain.

**Failure:** The Doliochthon fails to hit its intended target.

**Success:** The Doliochthon hit its intended target, dealing damage to him.

**Exceptional Success:** The Doliochthon hits its intended target, dealing damage to him and knocking him out for the rest of the combat. If the Doliochthon chooses to flee the scene, it will take the unconscious victim with it.

## Track It Down

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Survival (dice pool 7) versus the character's Wits + Survival

**Action:** Instant and contested

**Hindrances (trackers):** The creature's Camouflage power naturally makes it harder to locate it (-1; see p. 17)

**Help (trackers):** It does not specifically hide its tracks (+1)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, not only does the Doliochthon fail to hide its tracks, but blood loss from its victims and other clear signs of movement bring the trackers directly to the Doliochthon's lair. If the trackers roll a dramatic failure, no one can pick up its trail this scene.

**Failure:** The Doliochthon fails to hide its trail.

**Success:** The Doliochthon hides its trail from the tracker.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, the Doliochthon hides its trail from trackers using its large strides. No one can pick up its trail this scene. If the trackers roll an exceptional success, they immediately find a clear path to its lair.

## Consequences

If the team fails to kill the Doliochthon in the initial attack, it will dog their steps to and from the pyramid while they are in its territory, trying to pick off team members one by one. If the team camps at the pyramid, the Doliochthon will attempt to take a team member that night.

If the team decides against tracking the creature or fails in the attempt, any captured victims will be killed and eaten.

The Doliochthon will continue to be a problem for the archaeologist team in the future if it is not dealt with on this initial outing.

# What is an Archway but a Portal?

*"It all started when I walked under that ladder," Daniel said miserably. "There was a flash of light and then everything went to shit. Right after that, I didn't see the light change colors, started to cross the street and almost died. If that guy hadn't pulled me back... Well, ever since then, I feel like something's followed me, hounded me, made me do things that almost get me killed. Worse yet, I've started seeing something out of the corner of my eye; something horrible. I think it wants me dead, and I don't know why."*

## Walking under a ladder is bad luck.

There are two commonly accepted origins for cautioning against walking under a ladder. To many people, walking under a ladder is bad luck, while to others it is simply unsafe.

One commonly-cited origin theory of the superstition has to do with the similarities between the appearance of a ladder leaning against a wall and that of a gallows. Anything associated with a gallows was considered ill luck, so walking under one – or a ladder that looked like one – could hardly be a good idea.

A more ominous origin of the warning comes from Ireland in the dark ages. Documents of a prolific religious chronicler tell of the first encounter with the creature born from walking under a ladder. The documents state that a man discovered the malevolent creature after seeing a flash of light surround his young son Ronan, as he played around and then walked under a ladder that was stored up against the barn wall. For the next seven days, he watched his son being subtly guided to do careless and reckless things. On the seventh day, the father saw the creature that plagued his son and put him in such danger. The name for the ladder (*dréimire* in Irish) got confused with the creature's power to create dream-like visions, and eventually the spirit got the name of the Dreamer.

## The Dreamer

**Quotes:** (distracting, indistinct whispers)

**Background:** No one truly knows where the Dreamer comes from or what it is about the particular ladders that make up its doorway into our world. However, when a Dreamer comes into our world, it is attached to a particular victim. All of its focus is on that one victim, forcing the victim into self-harm and, eventually, death.

The Dreamer has a limited time to do its work. It can stay in our world for no more than ten days. After that, the creature simply disappears and its victim is safe (though traumatized). During those ten days, the creature baffles, bemuses and distracts its victim at the worst possible moments in order to cause him harm. If its victim dies within those ten days, the Dreamer may be seen leaping upon the body in a flash of light and then disappearing altogether.

Most of the notes involving the boy Ronan and the Dreamer are now hidden within the Vatican archives. However, some information on the Dreamer is available in other esoteric books on Christian magic and dealing with spirits.

**Description:** The Dreamer is an almost invisible creature, except when its time is running out and it is desperate for a kill. Then, it will manifest enough to terrify its victim. Manifested, the Dreamer looks like a huge ethereal starfish, as large as a child and the color of cobwebs. It has a single eye in the center of its body and sucker-like mouths on the ends of each limb. The Dreamer undulates in the air and moves quickly when it is agitated.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Dreamer is a monster of the mind and the spirit. It is unknown why the creature comes through to bedevil its vic-

times, but it is certain that its portal to this world must have three straight sides. Also, the portal apparently needs to be a temporary thing, as the creature never seems to make its way through other three-sided permanent structures. The ladder itself, a conveyance from one place to another, may be necessary for the Dreamer to pass through from its world to ours.

This creature will not directly show itself to its victim for the first seven days of its torment. It will bedevil, befuddle and distract with indistinct whispers in order to get its victim to accidentally kill himself in some horrible manner – walking in front of a bus or train, accidentally electrocuting himself, keeping him from sleeping or other such things.

On the seventh day, the Dreamer will begin to show itself in order to try to terrify its victim into harming himself. It will rush at the victim while he is driving, startle him while he is at the top of a set of stairs or intimidate him until he falls off some high ledge. The important thing to know is that the Dreamer cannot physically touch anything or physically harm its intended victim. Everything it does is designed to get its victim to hurt himself.

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 2, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 8

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

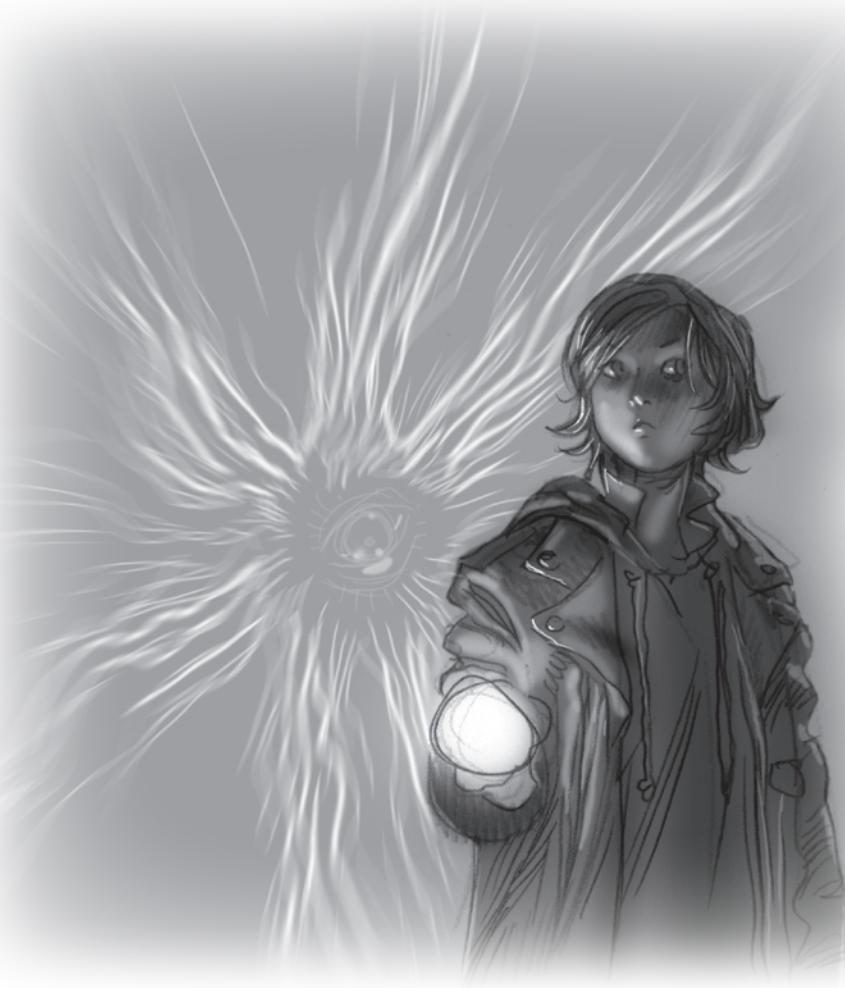
**Speed:** 10

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 8

**Essence:** 15

**Numina:** Bemuse and Terrify



## Special Powers

The two special Numina of the Dreamer, Bemuse and Terrify, are designed to force a person into harming himself through inattention or fear.

**Bemuse** (Power + Finesse versus the victim's Resolve + Composure): The Dreamer will mentally whisper or distract the victim in subtle ways – soft, distracting lights, a murmuring whisper that is too far away to be understood, sensations being stronger or softer or merely different from what they are supposed to be. This bemusement may also take the more aggressive form of a shape hovering just out of sight, something flashing by or a jarring sound that the only the victim can hear. Bemused victims have a -2 dice penalty to all perception rolls.

**Terrify** (Power + Finesse versus the victim's Wits + Composure): When the Dreamer fails to kill or hurt its intended target within seven days, the Dreamer takes a more direct, visible approach to distracting and frightening its

prey into acting in a reckless fashion. The Terrify ability is always accompanied by a physical movement of the Dreamer; usually towards the victim in an aggressive fashion. A terrified victim may flee, cower or freeze in shock, but is at a -5 penalty to any action taken against the monster. Terrified victims have a -3 dice penalty to all perception rolls.

## Story Idea: Heir to the Throne

Joseph Sarver is the CEO and owner of Sarver Industries. He is a busy man who is trying to do some good in the world with his medical inventions while making a pretty penny. Unfortunately, Joe's seventeen-year-old son, Lon, came home from boarding school two days ago raving about whispers in his ears and lights in his eyes. It started four days before that at school when all sorts of things started happening to Lon – stepping on a rake, falling down the stairs and walking into doors. Since he's been home, he hasn't been able to sleep and he continues to hurt himself – slipping in the bathroom, tripping into a glass coffee table and almost falling into the hot tub.

Joe is at his wits' end. He cannot understand why his bright, ambitious son has suddenly become a distracted, accident-prone insomniac who admits to hearing whispers in his head. He has hired a team of experts to come in and evaluate Lon. He refuses to allow Lon to be taken to

a hospital for this evaluation. After all, what would the papers say? It could harm his business, his reputation and the livelihood of his employees. As such, he asks some associates of his who are known for taking care of "unusual problems" – the characters.

When the characters enter the scene, they are aware of Lon's apparent psychosis and his father's distress. It is important is to discover if Lon did have a psychotic break or not. Above all, a promising young man's life may be at stake, and the characters are the family's last hope to find out what is wrong and fix it before Lon does something drastic of a permanent nature.

The first night of observation brings about some odd readings on the medical equipment, security sensors and paranormal equipment. The second night begins with Lon screaming for his life and fleeing to the roof of the fifty-story building that houses the family's penthouse apartment.

### Variations

- **Innocents:** The gathering of people could be a slumber party at Lon's request, where Lon tells his friends about the thing that seems to be stalking him.

- **Vampire:** Kindred with the Auspex • power Aura Perception can see a second malevolent aura connected to Lon's aura. The best way to describe the aura of the Dreamer is the Beast personified.

# On the Rooftop

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL ••••

## Overview

You and your group of people know that something is wrong with Lon, and that it's not all in his head. Since you have arrived at the Sarver penthouse, things have gotten worse. Lon is much more distracted and becoming more of a danger to himself. It's after midnight, and despite the exhaustion of the previous day, neither Lon nor any of your group is sleeping. If Lon isn't crazy, what can you do to help him? Would it be safer to send him to a mental hospital where there are fewer things for him to hurt himself on, or is it better to see if he can be freed from these compulsions?

## Description

*Lon's yell of panic brings you out of your late night stupor. Before anyone can react, Lon runs through the home, out the front door and down the hall to the rooftop exit. "Get away from me!" he screams as he flees, though no one can see what is chasing him. Following him up to the rooftop, you find the shivering fourteen-year-old boy, barefoot and pajama-clad, being confronted by an eerie starfish-like creature almost as big as he is.*

## Storyteller Goals

The goal of the Dreamer is to get Lon to go over the edge of the rooftop and fall to his death. It will do everything in its power to keep Lon from leaving the rooftop and to keep the interlopers from getting to its prey. Keep Lon terrified and keep the others from helping him.

## Character Goals

Lon is not crazy; that much becomes clear as a ghostly starfish creature confronts the group and tries to make Lon jump from the top of the penthouse building. The characters' main goal is to get Lon down from the rooftop and back into the relative safety of the penthouse.

The characters' secondary goal is to stop the Dreamer. They can do this either by trying to kill or by keeping Lon safe from it for at least two more days. (The characters are unlikely to know about the ten-day restriction unless they've done some research. If the characters think to make Lon unconscious for a couple of days, that will do the trick as well.)

## Actions

The Dreamer's main focus is Lon and getting Lon to fall off or run off the top of the roof. As such, it will first try to keep Lon focused on it. If Lon keeps getting distracted by the player characters, the Dreamer will try to get the player characters to flee from the scene by terrifying them. If it succeeds in this and Lon dies, it disappears to find new prey elsewhere.

### Pay Attention to Me

**Dice Pool:** Power + Finesse (dice pool 6) versus the victim's Resolve + Composure

**Action:** Instant and contested

More information on the Dreamer's Bemuse power can be found on [p. 21](#).

**Hindrances (Dreamer):** The Dreamer is visible (-1); attempting to bemuse any targets who are not its chosen victim (-1).

**Help (Dreamer):** None.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, the Dreamer not only fails to bemuse its victim, Lon is able to flee from it and will feel the need to flee the scene itself. The creature will return no sooner than one hour later. If Dreamer dramatically fails to bemuse anyone other than Lon, it will be unable to use that power against that person for the rest of the scene. If the player of the victim rolls a dramatic failure, they are fully in the Dreamer's thrall and cannot act against it for the rest of the scene (or until somehow brought out of the bemusement).

**Failure:** The Dreamer fails to bemuse its target.

**Success:** The Dreamer bemuses Lon and can attempt to terrify him into recklessly fleeing. If the Dreamer bemuses someone other than Lon, they lose their next action due to supernatural distraction.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, Lon will be fully in the Dreamer's thrall, and nothing less than a physical removal from the rooftop will turn Lon's attention from the Dreamer to a player character. If the Dreamer gets an exceptional success in bemusing someone other than Lon, they are unable to act against Lon or the Dreamer for the rest of the scene unless supernaturally brought out of the bemusement. If the player of the victim rolls an exceptional success, the Dreamer cannot use its power against the victim for the rest of the scene.

### Run for Your Life!

**Dice Pool:** Power + Finesse (dice pool 6) versus the victim's Wits + Composure

**Action:** Instant and contested

More information on the Dreamer's Terrify power can be found on [p. 21-22](#).

**Hindrances (Dreamer):** The Dreamer is visible and horrible (-1); terrify any targets that aren't its chosen victim (-1).

**Help (Dreamer):** None.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, the Dreamer not only fails to terrify its victim, but Lon is able to escape. The monster will disappear, but return no sooner than one hour later. If the Dreamer dramatically fails to terrify anyone other than Lon, it will be unable to use that power against that person for

the rest of the scene. If the player of the victim rolls a dramatic failure, they spend the scene running around blindly (and potentially into a dangerous situation).

**Failure:** The Dreamer fails to terrify its target.

**Success:** The Dreamer terrifies Lon, causing him to run around blindly (which will very likely mean off the rooftop). If the Dreamer terrifies someone other than Lon, they spend their next action fleeing the scene due to supernatural fear.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, Lon will be completely terrified and flee off the edge of the rooftop immediately. If the Dreamer gets an exceptional success in terrifying someone other than Lon, they spend the rest of the scene fleeing due to supernatural fear. If the player of the victim rolls an exceptional success, the Dreamer cannot use its power on the victim for the rest of the scene.

### Consequences

If the player characters take more than couple of minutes to get to the rooftop, Lon will have already jumped to his death by the time they get there. If the player characters succeed in scaring the Dreamer from the scene, the creature will redouble its attack in an hour or two. If the player characters do not succeed in keeping the creature from getting Lon to kill himself before they see the creature, Joe will blame the characters for their failure and could potentially become a reoccurring antagonist. If the player characters do not succeed in keeping the creature from getting Lon to kill himself but they see the creature and can describe the creature in detail, Joe will consider them failures (if he even believes them), but probably won't go out of his way to go after them.

# If Four is Lucky, Five Must Be Luckier

*“Look what I found.” Jane showed Tyler the five-leaf clover.*

*“Uh, five-leaf clovers are bad luck.” He squinted his eyes at small quintet of leaves.*

*“No. I’ve heard that if four-leaf clovers are lucky, five-leaf clovers are even luckier. You can make a wish on them.”*

*Tyler shook his head. “I don’t think so.” He paused and then breathed out, “Whoa! Look at that thing!”*

*Jane turned to see what her boyfriend was pointing at. In the clover at the edge of their picnic blanket was a large cockroach-like creature about six inches long. When she saw it, she gave a gasp and wrinkled up her nose. “Ew! It’s a Palmetto bug!”*

*The bug reared back on its hind legs and gave a screech from a disturbingly human-looking face. Behind it, a swarm of similar creatures dug their way out of the ground, and the ground at the edge of the picnic blanket was suddenly a mass of moving black bodies. As one they spread their wings, took to the air in an angry chittering sound and dove at the girl holding the five-leaf clover.*

## Picking a five-leaf clover is unlucky.

If you ask people about the origin of the saying that picking a five-leaf clover is bad luck, some people may say instead that since a four-leaf clover is lucky, a rarer five-leaf clover must be even luckier.

In reality, no one is quite sure where the origins of either proverb came from, but the first written warnings of them appeared in medieval Britain. These tales warned of black “fairies” that came from clover patches all over Britain. Since then, cryptozoologists have rediscovered these creatures and the danger they pose to the unwary world that lives above them.

## Goblin Roach

**Background:** The Goblin Roach is as to a cockroach as a human is to a chimpanzee; cousins, perhaps, but an altogether different creature. Rediscovered again and again over the centuries, the one thing that cryptozoologists and occult researchers have determined is that the Goblin Roach is a creature that just wants to be left alone. However, if you disturb their home, they must defend their territory and will do so with great vehemence and malice.

Goblin Roaches are a hive-mind swarm, linked telepathically to a single leader. While most hive based creatures center around a “queen,” in this case, it is a “king” figure who leads the hive in both day-to-day life and into battle. While the five-leaf clover is a rarity in nature, it does occur naturally as well as artificially. The king of the Goblin Roaches secretes a chemical in the clover, above the hidden hive, that causes the five-leaf clover to grow. This is a territorial marker to all other Goblin Roaches. If the king of another Goblin Roach swarm wants to muscle in on another’s territory, he rips the five-leaf clover from the ground, removing the territorial marker with the current king’s scent markings on it. This is start of the challenge. The two swarms will fight until one king is dead. At that time, either the two swarms will merge or the losing swarm will flee with a temporary king in charge. How the king of the Goblin Roaches is chosen is still a mystery.

There are two ways to protect oneself from the Goblin Roach swarm when it is intent on destroying you. The first way is to submerge oneself in a body of water. A Goblin Roach hates water and thus will end its pursuit at the shore and eventually lose interest. The second is to immediately flee beyond the borders of the Goblin Roaches’ domain. How one discovers the borders of the creatures’ domain is unknown.



**Description:** A Goblin Roach is between five and seven inches long and reminds observers of a cross between a Palmetto bug and a small humanoid with wings. It has a shiny black carapace and six limbs in addition to its translucent black wings. The two back limbs are the strongest and most muscled, and allow the creature to stand upright in an intimidation pose. The two middle limbs are the smallest, each ending in a venomous stinger. The two upper limbs are the most articulated and end in pinchers for fine manipulation. The head of a Goblin Roach is vaguely humanoid and flat with large black eyes and a large mouth with needle-like teeth. For the most part, the Goblin Roach walk around on the front and back limbs, allowing the stingers free motion to sting prey animals.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Goblin Roach is alien in thought and deed. They are a hive mind. Speak to one, you speak to them all – and all of them listen to the king. The king will always be the member of the Goblin Roach that is front and center of things. Thus, if you can manage to speak to one of them, the king will be the one answering you.

The Goblin Roach swarm just wants to be left alone to live their lives in peace. They are not an aggressive swarm like killer bees or other expansionist insects. That is because they are more than an insect. They are sentient creatures with simple drives. The biggest drive is to protect their home territory from all invaders. They identify the invaders by those who rip their territorial marker (the five-leaf clover) out of the ground or those who try to dig up their underground hive.

Once the challenge has been given, the Goblin Roach swarm will not stop attacking until the challenger (the one who pulled the five-leaf clover or broke into the hive) and anyone with her are either dead or driven off of Goblin Roach territory, or their king is dead. If the Goblin Roach swarm loses six or more health points, the king can be considered dead and the swarm will stop attacking.

Their attacks come in the form of biting and poisoning. A poisoned creature will become paralyzed over time based on the amount of venom in their system. If the enemy is killed, the creatures will continue to inject the poison into the corpse so that the innards will liquefy and be turned into sustenance that the Goblin Roach can suck into themselves through needle-like teeth.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidate 4

**Merits:** None

**Willpower:** 5

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** N/A

**Vice:** N/A

**Health:** 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 12

**Size:** 6

**Armor:** 1

**Powers:** Swarm, Bite and Poison

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- **Mage:** The Goblin Roach creatures are considered cryptids and follow the cryptid rules (**Mage: the Awakening**, pp. 338-340).
- **Changeling:** Despite the name, the Goblin Roach is not a Hedge creature, though you may change that for your chronicle.

### Special Powers

Goblin Roaches have three basic powers: Swarm, Bite and Poison. These attacks are used primarily for feeding, but they are also very effective forms of combat.

**Swarm** (Dexterity + Athletics): The entire swarm of thousands of Goblin Roaches targets a single individual and swarms her, flying around her face to blind, landing on her to bite or sting and working to incapacitate her in the quickest way possible. This is usually used to bring down larger prey but is effective on enemies. Those that have been swarmed are at a -2 perception penalty and -1 to rolls using Dexterity.

**Bite** (Strength + Athletics – victim's Defense): Representing an entire swarm of Goblin Roaches attacking at once and attempting to bite. With a successful roll, some are going to succeed. The number of successes represents the number of Goblin Roaches biting the victim at 1 bashing per bite. This may be soaked normally.

**Poison** (Dexterity + Athletics – victim's Defense): Representing an entire swarm of Goblin Roaches attacking at once and attempting to sting a victim with their poisonous stingers. With a successful roll, some are going to succeed. The number of successes represents the number of Goblin Roaches stinging the victim with a paralyzing toxin. Use the poison rules in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 180-181 (Toxicity level 4, and resisted by Stamina + Resolve as a reflexive action). When all the victim's health points are gone, the victim is paralyzed. If left unmolested, the paralyzed victim will be able to move again within 24-36 hours.

### Story Idea: Encounter in the Clover

Caleb and Rob were doing what two boys usually do on a sunny day in a wilderness park: wandering, horsing around and generally having a good time. They had the run of the area as long as they stayed within the boundaries set up by both sets of parents which amounted to “don’t get lost, don’t bother anyone and don’t burn down the forest.”

Well, they weren’t lost. They knew exactly where they were. They were far enough away from the beaten path next to a small pond that they couldn’t bother anyone, and the magnifying glass was only good for roasting ants and little bugs. And that was just what Caleb was intent on doing as soon as he found an anthill in all of the clover.

But there were no anthills to be had, just clover all over the glade. “Hey! I found a four-leaf clover,” Rob called to his friend. “That’s good luck.”

“Bet I can find more of them than you can.”

“No way.”

“Yes way.”

“If I win, I get the magnifying glass for a whole week,” Rob challenged.

Caleb thought for a moment and then nodded. “If I win, I get your bike for a week.”

“You’re on!”

The two boys began their search for the good luck charm in the form of the four-leaf clover while the Goblin Roach hive labored peacefully in the ground beneath them.

# Unlucky Little Boys

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL ••

## Overview

In a lull in the story while the player characters are going from one scene to another or while they are simply enjoying themselves in the great outdoors, the characters hear the terrified screams of children. It could be while they are in a hurry to something else, or it could be that this is a way to introduce new Storyteller characters (or player characters for that matter) to the group through the children and their parents.

## Description

*The screams of children pierce the air. Running through the trees, you break into a beautiful glade and a horrific scene. Before you, two boys are swatting at what must be thousands of bugs – huge ones – at least six inches long and glossy black. The children are blinded by the onslaught and are unable to find their way out of the black mass. You can see small rivulets of blood running down their faces and arms where these insects have bitten them. One of the bugs flies up to you and hovers briefly before your face, letting you get a good look at it before one of the boys lets out another scream and falls over. His small body is immediately covered in a blanket of glossy black carapaces.*

## Storyteller Goals

The goal of the Goblin Roach attack is to introduce an unexpected threat to the characters that has nothing to do with their current story. The Goblin Roaches are uncommon bugs and generally keep to themselves. Saving the children will allow the characters to meet new Storyteller characters who may or may not be part of a greater story in the future.

The Goblin Roaches have two goals that amount to the same thing: Protect their territory. They can do this by killing the interlopers (the boys and now the characters who have come to help the boys) or by running them off of their territory (the clover patch).

## Character Goals

The main character goal should be to rescue the two boys before they are killed. One of them, Caleb, is paralyzed from the Goblin Roach toxin. The other has been harmed a little but is still able to move.

The secondary goal for the characters is to find out more about the Goblin Roaches. What set them off? What are they? Obviously, these are not normal bugs.

The third goal is for the characters to decide if the Goblin Roach hive is too big of a threat to be allowed to live. Their hive is near a growing wilderness park and while it is currently off the beaten path, its proximity to the lake makes it prime vacationer territory.

### Rescuing Caleb

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics (dice pool 8) – the victim's Defense

**Action:** Instant

Saving the paralyzed boy, Caleb, will bring a much greater chance of the characters being poisoned, as he is covered in Goblin Roaches. More information on the Goblin Roaches' Poison power can be found on [p. 27](#).

**Hindrances (Roaches):** The Goblin Roach stingers cannot pierce Armor 3 or above. If the Goblin Roach king is killed, the attack stops immediately.

**Help:** None.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Goblin Roaches not only fail to poison their victim, but there is something about her that makes her unpalatable to the Goblin Roach swarm. The Goblin Roaches will choose a new victim on the next turn and ignore the first victim for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Goblin Roaches fail to poison its victim.

**Success:** The Goblin Roaches poison its victim, Toxicity level 4. Resisted by Stamina + Resolve as a reflexive action.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only have the Goblin Roaches poisoned its victim, the paralysis occurs immediately.

### Rescuing Rob

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics (dice pool 7) – the victim's Defense

**Action:** Instant

Saving the flailing boy, Rob, comes with it the much greater chance of being bitten. But since he's not the boy with the five-leaf clover in his hand, he is the swarm's secondary priority. More information on the Goblin Roaches' Bite power can be found on p. 27.

**Hindrances (Roaches):** The Goblin Roach stingers cannot pierce Armor 3 or above. If the Goblin Roach king is killed, the attack stops immediately.

**Help:** None.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Goblin Roaches not only fail to bite their victim, but there is something about him that makes him unpalatable to the Goblin Roach swarm. The Goblin Roaches will choose a new victim on the next turn and ignore the first victim for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Goblin Roaches fail to bite their victim.

**Success:** The Goblin Roaches bite their victim, causing 1 bashing bite per number of successes.

**Exceptional Success:** The Goblin Roaches bite their victim, causing 1 bashing bite per number of successes. The victim also develops an immediate allergic reaction to the bites in the form of incapacitating swelling, itching and hives that adds a -3 penalty to all his actions until the allergic reaction is dealt with.

### Consequences

If the characters choose to ignore the screams of the children, both children will die. If the characters save the children, they are lauded as heroes by the children's parents and the community, giving an opportunity to be introduced to new Storyteller characters for future stories.

# Only the Children of Autumn

“Oh, hey, this is gorgeous,” Julie said as she held up the opal ring. “Can I borrow it?”

Kimberly paused in her sorting of clothing for her best friend to borrow, “Uh... it was my mom’s, and it’s probably too fragile to wear. Besides, you weren’t born in October.”

“So?” She slipped the opal ring on and admired the rainbow reflection of light within the gemstone. She smiled at the shimmer of beauty.

“It’s bad luck to wear an opal if you weren’t born in October.”

Oh whatever, Julie thought. There she goes on her superstitious bit. Julie wagged the bejeweled hand at her best friend. “Why? It’s pretty. I want to wear it.”

“I don’t know. I just know that’s what they say.”

“Well, they can go jump in a lake.” Julie said. “So, can I wear it or not?”

## It is bad luck for those not born in October to wear opals.

The traditional gemstone for October is opal – the zodiacal stone for Libra. It is a common belief that wearing opal, if it is not your birthstone, will bring bad luck to the wearer. In ancient times, an elemental researcher discovered the existence of the opal’s elemental spirit and simply called the spirit within it “Opallios,” after the stone. At the time, he was uncertain if Opallios was an angel, a demon or a spirit, but he was certain that the spirit came from the opal stone to bless some and to curse others. The unnamed sage wrote his findings in a document that Stephen Ashmead, a noted occultist, later found, translated and expanded upon in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

It is his research that tells the story of the spirit of the stone going from a benign creature to one of malicious intent. Ashmead dubbed this spirit “Autumne” (aw-TUM-nay) while researching its origins and its connection to this beautiful and

precious stone. After years spent communing with Autumne, he put his findings down on paper and retired to a home for the wealthy and insane.

## Autumne

**Quotes:** “Who dares disobey my command? Only the children of autumn may wear my sigil! Now you will pay for your disrespect.”

“Debase yourself before me. Beg for my forgiveness and mercy!”

“Swear upon your life and soul that you will obey my edict. Swear it or die!”

**Background:** Man has valued the veins of milky white stone that shimmer rainbow colors in the light since time immemorial. However, another attractor to this stone is the spirit that resides deep within it. No one knows where it came from, but the spirit within the opal stone is very real, and he is jealous of whom he bestows his blessings upon.

For a long time, the opal was thought to bring luck and good fortune to the “children of autumn,” or those born in October. This much appears to be true. The opal was so valued for this mystical boon that soon people forgot its one requirement – the month of birth. The Autumne spirit, once generous and fair, became embittered at this abuse and withdrew his boon to the world because so many disrespected him. Over time, this withdrawing of boon became an active malevolence towards those who defied his edict – whether they knew of it or not. For hundreds of years, Autumne actively hunted and harmed those who wore the opal without having the right.

Although Autumne sightings are very rare, most encounters with the spirit end in death for the human wearing the opal. Only the truly penitent edict-breakers live through their encounter with Autumne and most of those come away scarred, paranoid and insane.

**Description:** This elemental spirit always appears in fine dress of the current age (the flashier, the better). He is tall and imposing with long hair and opalescent eyes. His hands are twice as large as they should be, ending in sharp talons. His hair and clothing flutter in a wind only he can feel.

**Storytelling Hints:** Most modern day people attribute the “bad luck” of wearing opals to the soft stone’s tendency to break. This complete lack of respect and care for his edict has filled the Autumne with rage and hate for mortal man. Only his “children of autumn” are spared some of this maliciousness.

There are times when Autumne’s rage is too much and he must seek out an edict-breaker to get his revenge on. He prefers to appear to his victim when she is alone so he will have her full attention. Most frequently, he will attempt to murder her only after telling her what she has done wrong. He does this to give his victims a chance to repent. Even if they do repent, he will slay them if he does not feel they are sincere enough. If they do not apologize, or if they attempt to flee or attack him, he will tear them from limb to limb.

Autumne is impatient, imperious and full of rage. Every word should be malicious and degrading. However, he can be reasoned with. He will listen for the apology, but he is judgmental and generally unforgiving. After his vicious onslaught, the unlucky opal-wearer will have one chance to apologize and beg for forgiveness or mercy. Autumne will then judge her on her words and sincerity. It must be an impressive and sincere debasement for Autumne to leave them alive. If she is sincere enough, he will let her go free with a warning, but the next encounter will mean immediate death.

Also, if a “child of Autumn” becomes a part of the encounter with Autumne, he will listen to them with a greater patience and mercy.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 4



**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** None

**Willpower:** 7

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Wrath

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12

**Size:** 5

**Powers:** Judge and Rend

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- **Werewolf:** The Autumnne could be considered a spirit of the Earth (specifically opals). He is an old spirit filled with anger towards humans who disrespect him. He generally ends up taking a host (similar to the *Hithimu*) – the mechanics presented assume that he has.

### Special Powers

Autumne has two powers: Judge and Rend. The first power is judge the edict breaker's sincerity. The second power is to murder her for her trespass against him.

**Judge** (Intelligence + Empathy versus opponent's Wits + Subterfuge): Autumnne will first lambaste the edict breaker for wearing his sigil when it is forbidden for those who are not children of autumn. During the excoriation, Autumnne will be able to psychically judge the sincerity of the person it is used on.

**Rend** (Strength + Brawl – opponent's Defense): Autumnne's main attack is a mental assault against the edict breaker's spirit. This damage manifests in aggravated wounds. Autumnne slashes at the edict breaker with his over-large, taloned hands. While his claws may seem to pass through the physical form, he is really slashing the victim's spirit.

### Story Idea: Opal, Opal, Burning Bright

Something is happening to Julie Steward. For days, things seem to be deliberately trying to hinder and hurt her. She's noticed crosswalk

signs not working right, automatic door slamming themselves on her, elevators stopping two or three inches too short and more. Worse yet is the face that Julie is certain that a man is following her. She keeps seeing him out of the corner of her eye, staring and glaring at her. More than once, she's sworn that she heard him whisper, "Why do you defy me?" in her ear.

Tonight she has a date with a guy she's been waiting to go out with for what seems like forever and things are the worst they have ever been. She's had a fight with her friend Kimberly about that stupid opal ring she borrowed days ago. She's burned herself on her curling iron, and the apartment elevator seemed determined to eat her dress.

Undaunted, Julie has made it out to the nightclub where she's to meet her date. She ducks into a bathroom to powder her nose and gather some courage. As she is about to leave, the bathroom door slams shut and that voice is back, but this time his demanding question is not whispered in her ear. It is shouted at her back. Turning around, Julie sees Autumnne with his opalescent eyes and huge, taloned hands floating above her.

# Persuading Autumnne

MENTAL ••••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL ••••

## Overview

This takes place at a local club; whether the characters are just relaxing or there for a specific purpose depends on your needs. It can be used to take a break from a long running story or to introduce a bit of chaos into the game. They can know Julie Steward or her friend Kimberly, or they may all be complete strangers when Autumnne attacks. This scene can also be used to introduce a player character or a Storyteller character into the chronicle – just replace Julie or Kimberly.

## Description

*The screams coming from the area of the ladies room are muffled by the thudding beat of music on the dance floor and the sound of hundreds of people shouting to be heard over it. People are running for help. People are coming to gawk. There is the sound of glass shattering behind the closed and locked bathroom door. In between the screams, the sobs of a woman crying out, “I’m sorry!” can be heard.*

## Storyteller Goals

The goal of Autumnne is to extract a sincere apology from Julie for her repeated disrespect to him and his edict about who may and may not wear the opal. If he extracts a sincere apology, he will give her (and anyone watching) one last warning that his sigil is for the children of autumn only before leaving his host body.

However, if he does not get a sincere apology, he will do everything in his power to kill the edict-breaker and those who would try to stop him from gaining his just vengeance for such disrespect. Once Julie is dead, he will leave his host body.

## Character Goals

Save Julie from Autumnne. Figure out what is actually wrong, what Autumnne is and either get him the apology he wants or figure out a way to banish or destroy him.

## Actions

### Talking to Save Her Life

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion versus Autumnne’s Composure + Subterfuge (dice pool 7)

**Action:** Instant and contested

The player characters break into the bathroom to find out what is going on and discover Julie on the floor, unharmed but shaken and sobbing. Autumnne is standing above her, shouting at her about her trespasses against him and his. More information on the Autumnne’s Judge power can be found on p. 32.

**Hindrances (speaker):** Not born in October (-1).

**Help (speaker):** Born in October (+2).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the player of the speaker rolls a dramatic failure, not only does the speaker fail to convince Autumnne to leave Julie alone, but the spirit also becomes enraged and starts attacking him. Autumnne will do everything in his power to kill the character. If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, Autumnne returns the opal ring and leaves Julie alone.

**Failure:** The character fails to convince Autumnne to leave them alone: The spirit ignores his words and continues to try to extract an apology from Julie (or to attack her if it has gotten to that point).

**Success:** The speaker convinces Autumnne to listen to either Julie’s apology or to the characters’ apology on her behalf.

**Exceptional Success:** If the player of the speaker rolls an exceptional success, the speaker convinces Autumnne that the situation is all a complete misunderstanding for which not only is Julie sincerely apologetic but that everyone in the room is apologetic, and that they will spread the word that Autumnne’s edict should not be disobeyed. Autumnne leaves Julie alone. If the Storyteller rolls

an exceptional success, Autumne becomes enraged and shifts his fury from Julie to the speaker.

### Autumne's Rending

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Brawl (dice pool 7) – target's Defense

**Action:** Instant

If the player characters immediately attack Autumne or they fail to persuade him that they and Julie are sincerely sorry, Autumne will attempt to kill Julie. If the spirit's host loses all of his health points, he is temporarily banished for 24 hours from Julie (if she continues to wear the opal ring). If the opal in the ring is broken, then Autumne is banished from Julie until she wears another opal. More information on the Autumne's Rend power can be found on [p. 32](#).

**Hindrances (Autumne):** If the opal stone is broken, Autumne will be temporarily banished. Autumne is focused on Julie (-1 to Defense).

**Help (Autumne):** Combat rolls versus Julie (as the edict breaker; +1)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does Autumne fail to rend his victim, the victim is able to get out of range. If the intended victim is Julie, she is able to attempt to flee on the next action. If the intended target is not Julie, Autumne will return his full attention to her.

**Failure:** Autumne fails to harm his intended target with his power.

**Success:** Autumne hits his intended target with his power, doing lethal damage.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does Autumne damage his intended victim, the victim is knocked out for a number of turns equal to 6 - the victim's Stamina. The victim takes no other actions during this time. If the victim is Julie, Autumne will continue to attack. If the victim is not Julie, Autumne will return to attack her.

### Consequences

If the player characters are unable to save Julie from being murdered by Autumne, there is a good chance that one of them will be blamed for it. However, without any witnesses willing to speak against the accused, the case will fall through, opening up the possibility of new enemies for the player characters (including Julie's family or law enforcement officers).

On the other hand, if they do manage to save Julie, she and Kimberly will be eternally grateful and may be called upon as allies for future storylines. Also, this scene may open up the possibility for another new ally (mundane or supernatural) in the form of the club's owner and manager.

# Glistening or Glittering Neither is Gold

"Dude! Look at this," Shane said as they entered the next cave on their spelunking trip. "It looks like gold. A whole huge gold vein! Look at that shine."

"Is that what gold looks in the wild? I thought it'd be more like a diamond in the rough. Dull and stuff."

"No man, this is gold. Seriously. I'm gonna get me some. You know what this stuff is going for an ounce?"

Kevin shrugged but pulled out his rock pick, "Not a clue, but a lot, huh?"

"Yeah. A whole lot. Like hundreds of dollars an ounce." Shane took aim with his own rock hammer and started chipping away at the rock next to the gold, accidentally striking a piece of the gold vein.

Kevin turned back from setting his backpack down just in time to see the gold move and slither like a snake. "Dude! Watch out!" But it was too late. The previously solid vein of gold shot out from the rock and wrapped a glittering noose around his friend's neck, cutting off his cry of surprise and pain.

## All that glitters is not gold.

Shakespeare is the best-known writer to have expressed the idea that not all that glitters is gold—that not all that is beautiful is valuable. The Bard was by no means the first to suggest this, however. The 12th century French theologian Alain de Lille wrote "Do not hold everything gold that shines like gold." And in 1553, Thomas Becon, in *The Relikes of Rome*: "All is not golde that glistereth." There is a much older version of this proverb from Old Norse that means "that which glitters may be deadly." It is a warning from the Norse Viking explorers who first encountered the creature they called Glitra on one of their explorer expeditions. The creature looked like gold and lured its prey in through its sparkle and shine. When the

prey touched it, it would snap out and capture the hapless victim, absorbing him totally.

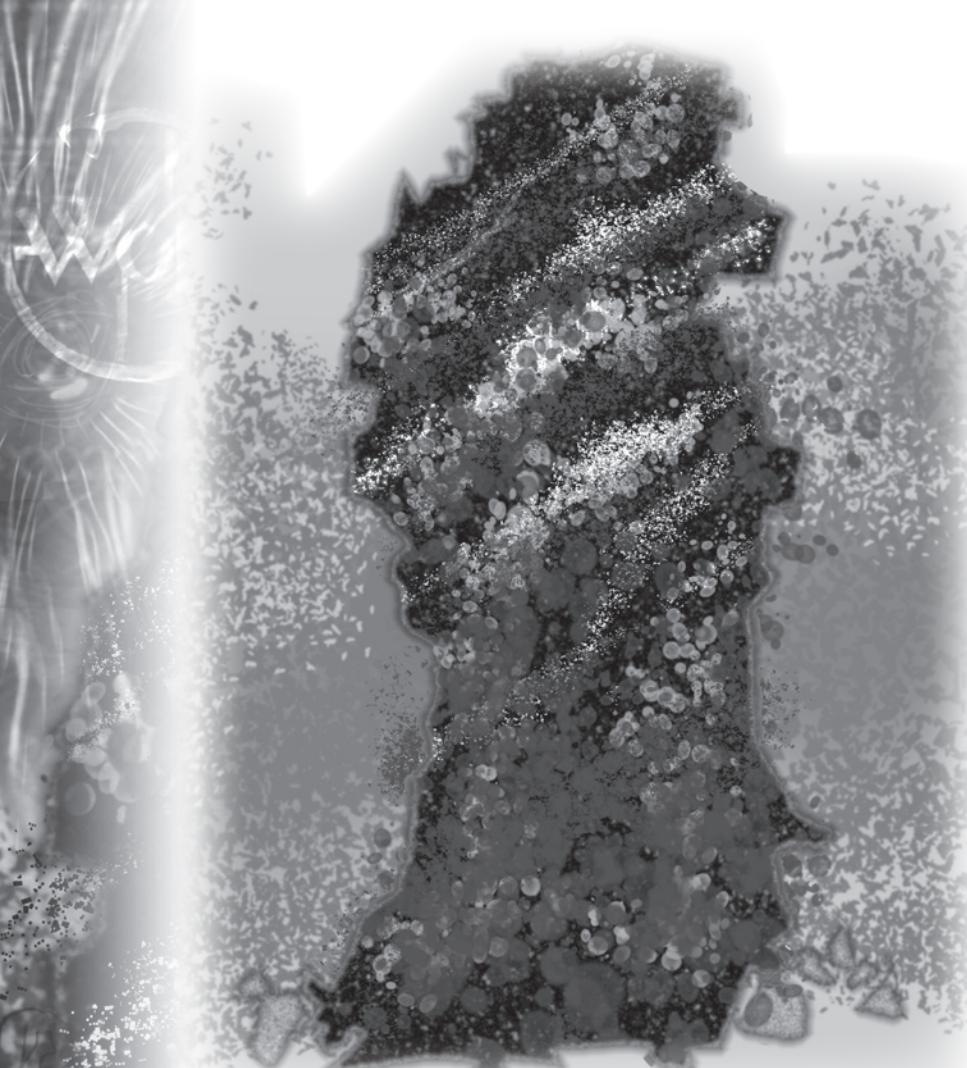
## Glitra

**Background:** Gudrik Grímsson was the first known person to record a description of the Glitra. Grímsson wrote:

"We found a good cave to camp in on the island but then Ulfr found the gold in the wall. He started digging the gold out but found it was not gold. It was a creature that glittered like gold. The creature ensnared Ulfr, broke his neck and pulled his body into its maw. It was as if the creature was made of congealed fat. Bjorn attacked the creature, but his weapon first hit something hard and then was sucked inside. We knew we were facing a monster we did not understand. Ulfr's body was halfway into the creature and I could see the signs of his bones beneath the shimmering gold. It already had one of us. I would not allow it to have more."

From time to time within the occult researchers' community, sightings of the Glitra are mentioned; usually in conjunction with a missing person or a lost pet in a mountainous or cavernous region. However, no one has ever captured the creature for study, despite repeated attempts. Unfortunately for would-be captors, the Glitra has the ability to become liquid and escape through the smallest cracks in the wall or floor. If necessary, the Glitra will leave its meal behind if it feels it needs to escape. If it does not, it will slowly dissolve the prey over a matter of hours, absorbing its nutrients into itself.

It is content to live in dark places, eating the native fauna and, if it's lucky, the occasional unwary and unlucky miner, spelunker or hiker. Recently, there has been a disturbing change in the Glitra's



**Storytelling Hints:** Slow-moving, very strong and long-lived, the Glitra lives to feed and feeds to live. It has almost no discernable intellect. It doesn't have an overwhelming hunger, but it is an opportunity feeder. If something like a rat or a rabbit or even an unwary human comes along, it captures, kills and eats the prey, dissolving every last bit of the prey that it can. The only things it does not dissolve are metals and hard plastics. Those are eventually spit out and left behind.

The Glitra is not completely sedentary. It does move slowly around its domain, somewhat like slow-moving lava. The only time it does move quickly is when it produces its tentacles to capture and kill prey or it is escaping a threat to its life. If there are large creatures moving about in its domain, the Glitra will remain perfectly still until one of the creatures triggers its feeding response.

While a Glitra does not have complex emotions, it does have feelings. It feels pleasure while feeding, anger when hurt and fear when cornered or overwhelmed. When the characters encounter the Glitra, it will appear as it always appears: as part of the structure of the cave or tunnel as veins and deposits of gold. It will only react when a character touches it and then it will focus only on that character until another character touches it. If it is critically injured, it will flee through small cracks in the wall and floor of its territory.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- **Vampire:** The Glitra will not try to absorb the vampire's dead flesh. Vampires are not considered food.
- **Mage:** The Glitra is considered a cryptid creature.

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** None

**Merits:** None

**Willpower:** 7

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** N/A

**Vice:** N/A

**Health:** 12

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Size:** 6

**Armor:** 5/5

**Powers:** Camouflage, Ensnare and Absorb

## Special Powers

The Glitra has three powers: **Camouflage**, Ensnare and Absorb. The first one is its natural ability to hide, and is identical in function to the Doliochthon's power on p. 17. The second two revolve around capturing and eating its prey.

**Ensnare** (Strength + Brawl – victim's Defense): The Glitra is triggered to ensnare its prey when something as large as or larger than a mouse touches it. Based on how hard the touch it (weight or striking) as well as how big the prey is, the Glitra will shoot out an appropriately sized tentacle to ensnare its victim, doing crushing damage once captured. To break out of being ensnared is the ensnared victim's Strength + Brawl – the Glitra's Strength. (See the grapple rules, *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 157.)

**Absorb** (Stamina + Composure): Once the prey is dead or incapacitated, the Glitra pulls the prey into its mass and absorbs it at a damage rate of one lethal health point per 15 minutes.

## Story Idea: Something's Deadly in the Sewers

"You think we got giant rats in the sewers?"

The stranger's voice and the even stranger question catch your attention. Sure, you eaves-

drop. No one really expects their conversations to be private in a crowded coffee shop. "Nah, man. Giant rats are in places like New York or L.A. Not here."

"Two sewer workers have gone missing in two months. Listen to this. Tom Waterford, age 34, and Chris Stone, age 23, have both gone missing while inspecting underground sewer lines. Both are married with children, and their spouses are frantic to find the missing men. According to the work roster at the Thompson's Plumbing Services, on contract with the City, both men were assigned to the J-line of sewer tunnels, which runs under the City Hall building. When contacted by this newspaper, neither City Hall nor Thompson's Plumbing Services had a comment..." What do you think of that?"

"Creepy, but not giant rats. I'd believe ghosts before giant rats. I mean, the city is hundreds of years old. Who knows what burial grounds are down there? Or what the city's dug up?"

"Yeah. I guess you're right."

The two men leave the coffee shop, leaving behind the paper they had been reading. You cannot help but take it and read the story for yourself. Something about the story gets to you. Maybe it's the fact that both men were in the prime of life. Maybe it's the fact that both men went missing while working in the same sewer tunnel. Perhaps it's the fact that the sewer tunnel runs under the middle of the city and City Hall. This may need to be investigated.

## Variations

• For a **World of Darkness** or **Hunter: the Vigil** game, one of the sewer workers was a friend of a friend and you are asked to help look for him.

• For a **Vampire: the Requiem** game, one of the sewer workers was a valuable ghoul.

• For a **Changeling: the Lost** game, Chris Stone, the younger missing man, was ensorcelled.

• For a **Werewolf: the Forsaken** game, one of the sewer workers was kinfolk.

• For a **Mage: the Awakening** game, one of the sewer workers was a Sleepwalker.

# Nothing Floats Down Here

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •••

## Overview

You and your friends are here in the sewer looking for what happened to those missing people. You have no idea what you are looking for (besides those missing men), but part of you is afraid that you will find it.

## Description

While the stone walls aren't damp and dripping, they feel like they should be. The sewer tunnels are dark, dimly lit by a fluorescent light stationed every twenty feet or so. There are walkways on either side of the river of sludge in the middle of the tunnel. The constant sound of skittering rat paws lets you know you are not the only ones to use this walkway. Up ahead is a round tunnel junction that splits off into four different directions. Near one of the smaller tunnels' openings is a plastic hardhat. Without picking it up, you can see the name Stone stenciled on the back of it. Shining your flashlight around, you catch sight of something beautiful and golden glittering in the flashlight's beam.

## Storyteller Goals

Tell a creepy tale of looking for trouble and finding it. The Glitra is a powerful monster with simple goals: to survive and to eat. It cannot be reasoned with and it will not stop unless significantly damaged.

## Character Goals

Find out what happened to the missing sewer workers. Once they've discovered the Glitra, the secondary goal is to escape from it alive. Optionally, find and capture (or destroy) the creature.

## Actions

### All That Glitters

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure versus the Glitra's Wits + Stealth (dice pool 7)

**Action:** Instant and contested

Most characters will not realize that the Glitra is even there until they trigger its feeding reflex. More information on the Glitra's Camouflage power can be found in the [Glitra's powers](#) on p. 37.

**Hindrances (character):** The Glitra is still (-1).

**Help (character):** The Glitra is in motion (+1).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the person looking for the Glitra not see it, she puts her hand on it, immediately triggering its ensnare reflex. She is so surprised that she is caught fast.

**Failure:** The person looking for anything strange does not find the creature, but does see the gold deposit.

**Success:** The searcher realizes that the gold deposit isn't what it seems.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does she find it, but she figures out just how big it is and can keep track of it for the rest of the scene.

## Escaping the Glitra

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Brawl (dice pool 9) – victim's Defense. Once ensnared, victim's Strength + Brawl – Glitra's Strength (5).

**Action:** Instant

Once the feeding reflex is triggered, everyone and everything is fair game. More information on the Glitra's Ensnare and Absorb powers can be found on [p. 37](#).

**Hindrances:** The Glitra is unaffected by powers that attack the mind, intellect or emotions or any power that needs eye contact.

**Help:** For each target beyond the first (-1).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the ensnared victim not break free, her struggles push her deeper into the Glitra where she cannot escape, giving an additional -1 to all rolls.

**Failure:** The ensnared victim does not break free and suffers crushing damage.

**Success:** The ensnared victim breaks free, but is still the Glitra's main target.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the ensnared victim break free, but she moves far enough away that the Glitra no longer targets her. Instead, the Glitra will attempt to ensnare the next closest person.

## Consequences

If the characters do not take up the challenge to search for the missing sewer workers, more

people will go missing. This will include more sewer workers, a building inspector, a couple of children and several bums.

If the characters do go looking for the missing sewer workers, they will find both men's hardhats and some scattered belongings, which they can return to the grieving spouses. After the encounter with the Glitra, they may be approached by a secret organization (such as a Hunter compact or conspiracy) that will want to know what really went on down there. Alternatively, they may be rewarded, either publicly or privately.

# Ashes to Ashes Death to Death

Scott lifted the pan of water, intending to dump it on the glowing coals nestled in the fireplace.

“Stop!” exclaimed Melissa. “Don’t.”

Scott stopped and frowned. “Don’t what?”  
“Don’t douse the fire. Not now.”

“But we’re going to bed. I don’t want leave the fire going. Lord knows I don’t want to be the schmuck responsible for burning down a luxury cabin.”

Melissa shook her head. “It’s bad luck to completely rake out or douse a fire before bed. There should always be a few embers left burning. That’s what my grandma used to say.”

“Why?”

She shrugged. “I don’t know. I just always did as she said. Grandma knew the old ways.” She moved over to the fire and started covering the glowing coals with ashes. “This should keep them burning and keep us from setting everything on fire.”

Scott shook his head. “All right, but I think you’re crazy.”

**It is bad luck to completely rake out a hearth fire before retiring. A few embers should always be left burning.**

This saying comes from a time when some of the coals of family’s hearth were used to set the fire in the new family home as a way of bringing the good luck of the old home into the new one. In the past, the fire was physically and socially at the center of the house and of a community. Some stories claim that many domestic fires remained burning continuously for hundreds of years.

The prosperity of the house or farm was closely associated with a well-kept fire. The fire was symbolic of life; if someone from the house died, the fire was allowed to also die and be rebuilt as a cleansing of the death taint. If there was someone sick in the house, every effort was made to ensure that the fire

did not die by accident, to help keep the sick person alive. It was especially important to keep the fire going on May 1st or “May Day” as a means of protecting the home year-round from evil intentions.

If the hearth had to be repaired or cleaned, then some of the old burning fire coals were set aside in a bucket in order to replace them when the repairs had been completed. It was an indication of bad housekeeping to have to go to a neighbor in the morning to ask for some burning coals because your own fire had died out in the night. No one liked letting a burning coal out of a house “for fear of giving away good luck.”

One story of the origins of the superstition tells of the mysterious death of a family burned almost beyond recognition and covered in a fine layer of ash – despite having escaped their burning home intact and unburned. Researchers would come to refer to the occurrence as an “ash-burn death” and over time the malevolent creature that caused these deaths became known as an Ash-burn.

## Ash-burn

**Background:** Fire has been integral to man’s survival for eons. It has been given religious significance both good and evil. What most people do not realize is that fire is a pure element—pure enough to protect this world from some of the supernatural creatures who would do it harm. The positive emotions and security associated with hearth fires have been found to protect humans from evil spirits and demons such as the Ash-burn. While it’s not clear what attracts the Ash-burn to our world or why they linger around hearth fires in wait for them to go out, these demons tend to account for many of the “accidental” house fires that occur all over the world.

**Description:** The Ash-burn materializes as a small vortex of burning ashes. They range from one to four feet in height with the top of the vortex ranging from one to three feet in diameter. Throughout the spinning ash are disembodied eyes glowing from yellow to orange to red, resembling burning coals.

**Storytelling Hints:**

The Ash-burn is a demon that slowly gets smaller as it burns. It lives to burn and does so with great glee and malice. The more living creatures it can burn to death, the better. It has only one harming attack but also likes to use intimidation tactics to herd its victims into the best possible place to burn.

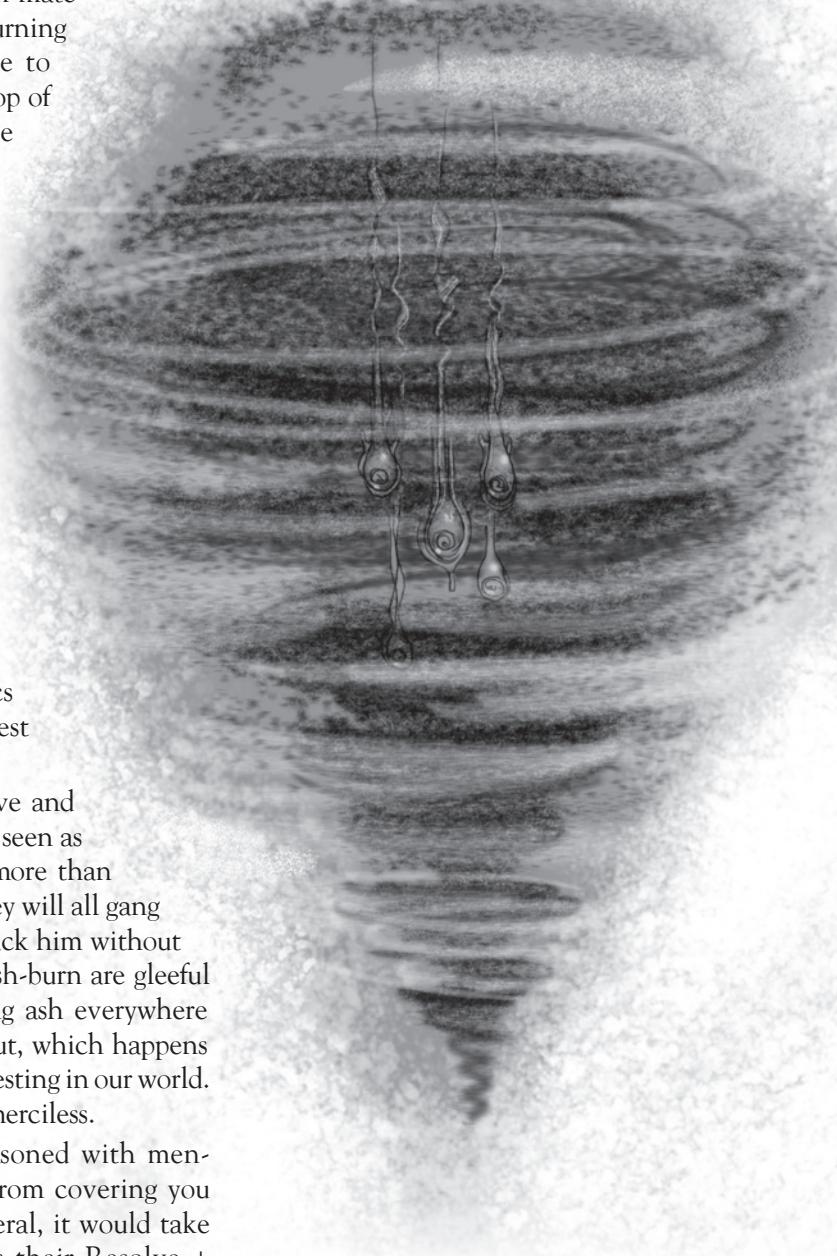
The Ash-burn are aggressive and smart. Any attack on them is seen as a challenge, and if there is more than one Ash-burn manifested, they will all gang up on the challenger and attack him without hesitation. Otherwise, the Ash-burn are gleeful fire-starters, throwing burning ash everywhere until they burn themselves out, which happens within an hour of them manifesting in our world. They are vicious, quick and merciless.

The Ash-burn can be reasoned with mentally if you can keep them from covering you with burning ash but in general, it would take an Intimidation roll (versus their Resolve + Composure) to coerce these creatures into dissipating. Water and fire extinguishers will do 1 point of lethal damage per pint of water or

3-second spray of extinguishing foam to the Ash-burn, and cause them to be banished when all of their health points are gone.

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- **Vampire:** Vampires need to make an immediate frenzy check to not flee the scene (**Vampire: the Requiem**, p. 178). This is a fear frenzy versus fire, bonfire difficulty (**Vampire: the Requiem**, p. 180) for a vampire to resist the frenzy and take actions.
- These creatures are not spirits and cannot be commanded in such a manner. However they are demons, and are subject to powers and objects that affect demons.



**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** None

**Physical Skills:** Firearms (ash burst only) 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Morality:** N/A

**Virtue:** N/A

**Vice:** N/A

**Health:** 7

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Size:** 4

**Armor:** 4/4 (0/0 against water and extinguishers)

**Power:** Ash Burst

## Special Powers

The Ash-burn has only one attack: the Ash Burst. With each attack, it gets a little smaller but that does not lessen the strength of its Ash Burst.

**Ash Burst** (Dexterity + Firearms): This is a blast of burning hot ash that covers and sticks to its target, setting clothing, hair, and paper on fire almost immediately. Each blast does fire damage (*World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 180): four lethal damage per turn of contact.

## Story Idea: Too Hot to Handle

Jesse and Jennifer have the *best* backyard BBQ parties. There is always plenty of food, drink and fun. You always meet someone new. You always have a good time. The house is open and the backyard is huge. There's even a huge stone fire pit for grilling. They never care if you end up

spending the night because it got too late. They usually don't even care if you end up passed out in the backyard. On the morning after one of their parties, you can be sure that you will be woken up, escorted to the table and fed a great breakfast (even if it's 2 in the afternoon) – and a bit of hair of the dog that bit you, if you ask for it.

Tonight has been no exception. The booze has flowed freely; the steaks, hamburgers and hot dogs were perfectly made. The music was turned down after 11pm but all of the neighbors are at the party, too, so there's no one left to complain about a wild party.

"Man, who let the fire pit go out?" Tim asks, his voice only slightly slurred. "I wanted another burger!"

As the first vortex of ash appears behind Tim, those who look his way don't understand what they're seeing. As the hot coal eyes of the growing ash devil open, the realization of wrongness dawns on the inebriated partygoers. Then, Tim turns around and sees the Ash-burn floating in front of him. There are too many hot glowing coal eyes to count.

"Holy shit," Tim breathes out just before the Ash-burn blasts him full in the face with a wave of burning ash. He shrieks in pain, his hair and clothing on fire. The rest of the party erupts into chaos as another one of the unholy ash vortexes appears out of the dead fire pit.

You were there, having a good time with some friends and strangers. Now this has happened. They don't know about you or the special things you do. Now you have a choice: fight these ash monsters any way you can and possibly reveal yourself or let them run amok, killing people and burning the neighborhood down.

## Variations

- If this is an **Innocents** game, it is a backyard slumber party and only one Ash-burn will appear.

# An Unholy Light

MENTAL ••••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •••

## Overview

Danger and disaster can strike at anytime; especially when it is inconvenient. All the characters wanted to do was have a good time. Suddenly, that good time has become a killing zone for some otherworldly creatures, and the choice becomes whether or not to save these people and possibly reveal yourself as something more than normal or to let these monsters have their way. People with power and skills have responsibilities to those who do not. It goes along with the territory, no matter how disruptive it can be to your personal life. It is a sacrifice you have to make.

## Description

*The vortex of hot ash is alive and moving. Its many glowing eyes spin within its whirling form. As it moves away from the fire pit and the screaming man, another dust devil of ash and glowing eyes rises out of the fire pit, bringing more ash with it. The two whirling tornados of death dance around each other as they move closer and closer to a group of huddled, frightened partygoers. You know that if you don't do something now, they will be these monsters' next victims.*

## Storyteller Goals

Your first goal is to put the characters into a situation where they must sacrifice their anonymity in order to save some innocents. Your second goal is to cause as much damage as possible in a short amount of time. If the characters attack, they will become the Ash-burn's target. If not, the innocent people, the house and the surrounding property will be burned to ash.

## Character Goals

The characters need to choose between protecting their own anonymity and protecting innocents. Assuming they do the right thing and save the helpless, their next goal is to stop the Ash-burn from hurting anyone else. After that, they'll have to deal with the aftermath of their secrets coming to light.

### Ash Burst

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Firearms (dice pool 9)

**Action:** Instant

More information on the Ash-burn's Ash Burst power can be found on [p. 42](#).

**Hindrances:** Target is within arm's reach, and can use Defense.

**Help:** A lot of objects in the backyard are flammable.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the Ash-burn miss with its Ash Burst, something about the intended victim causes every Ash-burn to shy away from them and turn to another character.

**Failure:** The Ash-burn fails to hit with its Ash Burst.

**Success:** The Ash-burn hits with its Ash Burst.

**Exceptional Success:** The Ash-burn not only hits with its Ash Burst, it hits with extreme precision, ignoring armor (if the target is wearing appropriate armor).

## Consequences

If the characters flee (or, in the case of vampires, are forced to flee), more than half the partygoers will be murdered, the house and the two neighboring houses will be burned to the ground and those that live will be driven insane with fear.

# Spirits of the House

Six year old Madeline twirled her umbrella in the hallway as she entered. "Nana! Look what I can do!"

Her grandmother came around the corner and her smile disappeared. "No! Close the umbrella. Close it now!" She looked around her house with a fearful expression.

Madeline stared at her, the umbrella still open and twirling. "But, why Nana?"

"Because I said so!" Her grandmother yanked the umbrella from her small hand and closed it. Seeing her granddaughter's eyes go big and round, threatening to spill tears down her face, Nana knelt next to the girl. "Because, child, you insult the house spirits here. You tell them they aren't good enough. We don't want to do that, do we?"

"No Nana."

"No. We don't. Let's apologize to them for the insult."

Madeline looked around the hallway and up the stairs. "I'm sorry if I insulted you, house spirit. I didn't mean to."

They both heard the closing of a door upstairs and Nana smiled. "See? They forgive you. Let's go have some cookies."

**It is bad luck to open an umbrella inside a house.**

Open an umbrella indoors and bad luck will rain down on you. But why? There are a couple schools of thought on this. The most common theory stems from the days when umbrellas, named for the "little shade" they provided, were used mainly as protection against the sun. To open one indoors would be to insult the sun god and invite his wrath on everyone in your household.

The second theory is that the umbrella is a universal symbol for protection from the storms of life. Umbrellas have been around for over 3,000 years. The belief that to open an umbrella indoors brings bad luck may have been started because people saw it as an act that insulted the spirits of the household by implying that their protection was inadequate. If you were to open one in your home, the household guardian spirits might think you felt their protection was insufficient. Their indignant abandonment of their ungrateful charges would lead to misfortune for everyone in the house.

## Domos

**Quotes:** "Treat us well and your house will never need for repair. Treat us poorly and your house will never know bliss."

"Why must you insult us? We do not deserve such disrespect. We care for you and our home."

"Insult us, do you? Think we cannot care well enough for you that you need that thing? We'll show you what your life is like uncared for."

**Background:** Once an umbrella, a symbol of protection, is opened in a home, the Domos (the term is the same for one or more of these spirits) see this as a direct challenge to their skills as keepers of the house. Insulted, they allow things to go wrong in the house that, until then, had not been a problem before. Plumbing breaks. Ovens refuse to light. Doors stick open or closed and the plants die.

Then things get worse. The house cat is found dead. Sharp pins and needles somehow wind up on chairs. Food spoils at an alarming rate. People trip down the stairs over nothing. The home that once was a blessing becomes a curse, all for the lack of understanding and an unintended insult.

The Domos do not live in every house. Usually they live in older houses that have a connection to the land through gardens and wells. They also prefer houses with history or homes that have had a single owner or stayed in a single family for decades or more. These houses have a sense of spirit and life that new homes do not. Those who are respectful of the house have good lives. Those who are not tend to move away as soon as they can.

For the Domos, it is their right to choose a home to live in and care for. It is a privilege for the dwellers of the home to have the Domos around, because they care for the home and those within it. On the other hand, never make the mistake of assuming a Domos is subservient to its human charges. The Domos chooses to be there and woe unto to those who insult or displease them.

**Description:** Domos are small, wizened-looking creatures that stand between one and two feet tall. They are humanoid in appearance with leathery skin and solid black eyes. Their heads appear slightly too large for their small bodies. They wear no clothing and appear to be androgynous. Their hands end in sharp, short claw-like nails that look dangerous.

**Storytelling Hints:** Having a Domos creature can be heaven or hell for a household. They are subtle at first when making their displeasure known. But as time goes on and no apology or gesture of respect happens, the Domos turn from blessings into curses. Instead of taking their anger out on the house, they start taking it out on those who live within it. When a Domos reaches its breaking point, they will appear and attack the house's owners directly with poisoned claws.

Once manifested, a Domos can be reasoned with, especially if the homeowners appear frightened or cowed by them. Sincere apologies and promises to never disrespect the house or the Domos will go a long way, but only if everyone present agrees with a proper attitude. If even one person is snide, snarky or unrepentant, all of the Domos will attack.

Household objects will not harm a Domos, but things from outside the house will. For example, a kitchen butcher knife will always miss the Domos, while a hunting knife can hit and do damage. If a Domos is damaged to the point of death, it will disappear, but there is a chance that it will reappear another night to attack again.

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 2, Resistance 1

**Willpower:** 6

**Initiative:** 3

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 5

**Essence:** 10

**Powers:** Break, Curse and Poisonous Claws



## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- **Changeling:** The Domos are goblins from the Hedge and are affected by Contracts. Changeling characters have a +1 to Investigation, Empathy and Expression rolls and a -1 penalty to Intimidation rolls.

### Special Powers

The first two powers of the Domos, Break and Curse, are designed to first attack the house and then the owners. The third power, Poisonous Claws, is a direct attack by the Domos itself.

**Break** (Power + Finesse – target object's Durability): The house is an extension of the Domos. The Domos know it inside and out. They know exactly where to start making things break to annoy or distress the house dwellers.

**Curse** (Power + Finesse – target's Resolve): When the Domos are ready to curse those within the house, they call upon the natural magic in the area to do so, increasing their effectiveness. Every success rolled by the Domos a -1 penalty to the target for the duration of the scene. Each target's Curse expires at the end of the scene and a new Curse on the same target will start from 0 successes.

**Poisonous Claws** (Power + Finesse – target's Defense): The claws of the Domos are slightly curved and poisonous. If clawed by the Domos, the poison goes to work immediately, coursing through the victim's veins, doing damage over time as per normal toxicity rules (*World of Darkness Rulebook*, pp. 180-181) with the toxicity level of 5. The poison cannot be healed naturally, but the Domos can heal the poison themselves if given enough motivation.

### Story Idea: Home Sweet Home

John and Ellen Harper inherited the beautiful Victorian home from her late grandmother. The small inheritance that came with it paid the taxes and the couple is grateful for one less expense as they prepare to welcome another child.

At first, everything is perfect. Then, once the rainy season hits, things start to break. First it's the doorknob to the screen door. Then the sinks in the house start to drip — all of them, on the same night. Nothing the Harpers do fixes this problem. Next to go is the vacuum cleaner, followed by the dishwasher, the oven and the garbage disposal. Each of things is an expensive hassle to repair.

Then things go from bad to worse. Knives somehow end up point-up in the dishwasher, no matter how careful the couple is. Glasses tumble silently to the floor in the middle of the night, causing bare feet to be sliced on the shards in the morning. Thumbtacks appear in chairs point-up. Scalding hot water comes out of the cold tap, and unseen obstacles in the hallways throughout the house are causing their daughter Julia countless cuts and bruises.

It is to the point that the Harpers now believe their home is haunted. Ellen's inexplicable fall down the stairs — though she swears she felt a push — has the family at its wits' end. They have called for help from paranormal investigators and psychics to help find out what has happened to their once lovely home. Ellen is four months pregnant and doesn't want to move yet again. She just wants whoever, whatever, is haunting the house to go away.

### Variations

- If this is a **Vampire** game, Mr. Harper could be a ghoul.
- If this is an **Innocents** game, the Storyteller character most involved is the Harpers' child, Julia. She has asked her friends over to help figure why the house is mad at her family.

# Hostile Natives

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL •••

## Overview

Someone important to the group has asked them to help with the Harpers' home. The attacks by the Domos are becoming increasingly more violent, and the Harpers are considering moving from what was once their dream home. When the characters arrive, it is raining.

## Description

*You have entered the foyer of the Harpers' home. As you shake the rain from your coats, you see pairs of galoshes and two open umbrellas already in the hallway. "You can leave your coats and umbrellas here," Ellen Harper says as she gestures to the coat rack in the hallway. "And leave your umbrellas open to dry. I don't mind if they drip."*

*As you all shuffle about, taking off wet overcoats, you begin to hear the sound of breaking glass from upstairs and from the room at the end of the hallway. It sounds as if someone is having a temper tantrum and is taking his or her anger out on anything breakable. The mirror in the hallway suddenly shatters in a startling shower of shards, and a new voice joins the cacophony of sound.*

*"Leave your umbrellas open on in the hallway? Why don't you just invite them to shit on the floor and be done with it?"*

*Looking, you see a small creature standing next to a closet at the end of the hallway. Its coal-black eyes bore into you. It seems to shake with rage as a second and then a third small humanoid creature exits the closet.*

## Storyteller Goals

Introduce the idea that being nice to a monster could be the easy way out of a potentially fatal situation. The Domos are furious but intelligent. They can be reasoned with and reasoning with them is not only the easy way, it is the most beneficial way. This also provides the characters a chance to think on their feet.

## Character Goals

Figure out what's wrong with the house. Find out what the Harpers have done to upset the Domos, and fix the situation.

## Actions

### Calm the Domos

**Dice Pool:** Presence or Manipulation + Persuasion vs. the Domos' Finesse + Resistance (dice pool 3)

**Action:** Instant and contested

The characters have a chance to talk some sense into both the Domos and the Harper family.

**Hindrances:** No Occult knowledge (-1).

**Help:** Encyclopedic Knowledge (+1).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the speaker fail to convince the Domos to leave the Harpers alone, but the Domos becomes enraged and attacks the speaker.

**Failure:** The speaker fails to convince the Domos to leave the Harpers alone, and the spirit continues with its current course of action, berating Ellen Harper until either someone can persuade the Domos the Harpers meant no harm or the situation escalates into violence.

**Success:** The speaker convinces at least one of the Domos that the Harpers did not mean any harm or disrespect.

**Exceptional Success:** The speaker not only convinces all of the Domos that the Harpers meant no harm or disrespect, but is so eloquent that the Domos forgive the Harpers without forcing an apology. Moreover, the spirits are willing to talk more about themselves and their world.

### Fight the Domos

**Dice Pool:** Power + Finesse (dice pool 7)

**Action:** Instant

If talking fails, the fighting begins. The Domos will slash and claw with their poisoned talons. More information on the Domos' Poisonous Claws power can be found on p. 46.

**Hindrances:** The Domos are immune to any household items used as weapons.

**Help:** None.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only will the Domos miss with a poisoned claw attack, but it stumbles, causing it to lose its action next turn.

**Failure:** The Domos misses with its poisoned claw attack.

**Success:** The Domos hits with its poisoned claw attack, doing damage. Follow the normal toxicity rules (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 180-181) with the toxicity level of 5.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the Domos hit with its poisoned claw attack, doing damage, the victim automatically fails their next roll to resist the poison.

## Consequences

If the characters manage to talk the Domos into forgiving the Harpers for their trespasses, the Harpers will offer to let the characters use the house or rent a room in the house as a hiding place. If the characters banish the Domos through combat, the Harpers will also offer to rent the house to the characters at a much-reduced rate for the same reason.

If one (or more) of the characters is poisoned in a combat with the Domos, they will have to deal with the mystical poison. Ways to deal with it include calling the Domos and begging them for help and promising respectful treatment of them and the house, and finding a specialist who knows about such matters.

# Smell the Flowers but Don't Take One

*James ran up the walkway from the bus station. He was already late, and Shannon would kill him if he walked into the house late AND empty-handed on their anniversary.*

*Missing one bus had made him ten minutes too late to reach the flower shop before it closed. That's why grabbing the bouquet from the graveyard seemed like a good idea at the time. He felt a bit weird about giving his wife some corpse's flowers, but there was nothing to be done about it now; Shannon was in the doorway and she was beaming at him.*

*"You did remember! Oh, honey, thank you. They're lovely," she said as she reached for the bouquet in his hands.*

*Too late now, and it's not like the dead person's gonna be able to use them, he thought with mild guilt before smiling at his wife, "Of course! You didn't actually think I'd forgotten, did you? I just wanted to surprise my darling wife."*

## Taking flowers from a graveyard will bring bad luck.

It has been said that picking a flower from a grave and then throwing it away is thought to bring bad luck, as the place where the flower falls will be haunted. It has also been said that you shouldn't take flowers off a grave or you might soon find yourself in one. In general, there are strong superstitions about taking flowers from graveyards being bad luck.

The origins of this proverbial warning can be traced as far back as ancient Greece in the story of Hades, god of the dead, abducting Persephone as she gathered violets. This story holds a much deeper warning to those who know what to look for: the warning of the Thanatanthe (thah-nah-TAHN-thay) or "Blossom of Death."

## Thanatanthe

**Background:** One apocryphal story says that the Thanatanthe is the remnants of a pharaoh's curse upon grave robbers: Take from the dead and become one of them. This unknown Pharaoh was said to be so angered by the idea that someone might deny him anything in the afterlife by stealing his possessions that he spent years researching curses and maledictions to ensure his tomb's safety. He beseeched the gods for the power to see his will through. The gods and goddesses looked down upon this Pharaoh and decided to answer his prayer.

Upon his deathbed, this pharaoh spoke his curse to all grave robbers who would dare to take from the dead. Clutching a bouquet of lotus flowers brought for his pleasure, the pharaoh died with his curse on his lips. When his tomb was robbed, the pharaoh was allowed to his revenge.

In the disguise of a mourner's bouquet of flowers, the pharaoh traveled with the thieves to their den. When the thieves went to sleep, the pharaoh manifested in the form of a deadly coil of poisoned smoke. It wound its fragrant way through the hideout, enticing its sleeping victims to breathe deeply of its heady scent and then smothered them while they slumbered.

The curse was not without its drawbacks, however, and the pharaoh's spirit found itself compelled to seek the unwary robbers of more and more graves, even those in far-off countries. Over the centuries, the spirit has lost all memory of its origin and now merely carries out its compulsion to punish those who would steal from the dead.



**Description:** When the Thanatanthe can be seen, it looks like a tentacle of yellowish smoke rising from the stolen blooms. It smells like whatever flower is has been born from. Snaking out from the flowers, it grows ever longer until it reaches its intended victim. Once separated from the bouquet, the coil of smoke reaches a length of about five feet.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Thanatanthe is a monster without conscious thought. It is the embodiment of a dying man's paranoia and rage. It is a vicious guard dog that, once freed, will not stop until it perceives its job is complete. That job is to kill the thief who stole from the grave and all his companions and abettors. In this case, if a boy brings his sister flowers from a grave, the Thanatanthe will murder the boy, his sister, his parents and even his dog.

The Thanatanthe will remain for as long as the thief and those he lives with are still alive or until the stolen flowers are destroyed or tossed out of the house. Being fairly quick to act, the Thanatanthe rarely waits long enough for the stolen gravestone flowers to wilt and die.

Though the monster's original manifestation originates in the bouquet of flowers, it will quickly separate itself and seek the thief. The Thanatanthe tends to act at night and prefers to murder its victims in their sleep. However it will attack victims who are awake as well. The Thanatanthe is a powerful ghost but not a particularly sentient one (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 208-216). However, it does have one crucial weakness – if the stolen bouquet of flowers is destroyed, the Thanatanthe is banished, not to return unless someone steals another bouquet of flowers from a gravestone.

**Attributes:** Power 1, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 5

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 11

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 8

**Essence:** 15

**Numina:** Choke

**Notes:** If the stolen bouquet of flowers is destroyed, the Thanatanthe is banished. Special power: Choke.

## Using Different World of Darkness Games

- If the character is a creature that does not need to breathe, it is immune to the Thanatanthe. Once it attacks and the character does not breathe, it will sense them as dead and leave them.

## Special Powers

**Choke** (Power + Finesse versus Stamina + Athletics): This ability is part physical and part supernatural. It is the ability to choke and suffocate a targeted victim. It does this through forcing itself into the victim's nose and mouth, using its smoke-like body to block all air passages.

## Story Idea: The Mercy House

The Mercy House is a hospice run by Mary Walker, a retired nurse. Walker is a kind soul who runs the house with a firm but gentle hand. She listens to her patients' fear, anger and hope with attention and compassion, even understanding when they lash out at her.

When it comes to the patients' visitors, Nurse Walker does what she can to make them comfortable. She allows them to stay when she knows they are here to spend quality time with a parent, a child, or a loved one.

Most patients at the Mercy House die peacefully in their sleep, which is a blessing for those who have been in so much pain—physical and emotional. Once the dead have passed on, they are no longer in pain and those they left behind can begin the long road of grieving and recovery.

Janet McGuire's mother, Ruth, is currently the only patient at the Mercy House. Ruth is seventy-one years old and dying of cancer. Most days, she sleeps. Some days, the persistent pain keeps her awake. Janet has flown in to be with her mother in these last weeks. Mother and daughter have finally said what they needed to say to other. They both know that the end is coming soon.

# In the Dead of Night

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •

## Overview

You are a friend of Janet's, and she's asked to not be alone in this time of grief. She will even accept the company of strangers if they are sympathetic and supportive. Janet has finally made peace with her mother after a long estrangement over misunderstandings and petty disagreements. The reunion and the good-bye with her mother have taken its toll on Janet and she isn't sure she can handle her mother's death alone.

Nancy Walker, usually the epitome of kindness, seems to have grown uncomfortable with the number of people in the house. After delivering a bouquet of flowers to Ruth's room, Walker has asked that you all leave Ruth in peace for the evening. She is firm in this order and despite Janet's protests will accept nothing less.

Janet, having just regained her mother only to lose her again, is in no mood to obey the nurse. She convinces you all to stay with her.

## Description

*It is 11:55pm and all seems well until Nurse Walker appears in the doorway. She is surprised to see you as she is unaccustomed to being disobeyed. "I thought I told you to leave!" She looks over her shoulder in a worried gesture towards Ruth's room. "You need to go. It's not safe for you here. Leave."*

*Before you can make sense of her strange commands and nervous demeanor, an alarm goes off down the hall. Something is wrong with Ruth. Her heart or breathing has stopped. Janet, in a sudden panic, rushes past the nurse.*

*Nurse Walker follows on Janet's heels and they both stop in the doorway to Ruth's room. Ruth is peaceful, smiling even... but definitely dead. Everyone in the doorway can see the coil of yellowish smoke pouring out of Ruth's nose and mouth.*

*"It was her time," the nurse says, with a strange regretful tone. She suddenly shoves Janet behind her, opening her arms wide to the barely seen creature. "Get out!" she shouts. "Get out while you can!" Nurse Walker turns her attention back towards the coil of smoke drifting toward her. Her fear is palpable as she faces the oncoming miasma.*

## Storyteller Goals

Show that sometimes running from the monster is the best idea, and the characters should grab the innocents and go. If the characters stay and fight despite the nurse's plea to leave, Janet will be killed, the nurse will be killed (probably) and, until someone destroys the bouquet of flowers (Durability 0, Size 1, Structure 1) or all of the characters flee the house, all the characters will be killed, one by one.

## Character Goals

Choose whether or not to run and whether or not to save anyone. If they stay despite the nurse's plea, their goal is to survive long enough to figure out that the bouquet of flowers is the key and destroy it. After the running (or fighting), if the nurse survives, the characters need to decide what to do about her and her supernatural method of "mercy killing" her patients.

## Actions

### Gasping for Breath

**Dice Pool:** Power + Finesse (dice pool 7) versus the intended victim's Stamina + Athletics

**Action:** Instant and contested

More information on the Thanatanthe's Choke power can be found on p. 51.

**Hindrances:** None.

**Help (victim):** Holding breath (+2), Strong Lungs Merit.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** If the Storyteller rolls a dramatic failure, not only does the Thanatanthe not get a hold on its intended victim to choke but it loses sight of the target altogether and will spend the next action seeking out a new victim. If the player of the victim rolls a dramatic failure, she is at -1 to any future rolls to resist for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Thanatanthe does not choke its intended victim. The victim can still breathe.

**Success:** The Thanatanthe begins to choke its victim, doing lethal damage.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, the Thanatanthe not only gets a hold on its intended victim to choke her, the victim is at -1 to any future Stamina + Athletics rolls to resist for the rest of the scene. If the player of the victim rolls an exceptional success, the Thanatanthe loses sight of the target and will spend the next action seeking out a new victim.

## Consequences

If the characters run and take the nurse with them, only Ruth dies. The characters may then question Walker about the monster and how it works. She will explain what she knows about the Thanatanthe and how she used it to painlessly kill her hospice patients when they were ready to die.

If the characters run, leaving the nurse behind, she and Ruth both die. (Though she's brought the creature to her house, she doesn't know how to stop it.) The police will find that Ruth appears to have died in her sleep and Walker appears to have had a heart attack. The characters are safe but they know nothing of the Thanatanthe, what Nurse Walker had been doing or why.

If the characters stand and fight, the monster will kill everyone in the house. If they manage to destroy the flowers after the monster has killed Walker, Janet, or any of the player characters, the remaining characters will be caught up in a police investigation of the suspicious deaths.

## SCENE: I See You. Do You See Me?

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MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •••

### HINDRANCES

No occult knowledge (-1).

Exceptional eyesight (-1).

A beguiled victim will take no physical actions, and has a Defense of 0 (making it easier for others to attack, grapple or otherwise move her).

### HELP

Poor or hindered eyesight (+1).  
Blind characters are immune to the Miraree's power.  
The victim must be beguiled before it can be consumed.

### OTHER

Miraree scene.

**STs**

The Miraree will attack is to beguile and consume everyone it possibly can.

**PCs**

Defeat the Miraree without anyone (especially Sharon) being consumed.

## SCENE: It's Alive!

18

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL ••

### HINDRANCES

The Doliochthon is being fired on (-1).

Thermal scanner, motion sensor, or other high-tech surveillance gear allows the target to dodge more accurately. The creature's Camouflage power naturally makes it harder to locate it (-1).

### HELP

The Doliochthon is in motion (+1).

It does not specifically hide its tracks (+1).

### OTHER

Doliochthon scene.

**STs**

Attack and feed from the group. Escape with at least Gunny as a meal for later.

**PCs**

Survive the initial attack by the Doliochthon.  
Get the archaeologist to the pyramid and back out again.

## SCENE: On the Rooftop

23

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL ••••

### HINDRANCES

The Dreamer is visible and horrible (-1);  
bemuse/terrify any targets that aren't its chosen victim (-1).

### HELP

None

### OTHER

Dreamer scene.  
If the Dreamer is only frightened away but not killed, it will spend the next two days redoubling its efforts to get Lon killed.

STs

The Dreamer will bemuse and terrify Lon until he is dead.

PCs

Protect Lon from the Dreamer and from going over the rooftop.

## SCENE: Unlucky Little Boys

28

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL ••

### HINDRANCES

The Goblin Roach stingers cannot pierce Armor 3 or above.  
If the Goblin Roach king is killed, the attack stops immediately.

### HELP

None

### OTHER

Goblin Roach scene.

STs

The Goblin Roaches want the challengers (the boys) and the interlopers (the characters) off their territory at all costs.

PCs

Save the children from their own folly.

## SCENE: Persuading Autumnne

33

MENTAL ••••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL ••••

### HINDRANCES

Not born in October (-1).  
If the opal stone is broken,  
Autumnne will be  
temporarily banished.

Autumnne is focused on Julie  
(-1 to Defense).

### HELP

Born in October (+2).  
Combat rolls versus Julie  
(as the edict breaker; +1)

### OTHER

Autumnne scene.

STs

Autumnne will try to gain a sincere apology from Julie  
(or someone speaking for her) or kill her with great malice.

PCs

Save Julie from Autumnne by providing him with the sincere apology he wants  
or by temporarily banishing him.

## SCENE: Nothing Floats Down Here

38

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL ••

### HINDRANCES

Glitra is still (-1).  
The Glitra is unaffected  
by powers that attack  
the mind, intellect or  
emotions or any power  
that needs eye contact.

### HELP

Glitra is in motion (+1).  
For each target  
beyond the first (-1).

### OTHER

Glitra scene.

STs

Tell a creepy story.

PCs

Find out what happened to the missing sewer workers.  
Either escape from or kill the Glitra. Reap the rewards of surviving with the information.

## SCENE: An Unholy Light

43

MENTAL ••••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •••

### HINDRANCES

Target is within arm's reach, and can use Defense.

### HELP

A lot of objects in the backyard are flammable.

### OTHER

Ash-burn scene.

**STs**

Force the characters to choose revealing themselves in order to protect their friends. Kill as many Storyteller characters as possible and damage as much property as possible.

**PCs**

Choose whether or not to out themselves. If yes, defeat or kill the Ash-burn. Deal with the fallout of either path of action.

## SCENE: Hostile Natives

47

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL •••

### HINDRANCES

No Occult knowledge (-1).  
Immune to any common household items used as weapons.

### HELP

Encyclopedic Knowledge (+1).

### OTHER

Domos scene.

**STs**

Present a story where talking is the best option.

**PCs**

Help the Harpers and quell the Domos by talk or by combat.

# SCENE: In the Dead of Night

52

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL •••••

SOCIAL •

## HINDRANCES

None

## HELP

Holding Breath (+2),  
Strong Lungs Merit

## OTHER

Thanatanthe scene.

If the character is a creature that does not need to breathe, it's immune to the Thanatanthe.

**STs**

Prove that sometimes it is best to just run away from the monster.

**PCs**

Run away from the monster and learn more about it and the nurse. Deal with the nurse. Fight the monster and try to survive. Deal with the nurse if she survives.