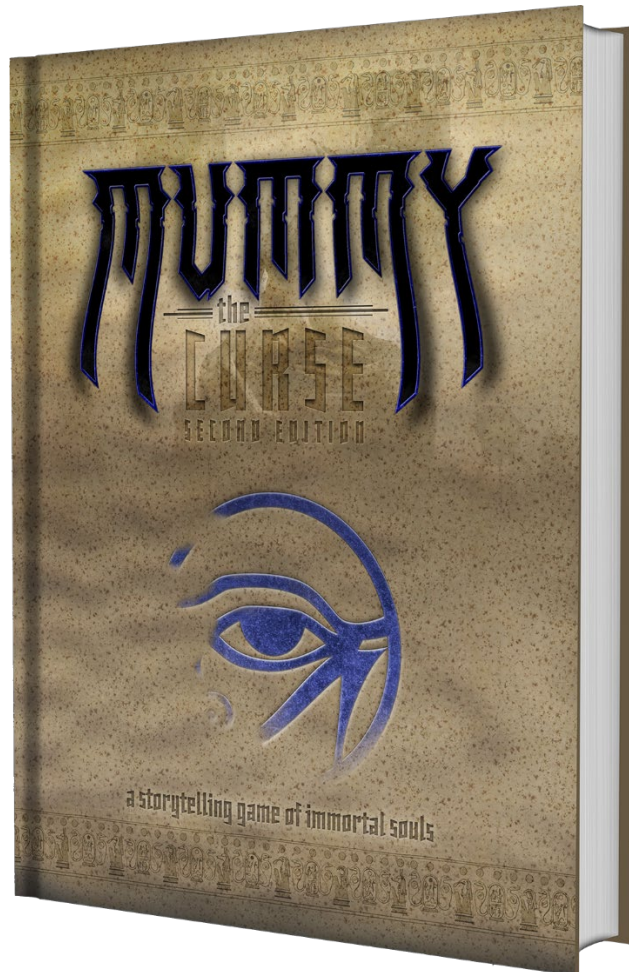




Kickstarter Manuscript Preview #4



Chapter Five: Immortal Foes

A riot is the language of the unheard.

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sekhem is life, and the Arisen pick the world clean of it.

But what of the scraps? That force ungifted, those bits left uneaten on forgotten temple floors, energy unreturned to those downtrodden lost to it, must be reclaimed. The inheritors of old Irem believe themselves cursed. If only they knew there are curses far worse than life.

Amkhata

Irem called them the Eternal Ones, the horrors beyond the veil. The lion soaring upon falcon's wings, the cobra-headed bull, the saber-toothed crocodile, the fire-breathing jackal, the Sphinx. These chimeric amalgamations are blasphemous, anomalistic visages spawned from careless releases of Sekhem, doomed to a life in the ephemeral jungles of Neter-Khertet where only the fittest and those summoned by precious sorcerers are granted further life.

Emergence and the Hunt

With a crash, relics shatter, unleashing cosmic contents into the ether. The loosed Sekhem needs some place to go, and without guiding hands or vessels, it seeps into Neter-Khertet and creates life where before there was none. All Amkhata are birthed this way, either by accident or ritual, formed piecemeal by parts and appendages of whichever sacred creatures lay dead nearby. Once the Sekhem consumed is no longer enough to sustain their physical forms, they return to Twilight in a violent, reality-altering spasm — but they never forget the orgasmic life they once felt.

Upon emergence, Amkhata are damned to an existence of starvation where their exquisite sense of Sekhem is their most punishing torture. From beneath layers of Twilight, they sense the distorted frequencies of reality where Sekhem resides or has recently been. They hunt its sources like prey, follow its trails like meandering rivers, sustain their ephemeral existence off the fumes like oases. Amkhata sense this Sekhem for a number of miles equal to the dots held within the particular vessel, multiplied by their Rank, and many construct permanent nests in these locations to the despair of those nearby in the material world. Existing off the cosmic energy while in Twilight grants the Amkhat 1 Essence per week, up to its maximum.

When Sekhem is spilled and there are no extant Amkhata to suck up the energy, a new and confused chimeric abomination is born. The process takes approximately one hour to complete, after which a Rank 1 Amkhat manifests. Cults use ancient ritual practices to summon Amkhata, but the occult process is inherently the same, involving shattered vessels to either pull the creature from Amxaibit (in shadow) to Amxuti (between horizons), or forge a new Amkhat entirely.

Manifestation

Amkhata maintain their ephemeral forms by feasting upon denizens of Neter-Khertet, from ghosts and spirits, to shades, to their own kind, but Sekhem is the lock and key to manifestation. Once the Sekhem is obtained, the monsters convert the cosmic energy into Essence and emerge

into material reality. Most are singular in this goal. Until they acquire it, these creatures rove through Neter-Khertet seeking to obtain it, destroying those in their path.

Manifestation Roll

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: Power + Finesse + Dots of Siphoned Sekhem – 5

Roll Results

Success: The Amkhat manifests within the day with its current Essence pool.

Exceptional Success: The Amkhat manifests within the hour with a full Essence pool. In addition, other narrative effects the Storyteller deems appropriate may occur. For instance, the Amkhat could manifest with an additional Head beyond its Max Essence, all relics in the area might turn to Bane Relics (see p. XX), or all mummies within 100 miles might awaken fully aware of the unnatural horror now wrought upon the Earth.

Failure: The Amkhat fails to fully manifest, instead appearing as a spectral monstrosity unable to deal damage or use abilities. It gains one of its parts (head, body, or limbs) every five minutes until it is whole.

Dramatic Failure: The Amkhat is torn to pieces by the overpowering Sekhem, leaving behind hundreds of Size 3 creatures appropriate to the Amkhat's parts. They are aggressive towards all around them, until they inevitably perish an hour later. Alternatively, other more narrative approaches to the failure may be chosen by the Storyteller.

Summoning

Amkhat summoning rituals have passed down along lines since the first rogue sorcerers of Irem. Few comprehend the symbolic and physical requirements for such an ordeal, and modern mortals who don't learn the rites from an Arisen or Shuankhsen master resort to guesswork and improvisation — a dangerous combination.

Blasphemed symbolism and unhallowed architecture are the cornerstones of the ritual. Inverted pyramids and once-breathtaking tombs now marred and coated with pungent spray paint are blatant methods of this profane reversal, but any location now used for a purpose contrary to its morally pure original intention, counter to its virtuous design, will do the trick. The unfunded and abandoned children's hospital where narcotics now exchange hands, the behavioral health center converted to a for-profit prison, the burial mound breached and looted decades previously, the indigenous holy city burned to ashes during the War of 1812 — irreverence toward the sacred stymies the frequencies of Twilight, which many Amkhata perceive in the same way they do spilled Sekhem.

From there, these rituals are propelled toward success by traditional Iremite mutterings, objects from the Nile River Valley, vestiges constructed for such an occasion, and any extinguishing of mortal life. The summoning is performed as an extended action with a number of successes determined by the Storyteller. The scientists at Last Dynasty International holding the ritual within their million-dollar inverted pyramid installation might only require 3, while the rookie occultist reading through her great-grandmother's private tomes in the basement might require 20.

Amkhat Summoning Ritual

Action: Extended

Dice Pool: Determined by Task. Stitching together the corpses of dismembered animals could require Dexterity + Crafts, while knowing exactly where and when to hold the ritual calls for Intelligence + Occult.

Suggested Modifiers: Assistance from a knowledgeable cult (+1), some required symbols or objects are missing (-1 to -4 depending on the object), a mortal human sacrifice is offered (+2), water from a great river such as the Nile, Amazon, or Congo is poured (+1), a mummy is leading the ritual (+3), distracting environment (-2), Ammut or a Judge of Duat disapproves of the ritual (-5).

Success: A Rank 2 Amkhat is summoned with a full Essence pool. It serves the ritual leader for a week, or until it is forced back into Twilight.

Exceptional Success: The Amkhat desired by the ritual leader is summoned forth from Neter-Khertet with a full Essence pool. It serves the ritual leader for as long as a continuous supply of Sekhem is provided it.

Failure: A Rank 1 Amkhat is created, but it serves no one. While it can't be tamed, it can be restrained and caged like a wild dog to be loosed upon enemies.

Dramatic Failure: A wild Rank 4 Amkhat is summoned against its wishes, without its knowledge, or in another manner leading to its revolt against its calling. It attacks everyone nearby until it is destroyed and thrust back into Twilight.

The Hourglass

Mortals have long used Amkhata as devastating weapons in war, but this manifestation is impermanent. All Amkhata face a ticking clock the moment they achieve material form.

For every day of manifestation, Amkhata must spend 1 Essence per Rank of the creature. When their Essence pool is depleted, they spend one Corpus per day until it too dissipates completely and they return to Twilight. This transference replenishes their Essence pool entirely, though they can't manifest until more Sekhem is obtained. Reversion to a Twilight state holds severe ramifications on the environment — whenever an Amkhat “dephases” back to Neter-Khertet, the surrounding area suffers the Amkhat's Curse Tilt (see p. XX). If a Sekhem source is consumed by the Amkhat while manifested, their Essence pool is replenished entirely.

Outside of consuming more Sekhem, Amkhata devour mortals to preserve their manifested forms. For each mortal human heart consumed by the Amkhat, it gains 1 Essence toward its maximum. Sphinxes and other manipulative, quick-witted Amkhata coerce brainwashed humans to bring them vessels and sacrifices, allowing them their physical form indefinitely.

The Sickness

Amkhata construct abhorrent nests in locations of Sekhem sources, sustaining their Essence off its fumes, and waiting for some foolish mortal to break the vessel in question. When nests remain in certain areas for over a decade, the fabric of Twilight becomes distorted in the ancient tomb, dusty attic, or underground lair they've chosen, and actions taken in Neter-Khertet begin to affect the material world. The Unhallowed Ground Tilt (see p. XX) commonly manifests in such an area. Chairs topple when an Amkhat fights or breeds, and the massive footsteps of the alpha reverberate off physical walls and down spiral staircases. Mortals in the area often gain the

Sybaris Condition (see p. XX), and most conclude the nested area is haunted or cursed. Believing the mysterious ancient relic located there to be the cause of such events, mortals often destroy the object, unleashing the Sekhem within, and giving the Amkhata exactly what they want.

Amkhata Breeding?

The arduous nature of Neter-Khertet means Amkhata breed as quickly as they are destroyed by the realm's other denizens. In addition, the creatures reproduce by mitosis, expending all but 1 Essence to create two Rank 1 Amkhata. Because breeding impairs their own survival within Twilight, many Amkhata remain in the safety of their nests, feasting only on those who venture too close.

Creating Amkhata

Amkhata have Heads, Bodies, and Limbs, all of which make up its form and determine its Attributes, traits, Dread Powers, behavioral features, and other Special Qualities.

Rank

Ephemeral at their core, Amkhata possess Rank just like ghosts and spirits. This trait determines the creature's Essence available to progress their creation, starting Attribute points, the monster's classification at Last Dynasty International, and some other traits.

Attributes and Traits

Amkhata use simplified **Attributes** (Power, Finesse, and Resistance) and other traits much like ghosts and spirits, including corresponding **Speed** (greater of Power or Finesse + Species Factor), **Initiative** (Finesse + Resistance), **Size** (determined by Rank), **Willpower** (All Amkhata possess 4), **Defense** (lower of either Power or Finesse), and **Corpus** (Resistance + Size).

- **Power** represents the raw ability of the Amkhat to manifest itself into the material world, and to manipulate its surroundings once through the veil. Use Power for rolls requiring Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.
- **Finesse** represents how clever the Amkhat is when control of emotions is required. Use Finesse for rolls requiring Dexterity, Wits, or Manipulation.
- **Resistance** represents how easily the Amkhat evades attacks or otherwise avoids harm. Use Resistance for rolls requiring Stamina, Resolve, or Composure.
- Amkhata rarely ever use **Skills**, but the Storyteller should use the appropriate Attribute when it makes sense.

Essence

Rank indicates the maximum Essence an Amkhat contains in its pool before consuming other Amkhata, ghosts, or ephemeral beings within Neter-Khertet. Points up to this Max Essence are spent during creation to add the various Heads, Bodies, and Limbs to the creature, and Essence is spent from the pool to sustain their manifested forms in material reality, or use powers.

Size and LDI Classification

All Amkhata differ. Even those created from the same parts display variations in color, supernatural aura, and size. With some difficulty and generalization, Last Dynasty International scientists classify them into two groups — Lesser and Greater. These two subdivisions of

Amkhata determine their size and complexity of form and evolution. Lesser Amkhata are those recently created, unevolved, oftentimes working in packs to survive in the wilds of Neter-Khertet. The Greater are those deemed fittest to dominate Twilight, or those pulled into being by mortal cults and their sorcerers.

Little evidence exists of Titanic Amkhata, though many sorcerers and scientists speculate. Only vague recordings in ancient scrolls, terrifying visages engraved into stone relics, and the ruined remains of modern estates point to these huge monstrosities. It is said these gargantuan creatures were viewed as demigods to Iremite worshippers, who they in turn saw as mere insects in a mortal reality they rarely concerned themselves with.

Evolution

Amkhata are born into cannibalism, their only path up the ephemeral food chain being the destruction and consumption of other creatures within Twilight, increasing their Rank by 1 with each more powerful entity devoured. As an Amkhat's Rank and Max Essence is increased, it may spend the available essence on new parts or Dread Powers — unnatural powers used to destroy or manipulate the world and people around it.

Amkhata never surpass a Titanic Essence Pool of 50, even if they are formed unnaturally through occult summons, but that hasn't stopped the more reckless scientists and Shuankhsen Cults from trying. If the operation gained the cooperation of a powerful Sphinx, or if a small hamlet were destroyed for the effort, or all of Manhattan Island — who knows what could emerge from such a sacrifice to the monsters of Neter-Khertet?

[BEGIN TABLE]

Rank	Attribute Dots	Trait Limits*	Max Essence	Size	LDI Class
1	5-8	5 dots	10	1-2	Lesser
2	9-14	7 dots	15	3-4	Lesser
3	15-25	9 dots	20	5-7	Greater
4	26-35	12 dots	25	8-10	Greater
5	36-50	15 dots	50	18	Titanic

* These represent permanent dots, neither temporarily-boosted ones, nor including bonuses provided by Amkhat Bodies.

[END TABLE]

The Head

An Amkhat's Head determines the creature's Dread Powers and attacks inherent to their vicious horns or gaping maw. These attacks are always Power + Finesse. In addition, Special Qualities and information relevant to the Amkhat's nature, behavioral patterns, and instincts are provided.

Abara, the Brazen-Headed

Abara bear the visage of the bull, rhino, and broad-tusked warthog, roving through the barren frequencies of Twilight, guarding the relics there like oases beyond the veil. They keep to this

task because it's all they can do. They are simple-minded, but their knack for using brash means to justify brutal ends is unrivaled. These destructive loners, volatile bruisers, and raging terrors of Twilight are the sorcerer's greatest servant, the immortal's most lethal weapon, the Judge's most feared messenger.

Essence Cost: •

Dread Powers: Expression Surge, Natural Weapons (••)

Attack (Bite): 1(B) for Lesser, 3(B) for Greater

Attack: (Horn): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Brash): Abara manifest instantly and violently, breaking through the frequencies of Twilight to obtain the sweet fruits of life. Whenever they manifest, the Amkhat's Curse Tilt is applied to the entire area, and the first effort to strike them is rolled at -3.

Auru, the Nile-Headed

The Nile-Headed Amkhata bear the visage of the hippopotamus, the South American caiman, or Egypt's sacred crocodile, spending their placid existence conserving energy and Essence in the meandering Rivers of Neter-Khertet, before lashing out into the physical world to drag unsuspecting prey into Twilight for feasting. They rarely stray far from the rivers, where Essence seems to flow more freely between worlds.

Essence Cost: •

Dread Powers: Drag Under

Attack (Bite): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Conservant): Auru expend Essence at half the normal rate, and regain it back at double the speed if near a freshwater source.

Hepu, the Jackal-Headed

The Hepu, appearing as desert wolves, jackals, and foxes, hunt in groups along the plains of Twilight, seeking out unsuspecting ghosts and vessels of Sekhem present in the world of the living. The strongest of their kin make up the pack, while the runts are eaten for vital Essence. Cunning minds allow Hepu packs to plot their manifestations and work together to survive and thrive.

Essence Cost: ••

Dread Powers: Beastmaster

Attack (Bite): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Pack Hunter): The Hepu gain +1 to all rolls for each other Jackal-Headed Amkhat or related beast within 30 yards up to a maximum of +3. Up to 3 Hepu can manifest with a single Manifestation Roll.

Khespu, the Swarm-Headed

These ravenous beasts puke the Essence they consume out of insectoid maws, building nests and hives from the sticky bile in the deepest cavernous recesses of Neter-Khertet. The wretched

fumes pouring from these festering breeding chambers open strange wounds in the walls of reality, tunnels to other worlds even beyond material.

Essence Cost: •••

Dread Powers: Ravenous Feasting, Swarm

Attack (Bite): 2(B) for Lesser, 1(A) for Greater

Special Qualities (Fester): The locations of their nests become wounds, loci, or other tears in the fabric of reality, allowing a +1 to all rolls to traverse between realities (including the material world, Neter-Khertet, Shadow, and other appropriate places) for each year the nest has been present, up to a maximum of +3.

Menqi, the Serpent-Headed

Serpents litter Egyptian mythology, and even the Iremites deified them. The black asp, the Naja Cobra, and the Persian Viper all potentially manifest as the Menqi's visage. The Serpent-Headed thrive in the shadows, especially mountainous ranges, and Arisen tombs populated by glowing relics. Some Arisen have found ways to summon, capture, and tame the Menqi to serve as eternally loyal guardians of their resting places.

Essence Cost: ••••

Dread Powers: Hypnotic Gaze, Venom (••)

Attack (Bite): 1(A) for Lesser, 2(A) for Greater

Special Qualities (Lunging Strike): Exceptional successes on a Menqi's Manifestation Roll allow them one free bite attack upon entering the material world, dealing twice the aggravated damage and propelling the target 10 feet per Rank, grappling their target.

Pakhu, the Cat-Headed

Pakhu appear with heads of lions, cheetahs, leopards, and hyenas, all of which wield vicious, saber-toothed maws used to guard the boundaries of Neter-Khertet. The land of Anpu is plagued with lost ghosts, spirits, and Shades, none of which belong in the eyes of the Cat-Headed. These custodians of Duat's outskirts are found throughout Neter-Khertet, and known for their unnatural effect on both Twilight and the material world.

Essence Cost: ••••

Dread Powers: Ravenous Feasting

Attack (Bite): 2(L) for Lesser, 2(A) for Greater

Special Qualities (Telepathy): The Cat-Headed are not wise, but speak basic words like *help*, *hunt*, *kill*, or *seek* telepathically to any within 100 yards. In addition, wherever a Pakhu remains for longer than a day, mortals in the area gain the Sybaris Condition.

Sphinx, the Human-Headed

Few humans master control over the most notorious Sphinx, and those who succeed rarely do so for long. They reach out to humans in visions, dreams, or directly after manifesting, always speaking in riddles, mysteries which seem to make sense to those mortals subjected to them for long enough periods of time. The Sphinx use human wits and language to manipulate those around them to do their bidding, discarding the remnants when they're finished.

Essence Cost: ••••

Dread Powers: Enrapture, Maze of Lost Souls

Attack (Bite): 1(B) for Lesser, 2(B) for Greater

Special Qualities (Dream Visitor): Once per day, the Sphinx can infuse a mortal or mummy with a vision or dream, filling it with symbolic imagery that progresses its own will. All rolls to manipulate those affected in this way gain +2.

Utchefu, the Sky-Headed

Utchefu bear the visage of falcons, owls, vultures, and other birds of prey hunting and sustaining their Essence in the volatile Ashen Storm of Neter-Khertet. Those with wings circle the swirling dust in defensible flocks looking for ghosts caught in the reality-bending gales, while those relegated to the earth feed on the weary and fallen at the bottom. The Utchefu conserve Sekhem for when they need it the most, acting as a living vessel (••) which it can activate once per chronicle to manifest or replenish its Essence.

Essence Cost: ••

Dread Powers: Godly Vision (••)

Attack (Bite): 2(B) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Ashen Entrance): Utchefu gain +2 to Manifestation Rolls when emerging from inside the Ashen Storm, strewing the dust and ash into the area where they manifest. In addition, they may emerge from the sky, dropping on a target in the material world.

The Body

Every Amkhat is constructed around a framework — a Body which determines how well they interact with material reality, represented by their Attributes.

Bull's Body (Ahasu)

The Ahasu are burly bruisers, destructive machinations who wreck their foes as handily as they do their surroundings.

Essence Cost: ••

Attribute Alteration: +2 Power, -1 Finesse

Species Factor: 3

Dread Powers: Destructive Aura (••)

Crocodile's Body (Su)

The Su are armored visages of the sacred predator of the Nile, and of the Egyptian god Sobek, slow-moving but especially difficult to destroy.

Essence Cost: ••••

Attribute Alteration: +1 Power, +1 Resistance, -1 Finesse

Species Factor: 3

Dread Powers: Armor (•••), Camouflage (••)

Falcon's Body (Herasu)

The Herasu would be easy for Arisen to obliterate, were it not to their exceptionally agile forms. The falcon-bodied Amkhata are granted the Falcon's Talons and Wings limbs for free.

Essence Cost: •••

Attribute Alteration: +2 Finesse, -1 Resistance

Species Factor: 7

Dread Powers: Prodigious Leap

Hippopotamus' Body (Ammu)

Blessed (and cursed) with the visage of the Devourer, Ammu-bodied Amkhata are large and powerful, trampling and destroying with abandon until a depleted corpus destroys the monsters outright.

Essence Cost: •••••

Attribute Alteration: +3 Power, -1 Finesse, + 2 Resistance

Species Factor: 5

Dread Powers: Destructive Aura (••), Cosmic Detonation (•••), Armor (•)

Jackal's Body (Sabasu)

Silent and stealthy, the jackal-bodied Amkhata are especially quick and difficult to perceive, even right in front of a mummy's face.

Essence Cost: •

Attribute Alteration: +1 Power, +3 Finesse

Species Factor: 7

Dread Powers: Reality Stutter

Lion's Body (Maasu)

Deft and swift, the Maasu are agile enough to position themselves near an enemy only when they wish to attack, and leap out of the fight when the going gets tough.

Essence Cost: ••••

Attribute Alteration: +2 Power, +2 Finesse

Species Factor: 8

Dread Powers: Prodigious Leap, Catlike Reflexes

Serpent's Body (Tetasu)

The Tetasu's form is soft and slow, but ensnares and constricts the life out of any enemy.

Essence Cost: •

Attribute Alteration: +2 Finesse, +2 Resistance

Species Factor: 2

Dread Powers: Camouflage (••), Constrict

The Limbs

Limbs often allow for additional attacks, and always provide Special Qualities appropriate to their nature. If no more spendable Essence is available for the Amkhat, its limbs match those appropriate to its Body or are absent as per the Serpent's Body, but they are merely ephemeral manifestations chiseled onto reality, not actual limbs capable of Extra Attacks or Special Qualities.

Falcon's Talons

The claws of the falcon, vulture, and hawk rend and violently carry unsuspecting victims.

Essence Cost: •

Extra Attack (Talons): 1(B) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Swift Catch): This Amkhat's speed is increased by 2, and if accompanied by the Falcon's Wings Limb, it can carry enemies equivalent or lesser in size away into the sky for a number of turns equal to its Rank.

Falcon's Wings

This Amkhat soars into the sight under the beating wings of a falcon, hawk, or vulture.

Essence Cost: ••

Dread Powers: None

Special Qualities (Flight): The creature can use a turn to take off, gain altitude, circle, land, and utilize any other like quality of a mobile bird of prey. Its Speed during flight is doubled.

Human Extremities

This Amkhat is blessed with agile limbs and opposable thumbs, allowing it to use tools, or indicate desires using hand-gestures.

Essence Cost: •••

Extra Attack (Fists): 1(B) for Lesser, 3(B) for Greater

Special Qualities (Opposable Thumbs): The Amkhat can manipulate items and utilize tools in accordance with its intellect and ability, often grappling foes during fights or stealing away relics in hands or underneath arms.

Jackal's Paws

Silent and stealthy, this Amkhat's doglike paws are near impossible to trace.

Essence Cost: ••

Extra Attack (Claws): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater

Special Qualities (Untraceable): This Amkhat leaves no tracks, no matter the terrain. It can be followed via other means — scent, echolocation, destroyed surroundings, or other powers — but not by its paws.

Great Cat's Claws

This Amkhat wields the legs and claws of a lion, cheetah, or panther.

Essence Cost: •••

Extra Attack (Claws): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(L) for Greater.

Special Qualities (Rend): Wounds delivered by Great Cat's Claws bleed and bleed, dealing 1 additional lethal damage per turn until natural or supernatural medical attention is provided.

Scorpion's Limbs

This horrifying Amkhat bears the eight legs, two pincers, and looming stinger of a scorpion.

Essence Cost: •••

Extra Attack (Sting): 1(L) for Lesser, 2(A) for Greater. The successfully struck target gains the Poisoned Tilt (moderate for Lesser, grave for Greater).

Special Qualities (Grasp): Successes in grappling become exceptional successes, and up to 2 mortals within reach of the Amkhat can be grappled with +2 dice.

Other Amkhata Parts?

The appendages listed here are merely those most commonly recorded by Last Dynasty International. The possibility of Amkhata created from other parts — criollo horse, tarantula, owl, catfish, and even extinct animals — has been postulated by those with extensive experience in the matter, and shaken witnesses swear a condor-headed jaguar tears limb from those who delve too far into the caverns around Cusco.

In game terms, the Storyteller can freely swap in new animals for those listed in a narrative fashion depending on the region or tone they are looking for.

Dread Powers

Dread Powers are supernatural powers inherent in the myriad appendages of the Amkhata and in the might of the godlike Judges. For Amkhata, they are added as the other parts, increasing the Essence pool up to its maximum. All Amkhata begin with the Fiendish Resilience and Unbelievable Visage Dread Powers.

Many of the descriptions for the Dread Powers listed below don't have dice pools assigned to them; tailor the pool to the Amkhat using the power. Consider how their Heads, Bodies, Limbs, and disposition would affect the way the power manifests.

Armor (• to •••••)

This Amkhat is covered in crocodile's flesh, the thickened hide of a hippopotamus, scorpion's carapace, or some other supernaturally thickened skin. It gains an armor rating equal to the dot rating of this power.

Beastmaster

The creature has mastery over the lesser beasts of Twilight. By spending 1 Essence, it conjures up a swarm of small ephemeral animals or lesser ghosts appropriate to its nature. These creatures obey its commands and it can communicate with them clearly. By spending 4 Essence, it summons a Rank 1 Amkhat once per scene.

Breath Attack (• to •••••)

The Amkhat spews forth fire, lightning, acid, blistering sands, or other appropriate elements from its maw at a target within line of sight.

Cost: Equal to the number of dots in this Dread Power

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Power + Breath Attack

Effect: Each dot of Breath Attack applies to either direct damage, extended damage, armor, or Defense evasion, mixing the effects as the Storyteller desires. The range of the weapon is equal to 10 feet per point in Breath Attack.

Direct Damage: Add dots as damage to the attack.

Extended damage: The attack causes two damage per point in Breath Attack for an equal number of turns on the target and environment as the Storyteller sees fit.

Armor or Defense evasion: One point negates either armor *or* Defense; two dots negates both.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails and cannot be used again during the scene.

Failure: The power fails to strike the target, but any extended damage applied is done on the surrounding environment.

Success: The attack hits, causing lethal damage appropriately.

Exceptional Success: The attack hits, causing aggravated damage appropriately.

Camouflage (• to •••••)

When in a dim-lit area or place appropriate to the Amkhat's concealing nature, it may hide itself. Characters trying to see, hear, smell, or otherwise perceive the creature suffer -1 to Perception rolls per dot in Camouflage. This penalty is lifted if the Amkhat moves at full speed.

Catlike Reflexes

This Amkhat moves with the grace of the lion and panther, dodging weaponry and other assaults. It gains +2 to Defense and is not penalized by multiple attackers. Extraordinary successes become successes when attacking it.

Constrict (• to •••••)

This Amkhat grapples, squeezes, and chokes the life out of its victims. After a successful attack, the creature rolls Power + Finesse vs. the target's Dexterity + Resolve. It grapples and constricts them if successful, dealing 1(L) per point in Constrict until the grapple is broken or the target perishes.

Cosmic Detonation

The Amkhat stores additional Sekhem inside itself when it manifests. When its corpus is depleted and it would be sent to Twilight, it instead explodes into volatile Sekhem, dealing 3(A) to anyone within 20 yards. 3 Sekhem are released into Twilight much like a shattered vessel.

Destructive Aura (• to •••••)

The Amkhat's flailing, powerful form does damage to its surroundings while also damaging its enemies. When attacking, bashing damage equal to its Destructive Aura is dealt to anything and anyone within 3 yards of the creature.

Drag Under

This Amkhat emerges into material reality and recalls itself near instantaneously, dragging mortals into Neter-Khertet to feast on their Essence. It spends 2 Essence, rolling Power + Finesse vs. the target's Dexterity + Composure.

Dramatic Failure: The Amkhat misjudges its power or the target's location, emerging only partially into material reality. Half its body is missing, the stump where it should be bleeds profusely, and it barely survives the day with only its Head to defend it, before returning to Twilight. If it's destroyed during this time, it's destroyed forever.

Failure: The Amkhat latches onto a limb of the targeted mortal, but cannot fully return to Neter-Khertet until 3 turns have passed. During this period, the target may be assisted by friends in withdrawing from the Amkhat's clutches, or their appendage may be amputated, but the Amkhat never lets go willingly.

Success: The Amkhat drags the mortal into Neter-Khertet to feast on its flesh, and unless the target's companions witnessed the event, they are none the wiser.

Exceptional Success: The Amkhat pulls its target and any other single mortal within 10 feet underneath, applying the Amkhat's Curse Tilt to the area.

Enrapture

The Amkhat spends 4 Essence to convince a number of mortals equal to its Rank to do its bidding for a number of days equal to its current Essence rating (minimum 1). After a successful Power + Rank vs. Resolve, the mortal enters a trance-like state, gathering humans as prey for the creature, or retrieving relics and the like. The mortal understands all Iremite spoken by the Amkhat, and engravings in ancient tongues are easily translated during this time. The power will undoubtedly be noticed by those other mortals closest to them, who might resort to seeking professional help, restraining, or even killing their friend or family member. Destroying the creature is the only other way to break the effect, unless it spends Essence beyond what is needed to continue control.

Expression Surge (• to •••••)

The Amkhat forcefully expresses itself deeper into manifestation, surging potent energy into one of its three Attributes. By spending Essence equal to its Expression Surge, an Attribute is boosted by the same rating for the remainder of the scene, affecting derived traits accordingly. If using this power fully depletes the Amkhat's Essence Pool, it is jolted back to Twilight at the end of its next turn, no matter its Corpus.

Eye Spy

The creature has a specific form of remote viewing; it may be able to see through surveillance cameras, view from the eyes of animals, or pluck an eye out and leave a bloodied organ behind to observe. Using this ability requires the expenditure of 1 Essence or Willpower point per hour. The creature remains aware of its surroundings while surveilling.

Fiendish Resilience

Shielded by its own legend, this creature fears only the Timeless. When mortals inflict wounds, no matter how successful the attack, it suffers only one bashing damage, unless the damage is inflicted by nuclear weapons or certain relics. Sekhem-infused beings inflict lethal damage normally with all attacks. Supernatural attacks from other entities inflict lethal damage, but mundane attacks inflict one bashing. All sources of aggravated damage affect it normally.

Flaying Word

Whenever the creature succeeds on a social roll targeting another character, it can inflict a single point of lethal damage to the victim. This damage inflicts no pain and may not be immediately noticed; it causes skin to slough off and flesh to abrade away.

Ghost Touch

The creature can touch and attack entities in the ghostly frequency of Twilight.

Godly Vision (• to •••••)

The Amkhat sees the material world clearly even from Neter-Khertet, allowing it to hunt for seeping relics and unguarded mortals safely. It spots vessels at increased range equal to 1 mile for every dot in Godly Vision, and sees the Sekhem inside both vessels and Arisen through walls and other surfaces up to the same range.

Husk Puppet (Judges Only)

By touching a mortal human and, as an Instant action, succeeding at a roll of Power + Finesse versus the victim's Resolve + Stamina, the creature can slay the human and render their body a puppet for its will, using the same traits and attributes as a Lifeless Thrall (see p.XX). The creature can control up to its Power in marionette humans in this way.

Hydra

This Amkhat contains a second Head and its attacks, and gains the Feign Strike Special Quality.

Essence Cost: The same cost as the Head chosen.

Special Quality (Feign Strike): One head feigns an attack while the other strikes. Roll Power vs. Composure to gain a surprise attack, or use one Dread Power granted by the Amkhat's Heads without spending the required Essence. In addition, the Amkhat sees in all directions at once, allowing no way to sneak up on it outside of supernatural means.

Hypnotic Gaze

This charming and beguiling Amkhat wields the ancient powers of manipulation or bears the eyes of a serpent-god. When meeting the target's eyes, it spends 2 Essence and rolls Power + Finesse (or other appropriate attributes) contested by the target's Composure. If successful, the target gains the Madness or Terror Sybaris Condition, or narrative effects the Storyteller deems appropriate.

Impossible Proportions (Judges Only)

The creature's proportions do not obey the laws of physics, and the notion of perspective breaks down in its presence. Although the creature's actual Size and any derived traits such as Health remain constant, it can act in practice as if its Size were anywhere between Size 1 and Size 100, allowing it to pass through tiny gaps or reach the top of a skyscraper in a single step.

Legion

The creature composes of a number of large but independent components acting in concert. It does not follow the rules for acting as a swarm, but is capable of splitting itself across various points within a scene, and can move through an area bypassing obstacles to its true Size as long as its component parts can find passage.

Mangle

Once per turn, when the creature inflicts damage with its attacks, it can spend a point of Essence or Willpower to also inflict the Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack Tilt on the victim.

Maze of Lost Souls (Sphinx Amkhata Only)

The Amkhat twists reality into a surreal labyrinth, surging through both sides of Twilight. By spending 3 Essence, a 100-yard area bears the mirage-like terrain of Neter-Khertet, such as winding rivers, blinding sandstorms, lost ghosts, and the jagged mountain passes of Bakhu and Manu. Structures affected combine these features with a mess of tangled corridors and rooms leading back on themselves. The effect lasts for an hour, during which anyone other than the creature attempting to move through the area must succeed at a Wits + Composure vs. the creature's Resolve each time they attempt to leave or progress through it to somewhere specific; if they fail, they simply get more lost. Ghosts and spirits in the area automatically fail this roll. Used during a mummy's Death Cycle, the Amkhat appears as a vague shadow of Anpu, drawing the Arisen away from their true goal.

Mirage (Judges Only)

The creature can make an illusory copy of itself. As an Instant action, it can spend a point of Essence or Willpower and create such a mirage anywhere that it can currently perceive. The mirage acts on the creature's Initiative, can act independently of its creator, and can relay the creature's voice; it can also serve as an origin point for appropriate Utterances, rather than the creature itself. Breaking line of sight with the mirage causes it to collapse immediately, as does any sort of damage.

Monstrous Resilience

The creature is incredibly sturdy and can shrug off grievous wounds. When it suffers a physical Tilt it may spend 1 Essence or Willpower as a reflexive action, ending the Tilt immediately.

Natural Weapons (• to •••••)

The creature is armed with savage jaws, a vicious beak, rending claws, eviscerating horns, or other formidable natural weaponry. The weaponry has a weapon modifier and armor piercing quality equal to the number of dots in this Dread Power. If the creature's natural weaponry includes a bite, it doesn't need to establish a grapple first.

Prodigious Leap

The creature makes great, bounding leaps. By spending 1 Essence, it jumps to the top of a four-story temple, or across a six-lane highway (or the equivalent distance).

Ravenous Feasting (• to •••)

The Amkhat devours its prey quickly and violently. After a successful bite attack, it may make additional free bite attacks up to its Ravenous Feasting.

Reality Stutter

The creature's presence sets reality stuttering and convulsing, allowing it to flicker from place to place. By reflexively spending 1 Essence when it moves, the creature translocates itself to any location it can see up to its Speed in meters away, seeming to observers to just spasm in and out of reality as it goes. Doing so adds +2 to its defense for the turn.

Swarm

A swarm of bees, wasps, locusts, or other small, flying creatures appropriate to its nature constantly circle this Amkhat, feasting on the flesh of those who come too close. By spending 3 Essence, the monster unleashes the swarm, dealing 1(L) per turn on any targets within 5 yards, and inflicting the Swarm Tilt on anything within 15 yards, with a maximum number of Tilt Factors equal to its Rank. If the Amkhat remains in the same area within material reality for a full day undisturbed, the location gains the Deadly Swarm Tilt Factor.

Unbelievable Visage

Amkhata are impossible for human minds to justify logically. Mortals beholding one lose 1 Willpower and make a Willpower roll, with failure giving them the Madness Condition. Arisen viewing an Amkhat make a Willpower roll, with failure costing 1 Willpower.

Venom (• to •••••)

The Amkhat injects its enemies with poisonous excretion. Even Arisen are not immune to this supernatural venom, and mummies affected by it lose nearly all magical semblance of their human Sahu.

Action: Instant and contested

Dice Pool: Power + Rank vs. Stamina + Sekhem

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails and the victim is immune to Venom for this scene.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: Poison is successfully injected into the victim, imposing a moderate Poisoned, Drugged, or other appropriate Tilt in affected Arisen, and a grave version of the Tilt in affected mortals. This lasts for a number of turns equal to the Amkhat's Venom.

Extraordinary Success: After applying the success, the Amkhat regains the Essence spent on this power.

Example Amkhata

The Revenant

It started with the guards, those keepers of keys.

The first was Josiah. The thing downstairs didn't realize how much he had to lose. His house, family, back yard, patio, industrial-strength pressure washer — his life. It wouldn't have mattered. The thing needed him. One after another, cell doors were opened in the night, and Josiah guided the prisoners through a maze-like labyrinth of surreal cell blocks and wards until finally they reached the old execution chamber, buried under layers of concrete and piles of bureaucratic paperwork.

The deal was simple. The brainwashed guards would free the prisoners to retrieve relics for the Revenant, and in return the prisoners would fall asleep at night to dream of wholly realistic lives with friends and family, beyond the confines of the penitentiary. Multitudes of prisoners now worship the Revenant freely while controlled guards allow them free passage when the warden is not present. Soon, the warden himself will be enslaved by the thing downstairs, and the next prison will follow.

Description: The Revenant has the body of a serpent, molded fluidly with the head of a human woman. Its lair is displayed on forgotten blueprints secured in the warden's upstairs safe. In its center is an old electric chair, used to sacrifice mortals to the Revenant and to supercharge the Amkhat's own abilities through Twilight.

Storytelling Hints: Local independent reporters grow interest in the goings-on at the for-profit prison, surrounded by rumors of mysterious disappearances, memory loss exhibited by guards and their families, and prisoners seen walking the streets in broad daylight only to be behind bars the next day. The Revenant's actions even catch the notice of a Maa-Kep cultist posing as a guard for a nearby prison.

Attributes: Power 7, Finesse 5, Resistance 6

Rank: 3

Essence: 11

Willpower: 4

Aspiration: Permanent Life

Initiative: 11

Defense: 5

Speed: 14

Size: 4

Attacks: Bite (1B)

Dread Powers: Constrict, Enrapture, Hypnotic Gaze, Maze of Lost Souls

Special Qualities: Dream Visitor

The Leviathan

Bright orange buckets of fresh water from Nile banks were loosed along the floor of the inverted pyramid, and the dismembered carcasses of a jackal, falcon, and lion removed from portable freezers. The parts were laid upon an altar by Dr. Trombly. He placed a meteorite in the falcon's chest, muttered something low under his breath, and scorched the ball of scrawled papyrus in a Bunsen burner. It was all so steady and patient up to the end. Every stone laid, every glyph engraved, every chant uttered, but in those final moments, there was only horror, and sacrifice.

The Leviathan emerged, the mortal sacrifice binding it to Dr. Trombly's will.

At once, its mission was provided — the breaching of Arisen tombs. Nothing too drastic, of course. Cultists should be killed in the effort, but the Amkhat should only endanger itself enough to draw the waking Deathless back to their headquarters to be imprisoned, studied, and used for the Rite of the Golden Vial (see p. XX).

Description: The Leviathan bears the head of a jackal, body of an Egyptian vulture, and the limbs of a lion.

Storytelling Hints: The Leviathan is powerful, but only attacks with full strength when it feels cornered. It commits to a fight only long enough to be chased back to its Last Dynasty masters, it relies on mobility and paralyzing venom to antagonize its foes. It flees when wounded, and is easily traced back to its source.

Attributes: Power 12, Finesse 14, Resistance 10

Rank: 4

Essence: 18

Willpower: 4

Aspiration: Spurring of retaliation by local Deathless for its masters

Initiative: 26

Defense: 12

Speed: 33

Size: 8

Attacks: Bite 2(L), Claws 2(L)

Dread Powers: Beastmaster, Breath Attack (••••), Ravenous Feasting (••), Reality Stutter, Venom (••)

Special Qualities: Fire Resistance, Pack Hunter, Rend

The Ephemeral Dead

Amkhata are far from the only entities lurking in Neter-Khertet. Bound by their passions, ghosts, echoes of mortal lives, haunt the living world or descend into the Underworld. Shades, strange shadowy entities thirsting for blood and Sekhem, lurk in the Ashen Storm, slowly drifting toward Duat.

Ephemeral Traits

As ephemeral entities, ghosts and shades share many traits in common with Amkhata.

Rank

Ephemeral entities possess Rank reflecting their power and awareness, which serves as a Supernatural Tolerance trait. Ghosts begin with Rank 1 or 2, and must drink from an Underworld river to increase it. Shades begin with Rank 1 or 2, increasing it by consuming Sekhem, usually wrested from mummies experiencing death cycles.

Attributes and Traits

Ghosts and shades use Power, Finesse, and Resistance, calculating traits like Speed, Initiative, Defense, and Corpus accordingly. Ghosts and shades are usually Size 5. They possess Willpower equal to Resistance + Finesse. Skills important to the entity's living identity persist. For simplicity, use Rank for these. Merits unaffected by their ephemeral nature also persist. Both retain their Virtues and Vices, but reverse their effects, gaining Willpower from their Vice like mortals do from their Virtue, and vice versa. Integrity scores remain fixed at the point of death, no longer threatened by ordinary breaking points.

[BEGIN TABLE]

Rank	Attribute Dots	Trait Limits*	Max Essence	Numina
1	5-8	5 dots	10	1-3
2	9-14	7 dots	15	3-5
3	15-25	9 dots	20	5-7
4	26-35	12 dots	25	7-9
5	36-45	15 dots	50	9-11

* These represent permanent dots, not temporarily-boosted ones.

[END TABLE]

Corpus

Corpus replaces Health, and entities losing all Corpus to lethal or aggravated damage disincorporate, reforming at safe places in hibernation unless their Essence was fully depleted. Ghosts and shades suffer bashing damage from most attacks, except those utilizing their bane or otherwise specifying harsher effects against ephemeral entities. These entities attack with Power + Finesse, but may only affect or be affected by beings in the same frequency of existence or otherwise capable of affecting ephemeral entities.

Essence

Essence sustains ephemeral existence and fuels their powers.

Ephemeral entities expend one Essence per day to remain active. Ghosts separated from their Anchors or shades in direct sunlight suffer Essence Bleed, losing 1 Essence each hour. Entities losing their last point this way suffer 1 lethal damage, entering hibernation. Aggravated damage strips away 1 Essence per point. An entity may spend Essence to boost Attributes for the remainder of the scene at a point-per-dot, raising no single Attribute by more than Rank + 2 dots.

Ghosts regain 1 Essence by spending a day near their Anchors, regaining another when remembered as a living person by a mortal. Shades regain 1 Essence by spending a day without exposure to light brighter than candlelight. Shed blood replenishes another point, or one for each level of lethal damage inflicted if the blood is offered to the shade.

Entities in Neter-Khertet may steal Essence from others in that state. The attacker rolls Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Power + Resistance. If successful, the attacker gains Essence equal to their successes from the victim's remaining Essence.

Bans

Every ephemeral entity has a unique Ban, a compulsive behavior an entity must or must not perform. Bans increase in complexity and consequence with Rank. A minor shade cannot attack those bearing candles. One ancient ghost summoned from the Underworld returns upon uttering their true name thrice backward.

Banes

Ghosts and shades have Banes, physical elements the entity cannot abide, which become increasingly esoteric at higher Rank. Salt burns a young ghost. A shade grown fat on stolen Sekhem dreads mudbricks anointed with blood from firstborn children. Banes are always solid to vulnerable entities, which must spend Willpower and succeed at a Power + Finesse – Rank roll to touch it willingly. Banes inflict one aggravated damage each turn of contact to Materialized entities, or lethal to those in Twilight or the Underworld. Wounds inflicted by weapons composed of Banes inflict the same type of damage. Fettered entities suffer lethal damage each turn their Fetter maintains contact with the Bane. Entities of 2 Ranks higher than their opponent also function as Banes.

Anchors

Anchors are people, places, and objects binding a ghost to the living world. A ghost without quickly descends into the Underworld. Shades possess no Anchors, substituting freshly spilled blood for the Anchor Condition for Manifestation purposes.

Influence

Each entity has Influence over certain phenomena, possessing dots equal to Rank, which also determines their maximum level in a given Influence. Ghosts usually possess Influences related to their Anchors, while shade Influences generally relate to shadows or their Vices. Using Influence requires Essence expenditure equal to level and a Power + Finesse roll, which may be contested or resisted by affected characters. Level increases both with effect and duration.

Level Effect

- Strengthen: Enhance or reinforce the subject, or shift Anchor to Open Condition.
- Manipulate: Cause minor changes in subject or its behavior.

••• Control: Cause major changes in subject or its behavior, or shift the Open Condition to Controlled.

•••• Create: Create new specimen or apply the Anchor Condition.

••••• Mass Create: Create multiple new specimens up to Rank, or one permanent specimen.

Level	Duration	Additional Essence
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0	One minute per success	N/A
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•	10 minutes per success	N/A
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••	One hour per success	+1
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•••	One day per success	+2
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••••	Permanent	+2
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Manifestation

Ephemeral entities require certain abilities and circumstances to influence the material world or move from one realm to another. Manifestations require Power + Finesse rolls to utilize, often costing Essence. Ghosts and shades begin with Twilight Form and additional Manifestations equal to Rank.

Manifestation Conditions

Anchor: Within Rank x 3 yards of their Anchors, ghosts don't suffer Essence Bleed.

Claimed: As the merging commences, the entity is safe from Essence Bleed, and living hosts suffer the Urged Condition. Each day, one dot of the entity's Attributes is added to one of the host's Attributes of the same category, causing physical mutation of the body. Corpses and inanimate objects receive Attributes the same way, but Mental and Social Attributes begin at 0. Upon completion of the merge, the host takes on the entity's Virtue, Vice, Ban, and Bane. The Claimed may use the entity's Influences, but not Manifestations or Numina, though some develop supernatural powers as Merits. If the entity departs (requiring Power + Finesse – Rank contested by the Claimed hybrid's Resolve + Composure) the host immediately loses all Essence and supernatural powers and two dots of the added Attributes each day, though the entity's Virtue and Vice remain. Nonliving hosts lose one Physical Attribute dot every three days once the Claim is completed, crumbling to dust upon reaching 0 and releasing the entity into Neter-Khertet.

Controlled: A subject with the Open Condition has been Possessed by the same entity on a number of separate occasions equal to the higher Willpower of the entity or the subject.

Fettered: Within five yards of the subject, the entity doesn't suffer Essence Bleed and pays one fewer Essence when using Influences on the Fetter. The entity cannot use Influences or Numina on anything else.

Materialized: The entity becomes physical, remaining safe from Essence Bleed. This persists for one hour per success. Materialized entities must roll Rank successfully each turn to maintain the Condition when touching their bane.

Open: The subject is conditioned to accept an entity's use of Fetter or Materialize.

Possessed: The entity controls the subject, rendering their mind unconscious. The entity doesn't suffer Essence Bleed, but cannot use Influences or Numina. The body can be repaired for 1 Essence per wound, but aggravated damage cannot be healed this way. The entity reads the host's mind with a Finesse roll at a -4 penalty, uses their Physical Skills at a -3 penalty or their Mental or Social Skills at a -4 penalty, reducing penalties by one for each day Fettered to the host. Possession lasts for one scene.

Underworld Gate: A gate into the Caverns of Neter-Khertet opens, permitting passage. Ghosts regain 1 Essence per scene.

Urged: The entity reads its host's surface thoughts with Power + Finesse, contested by Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. The entity urges specific actions with Power + Finesse rolls contested by Resolve + Composure +1. The host gains a Beat by following the urge.

Manifestations

Twilight Form: The entity exists in a frequency of Twilight appropriate to its nature, such as Neter-Khertet for ghosts and escaped fiends. This effect costs nothing.

Discorporate: The entity discorporates itself as though it had lost all Corpus, usually to escape a greater threat. This effects costs nothing.

Avernian Gateway: (Requires Open Condition) The entity opens a nearby gateway into the Caverns of Neter-Khertet by spending 3 Essence, applying the Underworld Gate Condition to the location.

Image: (Requires Anchor Condition) The Twilight form becomes visible to material beings for 1 Essence per scene.

Materialize: (Requires Open Condition) For 3 Essence, the entity gains the Materialized Condition.

Fetter: (Requires Open Condition) For 2 Essence, the entity gains the Fettered Condition. Living beings contest with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance, suffering the Urged Condition if the entity wins.

Unfetter: (Requires Fettered Condition) For 1 Essence, the entity suppresses the Fettered Condition for a scene. Entities separated from their Fetter when the duration ends go dormant.

Possess: (Requires Open Condition) For 3 Essence, the entity takes temporary control over a target, applying the Possessed Condition. Living subjects resist with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance.

Claim: (Requires Controlled Condition, Fetter, and Possess) For 5 Essence, the entity merges with a target, gaining permanent control and applying the Claimed Condition. Living targets resist with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance.

Numina

Numina are supernatural abilities possessed by ephemeral entities. Most require Power + Finesse rolls to activate. Storytellers may substitute appropriate Dread Powers for Numina and where it benefits the story, permit Amkhata the use of Numina in place of Dread Powers, requiring they roll Power + Rank in place of Power + Finesse for most activations.

Blast

The entity wounds opponents at a distance. Range is equal to 10 yards per dot of Power, suffering no range penalties. The Blast wounds as a lethal weapon. The entity increases the lethality of this weapon by one for 2 Essence, up to a maximum of its Rank.

Dement

The entity tortures its victim's mind. This Numen costs 1 Essence, and is contested by the victim's Intelligence + Supernatural Tolerance. If successful, the entity inflicts the Insane Tilt for the scene.

Drain

The entity steals Essence or Willpower (chosen at activation) from a material being. The roll is contested by Stamina + Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. Whichever character wins steals points equal to successes from their opponent.

Hallucination

The entity inflicts illusions on a single target. The Numen costs 1 Essence, and is contested by the victim's Wits + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. Each success over the victim's alters one sense.

Implant Mission

This Numen grants a vision and determination to fulfill a task the entity wishes accomplished. The entity rolls Power + Finesse, spending 2 Essence. Success inflicts a vision of the mission, imposing the Obsession Condition.

Innocuous

The entity is easily overlooked. Perception rolls to notice it suffer a -2 penalty. This requires no roll or cost to activate.

Regenerate

The entity heals Corpus with Essence, spending 1 Essence per turn to heal a point of bashing or lethal damage, healing bashing first. No roll is required.

Sign

The entity creates messages or images in media as a mortal would, sending audible messages over a phone or tracing words in dust. The Numen costs 1 Essence to create a single message.

Telekinesis

The entity lifts or throws physical objects without Manifesting. This Numen costs 1 Essence, with successes becoming the effective Strength.

The Shuankhsen

The Rite of Return was not free.

Wailing fields of slaves, crucified as fuel for Shan'iatu sorcery, those bound burned alive atop mass Nubian graves underneath. Weeping children buried behind the walls of temples before the whole complex is brought down upon them. The Arisen cannot fathom the cost of their special world, but the Shuankhsen remember. They remember everything.

Every death and doorway, every love lost, every ounce of flesh torn from their bodies by the Deathless, every painful resurrection thereafter. The crevassed, twisted faces of screaming sorcerers, and the menacing Arisen who brought down the cult 300 years ago, or 20 years from now. The chains are tightened, Ammut must be obeyed, and in their curse, the Shuankhsen find solace in vengeance.

Ammut, the Devourer

More than anything else, the Shuankhsen remember her — the end of beginnings and endings, the eternal Devourer at the bottom of Duat's deepest chasms, always waiting to consume them again, and again, and again. Every new death leads to her, but no death is final. The scales tipped by the Shan'iatu are perpetually balanced by her Shuankhsen. Ammut is technically their Judge, but the Shuankhsen consider her more as the true god — entropy.

It's hard for the Bane Mummies to see anything as new anymore. Even the virus at the top of the mortal food chain is cursed to mark the passage of time with the withering of their bodies, the shrinking of their minds, the self-destruction of their worlds. Their peace is always an illusion, a different sort of war fought by bankers and profiteers. No matter how tranquil the world seems at times, the centuries-old, teetering infrastructures once constructed by dead men will inevitably collapse underneath the weight of their great-grandchildren, who in turn construct new worlds to rise and perish at the behest of a Deathless vision. All goes to the Devourer.

Curse of Silence

Ammut devoured more than just their souls, but also their willingness to speak of their memories. Where the Shuankhsen would find frustration, anger, and a desire for reprisal against their maker, instead she placed fear without a safety net. They do not know what will happen if they speak out but they know *something* worse than their current plight would overcome them, and it's never worth it.

Sekhem Curdling

Contrary to the Arisen's surgical approach in guiding modern civilization, the Shuankhsen replace the natural order with chaotic balance by unleashing great bouts of twisted Sekhem upon unsuspecting populations. Words are whispered in private ritual, and the dead rise around the city. Glyphs are empowered by twisted magic, and airplanes fall from the sky. Vessels are consumed, and swathes of mortals experience the same nightmarish vision – the one that brought them to your bunker, carrying rifles and hand grenades. The weapons may change, but the war wrought by the Deathless wages still.

Shuankhsen are spawned with a full 10 dots of Sekhem used to fuel occult rites and unnatural abilities, but the number immediately starts decreasing one point every day unless a human's life-force has been devoured, usually through the consumption of their still-beating heart.

Burdens of the Devourer

Shuankhsen gain 10 Willpower when created, yet while the Deathless gain both Burden and Balance, Shuankhsen are cursed with only the Burden, appropriate to their nature. The following are examples of Lifeless Burdens.

Avenger: The Shuankhsen was wronged by an Arisen, and will stop at nothing to destroy them, often waiting millennia before their nemesis rises once more. Regain Willpower when they inflict physical or emotional pain upon their enemy.

Destroyer: The mortal machinations of the world, properly guided by Arisen drones, should be stopped or destroyed. Regain Willpower when the Shuankhsen directly interferes with the Arisen infrastructure inherent in the mortal world.

Zealot: Ammut is no slaver, but a liberator, and her will must be expressed to any who will listen, and especially to those who refuse. Regain Willpower whenever an Arisen is hindered, harmed, or converted to Shuankhsen using a Bane Relic.

Attributes, Skills, and Pillars

Shuankhsen gain between 3 and 12 dots in Pillars depending on their potency. Their defining Pillar must house more dots than any other, and their Remnant Pillar (the sliver of who they were before Ammut devoured them) must contain 1 or more dots. Any remaining dots can be spread across other Pillars. Defining Pillars and Remnants are decided by choosing one Bane Rite and one Bane Affinity.

Shuankhsen begin with one free dot in each Attribute and gain 16 additional dots to be freely distributed. The standard maximum limitation of five dots in a single Attribute applies. To illustrate the Shuankhsen's ability to remember age-old incarnations, all Bane Mummies gain 25 dots to be freely distributed into Skills, and three accompanying Specialties. Lastly, Shuankhsen have the same 10 dots in Merits as Arisen, and gain the Eidetic Memory (••) Merit for free.

Bane Rites

Bane Rites are doorways to powerful change in the surrounding world, and Shuankhsen cults are the key. They determine a Shuankhsen's defining Pillar, as well as broad features of their cult and goals. Shuankhsen begin with the Rite of Eternal Chains and Rite of the Lost Cause, before selecting one more from the list underneath. Over time, the mummy may accumulate more Bane Rites, providing her with unmatched powers and interesting, multi-faceted cults.

Rite of Eternal Chains

The chief servant to the Shuankhsen is a rotting, twisted mirror of the Sadikh, bound to its master for eternity. The Fasad is awake while their master walks the Earth, and dismissed into incorporeal dormancy in those eras in between, but nothing stops their bodies and minds from rotting away after eons of servitude. All Shuankhsen may transform an invested being into a Fasad using the Rite of Eternal Chains.

Enduring the Rite of Eternal Chains automatically grants Fasad characters The Gift of Years Merit at a dot level equal to the defining Pillar of their Shuankhsen. Instead of applying the Merit's dots to Social Merits, the Fasad may spend them on Cult Merits (p. XX).

Action: Instant, performed on a willing cultist in which they have invested Pillars.

Cost: 3 Pillar points

Dice Pool: Remnant + Pillars Invested

Suggested Modifiers: Participant is willing (+1), participant is a Sorcerer (+2), participant is already bound to another master (-1 to -5, depending on their status).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: A Fasad is created, but the twisted rite of the Sadikh connects them to the nearest Arisen instead. The Shuankhsen is clueless to this twist, but the Arisen is not.

Failure: The rite fails, the participant dies, and the Shuankhsen regains any invested Pillars.

Success: A Fasad is created. You can see through their eyes as a Reflexive Action, and dismiss or conjure them from wisps of mystical air as an Instant Action.

Exceptional Success: Success applies, and some of the cultist's power is imbued into the Shuankhsen master. Gain one dot in any Pillar of your choice. When the Fasad is destroyed, the dot gained turns into 4 dots for one scene, at the end of which you lose it. You may only have one Fasad at a time.

Rite of the Lost Cause

Like the Arisen, Shuankhsen invest their Pillars in cultists, though the effects on those chosen are often as visceral and horrifying as they are empowering.

Action: The Rite of the Lost Cause is an Instant action. The Shuankhsen and her target must make physical contact and recite Iremite words in unison.

Cost: Pillar points for investment

All-Seeing Eye: Shuankhsen can see through the eyes of their invested followers using a reflexive action.

Powers of the Devourer: The Shuankhsen gains a Bane Rite or Bane Affinity (but not the associated Pillar points). They can only do this with one investment.

Pillar Recovery: A Shuankhsen may remotely reclaim any unspent Pillar Points from Invested Cultists at any time. This is a reflexive action.

Inverted Geometry: Cultists with invested Pillars give off strange and unnatural emotional bouts which affect the entire cult. The effects depend not on the Pillar invested, but the Shuankhsen's Remnant. Some examples follow:

- **Ab:** Rending, cannibalistic horrors
- **Ba:** Hive-minded, relentless zealots
- **Ka:** Flesh-eaten, rotting vessels of death
- **Ren:** Brash outlaws, as stupid as they are disloyal
- **Sheut:** Mute, decrepit beings without self-purpose

Mortal Sacrifice: Invested Mortals happily provide their master with their own body if needed. All invested Pillar Points are returned to the Shuankhsen upon their deaths, or their master may claim their body using the Body-snatcher Bane Affinity (p. XX).

Ashen Sorcerers: Sorcerers may conduct their master's Bane Rites. If the Shuankhsen is still present, the rite's effects are tripled.

Festering Fasad: Invested Fasad may manifest and use their master's Bane Affinities (p. XX).

Bane Immortal: When invested, blood-bathers, body thieves, and other immortals gain a Bane Affinity of their own (but not the associated Pillar points).

Bring the Flood (Sheut)

The waters rise, and with them the dead. Sekhem clots in the sternums of corpses, where mortal hearts once stood beating, and toppled headstones soon leer over pockmarked cemeteries. Even Arisen are not immune to this necromancy.

Action: Extended (5 successes, each roll representing one minute)

Cost: 4 Pillar points

Dice Pool: Remnant + Occult

Suggested Modifiers: Runes or scrawled dedications to Ammut mar all visible surfaces (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite's power inverts, killing all mortals within a 100-yard radius.

Failure: The rite fails, though sporadic dead still rise, albeit without loyalty. The Shuankhsen may spend 3 Sekhem to downgrade this to a dramatic failure.

Success: Rivers flood, sewage overflows, and other waters under the earth rise to the surface. The dead are raised in a one-mile radius for a number of hours equal to the number of successes rolled, and are completely loyal to you. Arisen raised by this rite are not loyal to the Shuankhsen, but begin their Descent at a lower Sekhem rating, absent their Kepher for scenes equal to the Shuankhsen's Sheut. Use the stat block for the Lifeless Thrall (see p. XX) for the risen dead. This power causes the Flooded Tilt (see p. XX).

Exceptional Success: The success still applies, and the number of dead raised is tripled.

Cult: Amateur necromancers are easy to recruit once they've seen that raising dead isn't something reserved for television, and they rarely put a cap on their efforts once they're a part of the team. Many lose their fear of death, experimenting on themselves using their masters power to save or prolong their own lives.

Rite of Charon (Ren)

You pull the veils of the world apart, opening a doorway between material and Twilight. Shuankhsen cannot traverse into Neter-Khertet, but their cultists can, allowing for the tracking of Arisen back to their tombs during their time between Descents. Not to mention, the denizens beyond who desire unleashing into the mortal world.

Action: Extended (10 successes, each roll representing one hour)

Cost: 5 Pillar points

Dice Pool: Remnant + Occult

Suggested Modifiers: Another immortal assists the endeavors from inside Neter-Khertet (+2), Ammut disapproves of the ritual (-3)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The energies of Neter-Khertet infuse themselves into the Shuankhsen, transforming them into an abhorrent monstrosity — a Rank 5 Amkhat.

Failure: The frequencies of Twilight are stymied, causing the Amkhat's Curse Tilt in the area. The Shuankhsen may spend 1 Sekhem to downgrade this to a dramatic failure.

Success: A portal between worlds is opened for a number of minutes equal to the Shuankhsen's Sekhem after using this rite (minimum 1).

Exceptional Success: Success applies, and a loyal Rank 3 Amkhat or two Rank 1 Amkhata are summoned through to the material world.

Cult: Mortal occultists and rogue scientists from Last Dynasty International both find their way into these cults, pursuing discovery and technology above all else. With great knowledge comes even better gear, such as gigantic supercomputers built to stymie otherworldly frequencies, or armories of harpoon rifles meant to restrain large creatures from material and beyond.

Rite of the Onyx Amulet (Ab)

Iremite Relics are converted into tainted shadows of their former glory, harming those Deathless who claim them, and transform others into Ammut's own Shuankhsen. This rite exists only in whispers and sacrosanct teachings, and what is universally known is very little.

Action: Extended (number of weeks equal to the vessel's Sekhem)

Cost: Iremite Relic, or 3 Pillar points and a Vestige

Dice Pool: Sheut + Occult

Suggested Modifiers: The vessel is a vestige (-3), the vessel is a Relic of Irem (+3), sacrifices involved are willing participants (+1).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Volatile Sekhem explodes outward in a radius of 25 yards per point of Sekhem infused in the targeted vessel, dealing 3(A) to all within range.

Failure: The rite fails and the vessel is drained of Sekhem. The Shuankhsen may spend 1 point of Sekhem to downgrade this to a dramatic failure.

Success: The targeted relic becomes a Bane Relic, deformed in a way appropriate to the nature of the Shuankhsen — dark cracks spiderweb across its surface, colorful glyphs turn black, gems and gold crack like fragile glass, or something else the Storyteller deems viable for the chronicle. Reduce its Sekhem to 1.

Exceptional Success: The Bane Relic is created without damaging the Sekhem inside.

Cult: Bane Relics find use in the hands of tainted immortals attached to the Shuankhsen's cause. Those who would rather spring traps before engaging in showdowns frequent these cults, as do many with underlying motivations beyond their Shuankhsen ally's.

What do Bane Relics Do?

Bane Relics deal 1(A) per dot to any non-Shuankhsen who activates them and are theoretically used in secretive rites to convert Arisen into the children of Ammut. Outside of these powerful weapons against the Arisen, the most lethal facet is that the Deathless can still perceive them with Kepher. Perhaps the Shuankhsen use Bane Relics to draw Deathless, trap them, and convert them to Ammut's children. What if a Bane Relic were made to not harm Arisen, but trick them? What happens when Arisen bring one back to their tombs, or to Duat? What will the Judges have to say?

Vitriolic Souls (Ba)

The Shuankhsen bleeds curdled Sekhem into the local human consciousness, coercing the denizens of a city block into a rage. The mummy isolates themselves and their cult in a state of permanent ritual, inspiring fury in a meret, neighborhood, apartment building, or similar.

Action: Extended (one roll per day of desired activity)

Cost: 4 Pillar points

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Remnant – 1 for each ten mortal targets beyond the first ten, reducing the dice pool by the highest Composure among all targets of the rite. Whole crowds can be affected in this way while only a handful are targeted by this power.

Suggested Modifiers: The targeted group already displays symptoms of the expressed emotion (+1), emotions spread are contrary to the sway of supernatural powers or major current events (-5).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power backfires, and immortals themselves are targeted. For one turn, all Arisen are controlled by the Storyteller.

Failure: The rite fails, but a single target determined by the Storyteller is consumed by the unnatural power they felt. They gain the Obsessed Condition and are considered to be invested by the Shuankhsen. You may spend 3 Sekhem to downgrade this roll to a dramatic failure.

Success: The targets gain the Obsession Condition for one week beyond the ritual.

Exceptional Success: The effect spreads to double the area and targeted populace, granting the targets the Obsession Condition for a month beyond the ritual. In addition, the Shuankhsen may choose to spread a completely different emotion, such as cowardice or complacency.

Cult: Gangland criminals and violent security contracting companies serve as black-baggers and brutal interrogators for these Shuankhsen cults, profiting heavily in cash and illicit goods in the process.

Rite of the Storm (Ka)

The mummy draws the electrical currents from the sky into a violent storm. Electronic devices go dead in a five-mile radius, modern vehicles stall out, and airplanes fall from the sky.

Action: Extended (10 successes, each roll representing one hour)

Cost: 4 Pillar points

Dice Pool: Remnant + Subterfuge

Suggested Modifiers: There is already a storm outside (+1), multitudes of radios tuned to the same occult frequencies surround the ritual (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Everyone within 100 yards is dealt 3(A) from a barrage of destructive lightning.

Failure: The frequencies of Twilight are disrupted by the rite, drawing numerous ghosts and spirits to serve the Shuankhsen like moths to a lampshade. You may spend 2 Sekhem to downgrade this roll to a dramatic failure.

Success: The Shuankhsen sees through all digital camera devices in the area, hacking into security feeds and data networks, and collecting all information transferred. She may spend 1 Sekhem to upgrade this roll to an Exceptional Success.

Exceptional Success: Success applies, and the storm rains the element mercury instead of water.

Cult: Anarchist radio personalities and potential scientists lost to vast and ridiculous conspiracies are often brought into the fold to hack into television and radio frequencies, finding signs and information for the Shuankhsen.

Bane Affinities

Bane Affinities provide powerful abilities to thwart the Deathless. In addition to the Body-snatcher and Jaws of the Devourer Bane Affinities, choose one of the following Bane Powers, keeping in mind the Remnant provided must not match the defining Pillar determined by the chosen Bane Rite. Finally, Shuankhsen gain standard Affinities equal to their Remnant.

Body-snatcher

Shuankhsen have no Sahu of their own, instead claiming mortal corpses. Still, the wounds wrought during the Shan'iatu's betrayal show upon the Shuankhsen. Broad lacerations across the trachea scab over and ooze with putrid green pus, and broken ribcages still splinter from their chest cavity where the heart was pulled through.

Effect: Spend 1 point from any Pillar to transfer their consciousness into an invested mortal body, or into the nearest mortal corpse. This may automatically be used before the Shuankhsen loses or spends their last point of Sekhem.

Jaws of the Devourer

Ammut's first gift to the Shuankhsen was the ability to consume Sekhem by devouring the individual or vessel possessing it. Doing so strengthens the Lifeless mummy, and is one of the few things that might totally destroy an Arisen. Due to the rate at which Sekhem is consumed using this power, it's more likely for a Shuankhsen to take several bites from an Arisen and then return after the mummy's sahu has recovered, or somehow incapacitate the mummy so the feeding is protracted.

Effect: Spend 1 point from any Pillar for your jaws to widen, your teeth to extend, and for you to gain the ability to gain Sekhem from consumed bodies or vestiges. This Affinity remains in play for the scene's duration.

In combat, the Shuankhsen may bite enemies without grappling, as if using a weapon with a damage rating of 2(A), employing Brawl as a Skill. Every time the Shuankhsen inflicts 3 or more points of aggravated damage using Jaws of the Devourer, the mummy drains a level of Sekhem from the victim, if they have any, and gains it themselves. Subsequent attacks are required to gain further Sekhem. If the victim runs out of Health, further bites take no further Sekhem.

Once the victim has run out of Sekhem, one subsequent successful bite using Jaws of the Devourer enables the Shuankhsen to steal a *dot* from the victim's Pillars, if they have any. Subsequent bites convey no further benefits beyond destruction of the victim's body.

A Shuankhsen can use this Affinity to consume a mortal's heart, and even if they didn't possess Sekhem, the Shuankhsen gains a *point* in a Pillar of their choice. This Affinity is the only way a Shuankhsen can cannibalize a vessel, otherwise following the same rules as Arisen and immortals (see p. XX).

Schism of Flesh

Your flesh tears, and your bones split, horribly reshaping into a ferocious monstrosity.

Effect: Spend 1 Sekhem per Rank of Amkhat you wish to transform into as a Reflexive Action.

Remnant: Ab or Ba

Curse: The transformation takes its toll on your mind and memories. Lose 1 Beat, and you cannot regain Beats for the remainder of this ability's Decay.

Decay: The hidden beast within calls you, boiling forth after one month. You become a Rank 3 Amkhat at this time, under the Storyteller's control. You may trigger this Decay earlier by becoming a Rank 5 Amkhat instead. When this Amkhat is "destroyed," you instead revert to your previous self, but with the Disabled Condition for a number of hours equal to the Amkhat Rank you chose.

Sekhem Clot

You manipulate the Sekhem within lifeforms and Arisen, rendering them useless, or keeping it for yourself.

Remnant: Ka or Ren

Effect: Spend 2 Sekhem to give a target the Immobilized Condition, or spend 5 Willpower to steal 2 Sekhem from a Deathless in line of sight.

Decay: The Sekhem within you begins to clot as well, granting you the Disabled Condition for one month, or until a supernatural (not mundane) cure is used.

Swarm Messenger

Remnant: Sheut

Effect: Swirling sands, swarms of locusts, or other violent energies appropriate to the mummy's nature manifest around her at will, manipulated to display her visage, and their voice is heard in unnatural tones. This manifestation inflicts the Shaken Condition and any appropriate Sybaritic

effects on mortal witnesses. Roll Presence + Expression + Remnant to appear in this way wherever an applicable Fasad is located. The expression lasts for a number of minutes equal to successes rolled.

Roll Dexterity + defining Pillar vs. Sheut to transform these elements into shadowy talons, claws, blades, tentacles, spikes, or another visage appropriate to the mummy's personality at an enemy. If successful, deal 2(A), increased to 3(A) in areas of near-total darkness, and the target gains the Damaged Pillar Condition.

Decay: Using this power grants the Skincrawler Tilt to anyone within line of sight, and those affected give the contagion to any they touch for the next week.

Sample Shuankhsen

The following is an example Shuankhsen for your chronicle.

Tiye, Bringer of the Storm

She remembers. She watched as a meret of Deathless breached her tomb, obliterated her cult, and sent her back to Ammut. She recalls her dismemberment at the hands of their brutal Utterances, the screams of those mortals with which she had bonded herself, centuries from now. Here in the present is where she finds her chance to stop the Arisen ahead of time, before they ever hope to accomplish their goals.

Her cult of amateur scientists and audio engineers — not yet destroyed — has scouted out the locations of those Arisen tombs which will someday play a part in her demise, but the way in is not yet clear. Spearheading efforts to surveil the activity and possible threats around these tombs, her favored sorcerer, Belville has discovered strange frequencies emanating from within their sacred geometry. With enough time and power, Belville believes the signal could be traced to other realms beyond material. This is all the information Tiye needed.

Neter-Khertet, the world beyond, holds the answer, and she can't help but see this opportunity as a gift from her Devourer; sands of fate, guiding her to freedom beyond the mirage. Once passage is opened, legions of Amkhata wait to be unleashed into the world.

Description: Tiye inhabits the body of a deceased professor, though her wrists are scarred with blackened brands where she was chained to an Iremite crucifix. Her cult operates around an abandoned radio station used to trace mysterious signals and draw other cultists to the lair. Her tomb resides in the basement.

Storytelling Hints: Depending on the era in question, Tiye might utilize a highly weaponized security contracting company as her cult, or swathes of Celtic warriors armed with simpler weapons and gear. Adjust her Skills and other features to fulfill the desired roles for your chronicle.

She desires revenge through time, but her plans are impossible. When it comes to her cult's destruction, what's done is done, but that won't stop her from trying, and destroying more than the Judges care to allow. It's possible she can control the Amkhata to some extent, but those monstrosities will inevitably overwhelm her. The attempt will take her life, and her next rebirth will be at the whims of an Arisen cult breaching her tomb.

Concept: Timeless Vendetta

Remnant: Ab

Judge: Ammut, The Devourer

Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 2; Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Skills: Brawl 2, Intimidation 4, Investigation 4, Occult (Twilight) 4, Persuasion 4, Science (Spectrums) 2, Subterfuge 2, Weaponry (Submachine Guns) 3

Bane Rites: Rite of Charon, Rite of Eternal Chains, Rite of the Lost Cause

Bane Affinities: Body-snatcher, Jaws of the Devourer, Schism of Flesh

Merits: Allies ••• (Academic Circle), Cult •••• (Reach 2, Grasp 2), Demolisher •, Eidetic Memory ••, Enigma ••, Tomb • (Geometry 1, Peril 3)

Willpower: 10

Burden: Avenger

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Sekhem: 10

Pillars/Turn: 1/1

Pillars: Ab 3, Ba 0, Ka 0, Ren (Invested: Belville, Sorcerer) 5, Sheut 2

The Judges

To the Arisen, the Judges seem the font of all authority and power. They are the adjudicators of the afterlife, divine demons beneath whose baleful gaze the trembling dead must pass to prove worthy of starry Aaru. They are the patrons and masters of the Timeless. They are holy monsters whose word and command returns the mummies of Irem from Duat.

So too are they enforcers of the codes of civilization. It is upon their condemnations that the foundations of righteous order are built. The groaning empire of bleak, tyrannical Irem was the first manifestation of that order in the world, but the Arisen see all subsequent civilizations as successors to Irem and inheritors of the Judges' statutes. Through this legacy, the Judges claim authority over all human existence.

Despite this mandate, the Judges do not always reflect the harmonious order of which they are supposedly the keepers. Few Arisen would claim to truly know the nature and reason of a Judge; it's much easier to surrender Memory to the flaying sands of Duat, to serve blindly and to accept the divine wisdom of the Judges as truth. Why, then, do Judges work at cross-purposes to one another? Why do these dead leviathans seek to subvert or manipulate each other's pawns, the Arisen? And why do the Judges intrude, at times, into the world of the living in direct and even apocalyptic fashion?

If the Arisen are dutiful servants, the Judges are less than conscientious masters. These ancient powers may invest their authority into the Deathless, but they are by no means friends or even allies to the Arisen. For a mummy who guards Memory from the scraping abrasions of time's grinding wheel, the evidence can grow ever more uncomfortable; even the Arisen balk when the alien will of the Judges manifests in the world.

Cruel Judgement

From the moment an Arisen declares herself before the Judge who most closely resonates with the pillars of her soul, she is inextricably bound to this throng of godlike monsters. Though distant and vast, the nightmare presence of the Judge always remains with her — watching, guiding, and sometimes castigating. Through Memory and Sekhem, the mummy struggles with her Judge for self-determination and volition. Despite the power invested in the Arisen, it is ultimately a contest between human will and the monolithic force of a mind that has never been remotely mortal and never will be.

The Arisen might manage to balance the monstrous demands of her own Judge and play the obedient slave. She's unlikely to manage this act with the 41 other Judges, the bizarre motley of insane thought-forms and broken shapes all jostling to impose their condemnations on the world. The Descent will inevitably come where the Arisen ends up at cross-purposes to one insane scheme or another, pitted against her fellow Deathless or a more direct manifestation of Duat's mad order. Whether caught between the clashing imperatives of two or more Judges, or simply facing an atrocity that she refuses to stand aside and allow, the Arisen finds herself squaring off against a god-monster from beyond the reach of life itself.

What foe could be more terrible than the very judges of sin themselves?

Fate and Blood

It's difficult to genuinely predict what will provoke the direct manifestation of a Judge into the world. The assessors of Ma'at clearly follow cosmic laws beyond the ken of the Arisen. They cannot simply exude an emanation or avatar into the world at will, and doing so seems to greatly cost these divine beings. Judges with large followings among the Arisen are less likely to issue forth an emanation; they clearly prefer to rely on Deathless servitors where they can. The necessity for a human vessel at the heart of each emanation is a puzzling limitation given the Judges' supposed cosmic power, and even a furious Judge is sometimes unable to reach into the world regardless of how much it may desire to do so.

Judges never issue forth a manifestation without some purpose, however inscrutable. The place of the Judges is Duat, and it takes effort both to reach into the world of the living and to retain such a grasp. During times of great bloodshed, when the fabric of reality saturates under the sheer weight of souls passing beyond, the assessors of Ma'at find it easier to impress their leviathan desires into the world — but even when the gates of death are slick with gore, the Judges do not act without implacable intent.

Condemnation

An ancient terror of Duat turns in its unliving slumber, stirring with a sliver of outrage. The god's dreaming will senses an affront to its purpose, and it reaches into the living world. Something far worse than Sybaris takes hold throughout the city; wild-eyed mobs lynch those who transgress against whatever bizarre code the Judge fiercely guards. Amid the panic and

disorder, a mad prophet screeches the coming of an old divinity. Soon enough his flesh splits in scorpion apotheosis, a vessel for the god's nightmare to beach itself upon reality.

Judges sometimes intrude into the world to directly challenge perpetrators of the very crimes they are supposed to assess in Duat. This is most common among Judges who lack Arisen servants to carry out such condemnations on their behalf, and above all among Judges who are, for want of a better term, seen by the Arisen as dormant. How and why a Judge deems a particular transgression to be worthy of response isn't entirely clear, and many atrocities pass without attention from any of the 42.

Arisen are often caught in the crossfire of such a condemnation. Manifestations sow chaos and can weaken or even break Deathless cults just by proximity. A Judge's monomaniacal focus on its particular transgression usually doesn't extend to respecting the codes of the other 41; a massacre spurred by the fury of Maa-Nantuuf, the Seer of What Is Brought Forth, may result in Am-Khaibit dispatching Arisen to prosecute the agents of Maa-Nantuuf's will. Sometimes this clash of insane bureaucracy even occurs among the followers of a single Judge. Many of the 42 overlook perpetration of the very crime they oversee when performed in the course of duty, but with seeming caprice they sometimes *don't*. A Deathless can end up ordered to by her Judge to quell its own manifestation.

Some manifestations of condemnation are directly aimed at one of the Arisen. Crimes that echo across the ages, sins committed again and again through the cycle of Descent so often that they engrave themselves on the Deathless soul even as Memory corrodes away all recollection of the act, are a gleaming lure to the fury of the Judges.

For the Arisen who dares to question the will of the Judges, these manifestations are a challenge to the idea of Duat's righteous order. The Judges' place is in that dismal realm assessing the souls of the dead, not meddling with the still-living. Loyal apologists suggest the Judges are the font of all order and righteousness and, thus, their remit extends to corrective action in all realms so as to ensure the continuation of civilization and due recognition of that which is holy. It's harder to cling to that servile explanation when the entire neighborhood is spitting up lion-faced scorpions that scream your crimes.

Hunger

A rich bounty of Sekhem coagulates, an unclaimed bounty of relics pricking the hunger of a Judge. While the Arisen slaves of other assessors work to plunder the trove, the Judge's *need* spills into reality as a nauseating wave of subtle disquiet among the human population. Soon enough, a rich magnate turns his immense wealth and influence towards claiming the relics, the hunger in his gut serving as proxy to the appetite of a god.

The Arisen serve their Judges by claiming vessels of Sekhem from the world, offering these treasures up to Duat as a tithe to the holy order of the gods. Few question why the Judges demand such a toll from the vital energy of the world, or to what purpose they put it. Not every Judge has a grand retinue of Arisen to pay its dues, though, nor does every mummy stirred to claim such an item succeed before Duat claims her once more.

Lacking other options, Judges sometimes slake their thirst for Sekhem directly. A manifestation where the pure life force of the world runs deep and rich lets the Judge drink that power away into itself. In some cases, an emanation gluts itself upon a limited store of Sekhem, then retreats once more as frustrated Arisen pick over the drained remnants of its banquet. Occasionally,

where the geomancy of Deathless tombs or stranger natural forces saturate a region with Sekhem, the manifestation is longer lasting. A Judge may even go after the collected relics of an Arisen who is slave to one of the assessor's peers, consuming the mummy's eldritch treasures or snatching a relic away before it can be sacrificed to such a rival.

For Arisen, the hungering intercession of a Judge is a problem. Acting with absolutely no care for any existing politics or understandings among Deathless and immortals, a Judge's manifestation will hungrily loot accrued treasures or race to seize a particular prize. If the appearance of one emanation draws the attention of other Judges, several hungry avatars may end up clashing with Utterances and wild abandon, less like gods and more like bestial harbingers of the apocalypse.

Rivalries

The Arisen returns to his tomb, satisfied his duty is done. He finds it decorated in the shucked, bloody skins of his cultists, each painted with Iremic denunciations of those who transgress. Something waits amid the spilled entrails and flayed corpses. *Join me*, it says, and the pillars of the world shake with the echo of its words.

Among the 42 crimes the Judges represent, some transgressions seem to overlap heavily, or are one and the same. Like feral dogs, the Judges pull at the carcass of the sinner, each claiming ownership of the soul over some fine distinction. Nebha is bane to those who deal in deception and lies, while Kenemti claims authority over those who commit transgressions of blasphemy — but Artem-Khet judges those who *use* deception to *commit* blasphemy, and so the third Judge meddles with the efforts of the other two, struggling for ascendancy. When a Judge manifests to further such a rivalry, it likely acts directly against the cults and Arisen of its peers, seeking to undermine or destroy them during a brief emanation.

The Arisen are a resource to the Judges, and so the assessors of Ma'at treat their Deathless slaves appropriately. They attempt to steal or subvert each other's servants, trade them back and forth in inscrutable bargains, or spitefully cripple the favored pets of rival gods. An Arisen may become the target of a Judge's manifestation because it wants to enlarge its retinue of Deathless, whether by the honey of offering boons if she switches allegiance, or the whip of bringing ruin to her cult and accomplishments alongside threats of further torment.

Renegades

One step ahead of his fellows, clinging to the precious revelations of his carefully-guarded Memory, the rogue Arisen seeks apotheosis. He's getting so close, but now the skin of the world bubbles and boils. Something vast and vengeful rises from the depths, pouring a fragment of itself into a human receptacle who will deliver its judgment even unto the land of the living.

The Judges deem some Arisen failures, unworthy to serve as vessels of divine order. In some cases, Arisen find themselves renegades through no obvious fault of their own, rejected or persecuted by the cosmic strictures due to falling short of an unknowable test imposed by uncaring gods. Usually, a renegade brings about condemnation more directly, rejecting the duties she owes Duat entirely, pursuing heretical beliefs, or polluting her own soul with the power of even darker, hungrier forces than the morbid Judges. On rare occasions, a given Arisen becomes the prey to these jealous gods because she is simply too perfect and obedient; her own Judge may try to protect her, but rivals eagerly pursue her downfall.

Where a Judge has Arisen servants, it may set these eternal slaves on the trail of a renegade. Evading the Deathless long enough, or committing a particularly grievous transgression against a particular Judge, can provoke a heavier-handed response as a divine demon reaches into the shallows of reality and manifests its wrath.

Heralds of Duat

This section presents game mechanics for these manifestations of the Judges' will into the living world. Though divine beings of Duat, the Judges are capable of reaching beyond that dread realm to further their alien designs. Such manifestations are merely a sliver of the Judge's power, no more than a questing tendril. Even that is enough to make the fabric of reality weep and shudder, buckling beneath the warping might of such an intrusion.

Emanations

A Judge's presence is marked by an **emanation** — a widespread impression of its will into the world. Those caught within the emanation feel the inexorable pull of the Judge upon their minds and their bodies, an eldritch contamination that twists the laws of nature and humankind. Sekhem in the region drains away, and the whispering will of the Judge corrodes the bonds of Arisen cults. At the heart of every emanation is a **benbenet**, a chosen human or piece of sacred geometry that bears the Judge's **crown**, serving as the elder god's right hand in return for great power.

The emanation itself is represented through the Emanation Condition (see p. XX), applied to everyone across the area of the emanation's influence. Depending on the nature of the manifestation, this can be anything from a single tower block to an entire city, and isn't always contiguous in nature. An Arisen can immediately sense if she enters the area of an emanation, becoming aware that she is in the presence of a Judge — although she does not receive specific insight into which Judge or the purpose of the manifestation.

The sheer weight of a Judge's presence is corrosive to Arisen cults caught within an emanation. A cult that serves an Arisen of the manifesting Judge suffers no immediate penalties, but should the cult witness the Arisen disobeying, working against, or being reprimanded by the source of the emanation, they immediately incur the Shaken Faith Condition (see p. XX). Arisen cults that *don't* serve the Judge in question suffer the Shaken Faith Condition, as dreams, nightmares, and portents assail their devotion. Such cults suffer one lethal damage to their Fidelity after an hour of the emanation, another after a day, and thereafter two lethal damage every week that passes. Should the cult's Fidelity fill with lethal damage from any source and the cult enter a state of mutiny, its Doctrine derived from a Judge *immediately* switches to one reflective of the manifesting Judge, as heresy, confusion, and alien omens tear through the ranks. This new Doctrine remains until the cult is no longer filled with lethal or aggravated damage, and should the cult receive full aggravated damage, it becomes an independent and fanatically devoted tool of the manifesting Judge.

The weight of a Judge's presence always takes a psychological and spiritual toll on the wider human population as well. They see the twisted shapes of impossible chimera in their dreams, hear alien whispers writhing beneath words spoken to them by their co-workers, and feel a paranoid sense of being watched. The Emanation Condition imposes Integrity penalties and additional breaking points on humans as appropriate for the manifestation in question.

Sekhem in the area of the emanation drains away more swiftly. Arisen who follow any Judge other than the one issuing forth the emanation suffer a -2 penalty on all Descent rolls, and on any roll to draw Sekhem or activate the powers of a relic.

In order to establish an emanation, the Judge first opens a channel into a vessel — the benbenet. This is usually a human chosen as an exemplar of the Judge's nature, someone who possesses a deep loathing for or driving motivation to act against the same crime the Judge condemns, and who has anointed that dedication with blood, whether directly or indirectly. The benbenet might have performed that act through stabbing a transgressor to death or issuing the words in a court of law that consigned a criminal to execution; what matters is that she willingly sealed her devotion through the sacrifice of a human life. This is usually quite unwitting on the part of the benbenet, but some mortal sorcerers purposefully seek the attention of the Judge, desiring the power of its crown.

If a human, the benbenet is always someone at either the lofty heights or squalid foot of a symbolic pyramid of authority and power. She may be a grimy vagrant, seething with fury as passers-by spit on her in contempt, or she may be a sneering CEO atop a throne of subsidiaries and sycophants; the mantle of the Judges settles on Pharaohs and beggars, on magnates and sacrifices.

Other Forms of Benbenet

Most benbenet are humans, but rarely a Judge focuses its manifestation through another kind of vessel. Some are quite literal capstones, key parts of sacred geometry or symbolically significant architecture — quite possibly engineered for this purpose by an Arisen or a mortal occultist. Judges have channeled their power through vast skyscrapers made in mimicry of ancient obelisks, and poured their wrath along conduits of brick and water burbling beneath the feet of unwitting city-dwellers.

Sacred animals can also serve as a vessel. A sacred animal is a creature of grandeur or abject lowliness that receives praise and worship from a collection of humans — whether the actual zeal of a cult who believe the caged dog to which they feed corpses as a pariah to deflect the punishment for the murders they commit, or the devoted village community who simply believe the swans of the lake to be the real symbol of their community. As with a human benbenet, a sacred animal must have killed a human or had a human killed on its behalf.

Most rare of all are declarations, simple statements anointed by human death. An ancient scroll of curses, a stone-carved proclamation of defiance, or the glittering letters of a text message detailing those who must be called to account — what matters is not the medium, but the intensity of emotion felt in alignment with a Judge's portfolio, combined with a death to anoint the declaration. Some are immediate in effect; a man raises up his placard over the crowd and is shot by security forces, and as his blood spatters over it the writing pulses and judders. Others linger for long ages, only coming to light when an unfortunate discoverer unrolls a rusted curse-plate scratched with hateful denunciations from some fallen empire.

The emanation anchors itself on the benbenet through the Crown Condition (see p. XX), a mark of the Judge's ownership and the benbenet's authority. Characters with the ability to perceive Sekhem or the soul witness this crown as an uraeus of glowing vitality upon the benbenet's brow. The Crown grants the benbenet a number of benefits:

- She is unaffected by Sybaris, and she cannot be possessed or mentally compelled by supernatural forces; she is already the property of the Judge. In addition to any existing Vices, she gains the Vice of Vengeful or Judgmental.
- She gains 15 dots to allocate freely across her Attributes; these additional dots can raise her Attributes above 5.
- Her first impression when attempting a social maneuver against a human is improved by two steps.
- She gains access to the tier 1 powers of two Utterances, which she can activate by spending Willpower points rather than Pillar points. To determine their effects and any Pillar-related benefits, treat the benbenet as if she had all Pillars at 5.
- She gains additional Dread Powers or capabilities as per the specific manifestation that has crowned her.

Transformation through the Crown is a heady rush, an invigorating and life-changing metamorphosis. The benbenet becomes everything she was before, but *better* — a paragon of human potential. Alien words dance on her tongue like she was born to them. Her mind burns with ambition and a desire to *act*. A presence looms over her awareness as the Judge's will fuses to her own. The benbenet knows she's been chosen, and she knows her new purpose; indeed, acting against the Judge's desires requires the expenditure of a point of Willpower. She may misinterpret or misunderstand the nature of her divine transmogrification; some Judges clearly communicate their name and nature to their benbenet, but others leave the champion to understand what's happened through the lens of existing religious or philosophical beliefs.

Killing the benbenet, or somehow removing the Crown Condition from her, shatters the Judge's grasp and immediately brings an end to the manifestation. The manifestation may also end when the Judge has completed its task, or when it has become clear that such will be impossible.

Removing the Crown Condition leaves the survivor alive but deprived of the power she once wielded, and fully aware of all that happened to her. Some benbenet who survive in this way desperately seek out means to reclaim that power, grasping at any opportunity like an addict. Others, horrified by their experience now that they are no longer high on the Sekhem flowing through them, become devoted hunters of the Arisen, or pursue an occult path to better understand the events that have come to pass.

Avatars

Through an emanation, the Judge can issue forth a true **avatar** for a short period of time — a world-shaking herald of Duat's law. An avatar is physical and terrifyingly real, even if its presence contorts the natural principles of the world into weeping knots. Such a manifestation is fueled by Sekhem, and rapidly burns through the vital force to maintain its presence. The Judge uses the benbenet as the lynchpin through which it channels so much Sekhem, often at great cost to the chosen one's body and soul.

An avatar is but a shadow of the Judge's true might, yet it is still an instrument of colossal power. The manifestation of an avatar may be the ultimate purpose of the Judge's effort, or it might be spat forth in order to protect or maintain an existing emanation. The Judge can trigger the avatar's manifestation at any time once the emanation is established. The benbenet can call upon the Judge to do so, but has no control over whether the Judge delivers it.

With a flare of Sekhem, the benbenet undergoes a transfiguration into the avatar form over the course of one turn. While the avatar is present, the benbenet is entirely subsumed into its form for the duration of the manifestation, although she remains aware of everything that takes place.

The avatar operates under the following rules:

- It uses the simplified Attributes of a Rank 5 ephemeral entity (see **Chronicles of Darkness** p. 125), possessing 36-45 Attribute points, with the average Attribute ratings in the Power, Finesse, and Resistance sections governing their three trait ratings. None may be higher than 15. Its Corpus is equal to Resistance + Size and Defense is equal to whichever is lower of Power or Finesse. It is not considered to be an ephemeral entity and does not actually possess a Rank of any kind.
- The avatar does not possess Influences, Manifestations, or other supernatural powers associated with ephemeral entities. It is always manifest and tangible in the physical world.
- The avatar possesses the Sekhem trait, which is always 10 at the beginning of its manifestation.
- The avatar possesses two Utterances and any number of appropriate Dread Powers for its form. It uses Sekhem to activate Utterances, as below.
- The avatar inflicts a heightened version of its Emanation Condition on the immediate scene for as long as it remains.
- An avatar uses its Power + current Sekhem rating to determine its Clash of Wills pool.
- Judge avatars burn through Sekhem at a ferocious rate. For every scene the avatar remains active, it loses a dot of Sekhem. It may also employ any of the following capabilities at the cost of a dot of Sekhem:
 - Reduce **all** damage from a single source to one point of damage, although it retains its existing damage type.
 - Activate any or all tiers of a single Utterance it possesses. The avatar is considered to have all Pillars at 5 for the the purposes of calculating Utterance effects.
 - Immediately instigate a reflexive Clash of Wills against a single supernatural effect affecting it or that it is in contact with.

When an avatar runs out of Sekhem, or when its health track is filled with aggravated damage, its manifestation ends. The subsumed benbenet may, if she desires, maintain the avatar for additional turns by spending a point of Willpower each turn until she ceases or runs out.

The manifestation of an avatar takes a terrible toll on the benbenet. When the manifestation ends, the benbenet suffers 10 points of lethal damage, reduced by the number of successes rolled with the avatar's Power + Resistance. If the avatar was destroyed by damage, only its Resistance is

rolled. The benbenet may reduce the damage further by spending Willpower points on a one-for-one basis.

Once the emanation has extruded an avatar, it cannot do so again for some time. The avatar regains a point of Sekhem each day, and can be drawn through once more upon reaching Sekhem 10; this rate can be increased if the benbenet is able to drain Sekhem from relics or vestiges. Doing so requires the benbenet hold or touch a vessel for one turn per dot rating of the target. At the end of this period, the avatar regains one point of Sekhem for a vestige, or twice the dot rating of Sekhem for a relic, and the vessel is drained entirely of its power. A benbenet with a stockpile of potent vessels on-hand can potentially bring a defeated avatar back into the fight with alarming speed.

Sekhem Incantations

The avatars of the Judges are majestic, monstrous terrors. Each wields incredible such incredible power as to shake the foundations of reality, and even a meret of the Arisen must be cautious before these alien and hateful divinities. However, the Arisen do have a particular advantage they can bring to bear in what might otherwise be a foolhardy confrontation with an avatar. The Arisen were made as channels between Duat and the living world, while existence shudders and retches at the unnatural presence of a Judge's manifestation. An Arisen can wield the power of her own decree and her Sekhem to impose the might of her soul onto an emanation of Duat, shaping and reducing its presence but at potentially great cost.

As soon as an Arisen enters the area of an emanation, she becomes aware of the Sekhem incantation her decree can channel against the manifestation, and the offering that must be made to unlock it. She doesn't learn the specifics of the offering — for example, she may know she must offer the heart of the benbenet's loyal servant, but she has to find out who such a loyal servant might be, and indeed who the benbenet is, the hard way. Experienced Arisen with strong memories often know of the full range of Sekhem incantations, but a mummy can only ever bring forth that of her decree.

Each incantation is paired with an offering that the mummy must possess to use it. This often requires the Arisen to delve into the nature of the benbenet at the center of the emanation, investigating for secrets and symbols of the chosen one's nature and past. If the mummy possesses the offering, then in the presence of the manifestation's avatar she can spit forth her own Sekhem to empower the incantation of her decree for a brief, but perhaps vital, magical binding to lay on the avatar.

Using an incantation is a reflexive action on the mummy's turn. Each incantation affects a number of targets present in the scene up to the mummy's ruling Pillar value, and she can include herself as one of these targets. When she uses the incantation, she loudly announces her decree and infuses the spell with Sekhem; she must *immediately* make a Descent roll, meaning that these incantations can reap a terrible price from the Arisen's power. The incantation takes effect for the duration of *a single turn* for every target, regardless of the results of the Descent roll. To constrain and shape the power of an avatar is an act of incredible hubris and wise Arisen will make as much use of an incantation's brief benefit as they can.

A mummy can use an incantation as many times as she wants, although no more than once per turn, risking Sekhem loss each time.

The incantations are as follows:

Ashem: The offering is the *deepest fear* of the benbenet. This may be the knowledge of that which the benbenet most truly fears above all else, or it could be a physical representation of some terrifying phobia that grips her. The Ashem can use this fear to blind the avatar. By activating the incantation, the Aisen renders the incantation's targets entirely imperceptible to the avatar for a turn so that the avatar cannot see, hear, or even feel the touch of them, let alone sense them with supernatural capabilities.

Deshret: The offering is a *failed endeavor* of the benbenet. This could be a representation of something the benbenet strove to do yet could not, such as the skull of a lover she could not save or the deed to a property she lost, or the literal rubbish that's left from her attempt to craft something, but it must be a failure that was meaningful to the benbenet and that still hurts her when she recalls it. The Deshret can use this example of failure to pierce the avatar's defenses. By activating the incantation, the Aisen empowers the incantation's targets to strike at the avatar, so that the avatar cannot pay Sekhem to reduce the damage from any of the targets' attacks for a turn.

Kheru: The offering is a *symbol of majesty* of the benbenet. This could be an object representing the benbenet's authority over her minions — the nameplate off the CEO's desk, the rod of the cult leader — or some other personal item relating to her appearance and grandeur, but it must have real meaning for both the benbenet and those she influences. The Kheru can use this symbol of majesty to rebuke the avatar's very presence. By activating the incantation, the Aisen forces the avatar to move to avoid the incantation's target and move as far away from all of them as possible for a turn.

Nesrem: The offering is the *heart of a loyal servant* of the benbenet. This could be the literal blood-dripping heart torn from the chest of the benbenet's closest ally, or it could be the presence of a hitherto loyal minion who has had a change of heart and now wishes to aid the Aisen, but such a turning of allegiance must be real and genuine, and cannot be forced via magic. The Usheb can use this symbol of loyalty to turn aside the avatar's wrath. By activating the incantation, the Aisen protects the incantation's targets against the avatar's attacks, reducing the damage from any attack the avatar makes against them to one bashing damage for a turn.

Usheb: The offering is a *secret name* of the benbenet. This could be a moniker that they nurse great loathing for and want to forget, or a false identity that they hide illegal deals behind and keep separate from their usual life, but it must be a name that is not publicly or widely known as being connected to them. The Usheb can use this secret name to deny the power the avatar has over the world around it. By activating the incantation, the Aisen protects the incantation's targets against any and all effects of the avatar's heightened emanation for a turn.

The Sacrifice, Manifestation of An-Hotep

The Sacrifice is a manifestation of An-Hotep, the Bringer of Sacrifice. An-Hotep is Judge to those who would commit violence in order to perpetrate oppression or slavery. It has very few Aisen in its retinue, and possesses some antipathy to the notion of chaining an immortal being to servitude — a contradiction at the heart of its nature. An-Hotep is particularly prone to manifesting as a result, and the Sacrifice is its most common form.

Benbenet: She's chattel, a victim of human trafficking — an example of modern slavery hidden in the shadows of the city's gleaming spires, consigned to death to sate the sick fantasies of a wealthy 'client' when she's finally given the strength to bring the real balance due. He's a

downtrodden miner who pays the earth's cruel toll with his blood and limbs while the taskmaster glut themselves on the profits, brutalized by the police during a union strike — and then vengeful fervor takes utter grip of his soul. The Sacrifice stirs the benbenet to violent retribution, and gives the strength needed to do so — but the Judge does not care to help the downtrodden themselves, only for bloody revenge upon the condemned. It thrives upon the pain of the oppressed, the sense of loss, upon martyrdom for the cause.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet does not suffer wound penalties. Instead, she gains a number of bonus dice equal to the penalty she would normally suffer.

Emanation: Any character who suffers harm or injury at the hands of someone with more authority or power gains an additional Vice of Wrathful for as long as they remain in the emanation.

Avatar

The avatar of the Sacrifice appears as a bound and chained figure that hangs in the air, shackles and ropes leading away from it in all directions. No skin or flesh can be seen; the Sacrifice is entirely covered in cloth, not the grandeur of a mummy's embalming but the rough coverings of an execution victim. Dark ichor seeps up and stains patches of its cloth with gruesome filth. The limbs are too long to be human, as if wrenched out of their sockets, and they're bent and twisted at painful angles beneath the Sacrifice's bindings. The Sacrifice cannot speak, instead issuing a gurgling burble that sends rotting blood spilling from beneath its face-coverings in a torrent of gore and corruption.

As the Sacrifice drifts along, the tormented figure twitches and spasms, sometimes moving from one agonized pose to another without passing through any motions in between. Its very presence sparks the nerves with pain and leaves a taste of copper on the tongue. Victims of the Judge's malice end up like the wretched figure, snatched in its tangling coils of chain to hang alongside it like broken dolls.

Attributes: Power 14, Finesse 12, Resistance 13

Initiative: 25

Defense: 12

Size: 7

Speed: 21

Corpus: 20

Dread Powers: Armor ••, Constrict ••••, Reality Stutter

Utterances: Dust Beneath Feet, Rebuke the Vizier

Heightened Emanation: All wound penalties suffered by those present are doubled. Anyone who deals damage to either an unresisting victim or to the Sacrifice itself immediately suffers the same amount of damage dealt back to them, as their flesh rips away in flensing strips and blood fountains from their orifices.

The Sphinx, Manifestation of Neb-Heru

The Sphinx is a manifestation of Neb-Heru, the Lord Above. Neb-Heru is That Which Watches The Watchers, said to judge its fellow Judges, as well as claiming authority over all those who judge others in ill-conceived haste. Only a few, dedicated Arisen follow Neb-Heru, seen as distant and aloof even by their Timeless fellows. The Judge's manifestations often coincide with that of another of the 42, or appear in order to obstruct or foil the efforts of a Judge's Arisen servitors that have, for some reason, fallen foul of Neb-Heru's condemnation. The Sphinx is its preferred manifestation for these occasions, dispatched to directly detain and question any Arisen unlucky enough to cross its path.

Benbenet: She's a magistrate, seemingly with all the power and influence of judgement at her beck and call — but she's always felt held back by the very code of law she serves, that there's a distance between the practice of the courts and the ideal of justice itself. He's a criminal crushed beneath the blind wheels of order, bitter at his lack of agency in the face of a behemoth of bureaucracy — and truly contrite over the harm his grievous transgressions have caused to individuals. The Sphinx gives the benbenet the opportunity to exercise their own judgment, but does nothing to reign in their excesses, instead stoking the flames of their passions and self-confidence to unbearable levels. Upon confronting one of the Arisen, a benbenet of the Sphinx truly believes themselves worthy to do so — and likely seethes with resentment at the transgressions of a Timeless entrusted with such power.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet gains the rote quality on Empathy and Investigation rolls, and can glean information from either skill that is not readily apparent via physical evidence.

Emanation: Any character faced with a puzzle, question, or conundrum *must* attempt to answer or resolve it, and must spend a point of Willpower to avoid having to do so. Once she has spent Willpower in this way on a particular query or puzzle, she does not have to do so for that specific instance in future.

Avatar

The avatar of the Sphinx is a nightmare reflection of the creature's iconic image. The immense body of a lion is covered in scars that seep embers and tar, each ragged wound spelling out a glyph that tears at the mind when witnessed. Rather than proud majesty, the bestial form is withered and gnarled; the great humanoid head, bedecked in a corroded headdress, is near-skeletal in its gaunt appearance. That face is criss-crossed with sigils of glowing ink, the writing of a hundred baleful curses upon transgressors. All sense of perspective breaks down around the tottering beast; it rears over the horizon even as it bends and cracks its form to slither through a sewer grate. When it raises its foreparts up, a dozen lesser faces can be seen running along its chest and belly — contorted human visages that stare blankly as they recite a churning mantra.

When the Sphinx speaks — and it does so often — the lesser heads all echo its voice. The avatar is a merciless thing, but it abides by a code of its own strange rules. It will interrogate and question rather than leap to the attack and, should the victims navigate its verbal traps, the Judge will allow them to proceed unharmed. It usually challenges Arisen with an inquisition as to their purpose and their actions and, if it encounters the least contradiction or hypocrisy, will deem them subject to punishment; however, it has also been known to demand answers to riddles, complex mathematical problems, or occult formulae. While loquacious, its expression never changes. Even in battle, which it enters with cruel glee, it maintains a stoic visage while ripping the entrails from its victims and crushing them underclaw.

Attributes: Power 13, Finesse 15, Resistance 14

Initiative: 29

Defense: 13 (15)

Size: 18

Speed: 36

Corpus: 32

Dread Powers: Breath Attack •••• (Flaying sand), Catlike Reflexes, Impossible Proportions, Natural Weapons ••

Utterances: Dreams of Dead Gods, Secrets Ripped From Skies

Heightened Emanation: Uncontrollable epiphanies and whirling conundrums assail the minds of all present. Characters gain the Inspired Condition for all mental rolls, but failure on any mental roll automatically becomes a dramatic failure. Any lie a character speaks immediately brands itself into their skin as a statement, inflicting one point of lethal damage in the process.

The Writhing of Eyes, Manifestation of Bastu

The Writhing of Eyes is a manifestation of the Judge Bastu, the Stare. Bastu judges those who have ‘eaten their own hearts’ by attempting to cheat justice — most directly in the way it scrutinizes the symbolic heart upon the scales of each soul that comes before it. Bastu is said to crave the secrets and hidden knowledge that living beings hide within themselves, even to feed upon such, and no deception can lead it astray. The Writhing of Eyes is an extension of that craving, often turned against Arisen who try to hold anything back from the Judge they serve.

Benbenet: He’s a down-on-his-luck private investigator a hairs-breadth from being evicted or arrested as he scrabbles in the gutter for clues to a burning injustice that he just can’t let go, even as it consumes his life and pushes him across dangerous boundaries. She’s a rich and powerful magnate whose furrowed brow is turned to the desire to *know*, to *discover*, to see every transgression that occurs within her corporate domain and set it right. The Writhing is drawn to mass surveillance, both those who countenance its use and those who are watched and oppressed through its application, and it encourages a hunger for total awareness among its benbenet. The champions of the Writhing can never see too much, never know too much, and no sense of privacy or restraint holds them back.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet never suffers any penalties to perception rolls for any reason, can see perfectly in the dark or through obscuring effects, and maintains total awareness of the area immediately around them. Supernatural attempts at invisibility or concealment avail nothing against the Writhing of Eyes. They also gain the Eye Spy Dread Power.

Emanation: Characters attempting Subterfuge or Stealth rolls treat all failures as dramatic failures. Doing so also causes the character to suffer a malign growth somewhere on their body; over the course of a day, a staring eye buds from their flesh, inflicting an Integrity breaking point and allowing the benbenet to treat them as part of the Eye Spy power’s network. Leaving the emanation causes the eye to metastasize into a normal, albeit malignant, cancer.

Avatar

The Writhing of Eyes is horrendous in form, even by the standards of the Judges. It is a mass of writhing tendrils, some squamous of hide and some fleshy, ending in an androgynous human head with blank skin instead of eyes. When the human heads open their mouths, though, their protruding tongues bear a staring eyeball, or a whole polypous mass of ocular organs. The Writhing's tendrils seem infinitely long, snaking away to someplace else; their terminus cannot be found. The whole thing appears as a swaying, thrashing tangle, the heads moaning and drooling as the forest of eyes obsessively tracks the slightest movement in its surroundings.

The Writhing is content to watch at first, burning through Sekhem while it observes and gathers information. If tracking interlopers or transgressors, it moves through the environment in their wake as a tendril peering from a window here, a gently waving eye-stalk above the rooftop there. It seizes puppets with brutal efficiency, boring into the meat of a hapless human and rooting through their innards until it can force a tongue-eye through their brain and into an eye-socket, dislodging the organ there to make way for its own. When it attacks, the Writhing descends upon prey in a grasping, flaying tangle, ripping them apart and leaving only the heart behind.

Attributes: Power 15, Finesse 14, Resistance 10

Initiative: 24

Defense: 14

Size: 25

Speed: 29

Corpus: 35

Dread Powers: Camouflage ••••, Constrict •••, Husk Puppet, Legion

Utterances: Secrets Ripped From Skies, Words of Dead Fury

Heightened Emanation: The eyes of all those present before the Writhing seem to burn with insight; a character can see the pulsing heart within the chest of any living being they look upon, witnessing that character's Vice and Virtue (or equivalent trait) upon it and knowing the exact condition of their health track and any physical injuries or conditions they are suffering from. Furthermore, anyone who is *not* being looked upon by another character apart from the Writhing of Eyes suffers one point of bashing damage each round, as flesh turns to sand and skin peels away; this effect can be negated by tearing one's own eyes out.

The Scorpion Banner, Manifestation of Her-Uru

The Scorpion Banner is a manifestation of Her-Uru, the Face of Dread. Her-Uru presides over those who use terror as their weapon, particularly over their own kind; the Judge accepts the place of fear as a coercive tool in the ordering and maintenance of civilization, but is outraged by its use on the part of those who would bring chaos. The Scorpion Banner is a nightmarish manifestation of the enforcement of authority against such rogue elements — a soul-crushing numbness that denies terror its bite.

Benbenet: He weeps and rages in the ruins of his home, wounded by a bomb blast but luckier, perhaps, than the lines of bodies executed outside by the militia as a 'lesson' to others. She's an enforcer of law and order, representing an edifice of power but craving the ability to surpass the red tape and weak stomached civilians who she believes hold her back from stamping out the gangs terrorizing the district or the insurgent forces defying her nation. The Scorpion Banner's

crown most often settles on officials who wish to reduce their foes to dust and raise up the battle standard of their empire over the vanquished.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet gains the Monstrous Resilience Dread Power, and may spend a point of Willpower to grant the 8-again quality to any teamwork rolls performed in his presence.

Emanation: A numbness creeps through the soul, quelling fear. Humans are unaffected by Terror Sybaris and gain a +3 bonus to their Composure against any source of terror, but suffer a commensurate -3 penalty to Empathy and perception rolls. A character who has succeeded at an Intimidate check against another human within the past month is unaffected by both bonus and penalty, but begins at the worst possible impression in any social maneuver against characters who *are* under the Condition's full effects.

Avatar

The Scorpion Banner is a colossal, warped scorpion, bigger than a main battle tank. Its carapace bristles with serrated edges, while the immense claws can crush a vehicle like a tin can. The face of the avatar appears the viewer's own, eyes contorted wide in terror and the jaw replaced with threshing arthropod mouth-parts. Bands of gold and copper encircle the scorpion's limbs and dangle from the spines along its back. From the great, arcing tail hang banners of flayed human skin, bearing the glyphic marks of lost Irem.

The Scorpion Banner is an unsophisticated avatar, formed purely for the purpose of destruction and slaughter. It cannot speak. Indeed, it can only scream in a ghastly, tortured wail that even invades radio frequencies across the area, causing listeners' ears to bleed. If idle and without immediate prey to butcher, it will mindlessly skin the dead and decorate its spines with their flayed hides.

Attributes: Power 15, Finesse 13, Resistance 15

Initiative: 28

Defense: 13

Size: 20

Speed: 33

Corpus: 35

Dread Powers: Armor ••••, Mangle, Natural Weapons ••••

Utterances: Awaken the Dead, Waters of Life and Death

Heightened Emanation: The cold numbness of the emanation intensifies, inflicting a -3 penalty on Initiative and Defense. Any character immune to the regular emanation due to inflicting intimidation or terror immediately suffers the Arm Wrack Tilt and a point of aggravated damage as their left hand tears itself free from their flesh, fingers contorting and twisting to become a warped scorpion of bone and sinew that skitters away.

The Giver of Gifts, Manifestation of Heraf-Het

The Giver of Gifts is a manifestation of Heraf-Het, also called Whose Face Is Behind It, a particularly obscure and inscrutable Judge. Heraf-Het deals with transgressions of fine

distinction, where wisdom is required to assess matters properly or where the slightest of technicalities or differences in opinion could give rise to an unrighteous outcome. As a result, Heraf-Het has few Arisen servitors; little about the Judge resonates with a righteous spark in the soul of most mummies. Indeed, Heraf-Het is reputed to use entirely different strains of immortal as its servitors, shackling them to its service as punishment for whatever unwise transgressions it can exploit. Regardless, the one Whose Face Is Behind It lacks the retinue needed to funnel a significant portion of Sekhem into its grasp, and instead uses subtle manifestations such as the Giver of Gifts to take its rightful due.

Benbenet: She is smart, clever, motivated — but the slings and arrows of fortune have laid her low regardless, her every effort foiled by the judgment of fools who knew less than she. He's a great judge of character who made one little mistake in who to trust, a single subtle error causing a fall from grace that he now bitterly regrets. The Giver's benbenet always craves a second chance, an opportunity to try it all again armed with the knowledge and understanding they now possess — often including the desire for vengeance against those who benefited from their fall. The benbenet now acts as a thumb on the scales, a trickster-figure taking small but important actions to make sure everyone gets what they deserve — usually as a chain of transactions that ends up with a relic or vestige in the Giver of Gifts' hands.

Emanation

Crown: By allocating the benefits of any number of the benbenet's merit dots to another as a gift — such as purchasing something with Resources dots, helping someone out through Allies dots, or the like — the benbenet temporarily gains an equal number of merit dots of *any* kind to use as he sees fit. These new merits can be used once, and the benbenet cannot gain more through the Crown until existing merits have been expended.

Emanation: Bureaucracy piles up and tangles, legalistic patterns of thought bloom parasitically in the minds of the populace, and the letters of contracts slither off the page to drip ink onto the floor or corrupt a hard-drive's data. All failures on dice pools to interact with or navigate legal or bureaucratic matters become dramatic failures, and extended actions interacting with such processes or laws take twice as long as usual. Transactions or negotiations over relics, vestiges, or other Sekhem-rich objects are exempt from these effects.

Avatar

The Giver of Gifts appears as a mummified figure, wrapped in linen bearing glyphs of dire portent. Ragged wings unfold from its back, hanging with darkly-stained strips of cloth rather than feathers, and its face is concealed behind a smooth oval mask of copper polished to a mirror-sheen. When the avatar speaks, its voice sounds with metallic echoes. If wounded or torn, spools of bloody linen spill from the rents in its form in place of true flesh or blood.

The Giver of Gifts only rarely manifests for the specific purpose of inflicting violence; instead, the Judge uses the avatar to protect its benbenet from even worse consequences, or when it has the opportunity to glut itself on a bounty of Sekhem. It prefers evasion to battle, and discussion to physical conflict — a dangerous proposition for the unwary, for its very words can barter life-force back and forth. For some Arisen, though, the risk is worth the reward; Sekhem traded for insight, and a chance to harden the foundations of Memory.

Attributes: Power 10, Finesse 15, Resistance 14

Initiative: 29

Defense: 10

Size: 7

Speed: 32 (flying)

Corpus: 21

Dread Powers: Flaying Word, Mirage

Utterances: Dreams of Dead Gods, Gift of the Golden Ankh

Heightened Emanation: Any Descent rolls made in the Giver of Gifts' presence have a +2 dice bonus, and breaking points against Memory gain the same bonus. An Arisen who negotiates the trade of her Sekhem to the Giver of Gifts in return for greater understanding of her identity loses a point of Sekhem immediately, gains a Sebyat beat, and gains a +5 dice bonus to her next breaking point against Memory. There is no time limit as to when this bonus can be called upon, but it will always apply to her very next breaking point; she cannot bank it for a later lapse.

The Screaming Flock, Manifestation of Neb-Abitu

The Screaming Flock is a manifestation of Neb-Abitu, called the Lord of Horns. This Judge is newly ascendant as of the 21st Century; it claims purview over those who conjure and spread gossip and false news that obscures matters of truth and serious import. Long consigned to the ranks of the weaker Judges, Neb-Abitu now draws power from the bloated informational madness of propaganda and communications that swells in recent human history; a timeless being, it is paradoxically empowered in all previous time-frames as well. The Screaming Flock is its greatest and most incomprehensible manifestation.

Benbenet: He's the conspiring leader of a state intelligence apparatus, repulsed by the societal corruption he sees inflicted by the very propaganda he is complicit in. She's a queen of the social scene, stung by the morass of falsehoods that drown her world and the dawn of the age of fake news. Neb-Abitu doesn't bother with anyone but the greatest and most influential figures, benbenet who want to drown it all out, burn the whole thing down and start again from a clean, pure beginning. Their malevolence usually becomes wide-ranging and indiscriminate before long, rapidly losing sight of the difference between cause and symptom, and between truth and their own opinion.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet gains the rote quality on perception rolls, and never suffers penalties on hearing-based perception rolls or on surprise rolls to detect an ambush.

Emanation: Characters who state a minor falsehood or half-truth suffer a point of bashing damage; the tongue begins to ache, and blisters with unpleasant boils. Should a character who has suffered damage in this way encounter an immortal such as an Arisen, and should that immortal lie, the character will vomit up a scorpion with the head of a lion, suffering a point of lethal damage in the process; the scorpion will scream a denunciation of the immortal's lies before scurrying off. Enough such scorpions spawned through falsehood will form a lion-headed Amkhat in the area.

Avatar

The Screaming Flock's avatar is a swarm of grotesquely twisted, large owls, each bearing the head of a hairless man with bloody rents instead of lips. The mass of wretched monstrosities move in cohesion. When they take wing, gusts of sand and scraps of flayed skin whirl among their beating wings. At rest, the whole flock roosts on whatever perches are available and stares at whoever has its attention with its myriad of pupil-less eyes. The harpy-things speak through screeches that somehow harmonize into a pure, clear tone — the emergence of the beautiful from the worthless.

The Screaming Flock listens patiently to anyone who speaks to it, carefully gauging the truthfulness of their words. When riled, the swarm whips itself into a screaming maelstrom, sending streams of birds to tear and rip at victims with their avian claws and all-too-human teeth. Individual harpies are expended as needed, smashing into structures in bloody impacts until windows shatter or walls buckle so that the Screaming Flock can move forward; new birds emerge from the heart of the storm. In the flock's wake, it leaves corpses of the slain without their tongues, surrounded by revelations of their true feelings written in their entrails.

Attributes: Power 15, Finesse 15, Resistance 13

Initiative: 28

Defense: 15

Size: 30

Speed: 40 (flying)

Corpus: 43

Dread Powers: Destructive Frame ••••, Natural Weapons •••, Swarm

Utterances: Words of Dead Fury, Wrathful Desert Power

Heightened Emanation: Characters in the presence of the Screaming Flock cannot communicate with anyone apart from the avatar. Whatever means they might attempt in order to convey a message, whether words, writing, or body language, is rendered completely incomprehensible as long as they remain near the Judge's manifestation. Any attempt to invoke an Utterance by characters other than the Screaming Flock requires an additional Pillar point to be spend in order to force its power past the gibbering reality-static the avatar emits.

The Minotaur, Manifestation of Neha-Hatu

The Minotaur is a manifestation of Neha-Hatu, the Stinking Body. The Judge's purview is those who violate the basic needs of another — the taking of life, the denial of food or shelter, and so on. This is a *very* wide-ranging remit, and constantly brings Neha-Hatu into conflict with other Judges' overlapping portfolios. The Minotaur is among the most frequently recorded of all manifestations by any Judge, unleashed to contest Sekhem or interfere with other Judges' Arisen on a regular basis. How the Stinking Body possesses so deep a well of Sekhem to draw upon is a mystery to the Deathless, as few Arisen serve its overly vague and unfocused purpose.

Benbenet: He bears the marks of his deprivation in the scars and skeletal gauntness of his frame, a poor man denied even the basic sustenance he needed to make it from day to day until the Minotaur's immanence slammed into his soul. She still looks sick, diseased, just like the day the officials drove her away and left her to die out of fear that she might be contagious. The Minotaur grants its benbenet strength and resilience in wild contradiction to their apparently

frailty, but shows no particular care or tenderness; it uses and abuses them, subordinating their will if necessary, and tossing their ruined lives aside once it is done with whatever short-term purpose it pursues.

Emanation

Crown: The benbenet is unaffected by the Poisoned and Sick Tilts, and gains the rote quality on all Stamina-based dice rolls.

Emanation: Characters are troubled by corrupt vermin. Pestilent rats, skittering cockroaches and bloated scarabs scurry behind the walls and infest the home. Their numbers are not so great as to be a plague, but enough to lend a feculent air to the area of the emanation. Characters suffer the moderate Sick Tilt upon entering combat.

Avatar

The Minotaur is a ghastly chimeric being, an immense and rotting scarab bedecked with the gleaming ornamentation of a sacred beast of Irem. Lapis lazuli and gold adornments stand in stark contrast to splits in its carapace that ooze festering ichor and clouds of flies. Its head is that of a bull rather than a beetle, with large horns and a golden gorgerine armoring the neck.

Reality breaks down around the Minotaur; angles and surfaces cease to follow their usual meanings. Corridors loop back on themselves or spit out impossible rooms that would leave Escher dizzy. The avatar moves its bloated bulk along with implacable strength, cornering foes and pulverizing or crushing them; vermin spontaneously erupt from the carcass of any such victims, reducing the corpse to beetle-picked bones in moments. The Minotaur can speak, but rarely does so except when coercing an Arisen to join the Stinking Body's retinue.

Attributes: Power 14, Finesses 14, Resistance 14

Initiative: 28

Defense: 14

Size: 15

Speed: 33

Corpus: 29

Dread Powers: Armor ••••, Pestilent Cloud

Utterances: Dust Beneath Feet, Waters of Life and Death

Heightened Emanation: Anyone attempting to leave the Minotaur's presence must succeed at a Wits + Composure check — the Minotaur's remaining Sekhem or find themselves delivered back to the scene, no matter what approach they attempt to take.

The Shadow Judge, Manifestation of Tcheser-Tep

The Shadow Judge is a manifestation of Tcheser-Tep, the Exalted Hand. Tcheser-Tep concerns itself with the desecration of the dead and the disrespecting of their tombs, taking particular offense at the plundering or vandalism of the tombs of the Arisen but outraged at any transgression against the posthumous. The Shadow Judge doesn't just come for mortal offenders, though; Tcheser-Tep's manifestation pursues Arisen who wreak ruin against the resting places of rivals, attempting to force their allegiance to the Exalted Hand and receive their punishment.

Benbenet: She's a ragged gravedigger, raging at the disrespect and vandalism of the old crypts in her graveyard and the ruination of long-buried bones beneath the hungry excavators of modern machinery. He's a millionaire with a tendency for the macabre, planning to be commemorated forever with the grandest legacy he can possibly leave behind — and determine to keep it out of the hands of his thieving family and the vultures of the government.. Benbenet of the Shadow Judge often have a morbid streak, but most nurse an obsession with their own posthumous preservation, desiring a monument to their life and the protection of their remains against those who *might*, in the future, desecrate their ideal place of repose.

Emanation

Crown: Weapons and sources of harm that would normally deal lethal or aggravated damage to the benbenet only inflict bashing damage.

Emanation: Characters in the Emanation are treated as having the Open Condition toward ghosts.

Avatar

The Shadow Judge assembles itself from whatever stone, earth, or masonry is to hand, pulling bricks and rocks and fragments together into a looming, jackal-headed figure. A strange half-light shimmers amid the rubble, its wan rays stirring a sense of nausea and disorientation in the minds of those who look upon the avatar. No matter what angle one views the Shadow Judge from, it seems to stand before a bridge or expanse, as the fabric of space and time beyond it stretches and warps towards a distant point of that same gray radiance.

The Shadow Judge is methodical and implacable, each footstep shaking the earth. Tormented faces press up from the ground in its wake, murmuring distressing portents and begging for release. Pieces of rubble and debris in the vicinity but unclaimed by the avatar will stack or assemble themselves into baroque and macabre shapes, forming grinning skulls of brick and metal or crypt-like assemblies that topple and collapse when the Shadow Judge has passed. All color leeches from anything the Judge touches, rendered silvery-gray and lifeless in hue.

Attributes: Power 15, Finesse 10, Resistance 12

Initiative: 22

Defense: 10

Size: 10

Speed: 25

Corpus: 22

Dread Powers: Armor ••••, Ghost Touch

Utterances: Awaken the Dead, Words of Dead Fury

Heightened Emanation: Any character who dies in the Shadow Judge's presence immediately gives rise to a tormented ghost, which is bound to the avatar's command and will act to protect it.

The Immortals

The Deathless and the Lifeless aren't the only immortals present in the world. The Arisen consider these other long-lived beings deeply flawed: no Judges blessed them; they didn't

survive the harrowing, soul-baring experience that was the Rite of Return. What meager power they possess can't hold a candle to the might mummies wield, and no wisdom they glean from their long, linear lives can compare to that the Arisen gather during their Descents.

The immortals would beg to differ — *they're* not the ones who sleep entire centuries away, after all, and most of the time, their memories remain intact. Yet, the Rite of Return only had to be performed once, and requires no further rituals to renew its effects. How lovely, to not have to worry about upkeep. How grand, to know your followers can call you back from the dead when all that's left is your heart.

Mummies call such immortals the Endless. Where the Arisen braved death and came through it all the stronger, these beings fear it and seek instead to stave off their demise as long as they can. Preferably forever. Like the mummies, most of the Endless rely upon Sekhem to prolong their lives. They may call it life force or essence, or describe it in other arcane terms, but those immortals who have encountered the Arisen sense it within the Deathless. Immortals are like moons to the mummies' Earth, drawn into their orbit by the raw force of Sekhem flowing through them.

The Endless covet relics and vestiges as well, looking to them as another source of Sekhem to power their rituals. Sometimes they're akin to the Shuankhsen, greedily draining the power from the vessel. Other times, it's enough to possess the artifact and let its proximity boost their spells' potency. Both have led to bloody clashes between Arisen and the Endless.

The relationship isn't always an antagonistic one, however. Immortals join mummy cults, gaining access not only to vessels, but also to a network of cultists and sorcerers. Endless who earn an Arisen's trust gain insight into the rites that summon the mummy out of her henet, and look for ways to apply that knowledge to her own longevity. The Arisen may also instill the power of his Pillars in an immortal — what better servant than someone who stays the same Descent after Descent? Who understands even the tiniest bit what it's like to watch the centuries flash by?

Blood Bathers

She lays out her instruments lovingly: the stone bowl, the silver knife. The dull throb of arthritis threatens in her fingers, an ache she hasn't felt in a decade. She hasn't missed it, but it's as good as any alarm clock. If she hadn't marked the date in her calendar, that flare of pain would have been her warning. A few more hours is all she needs, then the ache will subside for another ten years. Twenty, maybe, if she can lure the Arisen here. She imagines the bowl filled to brimming with his Sekhem enhancing the blood she's already harvested. She can almost feel it, hot on her skin, smoothing away the wrinkles that have reappeared.

Tonight, she turns thirty for the ninetieth time.

Who They Are

A countess sinks into a copper tub, submerging herself chin-deep in the blood of her freshly-killed handmaids. A man dangles from the ankles in an abandoned barn. His killer slices his throat and stands beneath, letting the blood soak him like rain. A celebrity enters an exclusive spa, there to undergo a "Vampire Facial." Only, her procedure is nothing like the ones the fashion magazines describe. The blood they use isn't hers, for starters.

Blood bathers are immortals who prolong their lives through the power inherent in human blood. Why waste youth on the young, when you can be young, strong, and healthy forever? The key to eternal youth flows through the veins of every living human, but few understand how to harness it. Blood bathers have learned ways to distill that essence — what the Arisen recognize as Sekhem — and stave off the effects of aging. Some halt at the age they are when they first perform the ritual. Others watch the years roll back as the blood soaks into their skin. Death will have to wait a while longer to claim them.

No two blood bather rituals or their results are exactly the same, but they all share one common, grisly requirement: the person (or persons) whose blood powers the bathing ritual must die.

Every culture throughout history has produced blood bathers, though the rituals they perform to ensure their continued youth vary widely. Although there's no single, definitive origin, the sorcerers of the *Adelfoi Aímatos* (p. XX) developed some of the earliest-known rituals, and many present-day rituals use elements of their methods. The bathing ritual is a highly personal one, even those rites that have been handed down from mentor to student for thousands of years change from one generation to the next. Every blood bather makes adjustments and adaptations. Comparing a modern procedure to its ancient predecessor is like a gruesome game of telephone — you can see the similarities between the two, but the end result is utterly different from the original.

Some of the oldest stories refer to a bather who submerged themselves in a pool of blood and emerged from it as a god. Arisen who hear the tale wonder if this is a strange interpretation of the Rite of Return. After all, their descent into Duat was much like being submerged. They sloughed away their sins and stood before the Judges. How much more naked can one feel, when the Lords of Duat can see every flaw — not on your body, but on your very soul? The Arisen's return to the world is akin to rising from the bath: their souls were clean and pure, changed irrevocably. This ancient bather's wounds closed as soon as they were inflicted, the way a mummy's sahu repairs their body. And while the Rite of Return didn't make the Arisen gods, the Utterances they can call upon at the beginning of each Descent are as close to godhood as most mortals could imagine.

The Bathing Ritual

The bather has to be willing to get his hands dirty in order for the bathing ritual to work. Not only does the blood's original owner have to die, the person performing the rite has to be the one to take his life. That is, most often, the hurdle would-be blood bathers can't leap over. It's all academic until you're standing over a victim, holding a knife and hearing them beg. Without that last depraved act of will, the ritual fails.

A person in search of immortality frequently spends years researching how to attain it. They study ancient texts, read up on Elizabeth Bathory, and spend long nights on the darkest parts of the internet. Some find a mentor willing to show them how to achieve it, though first they have to earn the mentor's trust. After all, people who confess to strangers that they're murdering others to achieve immortality are likely to end up in jail. Those blood bathers who don't find a mentor cobble together a ritual on their own, picking and choosing elements from sources they've found until it seems complete.

Every ritual has four major components: the bath itself, the source of the blood, how the blood is prepared, and the ritual's frequency.

The Bath refers to the physical vessel and setting for the ritual. Some blood bathers can use any tub that's convenient, whether it's their own bathtub, or one at a no-questions-asked, no-ID-required hotel. Others have to use one specific vessel, or require that the tub be made of a certain material. The time of day or year might be a factor. A few bathers don't need to actually submerge themselves in a tub, but can instead coat themselves in blood to the same effect.

The Blood describes the source of the blood and the quantity the blood bather needs. Some aren't choosy, using blood from whatever victims are convenient. Others can only use blood from certain people (young or old, man or woman, specific blood types), and some bathers can only perform their ritual if the blood comes from a supernatural source. It's possible for some blood bathers to use preserved blood, allowing one victim's sacrifice to power several cycles' worth of rituals before they have to replenish the supply.

The Preparation defines how the blood is prepared for the ritual. It may need to be mixed with herbs, or stored in a bronze vessel for several days. Some blood bathers need the blood to be untainted by other fluids. Others don't mind a little mess.

The Frequency dictates how often the bathing ritual must be performed in order for the blood bather to maintain her immortality. For some, years might pass before the need to carry out the ritual arises. Others might need to renew it more frequently: monthly, weekly, or even daily — though when the bodies stack up that quickly, a blood bather's risk of getting caught increases exponentially. This also determines how much leeway the bather has. Can her ritual *only* be performed on the same date every year, or does she have a few days to either side as a buffer?

Once a blood bather performs the ritual successfully for the first time, that's how he'll have to perform it for the rest of his life, however long that may be.

Blood Bather Society

For the most part, blood bathers don't associate with each other. Hanging out with other mass murderers is risky for all parties, should any one of them get caught. However, some blood bathers are willing to risk it. Perhaps they've found the people with whom they wish to spend eternity and developed a bathing ritual together. A handful of blood bathers cultivate mortal followers, promising that someday they'll teach them the trick of eternal life, if they spend a while helping to hide the bodies.

Though it's possible to do it on the cheap, being a blood bather can be expensive. It's easier to perform the bathing ritual in a private space, one whose access you control. Ritual materials get pricey, especially when they're hard to procure and cumbersome to ship. Even before he performs the ritual for the first time, a blood bather has likely spent a small fortune on research, collecting rare books, and travelling around the world to interview experts. Many blood bathers are wealthy, using the advantage of their long years to build up sizable savings. For those who possess no stock market savvy, the option of robbing one's victims is always open.

The Arisen As Foes

Blood bathers occasionally stumble across mentions of the Arisen while researching their bathing rituals. They hear about the Deathless in a general sense first, and attempt to delve further into the information available. Any immortal is a potential inspiration for their own process, and the Rite of Return presents an intriguing possibility.

Unless she discovers a specific mummy or his cult active in her area, a blood bather usually encounters relics and vestiges before she comes face to face with one of the Deathless. She recognizes the Sekhem in a vessel as the very substance that flows through her in such sweet abundance the nights she bathes in blood. Adding the Sekhem contained in a relic to her ritual could boost its potency. Maybe it would lengthen the interval between performances. It could shave another ten years off her age, or grant her extraordinary powers.

When a blood bather meets one of the Arisen, the sheer amount of Sekhem the mummy holds is like a beacon. So much life force contained in one single body! She covets it, imagining how many years the mummy's blood would add to her life — how many *centuries*.

Of course, just like with the bathing ritual itself, murdering one of the Arisen is easy when it's a theoretical exercise. In practice, it's probably not the idea of murder the blood bather has to get past — he's already a killer at this point — but the incredible strength the Deathless possesses. Smart blood bathers look for easier targets. An Arisen at the end of her Descent has less Sekhem at her disposal than one fresh from her henet, but she's also less able to stave in your chest with one blow.

Blood bathers also occasionally insert themselves into a mummy's cult. Why try breaking down the doors when she could be invited in? Joining the cult and working her way up its ranks grants her opportunities to get near the relics in the tomb and its Lifeweb. Once she has their trust, she only needs to wait for her opportunity to snatch up the vessels she needs and disappear. If the Arisen counts her as part of his inner circle, it's far simpler to lure him to her ritual chamber when the time comes.

Those surrounding the mummy are also fair game to a blood bather. The sorcerers who perform the Call can bring back an Arisen whose body has been destroyed, a feat she'd surely like to study. The Arisen invests her Pillars in her Sadikh. His Sekhem levels aren't nearly as high as his master's, but they're more potent than a regular mortal's, and he's a far easier kill.

It seems foolish, perhaps, for a blood bather to target a mummy or his cult. She literally makes an eternal enemy if the Arisen finds out who's after him. Even when he's succumbed to henet, his cult may come after her to eliminate the threat. What would make a blood bather risk everything she's worked so carefully to build?

Desperation.

Even though she's put death off for now, a blood bather's immortality is contingent on her bathing ritual. Not all bathers enjoy taking lives to prolong their own (though some certainly do). If she can enhance her ritual with enough Sekhem, she thinks, death can never catch her.

The Arisen as Allies

Although many Arisen *tsk* and *tut* at the blood bathers' version of immortality, the Mesen-Nebu watch their results with keen interest. What is a bathing ritual, if not a form of gory alchemy? Similarly, the Tef-Aabhi study variations in the rite, curious how each component affects the outcome. Bathers intrigue sorcerers as well — many are self-taught, their bathing rituals a mishmash of occult concepts that shouldn't even work, metaphysically speaking. And yet.

Blood bathers who join a mummy's cult are more than just guinea pigs for the magic-users. They participate in parts of the rituals that aren't for the faint of heart, those rites that require a strong stomach and a steady hand with a blade.

They also act as the Arisen's assassins when the need arises. If anyone knows how to make someone disappear without being noticed, and how to get rid of the bodies efficiently, it's the blood bathers. What they do with the leftover blood is none of the Deathless' concern.

Lisette Meeks

"They say it takes pains to be beautiful. Nobody ever said it has to be my pain."

Immortality: Blood Bather

Curse: Lisette must perform her bathing ritual every three months. She can use any tub, filled with scalding hot water and essential oils before she adds the blood. Any human blood will do, but it must have been harvested within the last seven days.

Background: Lisette's always been beautiful. She had perfect teeth, perfect hair, flawless skin. She's a fair-to-middling actress, good enough to be a pretty face in the background, or to deliver a few walk-on lines then get out of the main cast's way. She's played plucky assistants, smart-mouthed medical examiners, and crime scene bystanders. She likes it that way. Stardom's an awful lot of work, and she learned from her Hollywood B-List mother that fame's exhausting and rarely as rewarding as it looks.

She learned the secrets of the bathing ritual from an older actor friend, when she noticed the roles she was offered start changing and the work dropping off sharply. She was getting older, and the men in the casting departments preferred putting fresh-faced young women in front of the cameras. Lisette's a mediocre actor, but an exceptional killer. Her first victim was a casting director known for his shitty treatment of women. She mixed his blood into the bath when she returned home, and rose from the water looking ten years younger. Though she knows it's the ritual that does the trick, Lisette can't help but feel like the act of killing rejuvenates her as well, giving her that rosy glow.

She's hunted outside of Los Angeles ever since, so the trail of the missing doesn't lead to her. She smooth talks her way into strangers' homes or hotel rooms, relying on the various roles she's played: country girl in the big city, carefree drifter, mysterious customer at the bar, whatever piques their interest and gets them talking. From there, she lures them somewhere quiet and kills them.

Lisette's looking for a way to make her youth last longer, and research has pointed her towards the concepts of vessels and Sekhem.

Description: Lisette's a thin, dark-haired white woman who appears to be in her early 20s. She's on top of fashion trends, and always camera-ready.

Storytelling Hints: Lisette is approachable and friendly, and happy to let people underestimate her. She's protective of other women in her industry, and doesn't believe in tearing other women down in order to lift herself up. Trying to pit her against colleagues pisses her off. Her mild disposition hides her ruthlessness. She files bits of information away from her conversations, to deploy when the need arises.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 1, Expression 2, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 3, Larceny 2, Occult 2, Persuasion (Fast Talking) 3, Politics 2, Stealth 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Short Cons) 4, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Merits: Danger Sense, Endless Potency (Manipulation) •, Fast Reflexes ••, Gift of Years •••, Resources ••, Striking Looks •, Supernatural Resistance •••, Sympathetic, Telepathy •••, Unseen Sense ••

Investment: None

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Determined

Vice: Ambitious

Integrity: 5

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 5

Health: 5

Body Thieves

He's worn so many faces over the years, he forgets which one was his own. Tonight, he's a security guard at the museum, watching the last of the patrons filter out. In a few hours, he'll leave here with an amulet in his pocket and pass it off to a stranger on the street. He'll walk away as that stranger, and they'll never find him. He's done it a dozen times before.

A woman lingers in the exhibit hall entryway. She looks familiar. Does he know her? Has he been her? She glances back at him, and her smile jogs the recognition loose: she resembles the woman carved into the amulet. A passing resemblance, little more.

"Ma'am?" he says, as aw-shucks and polite as the man who owns this body would say it. He's practiced for weeks. "Sorry, but the museum's closing."

Her smile widens, and the resemblance goes from passing to uncanny. "Of course," she says. "I'll see you soon."

No you won't, he thinks. He can't say why, but he's suddenly afraid.

Who They Are

Humans daydream about what it would be like to be someone else for a day, or a week, or forever. Hollywood makes movies about it. Entire television series deposit extremely different people in one another's homes and film what happens for the viewers' amusement. It's rarely as glamorous as it sounds.

Body thieves have figured out how to make the switch for real. They hop from life to life with little regard for the souls they're displacing. Some are tourists in other peoples' lives, visiting for a few days before returning back to their own flesh. Others take a more permanent tack, leaving their former bodies behind forever. Maybe they were old. Maybe they were ill. They traded for

younger, stronger selves, and never looked back. Now they shed bodies like a snake sheds its skin, moving on when they feel like it and leaving an empty husk behind.

How It Works

Like blood bathers, body thieves' methods differ from person to person. They can be grouped into three broad categories, though each has countless variations within.

The Mentally Talented are body thieves who've learned to slip into someone else's body by sheer will, transferring themselves with a thought. They are often individuals who have no latent psychic talents and are merely strong-willed. The yearning to be someone else grows so strong, he simply leaves his own body behind and goes walking in another. Mentally Talented body thieves require some kind of sympathetic connection to be able to switch into a target's body. This may be as simple as a physical touch. In some cases, the body thief needs a lock of hair, a drop of blood, or a tear-soaked tissue to facilitate the swap. The connection can be more abstract as well, like fierce love or burning hatred.

Unless he switches back to his old body almost immediately, a Mentally Talented body thief's swap is permanent. Within minutes of the transfer, his old body dies.

The Magically Talented learned how to make the switch via spells and rituals. Like the blood bathers, body thieves of this type came across the concept while chasing immortality. They read accounts of sorcerers walking distant lands in other bodies, of spies scouting enemy territory wearing their dignitaries' faces. Their theft requires more preparation. The body thief memorizes a ritual, either passed down from a mentor or gleaned from studying arcane texts. As with their counterparts, the Magically Talented need an object that forms a sympathetic connection between herself and her target. The swap is temporary, usually only lasting a week, though well-crafted spells can extend that time out to nearly a month.

If she wishes the transfer to be permanent, she either needs to find a soulless body or kill the body she left behind.

Other types of body thieves exist as well, lumped together as **Oddities** for the rarity and strangeness of their methods. These include strange fringe science experiments, potent psychotropic drugs, and frighteningly hypnotic websites. The details of these particular body thieves and their methods are left up to Storytellers' imaginations.

Out of the Old, Into the New

A Mentally Talented body thief pushing another person out of their own body so he can inhabit it is a form of possession. This is an extended, contested roll, pitting the thief's Resolve + Composure against his target's Resolve + Composure. Whoever loses the roll loses a point of Willpower. If the thief whittles his opponent down to 0 Willpower, he must then spend a point of permanent Willpower to transfer to the target's body. Shortly thereafter, his previous body dies of what appear to be natural causes. What happens to the soul he pushed out of his new body is unknown.

For the Magically Talented body thief, the magician must possess an object that forms a sympathetic connection to his victim. This may be a favorite book, a hairbrush, or a lock of hair. Alternately, the victim must be carrying an item containing a piece of the magician: hair, skin, or blood are possibilities. This is an

extended, contested roll. Roll the body thief's Manipulation + Occult vs. the target's Resolve + any supernatural tolerance. The target number is the victim's full Willpower.

On a Dramatic Failure, the would-be body thief loses a point of Willpower, and can't attempt to steal that victim's body again for a full week.

Body Thief Society

Where blood bathers tend to be solitary, body thieves frequently form networks of similarly-talented individuals. Changing faces and lives so many times gets surprisingly lonely — who are you, when you're never truly anyone? They seek one another out for companionship and the reassurance that no matter the face you wear, someone knows you for who you really are. These networks also provide cover and aid for one another.

Contacts within a body thief's network help her transfer money and other possessions from one life to another. Jumping into a wealthy person's body allows the thief an opportunity to go on any kind of spending spree she likes, but it has its limitations. She can purchase material goods for the next body she intends to inhabit, but moving everything in her host's bank account to someone else's name leaves a paper trail grieving family members will surely try to trace. Her allies offer help, sometimes in the form of legal aid or doctored accounting, sometimes by slipping briefly into a family member's body and signing papers in their name, making them complicit.

Other body thieves understand the meticulous kind of research that goes into stealing someone else's life. He might be able to wing it for a little while — a few days at most — but any longer than that and the body thief has to be utterly convincing while masquerading as his new self. He needs to recognize friends, coworkers, and family, and understand the dynamics of each relationship. His clothing choices can't change drastically without someone asking questions about the new style. Every interaction's an opportunity to slip up. He practices with friends in his network for weeks beforehand, and has them to fall back on when he needs a break from pretending.

Aside from the ability to move into a different body, body thieves are entirely human. They suffer damage like anyone else, though they have the option of abandoning a wounded body for an uninjured one if they get the opportunity.

Arisen as Targets

Sekhem fuels the sympathetic connections that allow body thieves to steal their targets' shells. Just as it imbues relics and vestiges with memories, Sekhem permeates the bodies of the living. Body thieves latch on to its flow through their targets' bodies and tie it to their own. The presence of items familiar to or representative of the magician and his target act like vestiges, enhancing and strengthening the connection between them. Body thieves lucky enough to discover Sekhem-rich vessels come to prefer those items and use them to facilitate their rituals.

They're especially fond of those sacred relics crafted long ago in Irem. Magically Talented body thieves employ Amulets to form their sympathetic links to a target. The ones made by the Maa-Kep serve incredibly well and are particular favorites, with Tef-Aabhi effigies a close second. The Mesen-Nebu gift of transforming objects and people into their perfected forms resonates with body thieves, and some of their rituals closely echo those of the Alchemists. Others follow

snippets of spells written down long ago by the Sessa-Hebsu; body thieves who receive word of a new text surfacing jump at the chance to own it and study it, frequently competing with mummies in search of their relics.

Body thieves are simultaneously fascinated with and repulsed by the Su-Menent. On one hand, the mummies' mastery over death intrigues them. Surely they have wisdom to impart on how to thwart the inevitable. At the same time, few body thieves want to get too close. The feeling is mutual: The Su-Menent view the body thieves' work as a sin against the shell.

Rather than attempting to break into a mummy's tomb and abscond with their relics, body thieves take a more insidious approach: they steal cultists' bodies. While normally, a Magically Talented thief could simply swap bodies for a day or two, doing so gives the cultist a chance to figure out who's behind the crime. Cultists experience all kinds of strange terrors throughout their service. Waking up in a body that isn't her own is temporarily disorienting, but any good cultist will collect herself and start gathering clues before the spell wears off. If she finds any, the body thief will have an entire cult on his trail.

He may devise a plan to keep his old body locked in a dark room, or make the switch moments before a prescription-strength sleeping pill can put his original body down for the count. But he knows the only way to be completely certain no cultist returns with information about the swap is to simply make sure the cultist doesn't return. The body thief assumes his victim's place in the cult, carrying out her duties and gathering information about their operations. Some thieves seize the first opportunity to snatch a relic and run. Others stay in their stolen body for months or even years, studying alongside the sorcerers and basking in the Lifeweb's warmth.

Though the experience doesn't last long, particularly skilled body thieves can steal an Arisen's body. The spell's duration is short — merely a day — but during that time the body thief has access to the mummy's powers. She doesn't know how to wield them, which may be a blessing or a curse. Perhaps she won't recognize how powerful she is until she's back home in her own (or someone else's) skin. Or perhaps she unleashes destruction while taking her new body for a test drive.

Of course, while she's running around in the Arisen's shell, the mummy wakes up in *someone else's*. If his assailant is Magically Talented, he switches into their body — though he can't access his Pillars, the sheer force of the mummy's will nullifies any sedatives or other drugs the body thief may have used to knock her original body unconscious. If the body thief is Mentally Talented, the Arisen's consciousness automatically transfers into an Invested cultist's body.

This can make for interesting race-against-the-clock stories for a troupe to explore: Can the Arisen get his body back before the body thief unleashes a devastating Utterance? How does his cult figure out something's amiss with their master? Does the Arisen seek revenge when he's back in his own shell?

Arisen as Allies

As frequently as they're at odds, mummies and body thieves can also come to mutually beneficial arrangements. Their talents grant them access to spaces the Arisen and their cults would otherwise have to break or bribe their way into. No need to sneak into the museum after hours when you can take over the head curator's body and give your "VIP donors" a private tour.

A sorcerer approaches a body thief when the body of the Arisen she serves has been completely destroyed. She needs an empty shell to Call his soul back to, and the word in occult circles says

that's a service the magician can provide. Rather than having to sneak into the tomb, the body thief becomes an invited and valued guest. She trades her services for access to the vessels in the Arisen's collection (carefully monitored by the cult, of course), and may even be able to acquire vestiges of her own, crafted by the cult's sorcerer.

Body thieves who serve an Arisen over many lifetimes provide valuable information at the beginning of a Descent. She can share an unbroken, firsthand narrative of the mummy's history, beginning when she joined the cult. While other cultists keep meticulous records to recite back to their Deathless charge, they may be telling a tale that happened a hundred years before they were born. The body thief was *there*.

When a body thief earns the mummy's trust, the Arisen imbues him with Pillars via the Rite of Investment. This power, above and beyond anything he's able to wield on his own, is one of the strongest incentives for a body thief to join forces with the Arisen rather than fight against them.

Darrin Knapp

"I can get it for you. I just have to be someone else for a little while. "

Immortality: Body Thief (Magically Talented)

Curse: In order to switch bodies, Darrin requires an item of personal significance to them. He reads a spell from an old grimoire while staring into a full-length mirror.

Background: Darrin spent most of his childhood hanging out in his aunt's occult bookshop. He wasn't sure he believed in any of it, though he liked reading the books and trying out the spells. He never got results, but chalked that up to having to substitute rare components with what he could find around the house.

The first spell that ever worked for him is also the only one that ever has. He read off the words to a spell promising to "let you walk around in another man's shoes" while holding his elder brother's football trophy. Next thing he knew, he was out on the field during practice, about to get sacked. It jolted him straight back into his own body. He might have dismissed it as a particularly vivid daydream, until the phone rang a few minutes later. It was the coach, reporting that James had taken a particularly hard hit and gotten a concussion. At the hospital, James told the family that he'd had a weird dream as he blacked out, about looking in a mirror and seeing Darrin's face instead of his own.

Darrin snuck the trophy back into James' room before his brother came home, but kept the grimoire.

He's been a body thief for seventy years. He's switched bodies permanently three or four times, but prefers shorter jaunts into other peoples' lives. Darrin has a reputation as a procurer, able to retrieve items from places thought to be nearly impenetrable. He serves as part of a mummy's cult, helping to smuggle vessels back to the Arisen's tomb.

Description: Darrin's current body is that of a heavyset black man. He prefers jeans and collared shirts, and keeps a sport jacket with him in case he needs to dress up his look a bit on information-gathering missions.

Storytelling Hints: Darrin listens more than he speaks, a habit he picked up while walking around in other peoples' bodies: if you don't talk too much, it's harder to slip up. Among trusted friends, however, he's chatty and displays slightly old-fashioned mannerisms, reflecting the era

of his childhood. Because he needs a personal item to facilitate his swaps, Darrin learned the art of pickpocketing. Many people carry photos, ticket stubs, or other small mementos in their wallets and purses, making that his first go-to.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2; Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Academics (History) 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Empathy (Calming) 3, Intimidation 2, Investigation 3, Larceny (Pickpocketing) 4, Occult (Spells) 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Common Sense, Gift of Years •••, Language (Iremic), Library ••, Relic Sensitivity, Scorpion Cult Initiation ••, Supernatural Resistance ••, Telekinesis •••, Trained Observer ••

Investment: Ab 1, Ka 1

Integrity: 5

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Compassionate

Vice: Curious

Initiative: 7

Defense: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 7

Health: 7

Sekhem: 4

Eternals

All she wants is to be left alone.

When a piece comes into her collection that they'd want, she calls the number on the card the suave gentleman gave her fifty years ago. She keeps it in her rolodex, where it's gone soft and slightly yellow with age. Funny, that this little card has aged but neither she nor the gentleman have. She calls that number and he comes by. She makes tea and he makes small talk. He takes whatever curiosity she's acquired with him when he leaves, and that ought to be the end of it.

But someone always comes knocking, sooner or later. The suave gentleman can't keep them all away. She's tired of changing locks, of spending money on security system upgrades. It's one thing. One! Thing! Their Judges can't have, one thing in all the world, but they never stop trying to take it from her. It doesn't matter to them that it'll kill her if they take the tiny stone sculpture that holds her very life in its carved granite hands, but she'll be damned if she gives it up without a fight.

They ought to have learned that, by now.

Who They Are

Out of all the immortals, the Eternals want the least to do with the mummies. They dedicate their lives to art, to preserving ancient wonders, and to sponsoring the great works of the future. They don't age, and spend their long years traveling the world seeking beauty, or stay in one place cultivating it in their hometowns. They jealously guard one single, special piece in their vast collections.

The piece, always a handcrafted work of art, houses their life essence. It's the object into which they diverted their death, and as long as it exists, they can never die.

It's easy for other relic hunters to assume an Eternal's a pushover, that their peaceful lifestyle makes them easy marks. Yet, rare is the Eternal who *hasn't* had to defend his artifact. He's the embodiment of *been there, done that*, where "there" is the fight for his life and "that" is killing anyone before they can kill him.

How It Works

An Eternal has already died, once. Or nearly so. She worked long and hard, building a life for herself and garnering occult knowledge to learn how to prolong it. The candidate procures a work of art. It must be handmade, and they must own it outright. Stolen items or artworks of dubious legal ownership fail to work as anchors. Though some do choose portraits or fabric-based arts as their item, most Eternals opt for stone or jewels, durable materials that will last for centuries and withstand fire, flood, and other disasters. Time and the very air around us make paper brittle. Fabric rots in damp spaces. Once an artifact crumbles away, so too does the Eternal's life.

The ritual she undertakes is a closely-guarded secret among the Eternals, though some act as guides for newcomers who wish to perform the rite. She transfers her mortality into the artwork, and does this by actually dying. The manner of her death varies. Some are grisly and agonizing, others may be quiet and as dignified as she can pretend to be, when staring down her own demise. At the moment of her death, the artwork absorbs her passing, and the Eternal lives on. From that moment, she can't be killed.

However, if her anchor is destroyed, the Eternal shares its fate. If it burns, she burns. If it crumbles, she does as well.

Arisen as Foe

The Eternals would generally be happy to leave the Arisen be. They'd gladly acknowledge them the way some people do when they make accidental eye contact with a stranger: polite nod, tight smile, walk swiftly on. They don't need anything from one another, and where their interests might overlap, an Eternal is content to give way to the Arisen. Opportunities always come back around, if you wait long enough.

But the anchor that keeps the Eternal alive is full of Sekhem. The moment of her death elevated it from a beautiful yet mundane work of art into something far greater. It's an especially potent relic: hundreds or even thousands of years as the Eternal's anchor have distilled the Sekhem within into its purest form, and Memories stored within are as vivid as they day they occurred. Mechanically, draining an Eternal's relic grants the Arisen two dots of Sekhem for every Relic dot drained, while cannibalizing it completely provides two Reminisce Beats. Once an Arisen senses the relic, the kepher leads him to it, often with the furious Eternal close by.

Draining the Sekhem from the anchor, or sacrificing it to the Judges, would kill the Eternal just as surely as melting it down into slag. If the Arisen insists on trying to take the item from its owner, the Eternal is ready to defend it. She's not only learned how best to fight one of the Deathless, but has likely laid traps in her home or in the vault where she stores her anchor. Eternals also know the value of buying yourself enough time to flee with your anchor, even if that means burning everything else down.

Arisen as Allies

Some Eternals do associate willingly with the Arisen. Immortality gets damned lonely, and Eternals view the Deathless as fellow travelers along that road. They politely ignore the mummy's snobbery about flawed immortal states, and gently steer the conversation toward shared experiences: reminiscing about historical eras, discussing recent finds at a dig site. Like body thieves, Eternals provide a welcome, first-hand perspective on a mummy's previous Descents.

Some Eternals join a mummy's cult for protection against the Shuankhsen and other Arisen seeking to steal their anchors. They offer up their connections in the art world, or hint they can use their pull on the history museum's board to procure other relics and vestiges, if only the mummy and her cult will ensure the Eternal's anchor remains intact. It's a risky gambit, especially if she has to take her anchor out of her vault and attach it to the tomb's Lifeweb as part of the bargain. What recourse does she have, if one day the Arisen decides to use his anchor as leverage over her?

Kassia Laskaris

"No, that piece isn't for sale. It's part of a private collection."

Immortality: Eternal

Curse: Kassia fiercely protects her anchor, a ten-inch tall marble statue of the goddess Athena. The little finger on its left hand has broken off.

Background: Kassia longs for the smell of the sea and the crying of the gulls. She was born in Greece around 460 BCE, and grew up in a small fishing village. As a young woman, she traveled to Athens and watched the Parthenon being built. She befriended a young sculptor, an apprentice to the famed Phidias, who gifted her with a small statue of Athena. By the time she was 30, she was a skilled painter herself. A mentor taught her the secret of eternal life, and though he was too frightened to go through with it himself, Kassia undertook the ritual on her own. She chose the statue of Athena as her anchor, and thanked the goddess for diverting her death into the stone.

Today, Kassia is a curator of antiquities at a major metropolitan art museum. She's stuck in her office most of the time, though the job allows her some degree of travel as the museum plans new collections and expeditions. She's well-connected throughout the world of antiquities dealers and has acquired a small but impressive personal collection, which she keeps in her home. The Athena statue normally remains in a room-sized vault at the back of her private gallery. Arisen and Shuankhsen alike have tried taking it from her over the centuries, forcing her to continually upgrade her security systems and study ways to defend herself against them. In addition to physical devices and alarms, she's laid several supernatural traps for anyone who gets too close.

Description: Kassia is a Greek woman in her mid-30s. She wears her dark, curly hair up in a twist, and favors tailored, jewel-toned suits. The little finger on her left hand is missing, mirroring the one missing on her anchor.

Storytelling Hints: Kassia is perpetually wary of new people. She has to deal with plenty of strangers in her line of work, but she's always on the lookout for cultists posing as art enthusiasts and other ruses. She's seen them all, and is quick to spot a phony. She'll drop tests into her conversations if she's suspicious, offering up erroneous information and seeing if her companion catches on, or asking their opinion on a sculptor or work of art that doesn't exist.

Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4; Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Skills: Academics (Ancient Art) 5, Athletics (Running) 4, Brawl (Boxing) 3, Crafts (Restoration) 4, Empathy 3, Expression (Painting) 4, Firearms 2, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Survival 3

Merits: Area of Expertise (Antiquities), Contacts (Art World), Danger Sense, Endless Potency (Strength) ••, Fleet of Foot, Gift of Years ••••, Psychometry ••, Resources ••••, Relic Sensitivity, Safe Place ••••, Supernatural Resistance ••••

Integrity: 7

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Clever

Vice: Impatient

Initiative: 7

Defense: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 6

Health: 6

Sekhem: 5

The Reborn

The young man waits for the high priest to finish speaking. He's listened to lecture after lecture about how it was in the old man's day, how the woman on the slab before them likes things to be just so when she rises. But she's been laying there for two hundred years; the old priest's never seen her so much as twitch a finger.

The last time she walked the earth, she held him prisoner when he was an old man too weak to break free. She hates what he is, or will, when her memory returns. But it won't come back for a while yet.

And there he'll be, young and full of hate and vengeance, waiting at her side.

Who They Are

Birth, death, and rebirth. Immortality for the Reborn is an endless cycle. They experience life after mortal life, their memories intact, the lessons they learn in one lifetime following them into

the next. Of all the immortals, the Reborn have the most freedom. The Arisen hate them for it. They capture the Reborn when they can, and take that bitterness out on them. The Reborn *remember*, and that's an unforgivable affront to the Deathless.

How It Works

The path to reincarnation starts within. A person wishing to be reborn must fully understand himself, not only his positive qualities, but also his flaws and failures. He may spend years purifying his body, mind, and soul, studying philosophy and meditating. He may instead spend it in utter debauchery. Either path teaches him to transcend the body and to let go of physical reality. Notably, some Reborn do nothing at all to earn their reincarnation, simply gifted immortality by the universe.

Though they don't consciously manipulate Sekhem — and in fact don't even sense its flow — the Reborn have essentially learned how to carry the same essence from one life to the next. It's not their bodies acting as vessels, but their very souls. Other beings who are sensitive to Sekhem and its effects may notice something different about its presence in one of the Reborn. They bear no more and no less of it in them than a normal human ought to, but it *feels* different. Older. Finer.

While the Reborn is to some degree aware of who he is and who he's been almost immediately after his rebirth, he doesn't have access to all of his memories right away. They return to him over time, often in the form of incredibly vivid dreams, along with skills and abilities he acquired in earlier lifetimes. His parents think he's a prodigy, picking up a foreign language with ease; in truth, he's simply remembering a tongue he spoke the last time around.

Some Reborn treat each life as another step in a sacred journey, building upon what they learned in prior incarnations. They assess what they've learned so far, seek to right wrongs and correct their failings. Certain Reborn have to continue living an ascetic lifestyle in order to insure their souls will remain part of the cycle. They may have to complete a specific ritual or task before their death. Others only have to die in order to come back again.

Stories of what occurs in the interval between death and rebirth differ. Many experience no gap at all, exhaling their last breath one moment and gasping in their first the next. A select few swear they've seen other worlds. Rarer still are the Reborn who claim they can send their consciousness forward or backward in time, controlling when they next emerge into the world. They'd have interesting notes to compare with the Deathless on living lives out of order, if the enmity between them weren't so great.

Religious orders devote themselves to the Reborn, seeking the wisdom they collect across their lifetimes. Students take notes on their recollections and pore over their stories in the search for their own enlightenment.

Reborn learn ways to find one another with each new incarnation. Communities composed solely of Reborn form in remote pockets of the world, their gates always open to old friends. They develop codes to use out among the mortals, leave cryptic notes in newspapers and on message boards with hints leading to a meeting place. Some keep standing appointments for centuries, returning to a particular park or claiming a table at a restaurant on a certain day each year. Any Reborn who shows up is welcome to join.

Arisen as Foes

The Deathless find most other immortals inferior. Their longevity comes at a steep price, and uncertainty is a constant companion. If a bathing ritual fails, or a body thief's stuck in a dying shell with no others to steal, or an Eternal's anchor goes up in flames, they die. The Reborn have no such obligations, no fine print on their reincarnation cycle. Even those Reborn who have to complete a task to assure their rebirths have it easy — they have a lifetime to get it done, and it's almost always a labor they want to perform. No Judges watch their every move, no cults compel them to destroy enemies or seek out lost artifacts.

The Reborn are free in a way the Arisen never can be. They retain their memories. They have lifetime after lifetime to build a legacy, and can watch how the plans they set in motion change the world. Their lack of supernatural power is a cold comfort to the mummies, but one they take advantage of. Arisen send their cults to capture and enslave the Reborn, punishing them for their freedom.

The Reborn who dies at a mummy's hands never forgets it. She returns to the world angry and wrathful, and spends her early years plotting revenge. She has lifetimes to exact it — if the Arisen who ordered her torture has returned to his henet, she can wait. Perhaps she destroys his cult while he sleeps. Perhaps she joins it and dismantles it from within. She may attack from afar, turning corporations she's built up against his long-term interests, or tip off law enforcement agencies to the cult's unsavory deeds.

Arisen as Allies

For the Arisen who can put aside their animosity, the Reborn make impressive allies. Like other immortals, their longevity and recall of past events help mummies adapt at the outset of each Descent. The Reborn harbor deep sympathy for the loss of memory that comes with being Deathless. Though they only understand a fraction of the frustration, the Reborn know what it feels like for memory to seep back in slowly, and recall their early years when they couldn't yet access the entire tapestry of their previous lives. Those Reborn who come back out of chronological order share even more common ground with the Arisen than they do other immortals.

Regina Perez

"We met once, a lifetime ago."

Immortality: Reborn

Curse: Regina must seek out someone she's harmed in a past incarnation — whether by intent or by accident — and make amends with them (or, if they're gone, with their family).

Background: Regina was born for the first time in 1750. She remembers the Revolutionary War, how she picked up her father's musket and went off to fight. She didn't survive, but discovered she liked the soldiering life. Every time she's come back since, she's joined the army as soon as she was old enough to enlist. She's seen a lot of battle, some of which she's come home from, some of which she hasn't. Dying's never deterred her.

In the 1950s, a Maa-Kep got wind of Regina and sent his cult to capture her. She killed a handful of her attackers, but ultimately lost to their superior numbers. She's neither forgotten nor forgiven him, and of all her deaths, considers that one her worst. She died in Vietnam. She survived Afghanistan. She's spent those past two lives figuring out how to get her revenge on the Arisen, keeping tabs on his cult and the patterns of his Descents.

Description: Regina is a Latina woman in her early 40s. She keeps her dark hair cut short and carries herself like a soldier. She's extremely fit, continuing with her exercise and strength-training regiments even after she left the army. She's quick to laugh and has a bawdy sense of humor.

Storytelling Hints: Regina is practical, patient, and coldly strategic when she's in pursuit of her goals. Two hundred and forty years of soldiering's honed her tactical instincts, and ever since her capture she's made sure she's always got line of sight on the exits wherever she goes. Regina is straightforward and no-bullshit, which some people read as blunt but she simply considers honest.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3; Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Skills: Academics 2, Athletics (Parkour) 5, Brawl 3, Computer 3, Firearms (Rifles) 4, Intimidation 3, Medicine (Field Medicine) 3, Politics 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 2, Survival (Hunting) 4, Weaponry (Improvised Weapons) 3

Merits: Contacts (U.S. Army) ••, Fast Reflexes ••, Gift of Years •••, Indomitable, Laying on Hands, Parkour •, Professional Training (Military) •••, Supernatural Resistance ••, Thief of Fate, Unseen Sense

Investment: None

Integrity: 7

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Assertive

Vice: Stubborn

Initiative: 8

Defense: 10

Size: 5

Speed: 7

Health: 8

Sekhem: 3

Other Immortals

Humans refuse to accept death's inevitability. Throughout history, they seek ways to thwart it, hide from it, escape it, or put it off just a little while longer. They devise esoteric methods and complicated rituals to prolong their lifespans, to varying results. The Arisen encounter these other immortals from time to time, working alongside them or competing against them.

The **Patchwork People** rarely understand the secrets of their own immortality. They're the ultra-rich, slapping down their credit cards and traveling to countries where questionable medical procedures go on unquestioned. It's their doctors who are the architects of their immortality, and most of them prefer to go unnamed for legal reasons. The **Purified** have found a way to tie their own consciousness to the Shadow Realm, where it retreats if their physical body dies. Their return comes closer to the Rite of Return than anything the Arisen have discovered, though their

focus on the spirit world keeps their affairs well apart from most mummies' earthly concerns.

Visitors are parasites who latch onto human brains, using their victims as pawns in an esoteric war. They hint at things about the Rite of Return and the Judges they have no business knowing, which intrigues the Arisen.

Storytellers who wish to introduce these or other strange immortals to their chronicles should consider the following: What makes these characters Endless? How do they compete with the Arisen for Sekhem? What makes them good foes? What makes them useful allies?

Creating Immortal Characters

Players who wish to play immortals begin with the standard **Chronicles of Darkness** mortal template. At her discretion, your Storyteller may give you extra experiences to spend, reflecting your character's long life and the skills and resources she's built up over its course.

Immortality: Decide which of the Endless you'd like to portray and work with your Storyteller to flesh out her backstory. How did she come by her immortality? Did someone else teach her how to achieve it, or did she formulate her rituals on her own? Does she keep in touch with any other immortals of her type, and what are those relationships like? If she's a blood bather or a body thief, discuss her Integrity and Breaking Points with your Storyteller. How do the actions she undertakes to maintain her immortality affect her psyche?

Curse: Next, determine processes required to renew or continue her immortality. If she's a blood bather, determine the components of her bathing ritual: bath, blood, frequency, and preparation. If he's a body thief, is he Mentally or Magically Talented? How does he transfer his consciousness from one shell to another?

Investment: If she's part of a mummy's cult, list any Pillars the Arisen invested in her. The Immortal gains the benefit of their master's decree (p. XX) and may use Tier 1 Utterances aligned with the invested Pillar.

List other **special notes** about the character. If she's an Eternal, what is her anchor and how does she protect it? What assets has he built up over the years? Have they acquired any supernatural powers or learned any sorcerous rites? What enemies have they made?

The Endless Micro-template

The Endless occupy an in-between space in the **Chronicles of Darkness**. They're no longer entirely human, but they're not so potent as mummies, vampires, mages, and other creatures. Below is a micro-template reflecting the abilities their Endless characters pick up over their extended lifespans. Endless characters must take at least one dot in the Gift of Years Merit to activate the micro-template.

The Gift of Years grants the immortal access to the Supernatural Merits in **Chapter Three** (p. XX), which are normally reserved for mortal characters only. The player may purchase Supernatural Merits that have an equal or lesser value than the character's dots in Gift of Years. For example, an Eternal with Gift of Years •• could purchase the 3-dot version of Telepathy, but not the full 5-dot version. At the Storyteller's discretion, players may purchase Supernatural Merits mentioned in other **Chronicles of Darkness** books, or create their own to reflect powers and abilities the immortals have picked up over their long lives.

Storytellers may wish to grant immortal characters their first dot in Gift of Years for free, especially in troupe play games. Consider raising the starting Merit allotment from 7 to 10 dots as well, to help round out the characters.

Gift of Years (• to ••••, Supernatural Merit)

Your character is one of the Endless. Each dot in this Merit represents experience borne of her longevity: blood bathers become more and more adept at procuring victims and concealing the crimes; body thieves learn how to slip seamlessly into their targets' lives; Reborn cultivate connections among other Endless of their type; Eternals develop methods for protecting their Relics from the Arisen.

For each dot, the character receives an equal number of additional Social Merits, earmarked specifically for the upkeep of her type of immortality. For example, a player purchases this Merit at •••• for his blood bather. He takes Fixer •• and Resources ••. The Fixer *only* helps with procuring materials for rituals or disposing of bodies used therein. He may spend the Resources on a storage unit where he keeps the ritual bath, or to win an auction for a rare manuscript of Adelfoi Aimatos rituals, but can't buy a new car with the money.

This Merit gives the immortal a Sekhem trait. The character's maximum Sekhem rating is equal to her dots in this Merit. The character begins with one dot of Sekhem, which may be increased up to their rating in this Merit for 5 Experiences per dot.

Endless Potency (• to ••••, Supernatural Merit)

Prerequisite: Gift of Years

The immortal channels her Sekhem into inborn ability. When purchasing this Merit, choose an Attribute. The character spends a point of Sekhem to increase that Attribute by the Merit's dot value, including derived traits, for the remainder of the scene. Activating this Merit can take her above her normal dot limit (usually 5) for Attributes. This may be used once per Attribute per scene.

Notes: You may take this Merit multiple times, each purchase representing a different Attribute.

Supernatural Resistance (• to ••••, Supernatural Merit)

Prerequisite: Gift of Years dots equal to rating or Sadikh

Immortality has left its mark on your character, making her aware of the supernatural's effects on the world and attuning her to the flow of Sekhem in all things. This Merit acts as a Supernatural Potency trait.

Sorcerers

The Guilds contained the greatest Sekhem artisans in the history of the world. Their expertise built the Nameless Empire. They uplifted stone and brought song to steel. The Arisen say that when Irem was lost to the sands, their practices went with them. Never again would mankind shape and control Sekhem.

This is not true. From the moment Irem fell, there have existed *sorcerers*, human beings capable of perceiving and manipulating the Pillars within Sekhem. Sorcerous traditions exist within every culture on the planet, using their concepts of sacred power and rituals to perform *rites*.

Sorcerers are a perplexing thing to the Arisen. Some serve them well, using their powers to carrying out their will. Others are deadly nuisances, robbing vessels from the Judges. Then, there are the deadly few, vicious sorcerer cults who stop at nothing to pursue mummies to the ends of eternity.

To Become a Sorcerer

Almost anyone can practice sorcery. As long as someone follows the right instructions, they can pull off any sorcerous effect. Many rites have easily obtainable components and fast, morally unchallenging rituals to perform them. In modern times, learning a rite can be as simple as stumbling upon a true ritual on the internet.

However, simply performing a rite or two does not make someone a sorcerer. Dedication to sorcery means trespassing into private libraries and wasting hours in shady bookstores, carefully handling ancient toms bound in flesh. A sorcerer discovers the best components and the most powerful rituals that get the least amount of questions from the neighbors. Walking the sorcerer's path requires exploring the unknown, into places the weak fear to tread. Reality is tapestry filled with loose threads. If someone pulls the threads, they can reshape the tapestry in new and exciting ways. Sorcerers have the knowledge and confidence to grab one of the threads and yank it as hard as they can.

At its best, a sorcerer's life is defined by discovery and success. Who could have known that shattering the shells of snails, hermit crabs, and turtles on a crisp Fall night could allow someone to conduct the waves of the ocean the next morning? How many other people on Earth could say that they pulled the Seven Tongued Liar, infamous Fiend of Duat, from the throat of a coworker while on lunch break? Sorcerers have the power to change the world, while still being capable of living like an ordinary person.

Then, there are the worst times, when a sorcerer realizes how alone they are, and how much of their art is trial and error. Who believes the latchkey kid when she tells them the trials and tribulations of creating a rite to fly in the sky? What good is being able to speak with the wind if it can't pay the rent? If that weren't enough, some sorcerers comes across the other creatures of the world, those who only feed on blood or nightmares yet can do far more than the most powerful sorcery ever could.

To live as a sorcerer is a kind of exile, both from those who live mundane life and from those who stand far apart. Perhaps this is why sorcerers inevitably seek out others like them and train apprentices, but also start violent feuds and throw hideous curses upon each other. Sorcerers crave companionship, but refuse to be seen as inferior in the eyes of others.

Sorcerers as Cultists

Sorcerers cross paths with the Arisen more than any other kind of supernatural being. No one is sure why. Sentimental cultists argue that because sorcerers practice a tradition that uses a mummy's power, they are bound to the fate of the Deathless. Cynical sorcerers see it differently. Once a sorcerer discovers they can create and use Vestiges, it won't be long until a several thousand-year-old monstrosity busts down the door.

Joining a mummy's cult can be a mutually beneficial partnership. Mummies constantly generate Sekhem and can provide Pillars to the sorcerer through the Rite of Investment (p. XX). Invested Pillars make the difference between having to chant over smoldering incense and fresh bones at

the top of the land's highest mountain to summon the rain, and simply asking the sky for a downpour. In return, a sorcerer uses their arts to protect the mummy, and can lead her cultists in rites once she has returned to Duat.

The Arisen tend to treat their sorcerers well, if only because they often depend on them to lead the Call (p. XX) that returns them to life. Sorcerers quickly carve out an important role in a cult. They're often the ones in charge of delineating a mummy's orders to cultists and the ones who filter and re-interpret the Iremite religion to appeal to modern day adherents.

It may not be an ideal relationship, but a sorcerer cultist will find that servitude can bring a hefty chunk of power.

Sorcerers as Interlopers

Some sorcerers refuse to serve, to settle for the chance to be someone else's second most important person. Why should someone who commands ghosts have to suffer the indignity of serving a creature who doesn't even remember its true name? A sorcerer may not be able to live forever or summon meteors from the sky, but at the very least, they're human and free.

That doesn't mean they ignore the Arisen. Mummies are the best at tracking down vessels, but not necessarily the best at obtaining them. Some sorcerers use that to their advantage, stalking a mummy and her cult in secret, and then snatching away their treasure at the last second. It's dangerous, but it beats needing to engage in long, complicated rituals.

These sorcerers may even declare a moral high ground or greater purpose as they pursue their targets. Often in tow with seasoned monster hunters, they claim that they thwart a mummy's quest in order to protect the planet's life force, to take back humanity's magic, or some other noble goal. The Arisen do not believe them. There is only one true owner of the world's vessels, the Judges, and only one word for those who would prevent their return: thief.

Of course, for all their passion and power, a sorcerer is still mortal. They can stalk and steal all they like but one day, they will be dead and the Arisen will still be very much alive. Sorcerous interlopers are merely flies: annoying, short-lived, and easily squashed.

Sorcerer Cults

Even flies gather into swarms.

Half social club and half coven, sorcerer cults are the best of both worlds. Joining one means a person can practice sorcery without isolation. It puts a sorcerer in contact with people who believe in her ability, and teaches her rites she would have never found on her own. They also provide benefits such as income, food, and shelter, things that sorcerers often end up lacking as they pursue their craft.

Sorcerer cults have lasted for centuries, with some tracing their heritage back to the Hellenistic era and even earlier. This is perhaps the greatest advantage sorcerer cults provide. Individual sorcerers may not live forever, but their cult will. Sorcerer cults keep lengthy, dedicated records in their secret vaults, providing a well-maintained cult access to every rite a member has ever studied or performed. Unlike their Arisen rivals, a sorcerer cult has a perfect memory.

While every member of a sorcerer cult can be killed, that is not necessarily the end of the cult. Unless their vaults are destroyed, they lie in wait for the next sorcerer to come along and use

them. New sorcerer cults are often founded after the discovery of these vaults, taking the knowledge within them and remixing it for a modern age.

Sometimes, when a mummy's cult falls apart, a sorcerer cult rises in its place. These defunct cults find themselves flush with Sekhem, whether it's from stolen vessels or the mummy they now hold power over. With so much life force on hand and with rites being so easy to learn, disgruntled cultists find new life as powerful sorcerers.

It is also possible for a mummy's cult to subjugate an ailing sorcerer cult. When a sorcerer cult is at their lowest, an Arisen can step in and offer the power and structure they need to thrive. Their adherents often find it hard to resist the temptation, and eventually come to worship the mummy as their master. Many modern Arisen cults began this way.

Mechanics

Any character that takes the Ritual Sorcerer Merit (p. XX) is a sorcerer. Sorcerers receive the following benefits:

- **Sorcerous Rites:** Sorcerers may have a number of Sorcerous Rites slots equal to the character's Resolve dots. The Sorcerous Knowledge (p. XX) Merit allows a player to taken an additional number of Sorcerous Rites slots equal to the character's Occult dots, and create new Closed Rites (p. XX).
- **Sorcerous Rite Slots:** Every unfilled Sorcerous Rite slot can hold either one Open Rite (p. XX), or one Closed Rite. Once a Sorcerous Rite slot is filled, the rite that fills it cannot be changed.
- **Sybaritic Resistance:** A sorcerer always has a +3 bonus to the dice pool to resist Sybaris (p. XX). If the sorcerer is a mummy's cultist with Scorpion Cult Initiation ••+ (p. XX) and obeys the cult's Doctrines, they are completely immune to Sybaris instead.
- **Sybaritic Insight:** A sorcerer can always interpret a Sybaritic Omen (p. XX) when touching a Sybaris-afflicted character, as if they had the character's Sybaris Condition (p. XX). This may reduce and even resolve the character's Condition.
- **Forbidden Knowledge:** Whenever a sorcerer undergoes a Breaking Point (p. XX) because of supernatural forces, the player can choose to lose a point of Integrity (p. XX) instead of rolling. If she does so, the player gains one new Sorcerous Rite slot and permanently reduces her character's maximum Integrity by 1.

Open Rites

Any action that a character without a supernatural template can do that causes a supernatural effect can be taken as an Open Rite. The term is a broad umbrella, encompassing a wide variety of esoteric abilities ranging from reading auras to summoning fiends from Duat. Unlike the formalized Closed Rites, Open Rites use wildly different rituals and systems to cast.

Anyone can perform an Open Rite, which has given them the reputation of being safe. That is not the case. Their accessibility comes at the price of perfection: once a character learns an Open Rite, they must follow the components and ritual method to the letter. Improvisation or forgetfulness can be deadly: summoning a fiend by mispronouncing their name might do nothing, but it might release the fiend into the world, unbound and thirsting for blood.

Commonly known Open Rites include:

- Mortal interactions with ephemeral entities (p. XX): Abjuration, Binding, Contact, Exorcism, Summoning, and Warding (**Chronicles of Darkness Core Rulebook**, pp. 139-140). Each individual interaction is considered a separate Open Rite.

- Amkhata summoning (p. XX). An Amkhat combination created after a Success or an Exceptional Success may be placed into an unfilled Sorcerous Rite Slot. If the sorcerer chooses to do this, they may summon the combination again with no roll necessary. Any essential environments or components for the summoning are still required.

- Creating a Vestige (p. XX).

- Summoning unclean spirits from Duat, known as *akathartoi* to the sorcerers, translated as “fiends.” Summoning an individual fiend is considered a separate Open Rite, even from the summoning of other ephemeral entities.

- Performing the Call (p. XX).

- Sybaritic Omen Interpretation (p. XX).

Sorcerers who learn Open Rites are exceedingly skilled at them, and their expertise grants significant advantages over a mere dabbler. Learning an Open Rite and placing it in a Sorcerous Rite slot provides the sorcerer these benefits:

- The choice of either 1 additional Mental or Social Attribute dot for the duration of the rite. The chosen Attribute must either apply to the rite’s dice pool or be thematically appropriate to the rite. This benefit continues during breaks or short interruptions during the rite, lasting no longer than one scene. The additional dot may raise the Attribute above its normal maximum.

- +1 bonus to any dice pool involved in performing the rite. This bonus stacks with Skill specialties.

- If a sorcerer uses a Pillar point during the rite, its dice pool receives an additional +1 bonus. The player may choose an additional Mental or Social Attribute to receive 1 bonus dot. The Pillar point must come from a Pillar appropriate to the rite. The chosen Attribute must not be the same Attribute enhanced by learning the Open Rite. This effect lasts for the duration of the rite.

Vestige Creation

One of the most important Open Rites is to create Vestiges (p. XX). In many sorcerer cults, it is considered the bare minimum of competency, and unless they witness a disciple creating one, that disciple will not be inducted into the cult’s deeper mysteries.

Creating a Vestige is done in three steps:

Step One: Acquire a Sekhem-filled Object

Ordinary use of objects inherently imbues them with Sekhem. Because of this, sorcerers tend to make Vestiges out of often-used household objects or antiques. These objects increase a sorcerer’s chance of success. The small amounts of Sekhem donated through repeated use or great age make these items into hefty reservoirs of life force.

When sorcerers need the Vestige to be a specific object and have no time to wait, they turn to another method: cannibalizing Relics (p. XX). Exposing an object to a broken Relic immediately

after the vessel's sundering fills the object with a portion of the Relic's Sekhem. Even a fraction of the Relic's distilled power is enough to prepare an object to be a Vestige.

Step Two: Imprint a Memory on the Object

Now the object is imbued with Sekhem, and the sorcerer must implant a highly emotional memory into it.

How this is done depends on what the sorcerer wants the Vestige to do, and what kind of memory would best form the basis for its function. A sorcerer creating a Vestige that makes his clothes bulletproof may recall the day his best friend was shot to death, or some other personal traumatic memory of gun violence.

Using memory alone can lead to problems. A sorcerer's memory may not be recent enough or strong enough to properly seal the object, the memory, and its Sekhem together. If the Vestige is not created within a week of enacting the rite, the Sekhem within flows back into the greater world and the sorcerer must start the rite from the beginning.

Sorcerers resolve this problem with a dangerous method: they engineer events to create the emotional memories they want. Sorcerers only need *a* memory to create a Vestige, not necessarily *their own* memory. As long as the object is physically present during the event and near the person experiencing the memory, it will imprint. The sorcerer creating the bulletproof Vestige might put himself in a situation where someone shoots him, or might just shoot someone else, placing the Vestige to-be beside his bleeding-out victim.

Step Three: Seal the Vestige

Sometimes, if a memory is very recent, and highly emotional, no further action is necessary. The Vestige is created and can be invoked immediately after.

Most of the time, however, sorcerers need to perform one final aspect of the rite. This step creates a mystical "seal" between the object, the Sekhem within, and the anchoring memory. Sealing a Vestige is a highly personal ritual, and some sorcerers never perform the same sealing ritual twice. One sorcerer may always carve runes into their Vestiges, while another may bury theirs in consecrated soil.

Sealing the Vestige

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Varies

Suggested Modifiers: Object imprinted with a fresh memory (+3), Object imprinted with a memory made more than five years ago (-1 for every five year period), object was imbued with Sekhem from a Relic (+2).

Success: The seal is complete. The object is now a Vestige (p. XX). The player may give their sorcerer's Vestige a dot rating up to their dots in Occult (minimum 1, maximum 5), a Virtue, and a Vice. The player and Storyteller must collaborate and create an appropriate Power and Curse for the Vestige.

Exceptional Success: As success, except the player may give their sorcerer's Vestige a dot rating up to their dots in Occult +1, potentially overcoming the known limits of vessels (minimum 2, maximum 6).

Failure: The seal falls apart. The object does not become a Vestige. The sorcerer may try again with a -2 penalty to the dice pool. If the object is not made into a Vestige within a week, the rite has failed.

Dramatic Failure: The seal implodes, shattering the object. The object is destroyed and the rite has failed.

Creating Relics

Can a sorcerer use the Vestige Creation rite to make a Relic? Yes, with three major caveats.

The first is that the sorcerer must find a way to refine the Sekhem inside an object. Even among the most powerful sorcerer cults, there is no known, reliable method for refining Sekhem. Once Sekhem leaves the mystical binding of a Relic, it immediately returns to an unrefined state.

The second is that creating a Relic is a major divergence in the working of an Open Rite, stretching an already permissible rite beyond its limits. Failing a Relic creation could permanently disable the sorcerer's ability to create Vestiges, or worse.

The third? Once a Relic is created, it is immediately known to the Judges, and capable of being tracked by kepher (p. XX). Without the protection of a mummy or a sorcerer cult, a Relic creator will find themselves in great danger.

Closed Rites

Closed Rites are the workings of true sorcerers, the fruit of years of study and sacrifice. They are only available to those who have the Ritual Sorcerer Merit (p. XX), the representation of their dedication and practice. Learning a Closed Rite always uses up a Sorcerous Rite slot.

These rites are at once more and less difficult than Open Rites. Closed Rites are formal and straight forward. They follow the *Rule of Three*. All Closed Rites consist of three separate elements, all working in unison. For example, a rite to become invisible may consist of these three elements: mixing cracked eggs and the practitioner's blood in a bowl, praising a god with sixty names over the bowl, and consuming the mixture in one go. Closed Rites have fewer overall steps than most Open Rites, but each step is specific and difficult.

Closed Rites can be made less complex with Pillar points (p. XX). These either come from cannibalizing Vestiges (p. XX) or the Rite of Investment (p. XX). Receiving Pillar points from a mummy is more convenient, as they have access to every Pillar at once. A Closed Rite can only take one Pillar point at a time, no matter the source.

Pillar points alter Closed Rites in three ways:

- If a Pillar point aligns with one of the three elements, it either replaces it entirely, or allows for a wider interpretation of the element. For example, if the invisibility rite is given a point of Ren, the practitioner no longer needs to praise a god with sixty names. If the rite is given a point of Ab, the practitioner no longer needs to mix their blood into the eggs. If the rite receives a point of Ka, the practitioner can feed the mixture to anyone while praising the god. The other elements of the rite must still be successfully completed.
- All participating sorcerers receive 1 additional Attribute dot connected to the Pillar (p. XX) for 24 hours.

- The donated Pillar point enhances the rite, granting it an additional Storyteller approved effect. A Pillar point that does not align with any of the rite's elements still provides an additional effect, even if it cannot replace or simplify a rite element. A Sheut point might make the caster soundless as well as invisible. A Ba point might allow the caster to see into a Twilight frequency, as he is just as invisible as the entities within it.

Last Dynasty International

Purity holds a righteous arm over hubris.

For many, Last Dynasty International is just another name in the vast pharmaceutical industry. They manufacture drugs, vaccines, and materials for cellular and gene therapy. They have a significant interest in the transportation industry and in wildlife preservation, headed by two subsidiaries. Their headquarters are in Thun, Switzerland and they're incorporated in the Seychelles. They own a major research unit in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill region of North Carolina. There, they hold open houses giving graduates from the area's universities a glimpse into the corporation's famously secret manufacturing process.

It's very important for Last Dynasty to keep their secrets. While most of their products are regular pharmaceuticals, a few have developed an obsessive following. Urban legends say that Amphex, an immune system booster, can eradicate an HIV infection. Elite soldiers tell harrowing stories of grave injuries healed in mere moments after a single dose of Notromadine. Athletes and their trainers search desperately for Mendathinol, a perfect and undetectable steroid. Tabloids hawk rumors of a cellular therapy process that literally reverses aging, reserved for the company's researchers, executives, stockholders, and anyone willing to pay billions to get on the waiting list.

All of these are true, but their miraculous properties come at a price: all of them are laced with Sekhem wringed from the bodies of captured Arisen.

History

Last Dynasty International formed centuries ago as *Parangelia Seth*, a cult of Greeks, Egyptians, and Nubians that worshipped the god Set and conned the rich with parlor tricks in the guise of sorcery. They deceived their way into the upper echelons of kingdoms and empires, and even the Arisen respected their influence and trickery. They recruited them into their cults.

Then, sometime after the second Sothic Turn, the cult learned actual sorcery. Legend claims that Set personally appeared to the cult, blessing them with fertility and sacred stones that described the cult's first Closed Rites. The cult continued to serve the Arisen, but tensions arose. Set did not permit stasis and demanded his adherents challenge all rulers, including the Deathless.

Then, the cult discovered the Scrolls of Isis, a prophecy that claimed Azar would be reborn in the form of Cleopatra's son Caesarion, ending the Arisen's purpose. Azar would gather the mummies and leave for another realm, with the entire world's magic in tow. The Set worshippers realized that this would lead to the destruction of reality, if not at least the loss of their patronage. They swore to oppose Azar's rebirth. Under the guidance of the Shunakhsen Nefersobk, they betrayed their Arisen masters and took part in the end of Cleopatra's reign and the murder of her son. Nefersobk claimed *Parangelia Seth* as her own cult, now named the Loyalists of the Final Dynasty.

What followed were a series of further betrayals and shakeups. The Mistress, Nefersobk's favored prey, fell to Ammut and became Shuankhsen. The Final Dynasty chose to serve the Mistress and drove Nefersobk into the wilds. The Mistress, too, was later betrayed by the Final Dynasty. Perhaps it was because despite her nature, she longed for the revival of Azar. Perhaps it was because for all her attempts to disguise herself as Arisen, the cult could not follow a bad liar. Whatever the reason, the cult's high priests destroyed her and claimed she had vanished. They turned the congregation towards studying Amkhata creation. The Final Dynasty hoped they could create powerful monsters to devour vessels and all involved with the Rite of Return, to honor Set and prevent Azar's return. While they thwarted the Scroll of Isis' prophecy, the cult feared that Caesarion's birth had only been the god's first attempt at revival.

This lasted until the 1800s, with the appearance of Adam Drake, Esquire; Major Rhys Treharne, M.D. (ret); and the Viscount James Killwarden of Curke Island. The three Englishmen aided Muhammad of Ali of Egypt's rise to power through an exciting caper lost to history. Not long after, Major Treharne aided a Final Dynasty cultist in helping Egyptians escape Ali's mandatory conscription, and in return she inducted him into the cult. Treharne recruited his friends, and the three used their new mystical abilities to oust the Turkish from Egypt, and then oust the cult's high priests from the Final Dynasty.

World War I scattered the Final Dynasty across Europe, Asia, and Africa. It reassembled during World War II and spend the next two decades in hiding. Seeing an opportunity in increasing corporate greed, the Loyalists of the Final Dynasty incorporated a Last Dynasty International in the 1970s. Now, the cult hides in plain sight.

Structure

Last Dynasty International functions as an Enterprise cult (p. XX). It is led by a CEO and a board of directors. Work is divided into several committees. Most of its employees are ordinary workers and will spend their entire time at the corporation developing, manufacturing, or transporting its mundane products.

The actual cult behind Last Dynasty consists of its leadership, major shareholders, and a few employees throughout the corporate hierarchy. They recruit members from within the payroll, using corporate events and "psychological batteries" to determine an employee's aptitude for sorcery. Unlike most sorcerer cults, Last Dynasty also brings ordinary people into the fold, using their exceptional organizational or public relation talents to keep the cult hidden even within the corporation.

Though it appears to be a unified cult to outsiders, Last Dynasty International is embroiled in an internal cold war. The cult is divided between two tendencies:

- The **Friends of the Three Gentlemen** are the dominant tendency, led by the Three Gentlemen themselves. Cell-scrub therapy keeps them young and allows them to manage the company in disguise. Under their leadership, the cult created the Rite of the Golden Vial (p. XX), the secret to the corporation's success. They believe that they have a duty to change the world for the better, but only if it makes them a hefty profit. They order the capture of vessels and the creation of Amkhata to use them as bait for the Deathless. The fourth Sothic Turn excites them, as they now have an opportunity to draw enough Exudation to last for years.
- The **Loyalists of Seth** comprise of the ideological descendants of the Final Dynasty's ousted leaders, who identify themselves as the High Priests of Set. They believe the blind pursuit

of money has turned the cult away from stopping Azar's rebirth. The fourth Sothic Turn shocked them into action, and they plot to pull away the company from the Three Gentlemen. Once they control the company, they will take it back to its roots, and use the corporation's resources to engage in all-out war with the Arisen.

For now, the tendencies agree that the Arisen must be hunted and drained. In order to achieve this, the cult uses three major divisions:

- Under Dr. Reece Trombly's oversight, **Last Dynasty Pharmaceuticals** manufactures the corporation's products, and its cultists perform the Rite of the Golden Vial. The Exudation the rite produces is the source of the miraculous properties of its medicine.
- James Killwarden III manages the **Killwarden Memorial Conservation Fund**. The fund preserves the territories of endangered species, finances educational outreach efforts, and provides conservation biologists access to its biome models. Its cultists are on the cutting edge of Amkhata creation, incorporating animals from their preserves for their projects.
- Vice President of Transportation Security Drake Adams is the secret master of **Integrated Transport Solutions, LLC**. The company ensures that Last Dynasty products are developed in-house and in the highest quality. It also serves as infrastructure by which cultists transport vessels, Amkhata, elite security teams, and captured Arisen specimens.

Closed Rites of the Last Dynasty International

Rite of the Golden Vial

The masterwork of the Three Gentlemen, the Rite of the Golden Vial accelerates an Arisen's Descent (p. XX). The lost Sekhem is expelled from the mummy's body in the form of *Exudation*, a thick, golden plasm. The plasm goes a long way, and one unit serves as the basis for 50,000 doses of Amphex, 2000 units of Nortromadine, or 100 courses of Mendathinol treatment. It is also a necessary component of cell-scrub therapy.

The three elements of the Rite of the Golden Vial are:

- The ceremony must start at noon, local time. A point of Ba allows the ceremony to be held at any time.
- The leading sorcerer must lead a blasphemous change in Iremite, announcing to all that she will work to destroy all the Arisen create. A point of Ren allows the ceremony to be carried out in silence.
- The sorcerer must slice open the spleen, heart, lungs, right carotid artery, and left eye with golden daggers. A hollow spike must be driven into the mummy's skull immediately after. A point of Ka allows the use of any cutting instrument. No matter what materials are used, the rite must end with a roll.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult

Suggested Modifiers: The mummy isn't restrained (-4), the mummy is exposed to bright sunlight (+1), the mummy has Sekhem 3 or below (-3).

Success: One unit of Exudation pours from the mummy's skull. The mummy loses a point of Sekhem and 1 Pillar point from every Pillar with at least 1 point remaining.

Exceptional Success: Two units of Exudaton pour from the mummy's skull. The mummy loses 2 points of Sekhem and 1 Pillar point from every Pillar with at least 1 point remaining.

Failure: The mummy takes six lethal damage, one for every incision made into her Sahu.

Dramatic Failure: As Failure, and the mummy may choose to immediately die and enter a Death Cycle (p. XX). While a mummy is dead, her body cannot be used in the rite.

Rite of Purity

The Rite of Purity is known among all sorcerer cults with close ties to Arisen, but Last Dynasty practices it the most. In their line of work, it is necessary before encountering a mummy.

The three elements of the Rite of Purity are:

- The rite must be performed on a moonless night, between evening and dawn. A point of Sheut allows this rite to occur at any time.
- The sorcerer must prostrate themselves before an image of one of the Arisen, or one of the Deathless themselves. A point of Ab allows this to be the image or actual presence of a non-Arisen loved one.
- The sorcerer must cut themselves, dealing at least 1 lethal damage. Blood from the wound is squeezed into a receptacle and offered to the image or person. A point of Ka negates the requirement for a fresh cut, exchanging blood for saliva.

Completing this rite gives the sorcerer complete immunity to Sybaris (p. XX) for an entire lunar month but prevents the interpretation of a Sybaritic Omen (p. XX) on another Sybaris-afflicted person. A point of Ba allows for the interpretation of Sybaritic Omens, and completely refreshes Willpower. A point of Ren allows the sorcerer to know the name of the last mummy that attempted to inflict him with Sybaris.

Wilfried Moeller

"An Amkhat is just like any other animal. Train it well, always keep it fed. You'll help with that last part."

Background: Wilfried Moeller grew up on a farm, where he learned to raise livestock and came to love animals. He pursued a career in Ethology, the study of animal behavior. Wilfried became especially interested in animal social interaction and studied group behavior.

He thought his Killwarden Fund internship would just be padding for his curriculum vitae. Then they showed him the Amkhata. Last Dynasty needed to know if the Sekhem-hungry creatures had any psychology beside their hunger, and Wilfried had the potential to become a sorcerer.

They were right on the money. The creation of a new life, with a new psychology, was exactly what Wilfried wanted to study. He swore to serve Last Dynasty International and learned how to create a few Amkhata of his own.

Description: Wilfried is a towering Swiss man in his early thirties. He keeps his black hair slicked back. Despite his imposing figure, he has a gentle demeanor enhanced by his kind, blue eyes. He never feels at peace unless he's around animals, especially the Amkhata he creates.

Storytelling Hints: Wilfried is a fast learner, but he's having a hard time acclimating to the Killwarden Fund's work environment. He disapproves of the sheer cruelty displayed when his co-workers work a summoning, and his bosses are uncomfortable with all the questions he asks

about the cult's two tendencies. The cult has yet to induct him deeper into their mysteries for these reasons. Still, they can't deny his usefulness. No one else can make a pack work in perfect formation like Wilfried can.

Wilfried Moeller

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3; Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Skills: Academics 2, Animal Ken (Training) 4, Athletics (Weightlifting) 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Politics (LDI Corporate Structure) 1, Science (Zoology) 2, Socialize 3, Survival 2

Merits: Giant, Interdisciplinary Specialty (Training), Multilingual (French, English), Ritual Sorcerer

Open Rites: Amkhata Creation

Closed Rites: Rite of Purity (p. XX)

Investment: None

Integrity: 6

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Compassionate

Vice: Nosy

Initiative: 4

Defense: 4

Size: 6

Speed: 10

Health: 8

The Nyctopian Masters

We will be your all, and we will be worth it.

Many have attempted to prove the existence of an empire older than Egypt's Middle Kingdom over the past century, but no one's claims hold up to scrutiny. This due to actual false claims and evidence, and the direct intervention of the Arisen.

Some cultists are shocked to learn that their masters would spend time and effort keeping the Nameless Empire a secret. The Arisen loudly proclaim their faith in the Judges, punishing sins in their name. When a mummy's Memory is strong enough to remember her past, her closest allies are the first to know every single detail. Some Deathless fly into rants about how empires like the United States barely hold a candle to their lost kingdom. With all that in mind, wouldn't they want the Nameless Empire to be known historical fact? Wouldn't it make their purpose easier?

The Nyctopian Masters are a living example as to why Arisen hide Irem's existence. Led by a sorcerer with ambitions of supreme power, the cult is filled with just enough knowledge to be a

threat. To add insult to injury, when the cult destroys a vessel or sends a mummy back to henet, they do it while cursing the Nameless Empire.

History

The Merry Pranksters faded into history as a colorful footnote, but they were a revelation for Henry Cooper. The psychedelic enthusiasts stopped in his town while on a road trip to the 1964 World's Fair. They threw a huge party, and Cooper snuck out to attend with a couple of friends. It was the first time he took acid. A few years later, he saved up what little money he had and, like many others at the time, moved to San Francisco to live among the hippie subculture.

While some turned to revolution and others to Eastern religion, Cooper traveled down a different path. He fell in with the Temple of Eternal Life and Love, one of the many community centers that sprung up in the area. The food was good, the drugs were better, and its members were happy to bring the young man in. Though the group had only formed a few months ago, Cooper was impressed at the esoteric knowledge they held, taught to them by the center's unseen benefactor. What he couldn't have known was that the Temple was a desperate effort to ensure a mummy's undisturbed rest.

Sarna was a loyal Sesha-Hebsu until he read the *Dreams of Avarice*, a heretical text claiming to tell the truth behind the Arisen's creation serve as a first step towards Apotheosis. He believed the text and cannibalized the Relic his Judge commanded him to retrieve. He spent decades roaming the world in search of enlightenment, consuming vessels to stay alive. By the late 1960s, Sarna lost his cult, was stranded in the United States, and achieved nothing. Convinced he had been deceived, he resolved to start the Temple as a new cult, return to henet, and beg his Judge's forgiveness.

Cooper learned all he could from the Temple and developed a knack for sorcery. Sarna was sure that he found his next high priest and helped develop his talent over the next several years. He allowed Cooper access to his personal library of occult texts, all Iremite history coded in the myths of other cultures. Only one book was off limits: Sarna's annotated copy of the *Dreams of Avarice*, which he could not find the heart to destroy. This would be his undoing.

As soon as Cooper knew the book was off limits, he coveted it. He craved *all* of Sarna's knowledge, not just the piecemeal bits fed through filters of lies. He stole it the first chance he could. He read the book while under the influence of his "spiritual cocktail," acid, marijuana, and amphetamine. The truth of the Iremite religion enhanced by the careful notes of a mummy who remembered almost everything was too much for Cooper's mind. He fell into a delusion that he was the Nameless Empire's Pharaoh reborn, and that the Shan'iatu betrayed him. Instead of giving him immortal life and power like they had the Arisen, they cursed him to live a mortal life. They needed to be punished. The Deathless must be destroyed, and Duat itself must be torn asunder.

That night, he gathered the Temple into a secret meeting, where he told the congregants of his revelations. A few left that night, never to return. The others marched with him to Sarna's makeshift tomb, where they slew the weak, defenseless mummy and destroyed his canopic jars. Once it was done, they pledged to serve Cooper for eternity.

Henry Cooper declared himself to be the Scorpion, the True Pharaoh and inheritor of the world. The Temple of Eternal Life and Love became the Nyctopian Masters, named because they mastered their own destiny in a single night. In 1979, the cult published *The Handbook of the*

Nyctopian Masters, a manifesto on the threat of Duat backed up by duplicated portions of Sarna's copy of *Dreams of Avarice*. It was distributed through head shops and underground circles, and digital copies are easily found on the internet. It has gone through four editions, with the most recent being published in 2011, on the eve of the fourth Sothic Turn.

Structure

The Nyctopian Masters function as a Tribal cult (p. XX). Every aspect of the cult is under the Scorpion's direct control. The cult is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area and spread through the United States. It also has pockets of activity in Central America, East Asia, West Africa, and Eastern Europe. These four international branches are led by a high priest or priestess named after a legendary ruler or warlord. All were trained and approved of by the Scorpion. Half of them are fantastically loyal to the True Pharaoh, and the other half are very good at pretending.

Until 2012, the Nyctopians focused on recruitment, drawing from college students, the older working class, and middle-aged dilettantes of New Age beliefs. The fourth Sothic Turn has shifted the cult into a proactive stance, seeking out vessels and Arisen to destroy. The Scorpion also orders his underlings to investigate recruiting within the tech industry, as he believes that programmers and hardware developers are true modern-day artisans and deserve to become a guild in his new empire.

The Nyctopian Masters want nothing less than the complete domination of the planet. This may seem difficult due to the cult's small size, but the Scorpion has a master plan. First all vessels must be destroyed, and their Sekhem allowed to return to the earth. Second, all mummies must be killed and permanently returned to Duat, which the Nyctopians also refer to as "Starry A'aru." Once the Deathless and Lifeless are sent back to what the Masters believe to be their unified paradise, they will perform a powerful ritual to destroy the realm. Finally, they will use the power of all the liberated Sekhem to conquer the world, eliminate all traces of the Nameless Empire from human culture, and then rule the planet as the Endless Empire.

The Scorpion has made it clear that the plan must be accomplished quickly. Every single creature that runs on Sekhem must be discovered and destroyed, and there won't be another opportunity to accomplish this for another millennium. The cultists understand this, and act with an intense zeal. The Endless Empire is at hand, and there is no room for error.

Closed Rites of the Nyctopian Masters

Rite of Vision

Sometimes, reading passages from the *Handbook* or offering free lunches aren't enough to get people to remember their very first past life in the Nameless Empire. When the Nyctopian Masters need to recruit an important person, or at least convince them that they truly believe what they say, they turn to this rite.

The three elements of the Rite of Vision are:

- The rite must be performed during a downpour. A point of Ba allows the rite to be performed during any kind of weather.
- The target's eyes must be covered with mud. A point of Sheut lets anything that blocks vision cover the target's eyes. If the rite is worked on multiple targets, all targets must have their vision blocked.

- The sorcerer must lead other sorcerers in a performance of the vision they want their target to see. A point of Ka lessens the requirement to one performer. The lead sorcerer's player must always roll to complete this element.

Action: Extended (12 Successes required. Each roll is 10 minutes.)

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression

Suggested Modifiers: Rite is performed on a stage (+2), rite is performed in a private area (+1), audience members can visible see the rite's performance (-2 for each member that can see).

Success: All targets experience a vivid hallucination of whatever the sorcerer wants him to see. For the next scene, any attempts to Persuade or Intimidate the targets receive a +3 bonus to the dice pool.

Exceptional Success: As Success, and every sorcerer who participated takes the Inspired Condition (p. XX).

Failure: All targets experience temporary blindness until the mud or other vision blocking object is removed.

Dramatic Failure: As Failure, and any attempts to Persuade or Intimidate targets receive a -3 bonus to the dice pool.

Rite of the Pharaoh's Ear

The Nyctopian Masters are spread throughout the world. In its early days, they faced a major challenge: members would need to spend long periods out of direct communication with each other, and especially with the Scorpions and his clergy. This Rite was developed to make sure that the True Pharaoh's adherents would never be far from each other — whether they want to be or not.

The three elements of the Rite of the Pharaoh's Ear are:

- A living creature must be killed and torn apart in the name of the Endless Empire. While cultists usually use rodents, some vindictive Masters sacrifice their neighbors' pets. A point of Ba allows the use of animal carcasses killed by other means.
- An object must be slathered with parts of the animal's body, while the sorcerer chants an admonishment towards the gods of Irem. A point of Ren negates the need for the chant.
- For the next six nights, the sorcerer must keep the object in their bed, and sleep while cradling it. A point of Ka negates this requirement entirely. In either case, the object can never be washed.

When the rite is complete, the object becomes a one-way psychic microphone, broadcasting anything it hears into the mind of the sorcerer that created it. The object works at any distance, but the sorcerer cannot shut out the noise it picks up. This effect lasts until the object is destroyed. A point of Ab allows for two-way psychic communication through the object, and a point of Sheut allows the sorcerer to hear the deepest desires of the voices the object broadcasts.

Sachiko Ishii

"You stand in the way of my birthright. Why should I show mercy?"

Background: Sachiko Ishii has been a Nyctopian Master since birth. Her parents, Aya and Souta, marched with Henry Cooper on the night he became the Scorpion. They returned to Japan and founded a local branch of the cult and raised their three children in the faith. Memorizing passages from the Handbook was mandatory, as was learning sorcery. Out of all their children, Sachiko was the most talented sorcerer.

Hana and Yuuka, her older sisters, escaped from the cult once they were old enough to attend college. They begged her to break away as well. After a long, agonizing time, she finally refused. Sachiko felt useful to her parents and the Masters and couldn't imagine giving that up. She cut ties with her sisters and has served the cult without question ever since.

Description: Sachiko is a Japanese woman in her late thirties. She is of average height and has brown eyes. She keeps her black hair at shoulder length. She always feels cold, and wears long-sleeved sweaters, regardless of the weather.

Storytelling Hints: Sachiko is taking on an active role in the day-to-day operation of Japanese Nyctopian Masters. Her parents are getting too old for the job, and she hopes to replace them. The elders of the cult, all next in line for head priest, severely disapprove of her actions.

She truly believes in the faith and claims that she remembers her entire past life in the Nameless Empire. Still, she misses her sisters and hopes for one last family reunion before her parents die.

Sachiko Ishii

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4; Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 2, Expression (Speeches) 3, Intimidation 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (First Aid) 2, Occult 4, Persuasion 3, Politics 2, Stealth (Shadowing) 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Knives) 4

Merits: Holistic Awareness, Library (Occult) •, Relentless, Ritual Sorcerer, Sympathetic

Open Rites: Create Vestige (p. XX), Sybaritic Omen Interpretation (p. XX)

Closed Rites: Rite of Vision (p. XX), Rite of the Pharaoh's Ear (p. XX)

Investment: Ab 1

Integrity: 5

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Loyal

Vice: Sentimental

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Health: 8

The Sanguine Fellowship

Blood is eternal, and we control its flow.

A local butcher drains the excess blood from her daily deliveries. Every month, she brings a huge tub to the man that rents her spare room. He makes it into an elixir that keeps the leukemia at bay for just a little longer. He always tells her that if she brought him the same amount of fresh human blood, it'd cure her completely. One day, she'll give in.

The soldier hears his sentence with his head held high. The press calls him a monster. Shock sites share leaked videos of what he did to a town square in a faraway country. The judge says he's committed a horrendous crime, but he knows better. For the price of a massacre, he's ensured that his country will win a war he foresaw in the guts of a comrade.

She's the best at selling guns, missiles, and drones. Tonight, she's securing a several billion-dollar contract for the government, but the generals she hosts in the meeting room are here for another purpose. After the usual slideshow of figures and charts, she projects an image of Iremite writings and leads them in prayer. When it's over, she's won the contract and the generals have their holy marching orders.

The man in the spare room, the soldier, the saleswoman and the generals, all are members of Sanguine Fellowship, though they may not know it by that name. Blood is perhaps Sekhem's closest manifestation, and the cult deals with it exclusively. They are masters of war and killers without remorse. And now, as Sothis ascends, the Fellowship considers its most contentious decision yet: serving the Arisen once more.

History

The Sanguine Fellowship are not forthcoming with their history, but its most dedicated adherents know the basics.

The Fellowship was once several independent cults of blood sorcerers from the Greek island of Karpathos. United by a desire for immortality and a hunger to learn ancient magic, the cults banded together as the *Adelfoi Aimatōs* and traveled to Ptolemaic Egypt, where they were accepted with open arms.

Like many sorcerer cults of the time, the *Adelfoi Aimatōs* served the Egyptian Arisen. The Deathless used them as assassins, tacticians, and fortune tellers. The cult flourished under their patronage, and even discovered sacrificial rituals that aided early Blood Bathers (p. XX).

It was not to last. A shadow war erupted among the sorcerers of Egypt, and the cult chose the wrong side. Their Arisen patrons fell into *henet*, leaving them defenseless. Their allies saw an opportunity and betrayed them, accusing them of poisoning important leaders. The cult, nearly wiped out, fled the nation and served an Arisen known as the Crimson Pharaoh.

When Marc Antony marched to Alexandria, the Crimson Pharaoh and his cult came with him, and attempted to transform Cleopatra's son Caesarion into Azar reborn. The ritual failed, and the Crimson Pharaoh abandoned Antony. The Arisen fell into *henet* not long after the Roman Empire's birth, and the *Adelfoi Aimatōs* scattered to the winds once more. While the sorcerers still gathered in secret meetings, developing a cellular structure was crucial to their survival after the empire's fall.

The blood sorcerers survived though the ages, hiding among armies and warbands. In battle, the cult could use their bloody and violent rituals with few questions, and their magic could help turn the tide for their patrons. As cells formed around the world, the *Adelfoi Aimatōs* became the

Sanguine Fellowship. Their cultists were found on every side of every major war in history, and they eventually nestled into the modern military-industrial complex.

Structure

The Sanguine Fellowship operates as a Conspiracy cult (p. XX). It consists of autonomous cells worldwide, ranging from 2-15 members each. Cells pursue their own projects but are not permitted to interfere with another cell's project.

While the leader of every cell is aware of the cult's true nature, this is not necessarily true for the other cell members. Cells can take the form of heretical orders in mainstream religions, mystery cults within the military, interest groups in hobbyist circles, and political action committees. Whatever form the cell takes, they usually have enough similar imagery and beliefs to cooperate. If necessary, cell leaders will not hesitate to step in and reveal the truth to their adherents, especially if their actions would inadvertently hinder another cell's goals.

While cell goals are varied, the hunt for immortality unites them. They keep tabs on known immortals (p. XX) and track the Arisen when they awaken. They are especially close to Blood Bathers, though these days they can't help but see the ritual as a waste of blood's true potential. The Sanguine Fellowship has existed long enough to see the benefits and drawbacks of every form of immortality and find all of them wanting. They will settle for nothing less than truly living forever in one body, with no drawbacks.

Another universal goal is the need for war. It provides cover for their sorcery, it provides blood, and the Sanguine Fellowship is exceptionally good at waging it. They use their positions in governments, militaries, and weapon developers to encourage it. However, the cult approaches their warmongering with caution. The cult fears nuclear war above all else. Initial deaths from a nuclear bomb shed little blood, therefore being pointless, and no sorcery in the world could reverse the damage.

Every year, cell leaders gather in one location, chosen at the previous year's meeting. This gathering, called the "Reunion," is when they report on their progress and collectively decide on the cult's actions. Once the year's agenda is complete, the Fellowship celebrates with sacrifice, sorcery, and debauchery.

The Reunion of 2012 posed an important question: now that the Sothic Turn has arrived, should the Sanguine Fellowship join the Arisen's cults once more? The topic was met with violent debate. The cells eventually agreed to continue observing the Arisen and revisit the question next year. Several years have passed since, and the Fellowship is no closer to an answer.

Closed Rites of the Sanguine Fellowship

Rite of Innocence

The Sanguine Fellowship kills. There is no better way to obtain the fresh, human blood that powers their rites. Not all its members are stone-cold killers, and still feel remorse, guilt and sadness over their murders. This rite is designed to shut down those pesky feelings.

The three elements of the Rite of Innocence are:

- The sorcerer must drain the blood of a proven warrior into a deep bowl or container, filling it to the rim. A point of Ab allows it to be anyone's blood.

- The sorcerer must dunk his head into the blood, long enough until they run out of breath. A point of Ka changes the requirement so that the sorcerer's head only needs to be soaked in the blood.
- The sorcerer must remove his head from the blood and praise Ares while facing the sun. A point of Ren negates the need for praise, allowing the rite to be done in silence.

Upon completion, the sorcerer can kill with impunity for the next twenty-four hours. No matter how many people he kills, or how it is done, the sorcerer never suffers a Breaking Point. A point of Sheut erases all traces of the killer's identity on the victim's body once the kill is complete. A point of Ba extends the sorcerer's killing power to Ephemeral entities. The sorcerer can harm them as if they were manifested.

Rite of Haruspicy

When the cult served the Crimson Pharaoh, they learned the art of *Haruspicy*, a form of divination that used the entrails of sacrificed animals. The Sanguine Fellowship still practices the art, with just one major difference: they use human sacrifices.

The three elements of the Rite of Haruspicy are:

- The sorcerer must kill his sacrifice without damaging the sacrifice's abdomen. A point of Ba allows the rite to be performed on any corpse, if the abdomen is intact.
- The sorcerer must slice open the corpse's abdomen with a silver-tipped blade. The liver must be removed and divided into five equilateral pieces. A point of Ka allows the use of anything that can cut flesh.
- The sorcerer must drink blood from each of the five pieces, then arrange them into a pentacle. A point of Ab negates the need to drink blood. Traditionally, sorcerers enhancing the rite with Ab pour the blood on top of a reflective surface, but even this is not necessary.

Upon completion, the sorcerer receives a vision of an upcoming major life event. A point of Ren allows the sorcerer to see the identity of every person in the vision. A point of Sheut reveals the greater context of the event, eliminating any potential misinterpretations or deceptions.

Peter Rousses

"Of course you need my help. Fair warning, it's going to be messy."

Background: Peter Rousses never cared about consequences. He seized every opportunity he could. When he wanted something, he took it. When he discovered a book on how to summon and bind ghosts, he followed it to the letter. He got so good at it that when his parents discovered his talent, they burned the book and sent him to military school.

There, he was recruited into the Bleeding Goat, the school's time-honored secret society and a cell of the Sanguine Fellowship. Delighted to be in the company of fellow sorcerers, he rose to prominence and graduated with top honors. He enlisted in the military soon after, keeping in contact with his cell.

After two tours of duties, Peter used his connections to form a new cell: Spearpoint, a private military company. Now, he serves the cult as a high priest, making conflicts bloodier and profiting from the carnage.

Description: Peter is a fit, muscular Greek man in his early fifties. He has dark olive skin, which contrasts with his blond hair and gray eyes. When he isn't wearing the finest suits money can buy, he wears button-down shirts and khaki pants. He wears a bloodstained apron when he works his rites. It's the same apron he wore for his very first sacrifice in military school.

Storytelling Hints: Life is good for Peter, and it can only get better. With the world in crisis, there's never been a better time to own a mercenary company. States and private clients around the world inquire about hiring Spearpoint every day, and his employees have played a part in decisive battles around the world.

The return of the Arisen annoys him. Those in favor of serving them claim that the Deathless are the most feasible example of immortality, but Peter refuses to buy that. He believes that if he can prove his soldiers are better at locating and securing vessels, and if he can get his top-secret cellular regeneration project off the ground, he can convince the cult to finally wash their hands of these archaic, pointless monsters.

Peter Rousses

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Blocking) 2, Empathy 2, Firearms (Handguns, Shotguns) 3, Intimidation (Interrogation) 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Ghosts) 3, Medicine 3, Persuasion 3, Politics 3, Socialize (Formal Events) 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise (Black Market, Navigation) 4, Subterfuge 3, Survival (Shelter, Weather) 2, Weaponry 3

Merits: Contacts (Military), Contacts (Mercenaries), Encyclopedic Knowledge (Politics), Fast Reflexes ••, Fleet of Foot ••, Inspiring, Iron Stamina ••, Professional Training (Soldier) •••, Ritual Sorcerer, Sorcerous Knowledge, Trained Observer

Open Rites: Create Vestige (p. XX), Exorcism, Summoning, Sybaritic Omen Interpretation (p. XX), Warding

Closed Rites: Rite of Innocence (p. XX), Rite of Haruspicy (p.XX)

Investment: None

Integrity: 4

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Steadfast

Vice: Indulgent

Initiative: 7

Defense: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Health: 9

Notes: Peter's Professional Training Asset Skills are Firearms, Streetwise, and Survival.