
DEGENESIS
MOLOCH





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MOLOCH



SI VIS
PACEM,
PARA BELLUM

[LATIN PROVERB]

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Prologue

Enter the Moloch

Heed my warning, stranger! You rise, and you fall – and there's hardly ever a way to predict who'll sell you out in the end. If you're searching for friendship and loyalty, you must be a hopeless idiot. Didn't anybody teach you that such things only prosper among equals, and that equality ain't a thing in authoritarian empires?

Listen. Justitian is the victor. The city rose out of Exalt's almighty shadow, flourishing while its predecessor perished. What's your claim to fame? Do you think it matters to anyone what Cult you hail from? There are thousands of others like you out there, waiting in the sidelines to assume your position. Don't think that the meager achievements you collected in years past will make a difference. Sooner or later you'll be gone, and you ought to be happy if your grandson even remembers your name. Meanwhile, this city will still be standing, booming, growing, and its creativity will outlast your miserable existence for centuries to come.

You'd better wake up to the simple reality that you're just a mote of dust drifting on the currents of history. Make the best out of what you have, and don't play the tough guy. Nobody needs your entitlement around here. If you keep sputtering nonsense like that you'll just end up incriminating yourself. See the Observer over there? He's been following you around for the past half-hour, and you haven't even noticed. All your smack-talk about friends in the right places sounds pretty pointless to me now. Better be prepared to talk yourself out of a confrontation, rather than risking your life making false claims. Good luck, fella, you'll need it.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You've wandered along the edges of the Black Lung and crossed the Protectorate. You've visited the satellite cities and walked through the gates of mighty Justitian. You rummaged through the history of this region and saw glimpses of the future. Now it is time to familiarise yourself with the powers-that-be.

Justitian is a hotbed of political intrigue, a nine-headed hydra steered by cruel and vicious rulers who hold on to their might with iron determination. Now you will face them, uncover their conviction, understand their motivation, and oppose them in their actions. You will be exposed to their limitless ambitions, their greedy designs, and in the end you will either confront them as enemies, or attempt to turn them into allies or pawns for your own personal gain.

BOOK 2: MOLOCH

◈ Chapter 1: INCEPTION serves as an opener, to allow new characters to settle into Justitian and become accustomed to the inner workings of the city.

◈ Chapter 2: MOLOCH takes a deep dive into an unseen plethora of NPC's, each with their own unique backstories, potential adventure hooks, and webs of connections, allowing Game Masters to string their campaign along a multitude of plotlines from a vast array of human interactions.

◈ Chapter 3: FALLOUT ventures into top secret territory, shedding light on some of the big mysteries surrounding the fall of Exalt, the Needle Tower Disaster, and the Piast's machinations from his hideout in Wroclaw, interspersed with historical documents that reveal new information on the plan of the Recombination Group.

◈ Chapter 4: TWILIGHT closes the book and delivers a final epilogue, forecasting near-future events and showing glimpses of how the world will look in the upcoming years.

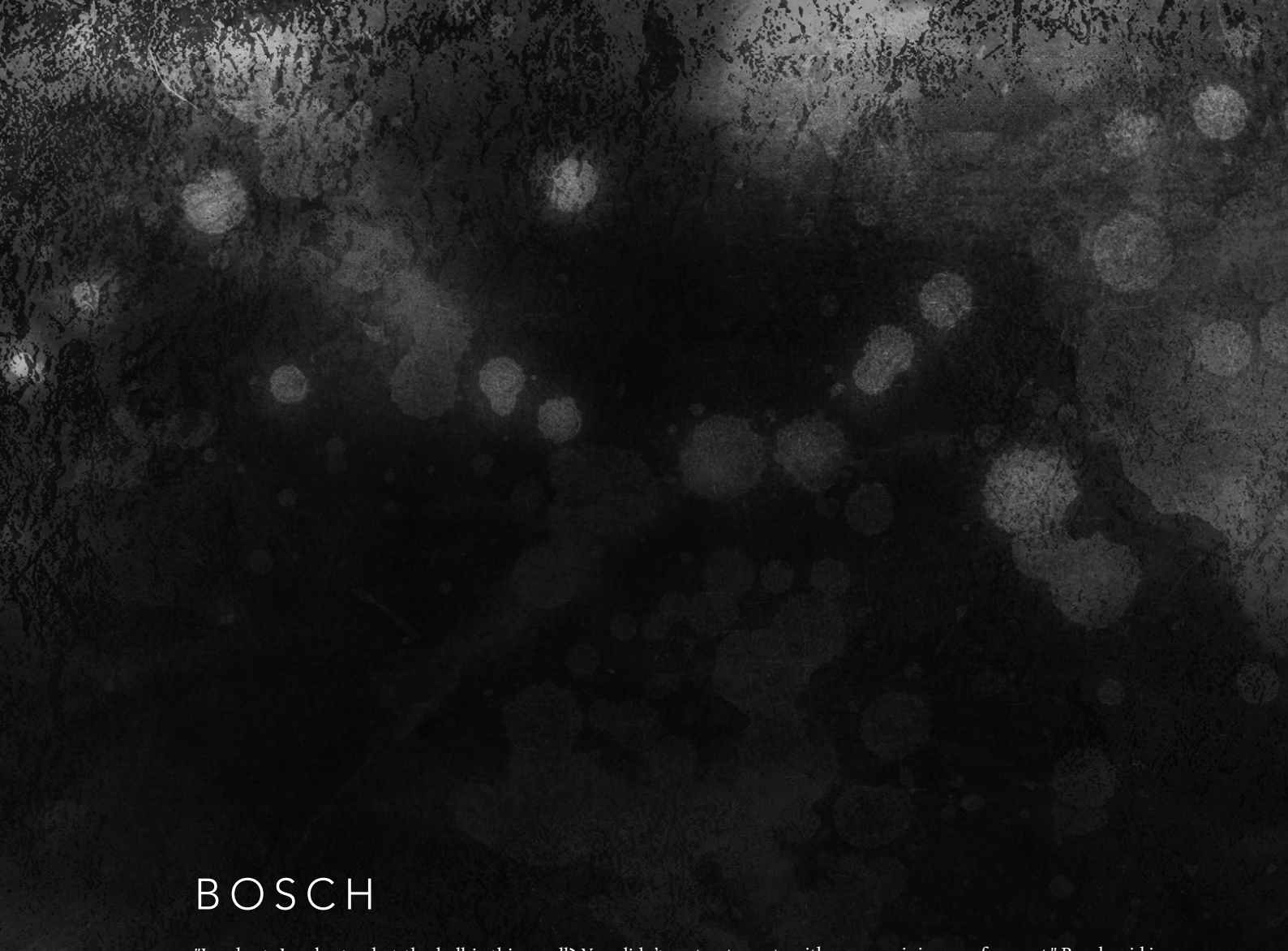
Be prepared. The fires of rebellion are burning bright, and old vendettas resurface from the depths of the past to take their toll in the present. Only those who are keen know how to survive in this perilous world, and can carve a niche for themselves in which they can retain their peace. The foolish ones meet certain death.

YOU ARE THE CONSEQUENCE
OF EVERYTHING THAT CAME BEFORE YOU.
TO DENY THE PAST
IS TO ERADICATE YOUR FUTURE.





Inception



BOSCH

"Lambert, Lambert, what the hell is this smell? You didn't shit yourself out of fear, did you?" Bosch shone a small flashlight across the swollen eyes of his gagged prisoner. The nostrils of the naked and chained victim trembled. A long bloody thread of spit hung from his chin, and his battered body shook in terror. "Buto, you told Lambert what happens to traitors?" Bosch's question dripped with boredom as he continued to inspect the prisoner.

"Yes, the whole program."

"And? Is he ready to talk?" Bosch targeted Buto with the lamp, running the beam over the bookie's huge belly, up to his eyes. He blinked.

"No. Damn Shutter. He does not talk. I had three of the boys go for it. They were in the cell with him for two hours and he still didn't even say a word. Just shat himself from head to toe."

"Did you remember to take out the gag in time for him to open his mouth?"

"Of course! He's just tough as nails. Give me one more day with him." Buto tried to explain.

"Nonsense! No more delay, we need this information right now" Bosch countered as he turned back to face his prisoner. The Dwarven King began, brushing the greasy hair from the Shutter's forehead to reveal his barcode, "Lambert! These beasts here, what did they do to you?" The prisoner only groaned, trying desperately to open his right eye. "Damn shame! People nowadays can't be trusted to treat guests with even a minimum of respect." Bosch said in a grandfatherly voice.

He leaned closer, whispering a question into the Shutter's ear. "Did they hurt you a lot?" Lambert's head dropped and a tormented nod followed. "Bastards! I keep saying it. You know Lambert, I'm your only friend down here." He glanced over to Buto, pointing a finger at the mountain of meat "If it was up to pigs like Buto, the rats would already be gnawing off your asshole. These guys don't know mercy."

Bosch took a lengthy pause, pulling off his oversized shades and giving them a polish with the dirty sleeve of his coat. His tiny eyes wandered over Lambert's disfigured features. Bosch's expression was full of pretentious sympathy. He sighed heavily, "I know mercy. I know you did not deserve all of this, Lambert. The torn fingernails. The blades through your feet. The branding irons. The blows with the steel bars. They hurt you a lot. Not even in the Cleft would they have treated you this badly." Bosch's summary was sober, and quiet.

Lambert's breath was halting. Slowly he seemed to grasp the sheer extent the torture he had endured for the last three days and nights trapped in Cartel's padded cell. A muffled sob escaped his lungs, and with the last of his strength he tried to sit up.

"Shhhh! Lambert, listen to me. I am here to redeem you. I will not leave you down here in the dark, with these pigs. Right, Buto?"

"Of course, Master Bosch, we'll stop as soon as you give the command!" Came the sheepish reply from Buto.

Lambert paused, unable to believe his ears. Bosch loosened the gag and whispered encouragingly: "You just have to give me something so that I can calm these fiends."

Lambert gasped for air like a fish out of water. Nothing but a faint rustling escaped.

"Lambert tell me, I beg you!" Bosch demanded as he wrapped his arm protectively around the battered Shutter. "How many Shutters did the Cluster plant within the Cartel? One? Two? Three?"

Lambert sucked the stifling air of the cell between his remaining teeth, coughing, choking.

"Come on, don't you throw up now! You've held up through all of this, Lambert. You're a fighter!" Bosch softly patted the prisoner on the back, encouraging him. "How many? Tell me the number, and the pain will be over in a second."

"Tw - two." Lambert moaned.

"Two? Are you sure? Do you mean two more, or you and a second?"

"I-I and a second."

"I see. And this second Shutter, is it Jasper by any chance? Is my assumption deceiving me?"

"No." Lambert rasped with his last breath.

"Jasper and Lambert, then. Two Shutters with fake identities were supposed to siphon information and broadcast it to the Cluster. That was your job right? "

"Ye..."

"Lambert, what I am asking you now is more important than anything else." Bosch gently took Lambert's head in his arms, holding it against his chest. The dwarf hummed as if he wanted to take away any fear from the prisoner.

"What name did the Chroniclers give you?"
Lambert started to cry. His body was twitching hysterically. His mouth opened to a whispered answer.

"St-Stringer."

"Stringer." Bosch echoed, satisfied. Then he rose and slowly walked towards the exit of the padded cell. As he stood there in the rectangle of light, he turned to Buto and looked up at the landwhale. "Send one of Joerdis' orphans to the Forecourt. Pay him twenty Drafts and give him a bucket of white paint. Tonight he'll immortalize Stringer's name in big letters on a wall."

Buto nodded curtly and wiped the sweat from his brow. In the background, Lambert let out a soft wail. Bosch threw an apathetic look over his shoulder to the prisoner. "Tell Hector to chop him up before setting him in concrete. And he should play it safe, cut off the scalp and burn it."

With a shrug, Bosch stepped out of the padded cell. Buto stared at the Shutter with raised eyebrows for a while longer. Lambert understood his death sentence, but he did not have the strength to scream. Slowly the cell door closed and the light left the room. Forever.

ARRIVAL

Welcome to the Moloch. Justitian, the eternal city, the heart of the Protectorate and the remnant of an age long gone. Hundreds of thousands of hearts beat here every second. Human lives begin, grow, thrive, set forth, conquer, kill, and pass away. The stories of the city are as diverse as its inhabitants, the interdependencies so complex that each insight into the life of one individual inevitably leads to the history of the next.

The seething neighborhoods of the suburbs are microcosms within this vibrant, overcrowded network of noise and filth. The people here live their everyday life penned in a kennel of bureaucracy, surveillance, and distrust. The dust of centuries tries to obscure the obvious. Brushing it aside reveals the origin of all laws, the driving principle of nature: human conflict. Just like everywhere else, this is the starting point for adventures and epic campaigns in this great metropolis.

Finding oneself in Justitian can be overwhelming at first. In fact, the first thing anyone should do here is find a place to settle down for a while.

If the characters want to stay among strangers and transients, the convoluted Guest Quarter in the west of the city is an excellent starting point. If they want to mingle with refugees and Defilers, the Bottomlands offers the best conditions to immerse themselves in that hazy air. Perhaps they want to venture deep into Justitian's heart; they can move into an overpriced inn on the Forecourt, or try it in a room in the Stukov Quarter and familiarize themselves with the ancient traditions of the locals. Those who want to pursue their business unrecognized and unmolested choose Tech-Central as their refuge, but caution is advised: the Cartel holds power here, and anyone acting out of turn will be crushed by the fangs of the criminal ring.

If the characters have connections to Judges, Chroniclers and Spitalians, then the gates to Uptown are open to them. However, there are other dangers lurking above.

TIMING

JUSTITIAN takes place after the events of the previous adventure, BLACK ATLANTIC. Many incidents from existing publications are taken up and continued here. For a better understanding we recommend using JEHAMMED'S TRILOGY as a basis, in order to capture JUSTITIAN in its full glory.

HEAVY LOT

Justitian's hierarchy of power undoubtedly differs from all known and familiar structures outside the Protectorate:

◈ Those who belong to Chroniclers, Judges or Spitalians stand at the spearhead of society, enjoy special rights, and must carry out their duties or risk losing these privileges.

◈ On the other hand, Scrappers and Clanners see themselves as the underdogs of this system. Despite this perception, they form the backbone of society without which Justitian would not be able to survive.

◈ As a neutral force in the Protectorate, the Hellvetics move freely, but wield no political force.

◈ Jehammedans, Apocalyptics and Anabaptists have established themselves within their ecological niches. Each of them dominate their own sphere of influence, but have limited impact beyond their territory.

◈ Palers, Neolibyans, Scourgers and Anubians are among the outsiders of the society. The former are simply not tolerated, while Africans are feared and sanctioned.

GROUP COMPOSITION

The composition of a Player group has an essential effect on the advantages and disadvantages of life in Justitian.

If they're on the winning side, many doors will open for them, but the subliminal hatred of the oppressed will hang over them at every hour of the day.

For anyone who belongs to the scum, the convenience of everyday life remains denied, but he can easily mix with the people and won't reap suspicious glances at every pub he enters. Those who share their place in the dirt together, curse with their finger pointed at Uptown and mark their enemy.

FIRE HAZARD

The city is full of hotspots, places where ideologies collide, where religions oppose each other with teeth bared, and where people struggle against oppression. The Chroniclers, Judges, and Spitalians have trapped Justitian in a straitjacket of laws and edicts, from which there is no escape. But it is precisely this systematic order, the maxim of exchanging liberty for security, which gives the city its magnetic appeal.

Nobody would voluntarily fall prey to a horde of savages who launch a bloodthirsty attack on one's home and farm, slaughtering sons and raping daughters. The fear of being helpless and exposed to the dangers of the wasteland is what drives people into the arms of the Judges. With their head lowered they cast themselves into Justitian's iron stranglehold, because they have no alternative.

The Judges do not apply any selection to the sheep that are lost and come desperately into their herd. They take anyone ready to submit to their word, follow their rules, pay their taxes, and pass on Justitian's ideals to the next generation. This is how Justitian formed, a merging of things that normally would never be found together. Jehammedans and Anabaptists are forced to visit the same streets and markets, Apocalyptics and Scrappers poach in each other's territories, and Clans that have relied on ancient traditions are suddenly being crushed under the Spitalians' concept of modernization.

Justitian is a powder keg. How and when this chaotic construct detonates depends on who finds the fuse first and unwittingly ignites the flames of revolution.

CONFLICT

Justitian is a war zone of greed, wounded pride, secret revenge, megalomania, manic growth, and authoritarian tyranny. The city is a projection of the psyche of a whole people. Whoever commands this caricature of civilization holds the crown in an ocean full of sharks and has to defend his position day after day to prove his power, otherwise it will be torn from him by the next ambitious upstart. Conflict is brewing. Everywhere.

Before you familiarize yourself with the featured NPCs in Chapter 2: Moloch, try to narrow down the conflict of your campaign. Once you have an idea of where your story is going, you can discuss the group composition with your Players.

◈ If you are looking for a warlike campaign on the borders of the Protectorate, then Hellvetics, Judges, and Anabaptists will be suitable to have on board.

◈ If you want to underline your campaign with politics and intrigue, then there should be no lack of Chroniclers and Judges to penetrate into Uptown.

◈ If your campaign is about oppression and rebellion, then Scrappers and Clanners are an indispensable part of a group of Players.

◈ If you are interested in crime and a campaign steeped in the shadows of Justitian, then it is recommended to have Clanners, Apocalyptics, Scrappers, and Palers among the characters.

◈ If your campaign aims to reveal secrets and uncover powerbrokers, it's apt to fall back on Spitalians, Chroniclers, Judges, Anubians, Jehammedans, Apocalyptics, or Palers.

HOSTILITY

Adventures and campaigns in Justitian are diverse. As a game master you have countless themes to choose from. Here is a brief overview:

WARZONE

The characters are veterans of the war and defend the Protectorate against the invading Clans.

UPHEAVAL

Together with other oppressed, the characters work against the system and try to overthrow it.

ORDER

The characters try to maintain the political status quo and beat down the blossoming rebellion.

POWER STRUGGLE

In the daily turmoil of Justitian, the characters try to seize the moment and expand their power.

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

If one uncovers secrets, they get a glimpse behind the scenes and begin to connect the dots. But characters who know too much attract new enemies.

BEFORE THE GAME

Take your time. Plan the first game session in Justitian as a prelude to get the characters acquainted with this strange environment. Sprinkle peripheral experiences to build mood and give your Players time to understand the customs of the Iron Fist. Even those who spend years in Justitian don't manage to learn all the nooks and crannies of this proliferating tumorous growth.

People come and go. New districts sprout from the dirt as old ones are torn down and rebuilt. Transformation and change are the constants according to which everything is aligned in Justitian. Anyone trying to anchor their memories at a cozy inn will find the following week that the landlord has been replaced and the place now goes by a new name.

Europe's largest marketplaces can be found in Justitian. Goods from all regions of the known world are offered here for sale. Scrappers from Pollen and Purgare drag their relics all the way from home to exchange them for Drafts and information. Neolibyan pioneers rummage through the markets, looking for a niche they can occupy. Apocalyptics from the furthest corners of the land of the Crow travel to Justitian to pay tribute to the Carrion Birds.

The city is a firework of impressions: glassblowers in the Stukov Quarter, medicine makers in Brennen, and cunning mechanics in Tech-Central. In the Harbor district, pubs and brothels are lined up close to each other, in backyards and cellar vaults competitions are held and celebrated until sunrise. Justitian never sleeps, even if the Judges would prefer it otherwise.

Not even the Chroniclers are able to keep track of the number of transients. Justitian's attraction is too strong for anyone who wants to enrich themselves through trade and service in the metropolis. Justitian is a drain on the Protectorate: spoon fed and cared for by the satellite facilities, gulping down Liqua's water reserves, reaping Mobilis' power, and burning Spicafield's timber. But with the crowds comes administration. Offices and paperwork determine the daily business, certificates and restrictions are issued, and both the Spitalians and Judges must work hand in hand to maintain control.

SLOW BURN

Not every campaign starts with a bang. Often it is the inconspicuous events that prepare one to embark on a larger story. In order to give your Players the opportunity to find their way around Justitian and to grasp the scale of this metropolis, you can use the openers listed here as a basis for the first game session.

OFFICE PROGRAMS

Citizenship papers mean privileges. If the characters want to move freely in Justitian, do their business or settle down in one of the citizen quarters, eventually they'll have to get their hands on these crucial documents.

QUARTER EXPLORATIONS

Each of the large neighborhoods and associated districts works according to its own rules. Old traditions meet modern ideas and merge into new structures. Whether in the Stukov Quarter, Tech-Central, Harbor district, Cross Quarter, or Jehammedan Quarter, no two places are alike and the more familiar the characters are with the city, the more likely they will be able to find suitable shelter for themselves.

ESTABLISH CONTACTS

Who controls where? Different Cults dominate their territories within the city limits. Those who do not want to run into trouble need to make sure to treat the local rulers with respect and to come to terms with them. A single Judge in Tech-Central is as powerless as an Emissary who has lost his way in the Jehammedan Quarter.

SHOPPING AND EQUIPMENT

Nowhere else in Europe has as much variety in goods as Justitian. Anyone who wants to improve his equipment and spend some hard earned Drafts or Dinars doesn't need to look far. Thousands of market stalls, scrap halls, department stores, junk shops, street vendors, blacksmiths, tailors, and black marketeers throughout the city are eagerly awaiting new customers.

GAMES AND COMPETITION

If one is out for entertainment and looking for more than just carnal pleasure and other cheap delights, they will find it in the Harbor district. Chessboxing is one of the most popular competitions in which opponents compete both mentally and physically. If someone is looking for gambling, all roads lead them straight to the Flotsam. The risk is high, but the profits are tempting.

STARTING POINT

Justitian is the beating heart of the Protectorate, but outside the city walls lies a vast territory, with dozens of cities to explore. The city can serve as a starting point for a pilgrimage to Sinder, or to visit the arena fights in Liqua. Maybe they ride from here to the east to track down an injured comrade in the Spital, or they head north toward the Stukov Desert to discover its deepest secrets.

HOME STRETCH

Once the characters have settled in, made contacts, gained allies, pitched their quarters, and set themselves up with equipment, the prelude ends and your campaign can begin. In Chapter 2: Moloch, we present a gallery of personalities who populate Justitian, from the scum of the Defiler Streets to the rulers of Uptown. Each of these featured NPCs forms the basis for their own adventure. Different characters are intertwined with each other over long distances and where various threads intersect, they weave together to the climax of a story.

WEB OF CONNECTIONS

Justitian is a chaotic city, with alliances coming together and breaking down faster than most can keep up. However, even in this tumultuous metropolis, Cults protect their own. The following are temporary Background bonuses granted to a character that enters Justitian. They cannot be used to increase a character's Rank, but otherwise function normally. When the character leaves the city, the bonus is lost.

- Characters that have previously lived in Justitian for over a year add (1) to Allies (This stacks with any other bonuses).
- Chroniclers add (1) to either Resources or Secrets.
- Judges add (1) to either Resources or Renown.
- Spitalians add (1) to either Resources or Allies.
- Scrappers add (1) to Network.
- Clanners add (1) to Allies.
- Apocalyptics add (1) to any Background except Authority.

RUMOR MILL

Justitian is a festering amoeba of gargantuan proportions, overgrown and bloated. The city overflows with rumors, stories, half-truths, and whispered secrets that can be distilled from conversations with the colorful population. Week after week, a new storm full of fairy tales sweeps across Justitian, spreads rapidly through all quarters, and fuels debates in taverns and market stalls alike.

But just as the oil floats up to the top of the soup, lies pool on the surface. If one wants to get some of the juicy meat they have to slide the spoon down to the bottom of the pot.

RULES: Let every Player perform an Action roll on INT+Legends before the game begins. Characters from the Protectorate receive +1D on this roll. Spitalians, Chroniclers, Judges, Clanners and Scrappers may add their "Network" score to it as bonus dice. Spitalians, Chroniclers, Apocalyptics and Palers may choose whether they want to add the bonus dice from "Network" or from "Secrets" to the roll. Every Success is rewarded with 1 piece of information from the rumor mill category "Success". Based on the number of Triggers rolled, Players may also receive a special rumour from the following Trigger lists.

SUCCESS

- The Mother of Ravens roams the streets at night and eats naughty children. If you don't want to get gobbled up, go to sleep on time!
- Burn is gone. The Great Cleanse destroyed the East Wind Flock and brought the trade to a standstill.
- The Flotsam is a bastion of pleasure, in the middle of a city full of stiff rules and duties.
- Neolibyans control the city. They are the true rulers of Justitian, the Judges and Chroniclers are nothing more than their puppets.
- The Clans are more powerful than ever. The boundaries of the Protectorate are no longer secure. Even in the Protectorate itself, the raids take their toll. Especially in the Rubble, there are occasional sightings of shock troops.
- Allegedly, there is a new drug in the city. If you are looking for the stuff, try the Eastside.
- Anyone wearing his weapons openly is in for trouble. Judges punish such misconduct with high fines or confiscate the weapon right away. Only those who carry a valid weapon license will get away with it.
- Before the Judges founded Justitian and proclaimed the Protectorate, the territory belonged to the Stukovs and Brenni. Other Clans like the Krawe and Adiki were expelled or crushed.
- Palers trying to get into Justitian disappear. The Chroniclers are behind this purge.
- Pit fights are prohibited, so they are arranged in secret.
- One should avoid the Stallion Streets if they do not want to be searched. Better to take detours through the side streets and alleys to cross the neighborhoods.
- Anyone who has to hide from the Judges has three options: move to the Bottomlands, submerge themselves in Tech-Central, or disappear into the Defiler Streets.
- Anyone who deals with Burn is considered a traitor and may be executed on the spot.
- Supreme Judge Archot is immortal.
- Nobody gets into Uptown without citizenship papers. The Chroniclers perform experiments on humans up there, brainwashing them.
- The attack on the Colossus was initiated by Anabaptists to politically bring the Jehammedans to their knees.
- The Forecourt is the best place to do business. The largest Alcove in Europe is located here and run by a Streamer called Deselect.
- The Spitalians are planning an ethnic cleansing of Justitian's population.

1 TRIGGER

- The Cartel governs Downtown. Tech-Central is the headquarters of the Scrapper coalition. Anyone who associates with the Scrappers is on the safe side and can avoid harassment from the Judges and Spitalians.
- The Chroniclers are the true rulers of the city. The Judges and Spitalians are their puppets. The Cluster sees everything.
- The Carrion Birds are the largest and oldest Flock in Europe. They rule the entire Harbor district.
- Anabaptists and Jehammedans have nothing more to say in the city. Politically, both Cults are powerless.
- The Crack is considered a high security zone. If you don't have a judicial permit, you should avoid being seen around there, or you'll end up in the Cleft before you know it.
- Within the Steel Monolith, the arsenal of the Judges is produced by an enslaved Clan. These so-called Steel Masters have never been seen by anyone in Downtown. Legend has it that they are four-armed giants who can bend metal with their bare hands.
- The Great Cleanse was personally orchestrated by Kranzler, the Provost of the Preservists. Supposedly he still lingers in Uptown.
- Rumors say the Judiciary is hiding Africans in Uptown.

2 TRIGGERS

- Buto is the head of the Cartel. Anyone wanting to participate in the pit fights, must land an audition with that fat whale.
- Bosch is the richest man in town and often invests in projects. Anyone who has to finance a project should try to talk to him.
- A Spitalian supposedly hides among the Defilers.
- The best inventors and engineers can be found among the Manufacturers. There is nothing that these Scrappers can't build or repair, but it comes at a high price.
- Supreme Judge Archot's mind has withered away. He is being held imprisoned in a basement underneath Judgement Hall. During public events, a disguised impersonator takes on his role.
- The Dust Riders control the Flotsam. In a bloody turf war with dozens left dead, they conquered the ship and expelled the Carrion Birds.
- The Head Collector works on behalf of the Cluster and tries to increase the presence of Protectors in Tech-Central with his murder spree.

3+ TRIGGERS

- The leading Protector, Senator Rutgar, the Old Wolf, holds the fate of the Judiciary in his own hands.
- There are Palers in Justitian. They holed up in secret and lead a war of attrition against the Chroniclers.
- Steelbeam, the last of the three Bear Brothers, hides in the city.
- The Cartel is hunting for Shutters. Any of these secret agents employed by the Cluster should fear for their life if they operate in Tech-Central.
- An Arianoi stalks among the Jehammedans of the Quarter.
- Hector, the Woodpecker, can make any corpse disappear.
- The city is infiltrated with spies from the Clans. They are waiting for the right moment to strike.
- The new drug on Justitian's streets is called Broiled and is produced in nearby Ferropol. The traders carry a secret mark on the forehead.
- A monster lives in the Defiler Streets.
- The Head Collector is real.
- Bosch is the Cartel.
- The Mother of Ravens isn't just a story.

IMPRESSIONS

- **FAMULANCER WALLENSTEIN:** “Anabaptists? The stupidest Cult of all! Born blunt, died dull. If you fertilized the Rubble with their corpses, not even a blade of grass would grow!”
- **WESER, THE PROCLAIMER:** “Respect the belongings of your neighbors. Report treason. Report theft and resentment. Without mutual vigilance, sin will infest your hearts and find its way into our lives.”
- **TREIBSAND, SCRAPPER FROM LEADFIELD:** “You can rename Leadfield into Deadfield if you ask me. No one survived the Cockroach raid. We Scrappers fought to the last drop of blood, and those fucking Protectors bailed on us!”
- **RIKA, HEALER IN BRENNEN:** “Knotted shoulders are a horror. It’s because of the heavy backpacks and all the rubbish you carry around on your back. Do you want to relax for a while?"
- **DRUG, THE TAINTED ONE:** “Fuck Justitian, fuck the Judges and their fucking Codex! Once you're at the bottom, it's over. Then you can shovel through the shit of the entire city."
- **LELA, THE HAGARI:** “No, I didn’t steal anything! Stop lashing me like that or I'll get my brothers! They'll flay your skin in stripes and when they're done with you, they'll fuck your sister!"
- **CORTIS, THE FOREIGNERS GUIDE:** “Forget it, Burn is nowhere to be found. Everything gone! Nobody imports. Since the death penalty for smugglers was imposed, not even the Carrion Birds risk it.”
- **ZENOBIS, AUGUR FROM THE STUKOV QUARTER:** “I see a wide field, full of broken stones. They form an arrow pointing north to your destiny. You have to get something out of the desert, stranger. It's waiting for you there."
- **BREITLING, PROTECTOR FROM SIEGE:** “It’s a living nightmare! The siege never breaks. Last month, a new vanguard of Phosphorites arrived. Every time they attacked, we lost more men. It's a never ending slaughterhouse down there in the south."
- **HERZOG, THE TROTTER:** “I can take you everywhere, dear Sir. Rest your feet and enjoy the ride through Justitian's finest districts. Twenty Drafts for half an hour of trotting!"
- **LORA, EXALTER FROM LIQUA:** “Our people should have emerged victorious from the City Wars. Instead, we were banished into exile. This is the Chroniclers' fault. One day we will be resurrected and nail those hooded cowards to the wall! Then the reign of Exalt begins anew."
- **RUMSCOTT, PORK DEALER FROM HARM:** “These Jehammedans with their fucking goats! Since they started settling here, it’s going downhill with the pig farms in Harm. Lamb isn’t even that good! Fucking up our whole business, those chinless wonders."
- **KISMET, THE PYRITE-DIGGER:** “In Cavernis, you can make good money if you understand minerals. You have to be able to distinguish cobalt from tungsten and stand the pressure in the mines, but it's worth it. Those miners have been closer to the Demiurge’s asshole than anyone!”
- **DONNERMANN, EXECUTIONER FROM THE WASTELAND:** “Is that a knife on your belt, stranger? Wrap that in leather or I'll break your hands! Don’t get caught again with a bared weapon, understood? If you want a fight, at least be a man and go to the front!"
- **BRUCHSTEIN, OFFICER OF THE CARTEL:** “If you want to trade, talk to the Cartel. We give you better prices than those accursed Chroniclers and make sure that nobody bends you over the table. Let's face it, we Scrappers are family. Who can we rely on, if not on each other? Come on, shake my hand.”
- **MEREDITH, THE PROVIDER:** “That’s the third time this year that my seeds weren’t certified. Every week they change the Hygienics Regulations in Uptown. No one can make sense of this chaos any longer."
- **ZWEIFELL, DISCHARGED CONVICT FROM SEVERINUS:** “I am now a Touched one. Do you see the nose ring? I just prayed to the invisible man once and now belong to the Anabaptists with all of my sins forgiven. Much better than sitting in the Cleft. There they brainwash you until you can’t even remember your name.”
- **BULCHIEN, FRANKAN REFUGE:** “Briton is on fire. The chieftains have gone mad, they’re killing each other! The whole area is cordoned off and the Emissary of Rennes ordered compulsory baptisms. Anyone who doesn’t convert is executed."

- **CAPTCHA, AGENT OF THE CLUSTER:** “Two hundred and thirteen, two hundred and fourteen, two hundred and fif– unknown subject is being ordered to continue moving, it obscures an Observer's vision!"

- **NINETEEN, SCAVENGER FROM MOBILIS:** “The drudgery is unbearable. You're burning out. Control sluice after control sluice. If you're thinking Justitian’s stipulations are strict, go try your luck in Mobilis, you stupid fool!"

- **GASTON, ASCETIC FROM SPICAFIELD:** “Yes, the city was formerly known as Arquet. The Anabaptists renamed it after they defeated the Pheromancers. Nowadays, the fields stretch over the horizon.”

- **MADIKWAME, NEOLIBYAN DEALER IN TRANSIT:** “The Chroniclers are highly sensitive these days. Is there any news I missed during my trip? What is the reason for their nervous appearance. Are they worshiped no more as the gods of yore?"

- **SELTERS, THE PILGRIM:** “You gotta see Sinder! The First Judge's block is right there in the middle of the market square. The stone is colored rust-red by the blood of the condemned. That is where the history of the Protectorate began."

- **SCREW, FOREMAN AT THE CRACK:** “Yes, just stay away from the Crack. The Chroniclers are anything but gentle. The Hellvetics too. They carry big guns around. Something you marvel at only once in a lifetime. I tell you, with an arsenal like that you could mow down an army of Cockroaches."

- **ALANIS, GRENADIER AT WORK:** “Working in Uptown. Guard duty, you understand? It’s more peaceful up there than in my mother’s womb. No idea why they require so much security."

- **MORTIMER, UNDERTAKER FROM THE KNACKER’S OFFICE:** “What are you gawking at? I have to get this corpse to the cemetery somehow. Come on, help me get this carcass onto the cart instead of just standing there like an idiot!”

- **HYGIENIST PECHSTEIN:** “Over there, to the sluice. Yes, put your boots deep into the pool, just like that. Over there, decontaminate the soles of the shoes. Well done. Open your palms. Open your mouth, I have to shine in there. All clean. Excellent. Next!"

- **ORNATA, FUROR OF BASSHAM:** “Drones, Expatriates, and refugees. Dangerous mixture. The city is already bursting at the seams and the supply has stalled. If a whole batch of people aren’t kicked out soon, everything will break apart."

- **ZAID, ANUBIAN AMONGST BLACK SCRAPPERS:** “The land is burning and the whispering of the ancestors is nothing but a distant echo. When you touch the ground with your hand, you feel that everything is withering and dying."

- **RAVA MAHARI:** “Do not believe the lies of Judges and Chroniclers. The Cockroaches are not cannibals. They only want to reclaim the land from which they were once expelled. If you want, I can show you the truth. We are only a week's ride from the border."

- **IKARINA, SHOEMAKER IN THE STUKOV QUARTER:** “My ancestors settled here generations ago. Yes, our name comes from Stukov, the first cartographer. He was the first one to explore the Black Lung and he’s the founder of our Clan."

- **ASPERAGUS, THE ASCETIC:** “The Judges dance on thin ice. Justitian is completely dependent on Cathedral City and Liqua when it comes to water supply. If they fuck with the Anabaptists, the city will soon be dry."

- **VIGNON, THE SCAVENGER:** “Do not trust anyone. Not the Cartel, not the Chroniclers, not the Spitalians, nor the Carrion Birds, no one! Do you understand? Everyone here is out to keep you down. All parasites, from bottom to top!"

- **NESSA, THE FINCH:** “Shh! You! Yes, exactly you! What are you looking for? Citizenship papers? Yes! I can get you fake papers. They are bulletproof. You can access the elevator platforms with those. You just have to be careful that no Observer is double checking."



Moloch

THE GIFT

Impulse inspected the mountains of shabby furs and carpets scattered around the corners of the dark vault. Tangled webbings devoid of meaning or reason covered every inch of the walls. Chaos reigned. Moisture dripped incessantly from the ceiling and the air smelled of mildew.

The Fragment tried to find a dry place to sit on a skewed bench next to a small table, but everything was soaking wet. Wherever he placed his hand, water oozed from the fibers of some rancid cloth. The Chronicler shuddered with disgust.

He tried to suppress his discomfort and raised his hooked nose up high, as if the air a finger's breadth above was better than down below. Impulse's wheezing resonated metallically, amplified by his crackling Vocoder. With half-closed eyes, he scanned the mocked-up relics littering the cave. Embryonic skulls stared back at him from every nook and cranny of the morbid nest. His mind got lost glaring into the empty eye sockets. They reminded him of his Lord Triglaw. Only in the Marauder's eyes had he ever seen such emptiness.

The Fragment's knee shook with unease. Where was the old hag? She hadn't taken this long before. His eyes travelled over to a stack of scattered Tarot cards. He recognized the familiar symbols on them, followed the Destroyer over to the Protector, and rested upon the Mentor. Her picture was emblazoned on it. A mere nondescript silhouette, yet to Impulse this depiction was spot on. Whoever had drawn her features on this card had captured the essentials without having to invoke any details. Her will to survive was one of a kind. For decades Impulse had attempted to artificially extend his own lifespan, but nobody could ever dare to compete with the Mother of Ravens in this field. She was the true master of immortality, and her secrets lay hidden behind a thousand veils. Impulse ran his gnarled fingers across the soggy Tarot card. Water accumulated underneath his thumb. Slowly, he increased the pressure, watching as the damp paper squelched forth tiny bubbles, convinced that he could crush the Mother of Ravens if he just kept pushing hard enough.

"You gotta squeeze harder, old man!"

Impulse flinched. The built in voice recognition system of his suit pointed him to the left. He squinted and mapped the random assortment of furs that were thrown over a sofa, trying to read the shapes. The Mother of Ravens peeled out of the formless rags like a conjured ghost rising from its grave. Her dark and contorted features were framed by endless rivers of white hair. She grinned. Impulse's synapses rattled, trying to analyze the situation. He struggled to regain his composure in the presence of the mistress of the Carrion Birds, and meet her with all due respect. She paid him no attention. Instead, she got up from her muggy camouflage and reached for a bowl filled with herbs and water. In one go she emptied the contents and let out a long snarl.

"Better," she croaked.

Impulse had no immediate response. He had sacrificed his entire life dealing with the marvels of the Bygones, yet every time he witnessed the Mother of Ravens in the flesh her magnificence left him speechless. She was the last of her kind, they, who had created the sun and the moon, who once strode as gods of the universe, whose words twisted the mind, and whose achievements broke the boundaries of reality. They were the creators of the Stream, and all of their knowledge was bundled within their mortal shells. They were masterpieces.

Impulse lowered his gaze in awe and produced a leather-wrapped cylinder from the layers of his heavy coat. He reverently placed the object down on the table covering the Tarot cards.

"A gift?" the Mother of Ravens gurgled. Impulse nodded and cleared his throat. The air crackled as his Vocoder Phalanx acknowledged his statement with a static reverb that echoed throughout the massive vault.

"I adore gifts," she said with a chuckle, gently unwrapping the leather cover with her black fingernails to reveal the contents. A probe in Impulse's suit recorded his accel-

erated heart rate, and the buzzer implanted in his right palm reminded him to calm down.

"Speak! He can't hear you down here!" Her voice dropped by several octaves. Her gaze was a merciless spear piercing Impulse's soul.

"Fulgur," he whispered.

The Mother of Ravens paused before fully exposing the gift. A grim smirk crawled across her features and distorted them even more.

"You clever old man, you," she said reproachfully. "You thought you could hide your beloved artifact with me?"

"He mustn't own it!" Impulse indignantly replied.

"And a witch's basement is a better repository than your highly secured Cluster?" she countered, cynicism dripping from every syllable.

"He won't suspect it in your hands. The Fulgur must stay here until we have found a way to terminate the Needle. If it falls into his hands everything will fail. Your revenge, just like mine."

The hag giggled to herself. She watched the Chronicler seated across from her with amusement. "Revenge? What tells you I want revenge, old man?" The next instant she was on her feet, circling the Fragment like a crow spying for corpses.

"Revenge is pointless. I haven't lived five hundred years to wallow in human hatred. I miss his grace, more than one can miss anything in the world. His benevolence was like no other. Revenge kept me alive, but it was born of endless yearning. I would even search for him between the stars." She lifted her head to lock eyes with the Fragment. "What are you searching for, Impulse?"

"For a way to stop Tannhäuser. But I also want what I am entitled to. I want to get rid of Triglaw."

"Oh, you mean because of his special piece of affection that he planted in your throat? You brought this all upon yourself, didn't you? Down here, you are under my protection, but back in your bunk filled with Bygone clutter your sins weigh as heavy as ever."

Impulse could taste her wretched stench as she leaned toward his ear. Her voice was suddenly soothing and melodic, as if spoken by an innocent child. "You cannot escape his anger, Impulse. He is your creator. He bequeathed the Stream to you. Without him you would have no purpose in life. You are his puppet. He is your god. If you kill him, you kill everything you ever lived for."

The Fragment struggled to keep his calm. He turned to the Mother of Ravens, baring his old yellow teeth. "He has given up the Stream! Without him, it would never have dried up! All we know is that he caused the collapse! He is the greatest traitor of all!" Impulse blustered, the Vocoder emphasizing his response with a shrill dissonance.

"The envy in you is boundless, old man. You want to take his place without having to bear his responsibility. You never had to know what he knew. You are a neophyte compared to his foresight, like all the offspring that crawled from my belly and had to be discarded for being no good." She turned toward the skulls arranged along the walls of her cave.

"That's-"

"Silence, Chronicler! You are in my haven! You speak when you are spoken to!" She hissed like a stirred nest of angered rattlesnakes, as she casually drifted back over to the gift in front of her. "Fulgur, you said?"

"It's the ignition component for the Carbon. Without it the train cannot cross the Spore Wall and reach Baikonur. It's what the Needle is after." Impulse barely coughed up the answer.

The Mother of Ravens didn't care for what he had to say. She wrapped the leather around the artifact and handed it back to Impulse. The Fragment was perplexed. Anxiously he rose from the bench. "You refuse to help me?"

"It's your war. Mine is waiting for me. That is the difference between us. I have all the time in the world. Yours is running out."

Impulse stared at his knotted and wrinkled hands. His time had come.



SPITALIANS

POWER BASE

Justitian serves as both the Spitalian recruitment machine and their upstream command center. As the third Cult in power, they oversee the daily proceedings in the metropolis. The principle behind this policy of intervention is obvious; the more powerful Justitian becomes, the more protection it will be capable of offering to the Spital. At the same time, access to a multitude of people means more potential recruits who can be enlisted and made fit for purpose. Another highly profitable advantage: Justitian's markets are the main provider for the Spital and its troops. Without the city's grain, electricity, and water, the Cult would be on its own. It is true that over the centuries the Spitalians have learned to endure in strict self-sufficiency and in times of need have come to terms with other powers, but no one longs for such exhausting stretches of deprivation.

The more stable the Protectorate, the less the Cult has to worry about dangers lurking within and instead can focus its gaze on the blooming Chakras and dedicate itself to the fight against the Primer. In order to avert the catastrophic event of a Mother spore field spreading on Borcan soil, the first official act of the Spitalians' reign was to put an end to the trading and consumption of Burn in Justitian. The Great Cleanse was the stamp with which they cemented their influence.

FIELD DEPLOYMENT

The burgeoning threat of the rise of the Clans has not gone unnoticed by the Spitalians. They know that they must support the Judges and Hellvetics stationed in Siege, so that there won't be a second disaster like Chalk Breach.

Time and again, Provost Kranzler assigns his Preservists to train Protectors while the Spital deploys idle platoons on patrols along the borders of the Protectorate. Side by side with Hellvetic mercenaries and the Judiciary's cavalry, they defend the frontier against the invaders from the south.

RECRUITS AND FAMULANCERS

Justitian is teeming with Spitalians. Famulancers stalk the Stallion Streets and monitor the marketplaces. With their mollusks they inspect travelers and dealers at random, fish suspects out of the stream of pedestrians, verify personal details, and examine their merchandise.

During the week, these troops are housed and fed in the public hospitals. Once a week they march to the Spital. On their way back, all the purchases that secure the basic care of the Spital are made by the returning Famulancers and Recruits. After three months, the change of guard arrives and the Famulancers retire to study in their barracks

within the Spital, or are sent to the front for further military training, while a new group is stationed in Justitian.

At any one time the Spital provides twelve platoons stationed within Justitian's perimeter, which equates to a manpower of 1,200 armed Famulancers.

HYGIENISTS

They enforce the Hygienic regulations, inspect market stalls and soup kitchens, evaluate the purity of the water in the wells, and maintain the decontamination sluices along the Stallion Streets.

Hygienists work closely with the Knacker's Office, distributing pesticides to eradicate vermin and overseeing the disposal of corpses and carcasses from the urban areas.

OFFICE OF HYGIENICS

The Spitalians, by joining the Protectorate, gained the right to apply their Hygienics regulations to Justitian. The Office of Hygienics squats in Uptown, an imposing structure radiating hostility, but despite that all the major threads of the Cult converge here. Here, the certification guidelines for food are set and monitored, mollusks are issued to public doctors, and demographic data from the Chroniclers is evaluated. In which quarter did which disease break out? Where are the most births registered? Which families have been associated with Leperos in the past? The Hygienists in the filing room walk through long rows of cabinets, pull open a drawer, and hand over the answer.

HIPPOCRATS

Keszler's Hippocrats deal with the Judges. They are legislators who impose punishments, create networks, and pursue apostate Spitalians who renounce the Hippocratic Oath, become intoxicated by Justitian's temptations, and neglect their tasks. As a secret society and moral authority, they have unrestricted access to all the offices and public buildings of the city, and collaborate with both the Senators and the Cluster's operatives.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS

The Spitalians rely on the establishment of upstream hospitals in the city center which specialise in rapid intervention, epidemic control, and everything else concerning Justitian's population that doesn't need to be regulated by the Spital itself. Each public hospital has a supervising Field Medic or Surgeon and also employs a handful of Orderlies and Recruits. If more people are needed, healers from Brennen are hired as helping hands and paid by the day. A total of six of these public hospitals are distributed across Justitian. They can be found in Uptown, at the Forecourt, in Brennen, Tech-Central, the Cross Quarter, and the Bottomlands. The latter, under the leadership of the renegade Village Doctor Elias Ramon, has gained recognition because it opened its doors wide to host refugees and riff-raff alike.

PUBLIC DOCTORS

The healer dynasties of Brennen once failed miserably to prevent the typhoid epidemic. Since the Spitalians took control of Justitian's healthcare, every citizen quarter has been assigned at least one so-called public doctor. For a small fee they treat fractures and broken bones, distribute pills made from rolled up herbs, or undertake simple surgeries. These physicians are subordinate to the public hospitals and patients are referred to them from there.

PRESERVISTS

When a Preservist enters Uptown, the winds of change are in the air. If the Provost himself strides through the Judgement Hall, it's time to close the curtains and lock the shutters.

Officially, the twenty members of Kranzler's Preservist Corps are honorary guests of the Judiciary and reside in an Ambassador's Villa. Unofficially they plan crisis interventions. Kranzler is a battle-hardened general. The success of the Great Cleanse can be attributed to his knowledge of warfare, but the Provost does not cling to successes of the past. His eyes are on the uncertain future. He keeps himself ready.

OFFSET

Justitian is too labyrinthine to maintain a watch on every winding lane and run-down backyard - and not everyone who once swore an oath to the eight-legged cross remains faithful to it forever. The Burn epidemic of recent years has carried away many a Famulancer or Field Medic. The war against the Primer spawn across all of Europe's frontlines leaves deep scars on the psyche of the Spitalians. Some members of the Cult burn out or can no longer cope with the civilized world and ultimately desert. These derelicts tear off their neoprene, hide in Justitian's bowels, sprout hair and beards, and wait for salvation from their suffering.



OSWALD KESZLER

In Justitian, the Spitalians' collective conscience is represented by a man who doesn't have one of his own. Oswald Keszler is the leading Hippocrat of the metropolis, thus overseeing all the operations of his Cult within the city limits. He negotiates with Chroniclers and Judges on equal terms and represents the Consultants' concerns with maximum authority. Politically, no one here is fit to hold a candle to him, for Keszler holds the prerogative of interpretation concerning the Spitalians' moral codex. Within the Cult, even Provost Kranzler would have to bend to the Hippocrat's directive.

However, Keszler's true potential for power only shows through when he interrogates someone and gives them a grilling using his talent for mental torture. The Hippocrat specializes in wringing out a captive's soul like a wet rag. The eternal, unchanging rhythm of his monotonous voice, the regular drumming of his index finger on the desktop, the presentational display of the medical instruments, it accumulates into a chant of psychic corrosion.

His victims are paralyzed. At some point, hours later, Keszler is within their heads, implanting orders, retrieving information and dragging secrets to light. He takes thorough, detailed notes and sends weekly protocols to the Spital.

Nothing evades his emotionless eyes and his acumen. Not even that Kranzler and his Preservists have been left without supervision for far too long. Keszler deeply resents the momentum that the military branch of the Spitalians has gained under its new Provost. In Kranzler's solo efforts, Keszler sees an alienation from the Spitalians' alignment that he condemns in the strongest terms. Recently, he has set the course for having Kranzler arrested in his Villa for questioning and his notes seized. A slander that the Provost of the Preservists would not readily stand for.

ROLE PLAY

Keszler is a purist willingly renouncing every human delight and vice. The Hippocratic oath is sacred to him, and he is completely devoted to his task. Keszler regularly fasts for weeks on end and hates gluttony and excess like poison. He is a strict disciplinarian, neither striving for glory nor monetary gains – he only wants to lead the Cult by virtuous example. This pious mindset has strengthened his position with the Consultants and in turn made him the Cult's prime ideologist.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Ruler, Spitalian, Rank 4: Hippocrat
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 2 CHA: 1 INT: 4 PSY: 6 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 2D, Melee 4D, Toughness 4D, Dexterity 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 5D, Conduct 3D, Expression 2D, Leadership 4D, Focus 8D, Legends 8D, Medicine 6D, Science 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 11D, Domination 10D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 10D, Empathy 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 5, Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 2, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Supreme Ideologist: Under the protection of the Consultants in all questions of morality concerning the Cult
POTENTIALS: Hypnosis 3, Oathspeaker 3, Asceticism 3, Moving Mountains 2, Memetic Teachings 2
PROTOCOLS: Coax, Urge
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Injector Gun (Black Band), Melee 4D, Narcotic (6C, 6 Ego), Piercing (4); Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 10/40, Damage 9, Mag. 12
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform and leather coat, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/20, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pendulum; Conductor's baton; Truth-serum; Notebook with recorded interrogations and compromising material about other Cult members

CHASING TRAITORS

Keszler has gotten wind of an unfaithful Village Doctor who is obviously being protected by the Judiciary. The Hippocrat does not know the traitor's name yet as the Advocates vehemently hamper his investigations. However, this wall of silence has roused Keszler's thirst for blood. He will stop at nothing to find the renegade and bring him to justice. To get tangible proof, Keszler now often makes sudden inquiries at the Protectoral barracks, searching for clues. Sooner or later one of these Judges will blab...

MEMETICS

Keszler's methods of interrogation are based on rudimentary memetics as they were used by the RG a long time ago. During his training, he discovered records in a sealed off part of the Spital which he studied and used to bolster his psychoanalytic skills. Years of practice have honed his technique. With simple methods, Rorschach patterns, rhythmical tapping of his fingers, endlessly repeated words and suggestions, Keszler can hypnotize and paralyze his opponent. In this state, Keszler can implant orders into his victim's mind that they will have to carry out when the time comes, even if it contradicts the victim's personality.

POTENTIALS

HYPNOSIS
PREREQUISITE: Hippocrat, Secrets 5, PSY + Domination 10
Keszler sacrifices (1) Ego Point and rolls PSY+Domination to overcome the victim's Mental Defense. If the roll is successful, his victim is paralyzed (1 Round/Potential level) and cannot act. Kezsler then plants an order in the mind of his victim, that must be fulfilled. If the victim tries to resist the manipulation they lose (1) Ego per hour in the process. If Ego drops to (0) the victim fails resisting any longer and performs the order like a marionette.



KRANZLER

Kranzler is legendary. He hails from a time when no one knew anything about the Preservists. They were the shadows of the Spital, devouring its enemies. Kranzler was the Provost who led the Preservists into the public eye and made their glory common knowledge. Every recruit knows his deeds and those of his troops. In Franka, he had captive Pheromancers nailed to trees. In Pollen, he smoked out countless nests of Spore beasts. In the Balkhan, he strangled a Dushani with his bare hands.

He was the hero the Spitalians needed. High atop his horseback, gazing into a new, better world. Every one of his deeds, his words, his demeanor promised that humanity would rise again and reconquer the Earth. Thousands of Borcans crowded the Spital's recruitment tents, mimicking Kranzler to either fight by his side or to become like him.

Single-handedly, Kranzler broke with the Old School, the secret doctrine the Preservists had been following for decades. This internal power struggle reshaped the Cult's reputation and supplied the Spital with the troops it so urgently needed. The Provost had worked towards exactly this goal, for he requires an army to prepare for his last campaign.

All of his previous successes had been nothing but preliminary skirmishing. Kranzler knows that humanity will soon face a battle for its own heritage and that this war can only be won by leading more troops to the battlefield than his enemies. He considers his Cult as an army, tempered and hardened, ready to face the Primer full force.

To guarantee the survival of Homo Sapiens, Kranzler is willing to sacrifice everything. No matter the cost.

ROLE PLAY

Kranzler himself appears unimpressionable and devoid of emotions. He is the Preservists' calm anchor and the only one of them who seems to not have suffered lasting damage from the Old School's program of deterrence that they all had to endure at the beginning of their training. The power he commands today has left him jaded. The only thing left for him to do is to keep his body from deteriorating as long as possible. Therefore, he has his pulse checked and his heart tones listened to daily. He has diagrams of his vital signs made and then ponders over the curves, lost in thought. His time is running out.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Creator, Spitalian, Rank 6: Provost
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 5 PSY: 6 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 7D, Force 8D, Melee 11D,
Stamina 11D, Toughness 10D, Navigation 8D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 9D,
Stealth 8D, Conduct 6D, Expression 8D, Leadership 10D, Artifact Lore 7D,
Engineering 6D, Focus 11D, Legends 11D, Medicine 9D, Science 11D,
Cunning 8D, Domination 10D, Reaction 10D, Willpower 12D, Empathy 9D,
Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 8D, Taming 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 6, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 5,
Secrets 6
POTENTIALS: Preservalis 3, Last Bastion 3, Kranzler's Teachings 3, Polaris 3, Beacon 3,
Danger Sense 2, Could be Worse 3, Marathon 3, Unyielding 3
INITIATIVE: 10D / 22 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Preservalis Sword, Melee 11D, Distance 1m, Damage 11;
Heavy Pistol, Projectiles 9D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag 20,
Smooth Running (3T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 11D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Willpower 12D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Preservist uniform, Armor 3, Sealed (+4S)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/24, Flesh Wounds 20, Trauma 11
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Gramophone; Soundproof earplugs (Sonic Damage reduced by half, +4D against Dushani phenomena)

HOMO GEANTIS

The last era of humanity has come. Kranzler is convinced that the hour of the Homo Geantis, the perfect variety of Homo Degenesis, is close at hand. The Provost belongs to a well-informed circle that is preparing for this doomsday scenario. Kranzler's prognosis is that the birth will happen in Cairo. The Anubians are the host body, for the Pure Strain is the perfect genome for the catalysis. This fate can only be avoided by force of arms. The Spitalians must take Cairo and extinguish the Anubians before the metamorphosis is complete.

Kranzler uses all the resources at his disposal to plan this last campaign. The awakening of the Leviathanics urges him to act. He has ordered his scouts to notify him about any Anubian movement within the city limits. An Ammit is said to have shown up in Justitian. Kranzler needs him. As a hostage.

INVENTORY

GRAMOPHONE

Kranzler's special possession is a portable field gramophone in a shatterproof steel case. The lid of the case contains several black music discs of the Bygones. Kranzler plays these crackling, hauntingly beautiful tunes from a time long gone whenever he needs to persuade someone of the importance of his mission. He calls music the heritage most worth fighting for.

POTENTIALS

BEACON

PREREQUISITE: BOD+Stamina 8,
BOD+Toughness 10,
PSY+Faith/Willpower 10

Every point of Trauma Damage replenishes (1) Ego Point. Up to (3) points of Trauma can be transformed into (3) Ego Points per Potential level. Thus, Potential level 3 turns (9) Trauma into (9) Ego Points.



PREISSLER

The instructors poisoned him, threw him into pits full of insects and spiders and forced him to leap from a tower, only tied to a rope. They called murder good and anarchy worth striving for. Until they claimed the opposite the next day. From two sides, they kept barking at him, smashing his innermost core. At night, he dreams of their faces with their mouths wide open and their teeth bared. Maddening cascades of words hammer into his brain, plucking all the strings of human malice with a dull axe. He wakes up in silence.

It was a different time, before Kranzler took over the Preservists. Preissler was a relic of the Old School program, a whimpering wad without any moral compass.

The new Provost did what he could do to break the doctrine and rebuild Preissler from ground up. He turned him into a human being without fear and needs, sent Preissler to do battle against Psychonauts and Leperos alike. Without remorse, the Preservist fulfilled his tasks, piled corpses of children up on pyres and hunted the spore-afflicted. In southern Borca, he led six successful campaigns right into the heart of the Clans before Kranzler sent him westwards. The horrors were the same everywhere. It did not matter.

Suddenly, however, the past came back to haunt him. A locked door in the back of Preissler's mind opened. Had he seen too much blood?

His features contorted with despair. His eyes started flickering restlessly as if he wanted to constantly reassure himself that the dead he was responsible for wouldn't suddenly appear behind him. Kranzler recognized the change in behavior and ordered his Preservist back to Justitian.

He knew that he could not redeem Preissler of his sins, but he was able to distract him from the turmoil in his head. He set a new task for him. From now on, Preissler was to mobilize Judges and teach them to guard the borders of the Protectorate. The Clans had turned into a real menace, and only an outside threat could offer Preissler respite from his war within.

ROLE PLAY

Preissler is a wreck, corroded by battle neuroses; his psyche is a scene of devastation on which dance the souls of those who are on the Preservist's conscience. What he fears most is silence and meaninglessness. Therefore he zealously embarks on any mission to escape his own thoughts.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Abomination, Spitalian, Rank 4: Preservist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 5 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 9D, Force 10D, Melee 9D,
Stamina 8D, Toughness 9D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 9D,
Stealth 6D, Leadership 4D, Medicine 6D, Science 4D, Domination 7D,
Reaction 5D, Willpower 3D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 2, Network 2, Renown 3, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: +3D Leadership (Protectors)
POTENTIALS: Old School 3, Preservalis 2, Last Bastion 1, Could be Worse 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 16 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Heavy Assault Rifle with Bayonet, Projectiles 9D, Distance 30/120m,
Damage 11, Mag. 30, Salvos (3), or Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T);
Pistol, Projectiles 9D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag. 12;
Preservalis Sword, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 12
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 9m
ARMOR: Steel-reinforced Preservist uniform, Armor 4, Sealed (+4S)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 10
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 4x Mustard gas grenades (5C, -1 Trauma per Round, Deviation, Cloud 5+ meters / 3 Rounds)

FLASH POINTS

Preissler was tasked to organize campaigns against Clans invading the Protectorate. He does so in cooperation with Judges and additionally musters battle-hardened Famulancers for preemptive strikes to wipe out penetrating assault detachments and incinerate their vanguards.

These destructive campaigns have put him on top of the death lists of countless chieftains who personally long to kill him. Meanwhile, lone warriors and champions have infiltrated Justitian and move amongst the populace unseen. These self-styled avengers are looking for a way to lure Preissler into a trap on his home turf, assassinate him and smuggle his head across the border as a trophy. Such a successful assault would further inspire the Cockroaches' and the Phosphorites' hunger for battle and demoralize the defenders. Every day, the noose around Preissler's neck draws tighter.

OLD SCHOOL

The remains of the doctrine have left behind a deeply rooted web of self-loathing and destructive frenzy. Preissler has never overcome the scars of his training days, and the years in Kranzler's service have made it even worse. He is a ticking bomb, only good for carrying out orders. Should these orders subside, Preissler's quiet insanity will soon burst into murderous rage against friend and foe alike.



CERVAL

The Spitalians have a problem with the way of the supernatural. In their fight against the Homo Degenesis, they rely solely upon the logic of the laws of nature. Psychonauts however, break the laws of physics and bend reality to their whim. That was one reason why Cerval preferred the company of Apocalyptics to wasting time with his own ilk. The idiosyncratic Preservist had realized early on the spiritual truth hidden in the migratory birds' tarot, that was fully ignored by his own Cult.

Then, the summer of 2596 swept over. Cerval was stationed in Montpellier when the Ravens of the Rhône delta suddenly started laying out a baleful set of cards. The Abomination throned above the Creator, a layout that had occurred only thrice within the last 500 years and represented the worst possible omen.

While the southern coast of Franka was teeming with rumors and clairvoyants tried to unravel the future from the cards, Cerval searched for clues in the past. Markurant's birth had been ushered in by the same draw of the cards. The Pheromancer King who had once erected the Ziggurath of Bassham had been destroyed, his body had been hacked to pieces and incinerated. Yet there were Spitalians who claimed Pheromancer Kings to be immortal. A rebel Epigeneticist from Rennes was the spiritual mother of this theory.

Cerval drew his conclusions. Maybe this sequence of the cards had nothing to do with the Apocalyptics at all. Maybe it rather was the vital evidence that Markurant's rebirth was close at hand. The same day he requested redeployment to Bassham to investigate his premonition.

Within a week of his arrival, Cerval found the first clue. In a failed expedition beyond the shattered Ziggurath, five Famulancers had lost their lives. The only survivor, Famulancer Perret, was nowhere to be found for interrogation. She had fled the quarantine zone of the field hospital and escaped. Cerval examined the security checkpoint. Someone had helped the Famulancer escape...

ROLE PLAY

Cerval's methods are unusual for a Preservist. Instead of considering other Cults despicable rivals, he maintains a large network of Jehammedans, Apocalyptics, and Scrappers whose legends he soaks up like a sponge and analyzes from his point of view.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Seeker, Spitalian, Rank 4: Preservist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 6D, Force 6D, Melee 7D,
Stamina 6D, Toughness 8D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 7D,
Stealth 10D, Arts 4D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 5D, Artifact Lore 5D,
Legends 7D, Medicine 6D, Science 5D, Cunning 7D, Deception 8D,
Reaction 7D, Faith 7D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 8D,
Primal 8D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 2, Network 4, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: +2D Negotiation (Apocalyptics)
POTENTIALS: Humanity's Burden 2, Preservalis 1, Ether Call 2, Asceticism 1
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Preservalis Sword, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 10;
Blow Gun (darts poisoned with Pheromancer secretions), Projectiles 7D,
Distance 3/12m, Damage 4, Poisoned (6C, -1 Trauma, Potency -1 per Round), Mag. 1
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Preservist uniform, Armor 3, Sealed (+4S)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 8/14, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Apocalyptic Tarot; Potent Burn (3x Bion; 2x Unity; 3x Glory; 5x Argus); Map of Bassham; Copied drawing of an idol of Markurant

THE CHASE

Famulancer Perret has fled Bassham. Anesthesiologist Devant was responsible for the failed expedition and is also nowhere to be found. Her last dossier concerned itself with studies of Markurant's residual pheromones in the area surrounding the destroyed Ziggurath of Bassham. Cerval doesn't need much to connect the dots. For months now, he has been following on the heels of the two women. He has tracked them through half of the Protectorate all the way to Justitian. In the maze of the streets however, he has finally lost sight of them. What are they looking for here? Cerval feels that he is close to an important revelation.

ON HIS OWN

Cerval abuses Burn to expand his consciousness. Under the influence of spores, he enters a meditative trance shedding light into the dark corners of his mind and looking for truth within his dreams. This reckless game with the Sepsis makes it impossible for Cerval to recruit other Spitalians as allies for his chase. He is fully aware of the consequences his exorbitant Burn abuse would cause him. Therefore, he needs to act as inconspicuously as possible in Justitian. He will have to search for help among other Cults.



ELLIOT HEILKAMP

The Great Cleanse made Elliot head of the Office of Hygienics overnight. No one could contest his achievements any longer. He had purged Justitian of the East Wind Flock, smashed the Burn trade, implemented the Hygienics regulations and decreed the certification controls for the Providers' seeds.

His formerly puny ego essentially burst with newfound megalomania. Never before had so much power been bundled in his hands. Suddenly, his orders transformed into adamant laws. Elliot could punish those who broke them, even have them executed in severe cases. The feeling of deciding on who got to live and who died aroused him, reigned over him. It turned him on to convict Burners and watch them in the Cleft the following day, collapsing under the hardships of the work camp in the midday heat. He gloated hearing the woes of spore-infested whores when they fell to their knees before him and begged for mercy. Women who would not have pleasured him as a paying customer the day before now clung to him, offering their bodies as a reward for their pardon.

However, Elliot knew no mercy. He wanted to be feared, wanted payback against all those who had put obstacles in his way his entire life. Elliot wanted people to beware his mercilessness and pay him respect when they crossed his path.

With each day that passes however, Elliot's status keeps fading a little more. The Great Cleanse isn't in the city's headlines anymore, and more pressing events now dominate the day-to-day business. Elliot lashes out against becoming a footnote in history, clings to every shred of fame his position still has to offer. Other Spitalians now draw the interest of the populace. A Village Doctor by the name of Elias Ramon has become a folk hero, and the inhabitants of Downtown praise him in messianic fashion. Heilkamp cannot fathom what is happening down there in the Bottomlands. Ramon embodies everything the Hygienist always longed to be and all that was never granted to him.

ROLE PLAY

Heilkamp is a querulant hater, a troublemaker who begrudges the success of others and always wants to claim the spotlight for himself. Heilkamp considers every lowly Spitalian who could endanger his position as his mortal enemy whose reputation he must sully.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Defiler, Spitalian, Rank 4: Hygienist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 1 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Force 3D, Melee 3D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 3D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Leadership 3D, Negotiation 4D, Engineering 5D, Focus 5D, Legends 6D, Medicine 7D, Science 6D, Cunning 6D, Domination 6D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 4, Network 2, Resources 3
SPECIAL: Leads the Office of Hygienics. Heilkamp can use his Authority against all Cults in Justitian, when it concerns the implementation of Hygienics regulations
POTENTIALS: -
INITIATIVE: 4D / 10 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Modified Fungicide Rifle, Projectiles 5D, Distance 4/16m, loaded with 10 rounds Fire Dust (Damage 8, Fire Hazardous), Irritant (Poisoned, 5C, -3D, per Round +1D recovery), SP 4016 TH (Poisoned, 4C, -2D, Duration 1 day)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Look for cover), Mobility 3D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Hygienist uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (6S)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 3x Chlorine gas grenades (3); 3x Phosphorous grenades (3); Notes about his mortal enemies within the Cult, with detailed listings of their weaknesses, preferences and allies

THE GREAT CLEANSE

The destruction of the East Wind flock was a large-scale maneuver organized by the Judges, Preservists and the Office of Hygienics. Heilkamp's role was merely that of a planner, not of a commander, although he would have preferred to see himself as one. The derisive smiles and the contempt of Kranzler's men still prey on his mind. Without him, the operation would never have succeeded. He would do anything to repay the Preservists for this disgrace, but his position within the hierarchy of the Cult brooks no dissent. Keszler, however, has the power to teach the Preservists a hard lesson. Heilkamp has long since begun to inform the Hippocrat of every petty detail he can recall about the Preservists.

THE OFFICE OF HYGIENCS

The office that Heilkamp administers is the source of all his delusions of superiority. Eight Hygienists and two dozen controllers from Advocate families are at his beck and call.

Together, they create lists of certified seeds, distribute fungicides to the Providers, and expand the hygienic regulations. The office is not a control room of power, but a bureaucratic nightmare. That doesn't hurt Elliot's smug conceit, though.

Even if the office is no powerhouse, it harasses the population of the countryside so much that it has risen to the title of the most hated institution in the entire city. Countless Providers desperately wish for Heilkamp's quick demise and the total reform of his office. The Hygienist has no clue how frustrated the peasants are with his people. He only sees the world from his perspective in which he is a hero who is denied the fame he deserves.



JOSEPH HEIDEN

Joseph's right hand with which he used to perform the most complex surgeries shakes uncontrollably. A steel brace holds his neck straight and keeps the crooked cervical vertebrae from wedging together and severing his spinal cord. His eyesight wanes, the throbbing pain is unbearable. Physically, he's cachectic, and mentally, he is on the brink of burnout.

Heiden was once the most highly decorated Surgeon of the Spital. When he was still in control of his senses, he saved countless lives of Preservists, surgically removed a Consultant's brain tumor and used his scalpel like an artist, but also with the precision of a state-of-the-art machine. But then, the condition came. Slowly at first, then all of a sudden. Diagnosis: the steel brace around his neck was his only hope, but it also became his prison.

Burn was his only way out. Bion dampened the pain, Glory helped him regain control over his body, so he could follow his calling. It didn't take long before Heiden was an addict.

He wasn't safe in the Spital anymore. Nobody would waste a ration of EX on a Surgeon who turned to Burn of his own volition. His addiction was tantamount to high treason.

Justitian was his only remaining option. Under the pretext of wishing to care for the aging Senators of the Judiciary in order to strengthen their alliance with the Spital he asked for redeployment to Uptown. The first few years, things were going well. At that time, highly potent Burn was easy to get. The Great Cleanse, however, changed everything. His dimwitted minion Mendelson, who did the shopping for him and supplied Joseph with fresh drugs, had unexpected difficulty getting access to new shipments.

Suddenly, the tremors returned to Heiden's hands, and he was afraid for his legacy. The house of cards he had so carefully built up for decades is suddenly collapsing.

ROLE PLAY

The Surgeon incarcerated within his own body is haunted by choleric bouts. In his study, he smashes vases, tears apart books and drums his fists against the walls in despair. The very next instant, he must compose himself again, keep up appearances and receive an important patient. But he would rather scream in anger until there is no more air left within his lungs. His desire for Burn determines his every deed and thought, urging him to take progressively higher risks to get a fresh fix.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mentor, Spitalian, Rank 4: Surgeon
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 5 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Brawl 2D, Force 3D, Melee 2D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 5D, Dexterity 5D, Leadership 5D, Conduct 6D, Engineering 7D, Medicine 9D, Science 8D, Cunning 9D, Deception 9D, Domination 8D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 8D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 3, Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 4, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: If Heiden must conduct a surgery without the influence of Burn, he suffers a penalty of -3D on all relevant rolls
POTENTIALS: Caregiver 2, Rod of Asclepius 2, Raise Dead 3
INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Stiletto, Melee 2D, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T); Walking Cane, Melee 2D, Damage 4, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 2D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform and neck brace, Armor 2, Sealed (4S), Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 9/16, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 10x Vials EX; Potent Burn (3x Bion; 1x Glory); diverse amphetamines and sedatives; Potassium cyanide capsule hidden in his walking cane

WITHDRAWAL

Old Joseph is an anxious man fully entangled in his web of lies. He smuggles EX from the public hospitals to sell it to the Carrion Birds via Mendelson who in turn supplies him with meager Burn reserves. Every month, the yield decreases. The city is grazed, yet the demand is higher than ever before. Heiden must organize increasingly absurd EX deliveries to trade for diminishing returns. At the same time, he needs more and more of the medicine for himself to cover up his growing spore affliction.

During an inspection three weeks ago, the Hygienist Heilkamp discovered that the EX reserves in two hospitals in Downtown had been plundered. Heiden suspects that the Hygienist will try to lure him into a trap which is why the Surgeon now needs to find collaborators to do the stealing for him.

THE MINION

Although Mendelson has the brain of a fly, Heiden depends on him. The fates of both men are intertwined. The crippled Scrapper and the drug addicted Surgeon are both prisoners of their own deeds. Without one another, neither can survive. Heiden exclusively communicates through Mendelson when it comes down to illegal deals.

The Scrapper in turn would never betray his employer. He clings to the money he gets from Heiden for supplying the Surgeon with Burn.



ELIAS RAMON

His heart belongs to the people, and he wants to commit his work to the citizens of Justitian.

Ramon's principles were not acknowledged by the Spital. His Registrar demoted him to the status of a Village Doctor immediately after Ramon filed for redeployment to a public hospital to care for citizens who weren't able to cover the costs for their own medical treatment. It was a perfect scandal.

Once, Elias was gifted and talented. He could've made it to the top without effort, was both supported, and regularly fostered by his superiors. Now all of a sudden he was in conflict with his instructors. Elias wants the Cult of doctors to regain mankind's trust and the Spital to once again conduct its work with an immaculate conscience.

His outrageous demands made Ramon an outlaw, even his once loyal Famulancers turned their backs on him. The Spitalians accused him of diluting the Cult's tenets of fighting on the front line for the survival of humanity – not at home!

Elias faced his Cult's accusations recklessly. The years in the Bottomlands have made him one of the most popular residents of the whole area: parents whose children he healed from brain fever are now forever in his debt. Scrappers whose hacked-off fingers he sewed back on again protect his hospital today. Apocalyptics he saved from death through spore infestation with smuggled EX now in turn supply his hospital with stolen medical cargo.

Like a protective layer of fat, these people have made Ramon nearly untouchable. The Spitalians cannot hurt the Village Doctor in his exposed position and must watch from afar as he proclaims himself the ringleader of the downtrodden. Now it is Ramon's turn to make demands against his Cult. He insists on medical provisions, a stable power supply and additional nursing personnel. The people of his neighborhood rejoice.

ROLE PLAY

Ramon is the embodiment of kindness and care. He rolls up his sleeve and helps, wherever he can, fully committed to the idea that he is making the world a better place. Nothing can detract him from his mission or shake his firm belief in the good of humanity. He doesn't care that his own Cult calls him naïve – it rather encourages him to make the Spitalians see the error of their ways.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Hybrispania, The Healer, Spitalian, Rank 0: Village Doctor
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 5 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 4D, Conduct 8D, Expression 7D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 7D, Engineering 4D, Focus 6D, Legends 5D, Medicine 8D, Science 6D, Cunning 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 6D, Perception 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Network 5, Renown 6, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Ramon's allies are the citizens of the Bottomlands. All CHA- and PSY- rolls receive a bonus of +3D when he deals with the people of his district. He's protected by at least 1D bodyguards any given time of the day
POTENTIALS: Caregiver 3, Rod of Asclepius 1, Raise Dead 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Elias despises violence and refuses to attack
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 2D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 2D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (4S), Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Field kit; Surgical tools Lvl. 1; Toys to entertain scared children; Countless sedatives for adult patients; 4x Vials of roofies; Plethora of pain killers and homemade remedies

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Many members of the Cult consider Ramon's breakup with the Spital a display of disloyalty. To openly break protocol in such a way must be punished accordingly. Some are quick to demand that the Village Doctor be removed from duty, but assassination is out of the question. It must look like an accident completely unrelated to the Spitalians, or the situation will get out of hand, and the outcry may lead to a revolt.

Heilkamp regularly consults with the Judges to bring an end to the spectacle in the Bottomlands. However, Senator Rutgar is not interested in deciding over Ramon's fate and condemns the Spital's reaction as exaggerated. To make sure that the Spitalians do not send any assassins against Ramon, he orders one of his Black Judges to keep an eye on the Village Doctor and keep him safe from potential attacks. Without his knowledge, of course.

SUPPORTERS

A short while ago, Ramon sided with Ardon. The leader of the Cooperative needs powerful supporters throughout the city to enforce the Providers' interests and strengthen their rights against the Spitalians. This alliance has turned both men into political figures whose influence keeps increasing by the hour.

REFUGEES

In the last few months, refugees from far away Briton headed for Justitian have finally reached the Protectorate. Many of these newcomers have survived weeks of travels full of hardships, are spore afflicted, and their faces are exhausted from attrition. Crossing the Gauntlet has clearly left its mark. Ramon has told the refugees to make camp around his public hospital, supplies them with the bare necessities, and cleans their wounds. He promptly declares the hospital grounds a quarantine zone, publicly embarrassing the Office of Hygienics as a result. Heilkamp is livid with rage.



DOCTOR MASUR

On the opposite side of Uptown, north of the plateau, lies the cemetery of the Judiciary that Doctor Masur has chosen as his refuge. Between colossal stone statues and monolithic crypts, the corpse doctor prowls like a vulture searching for festering carrion. The Judges don't know what brought him here – they only care for Masur's talents as a coroner. They have supplied the morbid doctor with a bunker-like cold storage full of glacier ice where the dead are laid out for examination. Masur autopsies corpses, determines the time of death and looks for any evidence of violence.

Dozens of times, his talents have helped Protectors solve murder cases or have supplied Advocates with proof they needed to convict felons. As such, the Judges especially value Masur and fulfill his wish to be able to work in solitude far from the city walls.

Masur wants to avoid the attention of Spitalians at all cost. Years ago, he worked as a Field Medic in Danzig. Out of sheer curiosity he started documenting the murals of the Wretched Hag all over Pollen. It was his assumption that the pictograms were directly related to the reappearances of Vasco, the renegade Spitalian prophet. After each sighting of the phantom, new murals were discovered on the walls of nearby ruins within days. Was Vasco personally responsible for the drawings? Did they form a message? When he presented Consultant Petrova with his studies, she chastised him. A simple field medic was not supposed to act as a forensics expert! He was to never mention this topic again and do his job!

But Masur was hell-bent to uncover the secret. At night, he crept through the powdery snow beyond Danzig's defenses, by day he paid nomads for clues from the trackless hinterland and bought information from peddlers from the south. Impatiently he waited for a sign…

ROLE PLAY

Masur shuns curious looks and deeply mistrusts other Spitalians. He only enters Justitian guarded by Judges and never sets foot into Uptown. To get to his cold storage, those who want to contact him must first convince the Judges that the matter at hand is pressing enough. To convince the taciturn doctor to talk, however, visitors will need more than just the power of persuasion.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Hermit, Spitalian, Rank 0: Village Doctor
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 2 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Stamina 3D, Melee 3D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 5D,
Stealth 5D, Negotiation 4D, Focus 7D, Legends 6D, Medicine 8D,
Science 8D, Cunning 5D, Deception 5D, Faith 5D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 3, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Under protection of the Judiciary. Four Protectors guard Masur's cold storage, and when he runs errands in Downtown, at least one of these Protectors serves as a bodyguard
POTENTIALS: Rod of Asclepius 2, Number Cruncher 3, Brainwave 2
INITIATIVE: 3D / 14 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Bone Saw, Melee 3D, Damage 3;
Shovel, Melee 3D, Damage 4, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 3D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Faith 5D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (4S),
Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Vivisection tools; Countless barrels of formaldehyde; Apocalyptic Tarot; Diary featuring all recorded Vasco sightings and meticulous copies of the Wretched Hag murals

VASCO'S DISCIPLE

What the prophet revealed to the Field Medic shook Masur to the core. Vasco was one of 22 iterations that the Czar had created to contact the Wretched Hag – his human mother. All the clones were equipped with various archetypical primal instincts to guarantee their survival and conditioned to search Pollen for signs of her. However, the clones failed. The Wretched Hag was not where the Czar had assumed her to be. One copy had even made it to Franka, but it died in 2575. Other clones searched the Balkhan and Purgare for the Hag – but Preservists and Dushani proved insurmountable obstacles for them.

Vasco begged Masur to help him with the search. None of the iterations had reached Borca so far. The alpine passages were too heavily guarded, there was no way through for his kind. Masur understood. At dawn, he fled the Danzig military hospital towards Justitian…

THE SYMBOL

Masur's memory of the fateful encounter has faded; one detail is fresh on his mind, though.

Vasco drew his personal imprint into the snow. A rectangular symbol consisting of seven interlocking bars. He said he was the iteration of the Mentor and Masur should remember the symbol to look for it in Borca.

For a long time, Masur did not know what to make of the symbol. However, when he was tasked to autopsy a Carrion Bird two weeks ago, he discovered a stack of tarot cards sewn into the lining of the dead man's coat. Vasco's symbol looked exactly like a card called The Mentor. Masur froze. Did the Apocalyptics down at the Harbor somehow know about Vasco? He must find out. As a Spitalian however, he cannot mingle with the Carrion Birds. After an eternity of acting all alone, Masur needs allies to continue his search.



CHEVALSKI

Then: The one-legged Kassinski is a patriarch teaching the countless children of his many wives to follow his orders unquestioningly. We are high up in the north of Eastern Borca, at the timberline. All year round, a storm is raging from the direction of the Ice Barrier, and the firs are heavy with snow. The village palisades keep out the biting wind, but young Chevalski must shovel snow daily anyway. Kassinski keeps reminding him of the importance of clearing the area around the towering horse made of straw, boards, nails and leather cords.

For the Oracle could arrive anytime.

Now: The Oracle did not find its way. Chevalski had become worthless for his old master, so Kassinski sold him to the Spitalians who were looking for sturdy recruits. Gook, guinea pig face, and idiot were the insults Chevalski had to bear on his endless march across the Reaper's Blow towards the Spital. Years of training followed. First as an Orderly, then as a Famulancer and finally, the studies of pharmaceutics. The quiet fellow grew into a thin-lipped specialist who kept his thoughts to himself and rarely voiced an opinion.

No one would believe him anyway, Chevalski mused. They would discount the Horse Oracle as a flight of fancy and mock him. Yet Chevalski knew that the Three-faced One went by many names, just like old Kassinski had always preached.

In Justitian, he was ordered to supply a Chronicler called Deselect with medicine and clean the man's festering wounds. The hideous Chronicler knew more about the world Chevalski had grown up in than the Spitalians. He kept rambling about Marauders, the Bygones, artifacts, and the almighty Stream. Chevalski drank in every word – he did not know the names Deselect used, but the stories felt like familiar anecdotes of his father. Chevalski dared asking Deselect for the true name of the Three-faced One, and the Chronicler grinned and answered "Triglaw".

ROLE PLAY

Chevalski is a dutiful, quiet guy who prefers staring at his feet to looking a person in the eye. However, there is an endless thirst for knowledge raging within him. He wants to unveil his father's secret so he can finally understand the ritual of the Horse Oracle.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Disciple, Spitalian, Rank 4: Pharmacist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 2 CHA: 3 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Stamina 6D, Force 4D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 4D, Conduct 6D, Negotiation 4D, Artifact Lore 7D, Focus 7D, Legends 8D, Medicine 10D, Science 8D, Cunning 6D, Faith 7D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Chevalski is a linguistic genius. When deciphering Bygone dialects he receives a bonus of +3D
POTENTIALS: Caregiver 1, Elephant Skin 1
INITIATIVE: 9D / 18 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Baton, Melee 3D, Damage 4, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 3D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 2D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (4S), Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Medallion of the Horse Oracle; Apothecarium, Lvl 1; Laboratory equipment; Compounds with numerous bacterial cultures; Magnification goggles; Chevalski's scratchpad, filled with encrypted notes from his conversations with the Chronicler Deselect

THE MEDALLION

The only keepsake of his father is a nondescript horse medallion made of polished brass. He stole it from the altar of the Oracle the day before he left the village with the Spitalians and has been hiding it in his lab ever since. He still can't make heads or tails of the medallion. Some days, he holds it up, lets sunlight play upon the surface and admires the delicate engravings, touches the smooth metal with his fingertips, but the trinket does not reveal its secret. From the outside Chevalski cannot discern that the trinket's interior is filled with high frequency electronics. The medallion is a probe, a so-called Corresponder, that can interfere with Triglaw's nanite bloodstreams. With a similar artifact, the Sleeper Prophet Karakhan gained Chernobog's attention and thus lured the Corroded towards Sofia. No one knows how Kassinski came into possession of such an artifact. The medallion is yet uncharged and not ready to use. In the hands of a Chronicler or Paler, however, ignition would be no problem at all.

DESELECT

The loathsome Chronicler who presides over the Forecourt Alcove adores the quiet Spitalian. He suspects that a data storm is accumulating around Chevalski. Several times already he has tried to convince Chevalski to let him in on his secret and tell him more about the medallion. However, Chevalski is at odds with himself. He has learned to never trust anyone.

Even worse, the conversations between the Chronicler and the Spitalian were intercepted. Palers from occupied combat zone C-3 have managed to plant a bug in the Alcove that records Deselect's conversations. The Demagogue is quite sure that the medallion is far more than filthy lucre and sets her Cyclops on Chevalski's trail...



INES DEVANT

For a long time, she was obsessed with Markurant. She climbed the remains of the Ziggurath of Bassham, absorbed all the stories about the almighty Pheromancer King. Ines shuddered when she realized the scope of the Aberrant's power. Soil samples she had taken from the ground around the Ziggurath pointed at massive pheromone residues. And indeed: after all these years, Markurant's influence was still measurable!

However, no one cared to read Devant's dossier on the subject. For the Spital, Markurant was dead and gone, and the Cult fought other problems on other fronts. Ines hurled tomes full of her discoveries across the lab. How could the Spitalians be so blind? Did they ignore her on purpose? Frustrated, she turned to Dr. Vega, an Epigeneticist from Rennes she exchanged thoughts with. Vega had come to similar conclusions as Devant which had put her in the line of fire. The correspondence was cut off when the Gauntlet closed, and Ines was alone again with her questions.

Ines needed proof for her assumption. Ceaselessly, she requested an expedition to be made, but only six Famulancers were mustered for it. Her higher-ups threatened to cut her funding if the expedition brought no new insights. Ines however felt confident.

She drew a map featuring all idols of Markurant that once had stood west of the Ziggurath. Ines instructed the Famulancers to march from one of these nodal points to the next in a specific pattern, one that she had derived from previously recorded swarm movements from the year 2571. Ines waited impatiently, but in the third week, she lost contact with Famulancer Perret. After that, the expedition was officially declared missing in action, and Devant lost all of her authority as a result.

Exactly one year later, a patrol found Famulancer Perret west of Bassham – the only survivor of the expedition was highly spore afflicted and was immediately locked up in the quarantine zone. Ines needed answers. What had happened to the expedition?

ROLE PLAY

Devant is an obsessive scientist – she doesn't consider potential consequences of her actions, neither for herself or for others, and cleans her conscience through the achievement of results and their importance for the Spital.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Zealot, Spitalian, Rank 4: Anesthesiologist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 5D, Leadership 7D, Conduct 6D, Engineering 6D, Focus 7D, Medicine 8D, Science 6D, Cunning 4D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Perception 4D, Empathy 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 1, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: -
POTENTIALS: Number Cruncher 1, Unyielding 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 14 Ego Points (Focus)
ATTACK: Injector Gun (Black Band), Melee 4D, Distance 1, Narcotic (6C, 8 Ego), Piercing (4)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (4S), Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Devant's analysis; Soil samples from the Ziggurath; additions to her dossier; Letters received from Dr. Vega; Security code for the quarantine zone in Bassham; Drafts for 3 weeks of accommodation in Justitian; City-map featuring Perret's movement patterns

DISOBEDIENCE

Perret was isolated, and Devant had no authority to question the Famulancer, let alone examine her. However, Ines was not so easily discouraged – she simply stole the access codes for the quarantine zone's security checkpoint to question the Famulancer. Perret was not herself anymore. The woman showed signs of being under someone else's control, talked backwards and in varying tonalities. She was possessed. Ines concluded Perret might have strayed into still active pheromone markers of Markurant during the expedition and had been imprinted with orders from the dead king.

But to find out what kind of influence Markurant exerted on the Famulancer, she would have to study Perret while she was at large. Without delay Devant decided to smuggle the Famulancer out of Bassham.

She bribed Ascetics to hide Perret in an ox cart, take her to Spicafield and set her free there. Ines followed them with two days distance to not lose track of her target and at the same time, not to be caught alongside the Famulancer.

Perret's course led straight and directly to Justitian. Devant didn't understand. Whose orders did the Famulancer follow? What primal instincts drove her to the metropolis? For weeks now, she has been watching Perret from a distance, has seen the Famulancer walk down the Defiler Streets as if she was searching for something. Devant has jotted down all milestones, marked them on a city map and discovered that the Famulancer follows the same exact movement pattern that was once plotted on the map of her expedition.

But why? Is she leaving a note for someone?



SABINE PERRET

Bassham. Deployment site: a field quadrant west of the destroyed Ziggurath. Sabine is leading a recon squad tasked to visit twelve different milestones according to a set marching order and to measure pH ratings along the way. The Famulancer was tense. For weeks, there had been increased drone sightings in the formerly purged area. The members of the expedition had trouble keeping their bearings. Within just a year, the underbrush had reconquered large parts of the area, and they made only slow progress.

At the tenth milestone, the mood suddenly flipped. Two Famulancers had disappeared during their night watch. Another lay in the grass, paralyzed and breathing shallowly. In panic, Perret raced across the countryside with the rest of the Famulancers, crossing a river, running up an embankment and finally ending up on an open field. When she finally turned around, her companions had disappeared. White motes danced past her on the wind. Sabine stood amidst a spore field. Then she blacked out.

When she awoke again, her throat was parched, and blood ran from her nose in rivulets. A droning sound in the back of her head guided her back towards the milestones. There, she found her comrades, dead on the embankment, but the gruesome sight didn't affect her. There was another, much more overwhelming emotion.

Unknowingly, Perret had become entangled in a pheromone trail of Markurant. It was a vestige of the former Pheromancer King, a chain of command that now took possession of Sabine and imprinted her with a new destiny. She was supposed to return to the human realm and wait for the Pheromancer King's rebirth. He had chosen her as his human midwife – he wanted to grow and thrive, be reborn to his old glory suckling on her breast…

ROLE PLAY

As a carrier of the Seed, Sabine is in direct contact with the Earth Chakra's ether, directed by Markurant's thoughts and emotions. The stigma glows beneath the neoprene. As a Famulancer, she is inconspicuous within the city limits, but she knows that she must avoid any Splayer with a mollusk tip. She has taken residence in a small inn in the Bottomlands where she waits to pick up her king's scent day after day.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Heretic, Spitalian, Rank 3: Famulancer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 4D, Melee 4D,
Stamina 6D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 7D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 6D,
Seduction 6D, Legends 4D, Medicine 6D, Science 4D, Deception 5D,
Faith 5D, Reaction 4D, Perception 6D, Primal 7D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Carrier of the seed
POTENTIALS: Splaying 2, Danger Sense 2, First Language 1, Markurant's Taint 3
INITIATIVE: 4D / 14 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Splayer, Melee 3D, Distance 1, Damage 6, Cutting
(2T, +1D Damage);
Combat knife, Melee 5D, Distance 1, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 4D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 5D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Spitalian uniform, Armor 2, Sealed (4S),
Respected (Patients +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 7/10 (4 permanent), Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Backpack loaded with field equipment, compass, sleeping bag, dressing material, chalk, maps, grindstones, distress beacon and multiple packaged food rations

MARKURANT'S BANE

Sabine is flooded by Markurant's pheromones. Like an ant, she has followed his call from afar, and his orders ceaselessly meander through her mind. The king is reborn, his mortal shell is hidden somewhere in Justitian. He has called for her to carry his newborn body to safety. Out of this city, back to Franka to rebuild his Ziggurath as foretold. Every day he chirps for her, rummages around in her head, caresses her thoughts. His words are lovelier than the sun and carry the scent of summer. Only Sabine hears his voice and follows the trace of the Pheromancer King down to the Defiler Streets. There, his signals end. Has anything happened to him? Sabine is worried sick.

She must find him and bring him spores before it's too late.

PREMONITION

Sabine has noticed that Devant is chasing her. Surely, she had her reasons to help her escape from the quarantine zone. To confuse and get rid of her pursuer, Perret lays out a trap for her. She keeps walking the same route along the Defiler Streets to draw Devant out of her cover. Meanwhile Sabine has paid off a handful Defilers to dispose of Devant in the nearest canal should she be foolish enough to get too close to her.

POTENTIALS

MARKURANT'S TAINT
PREREQUISITE: Carrier of the Seed, Primal, Chosen
Without her knowledge, Markurant cast his taint on Sabine. The Pheromancer King marked her as his mother, and her stigma keeps transmitting signals into the ether. Anyone who is under the influence of Burn cannot resist the taint and perceives Sabine as the King's chosen midwife. Sabine's CHA Skills receive a bonus of +2D per Potential level whenever she deals with Burners, carriers of the Seed, and Leperos.



ROTTER

13.05.2595, Laibach. Three animal faces overlap, dissolve into a gray mass from which eyes rise like bubbles to stare at Rotter. A deep hum crawls across the ground, climbs the barren concrete buildings and creeps all the way into the treetops of the pines surrounding the city. Eyes everywhere. Splayers snap shut like the jaws of hungry Gendos, then suddenly shatter. Rotter's arm is in burning pain, the elbow bursts into a cloud of bone fragments that are immediately reduced to dust which in turn dissolves into atoms which finally disperse into thoughts.

They run. The whole corps screams in dismay. One after the other, they load their guns, shove the barrels into their mouths, pull the trigger to escape the voice.

Rotter's gun jams. The voice charms him, lures him out of a crevice. It says something that sticks to his brain stem and slowly trickles down his spine. Rotter drops his gun into the yellow grass. Madly, he stares at his fingers. Viscous skin flows from his fingertips. He could twist candles out of them, he suddenly thinks, then he runs on. For months he races through the wasteland, hunts rabbits, and drinks from watering holes.

His past has mostly been extinguished. Rotter knows that someone else has it now. In exchange, he received the collective consciousness of the inhabitants of a whole village that had served the voice millennia ago.

He has no understanding on how he ended up in Justitian or what he is supposed to do there. However, the storm raging in his mind will not let him find any rest. He hides in the shadows of the Defiler Streets and sleeps under tarpaulins and garbage, feeding off trash. When he speaks, his tongue forms weird sounds he has never heard, much less understands. The other Defilers are afraid of him, call him wraith, ghoul, or corpse eater. The scum don't recognize Rotter's insignia and give him a wide berth.

ROLE PLAY

Between episodes of pure madness, Rotter is struck by brief epiphanies of mental clarity. These phases often last for only a few hours, after which Eidolon takes control of his avatar once more. In these moments however, Rotter is in command of his senses and strives for redemption from his damnation. But who would want to help a man like him? If only he had his gun!

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Visionary, Spitalian, Rank 4: Preservist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 1 INT: 3 PSY: 1 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 6D, Force 7D, Melee 6D,
Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 8D,
Medicine 6D, Science 4D, Cunning 3D, Domination 3D, Faith 6D,
Reaction 5D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 9D, Primal 10D,
Survival 10D, Taming 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Leperos; Eidolon's avatar: Rotter channels supernatural potentials that Eidolon bestows upon him through mental manipulation. He cannot use these powers during an episode of clarity
POTENTIALS: The Last Farewell 2, Preservalis 2, Danger Sense 3, Asceticism 2, Sonar 2, Phantom Pain 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 20 Ego Points (Primal)
ATTACK: Rusted Blade, Melee 6D, Distance 1, Damage 3, Smooth Running (2T);
Iron Bar, Melee 6D, Damage 6, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Torn Preservist uniform and cloak, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 9 / 12 (8 permanent), Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: None

EIDOLON'S AVATAR

Eidolon, the voice of the Dushani, controls Rotter from afar. The fallen Preservist is his eye, his scout, for Eidolon wants to be aware of his enemies' every step.

Eidolon yearns nothing more but to escape his dungeon in Laibach. A crazy Marauder has imprisoned him there, caught him in an endless echo loop with no way out. If Eidolon's song ebbs, the catacombs of his nest will collapse on him and bury the Dushani's higher self forever.

Rotter is Eidolon's human vessel through which the Mokosch can get a glance at the outside world he cannot personally enter. Through Rotter, he tries to collect all available information on his nemesis, to find Triglaw's weak spot and get rid of the Marauder once and for all. So far however, Rotter has not found a trace of the symbol of a burning metallic horsehead that Eidolon keeps projecting into his memory. If the Mokosch only knew how close to his goal he actually is.

POTENTIALS

SONAR
PREREQUISITE: Leperos,
Eidolon's Avatar, Primal
Simply flicking his tongue allows Rotter to navigate in absolute darkness without any penalty. Additionally, all rolls requiring INS Skills are boosted with a bonus of 1D per Potential level.

PHANTOM PAIN
PREREQUISITE: Leperos,
Eidolon's Avatar, Primal
Rotter's voice causes phantom pains. His victims feel a sudden rush crawling through their limbs, their hearts cramp, eyes bleed and their skin appears torn and poriferous. Others experience their teeth and hair falling out, or the stench of decay wafting towards them. These pains aren't real, but they're terrifying enough to keep pursuers at bay.

Rotter rolls INS+Primal versus the victim's Mental Defense. If the roll is successful the victim loses (1) Ego Point per Potential level for every Round they spend within earshot.



CHRONICLERS

HEART OF THE MACHINE

They created Justitian, planning the city as an expanding network of liabilities surrounded by the power of bureaucracy. They poured energy into it until finally a manifest Stream fanned out its leaden petals and autonomously generated rules. Rules that were revealed in the Codex, the behavior of the citizens, and the swarms of Scrappers passing through the streets. The Chroniclers were never concerned with the creation of a power base. What they nurtured with Justitian was the nutrient solution in which the Stream was supposed to awaken. Wherever people move, meet, and interact, data is generated. The sales figures from the markets, the movement patterns of Judges and Scrappers, it all forms columns from which general fractal formulas for Stream simulation in the Cluster can be derived. No Chronicler knows the critical mass of information needed. Gaps in the databases still exist and indicate deadly wounds within the data structures. Polyphonic commands echo from the speakers and Vocoders of the Fragments, ordering the Mediators to expedite the Scrapper's search for artifacts and to seal these fatal wounds, once and for all.

SERVANT

As much as the Chroniclers try to remain aloof from their citizens, without contact with the outside world they would have long since starved to death. The Servants are chosen Agents who maintain contact with the people, buy artifacts, and monitor the supply of the Cluster. Their tasks are predominantly communicative and interactive. They initiate conversations on the Stallion Streets, negotiate with Scrappers in the Forecourt and thereby continuously expand the network of information that the Chroniclers resort to for analysis.

Unlike many other members of the Cult, Servants don't constantly rant about virtual light, Stream constants, and electro-modifications, because most citizens of Justitian have no understanding of such topics. Instead, despite the mask, Vocoder, and insignia of power, they are able to build trust in the population and deal with their concerns.

However, this atypical empathy does not come out of grace or affection. The Servants are under the direct command of the Paradigmas of the Cluster. On their behalf they positively influence the perception of the people

in relation to the Cult, acting as its extended propaganda apparatus.

OBSERVER

They stand at markets and crossroads, the traffic of the Stallion Streets flowing past them. Scurrying Scrappers, Providers, and Judges are reflected in their goggles. They are Observers. They study, analyze, and report. Every detail recorded by them is fed into the Static Stream for evaluation and forms the basis for the calculation of the reality formula. They are everywhere in both Downtown and Uptown. Some of these tech disciples have strapped a thinking machine to their chest and enter short strings, one for each type of human they register. Others carry fist-sized devices with counters that click softly when a button is pressed.

The locals have become accustomed to these figures who stand against the walls like primitive automatons and catalogue human fluctuations. They can't be spoken to; anyone who blocks their field of view is brushed aside with a "Continue movement".

FRAGMENT

Almost nobody outside of the Cult ever gets to gaze upon the Fragments. Somewhere deep inside the Cluster, behind security gates and control curtains, they are connected to a wild growth of cables, surrounded with buzzing sensory modules. Their eyes are locked onto the amber monitors, flicking back and forth to follow glowing lines of code before they disappear back into the Stream. None of them have an understanding of the outside world. However, when one of them rises from the depths and steps into light, then it is an unforgettable moment for Chroniclers as well as for Judges, Spitalians, Scrappers, and Clanners alike. They rule over sound and light, heat and cold - the technological marvels of the Bygones are submissive servants at the whim of a Fragment's mind.

SHUTTER

The Cluster's lifestyle and discipline are not made for humans. The Needle Tower fiasco was the most impressive proof of failure - and a crushing defeat for the Cult. Only the Fragments know how many Chroniclers have gone astray. However not all these deviants turn their backs on their old home, some rather take a step aside. Their biOS is frozen, their score disappears behind a firewall. A Streamer will bend over his thinking machine and hurriedly set up a new entry with his nimble fingers in the directory "Shutter". From now on they are unofficial Agents. They live in the rat infested neighborhoods of Downtown, side by side with Scrappers, Jehammedans, and all the others who once looked up to them in awe. They no longer enjoy the safety of the Cluster; their equipment is restocked with sanctioned technology, the barcode on their forehead blurred and deleted from the database. They exist in a shadow world and act as valuable tools for the Cult. Their specialized knowledge of weapons and technology makes them excellent investigators - and assassins.

DECAY

The Chroniclers have generated powerful enemies for themselves. For centuries, they devoured Artifacts and technology, secured knowledge, manipulated other parties against each other to gain political power, controlled markets, and imprinted their ideas on emerging societies. Until recently they were untouchable.

But a series of devastating mistakes causes cracks in this perfect system. The Needle Tower fiasco was only the beginning. In 2596, a disastrously planned attack on the city of Toulon lead to an unforeseen chain reaction, from which the hatred between Neolibyans and Chroniclers solidified anew. Only a year later came the destruction of Aquitaine, the Frankan counterpart to the Central Cluster. Justitian itself, the success model for the entire agenda of the Cult, is out of control. The bureaucratic arm of the Judiciary has taken on a life of its own and rejects the instructions of the Fragments. Eternal allies have quietly turned into adversaries, eluding influence. Even the Scrappers, the Cult that profited more than any other from the artifact trade with the Chroniclers, suddenly face the Cluster with hostility. The Cartel is a virus and it is rampant amidst the Chronicler-created utopia.

SCHISM

Nothing shakes the Cluster like the news that a Needle is in town. The biggest conceivable upset has occurred. A nemesis from their own ranks, who has the intellect to override the principles set forth by the Fragments. The message spreads in a flash amongst the Streamers and causes the heart of the Cluster to tremble in fear of the outcome. Defense mechanisms are reevaluated, security measures put in place, Exits monitored and shut down. Panic is in the air. Any information the Cluster can get its hands on is extrapolated to give an indication toward the most important question of all: Why is he here?



GENERATION

Fractals are the formula of life, and mathematics the language of the universe. No other Chronicler in Justitian embodies this maxim as much as Generation. Rules and axioms give his Cult its form, and he knows every single one of them. For years, he has been trawling columns of numbers, studying data, compiling population curves, correlating them with the height of the Uptown wall, and drawing comparisons to the passage of all annually counted passengers of the elevator platforms. He links his results to the migration patterns of birds and swarm movements of colony-building insects.

Many of his fellow Cultists consider him a genius on the verge of paving the way towards groundbreaking insights. Others see him as a loudmouth who drowns himself in endless confirmation biases and meaningless correlations, and whose theories lack scientific verification.

Generation does not shy away from confrontation with his opponents. The statistical world formula of the Stream can only be fully comprehended if one has a clear view of all the relevant data. With such statements he even catches the attention of the Fragments deep below in Level 5. Some of these Cult leaders are convinced that Generation has revealed the origin of the 22 archetypes that the Stream once calculated as a symbol configuration from the dataset of Justitian's population. The feedback loop from that calculation took days to resolve.

While Generation polarizes the Cluster with his hypotheses, his mere presence triggers strict rejection from many Judges. In his capacity as an Observer, he is free to attend meetings of the Judiciary and pass on his insights to the Cluster. The Judges acknowledge this privilege with gritted teeth; no one likes being forced to share their meetings with the Chroniclers. However, all attempts to overturn this old-fashioned decree between Cluster and Judgement Hall have so far failed due to Senator Laakon's right of veto. He considers Generation an indispensable eyewitness. This is the only way he can guarantee the High Judiciary monitors itself.

ROLE PLAY

For Generation, reality is a battlefield of logical deduction and compelling consequences. Simply put, he's a smart-ass. Anyone who dares to engage him in a verbal altercation should be prepared and count his arguments. Insufficient repartee is considered by Generation as indirect evidence of the primitivism of the interlocutor, who would probably be better off among Psychonauts than among civilized descendants of the Bygones.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Chronicler, Rank 3: Mediator
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 3 INT: 4 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 4D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 6D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 7D, Focus 7D, Science 8D, Domination 5D, Reaction 4D, Faith 5D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 3, Renown 1, Resources 3
SPECIAL: Limited access to the Static Stream (+3D on all INT Skill rolls); Polarizing: +2D on social interactions with other Chroniclers, but -2D on social interactions with Judges (except for Laakon and his supporters), Hellvetics, and residents of Justititan during his "random sampling"
POTENTIALS: Number Cruncher 2, Fractal Memory 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Tuned-up Megaphone, Engineering 7D, Distance 20m, Nerve-racking (Anyone in range experiences a general penalty of -1D per Trigger), Area Damage (360°); Shocker, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 16, Dazed (8)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 4D; Ranged active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, First Impression (+1D), Source Lvl. 3, Dome of rays Lvl. 2, Fumor Lvl. 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Interfacer; Voice Recorder

SUPERVISORY

In Downtown Generation is often escorted by Protectors to perform "random sampling". He can request citizenship papers from bystanders without warning and compare them with the stored data in the Static Stream. If there are any discrepancies in the examination of the personal details, such as outstanding tax claims, expired stamps, or alleged dissident status, Generation can confiscate the papers as well as the citizen's finances, close market stalls, or have anyone turned over to the Cleft for further questioning.

On behalf of the Cluster, Generation monitors the Hellvetics' progress at the Crack and issues emergency passes for Scrappers needed as rescue workers. However, Generation is not fond of the work of the Hellvetics at all. The paid mercenaries do not take the urgency of the situation seriously enough, do not understand what secrets are really hidden down there. Especially the leading Genie, Glauser, who is a consistent thorn in Generation's side.

INVENTORY

VOICE RECORDER

Generation's voice recording device is connected to his suit and independently filters ambient noise from recordings to deliver sound quality as interference-free as possible. The audio coil can hold a full 24 hours of data. All of the Senates meetings he attends are recorded and released for later analysis. Occasionally there are also various interviews on tape, which he conducted with Senator Laakon. These files contain information on rebellion and imminent upheavals in the Senates driven by Laakon himself. By and large, Generation acts as the interface between the Cluster and the Senator and personally delivers his dispatches to the Fragments.



ECHO

Justitian is under constant threat from all directions and the Cluster needs to know every movement and every idle thought of its enemies in order to be able to retaliate with full force in these uncertain times. The source of the menace is irrelevant, whether it is Sleepers, Palers, Anabaptists, or even corrupted Judges. All of them use radio waves to communicate over long distances, inevitably littering the airwaves with electronic data and digital fingerprints that can be exploited by the Chroniclers. Echo's task is to skim this information pool and redirect it to the Cluster, where it is compiled and deciphered.

As a spy for the Cluster, Echo's purpose is to prepare the Chroniclers for crises or exceptional situations so that the Cult can respond with calculated precision. With his over-the-horizon radar, he receives every crackle and click that comes out of even far away Noret, two hundred kilometers to the south. Echo keeps one eye locked on the territory of the Marauder Gusev, as well as listening to the radio messages that are sent from Cathedral City in the direction of the Alps.

In addition, he maintains the Radio Tower, places hidden camera sensors around Uptown, and distributes his bugs and recording devices throughout the entire city. Nothing escapes him. Nothing, except for one miniscule detail. Echo has been under the mental control of Oswald Keszler for weeks. The Hippocrat has taken root in Echo's subconscious mind and is directing the Agent for his purposes. The Chronicler has no idea of the memetic conditioning he has fallen prey to. Like a puppet on Keszler's strings he jams all radio transmissions that contain the name or title of Kranzler, filters them from the ether and passes the recordings over to Keszler. Unknowingly, he has trapped the Provost of the Preservists underneath a glass dome, has cut Kranzler off from communicating with his troops, and silenced his allies. Thus, he has created the perfect conditions for Keszler to arrest Kranzler in his villa.

ROLE PLAY

Echo sees himself as a controller and the task assigned to him as vital for the Cult. His minutely calculated interception sequences are the shield behind which the Cluster hides. As an information logistics specialist, he has access to a vast array of resources and secrets, along with almost free reign to deploy his tools across the Protectorate and beyond.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Righteous, Chronicler, Rank 2: Agent
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 5 PSY: 1 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Force 6D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Mobility 4D, Conduct 4D, Negotiation 4D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 8D, Focus 7D, Cunning 3D, Domination 3D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 3D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 3, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Permission to access the Radio Tower and Peace Walk in Justitian
POTENTIALS: Mind of the Machine 2, White Noise 2
INITIATIVE: 3D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Streamer Glove, Brawl 4D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 30, Dazed (5); Vocoder, Engineering 8D and Domination 3D, Distance 10m, Damage 1+T Ego, Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 4D; Ranged active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, First Impression (+1D), Source Lvl. 3, Greenlight Lvl. 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Interception antenna and espionage equipment with Source backpack (powers all of his surveillance gear without using his suit's Source); Peacewalk access pass

ANOMALIES

Echo discovered a radio anomaly months ago in the Jehammedan Quarter. He is so far unable to analyze it, the frequency too high for his receiver dish. Echo is worried. Normally, he is at least able to locate the origin of a simple sine wave, but every time he approaches the Quarter the position changes.

He has already passed his observations to the Cluster, but the lack of a recording makes interpreting the data impossible.

But suddenly a second pulse of interference bursts into the Cluster network, driving Echo mad. Somewhere on the Forecourt someone has hacked into the internal radio channel reserved for Judges and Chroniclers and is siphoning off classified calls from Uptown. Echo has an impossible problem in front of him. Tens of thousands of people move daily across the largest marketplace in Europe and the maze of stalls, traders, mountains of goods, pack donkeys and ox-carts cannot be surveyed properly. Echo has to come up with something to stop the spy.

INVENTORY

ESPIONAGE EQUIPMENT

Echo's espionage equipment is among the best that the Cluster can provide. A portable over-the-horizon radar with a range of 1,000 km, an interception antenna, radio interference jammers, remote-controlled bugs, a silver globe with built-in camera lenses that can record panoramic environment maps. Add to that a heavy pickup box with several petabytes of storage capacity, solar cells for power, a rangefinder for pin-point distance measuring, and a remodeled Vocoder that works not only as a radio but records each of Echo's notes and copies them to the Central Cluster.

In addition, Echo is in possession of a special pass issued by the Judges which offers him access to the Peacewalk, a bridge system for monitoring road junctions and problematic districts. From up there, Echo can easily reach the rooftops of the city where he installs his monitoring systems.



DESELECT

The Central Exchange on the Forecourt is the most prosperous Alcove in the land of the Crow, and it is run by an obnoxious Chronicler renowned for his foul mouth far beyond the city limits. Deselect is old, ugly, smells like shit and is never shy about throwing around even the most taboo of insults. Decades ago, the negative feedback from his Source Module scorched his legs and amputation of the limbs was his only hope for survival. Since then, he has been confined to a wheelchair, or strapped into a corset which is connected by a coil system to the ceiling of the Exchange, allowing him to float through the Alcove.

His insults are hard to bear. The Chroniclers would have already set his score to zero if he didn't display such extraordinary talent. Deselect can sense data accumulations. He describes it as a feeling, as if air pressure builds up around an artifact or person, only to finally billow out in all directions. The fact is that Deselect unerringly discovers Stream fragments hidden within instruments and unassuming scrap, and this talent is something the Chroniclers cannot do without.

Deselect doesn't give a flying fuck about the disparaging whining of his Cult siblings, for he knows how crucial his work is for the Cult. He sits at the nerve center of the artifact trade, wades through endless mountains of useless scrap and negotiates with scum. Most Chroniclers would lose their oversight during the daily rush hour in the Alcove and collapse under pressure.

Relentlessly, Scrappers besiege Deselect for his knowledge, begging to buy new vector calculations of potential caches and stake their claims before winter arrives. In the Alcove's digital map room, Deselect shows off a flickering hologram where his calculations project hidden and so far undiscovered artifact veins of the Bygones. Every year there are fewer. This is the work of Neolibyans, declares Deselect. The Scrappers nod sullenly.

Recently, Deselect spends his time with his new student Chevalski. The silent Spitalian from the far east has taken the place of the Streamer Ampere, Deselect's former adept who went missing on an expedition to Briton more than a year ago.

ROLE PLAY

Deselect comments on sales with loud farts and burps, and punctuates his sentences with a spit. A brilliant mind hides behind this vulgar behavior, but Deselect would never divulge his knowledge in vain.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Abomination, Chronicler, Rank 4: Streamer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 1 CHA: 1 INT: 5 PSY: 5 INS: 6
SKILLS: Force 3D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 4D, Navigation 6D, Leadership 3D, Negotiation 3D, Artifact Lore 10D, Engineering 9D, Focus 10D, Legends 8D, Science 6D, Cunning 6D, Dominate 9D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 7D, Perception 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 4, Network 4, Renown 5, Resources 5, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Inside his Alcove, Deselect moves around and controls the Alcove's weapon systems with AGI+Navigation. Outside, he relies on his Agents and modules.
POTENTIALS: Fractal Memory 3, Number Cruncher 3, Child of the Stream 2, Defragment 2
INITIATIVE: 9D / 20 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Deployable Machine Gun Turret, Navigation 6D, Distance: Alcove, Damage 11, Salvoes (4), Jamming;
Electrocute The Floor: Opponents must succeed AGI+Mobility (5), otherwise Dazed (10).
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Use winch), Navigation 6D; Ranged active, Navigation 6D; Active Defense outside Alcove (Crouching), Mobility 1D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 6m (Winches and harness in the Alcove) or 1m (Wheelchair)
ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, First Impression (+1D), 2x Source Lvl. 2, Dome of rays Lvl. 2, Greenlight Lvl. 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Winches and harness (inside the Alcove worn gear counts as Enc. 0); Wheelchair (outside the Alcove worn gear counts as Enc. 0)

THE ALCOVE

The Forecourt Alcove is the most important trading post in Justitian, perhaps even in all of Europe. The Exchange serves as the conflux of artifact acquisition, cache analysis, and formal banking. A gargantuan, interconnected warehouse, divided into different sectors, is Deselect's realm. More sensors hang from electronic arms on the ceiling than there are stars in the sky, and cable connections line the sales desks where goods from all over the world wait to be appraised.

The Alcove never sleeps. Dozens of Deselect's agents scurry around, transporting objects that the Chronicler classifies as "interesting". Meanwhile, Scrappers crowd at the exchange barriers while Protectors and their Jurymen ensure order between the queues. In an emergency, the Alcove also has remote-controlled weapon systems and the entire sales floor can be charged with a high current at the touch of a button. Even the most foolhardy criminals would balk at robbing this fortress.

WISDOM OF THE BYGONES

No Chronicler has directly handled more artifacts with their bare hands than Deselect. From the remnants of the Bygones he has shaped his ocean of knowledge. There is barely a legend he does not seem to know. Anyone in Justitian looking for information on Marauders or the Recombination Group will find it with Deselect. However, Deselect's knowledge comes at a price; secrets for secrets. If they have nothing new to offer, he ignores them, or scares them out of the Alcove with a hail of vicious insults.

This outstanding position has focused the Paler's attention on Deselect. They crave the secrets the Streamer holds. One of their hidden bugs already records confidential discussions between him and the Spitalian, Chevalski. But that's not enough. The Palers want to kidnap Deselect and take him to their Exit. They hope that with the right application of torture they can get more out of the ugly Chronicler than a meager wisp of words.



ELIZA

The majority of Chroniclers residing in Justitian focus on taking care of the city's continuity, monitoring its population, directing the arrangements between Judges and Spitalians, as well as tracking the daily trade of scrap and artifacts. But beneath this pulsating network of communication and interaction, a small group of Chroniclers pull the strings. Eliza is one of these chosen few.

Ever since the day that the Dispensers first cracked open, Sleepers have tried to infiltrate the Chroniclers. They masquerade as devout disciples, piously climbing the Cult's hierarchy and trying to divert the attention of the Fragments. Little do they know they've fallen for a trap. Their gaze is fixed on data intended for them, but their transponders and the encoded data particles within their nanite blood have long been detected by the Cluster's security systems. When they pierce the mirror, a Primordial lies in wait to take care of them, devouring them before they can become a threat.

Aspera, in her infinite wrath, has eradicated many a Sleeper from within the ranks of the Chroniclers. To ensure the purity of the Cult, she passes her knowledge on to a select few Streamers. Eliza is the only one of these operators in direct contact with the Marauder, her spy and avenger alike.

The uninterrupted influx of people makes it impossible for Chroniclers to detect Sleepers who are submerged in Downtown. The Cluster is currently estimating that at least a dozen of these infiltrators are hiding in Justitian. Extrapolated to the entire Protectorate, that number rises to hundreds. These agitators must be deleted. As compliant tools of Project Tannhäuser, they continue their incessant activities, fueling conflicts, influencing high-ranking individuals, acting as spiritual firebrands, all with only one goal in mind: to complete the grand scheme of the Recombination Group and usher in the golden age of humanity. But they failed to account for Eliza in their calculations. The Streamer lurks in the shadows and she sees through every one of their lies. She has just uncovered a 600 within the city limits, and almost brought him to his rightful death. At the very last moment, the Sleeper escaped, but Eliza will not rest until she finds and hunts him down, as she has done dozens of times before.

ROLE PLAY

Eliza knows no mercy when it comes to defending the Cluster. Her distrust of Palers runs to her core. Sleepers are her declared arch enemy, she knows every one of their weaknesses and will hunt them to the ends of the Earth.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Protector, Chronicler, Rank 4: Streamer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 5 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 5D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 7D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 8D, Expression 7D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 7D, Artifact Lore 10D, Engineering 9D, Legends 8D, Medicine 6D, Science 8D, Cunning 7D, Deception 6D, Domination 6D, Faith 6D, Reaction 7D, Empathy 10D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 8D, Primal 10D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 3, Network 5, Resources 4, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Hunter Killer: Eliza has no Ego spend limit when fighting Sleepers
POTENTIALS: Nova 2, Nervous Breakdown 2, Download 2, Upload 2,
Child of the Stream 1, Danger Sense 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Streamer Glove, Brawl 6D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt) Mag. 30, Dazed (7)
DEFENSE: Passive 1 (5); Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, First Impression (+1D), Source Lvl. 3 (6),
Dome of rays Lvl. 2, Discharge Lvl. 2, Greenlight Lvl. 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Fuel cell Source (effective Source level doubled); Deadbolt Receiver and Interfacer; Kaleidoscope; Spectral Cloak; Encrypted radio link (Integrated voice scrambler, can only be decrypted by a matching unit held by Aspera)

ASPERA'S AVENGER

Eliza is in direct contact with her mistress, Aspera. As such, she is the only one familiar with the Marauder's current hideout. A secret the Chronicler has sworn to take to her grave. Aspera has settled in the heart of Cathedral City, amongst Anabaptists, the last place one would look for a Marauder. She has been covertly helping Modus, a Paradigma disguised as a Fragment, to access the hidden archives of the original Streamers.

INVENTORY

KALEIDOSCOPE

Eliza's defense weapon is her light staff. Hyperluminous diodes with a strength of 5,000,000 Lumens are ignited by an E-cube chain to produce a light cone that shines so brightly that its target must immediately close their eyes, or risk losing their sight completely. Every Combat Round in which an opponent looks into the beam with open eyes causes them to take (1) Trauma Damage and lose (1) Ego Point.

If an opponent receives more than (4) Trauma this way, their retinas burn under the glare and they lose their eyesight forever. If the Kaleidoscope is used against a Paler, they receive double the Trauma Damage per Round.

The E-cube battery lasts for a full (12) Rounds before the Kaleidoscope loses power, and the beam cuts out with a nervous flicker.

SPECTRAL CLOAK

Eliza's Spectral Cloak copies the incidence of light and traces the contours of the environment. This makes it possible for the Chronicler to merge with her surroundings and become invisible to the human eye. If she stays still, her outline can only be recognized by a roll of INS+Perception (7). If she moves, the Difficulty decreases to (5). Her movements are barely discernible in this state and her Passive Defense is increased to (5).



AELLO

In Justitian, the Scrappers have grown into a problem for the Chroniclers. The Cartel is spreading like smog through the city, choking the Cluster of its air. Countermeasures are initiated, pressure on the Judiciary increased, aid requested from their Spitalian allies. But none of it works. At this stage, the Cartel has become untamable, and its magnetism for Scrappers is so strong that suspected members and innocent bystanders can no longer be distinguished from one another. Its flat hierarchy, with ever-changing Officers, replaceable straw men, and inscrutable contacts amongst the Carrion Birds, makes it impossible to target its masterminds.

The Chroniclers should have reacted much earlier, but their focus was on other enemies and fronts for far too long. In Uptown's shadow, Bosch's organization was able to balloon into a disruptive factor whose scale is now giving even the Fragments cause for concern.

The Cluster is forced into action. Scrambling to mount a response to this seething threat, they must resort to lethal methods and begin to deploy their own agents to infiltrate the Cartel. Aello is one of the Shutters assigned to this task. He grew up among the Scrappers of Tech-Central long before the Chroniclers recruited him. Aello knows the dirt diggers well. He speaks their language, knows their habits, and understands both their dark sense of humor and the reasons for their undying loyalty to the Cartel.

Nevertheless, his mission in the heart of Bosch's territory is a game of fire and Aello must be alert at all times, or he risks getting burned. The Shutter is constantly afraid of falling victim to a kidnapping or assassination. As a safety measure, he has allied himself with Laika's Pack and personally handed the Bitch an electronic tracking uplink, which is connected to his Source Module. In case something happens to him, the Pack will do its best to try and track him down in this labyrinth of shaded streets, dead alleys, and convoluted basements...

ROLE PLAY

Aello kills on behalf of the Cluster. His Shocker scorches neural pathways and his blade slices the hearts of his opponents. Stealth is the top priority of his mission and he is completely on his own. On his forays into Bosch's lair, he masquerades as a Servant while interacting with the many Scrappers scouring Tech-Central for tough squads they can draft into helping them on artifact raids.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Destroyer, Chronicler, Rank 3: Shutter
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 1 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 6D, Force 5D, Melee 6D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 5D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 4D, Stealth 7D, Negotiation 4D, Artifact Lore 4D, Engineering 4D, Legends 5D, Medicine 6D, Science 6D, Cunning 6D, Deception 5D, Domination 6D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 4D, Orienteering 5D, Primal 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 3, Resources 3, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Access to sanctioned technology in Tech-Central
POTENTIALS: Nervous Breakdown 2, Danger Sense 1
INITIATIVE: 7D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Pulse Dagger, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 24, Smooth Running (2T), Special;
Shocker, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 16, Dazed (10)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Shutter suit, Armor 2, Source Lvl. 2, Discharge Lvl. 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/8, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Electronic tracker connected to his Source module (to allow Laika and her Pack to track him while he is in Tech-Central); Opticalizer (mask with special optics; negates all Vision penalties due to environmental influences)

ERADICATED

Time and again Shutters disappear during their covert operations against the Cartel. They are exposed when they try to penetrate too deep into the criminal network. Aello recalls at least a dozen codenames belonging to Shutters that failed to return from their respective missions. Their bodies were never found. But weeks after they disappeared, or sometimes even months, hand painted lettering appears on the walls of the houses and abandoned backyards near the Steel Monolith and the Forecourt bearing the name of a missing Shutter. Aello is convinced that the Cartel is behind these writings and uses them as intimidation tactics to warn the Cluster of further attempts of interference.

CONCEALED

In Justitian, it is almost impossible to tell an Agent or Mediator apart from a Shutter. Behind every inconspicuous mask of a Servant or Observer, a potential assassin of the Cluster may lie hidden. This is why Shutters operating within the city limits place little emphasis on disguise, but simply mingle with their Cult siblings to operate in secrecy.

INVENTORY

PULSE DAGGER

Aello's preferred melee weapon is his pulse dagger. The E-Cube, which is embedded in the knife handle, is connected to the blade via a jumper cable. At the touch of a button, the knife can be energized and blasts a charge of several tens of thousands of volts into the guts of an opponent. In close combat, Aello does everything in his power to use an Aimed Attack to drive the blade into an opponent's torso and holds the target in place with a chokehold. The longer the blade remains within the victim's body, the higher the voltage level. From the first Combat Round the victim has to roll BOD+Stamina (3). Every Round adds an automatic 1 to the dice pool. A Botch leads to immediate cardiac arrest and, almost inevitably, to death.



LOAD

Two years ago, Commando Requiem was obliterated during their fatally botched operation in Toulon. Load survived through a completely coincidental synchronicity of events. He was in the wrong place at the right time. Factor, the Fuse who Load worked for, failed to respond to the designated radio transmission, leaving Load to wait in vain for his cue.

A heartbeat later, everything went to shit. Load watched Ferrallies go up in flames from a safe distance and saw the Neolibyan battle cruisers from Montpellier and Perpignan enter the bay, pushing towards the harbor.

It was about time for Load to get the fuck out of there and lick his wounds. After months of covering his tracks out in the Rhône swamps, crawling from one filthy, moist shithole to another, Load was tired of the hide-and-seek. His plan: reach Aquitaine, report back to his superiors and be reassigned to a new unit. With the last of his reserves he trudged toward the territory of the Resistance, Toulouse, when suddenly the news of the destruction of the Frankan Cluster spread like wildfire. Load faltered in disbelief. Did the Neolibyans execute a strike in retaliation? News and rumours mixed together until they were impossible to separate. Nobody had any real answers, but to Load the situation was clear as day; Franka was no longer safe. Chroniclers like him were on the kill list.

His life was in disarray. The entire cast of clients, mentors, and backers upon whom he depended were wiped off the face of the Earth, Shutters and Fuses scattered into all directions of the wind. There was only one path left: back to Borca. The only place he could find answers was all the way at the Central Cluster. In the slipstream of a Purgan Scrapper gang, he managed to cross the Alps and took the rest of the route on an ox-cart that was heading for Cathedral City. During a stopover in A235, Load familiarized himself with the status of the Protectorate. Here the rules were different than in chaotic Franka. He was finally home, in a place where his Cult was not just tolerated, but where the Chroniclers were in charge. He couldn't wait to set foot in Justitian. He was finally where he belonged.

ROLE PLAY

Load is desperate. He's a fugitive secret agent with no past, and no Fuse, stranded in the sprawling metropolis of Justitian without a single contact within the Cult to which he dedicated his life.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traditionalist, Chronicler, Rank 3: Shutter
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 1
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 6D, Force 4D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 7D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 5D, Focus 5D, Legends 4D, Cunning 6D, Deception 5D, Domination 5D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 2, Resources 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: No access to sanctioned technology in the Protectorate
POTENTIALS: Dead End 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Shock Knuckles, Brawl 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 4 and Blunt or Dazed (8), E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 16;
Taser, Projectiles 7D, Distance 5/10m, Damage 1, 2x E-Cube (240Qt), Mag. 4, Dazed (6)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 6D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Shutter suit, Armor 2, Source Lvl. 2, Fumor Lvl. 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/10, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Encrypted disk with Nullify's commands; Scorched barcode on forehead; Backup Alcove memory bank (taken from the Alcove in Toulon where Commando Requiem operated)

IDENTITY CRISIS

The only remaining evidence in Load's possession to verify his identity is a cryptograph bestowed to him by his Fuse. All of Nullify's orders regarding Operation Mirage and Commando Requiem are stored within the encoded device, definitively proving Load's connections to the Chroniclers.

However, Load is not suicidal. He knows the data is full of compromising content, and wandering into any old Alcove and handing it to an Agent will net him a knife in the back. Similarly, Load has no citizenship papers and as such it's impossible for him to pass the barriers at the elevator platforms. Nobody would ever let him into Uptown to log himself into a registration terminal and draw the attention of a Fuse with his signature. The scorched barcode on his forehead makes him look like a desperate Scrapper trying to disguise himself as a Chronicler. Worse still, without that tattoo he can't scan into any Alcove within the city limits to update his score and send out a distress call to the other Shutters.

The situation is desperate. He has no choice but to pull the mask over his face and mingle amongst other Agents of Downtown, imitate one of these Servants and hopefully divert attention away from himself. Perhaps while in disguise he can locate another Shutter or Fuse? Easier said than done. While pacing around trying to to get a grasp of the size of the city, Load roams the districts in search of refuge. Maybe Tech-Central, he thinks? Surely it will be easy to hide amongst the Scrappers! But Load has ventured straight into the worst place a failed Shutter could choose as shelter; the Cartel's home territory.



DECOY 5

For a full year Decoy 5 pushed north, surviving on bird eggs and snake meat, covering his trail. The swamps were teeming with Pheromancer drones, but they were trivial to deal with, unlike the henchmen who followed closely on his heels. Nullify's agents hounded him for months, with the order to eliminate the rogue agent who knew too much.

The events surrounding the Day of the Phoenix had branded themselves onto Decoy's otherwise unwavering spirit. Deep within the underbrush of the mangroves, he remembered the recurring image of his assassination of Mirage, and how the last bullet of his magazine blew open her skull. He was used to operating alone. As a soldier of the Cluster, he was callous and committed only to the task at hand. But no acid in the world was strong enough to wash the blood from his hands. How did it come to this? At which crossroads in life had he taken the detour? Was it the job in Lucatore? Or maybe before? Was there even a "before"?

Decoy continued along the Sentier du Chasseur and on to Cremant, but by then Nullify's hounds were back on his scent. To shake off the pursuers, he would have to come up with a different strategy. Decoy took the route to Justitian. The place where his instruction began and where he came to exchange his past for a future as a secret assassin. Everything had started in the Cluster. At that time, as one of Nullify's many dirty hands, he executed his first political murder and eradicated those whom the Scalar marked in the crosshairs of his hatred. Nullify toyed with the possibilities. For him everything was a matter of chance, and he behaved like a vengeful god who wiped out the lives of those who stood in his way.

But the unbreakable control Nullify once exercised on Decoy has faded. The years in the field have corroded the Shutter's ideology and driven him into a spiritual twilight in which the border between right and wrong is blurred and indistinct, leaving only the lust for revenge.

Decoy wants to completely eradicate his former master. He will bring the war back to Nullify. Everything had started with him, and now everything must end with him.

ROLE PLAY

Decoy has nothing left to lose, and wants to put an end to his own story. He has long stopped caring whether that end is in glory or in a massacre, so long as he drags his target down to hell with him.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Chronicler, Rank 3: Shutter
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 5 CHA: 3 INT: 4 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Force 8D, Melee 8D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 8D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 9D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 10D, Conduct 7D, Expression 6D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 7D, Focus 7D, Legends 6D, Cunning 9D, Deception 9D, Domination 8D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 4, Renown 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Access to sanctioned technology
POTENTIALS: Dead End 3, Download 2, Multiply 2
INITIATIVE: 8D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Combat Knife, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T); Sniper Rifle with sight, Projectiles 10D, Distance 50/400m, Damage 11, Sensitive
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged active, Mobility 9D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Shutter suit, Armor 2, Source Lvl. 3, Fumor Lvl. 2, Discharge Lvl. 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/14, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Opticalizer (mask with special optics; negates all Vision penalties due to environmental influences); Stream drone with recording function and display; Lockpicks; Camo paint; Judge's coat, hat and sunglasses (Armor 2); Scrapper clothing

IN THE SHADOWS

Decoy has reached Justitian, and once again is forced to use his vast experience in camouflage and disguise. As "Custus the Scrapper", Decoy moves along the path between the Flotsam, the Steel Monolith, and Tech-Central, gathering contacts and new allies among both the Carrion Birds and the Cartel. In his disguise as "Judge Flemming" he uses his fake citizenship papers to reach Uptown, mingling with the Judges in their barracks and joining in with the gossip of the Protectors.

The next instant he changes the costume once again. Clad in his Chronicler suit he penetrates the cargo terminal of the Cluster. But even in Level 1 he has to exercise caution. Decoy plays it safe and only uses his fingerprint to access the terminals, rather than his barcode. An old Shutter trick that registers him as a Bit within the security systems of the Cluster. An advantage that Nullify himself once established when he darkened Decoy's score and turned his apprentice into a Shutter.

Now it's up to Decoy to locate his creator and lure him out of the shadows. But when he tries to access Nullify's data he suddenly finds over-written annotations, created by the Fragment Alias. They lead him to a blackened section of the Static Stream where the hidden operations of the Scalar are obfuscated behind a firewall. Only the most recent note is not locked with a password. Decoy takes a look at the file.

"Jehammed is Aries // Aries exists only through Jehammed's Will // Jehammed's Will is the key to the Ark."

INVENTORY

STREAM DRONE

Eico is a spy drone that Decoy has recoded. In addition to its limited learning abilities, Decoy has added rudimentary speech functions. The drone is palm sized and can record images and sounds that Decoy can extract using the microsensors of his opticalizer. Eico is Decoy's eye in the sky, his distant early warning system and his only companion.



ALIAS

In the hierarchy of the Fragments one iron rule reigns supreme. Chance alone determines who will be the bearer of the Alias Helmet. Whoever this lot falls upon must fulfill the role of the Alias, or face losing all privileges within the Cult. To refuse this task is akin to high treason, and as a result the score of the Fragment will irrevocably be set to zero.

This time, fate chose the Fragment Lambda as the next Alias. As the bearer of the Helmet, he was given total access to the heart of the Static Stream. It has been years since he last physically left the Cluster. Instead, he moves through a mirror realm in which he manipulates and examines data as easily as others breathe.

Alias drifts through the three-dimensional image of Justitian with the help of the visor. Augmented systems allow him to open passageways in the digital space of the Stream which have forever been denied to others. He can control and override modules of individual Chroniclers, retrieve their movement patterns, isolate monitoring sensors fitted into the Uptown wall and focus the camera lenses on suspicious individuals.

Within the mirror realm he has access to the entirety of all stored data of Justitian's citizens. Anyone applying for citizenship papers crosses the secret facial recognition barrier installed by the Chroniclers at the Office of Locality. Their features are scanned down to their individual pores and the images deposited within the Central Cluster. Archetypal symbols hover over each of these entries, characterizing the mind of a person and collecting their personality traits. Sleepers can be exposed within the digital space through their encoded nanite currents. Their transponders react to the impulses emitted by Alias and leave fractal footprints that the Fragment can narrow down to a specific urban area. He shares his discoveries with Eliza, who ensures that such infiltrators are eliminated.

ROLE PLAY

Alias' daily grind consists of deflecting the hacking attempts on the security systems of the Cluster. As the keeper of the Static Stream, he controls the central network and defends it against intruders. Since Exit C-3 fell to the Palers, their Cyclopes have been trying to crash the system and prepare for invasion. So far, Alias has been able to avert any of these attacks by overwriting vulnerable areas with new passwords in time or decoupling a damaged sector for a brief period. However, the balance of power has suddenly shifted. Someone is accessing the system with knowledge on par to that of the Fragments. A Needle. Corium.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Hermit, Chronicler, Rank 5: Fragment
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 2 INT: 5 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Melee 4D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 5D, Conduct 4D, Leadership 5D, Artifact Lore 10D, Engineering 11D, Focus 10D, Legends 7D, Medicine 7D, Science 10D, Cunning 11D, Deception 7D, Domination 7D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 9D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 6, Network 4, Renown 3, Resources 6, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Full access to Static Stream (+6D on all INT Skill rolls)
POTENTIALS: Y2K 2, Child of the Stream 3, Mind of the Machine 2
INITIATIVE: 9D / 20 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Shocker, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 16, Dazed (8)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 9D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, First impression (+1D); Source Lvl. 3; Discharge Lvl. 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Alias helmet; Squadron of remote controlled Stream Drones (4 units buzzing in a 10m radius around him, +4D INS+Perception. While they are active, Alias cannot be caught unawares)

BLIND SPOT

The constant barrage of attacks on the network, the regular upgrades and maintenance, the shifting of sectors and finally the emergence of the Needle: the constant stress on Alias' mind has made him blind to the dangers inside the Cult. Nullify has long since taken advantage of the situation and gained access to the secret Stream partitions used by the Fragments while manipulating Alias to hide his own covert operations behind insurmountable barriers.

Bit by bit, Nullify was able to sift through data that was never meant for him, relay information to the Needles in East Borca, and advance his own agenda. He knows that Impulse is in the possession of the Fulgur...

INVENTORY

ALIAS HELMET

Ever since the Chroniclers made their exodus from Cathedral City, they have been compiling a digital mirror of Justitian inside the Static Stream, containing all of the Cult's collective data. In real-time, the digital landscape expands and is constantly updated with new footage from camera sensors, intercepted radio messages, recorded correspondences, and scanned fingerprints. Nowhere else in the world is there a database of such magnitude. With a mere gesture, Alias can navigate every building in the city, jump from one district to the next, query information about registered residents, black out Exits, or discharge Source Modules of other Chroniclers operating within the city.

However, the constant hacking attacks on the operating system of the Cluster cause structural damage. For an attacker to overburden the system (4) successful Combination rolls of INT+Engineering (5) and INT+Science (6) are required, over a period of (5) Rounds. With each successful overload, Alias receives (1) Trauma. If the system is damaged at the same time by multiple attacks and the Trauma Damage pool is filled, Alias' brain conflagrates in the course of the deadly feedback.

In such a scenario, the Fragments would have no choice but to immediately appoint a new Alias to secure the Cluster - leaving them undefended for a short while.



IMPULSE

Man was not created to ever compete against the divine precision of the Stream. His mind and foresight are limited, his mortal shell nothing but a malfunctioning and corroding neural network trapped within an unpredictable operating system, prone to making erroneous decisions of microscopic size that lead to the most fatal chain reactions. Impulse committed one such error decades ago when he divided the leadership of the Cluster in two, sending one half of the Fragments across the Reaper's Blow in search for a solution to activate the Last Server. In wise foresight, the Bygones had hidden it on the Moon. However, the Cluster lacked the capacity to ping the Server. Something else was required. Needle Towers. Impulse had located these monumental megawatt-scale antennas in the dense forests of Eastern Borca. They were the bait he needed to rid himself of his competition.

The Fragments selected for the mission were carefully chosen. Each of them challenged Impulse's path towards the reanimation of the Stream. Internally, a power struggle raged over how the Chroniclers should go about the task. Should the Stream be ramped up in a controlled environment throughout several stages, or should all systems be rebooted at once at the risk of playing into the hands of Project Tannhäuser?

Impulse assured the 16 Fragments that the final decision could be made once the Needle Towers were under dominion of the Cluster.

And thus began the downfall. Impulse had forged a secret pact with Gileabod Ruben Abraham, the ruler of Osman, to destroy his rivals as soon as they stepped foot on Eastern Borcan soil. In return, Impulse would falsify the city books and deposit settlement claims for the Jehammedans in Justitian. The gate would be blown wide open for Osman to establish new territory in the Protectorate. All that, for a meager price: The death of 16 Fragments.

No one suspected that four of them would survive. No one foresaw what would become of them. Impulse's betrayal turned them into Needles.

ROLE PLAY

When Impulse rises from the Cluster and descends into Downtown, time stands still. Agents clinging to their Shockers orbit him, and hired Hellvetics carry loaded Trailblazers at the ready. Nervousness hangs in the air like electricity and people drop their daily work to catch a glimpse of the sublime Fragment.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Mentor, Chronicler, Rank 5: Fragment
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 2 CHA: 4 INT: 6 PSY: 6 INS: 6
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 3D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 5D, Leadership 8D, Artifact Lore 12D, Engineering 12D, Focus 12D, Legends 12D, Medicine 8D, Science 10D, Cunning 10D, Domination 10D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 12D, Empathy 10D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 10D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 6, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Full access to Static Stream (+6D on all INT Skill rolls)
POTENTIALS: Download 3, Upload 3, Tesla 3, Nervous Breakdown 3, Child of the Stream 3, Defragment 3, Fractal Memory 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 20 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Vocoder Phalanx, Engineering 12D + Domination 10D, Distance: 100m, Damage 1+T Trauma, Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°-360°)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Tesla), Brawl 8D; Ranged active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 12D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Chronicler suit with composite reinforcement, Armor 5, Bulletproof (8), First Impression (+2D), 2x Source Lvl 3 (6), Dome of rays Lvl. 3, Discharge Lvl. 3, Greenlight Lvl. 3, Fumor Lvl. 2, Screamer
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/24, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 2 Fuel cell Sources (effective Source level doubled); Stream drone; Triglaw's bug; Fulgur

ABATON

Impulse has held the future of Justitian in his hands for decades as one of the remaining 16 Fragments in the city. It was his design that turned the Needles into the archenemies of the Cluster. This one devastating decision put him in Triglaw's crosshairs. The Three-faced One revealed to the Fragment that the Needles, far away from the Cluster's influence, had come closer to their goal than ever before. In Triglaw's memetic chamber, the Abaton, the Fragment was forced to learn the true extent of the consequences of his actions: a restart of the Stream was imminent. Project Tannhäuser would emerge as the ruling ideology from this chaos, drowning the world in blood and slavery. Only one missing component held the Needles back. Electricity.

As a punishment for his failure, Triglaw fired a bug into Impulse's larynx that has been monitoring his every breath from afar. Impulse can not whisper a word that is not recorded by Triglaw. Nothing would delight Impulse more than to finally free himself from the Marauder's control.

INVENTORY

FULGUR

Impulse holds the artifact that the Needles are looking for in vain. The Fulgur, a nuclear reactor shrunk to the size of a palm, which provides enough energy to kickstart the Needle Towers and would also allow for the Carbon to breach all the way to Baikonur. Zander, the Scrapper, came across the artifact by accident and sold it to the Fragment. However, Impulse is unaware of the secrets that lie dormant within the Fulgur.

VOCODER PHALANX

Using the Vocoder Phalanx, Impulse is able to control all of the Cluster's megaphones, as well as Vocoders of other Chroniclers, and can blanket his enemies with a thunderstorm of a thousand voices. Impulse can access every loudspeaker within 100 meters and use it as an additional amplifier, bursting the windows of entire city blocks or making his word heard throughout Justitian.



MEMBRANE

Every defense system has a quirk, every security gate a predictable code, and Membrane cracks them all. When the Chroniclers recruited him, he was but a mere shabby tick feasting on the stupidity of rich citizens. Even so, he solved every single one of their logic tests with ease, and that aroused their interest.

The Chroniclers invited him to the top level of the Cluster. They had a wagon loaded with dozens of defense mechanisms: auto-firing turrets, camera drones, and coded computing systems waiting inside.

Membrane didn't even break a sweat. The record time he set astounded the present Streamers. They wanted him instantly. Better to have Membrane in the Cult than to see him recruited by the enemy.

Membrane agreed. For years he was tasked with reinforcing the Chroniclers' defenses. His mentors had him develop passwords, take precautions, and run security checks for the entire Cluster. Membrane went about his work with passion, but once all the upgrades were completed the Chroniclers wanted to dispose of him. The Cluster couldn't risk keeping someone who knew so much alive.

Shutters were activated to ambush Membrane, scorch his barcode, and make his naked corpse disappear into the Defiler Streets. But the attack ended in disaster. Membrane detonated a grenade he carried for emergencies and catapulted the assassins into the afterlife, although he had to sacrifice his right arm to do so. Badly wounded, he fled the scene and went into hiding. A year went by before Nullify unearthed the hacker in Tech-Central. The Scalar saw the potential in Membrane, and sympathised with his will to survive. While the Cluster had erased the Zero from its memory, he would be of great use to Nullify. He equipped the defector with sanctioned technology and gave him a new task. The Needles in East Borca would never enter into an open communication with the Cluster, the risk of Fragments locating their bases and infecting their systems with viruses would be too high. But a Zero outside the Cluster's mainframe would be able to contact them and make them aware of Nullify's intentions.

ROLE PLAY

Membrane's heart is blackened from hurt and betrayal. He still cannot believe how the Cluster took advantage of his abilities and deceived him. He would do anything to get payback on his former masters, on equal terms. As the only medium between Nullify and Corium he has finally been given a chance to initiate his revenge.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Chronicler, Rank 0: Zero
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3(8) AGI: 5 CHA: 2 INT: 4 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D (11D), Force 5D (11D), Stamina 4D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 9D, Artifact Lore 8D, Engineering 8D, Legends 6D, Medicine 6D, Science 8D, Cunning 9D, Deception 8D, Dominate 9D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 9D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 8D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 3, Resources 3, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Access to Nullify's arsenal of sanctioned technology
POTENTIALS: Y2K 3, Back Door 2, Nova 2, White Noise 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Cybernetic Arm, Brawl 12D (+1S), Distance 1m, Damage 7 and Blunt or Dazed (5);
EMP-Pulsor, Projectiles 8D, Distance 10m, Internal Cell (1000Qt), Mag. 3, Dazed (5), Special
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 12D (+1S); Ranged active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Shutter suit, Armor 2; Source Lvl. 3; Discharge Lvl. 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 2 Stun grenades; Interface deck (Used to hack into the Static Stream, +2D to all INT+Engineering and INT+Science rolls when using electronics)

ADAPTER

Membrane overrides the Exits through which Corium moves. Relentlessly, he hacks into the central nervous system of the Static Stream, overwriting the IP addresses stored in the tattooed barcodes and allowing the Needle to use his obsolete Fragment tattoo to gain access to the Underground anywhere in the city. Membrane knows all the security systems of the Cluster by heart, since he designed them all. At this point, only Alias prevents him from doing even more damage. But the Zero is ferocious, continuously attacking and unerringly turning life into hell on earth for the Fragment.

INVENTORY

CYBERNETIC ARM

Nullify provided the Zero with a cybernetic arm, a prosthesis constructed from AMSUMO joints and husks, which he rescaled and adapted to Membrane's proportions. The arm has dozens of ports that connect Membrane to thinking machines and establish a physical connection to the Stream. Through the interfaces on his arm, the Zero is able to charge his modules and power his bodyworn electronics. The cybernetic arm never tires and gives Membrane a BOD value of (8).

EMP-PULSOR

The EMP-Pulsor fires a hissing blue flash. If Membrane aims at a Chronicler, the electromagnetic salvo discharges all of the opponent's electronics at once. The Pulsor is thus safer than an EMP grenade, which would carry the risk of potentially affecting Membrane as well. However, the weapon requires a massive supply of energy and can not fire more than (3) salvos before Membrane must recharge it. For this he has to connect his arm to a power outlet, as the Pulsor needs to be directly connected to the charging cables of Membrane's cybernetics. The Pulsor takes (6) Rounds to fully charge, and the Zero will not be able to act while it charges.



NULLIFY

The Recombination Group had a serene goal in mind – to turn mankind into gods. They were the masters of the universe and the impact they left behind would outlast time itself.

Nullify watched the Fragments within the Cluster. They were nothing more than encrusted and distorted reflections of the Bygones, prisoners of the Static Stream. Cowards who gloated over catching a spark in their hands instead of wielding the lightning bolt.

As a Scalar, the world was at his whim. He steered. Destroyed. Rebuilt. Eroded. Diffused. Back and forth. His Cult brothers would never get a chance to trace it back to him. He began exchanging passwords, obscuring zones within the Stream, erasing scores, upgrading his own, unlocking secrets, and generating Shutters. He condensed the particles of his power, and covered Europe with a network of Fuses. With but a push of his finger, he crashed towering structures and studied the results.

His influence left chaotic, swirling patterns in its wake, ready to be solved like complex polynomial functions. He was so very close to unveiling the truth. Meaning formed from the pools of chaos. And then there was light. Nullify finally grasped what had caused the Stream to collapse. He understood the 2^16 Phenomenon. Triglaw had released the virus. The Three-faced One had toppled Project Tannhäuser by his own design. His signature was insultingly obvious. Triglaw's malware stuck to all sectors of the Stream like congealed pus, leaving traces of a three-faced grimace within the fractal cocoon. Wherever Nullify looked, Triglaw grinned back at him mockingly. That was, until the Scalar saw through the implications of it all. The Marauder was nothing more than an obstacle, existing solely to challenge Nullify's ingenuity. And the Scalar burned for conflict. Covertly, he acquired access to areas of the Static Stream that were subject to the authority of the Fragments. He wanted to isolate his opponents, most importantly the slave of the Marauder, Impulse. Nullify would eradicate him first, and seize his artifacts. All that needed to be done was to lure the Needles back to Justitian. Membrane was the perfect interface for this task. The Zero relayed Nullify's encrypted messages to the Needle Towers and fed the renegade Chroniclers in East Borca with top secret information siphoned from the Cluster. Finally, one of them answered.

ROLE PLAY

Like a god, Nullify is a helmsman viewing His Cult as a collection of binary units, ready to be programmed. He uses them to impose His will on the world.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Heretic, Chronicler, Rank 5: Scalar
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 6 PSY: 6 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Force 5D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 8D, Expression 7D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 8D, Artifact Lore 11D, Engineering 11D, Focus 12D, Legends 10D, Medicine 8D, Science 11D, Cunning 12D, Deception 12D, Domination 11D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 10D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 7D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 6, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 6
POTENTIALS: Fractal Memory 3, Back Door 3, Dead End 3, Mind of the Machine 3, Y2K 2
INITIATIVE: 9D / 24 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Coil Gun, Projectiles 10D, Distance 100/400, Mag. 100, Damage 10, Capacitor banks (Every 2 shots, must take (1) Action to recharge, occupying 1 level of Source module), Armor Piercing, Piercing (6), Sensitive
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D; Ranged active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Graphene Battle Suit, Armor 7, Bulletproof (10), Sealed (+2S); Source Lvl. 3 (9), Discharge Lvl. 3, Greenlight Lvl. 3, Fumor Lvl. 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/20, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Countless Sun Disks; Solar Cell Cloak (effective Source level tripled by constant recharging, as long as there is sufficient solar radiation)

DARK BUSINESS

Nullify's black ops are a symphony of dirty regime change, assassination, and the instrumentalization of innocents to further his goals. Years ago, he circulated fake Drafts in the Protectorate to test how fragile the Cluster's financial system was. Out of Justitian he orchestrated the assault on Toulon in collaboration with the Frankan Cluster, a proxy war initiated to measure the collective clout of agitated Scrappers.

But this much coincidence is unconventional. What the Scalar did not account for was that his operations would result in the death of two of the Bear Brothers. The emergence of the Third, with all his ravenous hunger for revenge, is a problem. Steelbeam is a madman and his appearance threatens to draw the attention of the Cluster in the direction of the Scalar for the first time. Nullify must eliminate the source of danger without making himself vulnerable. He will have to frame Steelbeam, so the Cave Bear can be thrown to the Judges as mere fodder.

INVENTORY

FREE SPIRIT EQUIPMENT

With his tampered Score, the Scalar has been able to access the most powerful equipment accumulated over decades of artifact trading. A graphene combat suit from the City Wars is as much a part of it as his solar-cell-reinforced cloak that absorbs sunlight. He is also in possession of more sun discs than any Paler has laid eyes on in years.

COIL GUN

Nullify's weapon is a coil gun, a remnant of the City Wars and one of the last of its kind. The ammunition fired by the gun consists of cobalt-platinum needles, exactly 1 millimeter in diameter.

The power of this weapon is legendary. The tiny projectile pierces through bulletproof vests and masonry, and even the steel cladding of a Surge Tank does not stand a chance. With the right oculars, or polarization goggles, Nullify would even be able to shoot an enemy through a wall.



CORIUM

2563. The year of the great betrayal. As one of 16 Fragments, Corium was chosen to cross the Reaper's Blow and conquer the Needle Towers. However, in the east, in the land of endless forests and uncharted regions, everything changed. Corium and his comrades lost their souls. They became Needles.

Now he has returned to his homeland. Aged. Hardened. A whole lifetime of deprivation and loss lies behind him. The Cluster took everything from him. It was only his mind that they could not break. Corium barely recognizes the city anymore. The streets are still familiar to him, but the echo carries a different tune. Time is an ugly lover.

The Fragments betrayed him. The Chroniclers were terrified of the resurrection of the Stream, despite this being the one and only goal the Cult had dedicated itself to throughout the centuries. Their entire existence was based on this objective.

The Needles didn't share such pathetic fears. It was the only purpose that made them persevere through this worthless existence on Earth. Only the Stream possessed the power to redeem humanity from its banishment.

The Needles have spent decades in exile, plotting their final act, specifying the physical projections that would lead to success. The only missing piece was the source of energy to initiate the transformation and send the Carbon on its final journey. The Fulgur. Nullify revealed to the Needles who had claimed the artifact: Impulse, the Deceiver. Corium understood that fate had chosen him to face his past and rip the artifact from the clutches of the Cluster. Only with the energy of the Fulgur would the Needles be able to ignite the Needle Towers and take the route to Baikonur.

There, in the last pristine Sanctum of the Recombination Group, the Ark of Jehammed awaits its discovery, biding its time for the moment it leaves this wretched planet behind to begin its journey to the stars.

ROLE PLAY

Corium has only contempt for his Cult. He remembers Justitian from his life as a Fragment, uses the same Exits, embarrasses the Chroniclers in their own territory. The Cluster fears nothing more than an opponent who dispels their abilities and beats them at their own game. But Corium is far more than a mere copy. He is an artificer whose spirit is ahead of its time and who knows only one enemy. Death itself.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Visionary, Chronicler, Rank X: Needle
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 5 CHA: 5 INT: 6 PSY: 5 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 7D, Force 8D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 9D, Mobility 8D, Stealth 9D, Conduct 8D, Expression 10D, Leadership 11D, Negotiation 8D, Artifact Lore 12D, Engineering 12D, Focus 12D, Legends 10D, Medicine 9D, Science 11D, Cunning 10D, Deception 11D, Domination 10D, Faith 11D, Reaction 9D, Empathy 10D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 8D
BACKGROUND: Allies 3, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Schism (Chroniclers suffer -3D on first Initiative roll)
POTENTIALS: Unyielding 3, Defragment 3, Download 3, Upload 3, Moving Mountains 3, Brainwave 3, Could be Worse 3, Number Cruncher 3
INITIATIVE: 9D / 24 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Streamer Glove, Brawl 9D, Distance 1m, E-Cube (120Qt), Mag. 30, Dazed (5); Phonon Oscillator, Distance 10m, Area Damage (45°), Biometrically coded (8), Energy weapon (Permanently drains 1 Source module level (480Qt) per (5) Rounds of use)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 11D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Needle Suit, Armor 5, Bulletproof (8), Insulated; 2x Source Lvl. 3; Fumor Lvl. 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 4/22, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Vantablack cloak; Handful of potent Bion cusps

INVENTORY

VANTABLACK CLOAK

On mental command Corium can align the carbon nanotubes that make up his cloak and merge with shadows. The Vantablack of his cloak completely absorbs light, causing Corium's outline to be swallowed up by the darkness. He is invisible to the naked eye and can only be detected with a successful roll on INS+Perception (6).

PHONON OSCILLATOR

Corium's Streamer Glove is equipped with a built-in phonon oscillator. A technical marvel that enables the Needle to alter the atomic structure of his target by breaking down the cohesion of its crystalline lattice using precisely tuned quantum emissions.

By bombarding a crystalline material with phonons of the opposite phase to the local phonons, the atomic bonds in the element are weakened or even shattered. To use the phonon oscillator, Corium must sacrifice (1) Round to tune it toward the targeted element. The following scenarios are possible:

SETTING 1: A specific metal element (copper, gold, iron). First Round: The internal temperature of the metal drops drastically, and a thin layer of dust covers the surface.

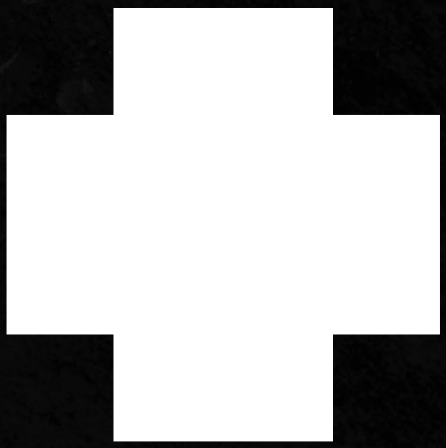
Consecutive Rounds: The metallic object becomes brittle and breaks down into dust, layer by layer. The target takes (10) Structural Damage per Round, or (5) if part of a compound (steel, brass).

SETTING 2: Any compound of a metal and a nonmetal (glass, quartz, sand, salt). First Round: The targeted element vibrates and condenses, glass becomes milky and cloudy, quartz turns opaque, grains of sand vibrate.

Consecutive Rounds: The crystalline structure detonates. Explosion Damage (1) to (3) if glass windows and sandbags are affected, (20) if a heavy-duty salt container in Downtown is detonated.

SETTING 3: Calcium. First Round: A strange, floury taste forms in the mouth of a victim.

Consecutive Rounds: Teeth and bones of the victim lose their density and shatter. Damage (1) per Round (Fatal, Armor Piercing). Only bone or chitin armor protects against the devastating effects.



HELLVETICS

A LOOK FROM OUTSIDE

Justitian is an emerging power, led by the expansionist aspirations of the Judiciary, autistic tech gurus with a fetish for masks, and complacent physicians with a messiah complex. It is better to have someone on site to keep an eye on the situation, the Corps Command argues, and follows their long tradition of sending ambassadors and troops to these northern climes. This serves to fulfill several tasks at once. First, their presence alone reminds the local rulers of the plain fact that there are powerful Cults who remain yet unaffected by their spell. Second, to secure the supply of the Alpine Fortress through a wide range of agreements. Third, to provide Hellvetica's troops some respite from military service.

Despite its size, Justitian holds little excitement for the Hellvetics. This is due to the fact that most of the Protectorate was pacified decades ago. There simply isn't much to do. Instead the permanent representatives bark orders commanding Hellvetics to the front as mercenaries. There, they will secure the Protectorate's borders and prove their strategic abilities.

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

Ambassador is just a kind way to say dumb idiot, a Grenadier grunts as he shoulders his Trailblazer and sets his view on Uptown lying in the morning haze. The six man squad behind him follows his gaze. Up there in the Ambassador Quarter, three of those stupid babblers reside: Subaltern Bloch and his two adjutants, trapped in an endless battle against impending boredom.

For the Hellvetics stationed in Downtown, the concept of "ambassadorhood" is the nail in the coffin of all military progress. They joke around as they march down the Stallion Streets, if one has to resort to using words it's just because their guns have failed to do the job.

Despite the ridicule, the position of Gustav Bloch is indispensable for Justitian's foreign policy. For years the Chroniclers have relied on the Subaltern's benevolence as they badgered him to keep the Neolibyans out of Borca. Since the destruction of Aquitaine, pressure has been intensified. The Vocoders rattle in unison: "African people bring misfortune." Bloch can't wrap his head around the

hysterical drama; the Chroniclers refuse to show him proof of their claims and yet the Cluster vehemently insists its perspective is correct. The cooperation between the Alpine Fortress and Justitian can only be maintained if the Corps Command agrees to prevent the invaders encroaching from the Purgan border from advancing any further.

MERCENARIES

With any great gathering of people comes a lot of mercenary work. In fact, in addition to the permanent representatives of Hellvetica, some soldiers whose clients can afford to pay for a Hellvetic's service are on a mission of their own within the Protectorate.

These specialists hunt deserters, plan campaigns with Spitalian platoons towards Parasite, or provide fire support for the Judges along the borders.

SECURITY

There are places that need special security. Mobilis is one of them. As Justitian's power generator, the Cluster grasps this city like a dying man holding on to life. Nothing must ever happen to Mobilis. The Chroniclers have been terrified of all imaginable scenarios for quite some time. A Liquan raid, consisting of a coalition between Exalters and Anabaptists, counts among the possibilities just as much as a potential threat by a lone terrorist who wants to blow up the power plant. As such, the Cluster has issued the highest resource level in its history to permanently station Hellvetics in Mobilis. The unit, led by Corporal Altamira, is one of the largest divisions ever deployed by the Alpine Fortress in foreign territory and secures the perimeter around Mobilis.

DEFENSE

Even the staunchly neutral leaders of Hellvetica are aware that a weak Protectorate will have consequences for the Alpine Fortress. The Clan Wars are observed with much concern. In order to act preemptively, a Hellvetic squadron was transferred to Siege to assist the Judges in defending their most important border town and delivering vital artillery to the field. Here the Hellvetic's hard-boiled dogs of war spend their winters, turning their cannons to the south and firing blindly into the hills in hopes of dispersing an approaching vanguard of Phosphorites and blowing them into the wind.

But the supply has stalled. Along the road linking Bassham, Cathedral City, and A235, sudden raids by the Enemoi cause unforeseen trouble. These vandals want only one thing, Hellvetic equipment, with which they can in turn resupply their own troops. In an altercation with a savage Clan the Hellvetics have little to worry about, but the Enemoi are different. Well equipped and prepared, they attack small units and loot what they can.

GENIE TROOPS

For special tasks the Protectors call upon the Genie troops of Hellvetica. If there is anyone in the world knowledgeable about bridge construction, tunnel excavation, and structural analysis, it's them.

The Judiciary relies solely on Hellvetica's competence and cleanup work after the Crack plowed a swath of destruction through Tech-Central and laid open shafts that lead directly into the Underground. But the Cluster has been nothing short of distrustful of the work of the Genies, and has spent three years delaying the excavations and reconstruction.

DESERTERS

They exist. Hellvetics who spit on the Doctrine and go rogue. They move north to find the amenities they were denied on the cold mountain peaks of the Alps. As a rule of thumb, this mostly concerns thighs spread wide and a throat full of Burn. But Justitian is not a good place to disappear. Too many stalwart comrades lurking in the city. And so the deserters are drawn to remote regions, Born, or Liqua, where no one is looking for them. Life on the sidelines makes them no less useful for local rulers however. To call upon a deserted Hellvetic as a confidant or bodyguard is to feel secure and protected like no other.

The most legendary of these deserters is undoubtedly Gram, a burnt-out P26 that fought on the side of the Raven of Ferropol. When the Judges put an end to that drug infested hellhole Gram managed to escape, and since then no one has seen or heard anything of him. According to recent findings of the Judiciary, he supposedly still resides somewhere in the Protectorate. By now, the bounty on his head has risen to 50,000 Drafts.


II
III
IV

GUSTAV BLOCH

Time feels like it's standing still. Bloch keeps checking the stupid watch the Chroniclers gave him when he took his position as an ambassador in Justitian eight years ago, but as usual, the hands aren't moving. The batteries have long since gone flat. Whenever he gets bored in a meeting, Bloch gives the watch a shake, trying to get the hands – and maybe time – moving again. But the minutes stretch out, longer and longer. His eyes wander from Judges to Chroniclers and back again. What losers, Bloch thinks, with their endless votes and their interminable negotiation of even the most mundane of details. Nobody here actually gets anything done. Everyone's just trying to maintain the status quo. Most problems could be solved quite easily if someone just took responsibility for once.

As a representative of the interests of Hellvetica, Bloch was sent out from the Alpine Fortress to take post in Justitian. If the Subaltern had known the bureaucratic nightmare that awaited him there, he would have refused the transfer and gladly relished his time in a prison camp. At least they get to break rocks.

Then, two months ago, things suddenly changed. Kranzler, Provost of the Preservists, invited Bloch to a meeting at his villa. Bloch liked the principled Spitalian – he found the man's self-confidence and penchant for quick action appealing. Kranzler proposed an alliance between their Cults. In return, Bloch would put him in contact with the Corps Command. The Subaltern prodded a bit to try to find out what the Provost had to say, but Kranzler ignored his questions, instead playing Bygone music.

Since then, Bloch hasn't stopped wondering about the encounter. When he returned from the villa, he made a comprehensive report of Kranzler's request and transmitted it home immediately. He has yet to hear back. Bloch is confused. As a rule, the leadership responds to his inquiries within a week. He is beginning to suspect that his report has been intercepted — but by whom? Who would want to prevent Kranzler from having a mediation with the Hellvetics?

ROLE PLAY

Bloch rarely smiles. Boredom lines his facial features. Though he has managed to preserve his sense of honor and decorum, his years spent in the ambassador's post have caused his cynicism to bloom. When negotiating with Judges or Chroniclers, his patience quickly wears thin. Only around his peers or in the presence of Preservists can he overcome his bitterness and become a pleasant conversational partner.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mentor, Hellvetics, Rank 4: Subaltern
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 7D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 7D, Expression 6D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 6D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 8D, Legends 5D, Medicine 4D, Science 5D, Cunning 6D, Deception 6D, Domination 7D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D, Primal 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 5, Renown 3, Resources 5, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Senior negotiator (+2D to social interactions with members of other Cults in Justitian); Bodyguard (Grenadier assigned as permanent personal protection)
POTENTIALS: Assault 2, Morale 1
INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Telescopic Baton, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Blunt, Camo (3C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Reinforced Subaltern uniform with rank badges, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Microfilm hidden in pocket watch revealing Triglaw's secret Alpine Fortress passages; Tools and code interface for the maintenance of Bastille's Heavy Duty modules; Notepad holding his thoughts on alternatives to the status quo

REPORTS

Bloch's suspicions are correct. His report to the Alpine Fortress was indeed intercepted, but he does not yet know that Oswald Keszler is the man responsible. The Chronicler Echo is in thrall to Kezler's memetics. The Hippocrat planted in him an order to block all outbound radio transmissions containing Kranzler's name or title, and forward them to him for inspection until his investigation was concluded.

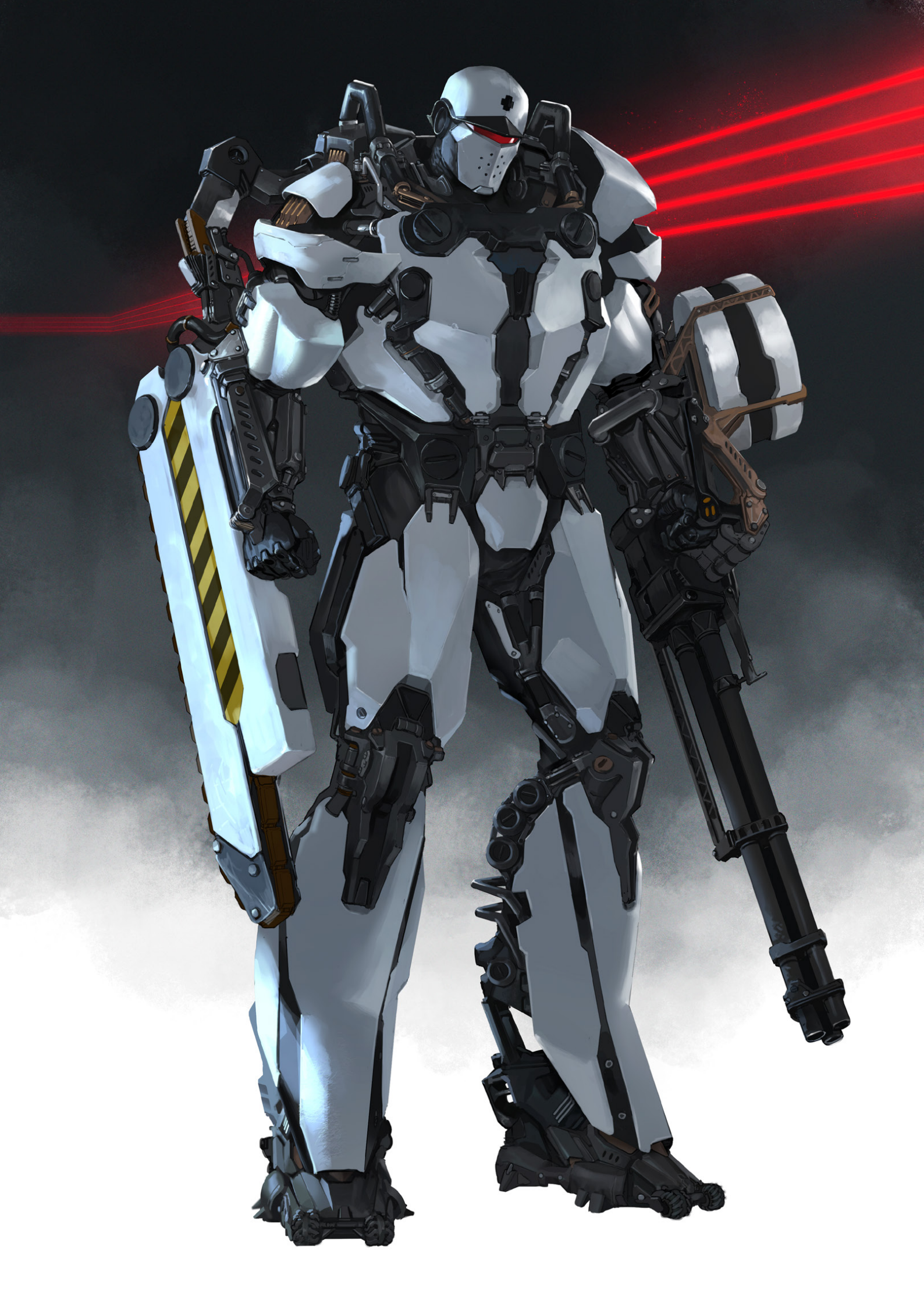
Meanwhile, Bloch becomes more and more restless. In order to avoid dealing with the Judges and Chroniclers, he has decided to try to send a written report to his superiors. His eyes fall on the ambassador's villa of Wakili – maybe the Neolibyans and their nimble caravans can help this time.

POCKET WATCH

The purpose of the strange watch given to him by Impulse such a long time ago has remained unclear to Bloch, even years after the fact. A weird cartoon mouse, with its eyes opened wide, grins from the watch-face. What was the Fragment trying to tell him with such a gift? Is it some kind of prank? A puzzle? An underhanded insult?

It would never occur to Bloch to try to take apart and fix the ugly thing. The quiet ticking of the hands would undoubtedly annoy him. But if he were to take it apart, all his questions would be answered: inside the tiny case a roll of microfilm is hidden. On it are plans detailing all the secret passages and hidden entrances that Triglaw has been using for decades to plunder the Alpine Fortress. The watch also contains a list of collaborators who have joined forces under Adjutant Slabon to support the Marauder.

Impulse himself is unable to warn Bloch, as the Fragment's every breath is being personally monitored by Triglaw. The Chronicler still hopes, perhaps in vain, that the Subaltern will discover the secret messages contained in the watch and manage to defang Triglaw's treacherous network before it's too late.



BASTILLE

Morvant Control Terminal, at the foot of the Frankan Alps, was Bastille's life. Ducal was just a stone's throw away, and so he spent much of his off-duty time right there, right in that cozy place between Purgan wine and polygyny. He knew it well. Over the years he had made numerous friendships with the resident Apocalyptics, and now he waved them across the border as they trafficked their drugs past the Control Terminal.

For a while, Bastille was worried that his operation was on the verge of being detected by the P26 Cadre stationed at the Carnest Intelligence Post, and the hot goods being traced back to him at Morvant. The Cadre was already on Bastille's trail, and the situation was precarious, but a fortuitous troop movement toward Justitian saved him at the last second. The Chroniclers had hired the Hellvetics to provide four Sentinels equipped with Heavy-Duty Harnesses for rubble clearing and security operations in the city.

For months now, Bastille and his squadron have guarded the Crack, a kilometer-wide fenced-off area of the city that suddenly collapsed three years earlier, killing hundreds and leaving thousands homeless. Bastille doesn't understand what caused the district to collapse, or really cares for that matter; instead, he focuses on his work. Justitian has offered him a unique opportunity to get his life back in order and put his past behind him.

But the memories of those long Ducal nights, full of orgies and drinking, don't want to fade. After dropping his Heavy-Duty Harness off in Uptown for a nightly recharge, he often roams the city for hours, exploring the neighborhoods, lost in his thought, trying to make sense of things. He misses the dark pleasures that the Apocalyptics provided. A few weeks ago, he dared to venture into the Flotsam for the first time. As soon as he entered, everything felt right again...

ROLE PLAY

Bastille is rarely short of a quick quip. In his mind, the Judges aren't much more than a simpering neighborhood watch, and the Chroniclers are hardly more bearable. His affection lies with the Apocalyptics of the city and the Apocalyptics alone – his only source of relief from daily routine. What he doesn't realize, however, is that he has begun to slowly drift back into old habits.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Protector, Hellvetics, Rank 3: Sentinel
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 (20) AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 7D, Force 8D, Melee 8D, Stamina 9D, Toughness 9D, Crafting 5D, Navigation 9D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 10D, Stealth 5D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 6D, Legends 5D, Cunning 6D, Deception 6D, Domination 8D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 4D, Perception 5D, Primal 5D, Survival 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 2, Network 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Walking Fortress (+2D Domination when wearing Heavy Duty Harness)
POTENTIALS: Heavy Duty 3, Forced March 3, Morale 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Heavy Duty Chainsaw, Melee 8D, Distance 2m, Damage 12, Sensitive, Terrifying (3), Impact (1T);
Heavy Duty Gatling, Projectiles 10D, Distance 50/200m, Damage 12, Mag. 150, Salvoes (15), Ammunition lock (10)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Heavy Duty Harness (TANK), Armor 7, Massive (9), Fire Resistant (8)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Servo stabilizers (no Handling penalties for mounted weapons or equipment); Ammunition Drums holding 5,000 rounds

AMONG DUST RIDERS

Bastille speaks Purgan fluently, and the Dust Riders at the port remind him of home, a warm feeling he has long missed. He's become comfortable with them and has spent weeks (and plenty of money) playing cards, getting drunk, and sleeping around. He doesn't notice that the Dust Riders are playing him, lulling him into a false sense of security and friendship. All they want is the authentication code for his Heavy-Duty Harness and intend to steal it as soon as the opportunity presents itself, and not just because it's worth a fortune: in the hands of the Dust Riders, the mighty Harness would turn the tide of their bloody turf war, allowing them to defeat the Carrion Birds once and for all.

HEAVY-DUTY HARNESS

Bastille's Heavy-Duty Harness is a masterpiece of engineering. Its servo-motors and heavy metal plating transform the wearer into a mobile fortress. At full power, its 40,000-watt chainsaw can cut through solid granite, and its rotating gun turret is equipped with 5,000 rounds of high-speed ammunition.

The BOD value of the Harness's wearer increases to (20) for Heavy-Duty activities. Fully charged, the Harness can function for twelve hours before it needs to be plugged in again.

Bloch maintains Bastille's Harness. To keep the Chroniclers and Judges at ease, he has programmed the Harness with a limit of ten shots a month. However, the limiter could be removed if someone short-circuited the Harness while it was in standby mode.


02

PAUL GLAUSER

Paul's job was simple: secure the Crack, recruit the Scrapper crews, and oversee the reconstruction of the collapsed district. But his clients, the Chroniclers, are concealing details from him. Why all the secrecy? Why the carefully guarded locks and the handpicked staff? What is buried down there? What are the Chroniclers hiding when they suddenly announce yet another delay to the reconstruction?

Anywhere else Glauser would have finished the job by now. But here, the construction drags out interminably. The last three years have felt like an eternity. His wife and children are back in Hellvetica; he promised them he'd be back after six months at the latest.

Paul's patience is at its limit. Over and over, he files complaints with Bloch, but the thoughtless Subaltern just shrugs indifferently. It's not the Hellvetic's business to question the strange procedures of this story. In these moments, Paul feels reminded of an old wives' tale that his instructor used to tell him. Long ago, a hero was damned to carry stones out of a crater for eternity. Every time he managed to muscle a stone to the crater's edge, another stone would break off and roll to the bottom of the pit. Again and again. Forever. Paul can't remember the hero's name, but he sees the story as an apt metaphor for his current existence.

On some days, he makes no progress at all. Then work is suddenly stopped by an order from the higher ups — postponed for another week. Paul stares down into the Crack from his control tower, gazing over the debris and rubble lying fifty feet below him, and silently willing the entire goddamned lower city to collapse beneath him. His foreman, a bald-headed Scrapper called Screw, claps him reassuringly on the back in an attempt to cheer him up. "Who knows what corpses the Chroniclers have got buried down there?"

It doesn't work. Glauser looks at his foreman, irritated. Corpses? Really? Does the Scrapper know something he doesn't?

ROLE PLAY

Work is Paul's life. Nothing bothers him more than an unfinished job. Every delay feels like another nail in his coffin. He spends hours poring over city maps, site plans and blueprints – all while drinking himself into unconsciousness. If he could only figure out what the Chroniclers were hiding, this whole thing would be infinitely more bearable.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Martyr, Hellvetics, Rank 3: Genie
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 4 INT: 5 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Force 6D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 7D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 5D, Arts 6D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 10D, Focus 8D, Legends 7D, Science 8D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 5D, Survival 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 4, Network 3, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Architect (+2D to Orienteering and Perception when dealing with irregularities in the Crack)
POTENTIALS: Forced March 3, Discipline 2
INITIATIVE: 3D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Small-bore Revolver, Projectiles 5D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7, Camouflaged (2C);
Signal Gun, Projectiles 5D, Distance 15/60m, Damage 5, Fire Hazardous
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Light uniform clothing, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Collection of city maps (+2D on INS+Orienteering); 3 rounds of signal gun ammunition; Headlamp (Darkness penalty -2D); Booklet with charcoal drawings of his family

THE CRACK

Paul has no idea of the hornet's nest he's poking around in. A Chronicler Exit was destroyed by the collapse. The floor underneath survived the disaster, however, and will soon be exposed by the excavation. Something that the Cluster would pay dearly to keep secret. They cannot risk knowledge of their secret shafts and corridors reaching the public – especially the Palers. The Cluster, therefore, watches the Hellvetic's work with extreme suspicion. The entire worksite now resembles a maximum security zone: those without identification are arrested and delivered to the Cleft by a squadron of Protectors for interrogation.

UNDER SURVEILLANCE

The Chroniclers are concerned. The Hellvetic is sniffing around too much, asking too many questions, brooding too much over the answers. Bloch has been called into the Cluster on several occasions and rebuked: restrain the Genie and limit the scope of his responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Paul himself does not yet suspect that the Cluster has put a Shutter on him. If the Genie happens upon the Exit Level during his work, the Shutter has been ordered to take Paul out and make the whole thing look like an accident. A tragic fall into the depths of the collapsed area and a broken neck should be enough to avoid suspicion.

INVENTORY

MAPS

Paul recently visited the Cartographer in the Stukov Quarter and paid a fortune to make copies of all the historic city maps of Justitian that he could get his hands on. The aged lithographs show the growth of the city over the last hundred years. Glauser is certain that he'll find the key to the Crack's mystery somewhere in here.



LUCIA

2587. Territorial Region III. Octus Listening Post. The Hellvetics stationed here had detected Triglaw's signal. They followed their training, trying to triangulate the signal's origin and requested reinforcements from Roppen. Little did they know, Triglaw had some tricks of his own: Lucia, a Sapper of the squadron stationed at the listening post, was a double agent spying for the Marauder. The rest, as they say, is history. No one at the post survived. Except Lucia.

Lucia is a collaborator belonging to a conspiratorial circle of renegade Hellvetics led by Adjutant Slabon. They have committed to supporting the Three-faced One in any way possible. It was he who revealed to the renegades the true extent of the dangers posed by the Needles.

A few months ago, Triglaw brought a peculiar frequency to Lucia's attention. It could be filtered out of radio transmissions from Justitian's Downtown district, but did not correlate with the typical sine waves emitted by the Chronicler's Central Cluster – though it exhibits comparable amplitude levels. For Lucia, there is no doubt that this can mean only one thing, and one thing only: a Needle, operating right in the heart of the Protectorate. She fears the Needle is in the city for a specific reason. Perhaps a valuable artifact was discovered, one that could help advance the agenda of the Needles in East Borca. Immediately, Lucia speaks to the Corps Command, and, using the pretext of mercenary work to protect the Protectorate's borders, secures a transfer to Justitian the following week.

She knows what she's getting herself into. Her mission is a deadly gamble and she is all alone with no means of support. She must confront a Needle, thwart his plans and ultimately disable him — this is the challenge of her life. But Lucia has much more to discover...

ROLE PLAY

Lucia appears carefree and charismatic, easily warming up to strangers and gaining their trust, which helps her move through the Downtown area all the more easily. Inwardly, though, she is consumed by tension. She knows how much depends on her mission, and that there is no Plan B.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Conqueror, Hellvetics, Rank 3: Sapper
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 6D, Force 8D, Melee 5D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 5D, Expression 4D, Negotiation 4D, Engineering 4D, Legends 5D, Science 6D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 6D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Network 3, Renown 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Triglaw collaborator (+2D on social interaction and Mental Defense during interrogation)
POTENTIALS: Infiltrate 3, Forced March 3, Demolitions 3, No Man's Land 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Trailblazer (with Handling bonus), Projectiles 9D, Distance 30/120m, Damage 11, Smooth Running (3T), Salvoes (3);
Knife, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Sapper armor, Armor 6, Fire resistant (9)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Harness pockets (reduces the total Enc. of up to 4x explosives by 2); 3x Explosives; 1x Stun grenade; Explosives accessories (timers and remote detonators, photoelectric sensor, 20m of detonating cord)

TRIGLAW'S COLLABORATORS

In Adjutant Slabon's world of dishonorable Hellvetics, Triglaw holds a senior position. It was this group who enabled the Marauder to make his way into their headquarters. There, using the Alpine Fortress' own processing power, the Three-faced One managed to tap into its defenses and install a subnetwork that blocks the Needle's access to the Last Server. With this system, Triglaw was able to hold the Needles at bay for a long time. Until, abruptly, the situation changed.

Eidolon, a powerful Dushani from nearby Laibach, had tuned his song to the same frequency as Triglaw's protective screen. The subnetwork had been damaged by Eidolon...

THE WRONG TRAIL

Lucia turned the city upside-down looking for the Needle. Again and again, she traces the frequency discovered by Triglaw, and again and again she ends up in the middle of the Jehammedan district. There, the Ismaeli stare at her in disbelief. Even if you ignore how the Abrami blaspheme, the Hellvetics must really be running out of soldiers if they're already putting women in armor.

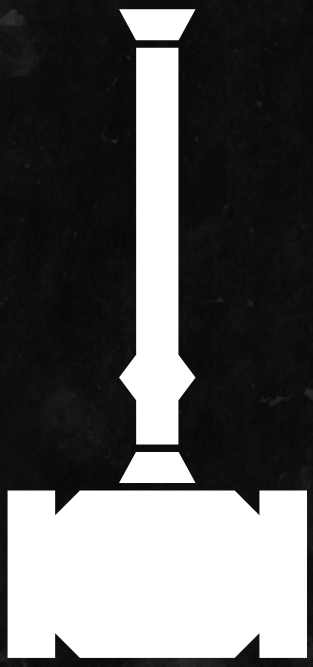
Lucia bites her lip in frustration. No trace of the Needle anywhere. Were the Three-faced One's calculations incorrect?

The Hellvetic does not notice that her wild goose chase has long since attracted an ancient gaze. The Aranoi Naraka watches Lucia's movements through his Ram's helmet. It was the near-field phenomenon emitted by this helmet that had led Triglaw and Lucia off-track in the first place...

INVENTORY

PRONG

On her mission, Lucia carries a fork-shaped tracking device the size of her palm. The Prong has a built-in memory module and records its location at all times. In addition, its memory card contains Triglaw Malware, a high-dose Stream virus on a hidden partition that can be used to short-circuit security systems.



JUDGES

UTOPIA

Justitian is a balsam to the souls of Judges who return battered and wounded from a campaign on the frontlines. Out there, far from the Protectorate, chaos reigns. The hate takes root in the hearts of the Clans, leading them to perform heinous acts. Justitian, by comparison, is a shining example of what Borca and the rest of the world might be able to look like. Law and order in every street, people content and busy. Here is a worthwhile place to build something new.

In the early years, intellectual Judges considered Justitian to be a sociological experiment that would eventually develop into a utopia. A damned dirty utopia rotting inside out, the pessimists among the Judges assert today. But what alternative can they offer? Compared to the Clan territories in the south, the Reaper's Blow in the east, the Stukov Desert in the north, and a west infested by Pheromancers, Justitian is a bastion of civilized creative force and energy.

AT THE TOP

The Judges like to view themselves as the most powerful and influential Cult in all of Borca. The Spitalians, Chroniclers, and Anabaptists would certainly object, but nobody asks for their opinion. The only thing the Judges are interested in are solid alliances. Electricity, water, and healthcare are the foundations from which Justitian could rise from the wasteland and shine far beyond the territory of the Black Lung. If the basic supply is guaranteed, nothing stands in the way of grasping for new territory. The Judges know how to keep their allies happy, and as such make sure they have a say.

PROTECTORS

If you ask the faceless masses of Justitian about their opinion of the Protectors the answers will sound similar. They are the heroes of the Protectorate. They enforce safety on the streets, hunt down felons, disrupt criminal gangs,

and protect convoys commuting between the settlements. They march in formation along the borders, spilling their blood to protect the people of the Protectorate. They reflect the people's desire for justice and order. They are the symbol of Justitian's rise, the force behind its security, and the military arm of the Judiciary.

JURYMEN

The Clan Wars have torn devastating gaps into the ranks of the Protectors, and they can't be filled as fast as the Judiciary would like.

Already there are too few Protectors operating in the city, forcing them to appoint Jurymen to assist in their duties.

These so-called deputy Judges are rushed through the most basic of training and are used to punish minor offenses, detain suspects until a Protector is ready to take on the matter, or are sent on patrols throughout Justitian's outlying districts. Probably the biggest advantage of becoming a Juryman is a weapon license issued by the Judiciary, which allows the open carrying of weapons within the city. Theoretically anyone can be appointed as a Juryman and some even gain fame and recognition in the process. The Pack, a nefarious gang of Anabaptist rioters, was assembled by High Judge Laika and is known for its cruel methods far beyond the city limits.

ADVOCATES

The Advocates are the ears of the people. They constantly hunt for inequities in the system and seek to resolve them. They draft new legal texts, delete paragraphs from the Codex, and expand inadequate passages and use them to formulate the precepts that govern all life within the Protectorate.

Not every Advocate belongs to one of the big families, but independent have a hard time in this game of intrigue and have to band together in small communities to give their words the necessary weight. Advocates who stand out through special achievements are adopted through marriage by the families. In other words, assimilated.

ADVOCATE FAMILIES

In the history of Justitian, a handful of names repeatedly appear: Salvano, Wender, Manteufel, Jungbau, and Masek. These families have lived in Justitian's territory since the founding years and have always been involved in the city's politics.

The families are split up into Houses. Each House has its own educational institutes and forums, where it trains its scions in written language and prepares them for life ahead as a fundamental part of the Judiciary. They are granted a place in Uptown by virtue of their lineage alone. Even if they fail the Advocate's examinations and are rejected from entering into the Cult of the Judges, they are placed into the Offices instead, where they oversee the administrative apparatus of the city.

The Offices are almost exclusively under the control of the five Houses. Whether it's Culture, Protectorate affairs, Locality, Internal affairs, or Economics, the families dictate the structure of society and influence daily interaction down to the last detail.

HIGH JUDICIARY

The High Judiciary includes the Supreme Judge and the two Senates. From Judgement Hall they direct the path of the Protectorate. Even though most decisions are made in consultation with the Cluster, politically speaking no higher authority exists.

The common people rarely get an insight into the everyday life of the High Judiciary. Only on official holidays, citizens gather in Calendar Square in Uptown and listen to the speeches delivered by Archot and the robed Senators behind him. For most people, the events that take place behind the walls of Judgement Hall are foreign. For an ambitious Judge, however, the accumulated power of the Righteous Fist converges there. Those who fight their way up to the High Judiciary and claim a seat for themselves will make world history as they forge Europe's future.

OUT OF CONTROL

The Judges are no longer the railroaded Cult of yesteryear whose simple aspiration was to restore law and order with the help of hammer and musket. They have grown into a rampant monster of bureaucracy and regulations, surrounded by pitfalls that curtail the Cult in its power and cut a deep trench between Advocates and Protectors.

Never has there been more disagreement between the camps, and never have the Senates been so hostile.

Intoxicated by the success of the last hundred years, the Judges longed for expansion, wanting to carry their vision of Justitian's glory to every corner of the world, but they failed through actions of their own. The Chroniclers, closest allies from the earliest days, watch the bustle of High Judiciary with suspicion. The Cluster considers Archot to be a threat to Justitian's safety, and wants to see his head roll. This conflict is not open, but it is palpable. The air in Uptown crackles with tension.

BLACK JUDGES

The Codex is the leash on which Executioners and Arbiters strain. If they cut the ties, they descend into a lawless darkness. That is, if it wasn't for an obscure passage granting specialists unlimited freedom of action in a strictly defined area of responsibility. Nobody knows about this passage except Rutgar. Nobody knows about his Black Judges. They are shadows. They are avengers.



ARCHOT

If the most recent historiography can be trusted, Archot is not only the Supreme Judge of Justitian, but also an incarnation of the Codex made flesh. He dragged the city from the deepest depths of corruption, crushed the Clans under the heel of his boot, fortified the Protectorate, and is even said to be taller by a head than all of his predecessors.

Those who have sworn him loyalty unto death claim that his life is too successful to be shortened down to a digestible length. The people of Justitian owe decades of peace and prosperity to his deeds. Under his rule, settlements and cities were annexed without shedding a single drop of blood. As a matter of prudence, he expected the unstoppable growth of Justitian and allied with the nearby Spital, a pact that still determines the day-to-day politics of the city. No one would dare to question these achievements.

It's not the past that his enemies hold against the Supreme Judge, it's his present state of mind. Dementia is eroding Archot's judgment, and his thoughts keep spinning in circles. Randomly, he issues edicts flattering his ego instead of paying attention to the rise of the Clans. He watches on passively as Wetzlar falls, Leadfield perishes, and the borders of the Protectorate burn. To some Judges, the decay of his mental health is a horrifying sight to behold. Others consider it a direct slap in the face.

Archot's rule must end, his opponents say. Never before has a Supreme Judge caused such division within the Cult like Archot has in his last forty years in office. Two factions remain – those who are loyal to him and continue to gorge on the successes of his early years, and those who surround the Supreme Judge like a pack of rabid dogs, biding their time, waiting for him to crumble so they can tear him to shreds.

ROLE PLAY

His shoulders are sagging, and he cranes his neck like a vulture unable to recognize his own image in the mirror. His hands and his flabby face are covered in age spots. Archot attempts to cover these blotches with a thick, cakey powder, but it is not enough to hide his blemishes. Although his outer appearance may seem frail in these private moments while dressing, as soon as the crown sits atop of his head and he strides through the Judgement Hall, flanked by Protectors and dressed in his robes, the Supreme Judge radiates determination, strength and purpose – and the Legend of Archot lives on for another day.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Righteous, Judge, Rank 7: Supreme Judge
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 2 CHA: 5 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 2D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 2D, Toughness 4D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 3D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 10D, Expression 9D, Leadership 11D, Negotiation 8D, Legends 8D, Cunning 9D, Deception 8D, Domination 7D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 11D, Perception 7D, Primal 9D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Two Protector escorts
POTENTIALS: Herald 3, Dura Lex 2, Tremor 3, Lynch Law 3
INITIATIVE: 4D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Supreme Judge's Hammer Staff, Melee 4D, Distance 2m, Damage 4, Impact (3T), Unique, Special
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Stumble to the side), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Supreme Judge's Robe, Unique, Respected (Protectorate, +3D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Hammer staff (Unique, official insignia, if Authority is used, double the number of bonus dice); Archot's Codex (personal copy, +3D on judgements and knowledge of the law, a holy relic for followers); Crown of the Steel Masters (Talisman, +2D to PSY+Domination)

CORNERED

Archot is orbited by friends and foes alike, those who would keep him in office against all logic because it guarantees their survival at the top of the food chain, and those who want nothing more than to see his head severed from his body. His every movement, and his every word, is a blessing to some, and torturous to others.

Archot, for his part, is anything but helpless. His quirks and his all-out stubbornness may have deteriorated his mind, but his instincts have kept him at the peak of power for more than four decades.

His gaze searches for doubts in the eyes of his opponents and wrestles them to the ground, wandering past the ranks of his Judges, probing and selecting. He has personally appointed every member of his personal retinue – and his intuition has never betrayed him.

He listens to Rutgar and does not wave his words aside with a lordly gesture, instead trusting in the Old Wolf's loyalty to the bitter end.

WITH IRON FIST

Archot does not believe in plebiscites because the people don't know what's good for them. He, however, does. Therefore, he never relied on advisors: those who hold the reins should share them with no one, because that will only confuse the horses.

Archot's decisions resemble adamant monoliths. They're either drawing a line in the sand or propagating change. Those who oppose his command will inevitably fail. Archot follows a straight course: out of the dirt and into a new age. Prosperity and safety, with Justitian as the cultural center of the known world. This motto will not change as long as he wears the crown.



RUTGAR, THE OLD WOLF

Just like Archot has shaped the exterior appearance of the Judiciary, Rutgar has internally consolidated the Cult. No Senator before him has ever been as popular with the Protectors as the man everyone knows as the Old Wolf. All who dare to call him by his nickname swear loyalty to him alone – considering him the leading commander of Justitian and a pillar of righteousness. Without someone of Rutgar's stature, the leadership would be plagued by whispering behind closed doors. Advocates and Protectors would claw at each other's throats until there was nothing left of Justitian but a gnawed-off cadaver.

However, only a selected few ever get a glimpse of the raw amount of Rutgar's clout, or realize the extent of the power struggles raging through the chambers of the Senate. The Old Wolf is a strategist who often plans years ahead without losing himself in temporary details. For decades, he has used his tactical acumen to keep Archot in office and thus created an equilibrium in which the Protectorate could expand and Justitian could thrive. As a steadfast protector of Archot's position, he holds the Chroniclers who have long tried to manipulate the Supreme Judge at bay. Therefore, the Cluster sees him as a nuisance whose nimbus has become much too threatening. However, the Chroniclers cannot touch Rutgar. He has them over a barrel. So far, he has dispelled every one of their attempts at blackmail, and managed to direct it back at them. He survived smear campaigns and returned stronger than before. He sniffed out spies and assassins and disposed of them. More than once, Shutters swarmed out, only to suddenly disappear without a trace. To challenge him means making the Old Wolf one's mortal enemy, and Rutgar does not forget. His revenge oftentimes meets his enemies several years later, when they expect it the least. Additionally, he uses the Cartel as a secret weapon to keep the Chroniclers in check. Rutgar understands that the Scrappers under Bosch function as a counterweight to the Cluster's machinations. Therefore, he gives the criminal organization a free hand, delays investigations, pulls Protectors from the Tech-Central and in doing so, supports Bosch's agenda. Not because he is especially fond of the Dwarven King, but because he needs him as a henchman.

ROLE PLAY

For Rutgar, there is no life outside the Judiciary. In conversation, he looks for opportunities to provoke his counterpart with a well-aimed statement without ever giving away much about himself. He knows not to open himself up to such vulnerabilities. Those who have done him a favor and think he owes them one are mistaken.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Protector, Judge, Rank 6: Senator
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 6 INT: 5 PSY: 6 INS: 6
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 8D, Force 9D, Melee 9D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 7D, Navigation 10D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 10D, Expression 11D, Leadership 12D, Negotiation 8D, Legends 9D, Medicine 7D, Cunning 10D, Deception 8D, Domination 10D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 9D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 9D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 5, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 4, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Wolf's Cunning (double bonus from Fiat Lux)
POTENTIALS: Fiat Lux 3, Tremor 3, Hammer Blow 3, Dura Lex 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Rutgar's Hammer, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 10, Blunt, Impact (3T); Steel Master Gun, Projectiles 10D, Distance 15/60m, Damage 8, Double Barreled, Sight, Muzzle Loader
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 9D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Judge clothing with coat, Armor 2
CONDITIONS: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Steel Master Gun (Marvel); Transmitter with Black Radio connection to Iwanov

BLACK JUDGES

Rutgar controls the Black Judges – and they are the only secret he keeps from Archot. This elite unit is led by Iwanov, Rutgar's best man, and there is absolutely no paper trail of it. It is made up of hand-picked assassins who carry out the Chief Protector's orders throughout the Protectorate under false identities, only communicating with Rutgar through a secret radio channel, the so-called Black Wave. Not even the Chroniclers are aware of this group's existence. The Black Judges operate outside the law to dispose of political enemies as well as dissidents.

Surely, Archot has his own thoughts on the matter when "problems" suddenly disappear, but he never questions the Chief Protector's methods.

THE CONSPIRACY

Rutgar knows every Senator that is conspiring against Archot by name. They will do anything to drag him down along with Archot. Rutgar is convinced that the Chroniclers support the upheaval from behind the scenes.

However, they have picked the wrong opponent. The Black Judges have already collected all the necessary data. Specifically for this purpose, they established Black Sites out in the wastelands where they held interrogations, recorded top-secret Cluster radio communications, and finally unveiled what their master had been looking for. Rutgar's henchmen collected the ultimate proof that there never was a First Judge. That he was nothing but a phantom, a meme devised and spread by the Chroniclers to inspire the nascent Cult of Judges, to discipline it and engineer its development from afar.

Rutgar has had the Paper Factory print hundreds of thousands of flyers containing exactly this revelation and had the whole print run hidden amongst several secret caches throughout the Protectorate. They are the final ace up his sleeve. If something unexpected should happen to Archot or Rutgar, the Black Judges have been tasked with spreading the flyers across the entire Protectorate, and thus ringing the death knell for the age old alliance between Judges and Chroniclers.



SENATOR LAAKON

Since the early days of his childhood, Laakon carried a sublime feeling for Justitian in his heart. To him, judgedom equalled perfection. He rose through the ranks of his Cult, studied the Codex, and celebrated the wisdom within. Every night, he lit a candle in honor of the First Judge they all owed this triumphant heritage to.

Laakon hadn't yet reached his thirtieth winter when he was made a Senator. His benefactors recognized his unbridled dedication, his wits, and his instinctive feeling for the law. However, Laakon quickly realized what a sharp downward spiral he had gotten himself into. The Senates and the High Judiciary were infected by nostalgia.

His brothers in office mourned after a past that was dead and gone. Archot pined away in broad daylight, his mind becoming mercurial, his capricious outbursts more bizarre. The Supreme Judge was in the grip of megalomania, and there was nothing Laakon could do about it. He was forced to passively watch the values he held dear for so long being shattered to pieces all around him. Where once an icon incarnate had shaped the Codex, now a fossilized charlatan led Borca's mightiest Cult and performed a foolish mummery, including a powdered face, a garish crown, and lavish works of art in his own honor.

Laakon's heart cracked. The longer he attended this chaos, the clearer he saw his goal. Archot's final downfall and Laakon's appointment as Supreme Judge were the only two things that could save Justitian. The Senator is certain that no one is devoted to the Cult as passionately as him and that only he would be able to restore the Judiciary to its old glory. He immediately sets his plan into motion, surrounding himself with like-minded individuals, conferring with Chroniclers, Advocates, and Arbiters alike. Everywhere, he discovers allies amongst the Judges who support him with their votes in secret ballots, even though they might only admit to sharing his opinion in private. Laakon's movement grows, and with each passing day it becomes larger and more powerful. It's only a matter of time before it turns into an avalanche.

ROLE PLAY

Laakon's face is a study in acrimony. The monument of the Judiciary is crumbling due to an idiot on his last legs, and only a few can see the danger of this. He's desperately looking for collaborators to support him in his cause, explaining his fears in quiet words, with a worried look and in a prudent language – to save Justitian from impending doom.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Heretic, Judge, Rank 6: Senator
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 4 INT: 5 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 5D, Melee 6D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 4D, Conduct 9D, Expression 10D, Leadership 9D, Negotiation 10D, Seduction 8D, Engineering 7D, Focus 8D, Legends 9D, Medicine 6D, Cunning 10D, Deception 9D, Domination 8D, Faith 9D, Reaction 6D, Empathy 9D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 5, Network 6, Renown 2, Resources 6, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Shutter bodyguard disguised as his secretary; Can apply Allies Background to the Chroniclers up to (3)
POTENTIALS: Lynch Law 3, Tenacious 3, Janus Face 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Jeweled Dagger, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T), Fragile
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 9D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Senator's robe, Armor 1, Respected (Protectorate, +2D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pictures and recordings of Archot's son; Folder filled with all of Archot's "mistakes" from the past 10 years, lined with Chronicler data; Vial of Stukov Scorpion venom for the final day; Codex, Special Edition

UPHEAVAL

Laakon has initiated the coup d'état. He already carries the torch of rebellion in his hand, and now the Chroniclers supporting his actions have given him the fuel he needs to realize his ambitions. Archot's capers have become unbearable for the Tech Cult as well. The Chroniclers want a Supreme Judge who displays strength controlling the Protectorate and who can defend the Central Cluster from harm.

Therefore, they have brought in the big guns and have let Laakon in on something to use against Archot.

According to their information, the Supreme Judge had a bastard son whose existence he kept a secret from the Judiciary. That is a violation of his office's most important tenet: to never lie. Archot couldn't bring himself to kill his son and destroy all the evidence. Instead, he tasked Rutgar with hiding the child, which he has done for more than twenty years. Three years ago, the son was able to escape from his dungeon. The Chroniclers assume that the scion, who is an adult by now, has found refuge amongst the Defilers of Downtown. They have passed along pictures and recordings of Archot's son taken by security cameras during his flight. If Laakon manages to apprehend the bastard and drag him in front of the Senate, this might be the hour of Archot's demise.

Now, the Senator tasks his loyal Advocates to spread throughout Downtown. They are supposed to look for independent mercenaries and bounty hunters willing to take part in a manhunt. Archot's alleged son is hiding somewhere in the Defiler Streets and it is time to find him and drag him to Uptown.

POTENTIALS

TENACIOUS
PREREQUISITE: Unique
Laakon is a man of boundless ambition. He'll never stop until he stands at the peak of his Cult, dictating the lives of hundreds of thousands - improving their lives, as he sees it. In pursuit of his goals, the Senator is utterly relentless. Whenever Laakon is acting on his goals to become the Supreme Judge, he adds +1D per Potential level to all Actions. In addition, every time he makes progress on his mission he regains an Ego Point.



LAIKA, THE BITCH

Name: Laika. Nickname: The Bitch. Her jury: Twelve heavily armed Anabaptists, known as "The Pack". Area of operations: Tech-Central.

No other Judge in Justitian has caused similar unrest in the past years, cementing her name way beyond the borders of the Protectorate. Tech-Central, a district that other Protectors avoid because they don't want to get their hands dirty, is Laika's territory. The Scrappers hate her with a vengeance. On the contrary, everyone who has an outstanding score to settle with the dirt diggers praises her in return. All over Downtown, she's perceived as law incarnate, as the only Judge who isn't aloof like the rest of the gang, but someone who sticks to the old ways of getting things done and is actually capable of restoring order.

Her methods are merciless: public pillories, intimidation tactics, suspects being nailed down to the ground on marketplaces. There are rumors that claim she once chained an alleged murderer to her horse, dragging him along the Stallion Streets at full gallop for hours. When she finally brought her mount to a stop, all that was left of the felon were the ragged remains of his legs and torso.

Advocates despise her interpretation of the Codex and consider her the most corrupt epitome of a Protector. This opposition only adds to Laika's reputation. With iron discipline, she clawed herself to the position of a High Judge of Justitian without ever losing sight of her true goal. She wants to be the first woman in the office of Supreme Judge and make history. Only Rutgar stands between her and the top. The Old Wolf and the Bitch are avowed mortal enemies, and their power struggle splits the Judiciary. Laika assumes that Rutgar protects the Cartel, which in turn enables Bosch to continually expand his leeway. In order to finally get rid of the Senator, she will have to unearth solid proof of the Old Wolf's involvement. Knowing that the ranks of the Protectors are riddled with Rutgar's cronies, she has instead declared the Anabaptists of the Cross Quarter as more trustworthy allies in her investigations.

ROLE PLAY

Laika never smiles – and if she does, the corners of her mouth twist into a fiendish grin. The High Judge is a cruel woman who considers mercy a rhetorical abomination used to impress stable boys. She deeply despises Advocates, regarding them as the most perverse proliferation of the law.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Ruler, Judge, Rank 5: High Judge
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 10D, Force 9D, Melee 9D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 10D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 7D, Leadership 8D, Legends 8D, Medicine 6D, Cunning 8D, Domination 10D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 9D, Empathy 6D, Perception 8D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 5, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 3, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Laika's Pack (12 Jurymen (Orgiastics) at her beck and call)
POTENTIALS: Fiat Lux 3, Tremor 3, Stampede 2, Hammer Blow 2, Blaze of Glory 2
INITIATIVE: 9D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Judgement Hammer, Melee 11D, Distance 1m, Damage 10, Blunt, Balancing (2), Impact (3T);
Cerberus, Projectiles 9D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 12, Mag. 5/8, Thunder Strike, Terrifying (4C), Fire Hazardous
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D; Ranged active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 9D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Personalised Judge's coat, Armor 2, Respected (Tech-Central, +3D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 20, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Cerberus; List of Cartel Thugs and Judges that Laika suspects are on Bosch's payroll; Collar and chains; Judge's Horse

THE PACK

Twelve Orgiastics – hot-blooded, ruthless thugs – form Laika's Pack. Each of them are at least as cruel as their callous leader.

She embeds her ideology of law and order in the minds of the Pack: lightning-quick interventions, unannounced house raids, merciless intimidation tactics, blackmail, relentless pressure, and perpetual controls make up her recipe for success.

At night, she educates her men in bed, turning them into slaves for her body, rewarding the best of them and punishing the worst with rejection to spur them on to a better performance. These inner dynamics of sexuality, violence, and craving for admiration have turned the Pack into an interwoven, highly dangerous task force that is willing to risk their lives to protect their Bitch.

AGAINST THE CARTEL

While Laika has managed to control and pacify large parts of Tech-Central, the Cartel remains her biggest problem.

Bosch's Scrappers are sworn-in mobsters with a vast network, and their connections are impossibly hard to untangle. The Pack barely manages to contain the offshoots of the racket, and only rarely reach those who actually pull the strings.

Laika's intuition tells her that someone is observing all of the Pack's operations and warning the Scrappers of their raids ahead of time...

INVENTORY

CERBERUS

On her first raid, Laika took a massive pistol from a Scrapper. The caliber is so big that it could completely blow the head from the shoulders in the event of a headshot. Cerberus held only a single magazine of ammunition when she confiscated it, which Laika has kept to this day. Five cartridges remain. A fearsome weapon in the hands of a fearsome woman.



GREGOR KANT

The archaic tradition to send culprits on the long march to Ferropol ended in a fiasco. During the great uprising of 2581, the majority of incarcerees of the local prison camp escaped and joined forces with the Raven of Ferropol, who seized the moment and transformed the city on the edge of the Wupper Crater into a drug fortress. Four years later, the Judges had had enough and wiped Ferropol's resistance off the face of the earth. The prison camp, however, has lain abandoned ever since.

A second attempt to strike a pact with the Anabaptists and displace prisoners to Severinus failed as well. Cathedral City offered the criminals the chance to regain their freedom by converting to the Neognosis, which in turn led to the largest mass baptism in Borca's more recent history.

A solution was desperately needed and lamentations were pointless. Gregor Kant, a steadfast Protector with a bloated ego, devised a new concept which shaped him into one of the most successful members of the Judiciary overnight. The Cleft was his vision of a labor camp within the city walls. Why waste a potential workforce on rivals if one could reeducate them politically and reintegrate them into society after they had served their time?

Thus, the Cleft was developed into a showcase project of modern slavery. Kant requested the resources to replace ramshackle huts with stone barracks and arranged them to form a rectangular courtyard. Rusty fences were substituted with walls of barbed wire. Kant successfully transformed unwashed, poorly organized criminals into clean shaven workers, and equally divided them into several regimented platoons. He took inspiration from militaristic organisations and their cruel drill methods. In addition, he applied the principle of reward and retribution to imprint the rules of Justitian's society onto the incarcerees. Reluctant prisoners were shouted at, berated, trampled into the dust, and humiliated until their defiance was broken. Notably efficient inmates were offered jobs working for Kant. As camp wardens. Because they are special...

ROLE PLAY

Kant is a man of action that few can oppose. Protectors and Advocates alike hold him in the highest regard and rubber-stamp his ideas without looking twice. His successes speak volumes and enable him to continue expanding his authority. After all, the Cleft has become the future model for new labor camps throughout the Protectorate.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Visionary, Judge, Rank 3: Protector
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 5 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 6D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 5D,
Toughness 7D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 5D,
Conduct 8D, Expression 9D, Leadership 9D, Negotiation 8D,
Legends 6D, Medicine 4D, Cunning 5D, Domination 6D, Reaction 6D,
Willpower 6D, Empathy 8D, Perception 6D, Primal 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 5, Renown 5, Resources 4, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Darling of the Judiciary (+3D to all CHA Skill rolls when speaking before the Senates)
POTENTIALS: Tremor 2, Tilt Shift 2, Lynch Law 3
INITIATIVE: 6D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Short-handled Judgement Hammer, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 9, Blunt, Impact (1T);
Flintlock Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Muzzle Loader
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active,
Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Vest and coat, Armor 2, Respected (The Cleft, +3D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Interrogation transcript; Blueprints to expand the Cleft toward the Crack

THE MENTOR

Gregor sympathizes with Keszler and the Hippocrats of the Spital, and is deeply infatuated with their doctrine. As a frequent guest, he visits Keszler's Uptown offices once a week, receiving tutelage from the Spitalian and drinking in his worldview to reconcile his own ideology with it. Keszler is acting more and more as Kant's spiritual mentor, teaching him various methods of psychological repression, indoctrination, and the use of propaganda to spread disinformation. Kant is a good student, diligently applying every new lesson in the Cleft the next day.

TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT

As much as the Judges shower Kant with praises, his exposed position has brought him many adversaries who cannot wait for him to make his first mistake.

First, there is many a Scrapper who hasn't forgotten the punishments during their time in the detention camp and wants to pay them back in full. Then there are Chroniclers, who consider it more than dangerous to keep such a large contingent of prisoners within the city walls and feel disgruntled that their concerns have gone unheeded.

For many citizens of Justitian, Kant represents the Cleft – his name is synonymous with the cruel prison camp. In pubs all across the Stukov Quarter, regulars lay out assault plans, and every citizen who has gobbled down a few too many cups of distillate declares himself a terrorist ready to bring down the system. By dawn, their alcohol-induced courage has evaporated, and they meekly revert back to their ordinary work routine.

INVENTORY

INTERROGATION TRANSCRIPT

The Cleft is intended only as a labor camp, but Kant has ambitions beyond that; he wants to turn his hand towards interrogation and information extraction, aping his mentor. However, his first experiment was met with utter failure. The Clanner dragged out of the Bottomlands seemed to break quickly, but started babbling about musket barrels and explosives. Kant is unable to make heads or tails of it - he must have applied the techniques incorrectly.



UTRECHT

Utrecht is an unassuming man. He keeps the brim of his hat lowered to obscure his features as he listlessly leans against the bar of a nameless Downtown joint. A fly crawls across the greasy wooden countertop all the way to his empty glass, where it probes a viscous patch with its proboscis. Utrecht's eyes follow the insect's every move. His real focus, however, is entirely on the two people sitting in the dark to his right. They whisper something about Protectors, about a meeting with the Salvanos after sundown. Utrecht knows the two. Their voices gave them away. The light loses its battle against the pig skins stretched across the window cases, and darkness invades the taproom. Soon, the innkeeper will throw a burning splint into the braziers.

Utrecht, however, will be long gone by then, on his way back to Uptown. To meet Rutgar. The two men linger behind, having already forgotten the silent fellow who was leaning against the bar just a few moments ago.

Utrecht is Rutgar's eyes and ears across Downtown. The Protector can blend in anywhere. In a rundown joint, he looks threadbare, his movements are sluggish and nondescript. On the Stallion Streets, he moves with the crowd, bothering no one and never attracting attention, despite wearing a Judge's hat and coat. His impassive gaze and ability to adapt and blend into any scene allow him to go unnoticed by even the most scrutinous observer. That's exactly what makes him so valuable for Rutgar. On his behalf, Utrecht collects information, listens in on conversations, tracks down criminals and other threats to public safety, and keeps the Senator in the loop about anything important.

Whenever the Old Wolf needs to gauge the public's mood, he relies on his confidant's judgment. Utrecht himself never comments on the knowledge he has collected over the years and never questions Rutgar. Even if the Senator's motives are not always morally impeccable, Utrecht is deeply convinced that he is working on the right side of the law.

ROLE PLAY

There are no obstacles too challenging for Utrecht. Whenever he tracks a suspect, he can seemingly sense their movement pattern instinctively. He knows Downtown like the back of his hand, he's seen the interior of hundreds of joints and crossed through countless backyards and alleyways. He systematically memorizes places, able to anchor his memory to a subtle detail or even a particular feeling. In this way, he can always find any nondescript spot again.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traveler, Judge, Rank 3: Protector
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 7D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 9D, Conduct 9D, Expression 6D, Negotiation 6D, Legends 7D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 8D, Primal 7D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 6, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Faceless (-2D on INS+Perception rolls to recognize Utrecht, in addition he gains +1D to AGI+Stealth when attempting to blend in to a crowd or environment)
POTENTIALS: Tilt Shift 3, Janus Face 3
INITIATIVE: 6D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Judgement Hammer, Melee 5D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Blunt, Impact (3T); Flintlock pistol, Projectiles 8D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Muzzle Loader
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Coat and hat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pocket flask (owned by the first victim of the Head Collector); Detailed hand-drawn maps of Tech-Central; Notepad and pencil to note down information for Rutgar; The Death List

THE HEAD COLLECTOR

In recent years, there has been no news about the Head Collector. After a vile series of brutal murders with a total of 31 victims, there hasn't been any recorded activity of him for the past three years.

Nowadays, many Protectors declare the idea of a serial killer a myth and claim that the Head Collector was nothing more but the result of a raging Cartel turf war.

Utrecht doubts this theory altogether. To him, the Head Collector is real: a single person, a lone wolf, extremely well prepared, and familiar with his victims. So far, all the crimes have followed the same pattern. All decapitation wounds were very nearly identical. Utrecht uses every free moment to investigate the story on his own, even if Rutgar scolds him for it and keeps telling him that he's chasing a phantom. Utrecht will not give in so easily. He has heard of a Defiler who has been claiming for years to have caught the Head Collector red-handed and can supposedly remember his features.

Utrecht must find this man, but that's easier said than done. The Defiler Streets form a meandering network of aboveground and underground sewers stretching for dozens of kilometers. Thousands of Defilers inhabit Justitian's sewers, and they protect one another from inquiring looks and interrogations. To locate the witness, Utrecht must look for a needle in a shit stack.

INVENTORY

THE DEATH LIST

Name: Tick. Sex: Male. Age: Approx. 26. Date of death: July 24th, 2595. Cause of death: Decapitation. New line. Name: Bolt. Sex: Female. Age…

Even after years spent staring at his records, Utrecht can't find a pattern. He has carefully recorded all of the details of every Head Collector victim on a finely sketched map of Tech-Central and the Outskirts - itself taking weeks of his time to make - which records the locations of each death, accompanied by all of the details he could recover for each and every one. Still nothing. The work continues.



DARIUS MASEK

Darius remembers his childhood. The legislative texts of the Codex were his beloved bedtime stories. When he walked the city streets on Sundays, holding his mother's hand, passersby bowed or changed the side of the road reverently. At the booths in the market, the proprietors always gave him candied fruit and sweetened water. At the time, Darius couldn't comprehend why people were all so friendly to him.

It took years for him to realize his noble birth. As the youngest son of the Masek Advocate family dynasty, he would one day inherit leadership, thus holding the city's fate in his hands. For this reason, citizens who did not want to find themselves on the wrong side of the law did everything they could to shower the scions of Advocates with adoration and respect, however insincere it might be. People were preparing for the future, hoping that their empty kindnesses would pay off when the young Advocates were in their adult years.

Darius was shocked when he realized that everyone pampered him solely based on his heritage and that no one would ever care for his performance – they would wince and cower in front of him because he could make life a living hell for them.

Compunctiously, he followed his calling and passed every one of his exams with honors, but all of his achievements carried a stale aftertaste.

In the middle of the night, he came to a decision. He would shed his robes and mingle with the people, mimicking a simple man, so that the commoners would treat him like a regular fellow citizen. He invented a fake biography and rented a small abode in Fielding where he spent his weekends. From one moment to the next, he had gotten rid of his trepidations – he got to know people in various emotional states, laughed, talked, drank with them and eventually became addicted to this feeling of freedom. Week after week, he stole away and built himself a new private life amongst the Providers. Meanwhile, he showed up at the Masek family estate less and less frequently, even though his duties at home were piling up: his wife and his three kids had no idea of Darius' double life.

ROLE PLAY

Darius is plagued by self-doubts. He cannot judge whether his counterpart in any conversation listens to him out of interest or out of fear. How will he ever know if a decision is right, if all the answers he is given are just aiming to please him? Only in the clothes of a commoner can he rely on people to treat him with honesty.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Judge, Rank 3: Advocate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 1 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 4D, Navigation 3D, Mobility 3D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 6D, Expression 5D, Leadership 4D, Negotiation 6D, Legends 6D, Cunning 4D, Deception 4D, Domination 3D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 3D, Perception 5D, Primal 4D, Survival 4D, Taming 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 4, Resources 5, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: House of Cards: His lies are stacking up, and he can't remember all of them. Whenever he makes a roll to deceive anyone about his origins, he must spend (1) Ego to ensure the story is consistent, otherwise whoever he is lying to will have a +2D bonus to seeing through the deception.
POTENTIALS: Heritage 3, Lynch Law 1
INITIATIVE: 3D / 8 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Punch, Brawl 5D, Distance 1m, Damage 2, Dazed (2), Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Advocate's robe, Armor 1; Provider clothing, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Ancient legal documents; Keys to the Masek archives; Commoner's clothes (For his alter-ego as Darial, the pig farmer)

DOUBLE LIFE

Darius' double life threatens to unravel. In Fielding, he has lost his heart to Jadwiga, a Touched woman from Pollen whose bed he has been sharing for a full year, and who is now carrying his unborn child. The people there know him as the successful swineherd "Darial Masev" who owns a large feedlot in Harm that he takes care of during the week. The Providers love Darial's understanding ways and his habit of being on hand to help out, including offering them sound advice in legal matters.

Back on the Masek estate, his wife Dagmar keeps asking him questions concerning his whereabouts on the weekends. His kids never cease begging him to show them Uptown, and his ancient mother throws a litany of cusses at him for not caring for her enough. Darius continues to evade their inquiries and devises excuses, but he is starting to have a hard time keeping his stories straight and convincing.

He knows that this web of lies will one day be his downfall if he doesn't call it quits and immediately terminate his double life in Fielding. But what would then become of Jadwiga, of his bastard child and of all the feelings that are tying him to his time there? He cannot simply give up the people he has come to know as an equal! Or can he?

INVENTORY

LEGAL HISTORY

Everyone knows the story of the downfall of Supreme Judge Lithor, whether they heard it from a Stukov storyteller or picked it up through gossip at a public well; he committed high treason, was tossed off the Uptown plateau, and was replaced by Supreme Judge Wenkmann. Simple story, over and done with. However, Darius knows otherwise. One day, deep in the Masek archives, he came across an old legal record, dated to the week before Lithor's fall and declaring the Supreme Judge as "not guilty," flying in the face of established history. If the document were to be published, the entire Judiciary would be shaken to the core, as it proves the intervention of the Advocate families meddling with the affairs of the highest office.



EMIEL SALVANO

Salvano is striving to gain control over all of Downtown. At this very moment, the Salvanos are the most powerful Advocate family. They have almost forced the Jungbau and Wender families into obscurity, partly by coercing their daughters to marry the sons of the Salvanos, in turn watering down their bloodline. The Houses of Masek and Manteufel, however, are still a thorn in Emiel's side. He wants to obliterate these families, or at least integrate them into his own, in order to secure the Salvanos as the most influential Advocate family of Justitian. That would ensure his succession as the next Supreme Judge.

Twice before in history has the Supreme Judge been a Salvano. They tried to embed the dynastic principle in the Codex, thus tying the Cult's control to the family permanently, but their bill failed to pass the Senates. This setback did not diminish their ambition.

As head of the family, Emiel pursues this goal like a madman. He has spent many hours poring over legal paragraphs, hoping to uncover the winning ace he needs to see his family's honor inscribed in the Codex – but so far it has eluded him.

However, once he controls all Houses of the city he will be able to direct the Advocates as he pleases. Then, legal changes will only be a matter of obtaining the right signatures. All proof could be destroyed before the Senates got wind of it.

For now, Emiel is focused on his two remaining rivals' weak spots.

Darius is an idiot full of insecurities. In Emiel's eyes, it's only a matter of time until he has found his Achilles' heel to slice with a dagger.

Aritha, on the other hand, is a much more dangerous foe, and her network extends far beyond the Protectorate. But Salvano is certain that she is conspiring against the Anabaptists. If he can find out what she's planning, he can use his contacts in the Cross Quarter to exert leverage on House Manteufel. This kind of intel is hard to come by. He needs to embed a spy in Aritha's entourage

ROLE PLAY

Emiel is a cunning schemer of unbridled ambition. He wouldn't hesitate to kill his own ailing father if he thought that it would further his goals. To him, people are only means to an end, to be abused and disposed of at will.

PUPPETEER

There is no price too high or request too demanding for Emiel – he is always building up his stock of favors to cash in at a later point. He views the wants and desires of other Cults as a vast pool of potential ready to be tapped and exploited for his own gain.

If the Jehammedans need new pastures, Emiel lodges old and forgotten claims of ownership in the Senates for them. If Anabaptists insist on having tax allowances because they provide water to Justitian, Emiel does what's needed to make this happen. If Providers do not want to abide by the new regulations of the Hygienics office, Emiel delivers convincing, inflammatory speeches against the Spitalians on their behalf in the Forecourt.

All his lobbying and show of being a dedicated politician is just a masquerade. He uses his political weight to win the trust of other Cults. His network is enormous and ever-expanding, and those who owe him a favor can never know when Emiel will show up to cash it in.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Defiler, Judge, Rank 3: Advocate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Force 3D, Melee 4D, Toughness 4D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 5D, Conduct 7D, Expression 6D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 7D, Legends 8D, Cunning 8D, Deception 7D, Domination 7D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 7D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 5, Network 6, Renown 4, Resources 5, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Salvano legacy (Mental attack: Combination roll of PSY+Cunning and CHA+Negotiation, the victim receives -2D on Mental Defense if a debt has not yet been paid. If they fail, they must carry out the order given or lose (4) Background points of Emiel's choice)
POTENTIALS: Heritage 3, Viper's Tongue 1, Undefeatable 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Salvano Gun, Projectiles 6D, Distance 30/120m, Damage 10, Sight, Mag. 6, Unique (Heirloom of the former Supreme Judge Semper Salvano)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Advocate's robe, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Bosch's receipt; List of debitors and clients;

INVENTORY

BOSCH'S RECEIPT

Emiel stands at the top of a massive pyramid of favors, debts, and I-owe-yous, but even the industrious Salvano patriarch isn't completely free of dependencies. The dominance his house possesses over the other Advocate families is in no small part due to the support of Bosch, who financed much of their rise to power. The Dwarven King is yet to collect on the debts that he is owed, but until he does Emiel has no choice but to do what he is told.



ARITHA MANTEUFEL

The Manteufel family has always thought way beyond the Protectorate borders. Why should the principles of the Judiciary not be applied in other societies and cultures? After all, Justitian was a social experiment, not a uniquely Borcan feature.

When Aritha became head of her Advocate family and mistress of House Manteufel, she decided to make the ideas of her late parents become a reality.

She entrusted the responsibility of the house to her nephew and rode toward the Alps with her retinue the next day. Aritha was headed for the independent city of Bergamo. Once settled, she acquired a place to study at the newly founded Neolibyan Academy to learn the Africans' language and ways. She made contact with local Clans and, after a brief year in the city, became an ambassador for the principles of the Protectorate, teaching people about the Codex and the clarity of its structure. It wasn't long before the Advocate from the far north gained Vespaccio's attention. The White Wolf of Bergamo immediately took an interest in the shrewd Judge. He courted her with gifts and invited her to feasts at the Fortezza Lombardi.

Aritha knew from the very beginning what she had come for: a marriage between the Manteufel and Lombardi families, bridging the gap across the Alps for the Judiciary. Vespaccio, for his part, was intoxicated by the idea of expanding his Clan to the north. Within the next week he had made all the necessary preparations and arranged for his youngest son Trivio to marry Aritha. This laid the foundation for an alliance between Justitian and Bergamo. In September 2597, Aritha returned to her ancestral seat with her new husband by her side. Trivio now goes by the name of Manteufel to avoid raising suspicion with the Anabaptists. Therein lies the special value of this marriage: through it, the Lombardi have established themselves beyond Cathedral City's defensive perimeter in Borca for the first time, quietly claiming their place in the Protectorate.

ROLE PLAY

Aritha is a spider whose web shimmers with perfection in the morning dew. Every endeavor she undertakes has been thought through to the very last perfectly spun thread. She sees herself as a vanguard of Justitian's global future – exceeding the borders of the Protectorate, cosmopolitan and efficient, a counterpart to Tripol's excessive expansion policies in Franka and Hybrispania. She's already showered with praise in the Senate for her providence.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Zealot, Judge, Rank 3: Advocate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 5 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Melee 3D, Force 3D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 3D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 3D, Stealth 3D, Conduct 8D, Expression 7D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 8D, Focus 6D, Legends 7D, Cunning 9D, Deception 7D, Domination 7D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 7D, Perception 5D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 4, Network 4, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Extensive knowledge of the customs and traditions of foreign lands (+1D to social interaction with people not from Borca)
POTENTIALS: Heritage 3, Tremor 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego (focus)
ATTACK: Riding Crop, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 3, Smooth Running (2T), Dazed (1), +2D to INS+Taming
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Advocate's robe, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Mandarin fragrance (Purgan perfume); Chain of keys to various mansions and houses; Briefcase filled with first drafts of her anti-Anabaptist laws; Jethro (Judge's horse Aritha broke and trained herself, trained with Calm Step and +1 Speed)

A TOUCH OF BERGAMO

Day after day, Aritha and Trivio develop laws that aim to cut back on the rights of the Anabaptists of the Cross Quarter, and they are working to have these laws passed through the Senates within the year.

Aritha is delighted by how their plans are progressing. Her vision is to erect an offshoot of the Protectorate in Purgare and to affiliate Bergamo with Justitian. This would not only cut off Cathedral City from the Eden Route, but also surround it by Protectorate territory; the Anabaptists would lose part of their agency and would be completely dependent on Justitian's goodwill.

Their plans have yet to be set in motion, but Aritha has already seized the opportunity to initiate talks with the Chroniclers, trying to win them over and gain their support. In these discussions, she drives home the historical disgrace that was inflicted on the Chroniclers by the Anabaptists when they took Cathedral City from them and chased them to Justitian. It is not hard for her to find a sympathetic ear with many a Chronicler.

THE MANTEUFEL ESTATES

The Chroniclers have their eyes and ears throughout Justitian, capable of recording almost every conversation that occurs within its walls. The only truly secure location, then, is beyond them. Aritha owns several estates beyond the reach of the Cluster's agents, in Liqua and Siege, where she holds secret meetings to discuss her grand designs.


VIII

KERBER

Kerber hates the miasma of Justitian and despises the self-indulgent talk of the people there, who labor their descriptions and explanations without ever really getting their point across. He's a man of action who rarely needs more than a single sentence to finish a discussion.

Kerber is familiar with scum, as he has spent years making life hell on earth for outlaws across the Protectorate. This was before he settled into a city job, working as an Executioner for Commissioner Levantis, a well-known Advocate who has solved countless high-profile crimes in his years in office. The aging Commissioner was past his heyday at this point, and needed someone to do the dirty work for him. Kerber was perfectly suited for this – he knew how to bust criminals whom Levantis had proven to be guilty of lawbreaking. In doing so, however, Kerber constantly got in trouble with the Cartel and the Carrion Birds who operated throughout the city and had henchmen lurking everywhere. He has looked death in the eye several times, and owed his survival to his razor-sharp instincts.

Kerber had been investigating an abduction in Brennen when Levantis suddenly withdrew him from his precinct. The Commissioner had gotten wind of something that was far bigger than the crimes Kerber had been on so far. The Executioner was eager to sink his fingers into the case and start knocking down walls, but Levantis took the wind out of his sails. Kerber was used to working solo, but this time Levantis declared that the case was too big for a single investigator. Instead, Kerber would be paired with Karolus, a diligent and reliable Assessor who had been in Levantis' service for years. The Executioner did not respond to this news kindly – he was livid with rage. Never had he been forced to rely on somebody else, but the Commissioner left him no choice. Kerber could either cooperate or be taken off the job and banned from the file. Growling, Kerber begrudgingly accepted the terms of the assignment.

ROLE PLAY

Kerber knows no patience. He simply gets rid of those who get in his way. His fits of rage are legendary and known throughout Justitian's criminal underworld. Those he drags into his interrogation room only ever leave with broken noses and black eyes. Kerber's sense of justice is dubious, but although people detest his brutality, no one questions his efficiency. Few Executioners have lived long enough to earn such a reputation.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Judge, Rank 4: Executioner
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 10D, Force 10D, Melee 10D,
Endurance 7D, Toughness 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 8D,
Projectiles 8D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 6D, Expression 6D, Leadership 7D,
Negotiation 6D, Legends 6D, Domination 7D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 5D,
Perception 5D, Primal 9D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 4, Network 4, Renown 3, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Hector's Mark (Carrion Birds avoid or ignore Kerber, but keep track of his movements in their territory from a distance)
POTENTIALS: Hammer Blow 3, Blaze of Glory 3, Undertaker 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Judgement Hammer, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 11, Blunt, Impact (3T);
Flintlock Pistol, Projectiles 8D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Muzzle Loader;
Brass Knuckles, Brawl 12D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active,
Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Reinforced vest, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Hourglass; Key to Levantis' office; Arcville case file (list of Vagrants and Jurymen who went missing in 2596)

THE PARTNER

Kerber cannot stand the new guy he's been stuck with. Karolus' constant talking grates on his nerves like nothing else. If he had his way, he'd shut the Assessor up himself, haul him back to Levantis' offices and dump him there. Kerber can't afford to do that though.

This time he must keep his temper in check, because this job is too important. What Levantis revealed to them about the case reeks of corruption, and this dark network could potentially go all the way to the top. The Senates may be compromised.

OLD ENEMIES

Hector, the Carrion Birds' Woodpecker, has a coffin waiting for Kerber. The feud between the two men dates back to Kerber's violent frenzy in one of Hector's brothels. During a routine raid, Kerber lost it and wiped the floor with three Magpies. This outburst shall not be forgotten. Hector has spent a long time planning his revenge. He has even dug out a sound-proof chamber where he plans to torture Kerber for weeks before burying him alive in concrete.

INVENTORY

HOURGLASS

Kerber always carries an hourglass, which he displays prominently during his interrogations. It takes exactly eight minutes for the sand to run from one side to the other. This is the limited timeframe that Kerber offers his suspects to confess. Those who take longer to start talking are in for a merciless beating. Kerber takes out years of pent-up frustration on his prisoners. He always gets something out of them in the end, even if it's a false confession.



KAROLUS

Karolus never ceases quoting Bygone Latin, a habit that irritates even the most Codex-adhering Advocates. At the same time, Karolus loathes everything that's foreign. He refuses to touch food from other regions and speaks only Borcan on principle. A paradox? Sure, but Karolus doesn't see it that way. As someone who is both obnoxious and xenophobic, Karolus does not have a lot of traits that make him a likable guy – certainly not someone you would want to go out for a drink with.

He does, however, consistently display skills that keep proving useful. Karolus considers himself a professional witness – he's a stickler for details, and persnickety. He probes, pokes, and constantly quotes paragraphs nobody but himself remembers. It is these qualities which make him an extraordinary Assessor. For fourteen years he has been in the service of Commissioner Levantis. He is essentially his servant for collecting evidence, connecting the dots and digging through the past of potential suspects. His work allows the Commissioner to focus on figuring out the motive of culprits and understanding their modus operandi. Other Protectors avoid Karolus, silently staring at their plates when he joins them at their table uninvited, or abruptly ending their lunch break before there can be any form of conversation. Karolus doesn't understand why everybody dislikes him, and sees this fact as confirmation that the other Judges are just afraid of his sharp wits because they all have skeletons in their closets.

Now, however, he is working with a Protector for the first time. Levantis has made him Kerber's partner. Karolus can't help but stare at the giant mindless brute he's been paired with puzzlement. The towering ape blots out the sun and displays the intellect of a cave-dweller. What was Levantis thinking? Was he punishing him by making him keep company with such a barbarian?

ROLE PLAY

Karolus is the embodiment of arrogance and conceit. Still, no one can deny that the Assessor has a sharp perception, which makes him great at what he does. He can read other people's faces like a book, never misses a stray trace of lint on somebody's clothing, remembers the engravings on any ring he's ever seen, and even notices the slightest stain in a spot where it is not supposed to be.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Adventurer, Judge, Rank 4: Assessor
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Brawl 2D, Force 3D, Melee 2D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 3D, Mobility 4D, Stealth 5D, Conduct 8D, Expression 6D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 6D, Focus 7D, Legends 9D, Cunning 7D, Deception 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 8D, Perception 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Voice of the People: by targeting a publicly known individual in one of his columns, Karolus can reduce their Renown by (1). In addition, he can apply his Allies background to the people of Justitian up to (1)
POTENTIALS: Tilt Shift 3, Lynch Law 1, Rebel 1, Danger Sense 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Karolus sees violence as a sign of barbarism and does not fight. He has Kerber for such unpleasantness.
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Assessor's light robe, Armor 1, Respected (Protectorate, +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: City seal; Typewriter and several sheets of high quality paper from the Paper Factory; Investigation notepad filled with Karolus' delicate handwriting; Key for Levantis' office; Latest edition of the Righteous Hammer

THE RIGHTEOUS HAMMER

Karolus writes columns for the Righteous Hammer, Justitian's weekly newspaper produced in a small print run at the Paper Factory. The small print run is not due to a lack of interest among the populace, but to the fact that the majority of the citizens are illiterate. Most of them just use paper to wipe their asses.

As far as news is concerned, the populace trusts the Cluster's megaphone announcements and the words of the proclaimers on the Stallion Streets.

Karolus doesn't mind the lack of circulation, since he knows that at least a handful of intellectuals read his articles. For the most part his contributions are almost identical, week after week, as Karolus paraphrases his texts without changing the content. The articles are rife with xenophobia and talk of foreign infiltration, along with urgent calls to the return of traditional values and accusations against the Protectorate for lacking border controls. Karolus especially loathes the refugees in the Bottomlands who have settled with Ramon and the tent camps south of Tech-Central.

CITY SEAL

Karolus wears an old city seal around his neck, which dates back to a time before people had citizenship papers to identify themselves. This anachronistic symbol represents a time when society operated in a different way, and is subsequently frowned upon in many of the original quarters of Justitian, where it is viewed as a symbol of oppression.

For Karolus, on the other hand, it is the symbol that most accurately and truthfully represents his beliefs.

It's almost a miracle that so far, no long-established Brenni or Stukov has smashed his teeth in – or maybe it's less a miracle, and more due to the fact that he seems to stick close by heavyset Kerber's side these days.



LEVANTIS

Levantis has served the Judiciary all his life. A long, stretching career as a hardened Commissioner lies behind him. In his time, he has solved the most complex cases and convicted countless culprits. He was ready to quit. For the last few years he has been scrimping and saving his pay for retirement. With the money, he wanted to buy a patch of land in Purgare, his parents' homeland, and plant tangerine trees.

Unfortunately, it wasn't yet destined to be. His last case has delayed his schedule – he wants to see this final job through till the end. Last year, a woman called Dauphine appeared at his office. She was highly agitated as she had been desperately searching for her husband Arcville, who was supposedly a Judge in Justitian.

She showed Levantis a long list of names that her husband had given her, but Levantis did not recognize a single one. Even when he enquired at the Judges' barracks and studied the citizens' list, he found no Judge called Arcville. Levantis tried to soothe the woman and to present another possible sequence of events, but Dauphine insisted on her story. According to Dauphine, before her husband was sent to Toulon in the summer of '96, he had entrusted her the mysterious list in an effort to protect her should anything happen. Dauphine was now seeking out the help of Levantis because her husband had instructed her to show the list to the Judges in Justitian if anything ever happened to him, and he had never returned. She showed him demise charters signed by her husband that proved he owned a country house in Bassham. Levantis thought long and hard about her story, and began digging through dusty tomes. It wasn't long before he found something. Two dozen Jurymen had been recalled from various Protectorate cities at the same time for no obvious reason, though he couldn't find any information about their whereabouts. Levantis decided to let the hysterical woman stay at his house for a while and personally took on the investigation.

He went through the list of names incessantly, but it stumped him. Even the first entry was problematic. It says "Iwanov". Could this list be the real deal? Levantis decided it contained codenames, but who is behind those names? A special unit of Judges? A shadow army? Who commands these people? Who watches them? This is Levantis' last case. He must find the truth.

ROLE PLAY

Levantis plays the forgetful Commissioner, lulling his enemies into a false sense of security. This way, he reveals the motives of culprits bit by bit until they trip themselves up and finally tip their hand.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Creator, Judge, Rank 5: Commissioner
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 5 INT: 4 PSY: 4 INS: 6
SKILLS: Force 3D, Melee 3D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 3D,
Navigation 4D, Mobility 3D, Projectiles 3D, Stealth 4D,
Conduct 9D, Expression 11D, Leadership 9D, Negotiation 11D,
Legends 9D, Medicine 6D, Science 6D, Cunning 9D, Deception 9D,
Domination 6D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 10D,
Perception 7D, Primal 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 5, Network 5, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Unlimited access to Internal Affairs case files (+2D to rolls related to researching judicial precedent and past cases).
POTENTIALS: Tilt Shift 3, Brain Wave 3
INITIATIVE: 4D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Sword Cane, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 2, Piercing (3), Camo (4C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Stumbling), Mobility 3D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Well-worn coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Office key; Dauphine's transcribed testimony; Uptown surveillance records; Reading glasses; Cigarette holder; 2 sealed Bygone cigars (for his last day in office)

AT A CROSSROADS

Levantis is on the verge of discovering Rutgar's best-kept secret. The Black Judges are an elite group sworn to silence that by all accounts shouldn't even exist.

The Codex does not allow any violation of the checks and balances. This breach of law has the potential to bring down the whole Senate.

In the meantime, the Black Judges have heard of Levantis' investigations, and made preparations to target the Commissioner, as well as his chief witness. But their hands are tied. Levantis cannot simply disappear. For one, he is too closely connected to the Advocates, who would raise the alarm at once. Another problem is that Levantis is no longer the only one on to them. He has already brought his Assessor and his Executioner in on the case, and has likely revealed everything he knows. The more Judges that become involved in the affair, the harder it will be for the Black Judges to cover their tracks.

Iwanov's situation is desperate. Dauphine is the key to successful obfuscation. If he can get rid of Levantis' most valuable witness, he will be able to manipulate the evidence and make sure that Levantis' investigations go nowhere fast.

BURDEN OF PROOF

Kerber and Karolus scour Downtown for possible clues pertaining to their case, and pass on anything that could be a lead to Levantis. The Commissioner, meanwhile, attempts to untangle the enigmatic case from his office. Unsolved murders from the last thirty years, testimonials, crime scene descriptions and autopsy reports by Dr. Masur are piling up on his desk.

In addition to this potential evidence, Levantis has confiscated records of Uptown surveillance cameras from the Chroniclers and is analyzing these recordings with the help of an Agent supplied by the Cluster. Step by step, he is making his way through the ever-piling, ever-perplexing data...



ESTRELLE ARNOT

Every night, it's the same nightmare. In it, Estrelle is vigilant, patrolling the perimeter around Bassham on horseback in the dead of night. Her rifle is loaded and at the ready. Suddenly, her horse bucks skittishly, and a heartbeat later the mount collapses, a poisoned arrow sticking out from its throat. Estrelle's senses switch into overdrive. She desperately scans the darkness for her attackers, expecting a highwaymen assault at any moment. Instead, drones come crashing from the underbrush. She fires a salvo. Then another. Dozens of hands grab her and pin her to the ground, tearing the clothes from her body. Suddenly, a bloated, naked man with a terrifying wooden mask is on top of her, entering her. Estrelle writhes in pain, unable to scream. Her lungs won't work.

Then she wakes up, drenched in sweat. Her memories are fractured. From one day to the next, she's completely changed. The Executioner who she has served diligently for years no longer understands her behavior. He has no use for a vomiting Judge so close to the frontline and sends her back to Justitian. When she arrives, her belly is already bulging. She has trouble hiding it under her coat. Old comrades want to know who fathered the child, and Estrelle panics. She flees to the Outskirts. As her belly swells, she misses out on more muster drills. She cannot work. Estrelle is avoiding the inevitable, trying to hide while her problem grows.

The only person she can trust is Joerdis, the Orphan Mother. She begs the Scrapper midwife to help her give birth. The delivery itself only takes a few minutes. Both women marvel at the child in the candlelight, overwhelmed by the baby's striking and unusual features. Estrelle wants to keep her son. She names him Metis.

Estrelle hides in an empty hut, caring for her newborn and guarding it. Her nightmare is almost forgotten. The love for her child overwhelms her. But she does not get to enjoy motherhood for long. A creature appears in the middle of the night, spindly and hideous. The monster towers in her chamber and demands the child. Its gland-covered torso throbs. Estrelle is so scared she cannot breathe, too afraid to move. With a hiss, the creature grabs the child and vanishes into the dark. Estrelle collapses.

ROLE PLAY

Estrelle is only a shadow of her former self. In the wake of the abduction of her son, she has taken up office as a Judge again, but only because she believes it will further her in finding him in the maze of the streets. Her maternal instinct tells her that Metis is still in Justitian.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Hermit, Judge, Rank 2: City Judge
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 6D, Toughness 4D, Stamina 4D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 4D, Expression 4D, Legends 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 4D, Perception 3D, Primal 3D, Survival 3D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 1, Network 1, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Mother's Intuition (She has a heightened sense of smell due to her child's influence, +1D to PSY+Reaction and INS+Empathy when dealing with others as she dimly senses their emotions)
POTENTIALS: Hammer Blow 1, Ether Call 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 6 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Judgement Hammer, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Blunt, Impact (3T); Flintlock Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Mag. 1 Muzzle Loader;
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Judge's coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 5/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Blanket her child was swaddled in (still marked with pheromones: anyone who has also encountered Markurant immediately recognises the scent); Broken cross pendant from Bassham; Crude scarf air filter (Sealed, +1S)

THE VESSEL

Estrelle's body was the vessel of rebirth for Markurant, the Pheromancer King. Nobody knows why Estrelle was chosen. After the birth, the Pheromancer Itis picked up the scent of his King and kidnapped his newborn mortal shell to bring him back to Bassham.

Chaos reigns in Estrelle's head. She's drowning in sorrow for her son, but at the same time she's unable to trust anybody, so she carries this burden alone. Ceaselessly she hunts for potential tracks of the creature, tearing her hair out crying, and in the end finds herself jumping at nothing more than shadows. Her heart aches for her child, threatening to be torn apart should she fail in finding her Metis. Joerdis is her only ally. The Scrapper midwife, being the only other soul who has actually seen the child, has recognized his uniqueness. He is no ordinary child. She aids the young Judge and helps her search the perimeter of the Defiler Streets in the Outskirts. To no avail...

CONSPICUOUS

The Preservist Cerval watches the Defiler Streets in the Outskirts, always on the lookout for fugitive Spitalians from Bassham. But he has grown suspicious of Estrelle and Joerdis, who turn up there night after night. Both women behave in a conspicuous manner. The Judge doesn't look like she is hunting for suspects, and the Scrapper doesn't match his image of a Jurywoman. Cerval decides to take a closer look at what they're up to, follows the Scrapper back to her orphanage. There, a bone-chilling thought creeps up on the Preservist. Perhaps the two women are looking for children to steal for the orphanage...



WORTMANN, THE HEATHEN

No other Judge lends himself as a mentor as keenly as Advocate Wortmann. He loves to explain his view of things to the young, and he has a whole fucking lot to say. Even the simple fact that it's so cold your testicles could freeze off is enough material for him to dive headlong into an erudite speech that takes up the entire evening. Blessed are they who stand above him in the hierarchy and can therefore leave the room with impunity. But his Vagrants are trapped with him. With sleepy eyes, they are obliged to watch him talk animatedly with flamboyant gestures as he covers the most boring of topics comprehensively and in great detail. While his incessant droning causes his listeners to slip into Morpheus' realm, Wortmann is usually so enthralled by his own monologue that he hardly notices. If only they had heeded the warnings that called the Advocate as dangerous as a Dushani.

Wortmann dislikes the sobriquet "the Heathen", and could provide dozens of reasons why one's personality and reputation should not be marred by a single, rashly chosen nickname. The truth of the matter is, however, he has earned it. He's an avowed enemy of all sects in Justitian believing in divine super-beings – meaning the Jehammedans and the Anabaptists. He is still undecided about the Chroniclers, and believes that their position should be thoroughly discussed within the Judiciary. If he could only find someone willing to fence with him verbally.

This is Wortmann's real talent. As an Arbiter, he's an unparalleled rhetorician. He can win any lawsuit, being able to analyze even the most insignificant paragraph from a new angle and reinterpret it in a way that helps him enforce the rights of his client. Those who want to conquer the mills of justice need Wortmann by their side. In his office in the Stukov Quarter, citizens line up to gain his legal counsel or be represented by him in court. Ardon and the Cooperative have started using Wortmann as a representative for their concerns as Providers, and the Arbiter treats this task like an honorable duty. The current fragile alliance between Spitalians and Judges seems unlawful to him, as it is eroding the core tenets that the Codex lists as sacrosanct. It is a violation of the principles of Justitian's constitutional state and must therefore be eradicated.

ROLE PLAY

Wortmann is an incorruptible dogmatist, who fiercely defends his principles and is only accountable to the law. In his world, any deviation from the Codex opens up a breeding ground for corruption and gives rise to a collapse of the system – two things he actively fights with all the power his office bestows him.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Chosen, Judge, Rank 4: Arbiter
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 1 CHA: 3 INT: 6 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 2D, Toughness 3D, Navigation 3D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 3D, Stealth 2D, Conduct 9D, Expression 8D, Negotiation 9D, Focus 10D, Legends 10D, Medicine 6D, Science 8D, Cunning 7D, Domination 7D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 8D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 3, Renown 3, Resources 4
SPECIAL: Master Orator (Dura Lex applies in verbal conflicts, regenerating Ego for every topic of discussion instead of every Combat Round)
POTENTIALS: Dura Lex 3
INITIATIVE: 4D / 20 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Old Letter Opener, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 3; Hidden Revolver, Projectiles 4D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 6, Mag. 5, Camo (2C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Ducking away), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Full length poncho, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Arbiter Badge; Case file on the Judge-Spitalian alliance; Large collection of past cases; Codex, Special Edition; Briefcase with velvet cladding for storing his collection of works by Bygone authors

ADAMANT

Wortmann is as stubborn and uncompromising as a block of granite. If he catches wind of a piece of legislation that he deems to be unlawful, he will stop at nothing until it has been amended and the issue rectified.

Advocates who envy his position try to damage his reputation with made up stories. Tons of ludicrous rumors surround the Arbiter, who would tackle even the Senates single-handedly just to be right after all.

The Heathen is notorious for his perseverance, but despite his immense and undeniable talent, many of the Advocates take pleasure in cutting him down. Their most egregious offense? They deny him the chance to marry into one of the five Advocate families and thus bar him from attaining a higher office. Wortmann as a High Judge or even a Senator would be a nightmare for the whole Judiciary.

EQUALITY

All are equal in the eyes of the law. For Wortmann, there is no exception to this. As one of only a few Advocates in Justitian, it makes no difference to him what Cult a client may belong to. He represents Apocalyptics, Providers, and the old Clans of the Stukov Quarter alike. Wortmann is not afraid to take the side of a Scrapper or defend ancient rights of settlement for the Jehammedans.



BLACK MARY

Life is a dead-end street from which there is no escape. Sometimes, one erroneous decision is all it takes, and from that point on everything hangs in the balance. For most, there are no second chances once such a wrong step has been made.

Mary was once entangled with the Reformists, a secret splinter group that was preparing for a revolution. She had come to believe that the development of the Judgedom had taken a wrong turn somewhere along the way. In the beginning, it all had been so promising, when there was no army of complacent scribes or wildly growing Codex. The only things that were necessary were a man and his hammer. The Reformists wanted to turn back time– to leave behind the painstaking bureaucracy and reinstate the Judges with more freedom and power to implement their own decisions.

But it was not meant to be. The nascent rebellion was exposed and brutally quelled before it even had a chance to begin. There was certainly no way out for Mary. As the ringleader of the ill-fated movement, the rope awaited her. To her surprise, however, the death sentence was never issued. On the night before her execution, someone snuck into the prison, unlocked her cell and let her escape.

Rutgar was the man behind it all. He was interested in reforming Mary, in taking her out of the underground and showing her a new way. He sent Mary's profile to Iwanov, who intercepted the fugitive Protector and issued her with a new identity.

On behalf of Rutgar, Iwanov became her instructor. He turned her into a proper assassin, a Black Judge, who now had the skills to see her beliefs put into action. Mary was an ambitious pupil. Unquestioningly, she accepted Iwanov's ideology, now seeing murder as a means to an end made legal by the infallibility of the Codex. In the end, a book is only a text, the text is a law, the law is a claim to moral superiority, and as such, is irrefutable if it's guided by a strong hand. If the hand falters, the whole system does. Mary realized that brute force might be the only way to implement the fundamental principle of justice. Without deviation. As her new life was gaining strength and momentum her old one faded. As a Black Judge, she had finally found the power to enforce the real change that she had been searching for.

ROLE PLAY

Mary's heart is as cold as a crypt. She lives for her ideology. Feelings for her fellow humans would only get in her way. Once upon a time, she had risked everything for her vision of a reformed Judgedom, and it had almost resulted in her death sentence. Instead, she has been given a new life. She remains deeply indebted to Rutgar for this.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Healer, Judge, Rank 4: Black Judge
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 4D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 7D, Dexterity 7D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 9D, Conduct 8D, Expression 7D, Engineering 5D, Legends 7D, Science 5D, Cunning 6D, Deception 8D, Domination 7D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 7D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 3, Resources 2, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Bottom feeder (+1D to INS+Perception in the Bottomlands)
POTENTIALS: Ambidextrous 3, Dura Lex 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Submachine Gun and Revolver, Projectiles 4D/4D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7/10, Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3);
Combat Knife, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Kevlar jacket, Armor 4, Bulletproof (7)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Variety of disguises and false identities; Black Site key; Assortment of listening devices; Radio transmitter

GUARD DUTY

Everything about Mary's life as a Black Judge is new. Her name, her apartment, her territory. Rutgar had her old citizenship papers burnt and personally destroyed all files that contained her name. After a few years, once the memory of her had faded and all evidence of existence was gone, his Black Judge was finally ready to be deployed.

She has spent her time since then watching people the Old Wolf considers valuable and wants to protect from acts of revenge or other assassins. Not because he especially likes these people, but because their death would help his rivals and enemies.

Recently, Mary has been tasked with guarding Elias Ramon, a renegade Village Doctor who has turned the public hospital in the Bottomlands into a refugee camp, and in doing so has angered the whole Spitalian Cult.

Her mission is to inconspicuously see to it that he is not assassinated. Mary is an excellent bodyguard. She has worn countless disguises so that she can stake out her territory and watch Ramon's back around the clock. The situation is tense.

She can only hope that the Spitalians won't assign Preservists to kill Ramon, for this would complicate her task enormously.

INVENTORY

FALSE LEADS

Not even in death can the Black Judges be compromised. Mary's disguises are carefully considered, down to even carrying false evidence to lead anyone investigating her corpse to the wrong target. On her current mission she carries a letter allegedly written by a Cartel Officer, filled with instructions to keep an eye on Ramon and ensure he stays alive long enough for Bosch to find a use for him. No Judge would stop to consider the details before leaping at the chance to get back at the Dwarven King. Identity secured.



IWANOV

For years, Iwanov has lived in the wasteland in disguise, eating dirt amongst the Clanners, constructing various false identities for himself, and using them to act as a spy throughout the Protectorate. He has managed to trudge around cities and fulfill his tasks without ever leaving a trace. Senator Tiagó died from a well-aimed bullet to the right eye, the Streamer Recall choked to death on the blood flowing from his smashed nose, and a Protector whose sick craving for children could never be proven was killed by Iwanov from up close – with 162 knife thrusts.

The list of his victims is long, but to him they are all just notches in the barrel of his rifle. Iwanov does what the legal system can't. He has terminated low-lifes when there was no other way to convict them, when the Codex or their social status protected them from the justice of the law. This is exactly what Rutgar created the alliance of the Black Judges for. Nameless, faceless avengers who can act above the law, owing explanations to no one. Even Rutgar doesn't know his best hired killer. He gives him orders via an ancient radio device Iwanov had sent to him years ago. Meanwhile, Iwanov trains new Black Judges himself, recruiting people who display the same core beliefs and have nothing left to lose. He gives their life new purpose, something worth aspiring to – and describes it as a unique opportunity to do something meaningful.

At this point, Rutgar has handed over the command of the Black Judges to Iwanov completely. The Old Wolf acts only as their sponsor and informer these days, but Iwanov does the dirty work. He prepares all the assaults with his team, distributes resources and leads operations. He is now the head of sixty-four of these secret agents, who are spread across Justitian and all the other cities of the Protectorate. In those rare cases when he needs to pool all their strength, he is able to assemble a task force of up to six Black Judges within hours. These effective, fast-hitting squads know how to quickly intervene anywhere in the Protectorate. He himself, however, prefers to work alone.

ROLE PLAY

Iwanov is the embodiment of faceless revenge. He is a man without a past or future. He is solely focused on the task at hand, on this present moment. It is his duty to serve true justice to those who have become untouchable for the Codex. His humanity was the price he had to pay for this honor. He has stored his pity and his remorse in a drawer, along with his fading memories of his former self. They have been replaced with cold-blooded, unbiased justice.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Traditionalist, Judge, Rank 4: Black Judge
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 6 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 5 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 9D, Force 9D, Melee 8D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 8D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 9D, Mobility 11D, Projectiles 11D, Stealth 10D, Conduct 5D, Expression 4D, Negotiation 4D, Legends 6D, Science 4D, Cunning 7D, Deception 7D, Dominate 8D, Faith 8D, Reaction 10D, Perception 9D, Primal 9D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 4, Resources 4, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Leader of the Black Judges
POTENTIALS: Pit Fighter 3, Tough as Nails 3, Dura Lex 3
INITIATIVE: 10D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Anti-matériel Rifle with Sight, Projectiles 11D, Distance 50/500m, Damage 14, Mag. 5, Piercing (4), Sensitive, Thunder Strike;
Pistol, Projectiles 11D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag. 12; Combat Knife, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 11D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Reinforced kevlar jacket, Armor 5, Bulletproof (7)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Black Site key; Receiver with Black Radio connection to Rutgar; Anti-matériel sniper rifle, a relic from the City Wars

PIT FIGHTER

There are only few activities that Iwanov allows himself to indulge in when he has spare time to fill. The only thing that he really takes pleasure in are pit fights, and his love for them is a weakness that continues to put him at risk. These illegal, life-threatening Cartel events are Iwanov's only spark of life.

Even though it means potentially exposing himself, he can't deny himself the thrill of the fight. Time and time again he has gone back to the pit, each time under a different false identity. It's Iwanov's only chance to stand against another man in a duel instead of fighting like a dirty assassin from the shadows.

Every time he enters the ring he hopes to face an opponent that is able to best him and rightfully deliver him from his sins so he may finally stop killing.

Evidently, this showdown hasn't happened yet. Instead, Iwanov ends up having himself disqualified after the preliminaries in order to avoid drawing too much attention to his fighting skills, and thus endangering his disguise.

INVENTORY

BLACK ARSENALS

Iwanov stashes weapons and equipment that even the Shutters with their access to sanctioned technology can only dream of. In the wasteland, he has dozens of hide-outs for his equipment. Iwanov is an expert at being an underground militant. He knows to hide his tools in rarely frequented regions that are filled with Scrapper runes, which signify that an area has already been searched and plundered of anything valuable. In Justitian alone he has six apartments in various neighborhoods that serve as safe houses and storage units for weapons. There, he keeps Bygone bazookas, guns, grenades, remote control combat drones, and targeting and tracking devices. They are remnants of the City Wars that Iwanov has recovered and collected over the years. He equips his Black Judges from these caches.

Additionally, he owns countless disguises which he wears like a second skin, changing them as needs dictate, depending on his operations.



CLANNERS

OLD WOUNDS

The descendants of Exalt's warlords have dispersed into many Clans, but their hatred of Justitian is stronger than ever and together they form a united front. They lust after Justitian's demise, longing for brightly lit funeral pyres on which the conceit of the Judiciary is finally brought to an end.

Beside the Scrappers, the Clanners represent the largest population stratum of Justitian. Among them are the assimilated Clans of the Black Lung as well as indigenous locals who lived and worked in the countryside in many small farmhouses and villages. Chained up by Big Brother Justitian and dragged into the Protectorate, few were able to preserve their cultural roots. In the evening, the families gather at the fireplace in the kitchen and tell the ancient tales of great battles and sky-storming ancestral spirits over a bubbling cauldron of milk porridge. But internally, their heads overflow with everyday worries: will the harvest be completely certified this autumn? Are there enough Drafts to reward the Juryman for handling their current affairs? Worries created by Judges and resolved by Judges - so many mundane problems that they leave no room for the traditions of the past.

RURAL EXODUS

Old rituals are suddenly banned, the water from the village well may no longer be drawn without permission, fences trace borders across the Rubble. The Judges smash and rebuild. Everything now has its order, everything is locked down. Justitian looks contentedly at a forest of milestones that blankets the Protectorate. If the grouchy farmer wants to tend his field, as he did decades ago and his ancestors for centuries before him, he should hurry up and make his way to Uptown to sign his name in the land registry. But only if he can place the necessary bundle of Drafts next to it and someone else hasn't already claimed the right to his parcel.

The land reform of the Judges and the certification policy of the Spitalians shakes the rural youth. They watch their parents and grandparents toil in the dust, as they put their exhausted limbs to rest on a hard straw mat in the evenings, only to climb back into the treadmill the next day. The fledglings are afraid to stare at the ruins of their past in old age and grumble "If I could only be young again".

Instead, they're drawn to the city. Into the surge, into a life that is so colorful, so fast and so different from everything that their parents have experienced. But the recruiters are already waiting at the gates, fishing fresh and inexperienced laborers from the crowds. Off they go to the next workshop, to a Defiler Street or into a Scrapper district! Lease and tax are waiting to be paid and the empty stomach needs to filled! Too late, the newcomers realize that the promised city life is just another treadmill, but unlike that of their parents this treadmill is forged from steel and runs like clockwork.

At least back in the fields, when one would drive the hoe into the topsoil next to their siblings they still had the feeling of freedom. In Justitian they are always bound by the shackles of society. Once part of the system, there is no escape.

BRENNI

The healer dynasties of the old days came together under the banner of the Brenni. Before the Spitalians took control and imprinted their way of healthcare and hygiene onto the population, the Brenni guarded the knowledge of medicine and healing and stood by the Judges. However, with the establishment of public hospitals in the city, the Spitalians deprived the Brenni of the medical license and the Clan was pushed to the brink of insignificance. As a result, many converted to the Neognosis and became Ascetics moving toward Liqua, Spicafield, Bassham, and Cathedral City. Brennen, the former apothecary district, lay bare and abandoned until it was swallowed up by its neighbor, the Stukov Quarter.

STUKOVS

Stukovs can trace their ancestral lineage back to the Great Cartographer, the first one who passed through the Black Lung and baptized the places and landscapes with the names they are commonly referred to today. Janus Crater, Stukov Desert, Ferropol, he was the namesake and the Stukovs are his successors. Today they compose the largest indigenous Clan on Justitian's soil by far, though little of the feeling of the great family of yore has survived.

After the Judges proclaimed the Protectorate they converted the former core of the Stukov settlement, the Old Fortress, into a garrison. It was only decades later that the Judges would hand the cultural center back to the original owners. As a sign of appreciation, of course.

PROVIDERS

The Providers are not a coherent Clan. Rather, it is the name assigned by the Judiciary to all peasant families who settle in the Rubble. The common name was meant to create a level of identity and togetherness that their fragmented lineage was unable to offer. The Providers restock the Moloch with grain, milk, and meat and secure the basic supply of the city.

STEEL MASTERS

History is written by the victors. After Exalt's downfall, the Judges claimed the spoils of war that befell them. Ferropol was a treasury waiting to be sacked, for it was the core of Exalt's war machine. The local Steel Masters were expropriated and the victors deported them as slaves to Justitian. Their task was to settle the Steel Monolith and expand it into a weapons factory. To this day the arsenals the Protectorate relies upon when defending both its borders and its interests are produced here.

CITIZENS

A wrinkled piece of paper, frayed at the edges, covered with small writing and cobalt blue stamps; these are the citizenship papers. Anyone who can pull them from their pocket and present them at the request of a Judge can call themselves special, confirming that they are one gear in the engine of the Protectorate. Valuable, and privileged.

Citizens live in the certified neighborhoods of the city. They are entitled to fresh water and get their meat and root vegetables from the food distribution centers. If a staggering fatso with bright red cheeks stumbles through the streets, one can be sure that he carries citizenship papers in his pocket.

In the Rubble, there are many large families who live and work together on a farmstead. In comparison, the ordinary citizen family resembles a branchless tree trunk: five or six family members share a flat. The grandparents often live outside in the Protectorate cities, those who can't work have no business in Justitian. In this way many Clans are torn apart.

Families with a pedigree that can be traced back to the founding days of Justitian are rare, but influential. The oldest of them can be found in Uptown. Their members work mostly as scribes or Jurymen for the Judges, while others have distinguished themselves as traders or have been absorbed by the Advocate families.

NAMELESS

Not every Clanner belongs to a family compound, or can name a Clan from which they descend and whose traditions they maintain. Such independents are listed in Justitian's offices and city books as Nameless. They pose no threat. In the eyes of the Judiciary, they are seedlings that can be easily repotted before they take root and sprout twigs.

AMBASSADORS

Every day, ambassadors from remote villages, self-styled principalities, or city-states stand in the Forecourt and demand an audience with Justitian's leaders. They come from Franka, the Adriatic lowlands, and the rugged Balkhan. Only a few are granted the favor of having their words heard.

Those petitioners who are considered useful by the Judges may eventually move into the Ambassador Quarter in Uptown and will henceforth act as the official representative of their community. They are now in direct contact with the leaders of the Cults, who also reside in Uptown. Here they negotiate with the Judges, Chroniclers, Spitalians, Hellvetics, and Neolibyans alike over the future of their peoples and form political alliances.



ATAMA

They call him the Red Bull, the Unbreakable, the Savage Without a Past. The names are part of the mythos that surrounds Atama. For years, he has dominated the pit fights with ease, remaining the most triumphant champion of the Cartel. He emerged victorious out of nine final fights, seven of which were ended by a killing blow in the first minute. No one can halt this force of nature.

But once Atama washes the red war paint off his body, clads himself in an unassuming grey robe, and goes about his daily business in Brennen, he is unrecognizable. He traces his lineage back to the ancient Brenni Clan that settled in the Black Lung long before Justitian existed in its current state. In his district, the people know Atama as a good-natured giant, who produces home remedies to help with common illnesses and knows all kinds of medical tricks to cure people from their infirmities. Atama utilizes acupuncture, places hot stones on infected tissue, and heals rheumatism with herbal oils. His knowledge is based on the traditions of his Clan and his clientele trusts him far more than they do the Spitalians.

With the death of his father, he took over the family's old apothecary rituals, expanding the formulas and experimenting with their chemical composition. Atama developed a highly potent anabolic agent - the secret of his success. Few people know the potential of the steroid cocktail. Growth hormones are boosted, testosterone levels skyrocket, and muscle density increases drastically. Anyone who takes a hit of this stuff invariably transforms into a colossus and rejuvenates at the same time. As a matter of fact, Atama is already over fifty winters old, yet he has lost none of his youthful prowess and speed. The only ones who share his secret are the Bear Brothers - lawless Scrappers that terrorized the wasteland for many years, and whose tales became intertwined with Justitian's folklore.

For Atama, the pit fights are a way to test the limits of his anabolic. Although he fights for the Cartel, he tries to stay out of their business as much as he can. He uses the prize money he receives from the finals to acquire rare chemicals with which he can optimize his formulas. In truth, Atama is preparing for something else entirely. He wants to take revenge on the Spitalians responsible for his father's death.

ROLE PLAY

Atama unites two souls in his chest - one a helpful apothecary, the other the unbreakable pit fighter. Switching between them is as effortless as breaking his enemies.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Clanners: Brenni, Rank 5: Champion
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 6 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 10D, Brawl 12D, Force 12D, Melee 7D, Stamina 11D, Toughness 12D, Crafting 5D, Mobility 10D, Arts 5D, Conduct 6D, Artifact Lore 7D, Medicine 8D, Science 7D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 9D, Empathy 7D, Perception 6D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Red Bull: When wearing his pit fighter war paint, his Network and Renown grow to 6. Even without the war paint, though, he can sometimes be recognised, and takes a -2D penalty to attempts to blend in
POTENTIALS: Pit Fighter 3, Goliath 3, Tough as Nails 3, Moving Mountains 2, Undefeatable 3, Elephant Skin 3
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Studded Gloves, Brawl 12D (+5S), Distance 1m, Damage 10, Blunt; Kick, Brawl 12D (+1S), Distance 1m, Dazed (9) or Damage 9
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 12D (+5S); Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Willpower 9D
MOVEMENT: 10m
ARMOR: Elephant Skin, Armor 3, -3D CHA+Seduction
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 24, Trauma 9 (+4)
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Explosives and contact poisons for the revolution; Pharmacological library and laboratory (+3D on INT+Science or Medicine)

A DROP OF POISON

The Spitalians desecrated the traditions of the Brenni and deprived Atama's father of the license for his business. The old man died in poverty. For years, Atama made every effort to rebuild his father's legacy and nourished a hatred for the Spitalians in his heart. When Cinnamon introduces him to her plan to prepare for revolution in Justitian, Atama does not hesitate. He distills the contact poison with which the terrorist cell plans to execute the Advocates and develops the explosives for the pipe bombs

ATAMA'S LAB

In the basement of his small apothecary, in an inconspicuous backyard of Brennen, lies Atama's laboratory. The storage is filled with every kind of acid and toxin that the giant could get hold of. Darwin, the poisoner of the Dust Riders, also supplies Atama with exotic goods and the leftovers from raids that end up in the Flotsam. The walls of the laboratory are covered with city maps of Justitian, highlighting vulnerable spots: public hospitals, patrol paths of the Spitalians through Downtown, supply roads, and escape routes. Cinnamon's cell meets here week after week, preparing their attacks.

INVENTORY

ANABOLIC AGENT

Atama's steroids fuel the metabolism. Decades of abuse have bolstered Atama's resilience and given him his legendary strength. Atama can use up to (4) Ego Points per Combat Round for Initiative rolls and regenerates (1) Ego Point per Round in combat once the adrenaline level increases.

From the third Combat Round onward, testosterone rages through Atama's veins and the penalty for Trauma Damage is eliminated. Not only that, but his increased vitality allows him to endure (4) additional points of Trauma Damage.

From the sixth Combat Round onward, Atama's body begins to overheat and his veins contract. Every additional Combat Round he must succeed on a roll of BOD+Stamina (4). If he rolls a Botch, Atama suffers a fatal cerebral hemorrhage and dies (4) Rounds later



CINNAMON

Cinnamon's parents died in a hail of bullets from the Judges. During a failed hostage-taking in the Stukov Quarter, they were caught in the crossfire of the Protectors. The Advocates callously classified the fatality as collateral damage. Years later, Cinnamon's brother found himself in the Cleft due to a petty crime, after he dared to openly defy a Protector. He lost his life on a punitive expedition to the Ice Barrier.

Cinnamon loathed the Judges and Chroniclers. They alone were responsible for all the terrible suffering and the relentless oppression. They spat on the dignity of the ancient Clans, eroded their traditions, separated families, desecrated their native territories, and plundered their graves. To them, nothing was sacred.

Alone she was powerless against this Moloch. She had to remind herself of her origins. A long time ago, the Stukovs and Brenni were proud warriors of the Black Lung. Here, in the midst of today's Protectorate, they had survived the City Wars, at a time when the Judges were nothing but a puny village militia. She observed the system, analyzed how fragile it was. Everything was functioning only because everyone was going about their daily business and nobody questioned anything at all. But just as a single stone is enough to trigger an avalanche, only the smallest spark is needed to set the fires of the revolution ablaze. However, it would have to occur simultaneously at carefully selected locations or there would be no chance of success. Cinnamon started looking for dissidents who shared her views. Ardon with his Cooperative and Elias Ramon had already defied the city in their own way, but neither went far enough. Only perfectly aimed attacks directed at the most vulnerable points would rock the system at its core. A task that could only be fulfilled by a secret terror cell.

Cinnamon gathered a handful of like-minded individuals, all of whom were proud to trace their bloodline back to the old Clans. Together with her rebels she conceived a plan. A double strike was necessary. Poisoned letters to the heads of the Advocate families and attacks on the Uptown elevators as well as the aerial railway would bring the city to its knees in a single day. The Jehammedans had demonstrated the technique with their attack on the Colossus years ago, but they had failed to deliver the final blow while the wounds were fresh. Cinnamon won't allow the same mistake to happen here.

ROLE PLAY

Cinnamon is a rebel who understands that sacrifices must be made to achieve her goals. Only when Justitian's foundation has been shattered can the city be resurrected under the rule of the ancient Clans.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Destroyer, Clanners: Stukov, Rank 3: Saboteur
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 2 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 4D, Force 4D, Melee 5D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 4D, Dexterity 6D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 7D, Expression 5D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 7D, Focus 7D, Legends 6D, Science 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Faith 5D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 7D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 2, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Under the radar: +2D on BOD+Athletics and AGI+Stealth in order to hide away in the Stukov Quarter
POTENTIALS: Herald 3
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Knife with Contact Poison, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T), Poisoned (5C, 1 Trauma per Round, Triggers from BOD+Toughness reduce Potency); Blowgun, Projectiles 5D, Distance 3/12m, Damage 4, Mag. 1, Dazed (6)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Evade), Mobility 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 8D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Fur coat, armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Steel disc with dragon motif (gift from Khaleb); 5 poisoned letters for the revolution

THE FINAL ACT

Cinnamon is prepared. She has never been targeted by any of the Chronicler's screening patterns, nor is she registered on the Judges' most wanted lists. In the shadow of the Cults, with her tiny five member cell, she has laid the groundwork for the grand finale.

She applied Atama's contact poison to five letterheads and addressed them to the leaders of the Advocate families. On the day of the reckoning, the Scrapper Sorrow is supposed to deliver them to the various domiciles, as fast as possible, so that the news of the death of the first Advocate can't reach another Advocate house as a premature warning.

To paralyze Uptown, additional human sacrifice is needed. At the beginning of every week, the Ropers deliver warped musket barrels recalled for repair to the Steel Monolith via the aerial railway. The muskets in one of those batches are dummies. They are in fact pipe bombs that Cinnamon will ignite halfway to the Monolith.

The final act reaches its climax with a member of Cinnamon's cell boarding the elevator platform as a suicide bomber. Once the Protectors scramble in panic over the destroyed aerial railway and reach the platform to bring Downtown under control, the assassin will blow himself up and drag a whole squad of Protectors with him to the afterlife. Only then will Cinnamon have made her mark.


CIVIS DE JUSTITIAN
DE JUSTITIAN

DAREV JUNGBAU

Nobody gets past Darev Jungbau. Sooner or later, anyone who wants to become a citizen of the great city will end up in the stifling waiting room of the Office of Locality in Uptown, staring for hours at yellowed walls, waiting for the door to Darev's office to finally open and receive them.

The mood is already charged when the guest enters the room late. Darev despises tardiness, and makes his distaste clear with a disgruntled greeting. What follows is a slow-moving conversation, a so-called review of personal data. Darev ruthlessly searches for gaps in the applicant's vita, questions the reason for their stay in the Protectorate, makes inquiries on the background of their family, checks political alignment, and notes deviations, all while crossing off boxes on a form.

Darev suddenly wants to know whether the petitioner has a guarantor who can vouch for them. Did they bring the naturalization tax of one hundred and fifty Drafts? Were they aware of their responsibilities within a civic society? It is an embarrassing interrogation. Darev pesters the applicant with questions, scribbles notes, and finally takes a few moments to decide the fate of the petitioner. No objections! Therein lies the true power of Darev's position. Whoever is not to his liking will be cast aside and thrown out of his office.

At his regular table in Brennen, he consults with old comrades about the values that a newcomer must represent to become a part of society. Together they compile a catalog dripping with prejudice, which summarizes their expectations toward the nature of a responsible citizen of Justitian. But these rules exist only in Darev's head, they cannot be evaluated by outsiders. Because of his obsession with detail Darev is held in high regard by the Judges, even if they would never allow for one like him to enter their ranks. As a stickler for the letter of the law, he would turn their lives into a hell on earth. Better to keep him off their back and direct his law-abiding nature towards something more useful.

ROLE PLAY

Darev classifies himself as a keen observer. Pedantically, he examines every discordant detail, puts words into people's mouths and strains the patience of petitioners. The more important the concern, the more time Darev takes for his task. The delay is a calculated provocation, Darev savors the feeling of holding a stranger's life in his hands. Only those who submit to his harassment will reap Darev's blessing.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traditionalist, Clanners: Jungbau, Rank 3: City Official
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Stamina 2D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 4D, Mobility 3D,
Arts 3D, Conduct 6D, Expression 6D, Leadership 4D, Negotiation 4D,
Focus 6D, Legends 7D, Science 7D, Cunning 5D, Domination 7D,
Faith 6D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 3D, Orienteering 4D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUND: Authority 3
SPECIAL: Can exercise Authority against all residents of Justitian, and is one of the few who can decide on whether someone should be made a citizen
POTENTIALS: Brainwave 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Physical violence is for boors and Anabaptists and therefore beneath him. If someone were to attack him anyway, the Iron Fist would respond with force.
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Get the hell out of here!), Mobility 3D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Robe, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Belt pouches with writing paper, ink, and pen; Signet ring of the officials; "The Model Citizen", a compilation of Darev's expectations of a good citizen in Justitian; "Codex Veritas", an amateurish imitation of a Codex filled with laws that Darev dreams up

CITY OFFICIAL

Not all members of the Advocate families are guaranteed to make the leap into the Judiciary. Those who fail in the exams nominally belong to the family, and instead of joining the Cult of the Judges they pursue a career as a city official. As part of the upper class, they are chosen by the Judges to hold the administrative offices of Justitian and oversee their bureaucracy. These officials declare themselves as the forerunners of the system and defend it to their last drop of blood. In this way, the Judges are spared from wasting their time with tiring bureaucratic work while these ankle-biters stick to the ready-made rules with an accuracy otherwise rivalling an Arbiter.

DAREV'S OFFICE

Darev's logbooks are an all-encompassing directory of names and cross-references collected from years of interrogations. For every suspicious person, he sets up a separate file in his office and forwards memos to Protectors and Advocates. Judges go in and out here, comparing their own leads on suspects with Darev's notes. For the Judiciary, Darev's passionate sophistry is a goldmine from which they can draw additional evidence about anything suspicious.

Day and night, the Office of Locality is guarded by a squadron of Protectors. While there are always outbursts of anger during office hours, especially when a citizen feels wronged, the real reason for the security guards is a different one. Rutgar fears that the Chroniclers want to seize Darev's records. That thought is not to the liking of the Old Wolf, not at all.



ARDON

Taking responsibility for a great cause demands just as great a sacrifice. Ardon sees himself as a symbol of such a sacrifice. He is the founder of the Cooperative, the political counterweight to the daily harassment by the Judges and Spitalians.

For too long, the Providers spoke with a divided voice. For the first time in history, they are now united under one banner. Ardon is the combined living mouthpiece of the Rubble and his followers want one thing above all: answers.

Uneasily, Ardon drums his fingers on the tabletop, trying to ignore the clamor of the farmers in the meeting hall. He does not succeed. Accusations are shouted back and forth, old family feuds revived once again. Idiots. The eternal drivel of the self-righteous tribal chieftains disgusts him. They adorn themselves with cheap rhinestones and wrap themselves in ragged mink, but their filthy fingernails reveal that they are the lowest of the low in society. They believe themselves to be powerful allies of the Judiciary, applauding themselves and taunting the Anabaptists - and understanding absolutely nothing.

There will be blood. Ardon knows that. Justitian is sensitively thin-skinned when it comes to feeding its people. Therein lies the only true power of the Cooperative. Ardon buttons his leather collar, inspects his reflection in a piece of broken glass and smoothes out an eyebrow. The Cooperative needs strong allies to expand its influence. Elias Ramon is already committed to Ardon's plan. Now he has to convince the Stukovs and the Brenni of his intentions and pull the Scrappers into the fold, bribing them with aid of the organisation's war chest.

Ardon plans interim storages in the Rubble - reinforced, semi-submerged silos. Ideally suited to be used as bunkers. Water pits as trenches, serving as cover against musket salvoes. He grins at his reflection. The time of rebellion will come soon. For the moment the Providers in the meeting hall are allowed to behave like spoiled brats, and throw balls filled with bile at each other's skulls. But as soon as he gives the command, the Cooperative will cease its grain deliveries and drag Uptown by force to the negotiating table. Only then will Archot realize that he can't eat his hammer for breakfast.

ROLE PLAY

The coarse Provider has nothing in common with a public speaker, but his words pierce the hearts of his listeners. He uses simple language, emphasizing emotions and uniting his followers ideologically. Politically, Ardon is a wolf, and his plans have turned him into public enemy number one.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Clanners: Providers, Rank 4: Founder
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 5 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 5D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 6D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 7D, Expression 8D, Leadership 9D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 7D, Engineering 6D, Focus 8D, Legends 8D, Science 5D, Cunning 7D, Domination 7D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 4, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 1
SPECIAL: Man of the Hour: Ardon's fame is growing by the day, and many have taken notice. If his Renown grows to 6, assassins will be sent to permanently silence him
POTENTIALS: Rebel 3 (Nemesis Cults: Judges, Chroniclers, Spitalians)
INITIATIVE: 5D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Whetted Axe, Melee 5D, Damage 7
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 5D; Ranged active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Provider leather armor, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Shoulder bag filled with Providers' complaints, deeds, and writs along with letters of support from various non-Cooperative allies; Maps containing the location of his interim storages in the Rubble

MORE DANGER, MORE HONOR

Ardon is on the kill list of several Cults and they are betting on who will be the first to take his head. The leader of the Cooperative has brought his adversaries to the end of their tethers. His family is being shadowed, his friends wiretapped. Anything the Judges, Chroniclers, and Spitalians can do to limit his reach is being done.

But Ardon is not deterred. The tighter the noose pulls around his neck, the more offensive his actions become. Surrounded by hundreds of onlookers he delivers fiery speeches on the Forecourt on Sundays, poking Justitian's leadership right in the centre of their power. His followers grow with every passing day. Now, more than 120 Provider families from the Rubble support the Cooperative, and recently even citizens started joining this movement.

Elias Ramon is one of Ardon's closest allies. Both men have one common goal in mind: to reform the system and to improve living conditions for those who are on the receiving ends of society's ills. Elias and Ardon meet regularly and debate how to pool their energies. They see themselves as martyrs, ready to lead the fight to the last drop of blood, but this is also their biggest difference. While Ramon loathes violence, Ardon is a man of action who is fully prepared to start a revolution if needs be.



SPRENGER

The face of Sprenger's sister has burnt itself into his retina forever. Her face, white as porcelain and framed by writhing tongues of flame. She screams, her hands stretched out as she disappears underneath the burning wooden beams tumbling from the collapsing ceiling. He sees her trembling forearm jutting from the rubble, but the fire is so unbearably hot that Sprenger has no choice but to retreat.

Decades have passed since then. Sprenger is now a well respected man and the commanding officer of the Fire Watch. The attic of his family home is bursting with trivial awards. If he could, he'd cast them all into a smelter and call it a day. All the pointless decorations and engraved medals awarded to him by Archot are meaningless. To him, the only thing that matters is the lives he's rescued, because for every soul that he fails to save he is forced to relive the moment of his sister's death, time and again.

Justitian itself is a powder keg, the building fabric so dilapidated and the quarters squeezed so densely together that during the dry summer months just one spark is enough to erupt into a major fire. Especially in the Bottomlands and Tech-Central, both of which are prone to recurring dust explosions which blast through the streets, wreaking havoc and claiming dozens of lives. The trail of destruction left by such a fire is catastrophic and can usually only be contained with the help of the quarter's inhabitants. Oftentimes bodies burned beyond recognition are recovered from the smoldering debris days later, keeping the undertakers busy with digging new mass graves out in Rubble. Sprenger and his firefighters do everything in their power to highlight hotspots and plead with the Judges and Spitalians to set up more water towers within the city limits. Uptown only reacts with diversions and delays. They refuse to entangle themselves with new commitments and additional dependencies with either the Anabaptists or Liqua. They decree that the Fire Watch shall instead make use of sand, red crater dust and salt from the Stukov Desert to fight the flames and lower the expenses. Sprenger's men sigh, exhausted. Always the same excuses...

ROLE PLAY

Sprenger saves lives. It's the only job he knows and he is fully prepared to die for it. When the officer of the firefighters enters a tavern in full gear and accompanied by his crew, the guests raise a raucous toast to him. Sprenger is uncomfortable with the attention. He considers his work a solemn duty, not a magnet for self-admiration.

CLOSE COMPANY

Sprenger never cared much for relationships and avoided marrying any of his previous love-affairs. There was always the fear of one day getting killed on a mission and leaving a grieving widow behind.

That all changed when Sprenger met Cinnamon. He was charmed by the young Stukov. Her crude humor and passionate kisses clouded Sprenger's mind. When he buried himself in her arms late at night, he talked about his work and how vulnerable the city was. He recalled all of the danger zones discovered by his crew and how fast a theoretical inferno could spread if a fire was to break out at any of these points. Bit by bit, he revealed to Cinnamon every weakness in Justitian's construction while she memorized all the details. On the day of her rebellion, she'll put this knowledge to good use.

Sprenger himself is overwhelmed by his feelings for Cinnamon. If only he knew what the woman by his side was planning.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Martyr, Clanners: Stukov, Rank 4: Fire Watch Officer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 4D, Force 7D, Melee 6D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 8D, Crafting 6D, Mobility 5D, Firearms 6D, Conduct 5D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 5D, Engineering 5D, Legends 5D, Science 6D, Domination 5D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 7D, Primal 8D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 7D
BACKGROUND: Allies 2, Network 1, Renown 3, Resources 1
SPECIAL: Regenerates (1) Ego for each person he saves from death by fire; Sprenger has been granted citizenship status due to his position in the Fire Watch, and gains +2D to all social interaction when wearing his uniform
POTENTIALS: Could be Worse 2, Moving Mountains 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Fire Axe, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 8, Impact (2T), Whetting, Balancing, Standard (+1D Mental Defense for citizens of Justitian)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Fire Watch Uniform, Armor 3, Fire Resistant (6)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Fire hose and water tank backpack; Cast iron medal from Archot, "Defender of Justitian"; Polished silver ring (a gift he plans to give to Cinnamon)

INVENTORY

FIRE HARNESS

Fabricated by the Manufacturers and issued to the Fire Watch, the fire harness is the only protection for Sprenger and his crew when they rush into a blazing hell to save human lives. All that stands between the firefighters and a burning oblivion is an asbestos reinforced jacket, heavy armor plates, and a small breathing apparatus. The iconic colors of the harness and the red helmet are known throughout the whole city. Anyone who wears one of these uniforms will receive free food in every tavern in any of the citizen quarters.



VUKODLAK

At the western edge of the Guest Quarter lies Vukodlak's house. Neighbors know him as a peculiar and solitary man, living in a mansion surrounded by high walls. At night, the howls of Gendos echo from within the courtyard.

Exhilarating rumours swirl around Vukodlak. Some say that he once dragged himself through the Black Lung as a Scrapper and had recovered ancient writings. Others claim to know that he was a leader of the Enemoi, before they exiled him due to a love affair with a condemned woman. Still others believe they saw him in the garb of the Judges, decades ago. Then there are the rumours about his estate: a bottomless basement is supposed to lead straight to the center of the Earth where the accumulated knowledge of humanity is stored! The howling of the Gendos is the echo of the Bygones and their souls watch over this place!

The stories spun by the idle masses have little to do with Vukodlak's real history. It is not even certain if Vukodlak is his actual name. Nobody in the Quarter knows about his true noble origin. Once he was a Voivodule in line for the throne, but the crown drifted past him and he was forced to watch his arch rival Zlatan be proclaimed Voivode. The bitterness sat deep and Borca became his hiding place from disgrace. Vukodlak concealed himself amongst Justitian's population, exchanged the life he had once known for a life in the unknown. But time has turned him into an old and grumpy man who harbours a deep resentment for common people. Their talk and their lust for sensation disgusts him. If there was a medicine that could be administered against their gossiping, he would buy it by the truckload.

He feels much more connected to animals, which is why the Judges have entrusted him with the unique task of breeding and training Gendos to make them fit for tracking and fighting. So far, the results have been dismal, at best.

Twenty of these beasts live within the perimeter of his estate. They only submit to Vukodlak's orders, recognizing him as their alpha. Every intruder would be torn to shreds. That is why a security sluice leads from the entrance gate of the estate all the way up to Vukodlak's house.

ROLE PLAY

Vukodlak is a born cynic. No matter how good the suggestion, he'll stop at nothing to find the downside. Nothing ever satisfies his expectations. As an eternal grouch, he has an opinion on everything, without ever having to prove himself.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Hermit, Clanner: Voivodule, Rank X: Outlaw
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 5D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 6D, Conduct 5D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 4D, Engineering 4D, Legends 7D, Cunning 8D, Deception 9D, Domination 8D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D, Taming 10D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 3, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Blue-blooded (former Voivodule, +2D CHA+Leadership when interacting with other Balkhani)
POTENTIALS: Pariah 2, Beastmaster 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Voivodule Saber, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 9, Whetting, Balancing, Talisman (+1D Mental Defense when leading other Balkhani into combat)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 8D (9D)
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Padded frock and Gendo skins, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Gendo whistle (+2D on INS+Taming, only works with Vukodlak's Gendos)

DRIFTWOOD

The old curmudgeon is a regular guest in the Driftwood, the largest inn in the Guest Quarter and haven for many travelers. He sits there with his ears pursed in a dark corner and listens for Balkhani words. If he recognizes a conversation or a specific accent in his native tongue, he latches onto the newcomer like one of his Gendos on its prey. Then Vukodlak's otherwise gloomy nature lights up and he tries to strike up a conversation about the homeland, wanting to hear all the news about the region and blossoming with a thirst for knowledge.

INVENTORY

DOG WHISTLE

Vukodlak carries a Bygone dog whistle that emits a frequency only audible to Gendos. The sound is painful to the animals and Vukodlak uses the pipe as a means to punish and train his pack.

With the help of the whistle he has managed to tame the beasts in his presence, but this effect can not be transferred to other people. However, he won't reveal this secret to the Judges. He has convinced them that it is only a matter of time before he succeeds in raising the first trained fighting Gendo for them. The Protectors believe him and finance both his estate and the endless supply of food for the animals.

Sometimes Advocates visit Vukodlak's house accompanied by their offspring. From the security sluice, the children marvel at the wild creatures that roam freely on the grounds, wincing at every bark and growl.



BELMONDO

The fucking critters are fast, but Belmondo understands them. First, lure them in with a few bread crumbs, then strike them down with his spiked club. Even if some tough bastard survives the killing blow, which happens far too often, nothing can tear itself away from the brutal nails and escape. In that case, the problem is dealt with via swift application of one's boot. Crunch! Note: Never bring your hands anywhere near a skewered cat!

Belmondo skins the fattest corpses and sells them to dealers, the skinny ones he stuffs into his backpack and drops them into the cooking tubs at the Knacker's Office later on. "Keep stirring, please," he says, grinning at the soap makers. They never smile back. Maybe it's because of his sleazy, chummy attitude, or perhaps because he's been branded a murderer. Belmondo has no friends - "No, only my club." he corrects himself, and makes his way back to the city. It's hunting season.

He had long resigned himself to the fact that he would spend the rest of his life catching cats when he suddenly stumbled across a headless corpse in Tech-Central. "No clean cut," he recognized immediately, "but the work of a butcher." The head had been torn off the victim, only the tendons and cartilage were severed with a knife. Blood had spurted from the torso and meandered like a scarlet river delta through the grooves of the cobblestones. The Head Collector must still be nearby! In fact, Belmondo noticed the killer at a distance, saw his silhouette and the bright red Scrapper Rune emblazoned on his back. If he captured the killer now, then... The Judges would have no choice but to absolve their loyal undertaker of his crimes as an outlaw! But when he looked again for the culprit, there was no trace. Belmondo cursed and stomped on the floor in a fit of rage. He had missed his chance.

Since that fateful night, Belmondo's mind is locked on that single topic. Over the years, he has developed a sixth sense for being the first to discover the victims of the Head Collector. His forays through the Outskirts of Tech-Central were fairly similar to the routes of the notorious serial killer. However, Belmondo never saw him again, even though the corpses were always warm to the touch when he uncovered them. Belmondo will find him. He just has to.

ROLE PLAY

Belmondo is as dull as a broomstick and has as much empathy as an ice block. His work fills him with purpose, yet there is little else that is charismatic about the undertaker, especially not his screeching voice or his bestial stench.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Visionary, Clanners: Defilers, Rank X: Tainted One
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 2 CHA: 1 INT: 1 PSY: 1 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 7D, Force 9D, Melee 8D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 9D, Crafting 4D, Mobility 4D, Stealth 3D, Conduct 2D, Legends 3D, Cunning 2D, Domination 5D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 3D, Orienteering 9D, Perception 7D, Primal 7D, Survival 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Branded (Murderer); Access to the Knacker's Office, who pay a pittance of Drafts for any vermin corpses he drags in. The real payoffs are human corpses - Belmondo is given 25 Drafts for each one
POTENTIALS: Elephant Skin 2, Danger Sense 1
INITIATIVE: 3D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Spiked Club, Melee 7D, Distance 2m, Damage 10, Impact (2T), Entangled (-2D), Gruesome (2)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Rags over elephant skin, Armor 2 (-2D on CHA+Seduction)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 1/6, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Flashlight; Liquor bottle; 1D animal carcasses; Poorly mixed black powder (used to make explosive traps for vermin, Damage 4, Camo (3C), Explosive); Bar of surplus soap

TAINTED

Belmondo belongs to the tainted ones of Justitian - Defilers who are never allowed to return to society. As such, his forehead is branded with the tattoo of the Judgement Hammer, which marks him as a murderer. Decades ago, he killed his son in an argument and served years in the Cleft. When Belmondo's sentence was completed, he was pushed into the Defiler Streets, where he has survived ever since.

The only vocation that can be followed by the tainted is the handling of corpses and exterminating vermin. The Knacker's Office is responsible for the disposal of corpses and animal carcasses in Justitian, and works closely with the Spitalians. Tainted ones are rewarded with stale stew and rock-hard bread when they dispose of cadavers, chase rats and cats, and dig up graves. As usual for Defilers, they live in the Defiler Streets and shovel shit until the end of their days.



GOTTERDAMM

He was nameless. For a lifetime he was held in a basement by a strange woman. She was kind to him and pressed his trembling body against her warm curves. To him, she was an angel who supplanted the darkness of his vault and filled the empty room of his consciousness with light. Until he smelled her fear, accumulating in greasy pools underneath her arms and dripping in rivulets from her forehead. Her eyes were those of a dead woman. He lurched backwards, but the woman lifted herself onto her elephantine legs and staggered toward him with outstretched arms. A punch delivered in sheer panic struck the center of her body. The monster caved in. He grabbed her by the hair, yanked her around and with a brutal crunch “Mother” crashed to the floor. He ran. Smashing through a door, he stumbled up a steep staircase, fell, bolted forward through a narrow hallway toward a cool light. The gleaming rectangle in front of him was blocked by the silhouette of a man in a floor-length coat, taking off his leather cap and holding a black book in his hand. The Nameless One lowered his head and rammed himself outside. A quick glimpse at a furrowed face with sparkling eyes and a mouth that formed into a "God damn!" The very next instant a maddening light flooded him with brightness. He kept running, running for his life, running until he collapsed from exhaustion and pressed his burning cheeks against the cold cobblestones. With his tongue he searched for moisture. His twitching body shook as if it was set ablaze. "Gotterdamm" the man had said. Or something similar. That's what he should call himself.

Gotterdamm was an animal. When hunger struck him, he followed the scent of bakeries or butcheries, tore off chunks of bread or meat and ran. The Judges finally caught him and colored his hands with purifying red. He did not understand and went on stealing. Yet again he found himself pinned to the ground by Judges. Was eating bad? Wasn’t it worse that the pig-eyed men behind the stalls did not want to share anything? Two Protectors held him to the ground, while a third tattooed a blue stripe across his face all the way down to his chin. Then the Judges pushed him into the Defiler Streets. Scum like him could only live amongst scum.

ROLE PLAY

Gotterdamm is childlike innocence trapped in the body of an adult. Nothing about him appears spiteful. Uncertainty and fragility speaks from his every look. The horrors he has survived exceed the limits of imagination, yet somehow Gotterdamm has retained every spark of his humanity.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Unknown, The Disciple, Clanners: Defilers, Rank X: Defiler
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 1 PSY: 2 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 5D, Stamina 7D,
Toughness 8D, Crafting 5D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 8D, Stealth 8D,
Arts 7D, Conduct 6D, Legends 3D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 6D,
Orienteering 7D, Perception 9D, Primal 10D, Survival 10D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUND: Allies 1, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Branded (Thief); Family: Gotterdamm has found his home amongst the Defilers, and they have accepted him as one of their own. He gains +2D to social interactions with his new family
POTENTIALS: Danger Sense 2, Adaptability 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Scratching and clawing like a raging child, Brawl 5D, Damage 2, Terrifying (3); Kicking and thrashing, Brawl 6D, Dazed (3);
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Jump to the side), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Tattered rags, Armor 0
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 1/8, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Small leather pouch filled with trash dug out of the Defiler Streets, all of the items inside representing fumbling attempts to rediscover his past (discarded Judges’ hats, hammer-shaped scrap metal, tufts of stained white hair, etc)

THE PRODIGAL SON

The Defilers rushed out of their holes like rats and dragged the stranger with the blood-covered face into their quarters. Amongst them, Gotterdamm found real peace of mind for the first time in his life. People smiled at him. Some shook him awake softly when he thrashed around in his sleep. A skinny woman with funny eyes snuggled up to him during cold nights. And he began to understand the usefulness of language, babbling every word he heard with the enthusiasm of a toddler. When a new guy got annoyed by him and threatened to break his jaw, the other Defilers came to his aid. The woman screamed at the newcomer. Gotterdamm finally had a family.

He never wants to leave the Defiler Streets again. But with his awakening mind, troubling questions have begun to take root. Who was the woman he had beaten to the ground? And the man? Why did they imprison him in that hole for all those years? Gotterdamm rubs the stripe on his face. The skin there is rough. He will observe the people from down here. For now, their garbage tells him all he needs to know. However, there will come a day when he will demand answers.

ARCHOT’S SIN

Gotterdamm is the stain on Rutgar's soul. Nothing tears at his heart as much as what he did to Archot's child. The years trapped in the dungeon, locked up next to the deaf and dumb whore that Archot impregnated.

The Old Wolf knows that he must carry this guilt to the grave. Perhaps it is his conscience that haunts him these days and prevents him from pursuing the escaped son, perhaps it is a secret desire to erase this act of cruelty from his memory forever. Whatever it is, Rutgar has sullied himself with Archot's sin. He is Gotterdamm’s creator. If he only had the strength to drown the scion at a young age, by now time would have healed all wounds. But as it is now, Archot's legacy treads among the living, chasing after his past in a desperate hope of uncovering the truth.



SISSMA

A Judge at the south gate of the Jehammedan Quarter fishes Sissma out of the crowd, beckoning her with a raised forefinger. With a commanding gesture he explains to her that he wants to inspect her backpack. Sissma opens the lid and the Judge buries his hand inside, rummaging through the interior. Again and again he asks something that Sissma does not understand. He erects himself in front of her, his eyes scanning her from head to toe. Sissma squeezes her lips. With a raised eyebrow, the Judge studies her face and asks with a degrading look: "Borcan?" Sissma shakes her head. The Judge spits in disgust and yells, "Keep going!"

Her tension dissolves immediately. With three quick steps, she dives into the crowd ahead of her and follows the flow of traders, junk dealers, and workers through the labyrinthine streets of the district. As she passes, people address her from all sides. Sissma has to discipline herself in order to pronounce the answers correctly, but she finds it difficult to imitate the foreign sounds of these city dwellers. With a tense look clouding her face, she forces herself to act inconspicuously, pointing at things with her finger and nodding instead of giving straight answers. As she crosses the weekly market in the Jehammedan Quarter and observes the residents at work, she tries to memorize their behavior. For a moment she stops and studies the people. How stupid they all are. If only she could tear off her clothes and grab one of those Jehammedan children, drag it into a dark alleyway and feast on its heart and brain. But Sissma knows she must tame her nagging hunger. Only a little longer now... She pushes further into the center of the city. The buildings get bigger. Towers inhabited by people rise before her eyes - towers that will soon burn, Sissma thinks. She cannot wait for her brood to gorge themselves on the carcass of this city.

Sissma belongs to a small vanguard of Cockroach warriors who have infiltrated Justitian to spy and hunt for weaknesses in its defense. She is proud of her calling. She wants to report back to her Clan about this fat offering and incite the broodmothers to give birth to even more warriors. The songs of the Cockroaches rustle in Sissma's head.

ROLE PLAY

Sissma avoids talking, and when she does it's done with her head tilted forward to hide her teeth. Her speech is simple and accompanied by clicking and hissing sounds that do not fit any familiar dialect.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Clanners: Cockroaches, Rank 2: Scout
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 8D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 7D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 6D, Stealth 7D, Conduct 4D, Seduction 6D, Legends 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Domination 6D, Reaction 6D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Cannibal fury: After eating fresh (less than 4 day old) human meat, Sissma regenerates her full Ego Pool.
POTENTIALS: Moving Mountains 2, Rigor Mortis 1, Brood Speech 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Stone Knife, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Leather and fur clothes, armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 3 sacks filled with Ptomaine (Poisoned: 5C, (1) Trauma per hit with a coated blade or (1) Trauma per Round when ingested, Potency decreases by (1) per Round); Ritualistic tattoos (-2D to blending in with Justitian's crowds unless fully covered)

BROOD FEVER

The Cockroaches are preparing for an assault. They have discovered a gap beyond Siege's defenses, where they can slip their warriors through to penetrate deeper into the Protectorate. The Cockroaches plan to create chaos in the southern Rubble and to force the Providers to flee. The burning fields will demand a reaction from mighty Justitian. If the Cockroaches can manage to lure Protectors into the open field, they can exploit their overwhelming numerical superiority. For twenty years they have been breeding and replenishing their ranks with a new generation of warriors. Now is the time for revenge.

POTENTIALS

BROOD SPEECH
PREREQUISITE: Cockroach, INS+Empathy 8, PSY+Deception 8
Cockroach language is all about clicks, snarls, and hisses. The sounds may almost be subvocalisations, but they are still perceptible to a trained ear. A Cockroach with Brood Speech can transmit complex information to others of their Clan in a way outsiders can barely understand - onlookers decipher it by rolling INS+Perception against a Difficulty of (3), increased by (1) per Potential level. In combat, the Cockroach may also communicate with and organize their team with no chance to be understood: anyone following their orders gains +1D per Potential level for Initiative rolls on every Round after the first.



VRAKUL

One day black riders came from the north. They set the village of Geth ablaze, hunted the women down, and their steeds trampled the children into the dirt. Wherever they rode, death followed. The Allfather of the Taunar had always prophesied this day. Vrakul faced the strangers, fighting with the heart of a raging buffalo and wrestling down two of the attackers. He cracked a third one's head open with a stone, saw the viscous brain spilling from his skull. Then lances struck him from all sides, sliding between his ribs and piercing his stomach. His mouth filled with blood and everything went black.

But the gods were merciful to Vrakul. He woke amidst a field of charred corpses, the sole survivor and lone witness to the carnage. With the last of his strength he rose from the bloodstained soil. Between the burnt bodies he dug for cusps, broke them open, inhaled the spores. Delirious and shaken by fever, he sewed his wounds and reset his broken bones. For seven days and seven nights, he slept beside the mound of corpses, pelted by the endless rain, praying.

Then Vrakul was reborn. Boundless rage and bottomless hatred fueled his battered limbs. He reached for the steel axe, whetted the blade across the grindstone, shouldered everything he could carry, and followed the faded hoof tracks of the black riders' horses. Weeks turned into months. He crossed foreign territories, surmounted ravines and raging rivers, while his anger grew with each passing day. Vrakul only wanted to find one man, the leader of the black riders, and cut off his head. It was his destiny. It was for this purpose alone that the gods had spared him from damnation.

Suddenly, after a year of uncertainty, he saw the city for the first time. Defiantly she rose from the wasteland, unaware of the divine retribution that had arrived at her gates. Vrakul had to be careful. He was just a worm compared to the unbelievable size of this sick place. But just as the worm penetrates the apple's shell and disintegrates it from the inside, Vrakul would creep among the townsfolk wearing the mantle of false friendship. By the light of day he would be an obedient workhorse, dragging stones and pulling carts, but in the dark of the night he would be a tool of revenge.

ROLE PLAY

Vrakul is a beast, pulled back from the brink of death and filled with divine fury. Tall and flushed with raw energy, he settles for the lowest work in order to burrow ever deeper into Justitian's heart.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Seeker, Clanners: Taunar, Rank 5: Champion
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 9D, Brawl 10D, Force 10D, Melee 10D, Stamina 10D, Toughness 9D, Crafting 4D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 4D, Leadership 4D, Legends 5D, Medicine 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 5D, Domination 6D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 10D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 7D, Primal 7D, Survival 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Spirit of Retribution: Vrakul is the living manifestation of his fallen kin, and they push him past all physical limits. The first time that he drops to (0) Trauma, he instantly regains (4) points as he uses up the last of his energy
POTENTIALS: Could be Worse 3, Marathon 2, Undefeatable 2, Indomitable 3
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Engraved Steel Axe, Melee 9D, Distance 2m, Damage 12, Impact (2T), Whetting and Balancing;
Armored Punch, Brawl 12D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 12D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 9m
ARMOR: Leather and fur armor, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 9/14 (2 permanent), Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: The last Taunar coin (Talisman, +1D Mental Defense); Relics of his dead Clan

THE LAST TAUNAR

The Taunar were once the ruling caste of Nullpellia and the most powerful Clan south of the Protectorate. The faces of their leaders were minted on coins passing between thousands of hands in a flourishing trade. This is all history. After the star struck the palace in Nullpellia, the Clan splintered into a thousand pieces. A quarter of a century later, hardly anything remains of its former glory. Few in Justitian remember this course of events at all.

Vrakul is the last Champion of his bloodline. That's why he must not fail. His mission is the one and only thing left in his life. He must find the black rider and slaughter him to save the honor of his tribe.

However, what Vrakul doesn't understand is that he is personally taking on the Cult of the Spitalians. Neither does he grasp that the rider he is looking for is Preissler, a Preservist and Kranzler's very own bodyguard. None of this makes any difference to the Champion

POTENTIALS

INDOMITABLE
PREREQUISITE: PSY+Willpower 10, BOD+Force 10
If you aren't suffering, you aren't pushing hard enough. When the last mental barrier breaks, the body also stops its futile attempts at self-preservation. Instead, it becomes a tool to be broken whenever you want. Vrakul may spend (1) Flesh Wound per Potential level to get +1S to any BOD+Force roll. During combat, he can also spend (1) Flesh Wound per Potential level to add (1) Damage to any melee attack.



DANISLAI OGOTA

The milk flocced. The tea ceremony, the most sacred hour of the Steel Masters, had been haunted by a bad omen. Danislai watched as the lumpy liquid blew bubbles and dripped in thick streams down the whetstone. It smelled of shame. A tear rolled over his furrowed cheek, caught itself at his split chin, hanging there for a brief eternity before it dripped down. There was no way to deny it anymore. Danislai knew that the legacy of the Steel Masters was lost. No one had followed in his footsteps. Not a single student in forty years who showed even a hint of skill. What a disgrace - his line would die off due to simpletons!

Heza, his brother-in-law from the Gotokai tribe, cursed with anger when he saw the fermented milk. It was a sign of decay. For decades, Heza and Danislai had struggled to find a successor who could take their place, but there was nothing. Not a single one of their children or grandchildren had the skill or patience to fathom the language of steel and to understand how to harness the metal.

Was the Steel Monolith and the seclusion of the Clan to blame? Danislai and Heza kept arguing about it. The Ogota insisted on not mingling with the people of Downtown. However, the Gotokai saw it as the only way to free the Steel Masters from their inevitable extinction. The dispute has resulted in a schism between the two families. For a full year now, Danislai and Heza have refused to talk to each other and their dispute has split the inhabitants of the Steel Monolith. The mood is charged. Many are looking forward to better times.

According to legend, the Steel Masters came from Ferropol, where they were once royalty. Before his death, Danislai's grandfather recounted the tale of the great deportation that took place after the fall of Exalt and how the Judges appropriated the Clan and relocated them to Justitian.

Since then, the Steel Masters have been living out their lives in slavery, endlessly producing the arsenals that defend the borders of the Protectorate. Fate could not have crafted a more cruel punishment for the Clan.

ROLE PLAY

The Grand Master of the Ogota is a thoughtful man. He often stares into empty space for minutes at a time before answering a question. His movements are agonizingly slow and precise, but anyone witnessing his craftsmanship realizes the true extent of Danislai's skill.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mentor, Clanners: Steel Masters, Rank 5: Steel Master
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 6 CHA: 2 INT: 4 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Force 5D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 12D, Dexterity 9D, Navigation 8D, Mobility 7D, Arts 7D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Leadership 4D, Negotiation 4D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 9D, Focus 8D, Legends 8D, Science 6D, Cunning 4D, Domination 3D, Faith 6D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 4D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Renown 5, Resources 4
SPECIAL: Master Craftsman (Difficulty of AGI+Crafting rolls to add modifications to equipment is halved, rounding down. In addition, new slots can be added with AGI+Crafting, with a Difficulty equal to the number of the new slot)
POTENTIALS: Moving Mountains 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Blacksmith's Hammer, 4D Melee, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Tai Chi), Mobility 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Steel-reinforced leather apron, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: The Flag (regenerates 1D Ego every time he retreats to his private rock garden and meditates over the symbol); First key to the Judges' arsenal; Welding torch with portable gas can; Safety goggles

FRATERNAL STRIFE

The Judges are anything but happy with the ongoing sibling rivalry between the Steel Master families. Week after week they send Arbiters to the Monolith to act as mediators. But the battle lines are drawn and neither the Ogota nor the Gotokai deviate a hair's breadth from their position.

The largest work order in history to build cannons for the Judiciary was cancelled. The troops defending Siege bemoan the lack of artillery and the fact that they are forced to rely on the costly reserves of the stationed Hellvetics.

For Laakon, the situation in the Steel Monolith is worrisome, but his warnings in the Senates fall on deaf ears. Especially since Archot holds the Steel Masters in high regard and he grants them the autonomy to solve their disputes internally. But the negotiations are going nowhere.

Laakon knows what to do, under his rule things must change. If necessary, someone should remove the chiefs from power and appoint Judges as replacements, they'll deal with this charade!

THE STONE GARDEN

High up in the crown of the Steel Monolith, Danislai has built a small rock garden that serves as a retreat. Between carefully erected stone sculptures and winter-proof herbs, the Grand Master meditates on the future of his Clan. The garden is a haven of peace, compared to the screeching work noise within the Monolith. Danislai sits there alone, lost in thought and trying to grasp the origin of his tribe. His fingers trace across Bygone writings and impossibly intricate symbols, unable to decipher any of it. His grandfather left him a small casket containing a memorial to the Ogota's past. An immaculate red flag, with five yellow stars in the upper left corner. On calm days, Danislai spreads the flag on the floor lengthwise, prays to it, and hopes for inspiration.



HEZA GOTOKAI

Heza stares into the mirror. He can't believe how old his eyes look, how alien the face gazing despondently back at him appears. A few moments ago he was merely a child pulling the steel out of the furnace and holding it up for the first time. Now a life of bitterness lies behind him. The Judges are their patrons and slave drivers alike. The Steel Masters lack for nothing, yet the tower has become their tomb. Caught like birds in a gilded cage, they look down upon the city and the city back up to them, but just as oil and water are forever separated from one another, so too are the Steel Monolith and Downtown.

Heza wants an exodus. After a hundred years, he insists, the moment has arrived where the Steel Masters have to leave the Monolith behind. Only a fresh start can ensure the survival of their traditions. But his vision of the future is met with rejection from more than just Danislai alone. When Heza addresses the Arbiters and declares that he wants to lead his tribe out of the Monolith into Downtown, the only response he receives are confused looks and raised eyebrows. The Judges are offended by the proposal. The Steel Masters are supposed to do their job, after all, they are in Justitian's debt! The Judiciary had granted them a life filled with amenities within the safety of the Steel Monolith, yet Heza's demands bear the insolence of a spoiled brat. Never has the Clan had to worry about starvation, each member was given full employment and a decent pay and could enjoy his life in peace, tucked away from the scum inhabiting Downtown. Suddenly, this key position at the top of society was no longer good enough?

Heza's blood boiled. These miserable Arbiters twisted every word in his mouth. They kept pestering him, telling him to settle the dispute with the Ogota. Once that happened, negotiations about more "freedom" for the Clan could possibly be held.

Ridiculous, Heza thought. If the damned Judiciary thought they had something to pressure him with, they're dead wrong. His pride will never allow him to forgive Danislai until the Ogota apologizes first.

ROLE PLAY

Heza is the hot-blooded and passionate Grand Master of the Gotokai. If he dedicates himself to one task, then he pours his whole heart into it. The bloodline is growing thin, and now the Steel Masters must push on to a new horizon. Ogota, the idiot, wants to leave everything as it was, plant bonsai trees and create gravel beds. Let it be so! His bloodline will wither away and die while the Gotokai travel toward a new sunrise.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Protector, Clanners: Steel Masters, Rank 5: Steel Master
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Force 6D, Melee 6D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 10D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 7D, Arts 7D, Conduct 7D, Expression 6D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 4D, Engineering 4D, Legends 3D, Science 3D, Cunning 5D, Willpower 4D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 8D, Orientation 7D, Perception 9D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 1, Network 2, Renown 5, Resources 4
SPECIAL: Master Craftsman (Difficulty of AGI+Crafting rolls to add modifications to equipment is halved, rounding down. In addition, new slots can be added with AGI+Crafting, with a Difficulty equal to the number of the new slot)
POTENTIALS: Undefeatable 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Sword of the Dragon, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 9
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Steel-reinforced leather apron, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Second key to the Judges' arsenal; Ancient nautical map of the route taken by the ancient barges; 4 spiritual tokens representing the elements tamed by the Steel Masters

EXODUS

The Grand Master knows he can't turn to the Judges with his request. Well, there are other ways to get what he wants. Many years ago, Heza made a discovery during one of his wanderings through the basement of the Steel Monolith. Hidden behind a fake wall was an uncharted room, secured with a door of a foreign, yet advanced design. A strange sensor was embedded in the wall. It looked like a scanning device, but Heza did not understand how it worked. For nights he laid in wait to discover the secret, until all of a sudden it happened. The door opened and a Chronicler strode through. For several minutes, he adjusted the sensors on the reader and tapped across the amber-colored protective glass. Then he opened his mask and bared his forehead to the scanner. Once again the door opened and the Chronicler disappeared through it.

For a long time, Heza brooded over the meaning of his observation until it finally struck him. That door was Gotokai's path to freedom! But to open the gate, he would have to overpower a Chronicler and take him hostage. However, since that fateful day the door has remained sealed. With a little skill, Heza attached a small metal wire to the shutter bolt of the hatch. The wire hooks into a thread and from there winds it way to a wind chime which Heza has fastened in a narrow air shaft leading up to his chambers. Should the Chronicler reappear, Heza will know and strike. Then, the time will have come for the exodus.



KHALEB OGOTA

The meaningless dispute between the two Grand Masters sets Khaleb's nerves on edge. The foreman has had enough of the never ending back and forth of the two families. Won't the leaders please just arrange a duel, crush each others skulls and finally shut up? Anything to stop this nonsense!

What the two Grand Masters simply don't want to realize in their childish dogmatism is that no matter where someone is from, or what petty liberties they spend their lives fighting for, life is the same everywhere. Instead of being content with what they already have, the two are trying to tear down their present existence in a pathetic, desperate attempt to find a paradise that only exists in their minds. One wants to make the withered past blossom, while the other longs for a future that will never exist.

Khaleb is one of a select few Steel Masters allowed to leave the Monolith with the permission of the Judiciary to scour the city's markets for usable metals, goods, and tools. This special permit allows him an unobstructed view of the inhabitants of Justitian. In his eyes, life down here is no different from that up there. All the same. Same pointless strife, same problems. The women gossip, the men are frustrated and the children never stop making noise. Sleep, eat, shit, repeat. Over and over his tribe droned on for hours, telling him that he was a "Cloud Dweller" and that the "legacy of the Steel Masters" was more important than anything else on Earth. What a load of rubbish, Khaleb thinks as he gazes out into the streets, watching the people of Downtown. He can't tell the difference.

On the contrary, the Scrappers in the Forecourt are often more pleasant company than large parts of his family. Although most of their jokes fly over Khaleb's head, he feels alive in their company. At least they don't try to transfigure their existence with myths and bloated drivel, but recognise that they only have one life, and make the most of it as they live it out day to day. If the Steel Masters were able to even slightly alter their perspective, they might realize how well they fare compared to many other Justitian residents. But that would be too much to ask.

ROLE PLAY

Khaleb keeps himself grounded as a life principle, but this attitude brings little love from the rest of the Ogota. That's why he keeps his distance from his Clan and instead enjoys every moment he gets during his errands Downtown.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traditionalist, Clanners: Steel Masters, Rank 3: Foreman
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 4D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 4D, Conduct 4D, Negotiation 5D, Engineering 3D, Focus 4D, Legends 4D, Cunning 3D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Orienteering 4D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUND: Network 2
SPECIAL: Head in the clouds: Despite being permitted to travel down into the city to obtain scrap and materials, Khaleb is from another world entirely. He has -1D to all social interactions, as he exhibits foreign mannerisms and has a hard time understanding common jokes
POTENTIALS:
INITIATIVE: 4D / 8 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Pneumatic Shears, Melee 3D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Cutting (3T, +1D Damage)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 3D; Ranged active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Leather apron, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Fragrant wood medallion (Cinnamon's gift); Procurement Permit (gives Khaleb permission to leave the Steel Monolith to make purchases for the Steel Masters)

FIT FOR PURPOSE

During one of his stock purchases for the Steel Monolith, Khaleb ran into a young woman named Cinnamon. With her foul mouth she made the Steel Master howl with laughter, and over the course of a friendly discussion she managed to wrestle all sorts of knowledge about the Steel Monolith from him. For weeks now Khaleb has been meeting her regularly at one of the many booths on the Forecourt for tea. Khaleb is fascinated by Cinnamon's lightning quick wits, and she impresses him with her interest in the inner workings of the Steel Monolith. Khaleb vents all of his frustrations to her, complaining about the family drama tearing apart the Monolith above. She nods understandingly and offers to be smuggled into the Monolith as a visitor and to be allowed to speak with the leaders. Perhaps, as an outside mediator, she could be of help to dispel the quarrel?

Cinnamon shamelessly exploits Khaleb's confidence for her own ends. Through him, she was able to familiarize herself with the safety measures of the aerial railway and now knows all of the delivery cycles. Several times the foreman has even led her into the Steel Monolith, giving the rebel a unique insight into the Judicial Armory.



FERHAT, THE ABHORRED

The ghostly silence of the Steel Monolith was unbearable. At night, while the giant hammers of the forge rested, Ferhat lay in his bed staring at the ceiling. Then he turned to his wife, who slept calmly next to him. He admired the shine of Sophene's black hair, her delicate shoulders, and wondered how it would feel to cut her throat.

Ferhat's mind drifted through a tangled abyssal labyrinth. The desire to inflict pain on his wife, to torture her, throbbed in him. If Sophene talked back at him, he beat her. First with the flat of his hand, then with a fist. When she stopped talking back, he cut off her hair and pushed nails through her skin. He yelled at her all night long, scalding her legs with boiling water, choking her until her struggles subsided. Time and again he blamed her for being the reason he was stuck in this prison. In front of other Steel Masters he cursed Sophene as useless cattle, pushed her around, humiliating her with pathetic tasks.

Was it the cabin fever? Claustrophobia? Had demons taken possession of his very soul? Every night, it was like an unbearable pressure building up inside him, like a tank filled to bursting, and the only relief was to unleash it on the woman by his side.

When Ferhat chased his naked and tortured wife through the factory one night, the other Gotokai had seen enough. Twelve of them overpowered Ferhat, wrestling him to the ground. As he struggled, screaming and yelling, one pulled out a knife and drew it across his vocal cords. No more screaming. Then they beat him with iron bars until he ceased to move. They stripped off his clothes, stuffed his broken body into a sack, and lowered him down into the city by a heavy duty crane.

His life among the Steel Masters was forfeit. Ferhat was now an exile and could never enter the Steel Monolith again. A winter has passed since then and Ferhat's soul has lost more and more of itself to the darkness, until barely a glimmer of light remains. Meanwhile, he tortures and kills for the Cartel - what's better than a murderer who can't tell anyone who he kills for? However, he never strays far from the Steel Monolith, for all his endeavors are aimed at returning home one day. So far he hasn't found a way in, but his knives are always kept sharp.

ROLE PLAY

Ferhat does not speak. Ferhat murders. If he steps out of the shadows, it is only to satisfy his lust for blood. Nothing pleases him more than hearing a victim whimper, and listening to the last breaths rattling from the warm body. Ferhat has found his destiny as the grim reaper of the Cartel.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Abomination, Clanners: Steel Masters, Rank X: Pariah
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 6D, Melee 7D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 8D, Arts 3D, Cunning 6D, Domination 8D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 5D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Renown 1, Resources 1, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Mute; Pathological delusions: Ferhat is incapable of understanding the feelings of others, and has a -2D penalty to all social interactions
POTENTIALS: Pariah 1, Ambidextrous 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Knives, Melee 8D (or 4D and 3D), Distance 1m, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T); Throwing Knife, Projectiles 7D, Distance 3/10m, Damage 5
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: -
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Trophy necklace; Arsenal of blades; Scraps of paper holding his barely legible ramblings and plans to take revenge on the Steel Masters; Flower bouquet (worn on his coat, a delicate red flower that has become his most defining feature, +1D on rolls to identify and trail him)

DEADLY EFFICIENCY

In Bosch's eyes, Ferhat is the perfect contract killer. He has no social ties in Downtown that could betray him nor does he belong to a Cult that could uncover his actions. In addition, Ferhat's lust for murder follows no ideology and his conscience is not plagued by trivialities. Dozens of times, the Dwarven King has already used the outcast Steel Master for his own purposes and eliminated unpleasant competitors. Ferhat's efficiency is unparalleled. He takes a small trophy from every victim. Ears, molars, fingers. Some of the remnants he dries and wears on a chain around his neck. Others are dipped in resin and placed in his bedroom like honey coloured works of art.

His habit of collecting body parts has caused Buto to start to suspect that Ferhat might be the elusive Head Collector who was forced to change his modus operandi, but Master Bosch waves the concerns away with annoyance. From the point of view of the criminal mastermind, the Head Collector is nothing more than a pathetic attempt by the Chroniclers to attach a pile of corpses to the Cartel and thereby reinforce the presence of Judges in Tech-Central.



LUREN, THE HERALD

There is nowhere better than Justitian! Luren was sent north as the Herald of the Pneumancers. He was to deliver a message to the Judiciary. The Pneumancers would refrain from warfare against the Protectorate and not ally with either Mechans or Phosphorites, on the condition that Justitian provided them with safe passage and opened up trade. The Clan was interested in peacefully expanding into the Protectorate.

Luren spoke in front of the Senates and Archot responded with a faint gesture. The Pneumancer was escorted to a villa in the Ambassador Quarter, a luxurious building rising above the rest. Surrounded by paid servants, he was to awaken every morning in a bed softer than he had ever slept in to the sound of Justitian's wealth and grandeur, until his idea of home and identity had degraded into a faded memory.

The Pneumancer was bathed with gifts. Furs from Pollen. Food prepared by the best cooks in Borca and flavoured with spices from Africa. A puppy from far away Briton. The Judges hired whores to keep the Pneumancer entertained and gave him a payroll large enough to make even a Neolibyan blush that he could waste to his liking on his trips to Downtown. Never before had Luren seen or experienced anything similar. His life was an endless parade at the expense of the Judiciary.

Month after month now, he sends an outrider with dispatches back to Nullpellia, pleads for his Clan to remain neutral, and calls on the chieftains to lay down their weapons: "All is quiet in the north and negotiations with the Judges are splendid! There is nothing to worry about! Just a few more months until I send the first draft of the contract!"

Meanwhile, Luren fucks through all the beds in the Flotsam, and gambles away his pocket money. Night after night Protectors have to swarm out across Downtown to track down the Herald and drag him back to Uptown so he can recover from his excessive binge. All over Downtown the savage with the bottomless wallet and the precious coats has become a celebrity.

ROLE PLAY

Luren always wears the old Pneumancer mask that identifies him as a member of the warrior caste when prowling through the city. Proud and patronizing, he struts along the Stallion Streets, tossing away money and behaving as if the whole world lay at his feet. Who cares what people think of him, so long as he gets to keep indulging in Justitian's luxury!

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Righteous, Clanners: Pneumancers, Rank 4: Warrior
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 7D, Force 7D, Melee 5D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 8D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Conduct 4D, Expression 5D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 4D, Seduction 6D, Engineering 5D, Focus 5D, Legends 5D, Cunning 5D, Domination 6D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Perception 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 4, Network 1, Renown 1, Resources 4
SPECIAL: Enjoys diplomatic immunity; Two Protectors as escort; Trauma penalty only applies after (3) points of Trauma Damage
POTENTIALS: Tough as Nails 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Armored Punch, Brawl 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Blunt; Rusted Pneumo Hammer, Projectiles 5D, Distance 10/30, Damage 10, Coal (6kg), Mag. 12, Thunder Strike, Talisman (+1D Mental Defense)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: High quality fur coat, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pneumancer mask; Ponzu; Archot's allowance (enough Drafts to purchase anything he desires, no questions asked)

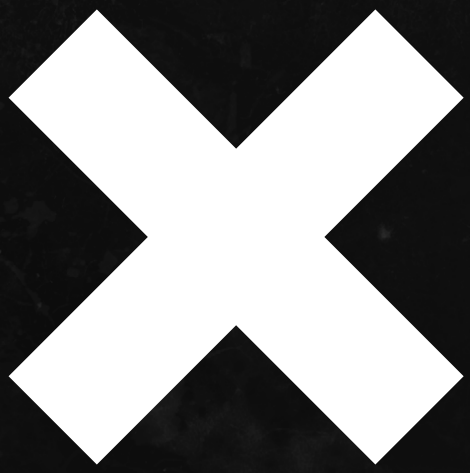
LUST FOR WAR

Archot bid on the right horse. He knew that if he allowed the Herald to be flooded with the conveniences of Justitian's civilization, he would quench his belligerence. All that was needed was to provide him with women, drugs and above all - pleasure.

Now, Luren's ideology crumbles, his old fighting spirit is long gone. The only thing that keeps the Pneumancer on his feet is mating with as many women as possible and living each coming day as if it were his last. The Judges don't even try and stop him. They know how important Luren is to them. His boundless craving for entertainment keeps hundreds of well-trained Pneumancer warriors in check, who could easily prove to be an extremely dangerous new opponent for the Protectors patrolling the southern border. As long as Luren continues to forget his real task and sends off his false messages home, Archot doesn't have to worry about a new source of danger arising from the Pneumancers.

PONZU

Luren's Beagle, named Ponzu, keeps Justitian's population in suspense. When Luren walks the dog in Downtown, the people stop dead in their tracks and watch with their mouths agape. Any bystander sheds a tear at the sight of the animal. Children corner the Pneumancer and can't be scared away until they are driven off by Protectors. Perhaps it is a buried, collective memory of man's best friend, considered extinct throughout Europe today, that imbues them with a sense of hope and longing alike.



SCRAPPERS

BACKBONE

Without the Scrappers, Justitian would be doomed to fail. They are the backbone of its society. They collect construction materials from all over Europe, haul goods and artifacts to Justitian, stimulate trade, maintain the elevator platforms of Uptown, and keep the aerial railway in top condition. No one would dare to deny their raw creative force.

However, it is impossible for even the Chroniclers to grasp their exact number: only a few Scrappers register themselves as citizens. Restless, they roam through the ruins of Borca, Franka, Pollen, and Purgare and return only when their cart is full and their stomach empty. A permanent home is unnecessary. Who would take care of it during their absence?

Instead, the Chroniclers can only make estimations: in the winter months of October to March, Tech-Central billows and over 200,000 bodies squeeze around the overcrowded fireplaces. The district is literally bursting at the seams. Every Scrapper who owns a lodging houses as many brothers and sisters as he can stuff inside, but with the first glint of summer whole city blocks become deserted once again. The turmoil fades and the number of resident Scrappers drops below 70,000.

No matter how large their numbers may be, without the Scrappers the trade would collapse. They generate Drafts and then spend them amongst the people of Justitian, buying grain from the Providers, water from the Judges, and from the Apocalyptics - well, at least nothing of lasting value. The Scrappers are the mortar that holds the bricks of the metropolis together. However, they are not necessarily aware of this, because they do not understand themselves as an organization but rather as a bunch of narrow-minded individualists whose ties with one another break as easily as they are knotted. With only one exception.

THE CARTEL

Look into the face of a Chronicler. Why do you think he's wearing a mask when he's negotiating with you? Because he does not want you to read in his eyes and guess his intentions. He wants to drag you over the table, dispute your hard-earned Drafts, and send you off with a puny reward. He doesn't care about the hardships you have suffered in recovering your treasure. It doesn't bother him if any of your comrades froze to death on your journey, suffocated or kicked the bucket due to a poisoned arrow. He knows that you're hungry, that you yearn for a round of shuteye as much as for the warm thighs of a woman. He is confident that you'll be satisfied with his first proposal and therefore offers you a shitty deal. And you fucking take it! Because you're tired! Burned out!

Look into my eyes! I wear no mask. I'm a Scrapper, just like you. I can read Runes and I know the value of our work. I know what guys like you had to go through. You deserve better treatment for your efforts. Come on, give me your hand. Leave the bartering to the Cartel. We'll negotiate the best price for you, and you can give me a cut afterwards, alright? Trust me, you won't believe what we'll get for your cargo...

STROKE OF GENIUS

Bosch created the Cartel and keeps it alive. Everything began with a handful of thugs who were all more stupid than their leader yet still had enough porridge in their skulls to understand that, firstly, working on your own is exhausting, secondly, it is easier to claim money from others, and thirdly, that you have to beat someone to pulp if they deny you their payment. You won't get an award for coming up with that. Every day some unknown chief in some noname hellhole somewhere on the fringes of Europe tries exactly the same thing.

But Bosch did it his own way. He structured and organized. He set up rules and spread them among his people: this street belongs to us, was secured by us and registered by us - pay up or keep moving! He fermented distrust of the Chroniclers: never trust someone you can't look in the eye! Lastly, he arranged for Cartel members to be shadowed by Appraisers capable of approximating the value of a find and handling the dealings with the Chroniclers. In the sectors controlled by the Cartel he installed the so-called Officers, who received a percentage of Cartel revenue to set up armed thugs acting as security forces.

The Appraisers approach. They always arrive in at least a pair, circling their victim. First they wait, trying to catch the Scrapper's gaze. "Artifacts for appraisal?" Suddenly, they gasp, hands covering their mouths. Once a victim's interest has been caught the Scrapper is bombarded with insulting phrases and hateful speeches about the Chroniclers until his ears bleed. If the Scrapper gives way, the Appraisers accompany him to the next Alcove and take over the negotiation. Of the proceeds they demand 20 percent; however, if the Scrapper becomes a member of the Cartel the fee is reduced to only 10 percent.

SCAVENGERS

If there were something that could be described as a brotherhood among Scrappers, then the Scavengers would be it. A long time ago they specialized in a new field of activity. Metals, sheets, pipes, gaskets, building materials, or plastic fittings are dragged by cart to Tech-Central to be melted down or cut to size. The newly cast iron struts, as well as nails and plastic coverings, are later sold all over Justitian's many construction sites.

New tasks require a new approach. As the artifact hunting Scrappers roam the tundra as lone wolves, following their strict belief in the "One Big Find", the down to earth Scavengers have solidified within groups of five to ten souls each. Together, these gangs organize expeditions into mining areas where they can harvest building scrap. They share the profits, and consider their hauling donkeys as the property of the group. Some of these gangs define their very own rules in writing and use a Juryman's notarial seal to cement them, while others rely on a sophisticated veteran Scrapper to lead them.

INDEPENDENTS

The influence of the Cartel is overwhelming. Those who resist get in trouble with its Officers. Nevertheless, there are many independents. They live in the Outskirts of Tech-Central or they try their luck in the other neighborhoods. They serve as helpers in the Forecourt or lay low in the Stukov Quarter. Some even settle among the Anabaptists, where they repair water pipelines, or find their way into the Rubble, housing with Providers. They are everywhere, even if they lack proper representation. Among them are adventurers, dirt diggers, trackers and junkers. Many are all-rounders who find their way around even in the most difficult situations.

MANUFACTURERS

The Manufacturers are the architects of Justitian. They're ingenious inventors, cranky engineers, visionary thinkers, but above all they're no organized group. Instead, they are a movement that fuels each other through rivalry and competition. Their Marvels and inventions are known citywide. They construct machines, electric generators, combustion engines that can be fueled by pig shit, stomping steam contraptions, and hydraulic colossi. Anyone who belongs to this innovative movement of Scrappers will always be granted work and recognition in Justitian.

ROPERS

The Ropers are a small and successful splinter group of mechatronic engineers and technicians who are well versed in the maintenance of the elevator platforms and the aerial railway and act only in the service of the Judiciary. Their exceptional position in the Scrapper society comes with enormous privileges. They are the only Scrappers in Justitian who have unimpeded access to Uptown and the Steel Monolith.

No one gets to choose to become a Roper, instead one is called forth. Those who reject the offer are guilty of their own stupidity, for there is no safer life for a Scrapper anywhere else on earth.

TENT SCRAPPERS

Scrappers from all over the world camp in the south of Tech-Central, if they can't claim any Borcan origin. Down there, they divide themselves into camps by their language and home culture. On the scum scale, they are considered the lowest of the low. Borcan Scrappers only reluctantly share their achievements and the amenities of Tech-Central. These Tent Scrappers must stay outside and deal with each other. Which is not always easy. Particularly when there are fights breaking out between the African and Purgan camps, who bring their conflict to the frozen Borcan soil.



BOSCH

The most dangerous man in all of Justitian is also the smallest. To Bosch, size doesn't matter; brainpower, as well as a certain propensity for risk-taking, is what really counts. No other Scrapper before him has accomplished what Bosch created out of thin air within the last thirty years: the Cartel is his magnum opus and keeps all of Justitian in suspense.

Never in a thousand years would the Chroniclers have anticipated that an ugly dwarf had the guts to consolidate a gang of solitary Scrappers and turn them into a crime syndicate unparalleled in all of Borca.

Meanwhile, Bosch recklessly flirts with the Judges on a daily basis. He meets them for luncheons in the Advocates' guesthouses, discussing laws and legal claims on a high level, and foots their bill at the end. In Brennen, he's well acquainted with the traditional Apothecary families and has them deliver home remedies to Tech-Central as support for the Scrappers there. At the Flotsam, he pays off the Magpies to sweeten the nights of his best Officers. Every Cartel member gets some form of a cut in his dealings, and he thus delivers "His Boys" from being dependent on the Chroniclers.

Long ago, a little bird told Bosch that he is being protected from up above. His business runs just a bit too smoothly. Someone Uptown sees to it that Bosch's patience is not unduly tried, for patience is not one of Bosch's greatest virtues. If he wants something, he gets it – using the right amount of brute force and intimidation when necessary to do so. But the dwarf has enough foresight to play it safe. He never issues any direct orders himself, ensuring that he is always guaranteed plausible deniability. His subjects receive their tasks from middlemen in the form of suggestions, ideas and opportunities, never as clearly phrased orders. The various Cartel cells make all decisions on their own and operate independently from one another, which makes traces leading back to Bosch easier to cover.

ROLE PLAY

To marginalize Bosch, reduce him to appearances, or underestimate him based on his size is a dangerous mistake. The gnarled dwarf is shrewd, and, despite the illusion of separation between them, the Cartel is entirely at his whim. Those who oppose Bosch or stand in his way disappear. For good.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Creator, Scrapper, Rank 6: Cartel Leader
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 3 CHA: 1 INT: 5 PSY: 4 INS: 6
SKILLS: Athletics 2D, Brawl 3D, Force 2D, Stamina 2D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 5D, Expression 3D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 7D, Artifact Lore 11D, Engineering 10D, Cunning 10D, Deception 6D, Dominate 9D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 9D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 10D, Primal 9D, Survival 7D, Taming 10D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 6, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Outside of his home, Bosch moves in an armored horse carriage. At least twelve Cartel Thugs are always by Bosch's side.
POTENTIALS: The Mob 3, Rat 3, Darwin 2, Artifact Sense 3, Glyph 2, Mongrel 3, Unyielding 2
INITIATIVE: 8D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Modified Automatic Pistol hidden in his sleeve, Projectiles 6D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7, Mag. 12, Smooth Running (3T), Salvoes (3), Camo (4C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Seek cover), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Druschinnik Silk Robes, Armor 3, First Impression (+2D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 3 capsules of cyanide (Poisoned, 6C, (-1) Trauma per Round, -1 Potency every (2) Rounds); Bosch's grudges (Notebook with a list of his enemies)

LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD

Bosch's Cartel owes so much tax to the city that the value of the Chronicler Draft would collapse from inflation for years to come if he paid everything back at once.

The Cartel is an empire, Tech-Central is a city within the city. Here, the Scrappers make the laws. No matter how much Laika takes pride in the strength of her Pack and their self-righteous successes, the Judges have long lost touch with the harsh realities of this place. Those who want to settle here have no choice but to work with the Cartel. The Appraisers control the markets, pull the plug on the Alcoves, and screen goods before the Cluster ever gets its hands on them. The Chroniclers must deal with increasingly high prices for basic artifacts that are essential to the survival of the Cult.

While the Carrion Birds in the western part of the city specialize in Burn smuggling, prostitution, human trafficking, and gambling, Bosch controls everything else: the protection racket, illegal events, pit fights, chessboxing, black labor, money laundering, the disappearance of unwanted people, and much more. The lord of the Cartel has his grubby hand in every dirty dealing in town. His network of dodgy businesses is extensive to say the least, but his involvement can never be proven by anyone. Not even the allied forces of the Cluster and the Judiciary can stop Bosch. He either has too much dirt on them or, if he lacks that, he blackmails Uptown by organizing Scrapper strikes that cripple entire districts across Downtown. Without the Cartel, the whole city is at a standstill. This unfortunate truce has backed the Judges into a corner. The best they can do is attempt to prune the crime syndicate's most excessive felonies, instead of wasting time working their asses off in vain to get Bosch.

An assassination is not an option, either. The disintegration of the Cartel and the power vacuum it would leave would bear an incalculable risk for Justitian. In the wake of such an event acts of revenge against Judges and Chroniclers alike would make daily headlines.

Sooner or later, Bosch will eventually die off from a heart attack, and his empire will crumble to dust of its own accord. Or so they hope.



BUTO, THE BOOKIE

Bosch's closest confidant is his bookkeeper. For decades, Buto has been at the Dwarven King's side, supervising all Cartel revenue, managing the cash flow, paying the goon squads, rewarding Officers, and bribing Judges. Whatever outlandish demand crosses Bosch's mind, Buto delivers like a well-trained dog, always optimizing the profit for his master.

Buto's most prosperous line of business is the pit fights in Justitian. These bloodthirsty duels, performed in front of an underground audience in the know, were sanctioned by Judges throughout the entire city. However, the ban exponentially raised the potential profits of the bidding business. The Cartel doesn't want to relinquish these earnings, and neither does the audience, who love to gamble on the chance of taking home a hefty sum after a luckily placed bet. Over the course of the year, the profit margins increase drastically. To get the most bang for buck, the organizers host the pit fights in rounds: first, fighters must compete in the qualifiers before they can move onto the quarter-finals and then the semi-finals. While bets are moderate at the beginning of the fighting season, they grow stupendously during the final fight. The risk of losing one's life savings is then just as high as becoming filthy rich in a matter of minutes. Of course, the Cartel gets its share of the winnings in every round, and their most popular fights, including all the finals, are always staged. In fact, a lot of the pit fighters come from the ranks of the Cartel itself. Neither Bosch nor Buto are stupid enough to believe in that thing called luck. The audience, however, is exactly this gullible.

Those who want to try their hand at the betting business need to get past Buto. The Bookie is extremely pedantic when it comes to revealing a secret venue to newcomers. Often, he hands out fake passwords, sends interested parties to the wrong address or has them shadowed. Only those that Buto declares trustworthy after weeks of inspection are given the right passwords to witness the spectacle. Snitches do not survive for long...

ROLE PLAY

Rivulets of sweat are dripping from Buto's forehead. Frantically, he wipes his face with a damp cloth, counting Drafts and tapping around on his Interfacer with his fat fingers. No one says a word about Buto's obesity, for those who belittle Buto are treading on thin ice. Razor-sharp wits lie hidden behind his unkempt appearance. If someone tries to cheat the Cartel or Bosch, Buto turns their lights off with but a simple gesture.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Scrapper, Rank 5: Officer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 5 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Brawl 7D, Force 8D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D,
Toughness 8D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 3D, Projectiles 5D,
Conduct 4D, Negotiation 6D, Artifact Lore 8D, Engineering 10D,
Focus 7D, Science 8D, Cunning 5D, Domination 5D, Reaction 5D,
Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 5, Network 5, Renown 3, Resources 4, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: At least six Cartel Thugs as bodyguards while in Tech-Central
POTENTIALS: Nitro 2, The Mob 2, Number Cruncher 1, Tough Dog 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Heavy Revolver (with laser pointer), Projectiles 6D, Distance 10/40m,
Damage 12, Mag. 6, Thunder Strike;
Bone Breaker (Brass Knuckles), Brawl 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Meat shield!), Brawl 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 3D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Morbidly Obese (see Tough Dog), Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Ancient Interfacer (+2D for management of Cartel balance sheets and tournament lists); A handful of wagers, promissory notes and payslips; Headlamp (Darkness penalty -2D)

PIT FIGHTS

Every year in September, Buto starts planning the pit fights. The preliminaries happen in October, while the final takes place in March of the following year. The Cartel employs so-called spotters who comb the Protectorate and the surrounding Clan territories for potential fighters and then smuggle them to Justitian. Buto often inspects the fighters personally, assigns them iconic names for the ring and advises them on strategy. Outsiders can also enter themselves to compete, but they must talk to Buto first. The Bookie doesn't allow upstarts to participate without an unpaid test fight. In such a situation, he often unleashes one of Bosch's battle-hardened thugs to test the contender's willpower. Impostors are disposed of quickly.

THE DEAL

Even though the Cartel and the Carrion Birds still fight over territory and control of the illegal markets, an unofficial deal exists between the two parties, established more than ten years ago. The Carrion Birds dispose of the corpses of the Cartel, and in return, the Cartel makes the Carrion Birds' victims disappear.

Both organizations have a person designated to carry out the dirty work. In the Cartel, this role is fulfilled by Buto; for the Carrion Birds, the Woodpecker Hector is tasked with destroying evidence. This deal works well in covering the two organizations' tracks, and makes it harder for the Judges to investigate either of their crimes. No corpse, no murder.



ARGEN

Bosch needs someone that keeps track of details, who remembers faces and can assess situations from afar. Argen sees himself as the proverbial hawk of the Cartel. The innumerable roads leading to Justitian are his territory. He roams them constantly, ever on the lookout for Scrappers hauling new trading goods on their way to the city. If he spots something valuable, he radios his observations to Bosch's Officers, who quickly scramble to inspect the newcomer's belongings. Thus, the Cartel filters sales of potentially valuable artifacts from the commercial chain, making it increasingly difficult for the Chroniclers to acquire them.

These damned masked cowards have sat on their throne in Uptown and acted like kings for far too long. But the tides are changing. Now the Scrappers are the true movers and shakers of Justitian, and they want to be treated as such. Argen yearns to see the Chroniclers die a death by a thousand cuts, wants to witness the Cluster's demise within his lifetime. He has never forgotten their arrogance when they still had him under their thumb, when he was nothing but a small fry and not a member of the Cartel. Now they don't dare to pester him, because they know that they would get their fingers burned. Argen is a big fish these days. He doesn't have to tolerate their harassment anymore. There is little he enjoys more than waiting for agents of the Cluster to cross his path in Downtown and making his power and presence known. He loves their dumbfounded expressions when they realize that he's untouchable and protected by the brotherhood of the Cartel.

If Argen were to ever second-guess himself in such moments, he may realize that it's not actually his membership in the Cartel that causes the confusion amongst Cluster agents, but rather his suicidal behavior. Any Streamer close to the Forecourt or in the Stukov Quarter could have him arrested at whim and thrown into the Cleft. However, the Chroniclers don't have time to waste on some obscure Scrapper posing like a turkey.

ROLE PLAY

Argen has the strange habit of quacking like an agitated duck when he's flustered. His movements are fluttery, his sentences accumulate into a staccato of clipped facts. As a Cartel scout, he mistakenly deems himself more important than he really is, and enjoys striking fear in foreign Scrappers who camp south of Tech-Central. There, he pretends to be something more than he will ever be. In reality, he's but a small cog in the machine.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Seeker, Scrapper, Rank 3: Cartel Thug
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 3D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 4D, Stealth 6D, Artifact Lore 5D, Cunning 5D, Deception 5D, Domination 5D, Faith 4D, Reaction 5D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 9D, Primal 6D, Survival 7D, Taming 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Renown 1, Resources 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: His strange behavior irritates his counterparts (-2D in all social interactions initiated by Argen)
POTENTIALS: Danger Sense 2, Rat 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Clawing and Scratching, Brawl 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 1; Pistol, Projectiles 4D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag. 12
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Flare and flutter), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D, Mental, Faith 4D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Overalls and plumage, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Binoculars (+2D for long-distance observation); Walkie-talkie; 3 cartridges for smoke signals to other Cartel members; Birdseed (dried grains and wood chips); "Trained" bird (pigeon with clipped wings and broken legs - it often dies and needs replacing)

USELESS

Bosch doesn't like fatuous Scrappers. He's outright aggravated by the henchmen who use their membership in the Cartel to fuel their otherwise puny egos with an inflated sense of self-importance. Argen is a prime example of such a pest. Caught up in illusions of having respect and stature, Argen doesn't yet comprehend that he's nothing but a spare wheel to the Cartel – easily replaced and too cumbersome to shed a tear for. Argen belongs on the scrap heap. Soon, Bosch will clip his little pigeon's wings and forget about him soon after.

AESHMA

The intercom staff speaks to Aeshma. The white noise reverbs into sound loops, transforms into words and suddenly into orders. She has to adjust the staff's frequency, so that the voices remain comprehensible. In some city districts, the signal is nothing but a mere whisper. Only in and around the area of the Steel Monolith are the messages received loud and clear.

Aeshma herself doesn't have the faintest idea of how she was able to intercept the radio channel between the Judgment Hall and the Cluster. The fact is, she can listen in on it. Although the language is coded, Aeshma has managed to decipher parts of the exchange and can grasp the gist of what is said. The Chroniclers have engineered the city like a giant puppet theater, with the Judges center stage, dancing to their tune. Internally, everything was interconnected, but the Cluster was the nucleus of it all. A place where the Chroniclers pulled the strings as they saw fit.

It didn't take long for Aeshma to grasp the intercom staff's inherent powers. With it, she was able to warn the Scrappers in Tech-Central, including the Cartel, of raids by the law enforcement well in advance. Aeshma's siphoned intel made Bosch and Buto aware of Laika's Pack's every movement, and ultimately led to the discovery of two Shutters who were about to infiltrate the Cartel.

Bosch is delighted with Aeshma and is willing to grant any wish this clever woman might have. In return, he requests that she settles down at the Forecourt and cuts all ties with the Cartel. Bosch can't have anyone tracing her back to him.

Aeshma knows what to do. Through an old contact amongst the Carrion Birds, she acquires false citizenship papers to rent a small workshop at the foot of the Steel Monolith. She specializes in recycling scrap metal, hires half a dozen Scrappers as laborers and uses the big auctions at the Forecourt Alcove to supply her workshop with raw materials. Her disguise is perfect. Ever since, she secretly intercepts the radio transmissions and passes the prescreened information on to the Cartel.

ROLE PLAY

As head of her metal workshop, Aeshma poses as a Manufacturer, businesslike, down-to-earth and part of the system. She lacks neither the self-confidence nor the skill, and by now, she has connections to many of the merchants trading in the Forecourt, supplying their booths with recycled goods. No one would ever suspect her to be a spy of the Cartel.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Adventurer, Scrapper, Rank 3: Fox
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 5D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 8D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 6D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 7D, Focus 5D, Science 6D, Cunning 7D, Deception 7D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 8D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 2, Network 3, Resources 3, Renown 2, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Chronicler Network Access (Secrets Background can be applied to the Chroniclers, up to (4))
POTENTIALS: Ambidextrous 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Paired Knives, Melee 6D or 4D (split between 2 attacks), Distance 1m, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T);
Intercom Staff, Melee 4D, Distance 2m, Damage 5D, Blunt, Fragile, Used as a last resort
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Leather garb, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Intercom staff; Toolkit (+2D on AGI+Crafting); Keys to the Ironworks; Fake citizenship papers

UNDER SUSPICION

Weeks ago, Echo's watchful eye detected that someone was hacking the secure Chronicler transmission network. Now, he paces up and down the Peacewalk, obsessed with locating the intruder. He's convinced that the unknown hacker must be hiding somewhere between the Steel Monolith and the Stukov Quarter. He cannot exactly narrow down the signature of the radio receiver yet, but Echo has a plan. He installs decoders on the roofs of the Forecourt, sending a silent alarm to Echo whenever someone dials into the Chronicler network. The closer the frequency of the receiver, the more frantic the decoder reacts. Echo waits for his trap to be sprung.

Aeshma has no idea how close the agent has come to his goal already. Meanwhile, a very different problem occupies her mind. Some Scrappers just don't seem to buy the story of success of her small metal workshop. Even after inquiries with the Manufacturers, nobody was able to remember a woman from their ranks called Aeshma. Aeshma passes the information about those nosy snoops to Bosch and asks him to shut down their investigations. Bosch is annoyed. He does not like curious Scrappers interfering with his affairs at all.

INVENTORY

INTERCOM STAFF

Aeshma's intercom staff is an unassuming speaker with an attached screen. The reception antenna within the plastic cladding is invisible from the outside. If the staff is set to the wrong frequency, it only emits static noise, and small, amber-colored symbols flash across the screen. Only Aeshma knows the code needed to skim the Chronicler transmissions.



IKE

Scrappers like Ike are the absolute low-lifes of the Cult. They have never stood on the bright side of life and will simply disappear one day. Starved, stabbed to death or stuck in some collapsed tunnel out in the wasteland.

Ike grew up in poverty as one of many others – he first watched his siblings die, then his parents who were killed by the deprivations of their short lives. He went on to sign up as a Mouse with a group of reckless Scrappers who had nothing left to lose. Together, they ventured on forays into the Stukov Desert hoping to retrieve a cache that was not already controlled by nomads. Most of those hell-bent operations failed. Ike remembers his friend Garim dying from the sting of a Stukov Scorpion and how the Scavenger Keitel led the whole group in the wrong direction for an entire week so that they almost died of thirst. Once, Ike and the other Scrappers were so close to starvation that they had to eat a dead comrade. This memory is forever burned into his soul.

Ike's metal detector crackles quietly. He is alone now. After all those years without luck, the old outfit has disbanded, and the only thing left to him is to wander the Rubble and revisit areas that had been marked as depleted by Scrapper runes centuries ago. Maybe someone has missed something? He doesn't dare to travel the wasteland anymore. These days, the savages send shock troops into the Black Lung every so often, and those who do not hole up on a farm and know how to defend it with a rifle are at their mercy. The last thing that Ike wants is to bite the dust the same way many of his comrades did. Therefore, there is nothing left for him other than making his rounds from one place to another. He spends the winter in Justitian amongst Scavengers who share their last supplies with him. In summer, he feasts on lichen, plains grass and birds' eggs...

ROLE PLAY

The only thing Ike ever yearned for was the hope of this one big find. Dozens of times, he donned his Scrapper gear and ventured out into the wasteland full of optimism. North, west, east – for years, he has been on his feet, but fortune never smiled upon him. His eyes are full of desperation, and deprivation marks his face. His final years have come.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traveler, Scrapper, Rank 2: Badger
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 5D, Force 3D, Melee 3D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 3D, Negotiation 3D, Artifact Lore 4D, Cunning 4D, Deception 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 3D (4D), Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D, Primal 5D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Renown 1
SPECIAL: Tourist guide (+3D on INS+Orienteering in the Stukov desert and in the Wastelands)
POTENTIALS: Darwin 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Hammer, Melee 3D, Damage 4, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 3D (4D)
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Damaged Scrapper Armor, Armor 2, Unstable (6)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/6, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: The Seashell; Metal detector (+1D when looking for scrap, for Ike: Talisman, +1D PSY+Willpower); Homemade gas mask (When at risk: 4-6 on 1D: +1S in the event of contamination with spores, germs, or environmental toxins, otherwise no effect)

THE SEASHELL

On his last foray through the Stukov Desert two years ago, Ike came across an unusual corpse. The desecrated figure lay in the shadow of a salt dune, half naked and covered in rags and dried seaweed. A third eye had opened on the dead man's forehead, and his fingers were clutched around a seashell. Ike pried the magnificent piece of mother-of-pearl from his cold, rigid grip and has carried it as a lucky charm ever since. Sometimes, he holds the seashell to his ear and it feels as if a strange voice speaks to him from inside, though he doesn't recognize the language, and the words are so quiet that he can barely understand them.

Ike doesn't have the faintest idea of what he has come across.

The seashell contains Markurant's memories of his past life. The dead man in the desert was a Mnemonid who had traveled from faraway Hybrispania to bestow the reborn Pheromancer King with his collected memories. The Pregnoctic failed from the exertions of the Stukov Desert, but the seashell survived the journey unharmed. Now, it is in Justitian, so very close to Markurant. If the King got a hold of the seashell, he could reap his memories from the byssus mesh. He would regain all the abilities of his former life and blossom anew with lightning speed.

INVENTORY

METAL DETECTOR

Ike's screeching dowser is the last thing in his possession that he wasn't forced to trade for food. The metal detector has faithfully accompanied him for years, and by now, Ike can imitate every one of the crackling sounds it emits. Sometimes, he even talks to the detector, especially when the instrument reacts suddenly and Ike gets excited at the possibility of discovering a lost circuit board or a round of ammunition in the dust of Tech-Central.



STEELBEAM

In search of his brothers, Steelbeam turned southern Borca upside down, crossed nameless Clan territories and looked under every stone. He tore Gendos to shreds, ate their flesh, and if some self-appointed Champion was stupid enough to dare and block his way, Steelbeam split his skull in two. However, all that he discovered were cold tracks of his siblings.

Close to Bern, Steelbeam got wind of the rumors. His brothers Blacksmith and Eisenhauer were dead. The gossip was that both had been betrayed by Chroniclers. Steelbeam was supposed to be the last survivor. The storm of vengeance roiled within him, but Steelbeam needed a name to point his anger in the right direction. He located a Shutter who was trying to pass across the Alps to Purgare. Without hesitation, Steelbeam dragged the Chronicler into his lair, beat him for days, tortured him and broke every one of his bones until the Shutter finally spat out the truth. A Scalar was responsible for both brothers' death.

Nullify.

Steelbeam had what he was looking for. He took the Shutter's scalp, folded the tattooed flap of skin into his vest pocket and marched north. Back to Justitian. Back to where the story of the Bear Brothers once began.

His arrival in Tech-Central was immediately registered by the Cluster. Agents were deployed to compile a movement pattern of the Cave Bear. Why in the world was he here? The Cluster needed answers. Steelbeam didn't care. He hid from no one, consciously parading around in plain sight. Straight like a die, he proceeded up the Stallion Street all the way to the Forecourt Alcove and demanded to speak to Deselect. The hideous Chronicler slid down on a windlass and examined the visitor, but Steelbeam had not come to trade. Steelbeam slammed the Shutter's scalp onto the countertop, drew his knife and carved a cross into his own forehead with the blade. Then he turned around and left without a word. Deselect understood the clear warning. War was coming.

ROLE PLAY

Steelbeam sees red. The anger in his belly has grown into a maelstrom of revenge. Nothing can stop the colossal Cave Bear's rampage. There is only one target on his mind: to get a hold of Nullify and scratch the Scalar's brain out of his skull with his bare fingers.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Hermit, Scrapper, Rank 5: Cave Bear
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 6 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 6
SKILLS: Athletics 10D, Brawl 11D, Force 12D, Melee 12D, Stamina 10D, Toughness 12D, Crafting 10D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 9D, Negotiation 6D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 6D, Cunning 6D, Domination 10D, Reaction 8D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 10D, Perception 9D, Primal 11D, Survival 12D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 5, Network 5, Renown 6, Resources 5, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Legendary outlaw (+3D Negotiation with Scrappers)
POTENTIALS: Tough Dog 3, Nitro 3, Darwin 2, Ravenous 3, Payback 3, Goliath 3, Could be Worse 3, Moving Mountains 3, Undefeatable 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 22 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: King's Blade, Melee 10D, Distance 2m, Damage 17, Impact (2T); Heavy Pistol, Projectiles 9D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 12, Mag. 12, Thunder Strike
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 10D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 10m
ARMOR: Kevlar vest, Armor 3, Bulletproof (6); Total armor 6
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 24, Trauma 10
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 2 Explosive grenades and 1 Claymore directional mine (like explosive grenade, but Distance 5/10m and properties Scatter and Area of Effect (60°) instead of Deviation)

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Steelbeam has holed up in Tech-Central and anticipates the Chroniclers' reaction. He is certain that Nullify is hiding out somewhere in Uptown and planning to smoke him out. The more he provokes the Chroniclers on their own turf and makes them look like powerless fools, the sooner they will have to act. Steelbeam expects the Cluster to send a Mediator to figure out what the Cave Bear wants.

Let them come, Steelbeam thinks. His deliberate confusion is only a ruse to strike panic in the hearts of the Chroniclers. The Cave Bear has long since contacted the Carrion Birds who owe him an old favor. They have shown him the way to the Underground, up to a breach that connects their Nest to the Exit Level. Steelbeam will go down there and fight his way through. If necessary, he will blow up the whole Cluster just to get ahold of Nullify.

LOOSE CANNON

Cartel members who insist on introducing him to Bosch swarm the Cave Bear like flies swirling around horse dung. Without a word, Steelbeam swats these insects aside. He has other allies. Atama, the Red Bull, was the last companion of the Bear Brothers and has supplied the siblings with medicine and anabolic agents for years. Through him, he can get in contact with Cinnamon's rebels and acquire weapons and explosives from the Stukovs.

Lastly, there is also the Paler brood hiding in Exit C-3. The Chroniclers will soon have to decide whether they hand over Nullify or prepare for Steelbeam's incoming destruction.

INVENTORY

BLADE OF THE COCKROACH KING

Steelbeam's preferred melee weapon is the club of a Cockroach King which he has filed into a giant sword blade. It bears a notch for every enemy dumb enough to confront him. One after the other, they fell before the blade. Whoever gets hit by this weapon never gets to see another day.



DECKER

Whoever belongs to the Ropers holds the keys to Uptown in their hands. This tight-knit Scrapper faction stands in the highest regard and remains under the protection of the Judiciary. The Ropers maintain the elevator platforms, the aerial railway, and the mechanical cargo cranes that transport the material supplies from Downtown up to the Steel Monolith. Without the labor of these Scrappers, the Judges cannot function. If the elevators ever failed, they would be trapped in Uptown.

In his time as head of the mechatronics, Decker has seen it all: men whose skin was flayed from their very bones, terrible burns from scalding vapor fountains, arms mangled between cogwheels, people falling to their death. It was just another part of the job, in no way different from an Advocate staining his robe with ink. Decker has spent so many years between booming boilers, rattling chains and screeching wire rope hoists that the clanging in his ears has become a constant companion. Only in the evenings when he retreats to his quarters does the painful sound subside somewhat. With the help of his friends among the Steel Masters, he was able to attach a small refuge to the outer hull of the tower, connecting it to the interior via a breach in the brickwork. Up here, in his swallow's nest on the highest point of the Steel Monolith, Decker's gaze wanders across Justitian by night. He admires the beauty of the city, counting the lights being extinguished in the windows while he rests his old bones.

Not long ago, Decker was given a new task. The Hellvetics had requested help constructing a crane platform. Their leading Genie, Glauser, is a fidgety drunkard whose head is boiling over with paranoid conspiracy theories. He has tried to convince Decker for weeks that something lies hidden deep in the heart of the Crack. A secret the Chroniclers are desperately trying to prevent from being unearthed by the workers. Decker, however, simply waves such ideas aside. Nonsense! Why would the Chroniclers have buried anything of interest down there in that hole? But Glauser insists, and even offers a whole month's salary to Decker to have the Scrapper rappel down into the Crack and survey the spot that Glauser has marked on a map. Irritated, Decker agrees, if only to convince Glauser that he's wrong...

ROLE PLAY

Decker is a cheerful, clever guy with a big heart and a heavy dose of common sense. Justitian is his beloved home, and he considers himself and the Ropers an important part of this living machine.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mentor, Scrapper, Rank 3: Mechanist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 4D, Force 6D, Melee 3D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 7D, Navigation 8D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 5D, Arts 4D, Conduct 5D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 9D, Focus 6D, Science 6D, Cunning 4D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Authority 2, Network 2
SPECIAL: Master Roper (+2D on all rolls related to operating and maintaining the Elevator Platforms); All area access in Uptown, including Cluster Level 1 and the Steel Monolith
POTENTIALS: Tough Dog 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Gripping Pliers, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Blunt, Entangled (-2D)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Evade), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Leather apron, Armor 1; Total Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Toolkit (+2D on AGI+Crafting); Headlamp (Darkness penalty -2D); Magnifying glass

DOWN

Glauser, the agitated gasbag! What is supposed to lay down there in the Crack, except for skeletons and debris? What a waste of time! Decker wants to rappel there, report back to the Genie, sack a month's pay from him, and be done with the affair as quickly and painlessly as possible. Hopefully, the bland result will teach the Hellvetic some humility and prevent him from spreading time-wasting rumors in the future.

Decker figures that Saturday evenings seem to be the safest moment for this side inspection. During the change of guard patrol at the entry gate the coast will be clear, giving him enough time to propel down into the shaft from the control tower. As soon as Decker has assembled all of his equipment from the Steel Monolith at the Crack, he's ready to go.

PREVENTION

The Cluster has a massive problem. The Chroniclers were caught off guard by Glauser recruiting the help of a Roper to satisfy his curiosity. The Shutter Recoil who was assigned to observe the Genie finds himself in a deadlock. Terminating Decker is not an option. The death of the head mechatronic would instantly alert the Judges and lead to an excavation of the whole site. That would almost certainly result in the discovery of the Exit Level.

The Cluster needs another solution. Maybe Decker could die in an accident on the job before he can reach the Crack? Recoil would only have to manipulate the Scrapper's equipment and Decker's next maintenance mission on the aerial railway would end with a ninety-meter drop onto the Forecourt.



DAHNE

Dahne never really had a chance. They ambushed her. One of them pressed his hand onto her mouth and the others forced her legs apart. It was a story that happens time and again – yesterday, today, tomorrow.

When they were done with her, they passed her a Burn cusp. They told her not to make such a fuss – after all, she had set out with the group and knew what she was getting into. Dahne stared at an empty spot at her feet and wasted no thought on the patronizing justifications of her companions. She inhaled the spores, and her misery faded.

The journey of the Scavenger squad was hard and bleak. A year before, they had set out from faraway Wroclaw, their backpacks stuffed with trade goods and Bion. They wanted to reach Justitian before winter set in, but by early spring, they were already far behind their schedule. After Mulhouse, Gendos killed two members of the baggage train. Close to Bassham, a Scavenger got into a bloody altercation with an Orgiastic and died with the man's knife in his heart.

Accompanied by the two remaining Scavengers, Dahne reached Justitian, but after the first night in the Pollen camp, the two of them vanished along with their entire cargo. As a farewell gift, they left behind a single Burn cusp. Dahne coughed white flakes.

She was stranded. There was no way back except for joining another Scavenger squad, but during the harsh months of winter, no one would set out for the south. Dahne had to get by. She was craving for Burn, and her growing spore affliction made her a target for patrolling Spitalians. Hastily, she fled the camp and hid amongst the Defilers. She reached the Harbor district via the sewers, hoping to get her hands on some Burn from the Apocalyptics. However, the Great Cleanse had left the city depleted. Instead, a new drug was all the rage. Broiled. Liquid Burn, presumably developed in nearby Ferropol, secretly took over the streets of Justitian. Nobody knew who imported the drug, but the few dealers out there swore that it was not the Carrion Birds. Dahne didn't care where it came from. She had found her relief.

ROLE PLAY

Dahne is a Burner through and through. She wastes all her waking hours on figuring out how she is going to get her next fix of Broiled, steals and sells her mangled body. When it comes to satisfying her addiction, nothing is sacred to her.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Pollen, The Abomination, Scrapper, Rank 3: Scavenger
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 5D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 6D, Stealth 8D, Negotiation 3D, Seduction 5D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 4D, Cunning 6D, Deception 7D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Secrets 2, Network 2
SPECIAL: Carrier of the seed; Hideous boils and sores caused by her Broiled addiction (-2D to all CHA+Seduction rolls)
POTENTIALS: First Language 1, Ether Call 1, Payback 1
INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Sharpened Steel Bolt, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 4
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Torn leather clothes and rodent skin coat, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 6/8 (2 permanent), Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: (12) vials of Broiled to be sold on to others; Raw vermin meat (rat or cat flesh, purchased from the Knacker's Office - the only food Dahne can afford); "Healing" pastes (made by the Defiler Matrons to help with the Broiled-induced lesions on her skin)

BROILED DEALERS

Dahne knows a handful of Broiled dealers selling the new drug on the Eastside and in the Bottomlands. A red triangle on the forehead is their secret sign. The Judges and Spitalians are not aware of this yet. They still believe they solved the Burn epidemic after their annihilation of the East Wind Flock.

The Broiled dealers, however, count on junkies like Dahne to spread the drug amongst Scrappers. They supply Dahne with free doses if she smuggles Broiled shipments to the Outskirts via the Defiler Streets in return, passing them on to Cartel members there who are in on the secret trade. Week after week, Dahne prowls from one supplier to the next, making her deliveries and paving the way for a triumph of Broiled in the city. Already, she has hooked a handful of Defilers she's rooming with on the drug.

REACTION

Mollusks do not react to Broiled itself, but it nevertheless afflicts the Burner's body with spores that can easily be detected during a routine search. Dahne must be careful and avoid the Stallion Streets at all cost. The unbridled use of Broiled additionally leads to extreme physical reactions. Dahne's skin breaks out in red blisters and edemas, which cover her whole face, and her fetid breath reeks of iron.



BUMBLEBEE

He doesn't like people. They talk too much. Machines make for much better conversational partners. The sounds they emit are like a symphony in Bumblebee's ears. He is their Maker, and whenever he brings one of them to life, his heart throbs in his chest with excitement, and the feeling of godhood tingles in the tips of his fingers.

Bumblebee is a legend. Without him, the Manufacturers might never have existed at all. An internal competition between Bumblebee and Mechkovski – two Scrappers trying to outperform one another with their aggregates and Marvels – led to a Scrapper movement that soon after infected the entire Cult. From one day to the next, Scrappers no longer deemed themselves simple collectors drudging for the Chroniclers anymore, only good for hauling artifacts from the ruins. Instead, the former Scrappers declared themselves inventors, creators and engineers: the Manufacturers were born. This Scrapper faction prides itself on being the intellectual spearhead amongst the ranks of the dirt diggers and recognizes Bumblebee as its founder.

Bumblebee isn't too fond of all the fuss directed his way. He prefers to lock himself in his workshop, and only allows visitors inside when he can demonstrate the functionality of a new apparatus. That doesn't change the fact that would-be apprentices often camp out in front of Bumblebee's workshop for weeks, harassing him at any hour of the day and night. These admirers drive Bumblebee crazy. He would love nothing more than to ask Bosch for help getting rid of these tramps, if that wouldn't equate to a collusion with the Cartel. It would be brinkmanship. After all, it's due to the neutrality of the Manufacturers that the Chroniclers do not crack down on Bumblebee and his followers with sanctions or embargoes, and leave them to continue their work in peace.

The Judges, on the other hand, go out of their way to keep the Manufacturers as loyal allies. Skilled architects and engineers are always needed. Archot himself adores Bumblebee. He has personally declared him an honorary citizen of Justitian. The ceremony on Calendar Square five years ago was such an embarrassment, however, that it took Bumblebee months to step out of his workshop again afterwards.

ROLE PLAY

Bumblebee constantly mumbles to himself. "Ah, gotta weld the number three flange to the number five flute…" His soliloquies are muffled by his gas mask that he prefers to wear even while working. Many of his admirers acknowledge his weird behavior as a sign of a genius mind.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Creator, Scrapper, Rank 5: Legend
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 4 CHA: 1 INT: 6 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 2D, Brawl 2D, Force 3D, Melee 2D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 10D, Dexterity 6D, Orientation 8D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 5D, Arts 4D, Conduct 4D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 10D, Engineering 12D, Focus 10D, Legends 8D, Science 8D, Cunning 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 6, Network 2, Renown 6, Resources 6
SPECIAL: Master Builder: +2D on AGI+Crafting in the workshops of the Manufacturers; Scrap consumption is halved
POTENTIALS: Junker 3, Glyph 2, Brainwave 3, Mole 2, Herald 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 20 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Torque Wrench, Melee 2D, Distance 1m, Damage 3, Blunt; Marvel (Improved Flintlock Pistol), Projectiles 9D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Mag. 3, Muzzle Loader, Triple Barreled, Sight
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Heavy protective jacket, Armor 2, Fire Resistant 5, Insulated, Respected (Manufacturers and Judges, +2D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 2 dozen keys to other Manufacturer workshops

SUSPICION

Bosch eyes Bumblebee warily. The Cartel Lord would like to establish a working relationship with the legendary Manufacturer, but sadly Bumblebee has proved to be obstinate. Bosch has offered his help several times already, but Bumblebee rebuffs Bosch's helping hand time and time again. Bosch is not amused. Maybe he should send a handful of his thugs to Bumblebee's workshop to accidentally destroy a few of his machines and demand protection money. A little bit of pressure never hurt anyone.

INVENTORY

MANUFACTURER KEYS

Young apprentices who are able to impress one of the old Manufacturers receive one of their legendary keys from them in return. These metal bolts sprouting gears, springs and wildly jutting prongs are about the length of a forearm and are a symbol of trust and appreciation - and signify that a bearer belongs to the Manufacturers.

Those who are in possession of one carry it around their neck dangling from a leather cord. The keys grant access to museums, private rooms, libraries or workshops of a Manufacturer, where one can study the old scripts and plan new projects with trusted companions. Following the example of the their elders, young Manufacturers will one day set up their own workshop at Tech-Central, secure it with a massive portal, and pass on their key on to the next generation, once again.

It is said that Bumblebee owns over twenty of these Manufacturer keys. Each of them grants him access to the havens of one of his companions. But he never wears them openly. Everybody knows that he's one of the five original Manufacturers anyway. On the other hand, Bumblebee avoids handing the key to his own wonderland to an apprentice. It would never cross his mind to grant a blathering idiot free access to his realm. Exactly this secrecy fuels the curiosity of his followers even more.


KING
Cockroach's
HONEY

KING COCKROACH

King Cockroach awarded himself with his preposterous nickname to impress Bumblebee and the other Scrappers. He was always an outsider – his inventions were belittled and his crude ideas considered worthless. The Manufacturers tried to explain to him that he would never reach their level of craftsmanship.

But King Cockroach was undaunted. On the Scrapper markets at Tech-Central, he presented his pathetic automatons and badly engineered Marvels. Nothing ever worked as it should. Spectators rolled their eyes and moved on.

King Cockroach dragged himself back to his derelict workshop in the Rubble. The rooms close to the Manufacturer district were unaffordable, and so he rented a small stable from one of the Provider families instead. But after several months of being late on his rental payments, his landlord lost it and threw King Cockroach out.

It was exasperating. Looking for a groundbreaking idea, he roamed around beyond the city gates of mighty Justitian. When he came across an abandoned hut in the Rubble, he got lucky. A glorious beehive dangled underneath its tilted roof. King Cockroach shouted with jubilation. He would move into the hut, turn it into a beekeeping farm and start supplying Tech-Central with honey. He went to work right away – getting stung a few hundred times until he learned that a little smoke would help to calm the bees and got the hang of handling them. He filled dozens of jars with honey and built a ramshackle cart to safely transport his goods. However, when King Cockroach set up his booth, he was quickly cornered by a group of Cartel thugs. They cracked open the jars and licked the yellow gold from their greasy fingers. King Cockroach knew what would happen next.

Ever since, he has handed over his honey to the Cartel for a bargain, and they resell it with profit. While the stuff has become somewhat of a black market success, as usual, there's nothing in it for King Cockroach.

ROLE PLAY

King Cockroach embarrasses himself at all costs, always hoping that someone will notice him. His jokes are pointless, and his inventions worthless. However, nothing keeps him from debasing himself publicly. He would even douse himself in ice water or light the sleeves of his coat aflame just to receive some attention.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Chosen, Scrapper, Rank 2: Badger
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 1 INS: 3
SKILLS: Brawl 3D, Force 3D, Melee 3D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 4D, Dexterity 3D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 3D, Stealth 4D, Art 5D, Conduct 6D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 4D, Engineering 4D, Focus 3D, Legends 7D, Cunning 4D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 3D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 4D, Primal 5D, Survival 6D, Taming 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Ear to the ground: King Cockroach knows everything that's going on in Justitian, or at least he thinks he does. (When asking King Cockroach for information about the city, roll 1D. 6: Inspired information that reveals a key event in the city. 4-5: Reliable information that helps, somewhat. 2-3: Not useful, but harmless. 1: Completely wrong.)
POTENTIALS: Fool's Fate 3
INITIATIVE: 3D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Pipe Wrench, Melee 3D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Let's get outta here!), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 2m
ARMOR: Heavy leather coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Beggar's box; Gas mask Level 2; 2 jars of honey

JINX

Whatever King Cockroach touches is doomed to fail. He leaves no hopeless venture untried, all in vain to finally gain some recognition, which, in his eyes, is long overdue. But his losing streak just won't stop. Over the years, he has eked out a living with dirty work while constantly dreaming of his breakthrough, but without ever getting any closer to his goal.

His gullibility is his most unfortunate virtue. He believes in the good in men, but in the end, he keeps getting fucked over and taken advantage of.

PEON

King Cockroach is always extremely well informed if the need for a helping hand somewhere in the city or in the Rubble creates an opportunity to earn some quick Drafts. He collects tenders at Tech-Central, inquiries at the Grand Markets and writes down announcements. Those who are looking for work in the city can rely on King Cockroach's recommendations. Time and again King Cockroach picks up information not intended for his ears while he is rummaging for new job opportunities. Recently it crossed his mind that there were Drafts to be made from such rumors. King Cockroach's next idea is to expand his information monopoly and become filthy rich.



SORROW

There are infinite ways to make your living in Justitian. A street-smart Scrapper does not have to resort to collecting artifacts. If they know their trade and can identify a market niche, they will quickly find themselves immersed in the natural laws of supply and demand.

A special need exists for messenger services and the delivery of news. Sorrow plies this trade like no one else in the city. Anyone who requires certified mail, important documents, or perishable goods that need to be delivered comes to her workshop at the Forecourt. There, her tuned and customized buggy awaits. With this racing Marvel she tears along the Stallion Streets within minutes and can reach any district of Justitian in just under a quarter of an hour to make her deliveries. After all, there is no motorized two-way traffic in the city that could slow her down. The Petro is too expensive, and no one can afford to maintain such a vehicle. The messenger service is profitable enough to meet the high prices for fuel and rare spare parts, but barely so. It is a scarce game for Sorrow, just sufficiently lucrative to scrape by month after month.

Her customers are fond of the Scrapper due to her cordial ways and her name alike. In spite of this, any questions regarding Sorrow's origins remain unanswered. Her past lies buried in the dark. Sorrow would never share who she once was or where she came from, quickly steering conversations back to business if such questions arise.

One of Sorrow's most important customers is Wakili, the Neolibyan Ambassador from Uptown. Once a month, he visits the young Scrapper and tells her about the riches of Africa, the endless racing tracks and the grand speed contests among the Scourger packs of Tripol that take place beyond the city walls. Sorrow gapes with open mouth, drinking in all the details of his stories like a sponge.

Wakili supports the Scrapper and her small messenger service. By secretly bribing the African merchant Dewe to artificially lower the price for his Petro, he cuts Sorrow's overheads by a good deal. Without Wakili's secret patronage, the Scrapper would fail to maintain her business.

ROLE PLAY

Sorrow is all smiles and likes chummy jokes and sociable meetings. She's friends with many of the inhabitants of the Stukov Quarter who see her as the nice girl from the neighborhood. But she makes sure to always steer clear of the Apocalyptics, avoiding their gaze and never allowing them into her workshop.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Martyr, Scrapper, Rank 3: Mechanist
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 8D, Dexterity 7D, Navigation 9D, Mobility 8D, Stealth 6D, Arts 6D, Conduct 6D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 5D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 7D, Cunning 6D, Deception 5D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 9D, Perception 8D, Primal 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 2
SPECIAL: Talk of the town: Everyone knows about Sorrow and her buggy, and whenever the engine flares up people take notice.
POTENTIALS: Quick Eye 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Crusher (Modified Pipe Wrench), Melee 4D, Distance 2m, Damage 6, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Sorrow's courier garb and helmet, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Sorrow's Buggy; Waterproof courier case; Workshop key, Lucky charm helmet with horseshoe (a gift from Wakili that he had made by the Steel Masters)

STOLEN CHILDHOOD

As a child, Sorrow was abducted by Apocalyptics. She cannot remember her parents or the place she was born. For years, a Raven kept her as his thrall until she was able to escape and flee north. Scrappers took her in and taught her how to survive in this harsh landscape. She rid herself of her old name and took on a new one that the Scrappers had given her based on her past.

Not long ago, Sorrow heard about the events happening in Toulon during the summer of '96. Allegedly, a Phoenix held a tribunal against Apocalyptics there, punishing them for the childhood they had stolen from him. Sorrow was speechless when she finally grasped Rattler's motif for this carnage. How desperately she yearned to have the strength to bring such vengeance over her tormentors, too.

CINNAMON'S LETTERS

Cinnamon, a young civil rights activist from the Stukov Quarter, peeked into Sorrow's workshop recently to inquire about what it would cost to deliver certified mail to all the Advocate families and whether Sorrow would be able to reach every house on the same day before noon. Sorrow nodded and named a price, but so far, Cinnamon has not returned to take her up on the offer. The Scrapper wonders about this strange query. Why is it so important for those letters to be delivered in such a short timeframe?

INVENTORY

SORROW'S BUGGY

For years, she has been tinkering on her vehicle that is both her masterpiece and her best friend, constantly adding new equipment and expanding its capacity. Among other things, it is equipped with a cable winch, swivel-mounted spotlights, several secret compartments, a foldable passenger seat and a crappy but functional radio. For emergencies, the back of the buggy contains a burner filled with rags and oil to cloud pursuers with heavy smoke.



JOERDIS

Joerdis is the guardian angel of the orphans of Justitian, and her orphanage in the Outskirts is widely recognized as a place of mercy. As a midwife, she has helped many a Scrapper woman give birth and taken care of their newborn babies.

An orphan herself, she grew up in the streets and backyards of Justitian until a Scrapper took her along on his journeys and made her his Mouse. She lost her youth in the wasteland. After sixteen long years out in the dirt, Joerdis decided to return home and create a shelter where she could give others the childhood she herself had never had. At the fringes of Tech-Central, she squatted at an abandoned warehouse and began re-furnishing it with the money she had saved from her previous forays.

These renovations continue to this day. Tirelessly, she keeps adding new wings to the orphanage, builds bunk beds from scrap and sews clothes for the children. To finance the orphanage, pay laborers, and organize food for the orphans, Joerdis collects alms in the citizens' quarters or rents out children as mail carriers and messengers. Some, she trains personally to become Mice and prepares them for a hard life ahead.

Judges, Spitalians, and Chroniclers are visiting the orphanage on a monthly basis. They are screening the children, looking for suitable recruits or orphans who display a knack for solving logical puzzles. The Cults pay a decent ransom for those considered worthy at their muster. As of now, the orphanage is packed with over 800 children, all sleeping across several large dormitories.

Proudly, Joerdis wears a leather halo like a crown; a recent present from her fosterlings. She loves her brats, and each of them she has to say goodbye to leaves a little scar on her heart. Her bedroom on the top floor is crammed with mementos of children who have left the orphanage to set out into the great wide open. Joerdis knows that many of them will never return. However, she will never forget the years she shared with them.

ROLE PLAY

The way Joerdis talks is overwhelming and unbearably loud. She keeps gesturing frantically in all directions, always giving orders and vigilantly counting the kids to make sure that none are missing. She confronts those who get too close to her charges with a raised crowbar.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Healer, Scrapper, Rank 4: Alpha Wolf
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 4D, Force 6D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 8D, Crafting 6D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Arts 5D, Conduct 6D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 6D, Seduction 5D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 5D, Legends 7D, Medicine 4D, Cunning 4D, Domination 5D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 2, Network 2, Renown 2, Resources 3
SPECIAL: Guardian Angel: The people of the Outskirts are Joerdis' allies, and have her back in times of need.
POTENTIALS: Tough as Nails 1, Undefeatable 1, Tough Dog 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Crusher (The Crowbar), Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Tough Flesh, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Gifts from "her" children; Canteen with herbal schnapps ("To fend off nausea"); Improvised midwife equipment (stethoscope, scissors, a roll of soft fabric to wrap the baby, smelling salts)

THE LOST ONE

In all her years as a midwife, Joerdis has never seen a child as perfect as Estrelle Arnot's son, and the Judge was just as enchanted by her child's face as Joerdis was. Shedding tears of glee they looked at the boy, overloaded by the sublimity of the moment. Now, however, after the abduction of Estrelle's son, the young mother is torn by grief. Joerdis watches the poor woman wallow in sorrow. She is trying to alleviate her suffering by helping her on her desperate search, though she doesn't believe that the kidnapper is hiding in the Defiler Streets – let alone that he's a monster like the Judge keeps saying. Night after night, the two women rashly follow alleged leads, raising more attention than is good for them in the process.

COVETOUS

During her time in Justitian, Joerdis has helped legions of women and saved the lives of hundreds of children. No one would allow for harm to strike her down. Scavengers as well as Manufacturers consider her the last good soul in the city, and some Protectors returning with loot from their campaigns on the frontline leave toys for the kids to play with as a sign of gratitude for Joerdis' work.

The Cartel, however, doesn't like the smell of this. Bosch would rather utilise the orphans as an asset for himself and raise them to be future Cartel members or pit fighters. He has Emiel Salvano review the city's cadasters, as he is planning to buy the premises the orphanage is built on and claim it for the Cartel. As soon as he owns the grounds, he will raise the lease for the orphanage and bring Joerdis to her knees. Then she will have no other choice but to say goodbye to her brats.


BASELINE
RIPTIDE

HOSTIN

Out in the wasteland, thousands of dangers lurk to kill careless Scrappers in the blink of an eye. When the Badger Leifer and his Mouse inspected an old bunker tunnel, the ceiling came crashing down and buried Hostin underneath. As if through a miracle, the boy survived. However, Leifer had to amputate Hostin's smashed leg and carry the critically wounded Mouse all the way back to Justitian. Leifer had barely enough Drafts to get his own ass through the winter, let alone feed a cripple. He subdued Hostin with a mix of distillate and milk, waited for the boy to close his eyes and dropped him in front of the orphanage. Hostin never saw Leifer again.

Joerdis found the boy on the sidewalk, chilled to the bone and blue from the cold, yet burning up from a fever. She didn't hesitate in taking him in. For weeks she nursed him, tended to his wound and slept at his bedside. While Hostin slowly recovered, she helped him build a makeshift prosthetic leg so he could walk again. Months passed, and the boy gradually reclaimed his self-confidence. He chuckled with a sense of pride when Joerdis gave him tasks to fulfill around the orphanage and spent his spare time welding together toys for the other kids in the house.

Hostin had found a new life and come to terms with never being able to run again. He made the best of what was left for him, and was content with it. Joerdis became his surrogate mother and fulfilled the role of a mentor at the same time, and he did everything he could to make her proud.

When he managed to attach an old camera to his toy buggy, Hostin began cruising around the neighborhood and recording again, something he had not done for a long time. He drove his toy buggy along the Defiler Streets, filmed parts of Tech-Central and shot some footage around the Crack. One day, a young punk wanted to take his toy from him, but a Chronicler intervened and jolted the would-be thief with electricity from his pinky finger. The bully gave the buggy back to Hostin at once and ran away with his hair standing on end.

The Chronicler nodded to the one-legged boy and encouraged him to keep filming. He told to him that what he was doing would be of importance one day.

ROLE PLAY

Hostin is a clever kid equipped with lightning quick wits and a knack for technology. He loves watching adult Scrappers at work and dreams of becoming a Manufacturer himself one day. Bumblebee is his greatest idol.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Disciple, Scrapper, Rank 1: Mouse
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Toughness 3D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 4D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 4D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 6D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 6D, Focus 5D, Cunning 4D, Faith 3D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D, Survival 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 1, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: The Chroniclers have an eye on Hostin - he is constantly shadowed by an Agent when he's out on his forays, assessing his behaviour, and all of the Cluster's cameras turn towards him as he passes.
POTENTIALS: Brain Wave 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Hostin doesn't have the stones to start a fight, and if faced with opposition would rather run away
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Ducking away), Mobility 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Faith 3D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Leather coat, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Drone buggy with camera and a stack of memory cards for his recordings; Prosthesis; Burnt-out E-Cube (the first thing Hostin found with Leifer, and the only thing remaining of the Badger)

FAREWELL

Sooner or later, Hostin will have to bid farewell to the orphanage. Already, he's amongst the oldest kids, and Joerdis keeps shooting him admonishing glances letting him know that it is almost time to prepare for the life that awaits outside. However, Hostin is fond of his little bed and the memories that connect him to this house. He would never leave Joerdis on his own accord.

With a heavy heart, he tries to find new friends, but the other Scrapper kids either make fun of his prosthetic limb or give him envious looks because of his toy. In the Scavenger streets, he searches for solicitations and asks around for odd jobs. But nobody wants to hire the crippled boy, and thus Hostin slowly begins to realize that because of his handicap, he doesn't really belong anywhere.

INVENTORY

DRONE BUGGY

Hostin's dearest treasure is an old, battery-powered toy buggy that he has turned into a wheeled drone. The all-terrain buggy is extremely maneuverable, quick and stealthy enough to scare sleeping cats. The remote control works at a distance of up to 200 meters, and the camera attached to the buggy is equipped with a shockproof fisheye lens.

Once every month, an envoy from the Cluster visits the orphanage and buys all of Hostin's memory cards, handing him a handful of new ones. They never fail to leave Joerdis a donation for the orphanage.



MENDELSON

Mendelson is a slouch, trapped within a frail body and punished with a simple mind. He never had any friends. Other Scavengers detested his sleazy demeanor. So he tried to find a place among the ranks of the Cartel, but whenever he showed up there with more stories full of made up exaggerations, he promptly got his ass handed to him. Mendelson just didn't know when to shut up. He kept talking until his drivel was enough to make others boil over, and could never quite figure out where it all went wrong. Herkling, an Officer, gave him one last chance to either disappear or to eat a bullet. Mendelson made himself scarce and applied to become a Manufacturer instead, but they saw nothing redeeming in him either. At the recruitment test, he couldn't even tell the difference between a wrench and a screwdriver.

His life was a string of failures. He moved from one blunder to the next and lived from hand to mouth.

One night, he met a tall Spitalian in the Guest Quarter, whose shoes he polished submissively. The Spitalian asked Mendelson for Burn, and the Scrapper knew where to get it. Every week after that, Mendelson went to meet the Spitalian, who had introduced himself as Master H., and supplied him with fresh cusps he bought from the dealers in the Harbor district. Finally, Mendelson had found a task he was able to fulfill. Master H. rewarded him for each of his errands, and for a brief period in Mendelson's life, everything seemed like it was going to get better.

Out of the blue, the Great Cleanse washed over the city, and Burn disappeared from the streets. Mendelson noticed Master H.'s features turn more and more grim every time he reached the meeting place they had agreed upon empty-handed. Then, disaster struck: Mendelson had initiated a big deal, but he had to pay in advance. The Spitalian entrusted him with the necessary Drafts, and Mendelson was ready to make the exchange. The Apocalyptics held a knife to his throat and took the bag of money from Mendelson. Aghast, the Scrapper rushed back to his employer. Master H. was so livid over the botched deal that he gave Mendelson a hard shove down the stairs. When the Scrapper awoke again, he found that he had been put in a neck brace…

ROLE PLAY

Mendelson panders to everyone like a thrall willing to do anything for money. However, there's not much the brittle Scrapper can do. Without his cane, he can't walk, and even the slightest of movements cause excruciating pain. He's only useful running simple errands or working as a city guide.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traditionalist, Scrapper, Rank 3: Scavenger
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 1 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 3D, Dexterity 2D, Conduct 4D, Negotiation 5D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 4D, Focus 4D, Legends 5D, Cunning 5D, Deception 4D, Reaction 3D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 6D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Renown 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Gutter Trash: Mendelson knows everyone in the city, but no one wants to be associated with the cripple (+2D to any rolls related to finding underground contacts, but -2D to securing any deals)
POTENTIALS: Fool's Fate 1
INITIATIVE: 3D / 8 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Crutch, Melee 1D, Distance 1m, Damage 3, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry with crutch), Melee 1D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 1D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Padded clothing & body brace, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 3 doses of Broiled; Gripping stick (Mendelson can't pick anything up from the ground without it); Ragged handful of Drafts from Master H. to pay for his supply; Toolkit filled with supplies for countless odd-jobs (Shoe polish, cloth, crude city map, basic mechanical tools that Mendelson can barely identify)

SHARED SUFFERING

The fall down the stairs shattered several of Mendelson's cervical vertebrae. Without the neck brace he is incapable of even keeping his head upright. Metal pins hold his left shinbone in place and allow him to shuffle along. But that's all Mendelson can do now.

Joseph Heiden has turned his minion into a cripple like himself. In any case, Mendelson is still more useful to him alive than dead, but in his current state, the Scrapper completely depends on his master's medical skills.

GLIMPSE OF HOPE

Mendelson has no survival skills whatsoever. The only thing that's left for him is his knowledge of the old dealers, but for the most part they have all either gone underground or fled to the four corners of the earth for fear of the Judges.

A few days ago, Mendelson met one of these old henchmen. He told the Scrapper that there is a new drug on the market. He should look for dealers carrying a red triangle on their forehead and ask for Broiled. Mendelson believes that his master will be ecstatic to hear such news. Maybe he will even forgive him for his bad mistake from way back and let Mendelson run errands for him again. Mendelson is full of hope…



THE CARTOGRAPHER

No one knows the Black Lung and the Stukov Desert better than the Cartographer. That's what everyone says who has ever laid eyes on his maps, which are remarkably detailed. However, the Cartographer doesn't care for praise and glory; this is not the driving force behind his work. He also doesn't mind that most people identify him with a nickname that reduces his whole being to his work, instead of calling him by his name, Remminger.

His maps are created for posterity, and in this way he is following in the footsteps of great Stukov, the first Cartographer. All his life has been dedicated to mapping the Protectorate and its landscapes, capturing their natural traits on paper. He has recorded every change that has occurred over time, every river run dry and every slight shift of the salt dunes, incorporating the data into his drawings. To get a clear picture of the current state of the Protectorate and all its cities, one has to visit Remminger's House of Maps in the Stukov Quarter. Its interior walls are covered with giant cross sections showcasing the winding alleys and streets of all the places the Cartographer has visited in the last thirty years.

These blueprints are of incredible value – or at least that's what Wakili the Neolibyan says, who also is Remminger's most loyal customer. The Ambassador is enamored with Remminger's work, pats him on the shoulder encouragingly and tells him that he would make a great Neolibyan in his next life. The Cartographer gets the joke, gives an embarrassed smile, and praises the grand mapmakers of Tripol in return. These two men get along well – a fact which infuriates the Chroniclers. They are highly suspicious about Wakili's map acquisitions and want to drive a wedge between the Neolibyan and the Cartographer. For weeks now, Wakili has been accompanied by two agents who record every word he shares with Remminger, as well as disallowing the Ambassador from making further purchases. Remminger can't believe this act of coercion. For decades, the Cluster didn't care for his creations, and now his work has suddenly turned into a political affair. He would much rather throw the agents out of his studio, but the consequences of such defiance would be fatal.

ROLE PLAY

Remminger is a wanderer; stoic, pedantic, and fully dedicated to his craft. His knowledge about soil conditions, mineral deposits, and land surveying is unequalled in the Protectorate. No one understands the history of the Black Lung and its geological composition like he does.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traveler, Scrapper, Rank 4: Lone Wolf
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Force 3D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 5D, Arts 9D, Conduct 7D, Negotiation 8D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 6D, Focus 8D, Science 8D, Cunning 6D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 11D, Perception 11D, Survival 9D, Taming 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 2, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Wayward Soul (+2D on INS+Orienteering and INS+Survival when exploring unknown territory)
POTENTIALS: Asceticism 2, Marathon 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Flintlock Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 5/20m, Damage 8, Mag. 1, Muzzle Loader; Walking Cane, Melee 2D, Damage 3, Blunt
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Weatherproof leather clothing, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Various maps of the Protectorate, the Black Lung, and their cities; Paper and charcoal pencils; Ancient surveying device (sextant); Hiking gear with canteen and supplies for several days

MASTERPIECES

The true value of Remminger's masterpieces is hard to grasp for the untrained eye. Laymen will only see the obvious in the landscapes he depicts, which look nice enough. To a Paler, however, they will reveal another layer of secrets. Some maps contain dozens of memetic markers pointing to image walls in the Stukov Desert that are clearly related to the Recombination Group. It is unclear whether these image walls are from the time of the City Wars or date back to before the Eshaton.

But what's more important – if a Redeemer were to reach one of these locations and somehow manage to power up the image walls, they would point to weapon caches and Dispensers all over the Stukov Desert that have lain hidden in front of everybody's eyes for centuries. Remminger sits on a treasure chest that a Demagogue would kill for. As of yet, the Palers from occupied war zone C-3 know nothing about the Cartographer's maps with loaded meanings, but the longer they hold out, the more secret data from the Cluster they can process. It is only a matter of time until some nondescript folder points their attention in the right direction.



ZANDER

Zander remembers all too well how it went downhill. In the beginning, they congratulated him on his find. The Chroniclers led him into a dark backroom of the Forecourt Alcove and showered him with Drafts, yet they refused to answer any of his questions.

Overnight, he became a legend amongst his ilk. Suddenly, he was able to afford everything he had ever dreamed of, and it wasn't long before he was surrounded by more friends than he thought he would ever have. The first luxury he blew money on was a swanky coat made of reindeer skin. Zander never wanted to suffer the freezing, bitter winds again in his life. Then, he paid for rounds of distillate for everyone, awarded the whores with massive tips and slid Drafts into the vest pockets of Scrappers who had helped him through the tough times in the past. Everyone kept pestering about what he had retrieved from that hole in the wasteland, but not even Zander knew the answer to this question.

A few days later, the looks people gave him turned from awestruck to greedy. Zander realized that strangers twisted their necks to stare at him as if they knew who he was. Absurdly beautiful women were suddenly highly complimentary, and tried desperately to lure him into their beds. Old bedfellows he hadn't seen in decades showed up, begging for money. Before he knew it, nightmares plagued his sleep. The pestering hunch that he was being observed from afar became his constant companion. Zander trembled. He was sure that there was somebody out there who wanted to kill him for his fortune. He tried to hire bodyguards, but the Cartel demanded a ludicrously high price. That's when it dawned on him – by now, everybody knew about his find and the vast sum he'd been paid off with. Zander gasped for air and bit his fingernails. He needed to find a solution that would keep him safe, and he needed to find it fast.

At dawn, he made a decision. He stuffed all the money into a heavy bag, burned his clothes, and went into hiding.

ROLE PLAY

Zander is a hunted man. He can't shake the feeling of being followed. It must be related to the artifact that made him rich, but that's all he knows. He tries to maintain as low a profile as possible. He changes the guesthouse he stays at daily, covers himself with unassuming, dirty clothes, only orders the cheapest foods and sleeps in the shabbiest rooms. He carries his entire fortune around in his bag. Zander is constantly on the lookout, his nerves are raw. Day and night, he's looking over his shoulder, trying to calm and assure himself that he's not being followed, even though his gut says he is.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Protector, Scrapper, Rank 5: Legend
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 5 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 1 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 3D, Melee 5D, Stamina 4D,
Toughness 5D, Crafting 8D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 8D,
Projectiles 7D, Stealth 10D, Conduct 5D, Negotiation 4D, Seduction 4D,
Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 4D, Legends 5D, Cunning 6D,
Deception 7D, Domination 3D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 3D, Empathy 7D,
Orienteering 7D, Perception 10D, Primal 7D, Survival 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Renown 3, Resources 6, Secrets 1
SPECIAL: Zander's reputation has been on the decline since he went underground. People are starting to forget about him.
POTENTIALS: Rat 2, Danger Sense 2, One Last Shot 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Modified Heavy Revolver, Projectiles 8D, Distance 15/50m, Damage 12, Mag. 8, Thunder Strike;
Sharpened Knife, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active,
Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Reindeer skin coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/6, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 3
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Travel bag full of Drafts

SPIRITS THAT I'VE CITED

For two years now, Zander hasn't had a full night's sleep. His eyes are permanently bloodshot, and paranoia haunts him. Destiny had chosen Zander to retrieve an artifact of immeasurable value. However, the Scrapper had no idea about the chain reaction his find would cause. The artifact from the hole close to the ruins of Exalt not only triggered Corium, the Needle from Eastern Borca, to return to Justitian – Zander has also raised the attention of the Head Collector who had lain dormant for many years. Now, he is back and will not rest until he has found Zander and taken his head.

INVENTORY

ZANDER'S FORTUNE

Zander's bag is chock-full with rolled-up Drafts. He has never bothered to count his fortune. A hundred thousand or a million – what does it matter? This huge mound of fucking money is what's gotten him into this trouble at the first place! One time he tried to get rid of the bag by offering it to a Defiler, but this only made the man afraid. Thinking it was too good to be true, the Defiler suspected that Zander's generous offer was a trap set to frame him, so he fled from the rich man screaming.



NEOLIBYANS

NINE STUPID WOLVES

The story is a simple one. Ten wolves had killed a herd of ten sheep. The grass was soaked with the lifeblood of their prey. Suddenly, one of the stupid wolves asked, "How shall we divide the sheep among ourselves?"

The sly wolf stepped forward and said, "There's nothing easier than that. There are ten of us, and we must distribute the spoils fairly amongst ourselves. Therefore, the only thing that matters is that the sum equals ten." He looked around. Nine stupid wolves gawked back at him. "Well, I get nine sheep," he explained, followed by a dramatic pause, "and the nine of you get one sheep."

The nine stupid wolves nodded. "Truly you are a smart wolf! What do you call this kind of redistribution, so that we can make use of it in the future?" they asked coyly.

The wily wolf grinned from ear to ear as he devoured his ninth sheep. "Capitalism."

INVADERS

“Africans in Justitian? Never!” the Scrapper grunts as he licks across his blistered lips. "Once here, they would stab us and bleed us like goats." he adds, nods, and hobbles away towards the ruins. Africans are perceived as the enemies of Borca, and the Neolibyans are their generals - the Judges would never do business with them. Or so the people believe. The Senates know better and are well advised to hide the African delegates within the Ambassador Quarter. However, the Judiciary can't possibly do without the Neolibyans. The same goes for the Spitalians, whose cooperation with the African traders is much more intense than it may seem from the outside. The Chroniclers, on the other hand, see betrayal toward the common cause in such a carefree attitude. They consider the Neolibyans invaders, contesting their artifacts. The Cluster willingly places them on the same threat level as Palers and Sleepers and does everything in its might to persuade the population to believe their warnings about the African conquerors. No method of propaganda is off limits for the Chroniclers. Servants swarm about and blanket the Protectorate with absurd anecdotes: Neolibyans steal, pillage and rape! They devastate entire regions with African epidemics, kidnap children, offer human sacrifices, mate with animals! They wear the skins of their opponents as cloaks and drink blood from silver chalices!

There is little truth to these scare stories, but the most

extreme lies remain glued in people's minds. As a result, the average Borcan seems to be more afraid of a potential African raid than he is of the Clans baring their teeth on his doorstep, or the Aberrants swirling around his empire.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

The Neolibyans immediately got the gist of the laws governing the Protectorate. The Chroniclers sit at the top and give the people a proper brainwashing. Below them the Judges parade, battle ready troops full of honor who defend the fatherland on behalf of those masked freaks. In their own way they resemble the Scourgers, more than they would like to admit. Beneath the Judiciary Borca's very own medicine men, the Spitalians, gather and beguile the crowds with their humbug. No wonder the baldies get along so well with the Anubians.

One level below, a swamp of enemies and rivals converges. Scrappers, Clanners, Jehammedans, Apocalyptics, and Anabaptists, all of them Cults that have little to no overlap with the Chroniclers. The Neolibyans, on the other hand, recognize these oppressed masses as their future allies. They want to negotiate with them: the Exalters of Liqua, the Anabaptists of Cathedral City, and the Scrappers of Cavernis. Anyone who is at daggers drawn with the Chroniclers receives special treatment from the Neolibyans. Their ambassadors move through the Protectorate cities with Scribes in tow, opening embassies, serving tea for the city lords, and giving away damascene blades decorated with gold inlays, ammunition belts embroidered with pearls, and Petro barrels. They know that they have nothing left to lose because the lies of the Chroniclers have polluted their honor so much that they can not sink any lower. The only way from here is up. Back to the top. Until the enemies of the Cluster stand united behind lions.

THE POWER OF GOLD

They are outnumbered. In the entire Protectorate, it's impossible to ferret out more than two hundred Neolibyans at a time. In Justitian, that number is less than two dozen. However, this lack of manpower is compensated for by the weight of their treasure chests. Long ago, many cunning traders changed course and now poach Borcan territory as they fan their business out across the Protectorate. Secretly, they finance Scrapper missions, buy looted goods from Apocalyptics while selling them ammunition in the same breath, and smuggle barrels of Petro to the Enemoi. The sheer breadth of possibilities offered by the Protectorate to optimize profit invigorates the Neolibyans. Nowhere else in the known world can they increase their wealth with such an ease as here.

THORNS FROM BEHIND

Sanction follows sanction. The Chroniclers do everything in their power to isolate the Neolibyans and their business. They flood Justitian with new regulations, complicate trade between Borcans and Africans, and drive a wedge through negotiations with Tripol's Chancery in Uptown. Every movement of Ambassador Wakili is tracked and evaluated, the danger of a conversation with a flagged target subject is color coded by its threat level. Most of these alerts flash a bright red.

APPRENTICESHIP

Not every Neolibyan stepping on Protectorate soil is aiming for big profits. There are certainly Scribes and Magnates who are within the borders and following their own agenda. There are those who want to capture the strange Borcan culture and tell their brothers in the homeland of the terrible food and the miserable mood, and there are some who are on the hunt for a trophy, with a spot on their walls back home waiting to be crowned with the head of a Cockroach King. Whatever reasons drive a Neolibyan into these realms, the Cultures are so alien to each other that each side can only learn from the other.

LATE REVENGE

Toulon was a disaster for the Neolibyans and the devious attack remains unforgiven. Zohra, Toulon's Consul, has sent her agents to Justitian to look for Nestor and his remaining Iron Brothers, rumored to be hiding in the Protectorate along with the looted treasures of Hamza Abubakar III. Zohra knows she cannot simply march into the Protectorate with an entourage of Scourgers, but the Scrappers in the African camp to the south of Tech-Central make an excellent camouflage for her bounty hunters.

But the Consul is not the only one who has unfinished business in Justitian. Magnate Bejide herself has taken residence in Uptown, lodging with her cousin Wakili while she combs the city in the hunt of two Apocalyptics whose heads should have rolled years ago.



WAKILI

A few years ago, the arrival of the Ambassador of Tripol caused an uproar in Justitian. When Archot laid eyes on Wakili's wealth for the first time, he enacted a series of luxury edicts and funding decrees to embellish Uptown. The Supreme Judge was determined that he would never feel that embarrassed again.

To Wakili, Archot's envy is a meaningless detail. He has not come to Justitian to deal with its rulers' petty inadequacies. He has come to form alliances. Wakili wants to win over the Spitalians, convince the Judges of trade routes to Borca and turn them into allies who can offer Tripol a passage through the Alps that sidelines the Hellvetics. To Wakili, the Protectorate is just what he hoped it would be: a potential gold mine holding boundless profits for his Cult. Uncharted territory – alas, it's rotting in the wrong hands.

In stark contrast to his successful negotiations, his conversations with the Chroniclers are full of subliminal hatred and mistrust. After the events in Toulon, the situation has only worsened. These days, the Ambassador is often placed under house arrest for days at a time and may only travel through Uptown in the company of a Streamer. Downtown, he is hampered by Agents blocking off his access to the Alcoves and obstructing his work. Wakili rolls his eyes. Of course those masked cowards have his whole estate bugged, eavesdropping even when he sleeps. His patience in dealing with them only makes the Chroniclers more nervous.

Then, there is a sudden shockwave. The news of the fall of Aquitaine spreads like a wildfire. The Neolibyans seem to be the target of accusations raining down from all sides for weeks on end. Every day, Wakili is escorted to the Cluster and must endure endless interrogations about the artifacts and weapon systems Tripol possesses that could pose a potential threat to Justitian. To Wakili, this blatant paranoia only proves Justitian's vulnerability. The Chroniclers are panicking, and the Neolibyan feeds on their fear. When the time is right, he will use that against them.

ROLE PLAY

Those who talk to Wakili are either overwhelmed by his tranquility or afraid of what schemes lurk behind his serene gaze. His alien nature fuels prejudice, but also triggers curiosity. Many people want to see the great man from Africa up close, talk to him, or ask him for favours. However, it is now often necessary to make an appointment at the embassy weeks in advance.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Mediator, Neolibyan, Rank 4: Ambassador
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Force 3D, Melee 4D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Arts 6D, Conduct 10D, Expression 7D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 5D, Focus 7D, Legends 6D, Science 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 6D, Domination 6D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 9D, Orientation 5D, Perception 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Can also use Authority in negotiations with non-Neolibyans
POTENTIALS: At Eye Level 3, Undefeatable 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 14 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag. 12; Curved Dagger, Melee 5D, Distance 1m, Damage 3, Jeweled adornments (+2D when negotiating with Neolibyans)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Vestments of the Ambassador, Armor 1, Bulletproof (3), Respected (Justitian's Upper Class, +1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Balancer with calculator, lock and latch; Ambassador seal of the Bank of Commerce; Diplomatic papers; Maps of the Cartographer

ARRANGEMENTS

Since Wakili's arrival in Justitian, Kranzler has visited the Tripol embassy dozens of times and has besieged the Ambassador with his ode to the impending death of humanity. Time and again, he has tried to make Wakili comprehend the grave dangers that the Psychovores pose. The Provost was seeking an alliance with the Neolibyan Cult to be able to launch a Spitalian expedition into the Psychovore Belt, along with free passage for his soldiers on the far and foreign continent. The two men on either side of the negotiating table couldn't have been more different. One a battle-hardened, stone-faced general, the other a scheming diplomat who proclaimed gold as his god.

Wakili agreed to the deal and provided Kranzler with his freighter, the Ruguru, that the Spitalians used to travel from Montpellier to Africa and set up a beachhead at Qabis.

In return, Kranzler would use his contacts in the Senates to strengthen Wakili's position against the Chroniclers. Rutgar himself took care of that and officially placed Tripol's Chancery under the protection of the Judiciary, knowing full well that this would be another stab in the Chroniclers' back. Ever since, the Cluster has been powerless. While the Chroniclers can observe and hinder Wakili, they cannot exile him from the city. Escalation is inevitable, for Wakili seizes the moment by putting all Neolibyan merchants stranded in Justitian under the aegis of his embassy, vouching for them at the Office of Locality, thus allowing them to receive the necessary citizenship papers.

INVENTORY

CANE OF THE ANCESTORS

Wakili's walking cane is a gift from the legendary Raider Hamza Abubakar III. For the Ambassador, the Staff of the Ancestors carries symbolic meaning. Whenever the Chroniclers pester him, he places the staff on the table, showing without words what political side he takes.



BEJIDE

A long time ago, the Sun Flock was the most insidious pirate organization on the Mediterranean Sea, and their Albatross, Vulco, a phantom that kept slipping through every net. The damage he inflicted upon the balances of the Bank of Commerce was impossible to sum up on paper, and the bounty on his head reached astronomical heights. However, Vulco was always one step ahead of the Neolibyans. His Sun Flock were a callous lot – ready for anything, repelling all rival mercenary platoons and dancing around the Scourger packs with ease. The only thing the Apocalyptics didn't see coming was a woman's guile.

Bejide, daughter of the Magnate of Bedain, ordered rumors of a truce to be spread. The Neolibyans would agree to a cease fire if the Sun Flock would concede to a negotiation, one on one. The conditions: no guards, no weapons, no traps. The Sun Flock sent Argus as an envoy to a meeting arranged with Bejide out on the open sea. The Apocalyptic boarded the Neolibyan's dhow, and the negotiation began. For hours, they discussed the potential outcome of the situation until she interrupted him and asked for a kiss. Argus didn't understand. Bejide insisted. "Isn't the moment the only thing an Apocalyptic lives for?" she asked, as she stepped closer to him, her clothes discarded on the deck behind her. The pirate tried to resist, but he had already fallen for her. Piece by piece, she drew all secrets of the Sun Flock from his lips while they were tangled in her sheets.

Bejide had all she needed. She bade farewell to the reckless man with a lingering kiss and waved him goodbye. Seconds later, she instructed her Scourgers by radio and at once five hit squads in torpedo boats raced towards Corpse to annihilate the nest of the Sun Flock.

Within a few days, news of the victorious operation spread along the Mediterranean coast. The Neolibyans and their hell hounds had exterminated the Sun Flock. As a proof, dozens of the severed Apocalyptic heads were brought to Tripol and displayed on the docks. Bejide walked past the ghoulish exhibition to convince herself that the Scourgers had done an acceptable job. However, Vulco's head was not amongst the trophies. Neither was Argus'.

ROLE PLAY

Bejide is like the sunset. In one second, there is light and in the next darkness reigns supreme. She is a gambler. Those caught in her web will be devoured whole. Her body is her most powerful weapon, able to set hearts ablaze – or to destroy them.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Ruler, Neolibyan, Rank 4: Magnate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 5 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 4D, Force 3D, Melee 4D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 4D, Dexterity 6D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 4D, Stealth 6D, Arts 5D, Conduct 9D, Expression 8D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 10D, Seduction 11D, Legends 7D, Science 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 8D, Domination 7D, Faith 6D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 10D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 7D, Primal 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 4, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 6, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Pathologically incapable of forgiveness
POTENTIALS: Wheel of Fortune 2,Tip of the Scale 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Glass Needle filled with Psychovore sap, Melee 5D, Distance 1m, Piercing (2), Fragile, Poisoned (6C, -1 point BOD+Toughness per Round, -1 Trauma per minute)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Fast as a cat), Mobility 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Splendid costume, Armor 1, Respected (+2D, Justitian's upper class and +2D when negotiating with Neolibyans) or Attractive undergarments, Armor 0, +2D on CHA+Seduction
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Kacela, a trained hunting eagle from Tripol's Chancery; One of Argus' throwing knives; Hierarch (blue necklace hiding an artifact)

UNPUNISHED

For years, there had been no sign of life of Vulco and Argus. Bejide had assumed that the two of them had escaped their just punishment, but had still died in a different way somehow. Last summer, a messenger delivered a letter sent to her from faraway Justitian. Her cousin Wakili, Ambassador in northern Borca, wrote to her about his life abroad and his experiences in the City of Judges.

Casually, Wakili mentioned the Flotsam, a ship on dry dock in the Harbor serving as brothel, casino, and haven to the Dust Riders, a local Flock based in Justitian. In the next paragraph, he described that the Seagulls of the Flock behaved like pirates and brought some of the great Purgan sense of humor to bone-dry Borca.

Bejide paused. Pirates? On dry land? She crumpled up the letter and ordered her servants to immediately prepare for her journey across the Alps.

Without hesitation, she called for Mbeke, the Dumisai of Bejide's house. She told him to pray to the Ancestors and prepare for the hunt. Bejide had found Vulco and Argus.

BEYOND THE ALPS

Bejide swept into Justitian like a hurricane. As Magnate and cousin of the Ambassador, she and her heavily armed entourage reside in Wakili's villa. However, the laws of the City of Judges differ from those in faraway Bedain. While Bejide may move freely throughout Uptown, her Scourgers may not openly carry their weapons, let alone cause a ruckus. The Magnate is thoroughly disgruntled. Which one of these gaunt Judges does she have to drag into bed to get those laws changed?

While Bejide deals with the Judiciary in Uptown, her Dumisai conducts reconnaissance at the Flotsam and collects information on the Dust Riders.



THE AFRICAN

Borcans love cheap stuff! When Dewe arrived as the first Neolibyan in Justitian twenty years ago, he immediately understood how the city worked. Cheap food! Affordable accommodation! Second-rate luxuries! The most important thing was that it just didn't cost too much. The average Borcan sat on his savings like a vulture and refused to blow any of it. Dewe witnessed with horror couples eating together in guesthouses, yet splitting the bill equally. No one tipped. No one paid for a round of drinks. On the rare occasions when someone did, the other guests swarmed him like a cloud of fleas and tried to bask in his wealth. Dewe grinned as the prospect of untold riches glinted in his eyes. Right here, he would make his fortune.

Today, the African, as most of the citizens of Justitian call him, controls a booming trade network. He owns more than sixty booths on the Forecourt, the largest trading post in all of Europe. He leases those booths to an army of middlemen to sell his goods. In the Stukov Quarter he operates several food courts, in the Outskirts he owns a tailor shop, and he has kickstarted a chain of soup kitchens along three central Stallion Streets. Dewe has struck gold based on a surefire recipe for success: mass orders financed with loans from the Bank of Commerce to keep the wholesale price as low as possible. He then resells the goods with discount margins and undercuts the competition with unbeatable dumping prices.

Dewe's ambitions are limitless. He hires the children at the Orphanage to produce cheap and flimsy toys, at the cost of only a small donation. From the Manufacturers in Tech-Central, he orders recycled jewelry and glassware. He demands that his cooks water down the stews and dilute the flour they use for baking. From the Apocalyptics in the Harbor district, he acquires sacks full of junk, leftovers from their pillaging raids, and has the Jehammedans in the southern part of the city fix it up. Dewe's warehouses are filled with goods from the floor to the ceiling, and his workshops are bustling day and night.

ROLE PLAY

The African relishes in being underestimated due to his heritage. He enjoys giving people the runaround, playing the subservient, dumb merchant who can be easily duped just to come up with a surprise offer that squeezes every last Draft from his customer's pockets in the next instant.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Conqueror, Neolibyan, Rank 3: Merchant
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 2 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 2 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Force 3D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 4D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 4D, Arts 5D, Conduct 7D, Expression 6D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 8D, Artifact Lore 6D, Legends 7D, Science 6D, Cunning 7D, Deception 7D, Domination 5D, Faith 4D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 5D, Primal 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 3, Renown 3, Resources 5
SPECIAL: The African lives entirely for Borca. He wrote off his home village (Renown cannot drop due to a lack of investment).
POTENTIALS: Silver Tongue 2, Lion's Share 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Decorated Revolver, Projectiles 6D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 10, Mag. 6, +1D when negotiating with Neolibyans
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Let's get out of here!), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 4D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: "Traditional tribal clothing", Armor 1, First impression (+1D, only for non-Neolibyans)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Balancer with lock; Various maps of Borca; Deeds to dozens of warehouses and workshops throughout Justitian; Collection of Bygone wines

AT FACE VALUE

Dewe can barely count the many lies the Chroniclers have spread about the Neolibyans throughout the years. He loves tearing up this false image right in the Chroniclers' stronghold and exposing the Cult of Technology's fake accusations. Everyone who treats Dewe with a lack of respect receives a small gift from the merchant in return. Those who drunkenly speak out against Africa at the cracker barrel are bestowed with a free bottle of wine from the African. Day in, day out, he dispels rumors about his Cult and calmly confronts any wrongful allegation. Single-handedly, he stamps the prejudices out of the brains of the people. Since Dewe doesn't interfere with the artifact trade, the Chroniclers consider him a low priority target and mostly ignore him. Dewe doesn't mind.

Once a month, his soup kitchens bring leftover food to the Defiler Streets and pass it out to the tainted ones. In return, he asks the Defilers to comb the rubbish for useful things and bring even the most unassuming bits to him. Sometimes it's hard to believe what the people of this metropolis actually throw away...

BLACK SCRAPPERS

During the cold winter, Dewe is on very good terms with the Black Scrappers who pitch their tents south of Tech-Central to carry on their work within the city. Many of these Scrappers are hired by Dewe's workshops through the dark months of winter and supply the African with additional goods they have obtained on their forays. Dewe's product range grows by the day. Already, there is almost nothing that the African cannot procure: exotic spices, Hybrispanian jungle fruits, rare ammunition. Those who browse his booths or his warehouses will sooner or later find what they were looking for, even if they didn't know they were looking for it.



SCOURGERS

ON THEIR OWN

The Lion's claws are dull in the land of the Crow; too much gravel, too much dirt. A bleak countryside without any prey surrounding the watering holes. Or maybe it's a trap to lure the King of the Jungle into a false sense of safety?

If a Scourger hits the dust of Borca, there must be a reason for it. Let's look at it clearly: In Hybrispania, the Cult is an untamable powerhouse waging wars of attrition against the local Guerrero forces while expanding Africa's zone of influence. In Franka they act as vigilant watch dogs along the Southern Coast; their prides strengthen the Neolibyan rulership and mercilessly impose Tripol's laws. In Purgare, they engage in battles with Apocalyptic pirates on the high seas, lead Scrapper mobs into areas infested with Psychokinetics, and secure their flanks with unmatched fire power. Eastwards, in the Balkhan, they hunt slaves, engage in brutal conflicts with unruly Voivodates, or attempt to crack open Paler bunkers to plunder buried artifacts.

But up north, in the barren lands beyond the Alps, they are on their own. A Scourger entering the Protectorate almost certainly has to fulfill an assignment behind enemy lines. A perilous mission, for there are no allies to fall back to. The Lion is without his pride and must keep his senses razor sharp, or he'll walk straight into an ambush laid out by his archnemesis.

MANHUNT

They enter via Bassham or sneak into the Protectorate by slipping through the occupied and Mechan-controlled hinterlands at Wetzlar. Some hide among mobs of Black Scrappers who accompany Neolibyan caravans heading toward Justitian and Liqua. They are bounty hunters in disguise, searching for enemies of Africa who have escaped into the safety of the Judiciary, who believe they have evaded their just punishment. But there is no hiding place on earth secure enough to rid oneself of a trained Damu or Simba specialized in hunting traitors. These warriors were bred for vengeance. Once a Scourger has caught the scent of his prey, he pursues his target with reckless abandon, pushing it toward the Ice Barrier, if necessary, to take their scalp.

The public rarely takes notice of such wandering assassins, as the outcomes of their missions never truly affect the day-to-day lives of the Protectorate's inhabitants. Scourgers can easily remain unseen on the byways of the Black Lung, so long as they avoid attracting the attention of the local Judges or meddling in the affairs of any of the dominant Cults.

SKEWED PERCEPTION

"The hell is a Scourger?" asks the Provider with the gaping harelip as he tosses the hay bale onto his oxcart and wipes his wet brow. "A warrior Cult? You mean, like them Hell-

vetics?" he mutters, shrugging his shoulders. "Look, I got some dire problems. See that axle down there? It's loose and skewed, and I can't afford to replace it. My son's been gone with the Spitalians for years, and my daughter ain't no good at making them Drafts, no matter how much I whack her o'er the head. Now, tell me why I oughta care about some damn Scourger?"

Most people living in the Protectorate have never left their home or traveled to other regions of the known world. What's happening beyond the borders of their realm is all the same to them: a flurry of wars, deprivation, crazed savages, and hordes of the Demiurge's spawn. They couldn't care less about the political upheavals in Franka, the Hybrispanian reconquest, or the bloody struggles shaking the Balkhan – for many of them, the concept of an African continent is so abstract that they can't even begin to wrap their head around the idea of a blooming civilization that isn't bowing to Supreme Judge Archot or the Chroniclers. Ultimately, they've grown up in an oppressive society that offers safety and denies information. The average person has heard only stories about Neolibyans, if he knows of them at all, and knows next to nothing about Scourgers, Anubians, or, for that matter, any of the countless other African tribes.

A Scourger unfamiliar with Borcan customs will be perplexed seeing how disrespectfully his kind is treated by commoners. Nobody seems to give a rat's ass about their tribal lineage, heroics, or spirituality. At best, they can be happy if someone nods in their direction when they pass them on the street instead of fleeing to the other side of the curb. Soon it becomes evident to even the most imperialistic warrior: this is not the land of their ancestors, and the Scourgers had best familiarize themselves with that notion fast, or they're bound to run into trouble. Every Neolibyan who conducts business in Borca instructs his bodyguards to keep a low profile and act with restraint, urging them not to draw unnecessary attention.

BUTTING HEADS

Africa's avengers are renowned for their lack of patience, yet here they are forced to conform to an abstract set of rules that is as foreign and unpleasant to them as the stew they ate at the outpost close to Mobilis the night before. Scourgers entering Justitian must bow before the Judges and turn their weapons in before they get confiscated at the next city gate. They are forced to pay their respect to the Spitalians and their ludicrous hygienic standards, subjecting themselves to humiliating examinations and exhausting questionnaires. They learn that prejudice and lies cloud the perception of the average Borcan, seeded by the Chroniclers. In this land they can't walk like kings.

They quickly realize that they are far better off blending in with former enemies, who appear to be outcasts just as the Scourgers themselves. Some try to meddle with the spiritual Jehammedans, others seek shelter among the Apocalyptics or search for African brothers and sisters amongst the Black Scrappers settling in the Tent City on the southern fringe of Tech-Central. In a land where enemies are manifold, one needs to choose their allies wisely.

LIQUA

For Scourgers, Liqua appears to be a safe house. Two of them even clawed their way to the top and became heroes of the people. Who gives a damn that they're Kifos? Most Liquans don't even know what such a title means. To them, Adabra and Oniya are the lords of the Arena, the best team of gladiators and showmen the district of Gaudica has to offer. They draw crowds of thousands to watch their matches in which they duel rabid Gendos and sentenced criminals, or face off against former pit fighters from Justitian.

However, the outrageous spectacle is just a front for a far more sinister business. The Kifos are paid hitmen, working hand-in-hand with the Iron Shrikes and Blood Birds of Liqua, providing the Flocks with weapons and ammo smuggled in by Neolibyan middlemen from Franka. Meanwhile, they enjoy the protection of the Water Lord Cervex who has proclaimed the Kifos as "Untouchables". Any act of dissent or violence directed against them is branded as heresy. The twin brothers use their superior status among the populace like celebrities, thereby winning hearts and favors wherever they go.

ZOHRA'S PRIDE

Four Hondos loyal to the Ambassador of Toulon have reached Justitian in the guise of Black Scrappers. The Hondos are part of a guerrilla mission hunting for Nestor, the fugitive head of the Iron Brothers who escaped the chaos on the Southern Coast of Franka with unknown riches plundered from Hamza's palace. The pride has been able to trace Nestor all the way to the border of the Protectorate, where his tracks were obscured by the red Borcan dust.


UAO

MBEKE, THE BLESSED ONE

There is no place on Earth more loathsome and despicable than the deep-frozen hell of Borca. Mbeke spits on the barren ground and wraps himself tighter in his heavy winter furs, trying to stave off the creeping cold. The Dumisai does not understand what sins he must have committed in his previous life for the Ancestors to have exiled him to such a cursed and wretched place.

The people here are hideous midgets, and smell like shit. Mbeke remembers his time back in Tripol. How surreal and almighty the stories about faraway Borca seemed, like warnings from the realm of shadows. The reality is an entirely different story. Mbeke has no choice but to bite back his disgust.

However, the honorable warrior hasn't come to pass judgement. He was chosen by his Magnate, Bejide, to accompany her on her mission. He was to act as the dagger of her revenge, and the claws of her fury. On her behalf, he was to turn Downtown on its head in search of two men called Vulco and Argus. Allegedly, they were survivors of the Sun Flock, a pirate alliance annihilated by Bejides's guile ten years ago. Mbeke does not understand what to make of these legends. Neither does he want to live his life according to the failures of the past. If he had the opportunity, he would strike camp and escape this lifeless tundra in the blink of an eye.

Any dirty skirmish in the humidity of the Hybrispanian rainforest would be preferable to wandering from one featureless crossroads to the next, milking innocent bystanders for information in the freezing cold. Mbeke is no investigator. He is a warrior. Just the fact that the Judges stripped him of his ammunition and only allow him to carry his dagger wrapped in leather is enough to irritate him to no end.

If one wants to break a man's pride they must send him on a mission unworthy of his skill, Mbeke thinks as he spits on the ground again, craving a quick end to this charade.

ROLE PLAY

Mbeke despises Justitian, its citizens, the Judges, the masked freaks that parade through the streets, the Black Lung, even the fucking cobbles that he struggles to walk on, the entire city - no, the entirety of Borca - can burn for all he cares. He wants to finish his task as quickly as possible and return home. Even Purgare with its ragged coastlines and bloated Psychokinetics is a better place to be deployed than the barren emptiness surrounding him here.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Traditionalist, Scourger, Rank 4: Dumisai
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 7D, Force 8D, Melee 9D,
Stamina 7D, Toughness 9D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 7D,
Projectiles 9D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 5D, Leadership 8D,
Negotiation 5D, Seduction 5D, Legends 6D, Cunning 4D,
Domination 6D, Faith 8D, Reaction 7D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 9D,
Perception 10D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 5, Network 2, Renown 2, Resources 3
SPECIAL: +2D on all CHA and PSY rolls when interacting with Africans
POTENTIALS: The Lion's Revenge 2, Elder Blood 2, Moving Mountains 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Combat Knife (Ancestral Weapon), Melee 10D, Distance 1m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T), Talisman (+2D Mental Defense);
Heavy Pistol, Projectiles 9D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 12, Mag. 12, Thunder Strike
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 10D; Ranged Combat active,
Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Flak jacket, helmet, and heavy leopard skin, Armor 4, Terrifying (1)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 2/16, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Scourger mask, representing the second ancestor; Pouch containing several dozen Psychovore seeds;

HUNTING INSTINCT

Mbeke's hunting instinct lies dormant. He's too detached from his mistress' motives, this environment too unfamiliar. The Judges seem like a circus full of clowns to the warrior. A hypocritical laughing stock, many of whom having never seen a real battle in their lives. With their gleaming rifles they remind him of a village militia, only even more poorly equipped than most Hybrispanian Guerreros.

As if by chance, Mbeke meets Bastille on one of his forays to Downtown.

Finally! A soldier with a spark of honor, and entangled with the Dust Riders in his own way. The Dumisai tries to get close to the Hellvetic, joining the Sentinel on his trips to the Flotsam where he realizes with disbelief that Bastille tosses his Cult's virtues out of the window as soon as the little man between his legs demands satisfaction. Mbeke sighs. At least, the Hellvetic had led him to the Flotsam. However, even here the Dumisai struggles to pick up any trail. Neither Vulco nor Argus seem to be in charge here. Instead, a supposed Pelican called Tolomei invites him to share a cusp. Whatever, Mbeke thinks; at least it's Glory and not fucking Discordia.

THE OTHER

Gacoki, Wakili's bodyguard, is a weird one. Mbeke doesn't understand why the Scourger almost never talks about his past. Time and again, Mbeke tries to chat with the Hondo, but the Scourger is as frigid as a block of ice. Has the Borcan cold frozen Gacoki's sense of humor?

Mbeke feels more connected to the young fighter than to the absurd inhabitants of Justitian. If only he knew how to crack Gacoki's hard shell – then he would have a fellow Scourger by his side.



GACOKI

The thirty-third day of Gacoki's quest ended in disaster. It was time for his last hero's trial, and the Scourger failed miserably. He was supposed to bring an egg back to camp intact, but the fucking chicken had died during the night before it even laid the egg. For hours, Gacoki yelled every curse he could conjure from his memory. However, that couldn't change his fate. He knew he could never return to Cartagena.

The Chaga would shatter his mask and exile him. As a branded Kifo, no pride in the world would ever accept him. He didn't hesitate for a second as he decided to flee and cover his tracks. If he didn't return, his former comrades would never know whether he was alive or dead.

But where could a Scourger go to find oblivion? Borca! None of his brethren would ever assume he'd escape to the barren north. Gacoki crossed the Alps and followed the Rain's dry riverbed north towards Justitian. Those who passed him stared at him with unease. One day he got in trouble with a pack of Anabaptists who tried to block his way. Gacoki challenged their leader to a duel and kicked the living shit out of him. Then he marched on.

His first encounter with a Chronicler came after he passed Wetzlar. Gacoki immediately understood why the Neolibyans hated these creeps. Still, the Tech-Toad proved to be a useful ally. He bought all of the intelligence the Kifo could provide about Africa and the Neolibyan Cult. Gacoki sputtered out what he knew, combining fact with falsehood, and filled his pockets to the brim with Drafts.

With fresh financial reserves, he finally reached Justitian. Gacoki looked around. The Flotsam was a tempting place to start his new life. The Dust Riders were hiring battle hardened bodyguards for their Magpies. Exactly the right thing for a former Hondo like him. But before he knew it, the Chroniclers pestered him once more and offered him an additional task. He shall approach Wakili, infiltrate the embassy of Tripol, and retrieve information on the Ambassador's plans. Gacoki smells a great opportunity.

ROLE PLAY

Gacoki's web of lies is fragile. He can only keep up his duplicity because the people in this city are unfamiliar with his Cult's traditions and don't question his tall tales. However, Mbeke's arrival in Justitian sets Gacoki on edge. The Dumisai's presence threatens the Kifo's masquerade.

PROFILE

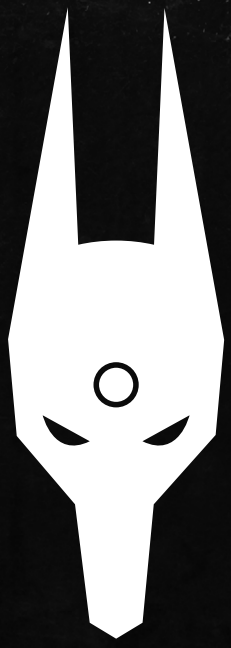
ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Conqueror, Scourger, Rank X: Kifo
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 4 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 7D, Force 6D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 6D, Art 4D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 4D, Legends 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 5D , Domination 6D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Primal 7D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Resources 2
SPECIAL: Faceless: Without his original mask, left with his Chaga in Africa, Gacoki is wracked with traumatic emotions he cannot comprehend. Bereft of his crudely made replacement, he suffers -1D to all Actions.
POTENTIALS: Ultimate Foe 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Quartz Gloves, Brawl 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Blunt; Assault Rifle, Projectiles 8D, Distance 30/120m, Damage 11, Mag. 30, Salvoes (3)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Brawl 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Vest, helmet and torn lion skin, Armor 4
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/8, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Self-made Scourger mask; Stukov Scorpion poison (6C, -1 BOD and AGI Attributes per Round, effects last 2 days)

BREAKING POINT

Gacoki's situation is balanced on a knife's edge. Ever since Bejide and Mbeke moved into Wakili's villa, Gacoki has been trying to discover their motives. He fears that the Dumisai might have seen through him. Why else would Mbeke keep frequenting the Flotsam? He has pestered Gacoki several times already. What battles did he fight in? What pride does he belong to? Who is his Chaga? The Kifo's answers to these questions are short and without any detail.

Gacoki does not know that Mbeke is actually looking for Vulco and Argus, the Apocalyptics he serves as a bodyguard. Maybe the migratory birds could help get rid of the snooping Dumisai during his next visit to the Flotsam?

Before Gacoki can act upon his plan, the Chroniclers, his employers from Uptown, put additional pressure on his back. They are dissatisfied with his work and want to adopt a tougher stance with Tripol's Chancery. The Cluster is fed up with the Ambassador's ado, and due to Rutgar's protection the Neolibyan remains untouchable. That does not apply to Gacoki, however. On Calendar Square, the Kifo is suddenly surrounded by Streamers issuing orders to poison Wakili at the earliest opportunity. Once the Scourger executes the Ambassador, the Cluster will hide the tracks leading back to the Chroniclers with ease. No one in Justitian will miss Gacoki if the Shutters delete the threat afterwards.



ANUBIANS

POISONED LAND

The cry of the ancestors is nothing but a distant whisper echoing across these desolate plains. Those who belong to the Cult of the Jackal are not drawn here by the call of the land, but instead by its slow decay. Borca is a black hole of waning energy, a collapsing star in which no Chakra has ever awakened. The silence is deafening. Anubians sense the entropic nature of the countryside, feel the crippling winds blowing over the rotten soil, and are struck with impotence and fear. Something inside them screams for retreat, urging them to abandon their path and return home, for this place is the obverse of the Psychovores, a zone of negativity that disconnects the Crown from its physical body.

But it is exactly these experienced phenomena that keep attracting the Cultists to enter this hellscape and face their darkest thoughts. Forlorn, they travel north through the Black Lung and the Stukov Desert as researchers and truthseekers. Most of them will never return home…

HIDDEN

It takes little effort to remain faceless among the swarming masses of the Protectorate. Anubians are masters of stealth and do well staying invisible. They traverse the country by night, and hide their foreign features under tribal masks and thick cloth. While one can spot a Neolibyan flaunting his riches from a mile away, the children of the Jackal disappear in the crowd, merging with the white noise of their surroundings. Just another Clanner – keep walking!

In disguise they chase after answers: learning the crude language of Borca's natives, engaging with the wise people of this strange land – Ravens, Elysians, and Iconides – and following the soundless hum of the pure strain which has pulled them here in their dreams. One thing is certain: Noret holds secrets that are directly related to the Anubian Cult. The Jackal's followers are close, yet they, just like everyone else, are barred from the forbidden city.

CURIOSITY

Spitalians are generally interested in Anubians. They regard the Cult's intuitive grasp of medicinal science as a curiosity, and see them as scholars and natural allies among the ranks of the African peoples. Their knowledge of the Psychonautic threat is invaluable, and the Spitalians do what they can to invite travelling Anubians into their laboratories and studies, exchanging research and offering shelter to the travelling mystics. Children of the Jackal can find a safe haven among the medics in almost all areas of the Protectorate, allowing them to trade and resupply before their travels take them elsewhere. However, such temporary bonds last only for as long as the Anubian is willing to provide his foreign host with intelligence concerning the Earth Chakras and the Psychovores. In return, Spitalians will offer the latest insight concerning Homo Degenesis activity from all fronts their own Cult operates on.

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Preservists hunt Anubians. Kranzler himself signed off on a secret order to track down and arrest any of these medicine men treading through the Protectorate. The Provost doesn't bargain or trade for information; he takes it by force. A special isolation tract in the Fortress of Arnsberg serves as an interrogation chamber for detained subjects of interest. To his knowledge, the Anubians harbor the greatest of all secrets and are preparing for a large-scale metamorphosis that is bound to reshape the future of humanity. All of his calculations point towards Cairo, and the Provost won't rest until he has revealed the final truth. No matter what the cost.

He has been patiently staging a large scale invasion, piercing the African continent from a bridgehead established in Qabis. Step by step he moves his units around, pulling Preservist Corps away from their regular assignments and giving them marching orders and spy missions along the North African coastline. The recent upheavals in Toulon and the bitter altercations that rage across Hybrispania blur Tripol's vision, allowing Kranzler's forces to slip past the watchful eyes of the Sheikhs and establish bases in the hinterlands. While the Lion is occupied by ferociously protecting his newly occupied territory in Europe, the Preservists push onward to reach the Anubian holy site hidden in the thick Psychovore jungles. What they are about to find there will change the course of history.

How long before the Hogons notice the trespassers clad in black neoprene? The clock is ticking for Kranzler's elite warriors, and the Provost himself fares no better at his headquarters in Justitian. An internal investigation launched against him, conducted by Oswald Keszler and funded by Consultant Grunow, puts the covert operation at risk. Exposure would climax in Kranzler's execution at the hands of a Hippocrat military tribunal.

INTO THE ABYSS

In 2581 Anubians all over Europe registered a burning sensation, some suddenly bleeding from their noses and vomiting incessantly while others were torn from Sekhmet's Slumber or experienced nightmarish apparitions that lasted for days. Soul Seers reported visions of a searing lance of light disintegrating into a black vortex. The Ammits alone understood what had happened. Markurant's demise at Bassham struck the fabric of the afterlife, resonating like a thundering tremor through the minds of the Anubians.

But the Pheromancer King was anything but gone. His Ba remained powerful, festering in the realm of death, discharging its unnatural waste through blackened tendrils, throbbing in darkness. A handful of Anubians anticipated his rebirth, searching for the human vessel that would bring Markurant back to life, but their premonitions failed them. Years passed before the signal returned, beating like a muffled drum from the center of the Protectorate; Justitian, the most hostile of places for an Anubian to delve into.



ATONKE

A message lies buried, inscribed into the crust of the Earth. It is a story written in compelling passages and great detail, and has been laying there, waiting for its discovery for 12,000 years – waiting for humanity to develop its senses, to receive and understand it. Blindly, mankind has been stepping across this ancient manuscript with no knowledge of its existence, with no means to unravel its hidden mysteries or comprehend its cosmic meaning: The universal civilization vanished without a trace. All that remains of it is a fading echo that transcends the tides of time.

Atonke followed the signs. The sparrows led him northwards, to the place of a supposed civilization that was trying to mimic the Ancestors. Justitian. A mirror image. An amorphous shadow. What Atonke saw was a city without splendor and people with no sense of their own destiny. The Ba burrowed through their bodies at the peak of perfection, their blood polluted by millennial filth. What revelation would Atonke uncover in this place?

The Ammit closed his eyes, spread his hands, felt the stream of souls passing by as he walked along the Stallion Streets. Amidst the void surrounding him, Atonke suddenly noticed a silent heartbeat throbbing from within the city. The sound pierced his body like a blazing spear, steering him toward the source of this inaudible signal – and Atonke understood.

A creature composed of pure Ba had seen the light of day in Justitian – something depraved, trapped within a mortal shell, had entered the world of the living. The Ammit knew his task. The Ancestors had guided him here to purge this tainted fiend and devour the soul of the creature, thus ending its cycle of rebirth. During the day, Atonke slept and dreamt of the impending battle; by night he followed the scents through the neighborhoods. In the Defiler Streets of the Outskirts, he found the signs he was looking for. Wild honey dripped from a drainpipe; under a layer of junk, he discovered burgeoning spore bloom, and ants cumulated in strange footprints. Atonke's eyes lit up. A Pheromancer was breeding a Mother spore field, right in the center of the city!

ROLE PLAY

Atonke is a seeker, determined and imbued by his Cult's tenets. He wants to heal the world by exterminating everything malformed. The Ammit trusts no one and wants to avoid raising suspicion at all costs. Therefore, he prefers to roam Justitian under the cover of the night.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Zealot, Anubian, Rank 4: Ammit
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 6
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Force 7D, Melee 10D, Stamina 7D,
Toughness 9D, Mobility 6D, Stealth 7D, Arts 4D, Conduct 5D,
Expression 4D, Legends 6D, Medicine 4D, Science 5D,
Cunning 6D, Deception 6D, Domination 6D, Faith 8D, Reaction 8D,
Empathy 9D, Orienteering 9D, Perception 10D, Primal 10D, Survival 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Renown 2, Resources 1, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: +4D to ward off the Raze
POTENTIALS: Ammit's Feast 3, Eye of Horus 3, Chill of Death 2, Soul Drain 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Ammit Sickle, Melee 10D, Distance 1m, Damage 11, Special Damage (Psychonauts, +3), Dazed (Triggers) against living targets, Menthu's Sting (Level 4, applies the Raze against humans and deals spore infestation Damage to Aberrants)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 10D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Faith 8D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Ceremonial armor, Armor 3 (Effective Armor increases to 4 against physical attacks by Aberrants)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: One last vial of Marduk oil; Healing medicines catalysed by a Hecatean (1x Stimulants, 1x Pain killers, 1x Antidotes, all Level 3);

BETWEEN TWO FRONTS

Atonke senses the power radiating from the Aberrant, but little does he know that he has picked up the trail of Markurant, the Pheromancer King. He keeps immersing himself deeper and deeper into the Defiler Streets, looking for secret entrances leading down to the sewers of Justitian, which he suspects is the origin of the taint.

Atonke's investigation has put him in grave danger. A four-man Corps of Kranzler's Preservists has been shadowing him, intent on capturing and delivering him to their Provost. At the same time, Atonke's nightly forays have been noticed by the Mother of Raven's henchmen. The stranger has come dangerously close to the nest of the Carrion Birds. The Apocalyptics do not understand the Anubian's intentions, but should they catch wind he will be eliminated before he can enter their realm.

TWO SIDES

Cerval follows the same trail as Atonke, yet he does so by using his own stubborn methods and draws conclusions from different lines of reasoning. In theory, both men would make perfect allies. Destiny, however, keeps them apart. If only they could share their knowledge, they would be able to uncover Markurant's secret and unite their powers to avert the bloom of the Pheromancer King.



JEHAMMEDANS

ILL REPUTE

A blanket of silence has fallen over the Jehammedans in the south of the city. Ever since the wrathful day on which the Isaaki St. Gideon, son of Gileabod Ruben Abraham and rightful successor to Osman's throne, was executed in public and hanged from the Uptown wall, the Jehammedans' once prosperous position amongst the people of Justitian, along with all of their collective political power, has been lost. Gideon's death was a display of Justitian's strength and Archot's swift judgement. Nobody should dare to question his law and the Protectorate's might ever again. Punctum!

Overnight, the Supreme Judge branded the Jehammedans as villains and traitors, cancelling deals and restricting the Cult's movement. The followers of the Last Prophet were now stranded in the city – unable to recover from the sudden legislative annihilation, they began drifting into obscurity. The ban from Uptown was so thorough that before long Archot couldn't even remember the name of the Iconide Baruch, leader of the Jehammedan Quarter, and kept referring to him as just "The Arianoi". Rutgar once tried to give the Supreme Judge a cue to distinguish the ranks of the Jehammedans properly, but Archot brushed the unsolicited lecture aside as rubbish. "Who on earth is supposed to 'appropriately recall' all their damn titles?" he barked, before dismissing the daily hearing of the Senates. Soon after, "Arianoi" became the common vernacular whenever the High Judiciary referred to the Jehammedans as a whole.

TRINITY

Leadership over the Jehammedan Quarter is divided between three factions which are all in diametric opposition to one another, fracturing the Cult even further and eroding the lattice that once held its members together.

The Traditionalist: The Iconide Baruch's reputation is heavily damaged and his integrity lies shattered, yet he still presides over the Abrami Council and rallies the hardliners of the Cult behind him. The elders entrusted him with the responsibility of repairing the broken relationship with the Judges, but all of Baruch's pacifistic attempts at appeasement have resulted in nothing but an endless string of failures. The Judiciary has no desire to go back

to the past and refuses to acknowledge the glory days of the Jehammedan Quarter. The Iconide struggles, cornered and pressured on all sides; his time at the helm of his Cult is coming to an end.

The Ruler: Basking in the prestige of a noble birth, Carmel the Immaculate, grand-niece to the Shepherd of Osman, has arrived to shake up the encrusted structures and allied herself with the Cult's progressives. Many believe that the young Saraeli brought dignity back to a dismembered community and that her presence will help in future negotiations with Uptown, but Carmel is not without enemies in her own ranks. The Abrami Council protests vehemently against leadership by a woman, no matter what bloodline she hails from, and sabotages Carmel's aims at unifying the broken Quarter.

The Destroyer: The radicals want revenge. They feel humiliated by the Judiciary's treatment of the Jehammedan faith, and their ceaseless calls for blood have finally been answered. Naraka, a wandering herald of Aries, has taken shelter in Justitian and pools the forces of hate and spite under his banner. His promise: a new, crimson drenched dawn, followed by a final departure towards the heavens. Before he can sound the horns of war, however, the stranger must collect an artifact supposedly hidden in the city. Until then his apprentices remain patient, waiting for his command.

EXCLAVE

In the truest sense, the Jehammedan Quarter resembles an exclave surrounded by enemy territory. The people on the inside are trapped in a ghetto, progress has stalled, business fails, and discontent is at an all time high. Although the Jehammedans remain largely self-sufficient and manage to provide for their families, the luxuries and benefits of citizenship are denied to them. The special lockdown decrees have taken their toll and only the Emphyteusis saves them from expulsion.

The Abrami Council has raised funding to be represented by some of the best independent Advocates in the city, including Arbiter Wortmann, the Heathen, who has taken it upon himself to fight for Jehammedan settlement rights before the Senates. Despite his efforts, the High Judiciary remains adamant in its decision to isolate the Cult and bar its members from regaining their former status. The Jehammedans have no other choice than to accept their fate, as they would fare far worse if they tried to settle across the Protectorate. Confined within their prison, they are at least protected by the Judges from retaliation, oppression, or conflict with their hereditary enemies, the Anabaptists, who swarm across northern Borca in droves and control major parts of the Black Lung.

EAST AND WEST

Dense fog crawls over the field of a small farmstead near the outskirts of Osman, far away in the sprawling forests of East Borca. The Abrami walks out into the morning haze, cracking the frozen puddles of mud with his shovel. "Honza, you godless nogoodnik! Get your lazy bones out here or I'll make sure your mother whips you till you cry the name of the Last Prophet!"

A boy with sagging shoulders and flushed red ears comes running to take his place next to his father, eyes darting around like a panicking animal, chest heaving and heart racing in fear.

"Where's West?" his father asks abruptly. Honza is unsure, unable to read the directions in the fog, and points. South. A cruel slap hits him across the back of his head, and white stars flash in his eyes. "Fool! West is where the heathens breed!" the Abrami yells, pointing the shovel into the grey wall of mist ahead. Honza nods violently, trying to calm his father's outburst with overzealous submissiveness. "They have become fat and soft!" the Abrami lectures, resentment dripping from his voice. "A Jehammedan must never be content with his life as long as there are heathens walking this Earth." he proclaims, resting his heavy frame on the shovel. "Do you understand what I am saying, boy?"

Honza jerks around, expecting another slap, but his father just keeps staring into the distance. "Look straight ahead, into the land of the setting sun. Right there." he points into the indistinct gloom. "Somewhere out there lies the Reaper's Blow, and beyond it rises the realm of the Judges." The boy cocks his head forward, eyes narrowed. He sees nothing. "Boy, beware of Justitian. Beware of our brothers and sisters there. They walk among unbelievers, eat with them, drink with them. One day their folly will turn them into pigs, and Jehammed's punishment will split their souls in half…"

Compared to their Osmani brethren, the Jehammedans of Justitian are far more secular. Decades of rubbing shoulders with the unbelievers of Downtown has twisted their beliefs and corroded their traditional values. No Shepherd presides over these tribes and families in the diaspora, steering their faith towards greater things, guiding them gently from one pasture to the next, or slapping them firmly to brace for war. What good can come of such a fallen community that has shed its fear of the Last Prophet's righteous commandments and replaced it with the fear of the Supreme Judge's laws? The Osmani resent the development of the Jehammedan Quarter and treat any piece of bad news as a dire insult to the integrity of the Cult's tenets.



BARUCH

The Iconide of Justitian is a broken and bitter man. Baruch had to watch helplessly as St. Gideon, son of Gileabod Ruben Abraham, was held accountable for a crime for which he bore no responsibility. The Judges made an example of Gideon. The execution of the Isaaki was in response to the cowardly terror attack on Archot's Colossus. What the Judges did to the young man's corpse, however, was a baseless sin. For two whole weeks they left his body hanging from a scaffold on the Uptown wall. The message was clear.

Baruch had to throw all of his political weight into the discussion to convince the Judges to allow for Gideon to be buried according to the Jehammedan traditions. The Iconide had been rendered powerless, and it made him miserable. After the attack, the Judiciary had drawn a line in the sand; the Jehammedans were to be pariahs. Shame mixed with rage, and eventually turned to contempt. However, Baruch knew that he couldn't get payback against the Judges on equal terms. His days were numbered. His Cult was now on the same level as the Anabaptists, and the valuable alliances that Baruch had laboriously built up over the years were suddenly being called into question. The bond of trust was torn. A long time ago, Justitian had invited the Jehammedans to settle in the south of the city and was ready to negotiate with the great city of Osman over the exchange of common values. Those days are over. Now there is a tense silence in the air. Gone are the moments where Baruch's presence was appreciated in Uptown. Now it is increasingly rare for Jehammedans to even acquire citizenship papers, and the controls at the south gate have been intensified. The Cult is under constant suspicion, and the Jehammedan Quarter is slowly turning into a ghetto, even if its residents join forces against this unjust prejudice.

Something has to change. Constantly, the Iconide prays to Jehammed for a sign, but his answer comes from a different source. Aries. The ram-headed Herald, Naraka, reaches Justitian. He claims the House of War as a base and calls the Abrami to deliver his sermon. Baruch is livid. Why does Jehammed let Aries speak in his place? Why send a Horned One when diplomacy is required? Baruch is desperate to find out what Naraka is planning.

ROLE PLAY

What is a man against a city? Nothing but a grain of sand. Baruch has abandoned his faith, no longer able to delude himself into believing that he can turn the fate of his Cult in Justitian around.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Traditionalist, Jehammedan, Rank 3: Iconide
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 6D, Arts 6D, Conduct 7D, Expression 8D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 9D, Legends 7D, Deception 8D, Domination 8D, Faith 10D, Reaction 7D, Empathy 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 6D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 4, Network 3, Renown 6, Resources 4, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: His faith in Jehammed has been shaken and he is full of doubt: 2s in any of his PSY+Faith rolls count as 1s
POTENTIALS: Iconide's Curse 3, Iconide's Blessing 3, Compassion 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Ram Staff, Melee 5D, Distance 2m, Damage 3, Blunt, Standard (+1D on attacks for all Jehammedans close by)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 5D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Faith 8D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Lambskin and woven cover, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/20, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Keepsake made of horsehair (Talisman, +2 Ego regeneration, only once a week); Jehammed's teachings, transcribed on ornate sheets and carried in a gold tube; Seal stone; Copy of the Emphyteusis;

CLANDESTINE CONSPIRACY

Baruch arrived in Justitian as a young Iconide and the leader of a Balkhani tribe. He is one of only a handful of initiates who know of the secret pact that the Fragment Impulse once made with the Shepherd of Osman. Impulse demanded that Gileabod Ruben Abraham dispose of the 16 Fragments sent to East Borca. The Shepherd's Janites were to make short work of them, eradicating and forever removing them from history.

In return, Impulse would falsify the settlement claims of the Jehammedans in the Protectorate and grant the Cult free access to Justitian. Thousands of Jehammedan settlers set out from Pollen, East Borca, and the Balkhan and populated the southern tip of Justitian, which within the last thirty years has grown into the Jehammedan Quarter. The pact was also a political move to weaken the Anabaptists, as this put the Broken Cross' archenemy on their very doorstep.

BROKEN PACT

Gileabod's Janites failed to deliver on their death mission. Despite their efforts, four of the Fragments survived and found refuge in the impenetrable forests of the East. They became Needles and nourished their hatred year after year as they subdued the Clans of the hinterland. The Storskis became their defenders, they traded with the Garganti and they even managed to repel mighty Osman's attacks. When Impulse learned of the survivors many years later, he was racked with anger. The Shepherd had broken the pact, and failed to live up to his promise.

Then terror struck, the Colossus fell, and Archot craved blood in retribution. The Judges demanded a culprit. Impulse shrugged and didn't even lift a finger to save Gileabod's son. It was the just punishment for Osman's failure. But with Impulse's refusal to offer assistance, Gileabod has turned into a mortal enemy. The Shepherd would like nothing less than to choke the life from Impulse with the cables of his suit, but the Reaper's Blow separates the parties. Otherwise, Abraham would have long since marched his armies on the path west.



CARMEL, THE IMMACULATE

Carmel's chest is heaving. Her heart is pounding and blood rushing to her cheeks. She's never even imagined so many handsome men in one place, and she's unable to resist drinking in the view. She spent her youth sheltered in a tiny tent settlement, forty miles east of Osman, next to an Abrami she had been married to as a child. The stubborn sack of shit was always busy with his prayers and Carmel was bored night after night, dreaming of another place where she would be allowed to blossom into a woman.

One morning, a uniformed Janite stood at the entrance to their camp and presented her with a message. Carmel's great-uncle, the mighty Gileabod Ruben Abraham, had annulled her marriage and ordered her to travel to Justitian to take the post of her dead cousin Gideon as a lawful delegate of the Abraham family. All of it went over the young girl's head. She had only seen Gideon once after his birth, and Justitian was a myth to her.

The Janite didn't wait for her understanding. Instead he loaded Carmel's heavy cargo box with all of her belongings and led her Abrami out into the field to make it clear that he no longer had claim to her. A moment later Carmel was lifted onto the Janite's horse's back, and they set off towards the Alps.

Now she is here. The fleeting looks of the Ismaeli leave her breathless. She gets carried away in daydreams, imagining their naked bodies covering her, mounting her. Day after day she drinks in the attention of the neighborhood's boys. She knows a dozen Ismaeli already by name, and there's not a single one of them whom she wouldn't drag into bed.

She couldn't care less for politics, but she is forced to endure the endless talks of the Abrami council and make decisions in the name of the Abraham tribe.

Akim, the Janite at her side, is pushing for solutions. She must position herself in Osman's favor, for the Protectorate is a prime herd of potential converts. Carmel is caught in a twisting web of expectations. Restlessly, she writhes on her bed of furs and finds no sleep.

ROLE PLAY

Carmel has never kissed a man, nor has she ever been touched by one. The Saraeli's heart longs so much for the embrace of a man that it threatens to jump from her chest. But no one in the neighborhood would dare to approach her. Her rank simply forbids it.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Ruler, Jehammedan, Rank 2: Immaculate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 5 INT: 3 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Force 3D, Melee 3D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 3D, Crafting 6D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 8D, Stealth 7D, Arts 8D, Conduct 7D, Expression 9D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 9D, Legends 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 7D, Faith 7D, Reaction 6D, Empathy 7D, Perception 6D, Primal 8D, Taming 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 4, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Under constant guard by Akim, the Janite; Leader of the Jehammedans in Justitian, +2D to CHA+Leadership in the city
POTENTIALS: Divine Intervention 3, Viper's Tongue 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Carmel leaves Akim to fight and flees at the first opportunity; Akim attacks with Scimitar, Melee 8D, Damage 9
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Evade), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Silk dress with sheepskin cloak, armor 1
MAKEUP: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Passes and sealing cords (allowing free passage into Uptown); Tattoos (+1D Mental Defense); Precious jewelry; Chest with secret gifts from her admirers

THE JANITE

Akim is an accomplished soldier, a guardsman of the Shepherd and a warrior who lives by the sword. He was assigned to watch over Carmel while she resides in Justitian. The Janite in his flawless black uniform, trimmed in gold, is disgusted by the twisted state of his Cult in their Quarter. The years mingling with the Apocalyptics and the Anabaptists have caused the Cult to lose its way. He besieges Carmel with pleas to seize the moment, do something to wrestle the reins of the Cult from the Abrami council and whip the Jehammedans back into shape! The Janite circles around the Immaculate like a watchful hawk, staring down anyone who dares to take a look in Carmel's direction for longer than a breath.

A war is raging in Akim's heart. He refuses to let his deep affection for Carmel show. It would be his death sentence. But his thoughts are swirling out of control, and his jealousy grows more intense with every one of Carmel's yearning sighs for other men. The Saraeli has no idea of Akim's feelings for her. In her eyes, the hook-nosed guardian is a moralist and braggart who holds her captive on an invisible chain.

RISE TO POWER

Despite her lack of life experience, Carmel carries a heavy burden of incredible political responsibility. As a member of the tribe of Abraham, representative of Osman, and an Immaculate, she has replaced Baruch in his role as the leader of the Jehammedan Quarter. Every family in the neighborhood wants to sink their hooks into her and the Abrami of the Council never cease their pressuring. She represents the Cult in the fight against the Advocates of the Judiciary who constantly attempt to cut down the rights of the Jehammedans. She is still at the beginning of her career, but with every month in the city she learns a little more about the men at the negotiating table and slowly understands how to wrap them around her finger.



FATIM, THE BARBER

Fatim runs the Bath House in the Jehammedan Quarter, and with it he has brought a touch of Osmani culture to Justitian. It has turned him into a rich and respected citizen, whose face is so well known around Downtown that he's even greeted by the Advocates crossing his path. The Judges all swear by the refreshing effects of his massages and baths, allowing him to anoint their scalps, trim their fingernails, and pull their rotten teeth even as they badmouth the Jehammedans at home. They justify it to each other with a smirk: "Ah, Fatim, that guy ain't no proper goat-fucker!"

On weekends, the Bath House is filled to the brim with guests from all over the city who can afford to obtain relief through the nimble hands of Fatim and his assistants. Fatim combs the beards of the Abrami, wraps hot towels around their calves and nods along with their conversations. The Abrami appreciate him a lot, but it's beyond them why he won't find himself a Hagari. "Do you want to stay an Ismaeli forever?" they ask him with a sneer, their bellies shaking with laughter. Certainly not, Fatim thinks as he deftly plucks out an eyebrow.

None of his regulars suspect what Fatim devotes his spare time to. The barber harbors an addiction for women, just not the kind of prudes that live in the Jehammedan Quarter. He prefers the Magpies from the Flotsam. They have twisted his head around while bringing him to the edge of bankruptcy. The barber couldn't care less about the money lost, so long as night after night he can grip some Magpie's hair in his hand, lick the sweat from her breasts, and push his tongue into every one of her orifices. He's so eager to fuck his brains out that even after waking up, he's incapable of thinking about anything but what he'll do with the wenches later in the evening. The people in his neighborhood have no idea of Fatim's perverse double life. If they did know about it, the barber would find himself publicly stoned to death for spilling his seed amongst the infidels.

ROLE PLAY

Fatim is an eternally good-humored barber, with an open ear for all the worries and hardships of his guests. In their gossip they thoughtlessly entrust him with intimate details from their everyday lives. It is from these personal conversations in the steam-drenched air of the Bath House that Fatim's knowledge is condensed. If anyone were to know about every rumor circulating in the city, it would be him.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Heretic, Jehammedan, Rank 1: Ismaeli
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 5 INT: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 5D, Force 5D, Melee 5D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 8D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 6D, Stealth 7D, Arts 8D, Conduct 7D, Expression 9D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 8D, Legends 8D, Deception 7D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 5D, Primal 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 1, Network 4, Renown 4, Resources 3, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: As the owner of the Bath House, Fatim knows many of Justitian's most important people. He may apply his Secrets Background to all Cults in Justitian, up to (2)
POTENTIALS: Viper's Tongue 2, Danger Sense 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Barber's Razor, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 3, Smooth Running (2T), Camo (4C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Sheep's wool clothing, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/10, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Barber's tools, Lvl. 3(+3D to all rolls related to his work in the Bath House); Supply of precious oils and perfumes; Hidden stash of pornographic etchings and sketches that Fatim uses to entertain himself

THE BATH HOUSE

Located directly by the southern wall, a set of double doors open into Fatim's Bath House. In Downtown, this place is widely recognized as neutral ground. Anyone who ends up drifting naked in the water basins enriched with oils and essences, relaxing to the melody of the jingling wind chimes, will quickly forget which Cult they belong to, and that the guest next to them might follow an ideology completely alien to their own. But that's exactly why the Bath House is so popular. It is the hub for both ideas and rumors being exchanged between Cults, and also the breeding ground for more verbal agreements than anywhere else in the city.

BLACKMAILED

Everything could have gone on like this forever, but all good things must come to an end. On his last visit to the Flotsam, Fatim was intercepted at the front door and lead directly to Tolomei. In the gloom of his office, knives glinting like teeth on the table, the Pelican made clear to the barber that the Dust Riders wanted more than just his money. They demanded his knowledge. Every fleeting whisper, every idle rumor, every single scrap of information drifting from Downtown to reach the barber's ears was to be collected and delivered to Tolomei from now on.

The Pelican threatens Fatim without leaving room for a shred of doubt; if he fails, his dance will be abruptly ended. If the truth about his depravity is leaked, it will spread through the entire Jehammedan Quarter like wildfire, and Fatim will have sunk his cock into a woman for the last time. The warning is as clear as the toll of a bell. All of a sudden, Fatim realizes how his sexual cravings have made him an obvious victim for extortion. Restless, he picks at what little of his hair remains with his fingers and desperately fishes for news among his regulars. Never before have they seen him as pale and agitated as he is now.



NARAKA

The sky is starry, boundless, an infinite field of possibilities. It has always served the Jehammedans as the ultimate goal of their pending journey. It is a journey they have been preparing to make for centuries, forced to endure the long wait within this god-forsaken place they know as hell. Everyone lives within it. Few rule it. Earth.

Naraka is the only Horned One in Aries' service to have retained his memories of both the Before and the After. He has waded through darkness in the past, just as he is bathed in light now. He is the sum of all things, chosen by his Master to recover His Will. Naraka senses that one aspect of the whole is dead, but Jehammed's Will is united.

The Arianoi immerses himself in Justitian's shadow world and waits in patience. He knows that his target will inevitably, in some way and at some time, appear before him. All roads lead to Justitian, eventually everything will pass through its crowded markets and clogged streets. When it does, Naraka will seize it and take it to where it belongs. To Baikonur.

The Jehammedans of the Quarter recognize Aries' Herald without having to even ask for his name. For them, his arrival is a sign that the times of hardship are over and the Cult is prepared to rise to its old glory. They would do everything in their power to protect the Arianoi from prying eyes. It would be a deadly sin to not invite him to their hearth, to not share meat or bread with him, or to not grant him shelter. A Herald is nothing less than a symbol, especially for the few who manage to kill one of them. If there is one certainty about Naraka, it's that he has enemies. However, he will not shy away from gathering the best Swords of Jehammed in Justitian to reveal his vision to. For too long, the Cult has dwelt in squalor in a stable surrounded by filthy pigs. Naraka gives the order to sharpen the blades and harden the minds. There are still many battles to be won before the Last Prophet elects his disciples to follow along on their journey to paradise.

ROLE PLAY

Naraka is like no other. His soul is a broken battlefield in which he stands alone as a general at the head of a lifeless army. As a Herald of war, he holds the power to unleash storms of hatred over the Jehammedans' enemies. Countless times before he has spoken his judgement and waded through fields of blood and guts, and not once has he faced defeat. However, with every victory another part of Naraka's past life slips away.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Destroyer, Jehammedans, Rank 4: Blood of Aries
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 6 CHA: 2 INT: 3 PSY: 6 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 9D, Brawl 10D, Force 11D, Melee 10D, Stamina 10D, Toughness 10D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 10D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 5D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 4D, Focus 9D, Legends 6D, Cunning 9D, Domination 10D, Faith 11D, Reaction 10D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 8D, Taming 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 5, Network 2, Renown 4, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Self-healing (1 Flesh Wound every 10min)
POTENTIALS: Ire of Jehammed 3, Fleece of Aries 3, Weal and Woe 3, Ram's Offspring 3, Divine Intervention 3, Quick Eye 2
INITIATIVE: 10D / 18 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Horn, Melee 11D, Distance 1m, Damage 13; Horned Headbutt, Brawl 11D, Distance 1m, Damage 8, Piercing (3)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 11D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Faith 11D
MOVEMENT: 9m
ARMOR: Black fleece, Armor 3, Fireproof (8), Insulated, Terrifying (5)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/22, Flesh Wounds 20, Trauma 11
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Blood-red ram's helmet (creates near-field phenomena in its vicinity); Bhuta; Blood of Aries (for 90 days); Black fleece; Bag with fragrant, dried flowers from the Balkhan (Keepsake)

INCARNATION

The Arianoi brushes the reservations of the Iconide aside like irritating spider webs, and orders the Immaculate to shut her mouth. An incarnation of Aries is always right, for no Jehammedan, no matter how pure, has been closer to the source than a Horned One. Only a Herald knows which stars the tribes have to align themselves to in order to finally transform into rams. For the Jehammedans, Naraka is a divine messenger.

The Arianoi does not care for such acts of reverence. The Master within his head has made him aware of something entirely different. In the midst of this vicious city, a Chronicler drifts about like a ghost, trying to steal the Ark and escape the coming deluge. The Horned One will cut him down like an oak. However, before the hour of blood comes to pass Naraka must eliminate a Hellvetic who by sheer coincidence has latched onto the aura of his helmet. The horns of death will sound for her as well.

INVENTORY

BHUTA

A flawless, snow-white globe about the size of a fist rests in Naraka's palm. At his behest, it rises into the air and races away. Bhuta is a probe that Naraka steers with his ram's helmet, expanding his field of vision. Everything Bhuta sees, Naraka sees also.

The sphere is made of an unknown alloy and is virtually indestructible. In combat, it spins around its master on an imaginary orbit, deflecting attacks and warning him of ambushes. On command, Bhuta unleashes a blazing flash that blinds Naraka's opponents. The Arianoi can control the ball at will and use it to attack a target from a safe distance. For this, Naraka has to succeed on a roll of AGI+Navigation (3). Bhuta's impact is painful, dealing (6) Damage (Blunt).

Bhuta has a range of (1) kilometer before the connection to the helmet breaks off, and its endurance is limited to (16) Combat Rounds.

If Naraka triggers a flashbang attack, it sacrifices (3) Rounds of performance. To recharge Bhuta, Naraka must baptize the probe with his blood.



APOCALYPTICS

CARRION BIRDS

The dice have fallen, and they always land in favor of the Carrion Birds. The oldest and mightiest Flock of Europe represents the epitome of the Cult, supposedly sculpted by the mind of the mythical progenitor of the Apocalyptics, the Mother of Ravens herself.

It is unclear if this creature ever existed, or worse, still remains among the living, but such pondering is not a factor in any real debate. It is enough for the Carrion Birds to define their lineage based on her ancient teachings and demand tribute in her name. The other Flocks follow along, some out of tradition and respect, others because they know all too well that any form of defiance isn't greeted with gentle patience but rather with brutal acts of revenge. The Carrion Birds are at the top of the food chain, a criminal empire that rivals the expansiveness of the Cartel and has its eyes and ears in every corner of the world. Nobody voluntarily chooses an enemy that is so well connected, dominating the corrupt underbelly of Justitian, and gets away with it unscathed.

Instead, becoming a valued member of this Flock resembles the highest form of honor that can be bestowed upon an Apocalyptic. Even the lowest ranking of its Battle Crows can rake up enough infamy to be on eye level with Ravens from other regions of the world. However, this newfound status comes with a price. The internal hierarchy of the Carrion Birds is ripe with ritualistic submissiveness, its organization bloated and leadership questionable. What it offers in sheer strength it lacks in agility. Immalleable and sluggish, the Carrion Birds adhere to their self-imposed system of ancestral customs, allowing entropy to gnaw at the Flock's roots and distrust to run rampant.

If it wasn't for the Mother of Ravens holding the decaying structure together with an iron grip, the Carrion Birds would disperse into a myriad of autonomous Flocks, wrestling for dominion over Justitian's cadaver.

BETWEEN GREY SKY AND RED DUST

Nobody can tell how many Flocks settle, let alone operate, within the territory of the Protectorate. The smallest groups consist of just a handful of outlaws laying claim to a flashy name and establishing themselves in the nooks and crannies of a society, while more prominent Flocks will draw as many as twenty hardcore followers – yet none of them can compete with the Carrion Birds in scope.

However, their relatively small size doesn't make them any less dangerous. The history of the Protectorate is littered with anecdotes of notorious Apocalyptic gangs who

terrorized the countryside, established power bases in the hinterlands, and gave the Judges a run for their money – the Plague Birds of Ignatz and the Splinter Hawks of Ferropol managed to evade their due punishment for many years, before finally being brought to heel.

Their tiny formations and tight knit allegiances allow the Flocks that live in the shadow of the Carrion Birds to thrive, hide their trails with ease, and redirect investigations against them towards the usual suspects. It is therefore commonly thought that not every crime pinned on the Carrion Birds has actually been committed by them.

For many years, the East Wind Flock was the most recognized offshoot of the Carrion Birds, led to fame by the Raven Zhivan, an alleged son of the Mother of Ravens. Zhivan was one of the most successful Burn smugglers in all of Borca – until the Great Cleanse struck his booming empire down, crippling the Carrion Birds' drug trafficking business and leaving an immense vacuum behind.

Into this gap seeped new Flocks of varying power-levels, the most notorious going by pompous names such as the Blood Birds and Iron Shrikes of Liqua, or Chagall's Swarm ruling over the bordertown A235. These new players are all moving to reshuffle the map in their own favor and competing for their piece of the pie. It's only a matter of time before their actions begin to interfere with those of the Carrion Birds, heating up the hostile atmosphere even further.

DUST RIDERS

December 4th 2594 was a curious day. In the early morning hours, a squad of Judges was called to the Flotsam. News was spreading of a mass suicide that happened on the casino ship in the Harbor basin during the long hours of the night. When the lawmen dismounted to inspect the rumors, they found it to be all too true. Forty Apocalyptics had seemingly taken their lives, overdosing on Burn. The sole survivor of the ghastly event introduced himself as Tolomei, and described what he had witnessed aboard the ship. Supposedly, the resident Flock was ready to get high for a massive orgy, yet the drugs turned out to be too potent. The Judges had little choice but to buy into the story, lacking additional witnesses or any visible evidence of violence or fighting. Only a tiny splatter of dried blood revealed something akin to a brawl. As a safety measure, the Judges called in the Spitalians to take a second look. The Office of Hygienics dispatched a unit to collect the corpses. Upon arrival, they were agitated by the fact that such rampant and devastating Burn consumption could happen within the city limits. Knackers were ordered to cart all the bodies away for autopsy, and the decontamination of the facility lasted until the following day.

Meanwhile, Tolomei, the last man standing, negotiated with the Judges. He voiced concerns over the casino ship lying empty and potentially losing profits. On top of that, if Justitian's biggest brothel were to close its doors, people would be rioting in the streets. He showed the Judges his finances, and offered to pay the taxes for the first year in advance, if they'd hand the property over to him. Once the Advocates entered to survey the premise, Tolomei gave them a tour of the entire facility and introduced them to his group of workers and partners, calling themselves Dust Riders. The Judges didn't debate long. They were convinced that Tolomei was a fine businessman, tangled up in this audacious event by pure accident. His citizenship papers were spotless. They issued a final warning to keep Burn away from the ship before they saddled up and returned to Uptown.

But that wasn't the end of it. The file detailing the events was forwarded throughout Judgement Hall and eventually landed on Rutgar's desk. The Old Wolf read it thoroughly. Many times. It was the final evidence he needed to sign off on the Great Cleanse. Someone had to clean this mess up, once and for all.

UNWELCOME

Apocalyptics are a part of Justitian's society, like it or not. Their contacts range from the scum of the Defiler Streets to the mobsters of the Cartel, they are in league with infamous Orgiastics, and negotiate with crooked Advocates. They sell what others crave – sex, drugs, and power.

The Righteous Fist cannot satisfy the masses without relying on the services offered by the Apocalyptics. However unwelcome they may appear in the eyes of some law-abiding bureaucrat in Uptown, denying the Cult's relevance to the well-being of Justitian would be foolish. The Judges must engage in a balancing act between leniency and punishment, allowing the Apocalyptics to provide civil society with their most precious offers, while appeasing the Spitalians and cracking down on the Burn epidemic of recent years. No easy task.



VULCO

The salty breeze of the Mediterranean has given way to a dry Borcan dust storm. The man on the bridge to the Flotsam spits a lump into the depth of the dry Harbor basin and counts the seconds until the saliva hits the bottom. With features frozen in disgust he turns south and dreams of his old home. Purgare.

Vulco, the Albatross of the Dust Riders, is trapped in exile. To him it feels like an eternity ago that he dominated the Mediterranean with his Sun Flock and brought his enemies to their knees, looting and pillaging. Today his Flock bears a name of shame. No longer do they have endless waters underneath their feet, but dust clogging up their pores.

Vulco snaps his fingers. Ten years pass before his mind's eye. Rise, fall, rebirth, departure, challenge, victory, and standstill. Ever since the Albatross conquered Justitian's Raven in a duel and the Dust Riders snatched the Flotsam from the Carrion Birds, the hand of the clock of Vulco's life has not moved. It stays motionless, a heartbeat away from midnight, waiting for salvation or ultimate doom.

But who is this man who dares to set up his nest in the heart of Justitian and breaks with all traditions of his Cult? A man who's got little left to lose - someone who hasn't fallen prey to the prospects of an unforeseeable future, but instead aligns himself to the modesty of the present day. Nobody else in Justitian embodies freedom to the same extent. Vulco determines the condition of his life clock, choosing the time to make his next move based on the actions of his enemies. He can sense the Carrion Birds circling him in the Harbor basin, waiting for their moment of revenge. Vulco humiliated them, showed them how weak they are at the core of their structure, how dependent they are on the myths surrounding their name and status. Maybe the loss of face was needed to wake them from their slumber, and turn them into the formidable Flock they once were. Then, only then, would Vulco consider a truce and offer himself as their new leader.

ROLE PLAY

The Albatross hates the limelight and leaves it to his partner Tolomei to run the Flotsam. He only appears in the shadows when it's necessary to give instructions. Many years of experience at the top of his Flock have turned him into a cunning tactician who prefers to spy on an opponent's most vulnerable point before striking.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Protector, Apocalyptics, Rank 3: Albatross
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 7D, Force 7D, Melee 8D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Dexterity 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 10D, Arts 6D, Expression 5D, Leadership 8D, Seduction 8D, Legends 5D, Cunning 11D, Deception 8D, Domination 10D, Reaction 10D, Willpower 10D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 9D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 6, Renown 4, Resources 3
SPECIAL: Misogynist (-2D on social Skill rolls, except Domination, when interacting with women)
POTENTIALS: All-in 3, Climax 2, Danger Sense 2, Moving Mountains 2
INITIATIVE: 10D / 18 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Short Sword, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 7; Various Knives, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Acrobatic evasion), Mobility 10D; Ranged active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Willpower 11D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Reinforced leather suit, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 8 / 20, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Dejan's braid (Talisman, +1D on Mental Defense); Astrolabe salvaged from his ship before the Sun Flock's destruction (+1D INS+Orienteering)

DUST RIDERS

Vulco only loves men. He despises women. To the Albatross they are creatures of malice and wickedness who do not appreciate the value of loyalty and brotherhood and lack any sense of humor on top. At best, their worth comes from being sold to other men and raking in money with their bodies, which is why there are just Magpies allowed amongst the lower ranks of the Dust Riders. The girls who work their asses off on the Flotsam either hail from small Flocks on the fringes of the Protectorate, or have been brought onto the ship as slaves of human trafficking. The core of the Dust Riders, however, belongs solely to men, who share their affection, beds, and profits with one another.

Vulco wants the best possible outcome for the Dust Riders at all times. He wants to see his Flock thrive, even if the Carrion Birds orbit the Flotsam and pose a threat to his business. Vulco isn't afraid of challenges. He defied powers that were far more dangerous and established than he was, and overcame them with a newcomer's luck and smarts.

Vulco's secret: he has nothing to prove. In contrast to the Carrion Birds who desperately cling to their tale of invulnerability and strength, the Dust Riders have no track record in Borca and therefore cannot be confronted by their past sins.

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Vulco sees Bosch as a knife in the flank of the Carrion Birds. If he supplies the regiments of the Cartel with favors, he'll gain Bosch's protection in return. The Dwarven King enjoys the rise of Vulco's Flock, understanding full well how this chaotic turn of events is weakening the Carrion Birds and blinding them to his own claims to the Harbor district.



TOLOMEI

Life ain't no bit of poetry. It's an endless battlefield and people's heads a'roll. Whenever the Dust Riders need a face to represent them in the outside world, they send Tolomei. The Pelican is listed in the Judges' files as the leader of the Flock in the Harbor basin, and they negotiate with him first when they enter the lot to conduct a routine house search. The assigned Protectors like Tolomei. In his office he loads them up with vanilla flavored schnapps from Genoa before taking them to the Dust Rider archives, in which the plundered treasures of the Flock are stored. The room is a museum, brimming with stuff stolen from both the Neolibyans and the Carrion Birds. Tolomei shows off nautical charts of the Mediterranean, statues made of brass, pearls, dried starfish, volcanic rocks, taxidermied crocodiles and sea birds, and some obscure beasts called Discordance creatures swimming in glass containers filled with brackish liquid.

The Protectors have never seen such exhibits. Some of them laugh when Tolomei changes the subject and goes off mocking the Trader Cult and their Scourger henchmen. His punchlines aim at the common Borcan xenophobia, knowing full well that the Judges have been feasting on Chronicler propaganda all their lives and are therefore susceptible to all sorts of ignorant remarks, prejudices, and false allegations. Before anyone in the room knows what's going on Tolomei already has them by the balls, throwing jokes around and making offers for them to come back when they're off duty, promising unforgettable nights at the Flotsam.

The Judges nod confidently. They won't continue the search. These Apocalyptics are fine, and there's no reason to keep pestering people just doing their job entertaining others. As they leave the ship they're too busy recounting Tolomei's one-liners to even notice the Scourger standing guard at the main gate. They'll file the usual report: Flotsam, cleared. No evidence of Burn trade.

Tolomei has done his job and kept the nest safe from further investigation. As long as he can keep the Judges occupied like this, there is no need for the Dust Riders to worry.

ROLE PLAY

Tolomei is a diplomat at heart. He knows full well how to avert aggressions against his Flock and calm the waters when he playfully juggles between Justitian's underworld and the powers of Uptown, diverting attention and building alliances.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Mediator, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Pelican
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 3D, Brawl 4D, Force 5D, Melee 4D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 5D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 4D, Arts 6D, Conduct 10D, Expression 8D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 6D, Focus 8D, Legends 8D, Cunning 7D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 5, Renown 4, Resources 3
SPECIAL: Favoured by Protectors (+2D social interactions with Judges who have visited him in the Flotsam)
POTENTIALS: Crow's Nest 2, Traffic 2, Mole 1
INITIATIVE: 6D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Revolver, Projectiles 7D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 10, Mag. 6
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Take cover), Mobility 5D; Ranged active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 3m
ARMOR: Leather overall and cape, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 4 / 12, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Coin of the Libyan (Talisman, +1D on Mental Defense rolls); Keys to the Dust Rider archives; Bandolier (Carries a spare reload for his revolver); Interior map of the Flotsam

THE GOLDEN COIN

Its origin is unknown and the embossing has faded over time. For Tolomei it is something of a talisman, and whenever he gets nervous, or wants to give the impression of it, he runs the coin across his knuckles.

What Tolomei doesn't know is that the inconspicuous coin is in fact the first Dinar. It was minted by the Libyan himself and is of immeasurable value to the Neolibyan Cult. Originally the relic was to be shipped from Cartagena to Tripol to take its final resting place in the Mausoleum of the Libyan, but it never arrived. The Sun Flock knocked the ship off course, boarded the freighter, and looted its cargo. The coin fell into Tolomei's hands, and it has been with him ever since.

The Sheikhs on the northern coast of Africa have been trying to get hold of the Dinar for the past ten years, offering high rewards for any information of the coin's whereabouts. So far, their search has yielded nothing. Some go so far as to think that the relic is resting somewhere on the bottom of the Mediterranean. If only they knew.

MEDIATOR

Tolomei is concerned. He has witnessed the downfall of the Sun Flock in all its tragedy - and he does not see the Dust Riders anywhere close to their former size and strength. Moreover, he feels that Vulco went too far when he humiliated the Carrion Birds. The Albatross sowed wind in the domain of the most influential Flock in Borca. A disaster like the one they faced in Corpse must never repeat itself.

Therefore he pays visits to rivals, distributes gifts, maintains the Flotsam, and ensures that the games and the gambling never ceases. He mediates between his Flock and the Judges, the Spitalians, the Scrappers, and everyone who finds their way into the casino. Often he only listens inattentively, already rolling the next problem in his head aside. Tolomei can be friendly and accommodating, but he maintains a personal distance at all times. When he sees an opportunity arise he'll offer a trade. He doesn't have to worry about monetary losses, what's more important is the connection he'll make from such a deal.



VADIM

Open camera lens: On a cloudy summer day, Vadim's old life ended and his new one began. The Scourgers came on boats. Their rifles flashed against a steel-gray sky. Nobody in the nest was prepared for the surprise attack.

Panorama: Vadim's life, gutted and torn to pieces. In a single breath everything is over and gone. He sees the war hyenas crack the skull of his sister. Gunfire blazes in front of a blood drenched horizon.

Long shot: The battle lasts all day. The Sun Flock is exhausted, retreating inland. Left and right comrades are torn to shreds in a hail of bullets or hacked to pieces with murderous chops. Vadim falls back, he wants to retaliate.

Knee level shot: Scourgers surround him. He is tied up and covered in blood. The Chaga growls. He wants answers. He drives glowing irons under Vadim's skin, flaying him alive. One of the men hits him in the head. Something cracks. Vadim's cheekbone fractures. They scream in a frenzy, demanding that he reveal Vulco's hiding place. When he doesn't answer, they try to break him by executing the captives of the Flock before his eyes. One after the other. Vadim sees their heads tumble to the ground as the howling chainsaw slices through their necks.

Close up: Vadim refuses. One last act of resistance. He bites off his tongue, his mouth filling with blood, and spits the lump before the Chaga's feet. The Simba roars with anger. Vadim grins at him, mocks him. The Simba lifts the machete to split Vadim's skull.

Axis jump: The Chaga intervenes. Vadim must be possessed. If they kill him here, they'll release every dark spirit residing within his mortal coil. They decide to bring him to their boat. Out on the open sea they throw him into the water.

Detail: Vadim sinks into the depths. A splinter hidden in his palm will have to suffice to cut through the ropes. Bubbles rise from his mouth. He struggles. The air is running out. Fade to Black.

ROLE PLAY

Vadim is Vulco's lover and bodyguard. He lurks in Vulco's shadow like a scorpion, always following his Albatross at a safe distance. Those who get too close to his companion will reap the fatal sting of Vadim's dagger.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Martyr, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Seagull
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 6 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 6D, Force 6D, Melee 9D, Stamina 8D,
Toughness 8D, Dexterity 10D, Navigation 8D, Mobility 11D, Projectiles 11D,
Stealth 11D, Arts 5D, Seduction 5D, Focus 8D, Legends 3D, Medicine 4D,
Science 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 8D, Dominate 9D, Reaction 11D,
Willpower 10D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 1, Resources 2
SPECIAL: Mute; Vulco's Lover (no Ego spend limit when defending Vulco from harm)
POTENTIALS: 1000 Ways 2, Mirror 2, Crow's Nest 2, Unyielding 2, Tough as Nails 2
INITIATIVE: 11D / 16 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Ceramic Combat Blade, Melee 10D, Distance 1m, Damage 6,
Smooth Running (2T), Whetting;
Various Knives, Melee 10D, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T);
Throwing Knives, Projectiles 12D, Distance 3/10m, Damage 5
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (The Dance), Mobility 11D; Ranged active,
Mobility 11D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Reinforced leather armor, Armor 4
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 11 / 20, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pair of steel cotters held against the inside of his cheeks as a last resort; One last cusp of Glory, for emergencies

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Vadim washed ashore. His body tortured, his mind broken, and his voice gone forever. He unearthed some of the hidden Glory stashes that didn't fall into the hands of the Scourgers, stitched himself up, cauterized the open wounds, and set out to find Vulco. He felt that the Albatross had survived. It took months before he found him on the mainland of Purgare. He had managed to rescue a handful of others. Vulco looked aged; their legacy was destroyed, but not their will to prevail. The five of them set forth, northwards, past Roma, into Genoa and Bergamo, and then beyond the Alps to Bern and Mulhouse. They laid low for many years, hiding their trails so they could start their rise to old splendor once again. They were Dust Riders now, and their new identity would be like a blazing dawn.

COLD BLADE

Vadim is one of the best knife fighters one can come across in a lifetime. He's been drilling his skills since early childhood, improving his technique, and is capable of accomplishing breathtaking feats with nothing but a set of blades. One of his signature attacks consists of tossing a throwing dagger with a spin so that it sails through the air with an unpredictable trajectory, making it almost impossible to dodge.

Alongside his throwing daggers he carries a myriad of blades on his body, hidden in the soles of his boots, in his elbow pads, and under his wrist wraps. A combat knife rests in a holster along his spine, covered by a thick leather jacket. The throwing knives are sewn into the sleeves of his coat and slipped between the layers of both boots. To spot any of the knives a successful roll of INS+Perception (4) is required.



ARGUS

A dark tunnel leads down to Argus' heart, where the sins of the past are hidden from the light of day. This place is cold and murky, covered by tendrils of seaweed and tangled algae, a hedge so thick that it cannot be severed even with the sharpest set of shears.

It should have been a fresh start. Up here, in Borca, Argus thought he had escaped the buried memories of his betrayal. On his shoulders lay the unbearable burden of being solely responsible for the demise of the Sun Flock. He had grown weak in Bejide's arms and broken the pledge he made to his Albatross to never fall for a woman's lies. When he lay next to her and drank from her passion he got lost in the moment, revealing all the secrets about Vulco's supply routes and their hiding places on Corpse.

Four days later, the Scourgers attacked the nest. Argus' brothers and sisters were killed in the massacre that followed, their eyes scorched from their sockets and their brains scattered across the dirty streets. It was a bloodbath. Argus survived, stuck in a storm at sea. He was lucky he was late.

It took him weeks to join the other survivors. Weeks in which the guilt rose from the depths of his subconscious and released its stinking cargo into his soul. Yes, he had told Bejide the location of the nest. He remembered the warnings of his fellow men and felt something break inside. He was a traitor. Nothing more. There was no way in the world he would ever be able to speak about his unfaithfulness to anyone. It would be his death sentence.

Justitian was a new beginning, a way to drown out the past. Until Tolomei informed him about Mbeke's recent forays at the Flotsam, poking around for information on Vulco and Argus. What are the odds? Could it be possible that Bejide is in the city as well?

Suddenly, Argus' dark secret begins to mold up, startling him in his sleep, waking him up drenched in sweat. If the Neolibyan has followed him all the way here, then the truth is about to spill.

ROLE PLAY

Argus' ever mirthful face has hardened and he is visibly agitated. Clouds of worry hang over his head, and paranoia is seeping into his bones. Everyone around him could be a potential turncoat working for the Africans. Even Gacoki.

OUT OF OPTIONS

Argus is counting down his options, throwing suspicious looks over his shoulder. Why did Gacoki hire on with the Dust Riders? What secrets does he keep? His thoughts meander into all directions. Has any of the knowledge of the past already seeped into the streets of Justitian? Is it even safe to stay on the Flotsam?

The Seagull is unsure of the next best step. As much as he loves his brothers, he knows there is no place with them if they ever found out what happened on Bejide's dhow. Maybe he needs to lay low for a while, and offer his services to another Flock.

On a night out, he heads for the Crowbar to meet with Hector. He asks for the Woodpecker's protection, just in case, but Hector doesn't trade unless there is something in it for him in return. He tries to push Argus to bring Vulco to the meeting table, so that the Dust Riders and the Carrion Birds can settle their score over the Flotsam. Argus senses that such a meeting will end in an ambush. Another betrayal, just to save his skin? He ponders hesitantly, but Hector insists that it's the only way out. Either he aligns himself with the strong, or he gets exposed and loses everything.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Seeker, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Seagull
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 VER: 2 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 7D, Force 7D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Dexterity 7D, Navigation 6D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 9D, Conduct 8D, Expression 6D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 7D, Legends 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Domination 5D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 4D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 8D, Primal 6D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 2, Network 3, Renown 2, Resources 2
SPECIAL: Paranoid: Argus sees enemies around every corner, and his mental barriers are showing cracks. Every failed Mental Defense causes him to lose the Difficulty of the roll in Ego Points
POTENTIALS: Fool's Fate 2, Hawkeye 2, Sleek 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 12 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Variety of Throwing Knives, Projectiles 8D, Distance 3/10m, Damage 6; Knife, Melee 7D, Distance 1, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (That was close!), Mobility 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 4D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Fine leather clothing, Armor 2, First Impression (+1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 4 / 8, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Bejide's hair needle; Matchbook from the Crowbar



DARWIN

Darwin adores life. Nothing fascinates him more than watching a creature's heart race as it opens and closes its eyelids and heaves its lungs in pain. He waits patiently for the moment when such a living being exhales its last breath, when its systems fail and the iris turns into a torpid gaze. This moment between life and death is sublime. The creature passes on, yet Darwin endures, remaining behind as a witness of death, as an opponent and conqueror who was stronger, smarter, more capable of survival. The creature before him is another human, but to Darwin it is just a worthless lifeform, incapable of lasting another day.

As crude as his philosophy may be, Darwin has been essential to the Dust Riders ever since their inception. As the Flock's poison mixer, he has put countless numbers of Vulco's enemies to rest. Lethal chemicals and deadly venoms are his forte, and his versatility in applying them as weapons of retaliation is legendary. Whenever violence doesn't yield the proper results the Dust Riders send in Darwin as the final solution, and extinction follows in his footsteps.

When everything is done he creeps across the corpses like the grim reaper, taking from them what he's entitled to. Memorabilia. Things that will remind him of their faded existence. Darwin collects these trophies deep down in the belly of the Flotsam, in his laboratory, where he spends most of his time. The objects are arranged in ritualistic fashion, oftentimes set up on altars of their own. Thus Darwin can recall every final moment of his victims. The only guests he allows in his sanctuary are those who understand the symphony of the poisons he creates, who are attracted by the toxic allure of his potions. Atama is one of them. The Red Bull visits Darwin to exchange recipes and buys off narcotics and other drugs collected during past Dust Rider raids. Both men respect one another for the vast knowledge they treasure, even though both aim for different goals.

ROLE PLAY

Darwin admires the Carrion Birds for their will to live. Even in the face of death, they resist and fight to the last breath. They are worthy opponents. He will turn his laboratory into a shrine dedicated to their collected mortal remains, once the day has come to kill them all.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Conqueror, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Vulture
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 VER: 5 PSY: 4 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 3D, Force 4D, Melee 5D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 8D, Arts 5D, Conduct 4D, Seduction 4D, Focus 9D, Medicine 9D, Science 10D, Cunning 8D, Deception 9D, Domination 7D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 5D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 2, Resources 2
SPECIAL: Venomous (+2D to all Skill rolls related to applying his poisons)
POTENTIALS: Luminary (Science) 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 18 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Blade Bracelet, Melee 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, Poisoned (6C, 1T, Potency reduced by Triggers rolled on BOD+Toughness), Camo (4C)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D; Ranged active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 8D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Light leather clothing, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 7 / 16, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Poisoner's Laboratory (+3D on INT+Science or Medicine when attempting to create new poisons and toxic substances); Collection of memorabilia (teeth, nails, dried scalps, braids, jawbones, jewellery, rings…); Keys to his laboratory in the basement of the Flotsam

CRESCENDO

Without Darwin's cruelty, the Dust Riders would never have been able to seize the Flotsam. When they first surfaced on the Carrion Birds' ship, Vulco challenged the Raven Dejan to a duel in front of everyone present. The provocative gesture was a show pulled off by the Albatross to draw the attention of the Apocalyptics and manifest the ultimate provocation. Everyone wanted to see blood flow. The Carrion Birds did not believe that Vulco would have the gall to overthrow Dejan on the hallowed territory of the Mother of Ravens. And even if the Albatross won the duel, the Dust Riders would never leave the ship alive.

But Vulco's offense and ridicule blinded the Carrion Birds to the danger in their midst. As the duel was reaching its climax, Darwin took advantage of the moment and switched the Burn in the goat skins and inhalators for deadly Discordia behind the backs of those present. When Dejan lay bleeding and defeated on the ground and doubled over in pain, Darwin walked down the rows and handed the inhalators to the humiliated Apocalyptics in celebration of victory. The Carrion Birds, agitated by the defeat of their Raven, reached for the poisoned drugs ready to prepare themselves for the execution of the rebellious Flock and to put themselves in a festive mood for the impending carnage. Less than an hour later, forty Carrion Birds lay scattered across the floors of the Flotsam with their lives being snuffed out, tongues swollen blue, throats mushroomed, and eyes widened in terror.

Overnight, the Dust Riders had secured their place at the top of Justitian's food chain. They only spared the Raven and dragged him off his own ship as a warning to the rest of his Flock. Times had changed, and a new player was in town.



MOTHER OF RAVENS

Her origins are obscured by the dust of history. It is said that she is the eldest of the ancients, and has been interwoven with the past of Justitian from its very beginning. When the city was merely a budding cusp of an emerging civilisation, the Mother of Ravens was already circling her nest and gathering her followers. When the Judges finally rose to proclaim the Protectorate, she had long since taken the shape of a crude mythical figure and seeped into the collective memory of the city's inhabitants. In those early days, she drifted in and out of the Cluster like a phantom.

Her memories reach back to the Fall of Exalt, the City Wars, and Cultrin's deployment. Generations of lovers became tangled in her web and eventually perished by her hand. She begat entire tribes in the East and fueled the legends of her immortality in the West with her mere presence. She hoarded tribute upon tribute as she rose to become the lodestar of the Cult, defining the occult traditions the Apocalyptics would come to adhere to. She gave birth to countless powerful Ravens across the Balkhan, Pollen, and Borca to immortalize her legacy. Those sons and daughters who were of no use to her on their way to maturity were poisoned in their sleep, boiled, and eaten to return to the Mother of Ravens' womb.

Today she commands the most dangerous Flock in all of Europe, controlling its members through an intertwined network of kinships and relations. Which string in this web will she pluck next, which son will she cast down to substitute for another? Like a spider she remains motionless in her nest for days before suddenly awakening from a trance in feverish excitement, throwing bones and reading the future in the guts of fallen enemies.

Decades ago she took leave of the sun and retreated into the heart of the Earth. From here, she sends her subjects to ransack the world in the hunt for the man who once betrayed her. She swore revenge on him an eternity ago, and it is this bottomless hatred which fuels her will to survive.

ROLE PLAY

Although this crusty old hag may appear crazy, one should always pay tribute and bring gifts if they plan to address her properly. Anyone who finally manages to enter her refuge and raise his concerns is either considered blessed, or will lose their head down there. Flip a coin. You can never be sure with the Wretched Hag.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Bygones, The Mentor, Apocalyptics, Rank X: Founder
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 1 CHA: 6 INT: 6 PSY: 6 INS: 6
SKILLS: Brawl 2D, Force 2D, Stamina 2D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 7D, Arts 10D, Conduct 8D, Expression 12D, Leadership 11D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 9D, Artifact Lore 9D, Engineering 8D, Legends 12D, Medicine 8D, Science 7D, Cunning 12D, Deception 7D, Domination 11D, Faith 10D, Reaction 8D, Empathy 12D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 9D, Primal 12D, Survival 7D, Taming 9D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 6, Authority 6, Network 6, Renown 6, Resources 6, Secrets 6
POTENTIALS: All-In 3, Card of Destiny 3, Mirror 3, Black Omen 3, Final Destination 3, Bad Luck 3, Corruption 3, The Voice 3, Asceticism 3, Aether Call 3, Danger Sense 3, Moving Mountains 3, Could be Worse 3, First Language 3, Viper's Tongue 3
INITIATIVE: 8D / 24 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Talons, Brawl 4D, Distance 1, Damage 1, Poisoned (4C, -2D on all rolls, 1hour)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 12D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: None
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 23 / 24 (3 permanent), Flesh Wounds 100, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Apocalyptic Tarot (Made from the flesh of her failed children); 2 six-sided dice (one featuring only 1's, the other only 6's)

THE LOVER

The Mother of Ravens hails from another world. At the side of her lover, she devised the movement from which the Apocalyptics sprang, at a time when the nights were as bright as the day. Her beloved bestowed on her the control of the nascent Cult, and she continued his plan. But she departed from the leader's ideology and tarnished the Apocalyptics with her esoteric memetics, perverting their core to accelerate the evolution of the Cult and adapt it to her vision. When the lover noticed the change of course, it was already far too late. Their relationship fractured. He turned his back on the Mother of Ravens and left her the Cult as a legacy, but not before he severed all ties. His revolution had been corrupted by the hands of Mother of Ravens, and irretrievably destroyed. The Apocalyptics, the prototype of a free-spirited humanity, were doomed to failure, and the lover was forced to start anew to complete his plan.

POTENTIALS

THE VOICE

PREREQUISITE: Unique

The Mother of Ravens laces every word spoken with primordial memetics. Her whisperings are overwhelming commands that plant or erase memories, manipulate minds, obscure knowledge, or freeze a victim with fear. She is able to lock her enemies into a mental cage from which there is no escape. Once she recognizes the individual's archetype, all protective mental reflexes collapse and a victim is helplessly at her mercy. She has been perfecting her voice for centuries.

The Mother of Ravens can make any social roll against a single person a Combination with CHA+Expression. If she knows the target's Concept, she adds Triggers to the roll equal to the Potential level.

(2) Triggers: The desired result of the command will happen instantaneously.

(4) Triggers: She can affect additional targets as long as she knows their Concepts.

(8) Triggers: Her orders will be implanted permanently.



JOSHUA, THE BUTCHER

Something alien has arrived in the city and Joshua senses his very presence. The newcomer challenges the power of the Mother of Ravens, chipping away at her spell with his siren call. Joshua can hardly resist. He licks at the droplets of condensed water pooling in the grooves of his cell, tastes the stranger with every breath.

A lifetime ago, Joshua had crawled forth from the womb of the Mother of Ravens bearing eyes that were cold and foreign like distant stars. Joshua recalls this moment vividly. How the acrid air of the nest first flooded through his lungs. How the hairs on his back vibrated to protect him from the cold of the crypt into which he had been born. Then he witnessed the face of his mother, who had brought him into this world. Her voice was a black symphony, without mercy, and henceforth he would spend his life in her service.

From birth, Joshua kept his mother alive, fueling her with his powers and the life energies of his victims. Later on he was given other tasks. At her command, Joshua saved mangled Battle Crows from the clutches of death, or absorbed traitors amongst the Carrion Birds to bolster his Phenomena. He countered diseases running rampant within the Flock by infesting himself and discharging a secretion to render the pathogens harmless. The ointments and tinctures the Mother of Ravens hands out to her followers are nothing more than Joshua's body fluids.

The Mother of Ravens gave the Carrion Birds a warning. Anyone who betrays the secret of her offspring will meet certain death. All of her children are called to greatness and Joshua, the beast from her belly, the Biokinetic, will be no exception.

Prohibitions, restrictions, and mental chains keep him in his place, for now. But what happens if the old hag is no longer? What will become of this creature that fears his own shadow yet rips the limbs from a living being without the slightest hint of doubt?

ROLE PLAY

Joshua is a louse in the lap of his mother. As frightening as his physical appearance may be, spiritually he is nothing but an underdeveloped infant obeying every hiss of his mistress like a submissive slave. Deep within his paralyzed brain coils, however, lie the killer instincts of a Biokinetic. When the Mother of Ravens unleashes these primordial powers for a brief moment, Joshua turns into a frenzied killing machine willing to throw himself against any opponent and defend his mother's life with his own.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Pollen, The Abomination, Biokinetics, Apostate
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 6 AGI: 6 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 12D, Force 11D, Melee 10D, Stamina 9D, Toughness 10D, Crafting 11D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 1D, Expression 2D, Leadership 2D, Negotiation 2D, Focus 3D, Legends 3D, Cunning 5D, Deception 4D, Domination 10D, Faith 8D, Reaction 9D, Empathy 5D, Perception 10D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D, Taming 7D
SPECIAL: Lapdog: Joshua has been trained through years of torture and punishment to always obey the Mother of Ravens. He must succeed an INS+Primal(8) roll to do anything other than what she commands. She also keeps him away from spores, unless she needs his phenomena
PHENOMENA: Lord of the First Plague (Swarm Strength 0), Spider Bite, Invigoration, Absorption
INITIATIVE: 9D / 6 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Claw Swipe, Brawl 12D, Damage 8, Piercing (2), Poisoned (3C, -2D to all Actions, lasts (3) Rounds)
DEFENSE: Passive 2; Melee active (Parry with claws), Brawl 12D; Ranged active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Hardened flesh, Armor 2, Terrifying (3)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 6 / 16, Flesh Wounds 20, Trauma 10
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: -

DOCILE

Over the decades, the Mother of Ravens infused her son Joshua with drugs and punctured his skull with a searing hot blade to release the evil spirits trapped inside. She drove chains and clamps through his bones and muscles to limit his ability to shapeshift. Sometimes she even let herself believe she was successful when her son crouched in the corner of his cage, clutching his knees and gazing up at her. In those moments there was a spark of humanity in his pale eyes, the gray irises fluttering like dying moths. On other days, however, he threw himself against the bars of his cell like a rabid beast or swayed to the tunes of inaudible melodies.

That was long ago. Joshua was allowed to leave the cage and trade it for his lab in the nest of Carrion Birds. The drugs have made him docile, along with the complex pattern of nails that the Mother of Raven's has driven into the back of his skull. He still remains the Flock's greatest secret, shared only by the hag herself, a handful of her children and a select few Carrion Birds.

Despite how useful Joshua may be, he is a threat. His ties to the Chakra collective have been damaged by the corrosive influence of the Mother of Ravens, but they heal the more Joshua sporulates. Without the drugs and memetics of his mistress, the Earth Chakra would finally call the prodigal son home within a few days. Joshua's access to Burn is therefore severely rationed by the Mother of Ravens. Additionally, she forbids him to keep his plague: the flaps of skin on the Biokinetic's back inflate furiously and twitch with agitation.

But now Joshua feels Markurant's call. The King has arrived to free him from his shackles.

PHENOMENON

INVIGORATION
PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 4
Joshua's blood pumps through engorged veins as he lays his hands on his mother. The claws on his fingers pierce her flesh, the blood surging into her and rejuvenating her beyond human limits.

RULES: The Biokinetic transfers his life force to another. He drains (5) of his own Flesh Wounds per hour, granting the target (1) Flesh Wound above their normal limit and extending their lifespan.



DEJAN

Thirty years ago, the Mother of Ravens gave birth to Dejan, the last scion of her lineage, and bequeathed him the rule of the Carrion Birds. As her Raven, he was to command the Flock on the surface world and act as the representative of the Mother of Ravens, so that she could retreat into the bowels of the earth and pursue her rituals undisturbed. From the very beginning, Dejan's life was predetermined. There was no escape. When he was old enough to take over the Flock, he could tell by the looks in the eyes of its members that no one was well-disposed towards him. Everyone considered him a puppet, a milksop, with no real ability of his own. He sat undeservedly on a throne which he never had to fight for.

Dejan's rule was marked by fatalities. He had to watch from the sidelines as his brother Zhivan enlarged the East Wind Flock, dominated the Burn trade, and pleased the Mother of Ravens with his tributes. At the same time Dejan didn't stand a chance against Hector the Woodpecker, who was deeply entangled with the Cartel and ruled over a network of taverns and brothels across the entire Harbor district without competition. Dejan was left with just the Flotsam, along with its casino and the accompanying Magpies, to prove himself to his mother. She rarely paid attention to his deeds.

Then came the Dust Riders. A filthy Flock from Purgare, homeless and without humility. The Albatross Vulco literally spat on Dejan's alleged lineage and demanded the Carrion Birds hand over the Flotsam. To fuel his words with pressure he challenged the Raven to a duel. Dejan knew that he lacked the grit to oppose the pirate, yet he had to face him in the fight as dictated by tradition. Dejan would leave the Flotsam that evening as the only survivor of his Flock. Vulco spared the Raven as a warning sign to the remaining Carrion Birds. The Flotsam was now in the hands of the Dust Riders.

Beaten and humiliated, Dejan limped back to his mother's crypt. It was the first time in years that she had listened to his whining. As a punishment for his weakness, she took his left hand and ordered him to retrieve the Flotsam, or never crawl back into her presence.

ROLE PLAY

Dejan faces a dilemma he can't hope to solve alone. Without the self-confidence to back up his overly complicated plans, he is unable to bend the Flock to his will. The task ahead is far too difficult for him, and every Apocalyptic who belongs to the Carrion Birds knows about the weakness of their leader. Even so, nobody would ever dare to put their hands on him.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Defiler, Apocalyptics, Rank 3: Raven
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 4 PSY: 5 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 5D, Force 5D, Melee 6D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 5D, Dexterity 6D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 8D, Arts 5D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 5D, Engineering 5D, Focus 6D, Legends 7D, Cunning 8D, Deception 7D, Domination 7D, Faith 6D, Reaction 8D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 5, Renown 3, Resources 3, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Mother's Punishment: Dejan has lost his left hand, using a prosthetic in its place, and takes -3D to rolls requiring the use of both hands
POTENTIALS: All-in 3, Card of Destiny 2, Final Destination 2, Danger Sense 1
INITIATIVE: 8D / 12 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Sawed-off Shotgun, Projectiles 7D, Distance 3/15m, Damage 10, Double Barreled, Scatter, Can only be fired with both barrels at a time
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Padded leather coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 7 / 12, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Apocalyptic Tarot (can gain a glimpse of the future, and +1D Ego, by dealing the cards); Gambling slips and wagers for pit fights; Memorized map of the Flotsam (to be used when he returns to take it back); Crude prosthetic

UPROOTED

Without the Flotsam, Dejan has become a bird without its nest. He is forced to endure his disgrace every day as he seeks refuge in Hector's taverns and calls upon his Flock to gather. His reputation dwindles with every month that the Dust Riders rule over the Harbor and the reconquest is not completed. But Dejan has no plan. The Flotsam is impregnable from the outside.

MATRICIDE

Dejan's life is a cage of overbearing responsibility. He is no match for the role he has been given, and he is aware that the Flock knows every one of his weaknesses and only obeys because his mother's blight surrounds him like a shroud. If only he could cleanse himself of his origin. However, the old hag digs through every one of Dejan's thoughts, forcing him to tread lightly.

He knows the hidden path down beneath the city, knows how to access the dungeon she has chosen as her refuge. From childhood onwards he tracked her every step, memorizing her rituals, counting the hours she spent in torpor, looking for vulnerable spots, hunting for the moment when he could bury a dagger between her ribs.

The curse of never living up to her expectations has crushed Dejan to his core. He'd enjoy nothing less than gutting his mother and stuffing her maw with her own intestines. But he cannot move against her. As with everyone else, she has cast a spell on Dejan, controlling his conspiratorial thoughts by carefully placing the right combination of Tarot cards. And yet, however powerless Dejan may seem in her presence, he still carries her seed within himself and has inherited her cunning.

The Raven knows that his half-brother Joshua is the key to the death of the Mother of Ravens. If he manages to dispose of the Biokinetic, the Wretched Hag will finally crumble to dust.



HECTOR

Hector is the public face of the Carrion Birds. The Judges believe him to be the leading figure, despite him not holding the title of Raven. He is always singled out for questioning during investigations, the Judges unaware that his prominent role exists only to divert all attention away from the Flock's connections to the Mother of Ravens. No one in Uptown can seem to figure out how the hierarchy of Carrion Birds truly works. How could they? Apocalyptics do not require hierarchies. They live in a state of constant flux, and Hector is a prime example of how a hotwired Woodpecker can bravely position himself in the limelight of the Cult, yet remain untouchable to the Judiciary.

Hector grins a careless smile. With all the headaches he imposes on the law enforcement, they keep overlooking the most obvious details: in a city like Justitian, murder is considered a problem. The Judges simply can't stand it. In contrast to the wasteland where you can simply shoot a few holes into someone and let them kick the bucket while they're wailing in their own juices, in the city of the Righteous Fist you have to be able to properly hide your trail.

That's when you call Hector. He deposits the corpses that fell victim to the Cartel two nights earlier across basements of his many taverns. He sinks the rigid bodies into freshly mixed mortar in holes underneath the wooden planks, or bricks them straight into the walls. If all the cavities of a cellar vault are stuffed and the space used up, he picks up the axe and disposes of the body parts in the pig fattening farm in Harm. Hector has good connections to the swine herders there.

For victims who are delivered to him alive, he reserves a special kind of treatment. In the nest of the Carrion Birds, he hands them to Joshua, the Butcher. The Aberrant son of the Mother of Ravens absorbs these condemned creatures, skin, bones, and all. Hector delights in attending this ceremony, observing the desperate eyes of the dying while they are being decomposed by Joshua's bodily fluids. Even in death, they remain useful. Their extracted life energy is fuel for the immortality of the Mother of Ravens.

ROLE PLAY

Hector is a pragmatic psychopath for whom a single human life holds little value. From his viewpoint, only business and his loyalty toward the Flock matters. The fact that he sometimes pulverizes bones and chops up body parts to keep the business running is simply part of his job.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Traditionalist, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Woodpecker
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 2 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Force 7D, Melee 6D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 3D, Dexterity 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 5D, Stealth 3D, Arts 5D, Conduct 7D, Expression 8D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 10D, Seduction 8D, Artifact Lore 4D, Legends 4D, Medicine 3D, Science 4D, Cunning 8D, Deception 7D, Dominate 9D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 7D, Primal 8D, Survival 6D, Taming 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 4, Network 4, Renown 4, Resources 5, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Prime Mover: Hector is at the heart of the Carrion Birds, and acts as their public face. He gains +2D to all social interactions with members of other Flocks
POTENTIALS:
INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Butcher's Blade, Melee 6D, Damage 8, Gruesome (2); Derringer, Projectiles 5D, Distance 3/10, Damage 6, Camo (2C), Double Barreled
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged active, Mobility D; Mental, Willpower D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Vest top showing off his tattoos, Armor 0, First Impression (+1D)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 8 / 14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: String of tattoos along his arms representing each of the establishments he owns; Pouches filled with financial records and deeds for his brothels

DRIVING FORCE

Hector ties the Carrion Birds together. He is the driving force behind their raids and the mastermind of all the many criminal activities of the Flock. Even the Mother of Ravens pays attention to his concerns and patiently listens when he speaks. On one hand he aptly keeps the competing Cartel at bay, even while cooperating with the bookie, Buto, in the disposal of corpses. On the other hand, he turns the Protectors who search his taverns and brothers into agreeable friends with a few well placed bribes.

Hector knows how to separate the corrupt enforcers of the law from those who are pure. To some Judges he offers a night with his best Magpies for free, for others he has a small Burn reserve at the ready. The Judges who engage in Hector's game are now struck blind in one eye, falsifying search protocols or sending a warning to the Woodpecker a day before an upcoming raid.

PIMP

Hector loves his girls and he has tried them all before they were allowed to work for him. It is important for him to know that the quality of his goods meets the price. That's why he takes a protective approach to every whore who spreads her legs in one of his brothels. The Woodpecker does not like it at all when someone hurts his girls: if anyone is to hurt them it will be Hector himself, not some runaway suitor.

However, during a house search a year ago, something went wrong. Kerber, a supposedly incorruptible and self-righteous Executioner, didn't play by the rules during a house raid and unleashed his frustration over a missing persons case muddied by blurry traces and fake testimonies at three uninvolved Magpies. Kerber's frenzy remains unforgotten. Hector will not rest until he has lured the Judge into a trap and tortured him for weeks thereafter. Only Hector is allowed to beat his girls.



JADE

She is the darling of the Mother of Ravens, the old hag often yearning that Jade had sprung from her own body. In her eyes, Jade is the symbol of perfection to the Apocalyptics: a disengaged individual unshackled from her destiny, from her body, her past, present, and future. The freest bird of all.

Not even Jade remembers how many faces she has worn. Every transformation shattered her memories a little more. In this endless metamorphosis, she reached the transhuman state that the Mother of Raven had always aspired to for her own children. Since childhood Jade has been shaped by Joshua. In his laboratory, he transplanted onto her the features of the dead, deformed the structure of her skull, molded her cheekbones, removed her eyes and replaced them with new ones, rummaging through the genetic structure of her body until nothing of the original was left behind. Equipped with hundreds of masks, she walked in disguise through the Cults of Justitian, climbing the hierarchies and reaping knowledge. She carried every shred into the nest of the Mother of Ravens, feeding her surrogate mother with whispers of what was happening on the surface world. To this day, Jade embraces this role flawlessly. In preparation for an infiltration, the Mother of Ravens uses the power of her voice to fill Jade's mind with memories she has never had, bolstering her will and empowering her for any potential interrogation. When Jade puts on her disguise, there is nothing that can give her away. Her ability to transform is so subtle and complete that no one suspects anything.

These days one task determines Jade's life. She is on the track of the traitor who delivered the East Wind Flock to the Judges and brought the Great Cleanse over the city. Jade suspects that he has gone into hiding in the Cross Quarter, amongst the Anabaptists. In the skin of an Orgiastic she has pierced their closed circles and is searching for clues. Soon she will track down the lying tick that sent Zhivan, the glorious son of the Mother of Ravens, to his death. Only after her work is done will she tear the false features from her skull to behold the effigy underneath, despite knowing full well that she will never be anything but the mask she is wearing.

ROLE PLAY

Jade has no personality, but she owns hundreds. With each new face Joshua attaches to hers, the rainbow of roles the Cuckoo can assume expands, and it is this talent that makes her the Carrion Birds' most capable spy.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Abomination, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Cuckoo
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 4 INT: 2 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 12D+5S, Brawl 9D, Force 9D, Melee 9D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 11D, Projectiles 11D, Stealth 11D, Conduct 7D, Expression 8D, Leadership 6D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 10D, Focus 5D, Legends 4D, Medicine 5D, Science 3D, Cunning 8D, Deception 9D, Domination 6D, Faith 8D, Reaction 10D, Empathy 5D, Perception 8D, Survival 6D,
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 2, Network 4, Resources 4, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Transhuman (Trauma pool doubled, only begins experiencing Trauma penalties after (8) Trauma Damage, BOD+Athletics score doubled, 1D Ego Points regenerated per Round, +4D CHA+Seduction on demand)
POTENTIALS: Mimicry 3, Mirror 3
INITIATIVE: 10D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Lever-action Repeater, Projectiles 12D, Damage 10, Mag. 5, Smooth Running (3T), Single Loader (3)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D; Ranged active, Mobility 11D; Mental, Faith 8D
MOVEMENT: 16m
ARMOR: Oilskin cloak over leather clothes, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 14 /16 (5 permanent), Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 8 (16)
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Flesh masks (False faces melded to Jade's own, grants +4D to any rolls made to disguise herself, deals (2) Flesh Wounds of Damage when removed)

SNAKE IN THE NEST

The Carrion Birds have no weapon more efficient than Jade. Like a snake she winds through foreign nests. An invisible assassin, she can dispose of every foe of the Flock, and the Cuckoo's complete adaptation to her roles allows the Mother of Ravens to have eyes and ears throughout Justitian. Jade is fully committed to the task, she exists solely to advance her own transformation to the extreme, but this process has completely extinguished her soul along the way. She has already lived so many lives that not a single one is left to anchor her in reality. Only her endless devotion to the Mother of Ravens keeps her in this world. If the Wretched Hag were no more, Jade would sink into a universe of possibilities and be devoured by her own schizophrenic psyche.

TRANSHUMAN

Jade enjoys benefits that are granted to no other mortal. She has offered up her body entirely to the Carrion Birds, and Joshua the Butcher has turned her into a creature that does not have to fear death. A second heart beats in her chest, allowing her to suffer twice the Trauma Damage. Enlarged sweat glands give Jade the ability to cool down quickly in periods of tremendous physical stress. For less violent tasks, her pheromone glands are hyperactive and exude an unmistakable smell on demand which boosts the sex hormones of a conversation partner. Her kidneys continuously produce excess adrenaline, giving Jade superhuman effectiveness. Every Combat Round she regenerates 1D Ego Points, and her BOD+Athletics score is doubled. This transhuman physique allows her to jump higher and run faster than any other human being.



LUPO

Lupo's shoulders heave and drop. His breath is rough and heavy. The girl lying next to his bed doesn't flinch anymore. Her face looks as if it was pulled through a meat grinder, not a single tooth left in its socket. She made fun of him and paid the price. Lupo folds her stiff arms across her chest and stuffs the lifeless body in a sack. Tomorrow, two Defilers will happen to fish the poor thing from a canal in the Outskirts. They'll report their find to the Judges.

What happened? Lupo had drugged himself to the eyeballs with this... stuff. The seller convinced him he was dealing with Atama's legendary anabolic agents, but instead of boosting muscle mass and increasing his reflexes the witches brew rendered him impotent. Lupo, the greatest pit fighter on the Carrion Birds' team, suddenly turned into nothing more than a limp-dicked loser.

His gaze is empty as he wanders aimlessly through his abode. The walls of his quarters have become his prison. He keeps staring at his straw mattress, where the broads used to moan underneath him just a few weeks ago. No one moans there anymore. Lupo has been disgraced.

No one can be allowed to know about this weakness, and every fucking whore who questions his masculinity will catch his reckless fury. He urgently needs to find treatment. But he's out of time, Dejan is already waiting in front of his door, ready to escort Lupo over to Tech-Central. The fighting season has begun and Lupo's first contender is sitting in the starting blocks, baring his teeth, waiting for the match. The rage building in Lupo's skull threatens to drown out his senses. Tonight he'll beat that grin off his opponent's face, kill him in the ring, if only to express his state of pure frustration.

The brawl is merciless. The assembled spectators are overwhelmed by Lupo's brutality, marking him as the favorite of this year's pit fights in their betting books. The predicted winnings have already doubled after just the first battle. If anyone can beat Atama, it's him, the audience mumbles, clapping the shoulder of the passing mountain of sinew and muscle.

But Lupo doesn't care. Everything tumbles past him. What meaning does his life hold if he can't even please a girl?

ROLE PLAY

The beast rages in Lupo's heart, inciting his wounded ego, drowning him in self-contempt. The pit fighter is a walking time bomb, and his only remaining purpose is to inflict as much suffering on others as he feels himself.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Destroyer, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Battle Crow
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 5 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 10D, Force 8D, Melee 6D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 9D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 6D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Leadership 4D, Negotiation 6D, Seduction 4D, Legends 3D, Medicine 4D, Cunning 6D, Deception 5D, Domination 7D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 5D, Perception 9D, Primal 10D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 2, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Feral rage: When Lupo gets into a fight, all bets are off and his blood boils over. In combat, his Ego spend limit is increased to (5) per Round
POTENTIALS: Pit Fighter 3, All-in 3, 1000 Ways 2
INITIATIVE: 9D / 20 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Armored Punch, Brawl 12D, Damage 5, Blunt; Razor Gloves (for when he really wants to make a mark), Brawl 11D, Damage 5, Dazed (2), Gruesome (1), Smooth Running (3T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Boxing guard), Brawl 12D; Ranged active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 8m
ARMOR: Studded leather gear, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 5 / 10, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Stacks of payslips from the initial rounds of the pit fights; Countless aphrodisiacs and enhancement pills to try and regain his virility - all failures

FAN FAVORITE

Lupo's emergence during the preliminary pit fights was pure carnage. For a long time the audience believed that no one could stand up to the Red Bull. But Lupo's fighting style is different. His unpredictability turns the anguished bodyguard of the Carrion Birds into an unforeseen wild card that brings fresh air into the dusty betting business. Many of the spectators can hardly wait for the clash between Atama and Lupo. This year's stakes exceed everything Buto, the Bookie, has experienced in years.

JACKPOT

The dice couldn't have fallen more favorably to incite a ruse. Dejan is the first one to notice Lupo's bizarre behavior. The Raven digs for the reasons, lurking in Lupo's shadow to find out what's bothering the fighter. Once he finally discerns the truth, he can hardly believe his luck: Lupo's broken pride is a gleaming spear. The pit fighter would do anything within his power to regain his virility. Absolutely anything.

Dejan reveals to Lupo the secret of one of Mother of Ravens sons. Joshua, the Demiurge's spawn made flesh. His blood is so potent, the Raven claims, that Lupo could reinvigorate his lost prowess by slaughtering Joshua and drinking his blood. Lupo is confused, but Dejan soothes him, tells him that the powers of the Aberrant lie in the realm of reproduction. After all, how else would the Mother of Ravens have managed to survive for all these centuries?

Lupo can hardly believe his ears. He has to kill the son of the Mother of Ravens to rejuvenate his loins? Dejan nods. With a face full of concern, the Raven stares into the questioning eyes of the muscle-bound giant. "It's your only hope," he says with words filled with tragedy. Lupo lowers his head and fixes his mind on the numb point between his legs. He is ready.



DANKA

The East Wind Flock was the supplier, while the Carrion Birds focused entirely on distribution. That was the arrangement. Trade was appropriately organized and the Burn trafficking ran smoothly for many years. All across the Protectorate interim warehouses lay scattered, regularly restocked with supplies which were then rerouted via loyal couriers to arrive safely in Justitian. The Harbor served as the collection point of all Burn cargo, and until just four years ago the drug was sold on every street corner on the Eastside

Danka was one of the Battle Crows of the East Wind Flock, assigned to watch out for incoming raids from the Protectors and keep everyone's back covered.

But then, out of nowhere, the skies came crashing down on Justitian. The Great Cleanse washed through the streets like a deluge. All of a sudden, Judges and Spitalians were everywhere. Members of Danka's Flock were dragged out of their shelters and mangled with hammer blows until no bone was left unbroken. Preservists attacked in broad daylight, executing Apocalyptics out on the streets. Only one thing was clear. Someone had talked. Someone had given the Judges and Spitalians access to names and places. The operation was so perfectly orchestrated that there could be no other explanation: the Judges had gained insider knowledge.

Danka survived only by sheer luck. In the turmoil of the executions, she went into hiding with the Carrion Birds, and escaped the Judgement block. Months passed before the situation calmed down and she eventually dared to venture back into the open. With her old Flock wiped out entirely, she had no choice but to look for a new home. She joined up with Hector and has been monitoring his brothels in the Harbor district ever since. However, the freedom she once enjoyed at Zhivan's side is now a thing of the past. She has to submit to the traditions of the Carrion Birds in order to survive. For a long time she has been toying with the idea of switching sides and defecting to the Cartel, or escaping the territory altogether to join a new Flock. Her finger wanders across an old Protectorate map, passes over Ferropol, and stops at Liqua. If only she had someone who could secretly help her to get out of this city.

ROLE PLAY

Danka's hot-bloodedness is her trademark. She hates stasis and inaction, but in her new plumage as a Carrion Bird she feels like she's been buried alive and deprived of her autonomy.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Zealot, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Battle Crow
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 4 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 6D, Force 7D, Melee 9D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 5D, Conduct 4D, Expression 6D, Leadership 4D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 6D, Artifact Lore 3D, Legends 5D, Medicine 3D, Science 3D, Cunning 5D, Deception 6D, Domination 4D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 4D, Perception 6D, Primal 7D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 1, Network 4, Renown 2, Resources 2, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Fish out of water: Every day Danka is forced to participate in the Carrion Birds' rituals or comes into conflict with their traditionalist ways, she only regenerates Ego if she passes a PSY+Willpower (3) roll
POTENTIALS: Crow's Nest 2, 1000 Ways 2, Ambidextrous 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Paired Short Swords, Melee 10D or 8D (split between two attacks), Damage 7, Smooth Running (3T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 10D; Ranged active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 5D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Light clothing, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 7 / 10, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Needle coated with Ptomaine, sourced from Hector's poisoners (Poisoned: 5C, (1) Trauma per Round, Potency decreases by (1) per Round);

THE HYGIENIST

Danka is unable to let go of the downfall of her Flock. Time and again she tried to decipher how the fatal events played out. What she was able to gather from chatty suitors pointed her to a man named Elliot Heilkamp, a Spitalian, and the head of the Office of Hygienics. She set her eyes on the target, hoping to get a clue who the brain behind the operation really was, but when she finally found the man she scoffed, barely able to believe what she was seeing. This bloated fat-ass was allegedly responsible for the downfall of the East Wind Flock? Danka refused to accept it. She decided to keep an eye on the toad and learn his movement patterns in Downtown. She has been watching Heilkamp for weeks now, following him at a safe distance when he is conducting routine checks at the public hospitals, or patrolling the streets of Brennen.

She tries to persuade Hector to allow a retaliation mission, but the Woodpecker refuses to engage in any discussion and demands that she not attract any unnecessary attention. Under no circumstances does Hector want the Spitalians to close in on the Carrion Birds. Danka is glowing with anger. Less than twenty paces separate her from that pig. She would only have to drive a poisoned iron pin into his flank in passing and make her escape. It would be a revenge for her fallen brothers and sisters, one that is long overdue...



DARLING

Fez cowers on the lowest level of the Carrion Birds. He always wanted to go up and make it to the top, becoming a Raven and leading a Flock of his own. He longed to be feared and revelled in the idea of hearing others whispering his name in awe. Turning his back on his brothers in far-away Hybrispania, he marched eastward unerringly until he finally reached Justitian. Fez was a go-getter, born to belong to the best of the best. His ego flooded rooms and he fantasized what it would be like to one day rule over the Carrion Birds.

After weeks of persistence, he was finally granted an audience with Hector. Fez laid his cards out on the table. He was ready to challenge the Raven of the Carrion birds to a duel and urged Hector to back up his plan. Amused, the Woodpecker listened to Fez's remarks and ideas, nodding confidently as the Finch described to him expressively how he planned to lead the Carrion Birds to glory. In his exuberance Fez failed to notice that Hector was secretly poisoning his distillate with sleeping pills. All at once darkness fell over his eyes.

When he awoke, he was trapped in a musty cellar. A leather mask had been strapped over his head and his mouth was gagged with a plug. His arms were stuck in fingerless, baggy gloves and rusty chains rattled from his limbs.

Daily, Carrion Birds entered the cell and taunted him with a clacking bunch of keys held up in front of his nose. "Work for it, sweety!" they hissed cynically before beating and raping him until Fez came to a standstill, writhing in a pool of blood. He was systematically dehumanized. They never addressed him by his name, but called him "Darling", forced him to feed from a trough and kept him chained like a mangy dog. It was not long before Fez's resistance was broken and his mind fled into a state of twilight to escape recurring torture. His identity faded forever in the process. Completely re-educated, Darling now obediently follows every beck and call of his new masters.

ROLE PLAY

Madness runs rampant in Darling's skull. Years ago, he saw the sun for the last time, for the tomb of the Carrion Birds is his new home. He may only leave his dungeon if his masters want to punish another prisoner. Then they let Darling off the leash.

ONE NIGHT STAND

Fez serves as a deterrent. Whenever the Carrion Birds have to teach manners to an unreliable member of the Flock, or give their orders the necessary emphasis, they bring Darling out of the dungeon. Just seeing the creature is enough for most people to get back on track. Those who still haven't understood the warning after the first exposure to the beast-like man will be disarmed and locked in a cage with their hands tied for a one night stand with Darling. Keeping the delirious Finch at bay for hours with only one's legs, warding off his attacks, and enduring his maddening moans and drooling is a traumatic date that no one longs to experience twice.

If Darling is let loose on a prisoner, the target must make a Complex BOD+Brawl (15) roll to kick him enough to discourage him, with a -2D penalty due to their restrained hands and an interval of (10) minutes. If they fail to acquire the necessary Successes within an hour, Darling will overwhelm them and spend the rest of the night pummeling them, dealing (10) Damage and draining their entire Ego Pool.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Hybrispanian, The Abomination, Apocalyptics, Rank X: Birdshit
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 4 CHA: 0 INT: 1 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 6D (4D), Brawl 6D, Force 7D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 7D, Mobility 6D, Cunning 3D, Domination 5D, Reaction 4D, Willpower 3D, Primal 5D
BACKGROUNDS: All Backgrounds are permanently set to 0
SPECIAL: Dehumanized (Automatically fails all CHA Skill rolls); Public humiliation: When Darling is dragged out to make an example or as a means of intimidation for anyone considering stepping out of line, his handlers add +4D to all PSY+Domination rolls; If someone were to somehow free him from his wretched existence and escape from the nest of the Carrion Birds, they would gain a follower with boundless loyalty - although one mentally damaged beyond return
POTENTIALS: Elephant Skin 2
INITIATIVE: 4D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Studded and Spiked Mitts, Brawl 4D, Damage 5, Dazed (2), Gruesome (1), Smooth Running (3T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; When the abuse begins again, Darling doesn't defend himself, he just rolls over and endures; Mental, Willpower 3D
MOVEMENT: 6m (4m)
ARMOR: None, total Armor: 2 (Elephant Skin)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 5 / 6 (1 permanent), Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Fingerless gloves and heavy chains (-8D on all Skill rolls requiring the use of his fingers, -2D on BOD+Athletics rolls and movement)



IVY

Ivy's life passed by in a flash. Every time she opened her eyes, she was in another place: a secret smuggler's path near Barnacle, an abandoned track behind the Roppen Customs Terminal, a route through the remote forests beyond Dresden. She was a runner, always on her feet and with a backpack full of Burn cusps strapped to her shoulders, crossing the endless tundra, climbing towering mountains, and descending into the guts of Justitian. From there the travels took her back to the outskirts of Parasite or across unsecured Alpine passes to Purgare with lighter luggage. Back and forth, restless and homeless. Ivy was just one among many in the East Wind Flock, and she fulfilled her destiny as the Raven Zhivan demanded. It was the only existence that Ivy knew. That was, until a fateful encounter.

In a dimly lit interrogation room, she met a man with silver-gray hair who reminded her of a wolf. His voice was fatherly, familiar and benevolent. He put his furrowed hands around Ivy's, and warmth washed over her. Time seemed to have no meaning for a moment. For the first time in her life, Ivy felt safe, as if nothing on Earth could affect her.

The haggard old man made Ivy an offer: a new life in exchange for her old one. If she was willing to betray her Flock, the Judiciary would give her a new identity and offer her a new beginning. The young woman didn't hesitate. All at once the truth gushed out of her mouth and she could not stop talking. Every word she uttered was a thousandfold treachery to the East Wind Flock. A week later, the Great Cleanse broke out over the city like a summer storm. Ivy was long out of the danger zone by then.

Today Ivy lives unrecognized in the Cross Quarter among the Anabaptists. Two Orgiastics paid by the Judges guard her house and her little shop, where she sells wooden bead jewelry. She is happy and has fallen in love with a stoic Ascetic named Goslar, a man who gifted her a wreath of cornflowers in greeting instead of yanking her into bed to finish himself off. When she kissed him for the first time, he stared coyly at his boots and said nothing. Ivy liked that...

ROLE PLAY

Ivy's new life fills her with peace. She is full of gratitude when she listens to the laughter of children in front of her store, and she wishes for nothing more than to found her own family and bury her past.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Heretic, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Magpie
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 2 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 3D, Force 3D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 5D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 7D, Arts 7D, Conduct 8D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 7D, Legends 6D, Cunning 4D, Faith 6D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Primal 5D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Network 2, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Outcast: Her allies are the Anabaptists of the Cross Quarter. Two Orgiastics act as her bodyguards - from a distance
POTENTIALS: Pariah 2, Innocence 1
INITIATIVE: 5D / 10 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Ivy is not a fighter. If her deferential pleas for mercy fail, she will try to run away. That's when her bodyguards intervene.
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Twist and turn), Mobility 5D; Ranged active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Leather coat, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 12 (4 permanent), Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Every month a wad of Drafts magically appears on Ivy's doorstep. She mostly spends them on flowers she crafts into beautiful wreaths that she gifts to the people of the Cross Quarter

NEW BEGINNINGS

With her betrayal, Ivy has brought down the entire East Wind Flock and caused considerable harm to the Carrion Birds. It was only because of her that the Great Cleanse could be orchestrated in the first place. As a crown witness, she was pardoned and placed under the Judges' protection. They gave her a new name and moved her into a secure part of the Cross Quarter. Her files in Uptown were destroyed.

Ivy often thinks back to the gray-haired man to whom she owes this new life. How much would she like to thank him, yet she doesn't even know his name.

JEALOUSY

The Ascetic is acting weird. Ivy was convinced that Goslar was interested in her, but suddenly he avoids her gaze. For two weeks, he's been frustrating her with reasons why he can't visit. As much as she has grown fond of him, Goslar's miserable acting skills are getting on her nerves. His evasions are incoherent and absent-minded.

Ivy is desperate to know what is preoccupying the Ascetic so much that he keeps stealing away from his responsibilities. Several times now she has followed him to his farm in Fielding to try and spy on his shed. Nothing suspicious. To Ivy, the matter seems extremely bizarre. Is there a vow of austerity that forbids Ascetics to be devoted to a woman? The girl thought that she had seen through the rules of the Anabaptists, but Goslar's behavior drives her crazy. Could he possibly have a family that he has been keeping secret? Jealous thoughts jam her mind like blood clots.

She lies in wait to see when her sweetheart will leave the house. Once the air is clear, she will sneak into the yard and take a look around.



PHOEBE

In his prime, Apok the One-Eyed was a drug lord and the self-proclaimed ruler of Ferropol whose criminal machinations were known throughout the Protectorate. The Splinter Hawks, Apok's Flock and a mob infested with nefarious mercenaries and assassins, had dug in and controlled dozens of smuggling routes to the southwest. However, the presence of the East Wind Flock hampered the trade of Burn and created tensions between Apok and rival Ravens. In order to pull the Splinter Hawks out of the crosshairs of other Flocks he invented a liquid Burn derivative and christened it Broiled. It displayed similar effects, but was far harder to discover.

Phoebe, Apok's Magpie, was both his adolescent intermediary and his bed companion. She controlled a brothel on the Eastside, through which Apok could distribute the drug as far as Justitian, slipping under the watchful eye of the East Wind Flock and the Carrion Birds.

Finally, in 2585, a calamity broke over Ferropol as the Judges annihilated Apok and his Splinter Hawks. Phoebe survived the carnage by taking shelter in Justitian, and the Judges overlooked the trail of evidence leading back to the young Magpie.

Thirteen years have passed since then. The girl of yore has grown into a cunning woman. Phoebe kept Apok's formulas and set up a new laboratory in the ruins of Ferropol to both restart the production of Broiled and bring the Splinter Hawks back to life. With a handful of allies, new and old, she has resurrected the business in Justitian which has been desperately craving a fix since the Great Cleanse wiped out its supply. She funnels her goods through the Amaranth, the old brothel of the Splinter Hawks, and distributes it from there among the population. Phoebe relies exclusively on Defilers as couriers to spread the substance to the people. These miserable creatures are unreliable and much more difficult to monitor, but they don't cost Phoebe a dime and let her keep the Carrion Birds off her back, who are still unaware of the Broiled imports slowly creeping into the city. To keep it that way, Phoebe's traders use a secret sign, a red triangle on their forehead, to distinguish themselves. Only a handful of addicts know the symbol.

ROLE PLAY

Phoebe plays a dangerous game. She is an upstart in the Carrion Birds' domain, and sullies established traditions with her filth. She spits on tribute, and will stop at nothing to bring back the Splinter Hawks to old splendor.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Creator, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Magpie
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 4 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 6D, Force 5D, Melee 6D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 9D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 5D, Arts 8D, Conduct 6D, Expression 6D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 10D, Focus 5D, Legends 4D, Medicine 6D, Science 8D, Cunning 9D, Deception 9D, Domination 8D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 9D, Empathy 6D, Perception 7D, Survival 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 3, Network 2, Resources 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Underdog: The Splinter Hawks are not fully established in Justitian, a fact that is both a blessing and a curse. Phoebe gains +2D when trying to go undetected, but -2D to making deals due to her lack of influence
POTENTIALS: All-in 3, Black Omen 2
INITIATIVE: 7D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Apok's Blade Bracelet, Brawl 8D, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T), Camo (6C); Pepperbox (loaded with shot), Projectiles 6D, Distance 5/15, Damage 7, Mag. 4, Salvoes (4), Scatter, Single Loader (2)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Brawl 8D; Ranged active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Willpower 9D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Leather bodysuit and cape, Armor 1, +1D to CHA+Seduction
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 11 / 18 (1 permanent), Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Broiled production formulas and laboratory

GRAM

Apok's old bodyguard, the deserted Hellvetic Gram, still resides among the living. In fact, he continues to use the ghost town of Ferropol as a secret refuge even though A235 has long since become his base. Phoebe, who in Apok's time had barely outgrown her girl clothes, is now Gram's playmate. The Hellvetic sees Phoebe as both daughter and lover in one person and assists in the execution of her plans with his strategic skill.

With Gram's help Phoebe can reach out to a network of backers who would be denied to other Apocalyptics: the Hellvetic shares his contacts with her, including the rogue Scourger siblings Adabra and Onyia operating from Liqua, as well as the Enemoi who have pitched a new operation camp in A235. As a result, Phoebe's Broiled is entering ever new circles and demand is growing outside of Justitian's city walls. The Magpie's Splinter Hawks have long since ceased to be the dispersed Flock that was ruined in Ferropol, and are growing into a serious competitor. Who can say how the Mother of Ravens will respond when she learns of this threat.

SIKORSKI

The man who brought down Apok was the Black Judge Sikorski. At the time, he infiltrated the Splinter Hawks on behalf of Rutgar and broadcasted Ferropol's secrets back to Uptown. The subsequent attack on the drug fortress was a clear success. As a Black Judge, Sikorski was gifted at blurring his tracks, but he acted carelessly and overlooked one target on his kill list: Phoebe. As one of the fortunate few to survive, she knows of the Black Judge and has shared her knowledge with Gram. Together they have decided to pick up his trail and settle the score with him, but what they don't know is that Sikorski has been held behind bars in the Cleft for the last five years. To successfully infiltrate Apok's Flock, he branded himself a murderer prior to the mission. Years later, this very branding would become his downfall when he was picked up by a group of Executioners. In three months time his sentence will finally be over and he'll be kicked out into the Defiler Streets. When that happens Sikorski will be just another member of the scum he fought against his entire life.



EZRA

They scoffed at him, ignored his concerns, ridiculed his thoughts, and punished him with the lowliest of tasks. After all, Ezra was just a Finch. What could someone like him even know about business? The arrogance of the Carrion Birds clouded their awareness, and Ezra's true talents were kept hidden from them in plain sight. For the established members of the Flock, the young Apocalyptic was nothing but useless ballast and just another mouth to feed.

For Ezra, however, the Carrion Birds were an open book full of secrets that he could absorb and learn from. Ezra saw through their structure, grasped the principles of hierarchy and submission by which the Carrion Birds abided. He could observe how the true power within the Flock aggregated within just a few individuals who were able to use their charisma to keep other members docile. These few formed the Flock's backbone and provided it with strength. Deprived of their leaders, however, the Carrion Birds would falter and collapse, for they had no moral compass that tied them together. Ezra tried to convey to his brothers and sisters the danger emanating from such a cult of personality, yet once again they refused to listen to him.

Frustrated, he gave up and searched for distraction. During a nightly prowl through the Eastside, he encountered the Broiled dealers. As the first Carrion Bird to get his hands on it, he got to try the derivative from Ferropol while his siblings were merely stumbling about in the dark. Ezra decided to keep the secret to himself and instead follow the origin of the drug import. After days of searching, he came across Phoebe in the Amaranth. Ezra was captivated by the daring Apocalyptic, who had set up her nest so blatantly in the blind spot of the Carrion Birds. Phoebe offered to let him join the Splinter Hawks and take over a share of the business. She needed someone like Ezra who could tell her about the movements and methods of the Carrion Birds far in advance and distract her competition until the Splinter Hawks had grown strong enough to defend their territory on their own. Ezra was thrilled. Finally he had found his role.

ROLE PLAY

Ezra is Phoebe's Owl and the captain of the Splinter Hawks. His eyes are always focused on the essentials, and everything he knows he has learned or blatantly stolen from the Carrion Birds to keep Phoebe out of trouble.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Protector, Apocalyptics, Rank 2: Owl
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 3 AGI: 5 CHA: 2 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 8D, Force 6D, Melee 5D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 6D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 9D, Projectiles 6D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 3D, Expression 3D, Negotiation 6D, Seduction 3D, Cunning 8D, Deception 5D, Domination 6D, Faith 7D, Reaction 8D, Empathy 4D, Perception 7D, Primal 8D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 4, Renown 2, Resources 1, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Man on the Inside: Ezra has seen the inner workings of the Carrion Birds laid out before him, and he remembers their weaknesses. The Owl gains +2D to PSY+Cunning when attempting to outwit his former Flock
POTENTIALS: Angel of Death 3, Crow's Nest 2, Free Like a Bird 1
INITIATIVE: 8D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Blade Bracelet, Brawl 10D, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T), Camo (4C), Poisoned (4C, (-4) Flesh Wounds per Round, lasts for (3) Rounds)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Brawl 10D; Ranged active, Mobility 9D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 5m
ARMOR: Leather skirt, Armor 0
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 11 / 14, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Lists of directions to entrances into the underground nest of the Carrion Birds, along with passwords to get past the Battle Crows watching them; 3x doses of Broiled, as "samples" for prospective partners

MÉNAGE À TROIS

The Carrion Birds remain blinded. They have neither noticed Ezra's betrayal, nor do they know about the new drug Phoebe is bringing into the city. However, even if the Splinter Hawks are at a slight advantage, they lack power. One wrong move would be enough for the henchmen of the Mother of Ravens to eradicate the young Flock and seize control of the Broiled business.

Ezra desperately needs powerful allies to help the Splinter Hawks. His goal is to bait the Dust Riders with tributes and get them involved in the distribution of Broiled. At the same time he tries to make contact with the Cartel, intending to offer the Scrappers free doses of the drug in return for granting the Splinter Hawks protection.

This ménage à trois would guarantee a minimum of security and prevent the Carrion Birds from resorting to a reckless retaliatory strike should they get wind of the drug business. Ezra knows that it is only a matter of time until the truth comes to light and the whole Broiled trade blows up in his face. Now he just has to prove that he can act faster than his overwhelming opponent.



ANABAPTISTS

SNAPSHOTS

This is the city of Judges, say the Chroniclers. This is the city of Chroniclers, say the Anabaptists. The latter sounds more realistic considering the intolerance displayed by Uptown toward every Emissary who dares to step foot on Calendar Square.

Something has gone wrong. The Broken Cross was never able to develop a political foothold in Justitian, even though Cathedral City's relationship with the Judges was built on the solid foundation of trade and unity against common enemies, and the Spitalians considered them brothers in arms in their fight against the Primer. The problem lies within the Anabaptist mindset. Composed of farmers and warriors, the Cult's followers make for great allies when conflict is brewing, but they lack vision in peacetime. With the Protectorate tranquilized at the hands of the Judiciary and the countryside cleansed from the spawn of the Demiurge, there were no longer any looming threats left to justify more time spent around the negotiating table. The Chroniclers instead used their momentum to sow discord, vetoing the Anabaptists at every opportunity and repeatedly sabotaging all attempts to integrate the Cross Quarter into the city. But, no matter how hard the Cluster tried to impose the Anabaptists with penalties, they ran into the same problem in the end: the Broken Cross controls the largest water supplies within the Protectorate. This leaves only one conclusion - you can twist the hand that gives you water, but you must not cut it off!

SPADE AND BIDENHANDER

Ascetics belong to the rural farming community of Justitian, and their settlements are dotted all over the landscape. They are one of the major backbones of society, and there is no question about the amenities they provide. Without their labor, fields would lie barren and water pipelines would corrode. Wherever there are Ascetics, there is some form of budding collective offering the bare necessities of daily life: bread, water, and distillate.

Orgiastics, on the other hand, are warriors. They are needed to defend the borders against the encroaching Clans to the South and the Frankan Pheromancers in the

West. They are the torchbearers in Paradise, a knighthood of crude men and rough women who zealously protect what is left of the fabled Garden of Eden. Both aspects together, spade and bidenhander, form the faithful community of the Broken Cross, inspiring the masses and calling them into their fold.

Things could be so promising, but they are not. The fragile peace negotiations between Fragment Modus and the Anabaptists in Cathedral City have led to a preliminary policy of relaxation, yet the trenches run deep as both parties eye one another with utmost scrutiny, waiting for the tiniest misstep to shatter the armistice. The eternal enmity between both Cults is legendary. Truthfully, the Chroniclers wish for nothing more than to banish their archenemy from the Protectorate, but without the full support of Judgement Hall such radical ideas will never come to fruition. Meanwhile, they must accept that the majority of the western Protectorate has fallen under the sway of Cathedral City. In Bassham and Spicafield the Anabaptists are in charge, and in Liqua they share power with the Water Lords. The Cluster's Agents are deeply concerned that the Anabaptist movement will continue to gain more traction, and therefore more followers; just one of the many reasons they impose restrictions on the Cross Quarter in Justitian, ensuring their carefully constructed utopia doesn't get overrun by a peasant religion.

On the other hand, Spitalians and Anabaptists look back on a rich history, often joining forces to eradicate Psychonauts, reclaiming lost territory, and exploring the fringes of Europe together. However, this alliance now stands at the edge of a cliff after Mission Concorde triggered the series of traumatising events that unfolded in Briton in the fall of 2596. The relationship appears to be irreparably damaged, and no shared feelings of nostalgia will help overcome the grievances anytime soon.

CATHEDRAL CITY

The largest bulwark of the Broken Cross lies outside of the Protectorate and has been in the hands of the Anabaptists since the founding days of the Cult. Although Cathedral City is dwarfed by its big brother Justitian, it remains the vital religious center of Neognostic faith, and its history and importance are undeniable to the people of the Black Lung. The city withstood many storms, coming under siege during the City Wars yet never changing hands. It prevailed and kept its independence, repelling all of the Judiciary's advances and offers to be annexed by their sprawling empire.

What most commoners don't know is that the city once was the ancestral home of the Chroniclers, before they were violently driven out of their base by Rebus and his raging armies – an insolence that can never be forgotten. In those dark times the Anabaptists seized the most holy relics from their hooded enemies, the Cathedral's Archives, and sealed them off for centuries, barring the Chroniclers from reclaiming the knowledge of their founders and potentially uncovering a way to reactivate the Stream. For centuries, the Cluster has tried to get its hands on their lost treasure, but all attempts at infiltrating the Anabaptists' headquarters turned into massive failures, forcing the Chroniclers to retreat and ultimately leading to the current stalemate.

SEVERINUS

One shouldn't think that the Judges are the only ones who profit from keeping prisoners. Severinus is a penitentiary run by the Anabaptists and lays claim to its very own foul reputation. For a brief period in the Protectorate's history Justitian would send its own criminals into the hands of prison wards of Severinus, but this policy was abolished after the Cleft was reformed under Protector Gregor Kant. While the Cleft is predominantly a reeducation camp with a focus on breaking the will of the incarcerees through humiliation, denunciation, and hard labor until the rehabilitated criminal can be released back into society as a useful subject, punishment at Severinus takes an entirely different route. Ceaseless torture sessions followed by endless confession hearings are tools to shatter the spirit of an inmate, and conversion to the Neognosis is mandatory if one wants to even think about ever leaving the underground dungeons alive. Reports of the cruelties raging within the prison camp's blackened walls are mind-numbing, consisting of forced self-amputations, sensory deprivation sessions lasting for weeks at a time, and near death experiences induced through starvation and drowning.

One unconfirmed rumor has it that Cathedral City breeds its very own angels of death, the Acherons, in Severinus, before they are sent to conduct their secret missions of vengeance in the field. Truth or fiction? Doesn't matter. What is important is that Justitian condemns the existence of such a camp and demands that Cathedral City applies the law of the Codex or shuts the site down entirely. The Council of Emanations refuses to bend to such preposterous requests and insists that Severinus doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of the Judges due to its position outside of the Protectorate. The political fallout resulting from Cathedral City's stubbornness is yet to come.



ZAMUEL

The world rushes past Zamuel's tired eyes. The bolts in his head billow up, forming a dark cloud from which a thunderstorm of countless fragmented memories bursts forth: The Baptist Altair resting an armored hand on his shoulder. His bidenhander splitting the blade of a saber and cleaving its wielder. A rivulet of hot blood running down his neck. A comrade stuffing his intestines back into his belly, with eyes widened in terror. Liquor blazing through his throat until it reaches his stomach where the booze explodes into pure bliss. Women rubbing their bodies against him as he snatches after a passing beauty's ass.

Now Zamuel, toothless and old, sits in front of his steaming cup of tea. A wig made of horsehair teeters on his head. His hands are gout-ridden, and his bones ache during all hours of the day. He can't grasp the world surrounding him anymore, the people simply talk and think too fast.

In spite of his decrepit age and waning wits, the city book still lists Zamuel as the official representative of Cathedral City in Justitian. These days, however, he's flanked by advisers when it comes to political affairs. In a case of doubt they will make decisions in his name, especially if Zamuel has fallen asleep yet again during negotiations.

For the Ascetics of the Cross Quarter, the old man who is slowly retreating from the world of the living, both physically and mentally, symbolizes the transformation from wolf to lamb – reaching Ascension through contemplation, not through excess. The Orgiastics have a similar point of view – and they don't like what they see at all. They revere Zamuel as a great warrior who conquered the Demiurge's spawn in the battle of Arquet and raised his sword for Cathedral City against the mad Jehammedans time and again. However, what happens to him now is ignominious. The great warrior has turned into a tea-slurping idiot. If only he had fallen in battle.

ROLE PLAY

Zamuel is stuck in yesterday. The colorful clothes and ample female bodies that he sees are like a billowing display of colors, yet they are so much less vivid than how he recalls them in his memories. He restricts himself to smiling nicely to the people surrounding him and nods politely whenever they wait for him to give them an answer. For quite some time he has been unable to process their questions.

"Would you also like a cup of tea?" he then utters in confusion. These days he can stomach this drink much better than the moonshine he gorged by the gallon in his wild years as an Orgiastic.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mentor, Anabaptist, Rank 4: Emissary
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 1 AGI: 1 CHA: 2 INT: 1 PSY: 3 INS: 1
SKILLS: Stamina 2D, Toughness 3D, Conduct 4D, Expression 3D, Leadership 3D, Legends 7D, Cunning 4D, Domination 5D, Faith 9D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 7D, Perception 3D, Primal 4D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Authority 4, Network 2, Renown 5, Resources 3, Secrets 5
SPECIAL: Divine Breath: Despite his failing mind, many Anabaptists still believe in Zamuel's holy powers. When the Emissary blesses others of his Cult, they regain (3) Ego. He can do so once per day.
POTENTIALS: Innocence 3, Rotten Apple 3, Realm of Emanations 3, Fisherman's Blood 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 8 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Bidenhander (Balanced and Sharpened), Melee 0D, Distance 2m, Damage 10, Impact (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 0D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 1D; Mental, Faith 9D
MOVEMENT: 1m
ARMOR: Old lamellar armor, Armor 4
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 6, Trauma 4
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Aphrodisiacs; Piss bellows; Faded etching of Zamuel in his youth standing beside a figure he claims is the Piast of Wroclaw. However, he must be delusional: anyone who saw the Piast today, 30 years on, would see someone who looked the same age as the man in the etching - surely this is just an old man's ramblings

ANCIENT GLORY

Zamuel's grandparents already fought in the City Wars. He himself looks back upon a glorious life full of experiences, but he cannot collate the knowledge he has been hoarding over the decades anymore. As a child, he saw Exalt with his own two eyes – before Cockroaches flooded the ruins. He was there when Justitian grew, when the Cross Quarter joined the city and the foundation stone of the Great Northern Wall was laid. He saw Baptists come and go, saw cities prosper in the Adriatic Basin, and, in better years, he even went on a pilgrimage to far away Briton. In '63, he survived the battle of Arquet. In '72, he dined at the court of the Piast of Wroclaw. In '77, he smashed a Pheromancer's skull at Born. In '81, he saw his last battle against the Jehammedans. Once, he sat across from the Mother of Ravens and had his future laid out by the old Crow.

If the Chroniclers knew what oceans of world knowledge the old Emissary can call upon, they would besiege him day and night to tap into his brain.

INVENTORY

APHRODISIACS

Even if Zamuel has been unable to enjoy the pleasures of sexual intercourse for a long time, he still keeps countless aphrodisiacs in his bedchamber. Roots from faraway Pollen, Pheromancer ichor, dried mushrooms, essential oils, and potency ointments are all part of his collection. He leers after every voluptuous woman crossing his path, indulging in her scent for minutes after she's passed. He always carries two or three of these quack remedies on his person and mixes them into his tea when nobody's watching. After all, he wants to be prepared should one of these beauties join him at his table. These days, Zamuel only seems to recognize women as conversational partners anyway.



URIAH

It didn't matter if he battled against the godless goat fuckers or horseshit-crazy Psychonauts, Uriah's most faithful companion was always the tin bottle full of moonshine. The appalling brew pierced his brain, and all the garbage memories filled with entrails and pleading children's eyes were washed out into the deserts of oblivion. However, there is still a large clump of dirt staining the interior wall of his skull. He feels the tension, presses his hands against his temples, gouging bloody furrows into his scalp. He grabs the bottle anew. He briefly shakes it, unscrews the top and stuffs the neck of the bottle between his rubbery lips. Then, he takes a huge sip. Uriah feels the surge in his throat, and only moments later, the troops land on the shores of his brain. A small victory. A small death.

Back in his days on the battlefields, Uriah's perception of life was as clear as the holy water in the Cathedral. Not ten feet from him, Zamuel the Emissary hacked and slashed his path through a forest of spears. Without a second thought, Uriah rushed to join forces with the legendary Emissary. For a moment, the gaze of the two men meet, one young and ecstatic, the other old and vulgar. Both survived the battle and became brothers in arms. However, it wasn't enough for a friendship. Even when they celebrated their victories with distillate with the other members of the pack, the age gap remained an insurmountable obstacle. Zamuel took the role of a mentor, Uriah became the student. But that was never enough for Uriah. When Zamuel was called to Justitian, Uriah followed. Proudly he strode next to his idol through the streets of the Cross Quarter. Before long, one could tell that Zamuel wasn't light on his feet anymore.

It would work itself out, Uriah thought and supported the old one who nodded at him thankfully. Two months later, Zamuel had already forgotten Uriah's name, thrown his sword out of his sleeping chamber, and wet his bed several times. His mentor decayed rapidly. There was nothing Uriah could do. He writhed in disappointed hope. Rubbed his hands. Drank. Smashed chairs and banged his skull against the wall.

His head was feverish, his body shaken by rage. Whoever looked at him questioningly was bound to receive the blow of his fist as an answer.

ROLE PLAY

The former hero Uriah has turned into a thug. He tumbles from intoxication to frenzy and back again, and the years unfold into one never-ending nightmare. Today, Uriah is a wreck. His joints are swollen, his sight blurred. However, he has a goal. He wants to pay his last respect to his mentor and allow for him to die heroically, in battle.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Martyr, Anabaptist, Rank 3: Furor
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 3 CHA: 1 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 8D, Force 9D, Melee 7D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 9D, Navigation 4D, Mobility 4D, Projectiles 4D, Conduct 2D, Expression 4D, Leadership 3D, Legends 4D, Cunning 6D, Dominate 9D, Faith 6D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 5D, Perception 6D, Primal 7D, Survival 5D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Authority 1, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 2, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Righteous Indignation: Whenever Uriah enters a Conflict, physical or social, with a Jehammedan and wins, he regains Ego Points equal to the difference in the Successes rolled
POTENTIALS: Fisherman's Blood, Zealot 2, Unleashed 2
INITIATIVE: 5D / 14 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Bidenhander (Balanced), Melee 6D, Distance 2, Damage 11, Impact (2T); Cestus, Brawl 10D, Damage 6, Blunt; Gladius, Melee 8D, Damage 8, Smooth Running (3T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Worn lamellar armor, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 18, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Root schnapps, distillate, or some other moonshine, he doesn't give a shit about it as long as it's strong; One of Zamuel's signet rings; Elysian oils (3x Hiddekel, Lvl. 3, 2x Gehon, Lvl. 2)

QUARRELSOME

These days, everybody in the Cross Quarter knows Uriah as Zamuel's keeper.

Behind his back, young Orgiastics slander him, wondering if he shares the Emissary's bed at night and if he drinks from his chamber pot. Ascetics dodge the giant drunkard as a matter of principle, avoiding becoming the next target of Uriah's frustration. He surely won't find any friends amongst them.

On those days when the old one hits the bed by noon, Uriah wanders down to the Harbor and spends his time bragging to the Scrappers about his mentor's alleged heroics. One exaggeration follows the other. The dirt diggers don't care for his stories, they only listen because the Anabaptist insists and pays for the drinks. Uriah doesn't recognize how embarrassing his tales are. When he's spewing hourlong torrents of hatred against the Jehammedans, his pitiful ramblings accumulate into a miserable climax. The Orgiastic can't comprehend why the Judges allow the Jehammedans to occupy the southern part of the city. If he had his way, the whole scruffy lot would be deported and their quarter burnt down. He cannot hide his repulsion against the Ram Cult. Whenever Jehammedans cross Uriah's path, his pent-up frustration erupts within seconds. The tiniest perceived aggravation is enough for Uriah to start spitting and provoking a fistfight, though no one wants to fight the roaring giant.



GOSLAR

The spade crashes into the gravel, the boot pushes it deeper into the dry riverbed.

Goslar knows that work cleanses the soul and sharpens the senses. He looks over at the other Ascetics. However, they have already left the field. Instead, a shrouded man stands in the knee-high grass on the other side of the river bank. Goslar's gaze searches for something familiar in the dark-clad stranger. The man raises his hand in greeting and rolls down his sleeve. A tattooed number 600 covers his forearm. Goslar doesn't understand, but the hooded man pleads for help. He claims he's being hunted and is looking for shelter, imploring Goslar to take him in and hide him in his house.

Goslar the Ascetic is confused. What does he know of the wars raging on the borders of the Protectorate? He knows how to reap the treasures of the earth and grow a good harvest – however, he knows nothing about good or bad, right or wrong. He looks up at the stranger, unable to judge his virtue, but he can sense that the man needs help. Goslar throws his spade into a trench and carefully wraps his cloak around the man's shoulders. He leads the stranger to his farm, hides him in the stable and tends to his wounds. The stranger is anxious. He keeps talking about a global conflagration, about the downfall of all life, about his task to save mankind from the end of days. Goslar is clueless. Has the time of the final battle already come to pass? Has the Demiurge finally risen to call the Orgiastics to their last stand?

Weeks go by. He tends to the wounded man, shares his water and breaks bread with him. The stranger calls himself Beryll and insists on being a warrior from a bygone age.

He keeps asking Goslar what year it is, does not want to believe what the Ascetic tells him, claims to have woken a hundred years too early. Goslar can't make sense out of all this. Beryll's tales sound like absolute madness, like ghost stories to frighten children with. The two men couldn't be more different, yet still Goslar feels an obligation toward the strange man. He keeps asking who has wounded him. With his finger, Beryll draws two numbers into the dusty floor of the stable. A large 2 and a small 16. "Chroniclers?" Goslar asks. Beryll nods.

ROLE PLAY

Goslar is one of the countless Ascetics settling next to the Providers in the Rubble, supplying Justitian with crops. He's a simple man without great expectations and has never done anything heroic in his life. Until today.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Anabaptist, Rank 2: Ascetic
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 3 INT: 2 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 3D, Force 5D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 4D, Crafting 7D, Mobility 4D, Arts 4D, Conduct 5D, Negotiation 4D, Focus 5D, Legends 5D, Medicine 5D, Faith 6D, Reaction 4D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 5D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Network 1, Renown 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: +1D on CHA+Leadership and CHA+Conduct among Ascetics and Providers; Good Samaritan: Goslar regains (1) Ego whenever he helps others
POTENTIALS: Pneuma 1
INITIATIVE: 4D / 12 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Spade, Melee 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 5
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 4D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 4D; Mental, Faith 6D
MOVEMENT: 4m
ARMOR: Ascetic cowl, Armor 0
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 8, Trauma 5
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Crown of flowers (gift from Ivy); Deed for a small parcel of land; Discarded metallic components (the stranger tossed them aside in frustration, but Goslar gathered them up one night and placed them in a small cloth wrapping. Little does he know he has recovered Beryll's ruined flechette rifle - an INT+Engineering (5) roll and 5kg of Tech VI scrap would allow someone to fix it)

BERYLL

Goslar's guest from the future is a Sleeper from a 600 Cascade. Beryll's Dispenser has opened a century too early and spit the soldier with a fragmented memory right into the middle of the Stukov Desert. Beryll stumbled into the Protectorate aimlessly and was quickly discovered by Eliza, who began hunting the Sleeper. Beryll only barely survived the first confrontation with the Chronicler and has been critically wounded ever since. Eliza injected a Deadbolt transmitter deep underneath the Sleeper's skin, incapacitating the nanites in Beryll's body and suspending the Sleeper's self-healing powers. Desperately, Beryll tries to get the transmitter out of his body, but the damn thing is embedded too deeply. Only a Spitalian could remove the Deadbolt surgically.

Goslar tries his best to find a doctor in Justitian to help Beryll. He has heard of Elias Ramon who operates the public hospital in the Bottomlands.

Goslar must approach him and bring him into the loop, even if Beryll pleads with him not to disclose his secret.

ENCIRCLED

Eliza sticks to her guns. A 600 within the Protectorate can only mean the worst is yet to come. The newcomer is possibly an infiltrator who was trying to breach into the Cluster. Project Tannhäuser has not yet dispatched its most capable agents into the field. She is convinced that the Sleeper is hiding somewhere in the vicinity of Justitian. She cannot properly locate the transmitter yet, however, she can narrow down the area it is in. The fugitive has holed up somewhere amongst the Anabaptists of the Cross Quarter.



MARKESH

The oil is itchy on Markesh's scalp, trickling down his neck and leaving a cold shiver running down his spine. Another hour of killing time until his night shift begins. Patrol of Tech-Central, first along the Scavenger lanes, then routine check-ups on the Grand Scrap Market and past midnight a final round through the western quadrant of Outskirts. Markesh is starving for a fight. For weeks, it has been far too quiet in his district.

Markesh is a member of Laika's Pack. The young Orgiastic is a hot-blooded zealot, as good with his blade as in the bed of his mistress. There is not a lot he gives a damn about except for pleasing his Bitch and shattering the jaws of criminals. In his opinion, the Judges are too craven to take control of Tech-Central, and too afraid of the consequences of the potential Scrapper revolt. Markesh considers this ridiculous. Why would one wield the power of the Judgement Hammer if one's not willing to use it? In Cathedral City, such negligence wouldn't be tolerated, and cowards would be shipped off to the frontlines with the next army train.

At Laika's side, however, Markesh can prove what kind of stone he is carved from. Membership in the Pack grants him the right to openly carry his weapons in Justitian and use them as he sees fit. No silly regulations anymore.

For Markesh, the situation is clear. To tidy up Tech-Central, he must get at Buto. He's convinced the gluttonous sack of shit is Bosch's actual commander in chief and that most of the Cartel's business is synchronized with him. He'd love nothing more than to jam a spear into Buto's ass, and roast him over an open fire like a giant boar until he spits out all the the Cartel's connections. However, Laika keeps her short-tempered roughneck on a tight leash. First, she wants to collect evidence and find out who in Tech-Central spies on the Pack and informs the Cartel about their every movement. Once she has nailed down the traitor, all other heads will roll, too, the Bitch has promised.

ROLE PLAY

Markesh's face is a mocking display of youthful arrogance. The only authority he recognizes is that of his Bitch. The Pack is his home; here, he can release his violent outbursts in the name of the law. When he patrols his district he's gripped by feverish anticipation, looking for any justification to measure himself in a fight.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Zealot, Anabaptist, Rank 2: Orgiastic
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 3 CHA: 2 INT: 1 PSY: 3 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 9D, Brawl 8D, Force 8D, Melee 9D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 8D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 5D, Conduct 3D, Leadership 5D, Seduction 5D, Legends 4D, Domination 6D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 3D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 5D, Primal 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 2, Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 1
SPECIAL: Pack Dog: Markesh is well trained, and attuned to the rest of his brothers in arms. He gains +1D to all Action rolls in combat while fighting alongside other members of the Pack, and +2D when Laika is with them.
POTENTIALS: Pneuma 1, Paradise Lost 1, Ambidextrous 2
INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Longsword, Melee 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 9; Short Sword, Melee 10D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Smooth Running (3T);
Pistol, Projectiles 5D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 9, Mag. 12
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Willpower 6D
MOVEMENT: 9m
ARMOR: Reinforced metal plate armor, Armor 5, Massive (7)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Several doses of Elysian Oil (1x Hiddekel, level 2, 3x Perat, level 1); Open carry permit

PAWN SACRIFICE

Buto is neither as stupid or as naïve as Markesh would like to believe. The Bookie knows that the Anabaptist is after him. What Markesh in his constant need to prove himself doesn't realize is the scale of the network of henchmen and backers the Cartel can draw upon. Buto decided on Markesh's fate a long while ago by charging a handful of Carrion Birds to kidnap the Anabaptist at the first opportunity and hand him over to the Cartel. Buto wants to sacrifice Markesh as an opponent for Atama during the opening season of this year's Pit Fights. If a contender gets killed during the opening rounds, the stakes for the Red Bull will double immediately.

Buto and Hector have already agreed that Markesh's corpse will have to disappear in one of the pig fattening farms in Harm. Without a trace.



PALERS

THE GOLDEN AGE

In a not too distant past, the Black Lung was a haven for Palers. Under Exalt's rule they prospered and were granted access to the Grindworks, which freed them of their memetic conditioning and turned them into Halos – Guardians of the Free Spirits. It was a golden age of redemption, as they contributed to mankind's revolution and accelerated Cultrin's transformation of an idealized humanity liberated of its sins past.

But the old system collapsed, and with it, the Palers. The final hours of the City Wars segregated the survivors and forced the remaining Guardians into hiding. Some were able to radio distress calls to foreign bunkers, warning their brethren of the downfall, or wiring encoded transmissions featuring passcodes and location data about Cultrin's final plan. Too late. Eventually, they perished, leaving nothing but fading evidence of their once glorious empire. Exalt was swallowed by dust storms and later reconquered by the savage Clans, until all memory of the great realm slipped from the minds of the people living today.

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

During the decades that followed, the Protectorate was barren of Palers. With their former bases gone, and the Chroniclers rigidly scanning their borders and hunting down intruders, the vault crawlers had a hard time setting foot into Justitian. They had no allies here, no aerial knowledge, and no supply lines to stage a large-scale invasion. The majority of their active bunker systems were scattered across Hybrispania and the Balkhan, and even just marching across the Alps into Borca was a logistical nightmare in its own right. Not to speak of the difficulties of operating in foreign territory, with no intelligence on the lay of the land or the customs of the people.

Yet they knew this region was ripe with secrets – the remains of Project Tannhäuser were visible to the naked eye, at least for those who had learned to discern such information. To this day the Black Lung resembles a treasure chest, and the Palers know that if they just dig deep enough they will strike gold. At least, that's what their calculations and mental conditioning have predicted for so long.

In the wake of the Clan Wars, the tides turned. All eyes were on the turmoil of the southern border allowing Palers to exploit the chaos and slip back onto the Protectorate's turf. In just a short period of time they were able to map prospects hidden underneath the salt flats of the Stukov Desert, while others narrowed in on Liqua and its Memetic Walls or the barren hill formations surrounding the ancient city of Mobilis. Justitan itself, however, ap-

peared to the invaders to be the biggest prize of all – with the Cluster at its center, the throbbing heart of the Chroniclers, holding everything a Paler could desire.

When Vesna's Horde arrived they had clear intentions in mind: pierce the understructure of Justitian and seize the so-called Exit Level in an attempt to lay siege on the Chroniclers' sanctum. For weeks, the Demagogue reinforced her Horde with every Paler she could beckon out of their hiding place in the vicinity of the great city and gave them a mission. The very next day they breached the Underground and Exit C-3 fell into their hands. The Chroniclers were not prepared for this.

ENTRENCHED

Slipping in and out of their occupied war zone, Vesna's Horde gets around the city cloaked among the wretched of society with ease. In the dark they can pass for a Defiler and cross the streets of Brennen without raising attention. Their savviness for electronics and machinery allows them to connect with Scrappers from Tech-Central, and their knowledge of Justitian's Underground has brought them into contact with the Carrion Birds. Useful! They manage to supply themselves with food by raiding farms in the Rubble at night and tapping the water towers of the Anabaptists. So far, so good.

Despite the fact that the Horde is massively outgunned, the group is persistent and incredibly well organized. Every member is a specialist, capable of perfectly fulfilling their set role within Vesna's strategy. To be able to stay ahead of their enemy, the Palers override the data nodes of the Chroniclers and siphon information, or hack into the security systems of smaller Alcoves around Downtown to get a glimpse at the Cluster's operations. In this cat and mouse game, the Palers have successfully held their position and put the Chroniclers in a heightened state of alarm. Although both parties have reached a stalemate, the mere presence of an intruder ceaselessly damaging the Cluster's integrity has the entire Cult over the edge.

NEEDLE AND SPIRIT

Marauders, the Mother of Ravens, Cultrin's legacy, Project Tannhäuser, artifacts, and memetic markers – the density of information is electrifying, and the Palers are overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all. Blinded by their recent discoveries, new players have moved in to take advantage of Vesna's Horde and their relentless ambition.

Via his minion, Membrane, Corium has made contact with the young Demagogue, feeding her information on weak spots in the Cluster's virtual defense systems, thereby amplifying the Horde's vicious hacking attacks and forcing the Fragments into action. The mayhem caused by the assault is making the Chroniclers go haywire. As they pool their resources to avert the next barrage, they fail to pay attention to the Needle freely traversing their Underground domain, drawing ever closer in his hunt for the artifact that brought him to Justitian in the first place.

But the fallen Chronicler is not the only one extending his influence over Vesna. A Free Spirit is eying the Horde as the perfect tool to advance her own agenda. Trice wants revenge for the City Wars, and she wants to grind her archenemies, Gusev and Aspera, into the dust. She considers the two Marauders solely responsible for Exalt's fall as they interfered with Cultrin's conquest and sided with the opposition. In order to reclaim the ruins of Exalt and reactivate the Grindworks she needs lackeys to do her bidding. Corium's intrusion sullies her plans, and she is wary of the Needle's true motivations. If conflict ensues, Vesna will be torn apart by the collision.



MISHITCHI

Mishitchi rushes through the occupied zone as if it were a battle ground. His eyes dart left and right along the hallway. No guards. Move on. Up and through the shaft that the Chroniclers call Exit. The overwhelming stench of the surface world chokes him, his breath catching in his throat. One glance through a crack in a boarded-up window quickly reveals the street below. The Paler licks the tip of his finger, holding it up to detect the direction of the wind. Good. Creaking stairs lead up to the roof of the empty building – from here, he can observe the pedestrians crowding the streets three floors down. People in this city are far too concerned with their own affairs to notice him. He turns his eyes to the sky, follows the clouds, and scans the area with his motion detector. He nods his head confidently. Still good. No drones.

He dashes to the end of the roof, launching himself across a wide gap onto the opposite building. From there he rappels to the ground using his carbon wire. The earth is soft beneath his feet. The Paler hurries down the alley, emerging onto the sidewalk of a busy crossing. Judges gallop along the street, but he slips past their watchful eyes. He counts to three and sprints to the other side – finally there. By the rear exit of a tiny Alcove tucked away in the Outskirts, a transponder has been hastily attached behind a wall of wooden boards. The detector, merely the size of a small plate, quietly begins to beep. Mishitchi scans the incoming columns of data and takes care to override the signature. Corium, the Needle, was correct in his assessment: the Chronicler's security cameras all converge to a single main line. Whoever finds and cuts that line can disable the omniscient eye of the Cluster! Mishitchi is ecstatic and can hardly wait to bring this news to the Needle and his scheming Demagogue, Vesna. Ever since his group took off and left the Heistos bunker behind, the Palers have only pursued one goal: the invasion of the Central Cluster and the recovery of the coordinates for all 44 hidden bunkers and their sleeping gods.

Finally, the operation is gaining momentum. For too long, Vesna's Horde has been stagnant in war zone C-3, unable to act. Now that the Needle Corium has revealed himself to them, the fortunes have turned in their favour.

ROLE PLAY

Mishitchi is his Demagogue's fierce attack dog. When the Horde emerged from the Heistos bunker, he swore to protect her with his life and lead the Horde to success in its mission. The Redeemer lives for the day that he can finally open the Dispensers and wake the gods from their slumber.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Righteous, Paler, Rank 3: Redeemer
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 2 CHA: 1 INT: 3 PSY: 3 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 7D, Force 7D, Melee 5D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 6D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 6D, Expression 5D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 7D, Focus 6D, Medicine 4D, Science 5D, Cunning 6D, Deception 8D, Domination 5D, Reaction 6D, Faith 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Survival 6D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 4, Renown 3, Resources 4, Secrets 3
SPECIAL: Protects Vesna with his life
POTENTIALS: Nightmare 2, Midnight Sun 3, Fluoride 2, Tripwire 2
INITIATIVE: 6D Ego (Focus)
ATTACK: Submachine Gun with bayonet, Projectiles 7D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7, Mag. 35, Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3);
Bayonet, Melee 5D, Distance 1m, Damage 4; Percussion Glove, Brawl 9D, Distance 1m, Damage 9, Dazed, Charges (10)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Intercepting punches), Brawl 9D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Light ceramic formwork, Armor 3
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 14, Trauma 7
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 8 Mute grenades; Percussion glove; Electronics tester and tools; Sun disk (Phaethon, level 1); Sun disk (Orbital, level 1); Gold stripes (400 Drafts); Sunburst; Voltage visor (visualizes current signals and highlights wires)

WITNESS

Mishitchi is certainly not blind – the Recombination Group has left its marks throughout the city. Their pattern is easy to detect since the Chroniclers are deploying exactly the same tactics. The Paler knows of the impressive defense systems that the Cluster has put in place, the unholy alliance the Chroniclers have forged, the terrible powers they've put to their own use. Eventually their demise will come as well, just as the day of reckoning is swiftly approaching for their false idols; the Marauders.

INVENTORY

MUTE GRENADES

The Redeemer is equipped with mute grenades, stolen loot from the Heistos bunker, and these weapons are an excellent choice to neutralize the Chroniclers' arsenals. Ignition is quickly followed by a hissing sound, like air being sucked through a pipe. A moment later, anyone nearby will feel their ears pop and find it hard to swallow. Suddenly, a wave of expanding air sucks all oxygen from the environment, causes severe apnea, and chokes all sound to complete silence. Communication within the vacuum is impossible, and suffocation becomes an immediate danger. Sonic weapons are rendered useless. The grenade has an impact radius of (15) meters, and the sound-absorbing expansion wave lasts for (8) Combat Rounds.

PERCUSSION GLOVE

Mishitchi's percussion glove releases a propellant charge of kinetic energy once the pressure sensors, located just above the knuckles, detect any resistance. One hit against an opponent's chest will push the air out of their lungs and blast them away from the close-combat area.

Anybody successfully hit with the glove loses (6+BOD/3) Ego Points and is catapulted backwards by a distance of (T) meters. During the subsequent Round, the victim must succeed a roll of INT+Focus / INS+Primal (4), or they will be stunned and immobilized by the impact. The glove carries (10) charges before the E-Cube has to be replaced.



KREDA

The long march through the Balkhan, across the Alps, and into Borca was a hellish ordeal, even if Vesna's Horde had prepared for the worst. Kreda ventured out alone, night after night, overloading Hellvetic security systems and quietly leading the Horde past the heavily guarded Customs Stations. After three-hundred torturous days without any rest or comfort, Kreda finally laid eyes on the legendary city of Justitian rising from the desolate tundra like the limbs of a fallen titan.

Here, the Chroniclers reigned supreme. Even as they looked down from the heights of their Cluster, lording their power over the population, they scurried beneath their subjects' feet in the Underground they believed to be safe. Through a network of shafts and tunnels, elaborate and insulated from the outside, they thought they could transpose themselves throughout the city, unnoticed. Much like ant hills, these networks grew over the course of decades, as new connecting lines were excavated and linked to secret Exits all across the city. These reinforced underground highways all converged to a single point, the Central Cluster, where the heart of the Chroniclers' lay: the Static Stream

No one expected the entrance of the Palers. With the assault on Exit C-3, an entire sector swiftly fell under the control of Vesna's Horde. The Cluster froze in panic – no binary calculation had prepared them for such a systematic collapse. Ultimate decision: seal off Exit C-3, negotiate a temporary ceasefire.

Now, Kreda's job is to listen, to detect any interference in the incoming transmissions. He has the entire city bugged and records even the smallest blip coming from the Chroniclers. He even found a way to hide his transmitters inside Deselect's Alcove, logging the grotesque Streamer's conversations. Preliminary results from this massive surveillance effort: the city is bursting with valuable artifacts that need to be recovered. The Chroniclers have no right to this treasure hoard, it was never meant for their greedy fingers. The Palers alone are the rightful heirs, and the Fragments will pay dearly once the Horde finally gains access to the Cluster.

ROLE PLAY

The crippled figure of Kreda hides a truly skilled man. The Cyclops is an unparalleled saboteur - to him, even the Cluster's security systems are nothing more than a welcome challenge, rather than some insurmountable barrier. Tick tock. Tick tock.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Visionary, Paler, Rank 3: Cyclops
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 1 INT: 4 PSY: 4 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 4D, Force 6D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D,
Toughness 5D, Crafting 5D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D,
Conduct 4D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 8D, Legends 8D, Medicine 6D,
Science 7D, Cunning 7D, Deception 6D, Faith 7D, Reaction 8D,
Orienteering 8D, Perception 8D, Primal 8D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 2
SPECIAL: Prefers technical gadgets instead of social exchange, has detected Beryll's signature in the Cross Quarter
POTENTIALS: Lament 2, Negator 3, Pandaemonium 3, Vault Fighter 2
INITIATIVE: 8D / 16 Ego (Primal)
ATTACK: Silenced Submachine Gun, Projectiles 8D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7, Mag. 35, Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3);
Cleaver, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 6
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 7D
MOVEMENT: 6m
ARMOR: Dark RG bunker overall, Armor 2
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Grim sun; Bugging technology; Sesamite; Throwing pulsor; Electronic tester and tools; Nanite tuner; Old Sun Eye; Signal gun (3 shots)

SUPPLY CHAIN

Once they became part of the Underground, the Palers began to interact with the Carrion Birds. In this unfamiliar darkness, the Apocalyptics proved to be useful allies. Kreda provided for the Horde by trading his technological know-how for food, and his role as intermediary earned him access to the Flock's nest. Ever since his very first visit, he has been stunned by the artful symbols adorning their walls – those who live here clearly have a deep, lasting connection to the Bygones. His gaze travels along the ancient glyphs, rendering him speechless. Every symbol is familiar, each sign triggers hidden memories of a distant past. The Cyclops cannot help but wonder: who, really, is the Mother of Ravens?

INVENTORY

NANITE TUNER

Kreda carries a small tube filled with black ferrofluid, suspended in a clear liquid. The ichor contains Assembler nanites it reacts to the coded frequencies sent out by damaged nanites within a radius of one hundred meters. Once the Tuner detects such a defective source, the ferrofluid begins to convulse and contract, waves pulsing on its surface. Several times during Kreda's nightly excursions into the Jehammedan Quarter, the Nanite Tuner has responded to the environment. The Cyclops has a hunch. The diabolical Marauder Aries must have unleashed one of his executioners in Justitian. Kreda wastes no time and informs Corium.

But one week ago, while Kreda was spying on Exit A-3 in the Cross Quarter, the Tuner triggered again. He stared in shock and awe at the vibrating ferrofluid. Sleepers, here?


3

VESNA

The Heistos Bunker: revived two-hundred and forty years ago by Lagadon. Home to over four-hundred Palers; its caverns stacked to the brim with weapons and ammunition. Two Demagogues, locked in a battle for supremacy. The pools of blood in its corridors dispelled any notions of community, and the tunnels were a war zone. Everybody was ready to die for their Demagogue, and many did.

Vesna's parents were murdered before her seventh cycle. At that time she was still an innocent child, although gifted with a terrifying voice, who was forced learn that in a society lacking unity, fear was king. Even at this early age Vesna was able to tear her way into the minds of other Palers, forcing them to follow her commands. In another bunker this would be celebrated, but to the Demagogue in control of the fledgling's sector, Wojna, she was a budding and dangerous rival that needed to be eliminated before she questioned his authority. Vesna had to follow his rules blindly if she wanted to survive.

Three years passed, and the conflict inside the bunker spiralled toward its blood-drenched crescendo. Threats knocked through the tunnel walls were followed by the Demagogues' whispered ultimatums. Shots bellowed through the abandoned hallways. Vesna stared at the sealed portal of the sanctuary in perfect silence, at the very point where the Recombination Group's logo blazed in all its splendor. The paint was still pristine, and dated back to a time when order must have been the supreme principle. How could the Palers have betrayed this legacy? The Heistos Bunker was bleeding to death, and in such a world the divine ones would never rise from their slumber!

The following night, Vesna made the most important decision of her life. With a handful of chosen subordinates, she would turn her back on the bunker and set out to claim a new home, but not without plundering the armories first. Under the light of an unforgiving sun, her group hurried across the Carpathians, traversed the snow-covered Alps, exploring caves and following ancient trails with only one goal in mind: find a new bunker. Once they heard the tales of Justitian, the Horde knew its destiny. The city was at the brink of chaos, and the Chroniclers, the Marauders' subservient heralds, had clawed their way to the top of the food chain. They were prepared for everything… except for Palers.

ROLE PLAY

Vesna's childlike appearance is a lie. Despite her age, the Demagogue is gifted with a voice that slices through even the blackest, most hard-boiled soul. Opponents exposed to her demonic whispers are banished into an unimaginable hellscape.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Balkhan, The Chosen, Paler, Rank 5: Demagogue of Fear
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 4 CHA: 4 INT: 4 PSY: 6 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 4D, Force 6D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 5D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 7D, Expression 5D, Leadership 10D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 8D, Legends 8D, Cunning 9D, Deception 9D, Domination 11D, Faith 9D, Reaction 9D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D
BACKGROUNDS: Allies 4, Authority 6, Network 3, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Total control over sector C-3, demands unconditional obedience
POTENTIALS: Unto death 3, Alias 2, Suggestor 3, Memeticon 3, Masterplan 3, Demagogy of Fear
INITIATIVE: 9D / 20 Ego points (Primal)
ATTACK: Silenced Submachine gun with target projector, Projectiles 10D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 7, Mag. 35, Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3);
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 9D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Worn ceramic fiber weave (Balkhan variant), Armor 4, Bulletproof (7), Sealed (1S), Camouflaged (4S)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/18, Flesh Wounds 12, Trauma 8
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Shock Grenade; Sun Disc (Arbiter, level 2); Grim Sun; Sun Eye (negates any darkness penalty)

CONQUEST

The Palers that had been hiding out in Justitian prior to Vesna's arrival were located without much effort. The Demagogue single-handedly subdued them, adding them to her Horde and assigning them useful tasks. Since then her control over sector C-3 has gone unchallenged. For a while, a quiet peace settled over the occupied war zone. Chroniclers and Palers alike gathered their strength, waited for the other to make a mistake, preparing to lash out like serpents ready for the final strike.

But when the fortunes turned, it was in favor of the Horde. The Needle Corium revealed himself, and thus became the Palers' most powerful ally. Could there be anything better than having a Needle by your side who wants nothing more than to see the entire Cluster burned to ash?

Vesna, however, is too intoxicated by the prospects of the alliance. She lacks the long-term vision and experience to see through Corium's game. The Needle has not a single ounce of empathy for the Palers – to him they are little more than pawns. Once they've done their job, he'll dispose of them. He can't allow anything to stop him from igniting the Carbon and reaching Baikonur.

POTENTIALS

DEMAGOGY OF FEAR
PREREQUISITE: Unique, Demagogue, PSY+Domination 10, INS+Primal 10
The horrors conjured by Vesna to punish her enemies surpass the limits of imagination. A victim feels cockroaches crawling underneath their skin and worms burrowing through their entrails, they are trapped in empty rooms without doors, they fall through bottomless chasms toward an endless nothing. Vesna's voice is a Mental Attack (Dazed 1; Terrifying 3) and affects all opponents within earshot. She rolls a combination of CHA+Expression (2) and PSY+Domination (3).

Every Trigger raises the Terrifying quality of her voice by (1). Victims fall into a state of sheer panic and their most primordial flight instincts take over.



FROM HELL

SLEEPERS

The Chroniclers claim that at least one hundred Project Tannhäuser agents are still active within the Protectorate's territory. Can this really be true, or are the numbers inflated so that the Cluster can wave the term "Sleeper" around to rid itself of competition or other obstacles? The Shadow War waged by the Shutters, along with the City Wars, pushed the Sleeper population to the brink of extinction. The few who managed to escape the Chroniclers' purge were either slain by Acherons or fell into the hands of Marauders before being drained of their nanite blood. There haven't been any verified reports of 100s, 200s, or 300s operating in the Protectorate in decades. What about the later Cascades, then? Many of the latecomers among the 500s are suffering from such massive memory loss that they don't even remember anything of their conditioning. The 2^16 virus eviscerated their synapses, reducing them to rambling madmen who do nothing but wander the wilderness for years before a roving Gendo pack tears them to shreds. Is the Sleeper threat finally over?

No. They just got better at hiding and learned from the mistakes of the early Cascades, say the Chroniclers as they keep watching.

FREE SPIRIT

Little is known about the enigmatic splinter cell called Free Spirit. Not even the Chroniclers who've studied Getrell's machinations in great detail know the true goals of this covert cabal and their Halo guardians. Their primary objective is clouded in mystery and paradox, and their shifting alliances are often in direct opposition to Project Tannhäuser. Their influence on the rise of Exalt was tremendous, yet their volatile actions ultimately led to the city state's demise. At least two Free Spirits were able to escape the conflagration that gripped the Black Lung a century ago and cover their tracks. The Chroniclers classify these agents by their code names, "Trice" and "Enceph", and suspect their hideout lies somewhere within Liqua's domain. The Cluster is certain that faithful Paler communities revere them as "Sleeper Prophets" and consider them to be saviors of humanity – a clear warning sign of ideological extremism.

PRIMER

The Spitalians have totally eradicated the Primer from Borca's soil. Or so they think. The Protectorate's position

on the western side of the Reaper's Blow keeps the Migrant Biokinetics out, and the Alps act as a natural barrier against roaming Psychokinetics from the south. But, unlike towering mountains or volcanic hellscapes, cultural borders aren't insurmountable walls. They can be pierced, and the neighboring regions of Franka teem with Pheromancer spawn, ready to spread their seed within the fertile vectors of the vast Borcan enclave. Something attracts them like a flare gun fired in the dead of night. The doctors stationed in Bassham recently started to notice a sudden spike in drone activity, which was followed by emerging Expatriates and Fosters attempting to break into the Protectorate and sow new spore fields. What is going on?

For decades now, the war against the Primer has been waged amidst the cesspools from which it rises – Parasite, Souffrance, Pandora, and countless other theatres – but the current developments are worrisome, and demand immediate answers closer to home. Only a Pheromancer King could be responsible for such a rapid stir in Psychonautic activity, but the Noumenon Vocalizers focused on the border remain silent. Could they be pointing in the wrong direction?

MARAUDERS

Legends of Gusev, the Ghost of Noret, and haunting tales of sightings of one-legged Aspera are as old as the Black Lung itself. Throughout the centuries the Marauders stayed invisible to the eyes of the common man, only revealing themselves in times of need or when a display of their seemingly limitless power was required. Their true motives are shrouded at best, yet in the fleeting moments in which they interacted with Cults like the Chroniclers and Spitalians, their actions appeared to be benevolent.

But why? Why does a blood god such as Argyre enslave an entire people, reinforcing his domain against any intruders, while other Marauders emerge as passive observers, subtly steering humanity towards self-determination? Why does Chernobog run rampant followed by an army of crazed savages, laying siege to everything in his path, while Gusev remains dormant in his impregnable exile? Does every Marauder act according to their own will, without overlap in common impetus, or is there simply not enough intelligence available to discern the master plan of these eternal creatures? Such queries fill the databases of the Static Stream and pile up as sealed folders collecting dust in the offices of the Consultants. Answers are scarce, and absolutely no-one can predict their very next move. What is their purpose, their driving goal? Why are they so obsessed with toppling the remnants of a system they themselves initiated long before the Eshaton? Is guilt driving them? Revenge? Spite?

Or perhaps they are just puppets on a string, dancing to the tune of obscure forces unknown to anyone. Do the Corresponders that woke the giant Chernobog from his torpid slumber hold the answer to this mystery? Who created these devices? What is their emitted frequency doing to the psyche of the rotting gods, and why do these objects leave a distinct signature in the Static Stream, visible to every Chronicler familiar with the subject matter. Are the Corresponders beacons, trigger mechanisms, or instruments of mind control, urging the Marauders to act according to the whims of some power hidden in plain sight? The leads are plentiful, but evidence absent. Assumptions and theories clutter the brains of those trying to make heads or tails of the information at hand, while the Marauders continue to phase in and out of mankind's perception like phantasms. And who can really tell if the fabled Mother of Ravens is just another one of these mystical figures or not, considering the way her presence resonates through the collective memory of even the lowliest Provider while the legacy of her immortality extends across the entire continent.

Some Fragments classify the traumatic effects left in the wakes of the Marauders as memetic residue, echoing through the greater consciousness of humanity just like the inaudible acoustic waves of the Earth Chakras, but resembling opposite impulses to the Primer's chaos. They suspect the Marauders to be avatars of the Stream's awakened mind, effigies of a personified artificial intelligence attempting to communicate with the outside world.



BERYLL

A blast of cold light floods the cannulas, followed by an electric shock that sweeps through every fiber of Beryll's body. He trembles as he watches the hatch of his Dispenser close like the mandibles of an oversized locust. A last beam of sunlight shines through a crack, but the very next instant darkness reigns. A century passes by without Beryll's heart beating once. Then a second. Silence.

Suddenly the coffin in which he is buried groans and spits his body out into a foreign world. He awakens to a vision of dust drifts wafting towards the sky, broken ships protruding from the dunes, and an endless expanse of salt flats ahead of him. Beryll rubs his eyes in disbelief, trying to understand his task, but the imprinted pattern in his brain remains silent. His memories are fractured. Something has been erased from his mind but he can't remember what. Nothing makes sense, just like the frozen comrades lying in the Dispensers next to him. Dead. The entire cohort. Crystallized nanite milk oozes from their coffins and has transformed Beryll's squad into fossilized mummies.

He is on his own. His implanted vocal memes allow him to make contact with strangers. They point him south, towards civilization, but as soon as Beryll enters the Protectorate an insane woman begins chasing after him. She fires something under his skin that paralyzes him. With his last strength, he frees himself from the agony and escapes his rabid pursuer. Heavily wounded, he roams across fallow fields and dried up riverbeds. Where in hell has he ended up? Beryll doesn't understand any of this. Project Tannhäuser should have been well established by now! Where are the reeducation camps? Where are his fellow Sleepers? Where are the signs of the Recombination Group?

His thoughts become clearer, slowly turning into suspicion and fear. The plan had failed. Something had ruined Project Tannhäuser and therefore humanity's future. But what? Beryll must find out. Making use of his memetic protocols he conditions a farmer to bring him to safety until he can recover and look for clues. However, the wound created by the crazy woman doesn't heal. Beryll's nanite blood is not responding and he's at the mercy of his newfound guardian. It won't be long before the effect of the memetic payload wanes and the farmer begins asking tough questions.

ROLE PLAY

Everything in this new world is out to kill Beryll. Who are the Chroniclers? Are they responsible for Project Tannhäuser's failure? What is this morbid city of trash, rust, and steel, and where are all the Soldiers and Sociocybernetics?

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Bygones, The Destroyer, Sleeper, Cascade 600
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 5 AGI: 5 CHA: 2 INT: 3 PSY: 4 INS: 3
SKILLS: Athletics 10D, Brawl 8D, Force 7D, Melee 7D, Stamina 10D, Toughness 9D, Crafting 7D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 10D, Stealth 9D, Conduct 5D, Expression 5D, Leadership 8D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 6D, Focus 8D, Legends 4D, Cunning 7D, Deception 5D, Domination 7D, Reaction 10D, Willpower 7D, Empathy 4D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 1, Resources 1, Secrets 4
SPECIAL: Deadlocked: Beryll's nanites are disrupted by Eliza's Deadbolt. He cannot naturally regenerate Flesh Wounds or Trauma, and is not immune to Sepsis
POTENTIALS: Regeneration (Disrupted)
PROTOCOLS: Camaraderie, Fear, Freeze, Blackout, Panic, Torment
INITIATIVE: 10D / 16 Ego points (Focus)
ATTACK: Combat Knife, Melee 8D, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 10D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Willpower 7D
MOVEMENT: 10m
ARMOR: Damaged Composite Armor, Armor 4, Bulletproof (7)
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 7/18, Trauma 7/9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Eliza's Deadbolt emitter injected underneath skin; Combat injector (empty); Throat mic with receptor implant (the receptor is implanted in the skull, the mic was damaged in his struggle with Eliza)

THE FARMER'S GIRL

Beryll must be careful. Goslar is simple enough to be manipulated for an extended period of time, and if he keeps his promise, he'll be able to find a surgeon who can remove the wicked transponder the Chronicler woman injected into Beryll's body.

But what does this farmer girl want? Is she snooping around? She's way too close for comfort and Goslar seems to be eating from the palm of her hand. Beryll's hideout is about to be compromised. He must get rid of the girl before she can ask any more curious questions. Beryll besieges Goslar, trying to drive a wedge between him and his sweetheart. He urges him to break contact, telling him that the world will come to an end if he doesn't follow along. Goslar is confused, but afraid enough to buy into Beryll's doomsday warnings. For now.

DEFRAGMENTED

Amnesia ravages Beryll's consciousness, entire areas of his brain seem to be blotted out, dark zones that feature no entry point, but with every day that passes he captures glimpses of his past, connecting the dots. His deployment zone featured three separate Dispensers.

He studies the maps that Goslar acquired for him. Beryll's squad didn't survive the cryostasis, but what about the other two bunkers? If his calculations are correct, they are located in the Stukov Desert, somewhere close to the Ice Barrier. If this damn wound would just heal in time, he could travel there by himself and locate the other agents of Project Tannhäuser. Together, they'd be able to press the reset button and begin the plan anew.



ITIS & METIS

The earth is so infertile. It makes Itis sad. He kneels on the ground, presses his fingers into the dust, closes his eyes - and feels nothing. The voices of his brothers and sisters are but a distant murmur, an incomprehensible soundwave travelling through the flimsy ether. Only Markurant in all his glory speaks to him, like a pulsating star radiating energy and determination, heat and unity. Itis' heart beams with love when he looks at his King. Fragile, like a newborn woodlouse, he nestles in the Foster's embrace. In this fledgeling form he is still too weak, but in due time he will grow back to ultimate glory to rebuild the Ziggurath, as foretold by the ceaseless buzzing of the hive.

To do so Itis must leave this barren land behind and bring his King to safety. But the journey ahead is dangerous. For now, they are trapped in this terrible place, surrounded by humankind on all sides. Everywhere Itis looks, enemies lie in wait. Therefore he must retreat deeper into the entrails of the city, hide, rest until the right moment comes to initiate their escape. He can feel Markurant's throbbing hunger, he can sense that the King needs new spores so that he can shed his feeble shell and rise to his greatest heights. But there are no spores. No plagues either. Something has destroyed them. Was it the hairless humans clad in black foam that smell of bitter acids and lifeless chalk? Possibly.

But they won't be able to stop Itis in his pursuit. He must protect the King, and if he can't bring him spores he will grow new ones for him. It took weeks for the ants to arrive. They crawled from far away in a long and winding trail until they finally reached the dirty channel that served as a refuge for Itis and Markurant. The insects brought fresh spores with them, burying their cargo in the wet feces of the canal and spreading it across muddy furrows. Now the seedlings are blossoming. Carpets of white mold blanket the human manure. Soon they will connect and begin their metamorphosis, sucking nutrients from the soil, transmitting signals to the plagues, attracting bees and moths to bring their pollen. Within a season, Itis will create a Mother spore field that will replenish his King and usher in his transformation.

ROLE PLAY

Itis has been trapped in his Focus phase for quite some time, which grants him flashes of human cunning and limited forms of vocal expression. In the dark of the night, he can pass for another Defiler roaming the Outskirts. So long as one doesn't get too close. Itis protects his King with his own life, willing to fight to death to ensure Markurant's survival.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Franka, The Zealot, Pheromancers, Foster
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 2 AGI: 3 CHA: 6 INT: 2 PSY: 4 INS: 5
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 8D, Force 6D, Melee 3D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 8D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 4D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 8D, Expression 10D, Leadership 12D, Negotiation 10D, Seduction 11D, Artifact Lore 3D, Focus 4D, Legends 4D, Cunning 5D, Deception 5D, Domination 10D, Faith 8D, Reaction 8D, Empathy 11D, Perception 9D, Primal 9D, Survival 8D
PHENOMENA: Lord of the Third Plague (Swarm Strength 0), Unity, Acid, Fear
INITIATIVE: 8D / 8 Ego points (Focus)
ATTACK: Poisoned Claws, Brawl 10D, Damage 4, Smooth Running (2T), Poisoned (4C, -2D to all Actions, wears off after (3) Rounds)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Evade), Mobility 7D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 7D; Mental, Faith 8D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Tattered rags, Armor 1
CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/16, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 6
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Metis; Blossoming spore field hidden in the sewers (currently the spore field is intensity (0), however every two weeks this value increases by (1) as more and more insects arrive, carrying their Sepsis with them); Barely edible food supplies stolen from the Defilers at night, only just enough for both Itis and his King to survive on

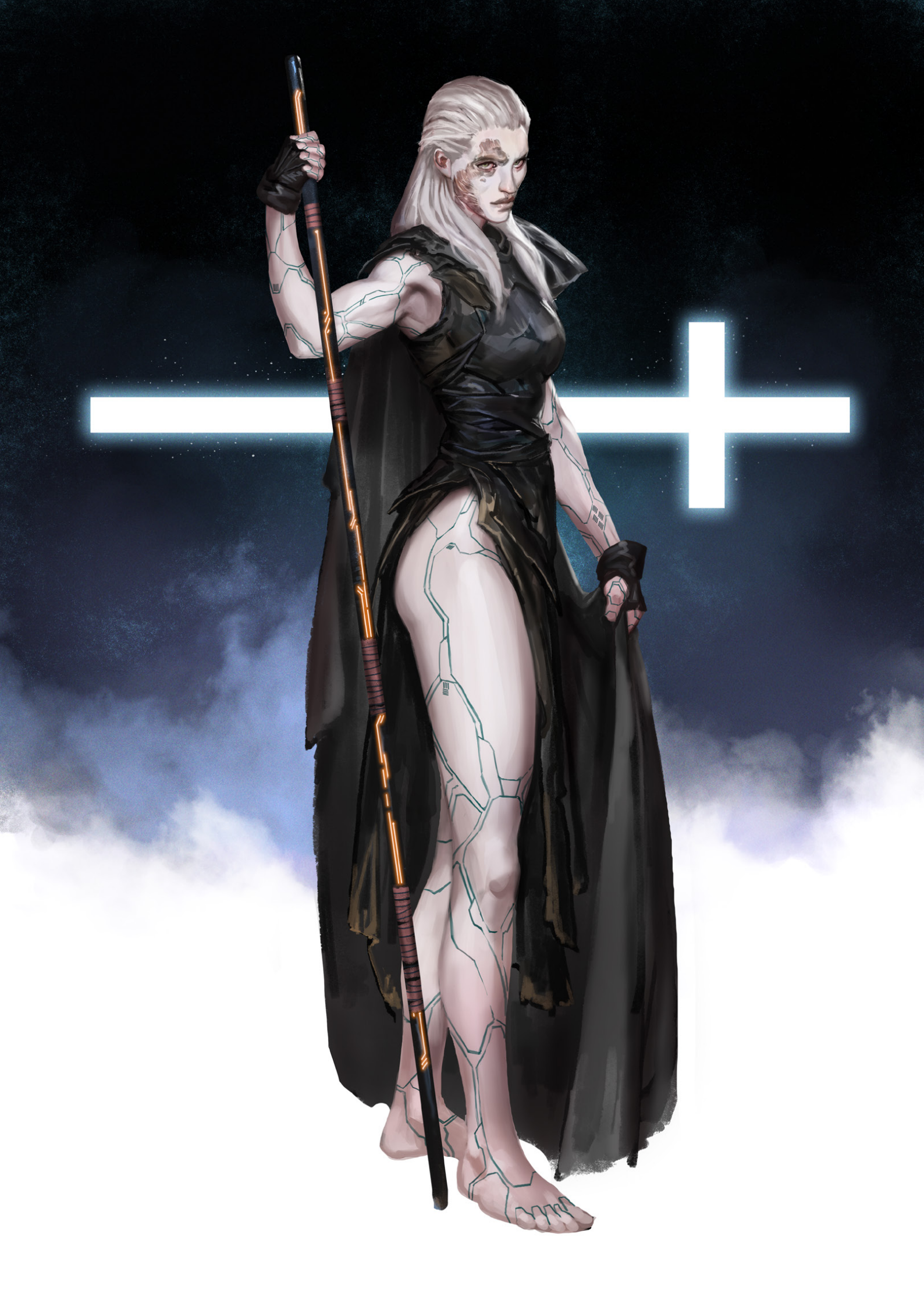
KING MARKURANT

In his current state Markurant is a newt, barely capable of surviving on his own. He is entirely dependent on his Foster, Itis, to both supply him with spores and carry him back to his destination in Franka. However, some of the King's most powerful pheromones are already active. Humans can't witness him for what he is, instead they fall prey to an illusion due to his overwhelming odor. They see him as a messianic child, emanating otherworldly beauty and innocence. This effect is holistic, and conjures deeply rooted parental feelings in every adult in Markurant's vicinity. Only children who haven't yet reached puberty are able to see through the haze and perceive the grotesquely malformed creature in its true appearance.

The second active pheromone lets anyone with all but the faintest trace of spore infestation recognize Markurant as their King immediately. This can only be countered by successfully rolling a Mental Defense against Difficulty (7). A successful roll grants (3) Rounds of clarity, Triggers count twice. Those who fail drop to their knees weeping in glee, awaiting their King's command to be transmitted to them.

THE SPITALIAN

With his overwhelming powers, Markurant has taken control of a Spitalian woman that accidentally stepped into an ancient web of pheromone trails spun by him in his previous life. He has selected her as his midwife and lured her across hundreds of kilometers towards his hideout in Justitian. She has yet to find him in the maze of the Defiler streets, but she is close. The King can sense the wave of motherly love approaching through the network of alleyways. If Itis cannot grow the Mother spore field fast enough, Markurant will abandon his Foster and force the Spitalian to take his place.



TRICE

The Judge rummages through his vest pocket and pulls out a bundle of Drafts. He hands a note to the beggar woman whom he has seen several times over at this particular crossroads. For a moment he gets lost in her pale features, riddled by a feeling of familiarity as if he had grown up with her.

Her hand touches his palm. The very next instant flashes of a thousand lives wash over him: he makes love to her in a bed of wet hay, watches as their children prosper, crowns her as his queen, and crosses endless oceans with her on a ship which he only remembers from his dreams. He drowns in the haphazard impressions of this split second.

Then she lets go of him. The Judge shakes himself back to senses, pulls up the brim of his coat, and trudges on. Trice has what she was looking for. With a mere touch, she stole his memories. Nothing valuable this time, but she won't give up until she has collected the right assortment of information. Her mission was stalling for too long. Even though it has been one hundred years since the City Wars swept across the land and destroyed every bit of progress she and her sister Enceph made, she never lost faith in her cause. Once, she was close to getting her revenge. She had already taken Aspera's leg during a different altercation a hundred years prior. It was only a matter of time before she could steer Cultrin's forces towards Cathedral City and Noret, putting an end to the reign of both Aspera and Gusev.

But the Spitalians turned the tide. In the final hour they betrayed Exalt and poisoned Cultrin's army. Trice must know how they did it. If she can sort all of the stolen memories into the correct order she will be able to draw her final conclusions: Gusev must have supplied the Preservists in Arnsberg with depots of chemical compounds developed in Noret. Before the Eshaton, the RG had one of its major pharmaceutical headquarters in the city. Gusev sealed the area off with an entire battalion of battle ready AMSUMO units. But nothing lasts forever. His reprogrammed guardians have been drifting into Sleep Mode since the Chroniclers took Mobilis and cut the Marauder off from the supply lines. Meanwhile, Trice knows that her red-haired nemesis hides behind Anabaptist walls. Walls that must be broken, so that she can be lured out in the open.

ROLE PLAY

Trice is an enigma, phasing in and out of Justitian at her own liking. She has hideouts across the entire Protectorate, and can disappear in a crowd at will.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Bygones, The Conqueror, Sleeper Prophet, Cascade 300
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 4 AGI: 6 CHA: 6 INT: 5 PSY: 5 INS: 4
SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 6D, Force 7D, Melee 9D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 8D, Dexterity 8D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 11D, Conduct 10D, Expression 10D, Leadership 11D, Negotiation 10D, Seduction 11D, Artifact Lore 9D, Engineering 9D, Focus 10D, Legends 11D, Cunning 9D, Deception 11D, Domination 8D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 10D, Empathy 10D, Perception 8D, Survival 7D
BACKGROUNDS: Network 5, Renown 1, Resources 3, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: Memory Drain: Trice can scan the memories of those she touches by winning a Conflict of PSY+Willpower vs the target's Mental Defense
POTENTIALS: Regeneration: (+3) Flesh Wounds/hour, (+1) Trauma per day
PROTOCOLS: Camaraderie, Fortify, Cloak
INITIATIVE: 9D / 20 Ego points (Focus)
ATTACK: Charged Quarterstaff, Melee 10D, Damage 6, Internal Cell (150Qt, charges through Trice's movements), Blunt, Dazed (6)
DEFENSE: Passive 2; Melee active (Deflect), Melee 10D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 10D; Mental, Willpower 10D
MOVEMENT: 7m
ARMOR: Bio-Cloak, Armor 4, Camo (5C), Insulated, Special
CONDITION: Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 9
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Beggar's rags; Deception Matrix (allows access to all biometrically encoded equipment)

PHASE 2: RETALIATION

The cards have been reshuffled. Helios awoke and showed the way. His nuclear strike on London, albeit averted by Argyre in the last moment, was the right sign. The destruction of Aquitaine shook the self-obsessed Chroniclers to the core and woke them from their slumber, leaving only one conclusion: the Free Spirits are alive and will restart the Grindworks of Exalt, reversing the Tannhäuser conditioning of future Sleeper Cascades, redeem the Palers, and obliterate the Marauders, thereby ripping the Central Cluster from its dear allies. Once and for all. Mankind will see a new dawn, one that their leader Cultrin promised. One that he fought and died for. But his legacy lives on.

UNFORESEEN

Trice has Vesna under her thumb. She supports the Demagogue in her attempts to break into the Cluster, but now a new player has arrived on the scene. Trice is unsure of the Needle's motives. Is his appearance in response to Chernobog's rise? Have the fallen Chroniclers initiated a new strategy to compete against the Cluster? Is he looking to claim Free Spirit artifacts the Fragments stole from Exalt's remains?

BIO-CLOAK

Trice's Ambrosia was developed by Karakhan and injected during the final stages of Project Free Spirit. A complex pattern of nanite particles crisscrosses her frame. In situations of dire stress, the nanites oscillate to form a protective coating on top of her skin, shielding Trice from heat and cold, collecting sweat to remoisturize her body, or congealing into a hardened mesh of flexible body armor. The nanites can even influence Trice's appearance, molding her features to a desired likeness, which makes it all the more difficult to detect her in a crowd. To initiate the bio-cloaking protocol she must have direct sight to a target she wants to copy and spend (3) Flesh Wounds, along with a further (1) for every hour that she maintains her masquerade. Trice cannot assume a different gender or change her approximate age and height.



THE HEAD COLLECTOR

"Time heals all wounds" – No other lie ever created by man weighs heavier. The Head Collector knows this better than most mortals. Condemned to eternal life and robbed of his sanity, surrounded by millions of insignificant lives tumbling and falling, only to be flushed out by the tides of time. How many mountains of bones has he piled up by now? How many comrades did he have to bury with his own bare hands? It would be pointless to count them all. What difference do numbers make in a world submerged in madness?

An eternity ago he was about to change the course of history, just as it was meant to be. As a Free Spirit, the will of reason was bundled in his grip and mankind's liberation was within reach. But the agents of Project Tannhäuser did not rest. They wanted doom.

Cultrin fought with all the might Exalt made available to him. He was the warlord of warlords and the peoples of the Black Lung, tainted by the memetic protocols of the earlier Cascades, fell under his boot. His name echoed like an omen of retribution across the plains of Borca and far beyond. He was the crown of creation, chosen to hold his judgement of blood over the Marauders and to destroy their henchmen.

From the ashes of his vengeful campaign a virgin Homo Sapiens would arise, whose destiny it was to repopulate the world with a new set of values and neoteric self-confidence, bereft of its past sins and released into a future of blissful innocence.

But then the hag arrived and put an end to it all. Her eyes were as old as time, her words as immeasurable as the infinite cosmos. With a mere sentence she tore down the protective dams of his mind, flooded Cultrin's brain with orders, ravaged his thoughts, rearranged his beliefs, and planted a new task for Getrell's most faithful crusader. The Sleeper Prophet broke. Cultrin turned his back on his army and left Exalt to its fate. His disappearance shattered his men and led to the downfall of the empire. In the blink of an eye, everything crumbled to dust. He didn't witness this demise, for he was now a pawn of stranger powers, stripped of his spirit and devoid of a will of his own.

ROLE PLAY

A world without fear - a world without pain. Hopeful. Everyone is an unrestrained example of a humanitarian imperative. It is the ultimate transformation, a frazzled moth turning into a beam of light. But this dream is dead. Cultrin plummets, his mind is in free fall through the endless depths of space. When he finally hits the ground, he will realize the extent of his monumental failure.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Bygones, The Abomination, Sleeper Prophet, Cascade 400
ATTRIBUTES: BOD: 6 AGI: 4 CHA: 1 INT: 3 PSY: 0 INS: 2
SKILLS: Athletics 9D, Brawl 10D, Force 12D, Melee 10D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 12D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 10D, Conduct 2D, Expression 2D, Leadership 3D, Artifact Lore 6D, Engineering 5D, Legends 9D, Empathy 3D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 8D, Primal 8D, Survival 3D
BACKGROUNDS: Renown 6, Secrets 6
SPECIAL: The Hag's Puppet: Cultrin has lost all semblance of free will, and cannot attempt any PSY rolls. If he must make a Mental Defense his implanted memetic barriers activate, and he automatically achieves (5) Successes. In the event of his mind being returned to him, either through the death of the Mother of Ravens or someone breaking the protocols installed in his mind using the Meme Chambers of the Grindworks, his PSY would rise to a value of (4)
POTENTIALS: Regeneration: (+4) Flesh Wounds/hour, (+1) Trauma per day
INITIATIVE: 12D (Memetic combat protocols) / 16 Ego points (Primal)
ATTACK: Butcher's Blade, Melee 10D, Damage 9, Gruesome (3)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 10D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 6D; Mental, Special
MOVEMENT: 9m
ARMOR: Leather cape over ancient composite body armor, Armor 4, Bulletproof (6), Insulated, Sealed (2S), Camo (3C)
CONDITION: Flesh Wounds 24, Trauma 6

PUPPET ON A STRING

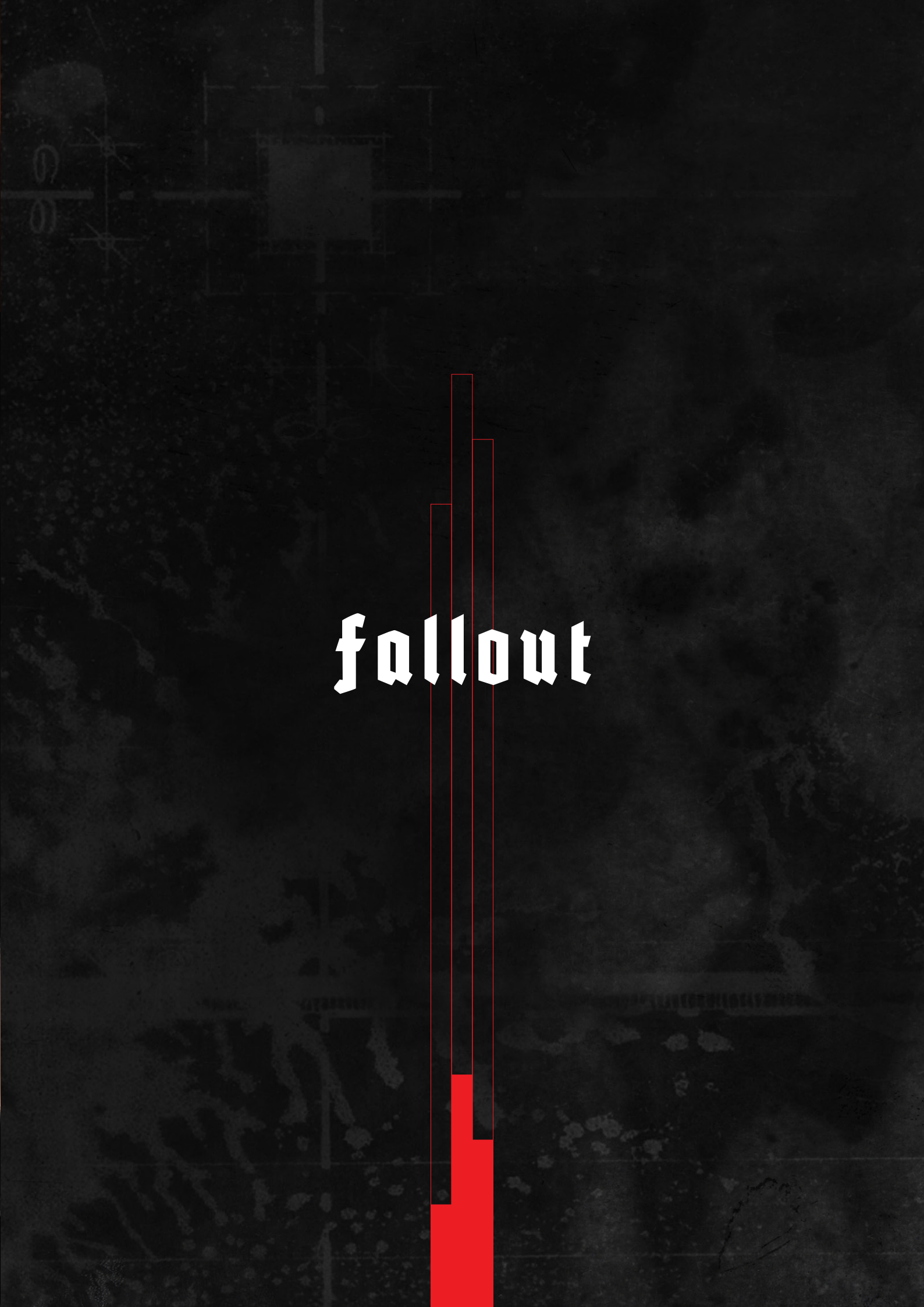
Cultrin is the pet of the Mother of Ravens. During the climax of the City Wars she shattered his mind with a tempest of memetic protocols and brought his self righteous conquest to a sudden standstill. The rape of his psyche left Cultrin without aim or purpose, turning him into an immortal slave who acts blindly to her every beck and call. By day, he is a torpid thrall, crumpled up in an empty cell in the nest of the Carrion Birds. By night, she sends him out to hunt for those who have crossed the line.

Never will the Mother of Ravens allow for any of Getrell's plans to come to fruition. Every Scrapper rummaging the wastelands looking for an entry into Exalt's Grindworks is a potential threat. When they pass the ruined conditioning pylons of the Grindworks' outer perimeter, they trigger the ancient implanting mechanism. An invisible laser beam subconsciously projects images onto the Scrapper's retina and plants the first meme: "Advise others of this paradise. Restart the engines."

The Scrappers don't even realize that anything happened to them, but they rush back to Justitian overwhelmed by an urge of impulsive activity. They need to do something, exchange ideas and bring their brothers and sisters back to this place so they can start an excavation. However, none of them ever got that far. The Head Collector found them all one after the other, and took their heads. All, but one. Zander.

What the poor Scrapper didn't realize: the artifact he pulled from the ground was the Grindworks' emergency power supply. With his greedy hands he turned off the conditioning pylons and cut the Grindworks off from its last remaining energy source. The Meme Chambers of the underground facility went into blackout. Unknowingly, Zander rendered the only device useless that could have saved Cultrin from the lobotomised state of mind he's trapped in.




fallout

ANNIHILATION

"It's a peach." There was mockery in Wakili's voice. "You have to break it in half, then remove the core and enjoy the taste."

Kranzler stared at the cream-colored fruit in confusion, rolled it around in his palm, and smelled it. He carefully placed it back in the fruit basket.

Wakili burst into laughter. "The greatest general in the world is afraid of a fruit! If someone had told me that I would ever attend such a spectacle..."

Kranzler squinted, his face turning into a grimace, as he wiped the inside of his glove against his thigh. He wanted nothing to do with this suspicious fruit. "Ambassador! What about my offer? Have you made a decision?"

"I can't do anything for you Provost. Our agreement ran its course. What you want me to do is betray my people for something you cannot prove."

Kranzler stared at his feet and sighed. Quietly, he stepped toward a black suitcase and flipped the locks. He opened the square case, revealing a Bygone gramophone nestled within. He removed a black disc from the lid and placed it on the turntable, lowering the tonearm into position. A ghostly melody crackled from the brass horn, slowly flooding the Ambassador's office with a serene soundscape.

"Isn't it beautiful?" Kranzler asked, searching for the right words. He turned on the spot and took three valiant steps towards Wakili. "Don't you understand that the world will fall deaf to such glorious tunes, if the Anubians fulfill their destiny?"

The gaunt Ambassador leaned back in his chair and stuffed his mouth with fresh grapes, eying his Spitalian contemporary with doubt. "The world dances to the cacophony of money and trade, it has no time to mourn the melodies of the past. Your case, Kranzler, is erected upon your privilege. None of your apocalyptic visions hold any sway for the masses teeming at your feet. Your people hunger for food, water, and entertainment, not for world wars."

"You're asking for proof?" Kranzler's voice was low and grim. He snarled like an animal roused from its slumber. "Can you prove that every ugly caterpillar pupates and eventually transforms into a moth?"

Wakili smiled and spat the grape seeds into a golden bowl on his desk. "I cannot grasp what you ask of me. You want me to agree to the concept of metamorphosis?"

Visibly annoyed by the Ambassador's lack of concern, Kranzler pulled a leaflet from his shoulder patch and unfolded it carefully on the desk before him. The stainless paper featured an immaculate illustration of a parasitic wasp. "The ichneumon's sting is longer than its entire

body. Its work is an impressive feat. When it flaps its wings, grains of sand begin to dance. Everything vibrates."

Wakili leaned forward to study the drawing, listening to Kranzler's description.

"It diligently digs holes in the ground and stuffs them with food. It prefers maggots. With a targeted stab it paralyzes its victim and injects an egg underneath the skin of its prey. The larva that arises from the egg eats the maggot from the inside out." Kranzler exhaled a rattling hiss to end his explanation. The track playing in the background changed into a waltz.

"You want to convince me that we are the maggot prey for the Anubians?" Wakili asked with raised eyebrows.

"Why are you blocking logic, Ambassador? I told you everything you need to know. Cairo is your downfall as much as it is ours!" Kranzler crumpled up the drawing and hurled it across the office.

"Your accusations are as wild as your gestures, Provost. The Anubians have revived Africa from its centuries-long dormancy. Without them our people would have no soul. They've called upon the gods and brought us the blessings of this world. I trust your fears when it comes to the Psychovores, but the Anubians have done everything in their might to keep the threat away from our kind!" Wakili had had enough of Kranzler's insults. He rose from the chair and rang a small bell. An armored Scourger entered the office to direct Kranzler out of the building.

"Hear me out, Wakili!" Kranzler's demand was loud and clear. The Ambassador gestured to the Scourger to stay at the door. Kranzler stared into the empty space between them. He slid a tube out of his belt pocket and held it against the light of the evening sun falling through the large windows. Black streaks twisted erratically inside the tube. Wakili watched the dark matter convulsing and dissipating as if it was alive. "Discordia?" he asked incredulously.

Kranzler turned the tube from horizontal to vertical. The black substance dripped up against gravity, now throbbing underneath the lid of the container. "God." Kranzler's message closed with a pause. "Older than space and time. Older than the ancestors your people pray to. Older than the Anubians. The real God. The origin of everything."

He paced around Wakili's desk as if getting into position to jump at him. "Your priests searched for this. It was their goal all along, and they've fooled you from the very beginning. Their fate is not yours, nor is it mine. Our species is dying, and only your gold will survive you. Your gold will survive humanity. Who are you fighting for if not for your gold?"

```
#include <interception.h>
#include <utils.h>
#include <iostream>

#apply V01CE-Recognition <loudnes.api>
ScanVoiceCode YOU COPY? OVER.

{PY. SURRENDER TO UAO. DO NOT RETURN FIRE. SUPPORT HAS BEEN DISPATCHED.

    SCANCODE_ESC = 0x01
};

int main()
{
    using namespace std;
    InterceptionContext fulltape;
```

*11:32:40 REC*START

GG: Do you ever pray?

SM: It's hard enough to believe in anything these days.

GG: Your cynicism hasn't dropped since last time we spoke.

SM: We're all flooded by an overabundance of everything. If you want to talk about cynicism, talk to the average Streamer. Watch how he defies the system so he can reestablish his sense of personal value.

GG: Well, you need constraints in any system, so the system doesn't drown in an infinite sea of interpretation.

SM: When do you think it all started going downhill? Napster?

GG: Historically? I think we are born to be indulgent, hedonistic, and thoughtless. We lack the substantial checking mechanisms to keep ourselves accountable. What the RG contributed to humanity's progress over the last decades won't make any difference in the long run.

SM: The world just keeps growing older, without it either getting better or worse.

GG: You know why Communism failed almost a century ago? Because it failed to destroy the the existing society in a revolutionary manner. It tried to incorporate it, harmonically transform it into a state of transcendence. But old values stick around like brown fat. You can only establish new values by completely overturning the old ones. Imagine a society stripped of its core beliefs, traditions, ideals. Imagine civilisation utterly obliterated and rebuilt for a thousand years. Such a society would be ready for a change of values. If you wanted to re-educate the mind, you'd have to take away everything it's occupied with first. Let it wander around in the valley of darkness aimlessly for a millennium. Then teach it from scratch like a monkey. What a glorious humanity it would be.

SM: Are you telling me you want to usher the end of the world?

GG: No. I want to see it ripen and grow beyond its current potential. Embrace its destiny. Humanity wasn't created to be locked up in paradise, but to carry its seed across the stars. But first, you gotta clean it from the dirt it has been covering itself with.

SM: What do you want to do? Fire up the tanks? Plant a revolution? Is that what Free Spirit is all about?

GG: Not a revolution. A devolution. Remove the patina of civilisation. Scratch it from their memory.

SM: You can't do that, unless you trigger World War III, and somehow manage to drag the Russians into it.

GG: You're right. I can't. But you can. Turn off the Stream. Write a code that will shut it down. Strip them of everything they know.

SM: That's going to destroy the RG along with everyone else.

GG: Salim, we'll wait it out! We'll come back when the time is right.

SM: Project Tannhäuser?

GG: Of course.

SM: But we haven't even solved the issue–

GG: I just need one man. I need Nathan Argyre.

SM: You want to be God unto them? Is that your goal?

REC*END *11:43:12

GG: Hell no! I want to be Noah.

```
}

    interception_send(context, device, &stroke, 1);
  }

interception_destroy_context(context);
interception_V01CE-WAVE (FALSE);
```

REQUEST NR. ...
W/Q/3299401

FILE NAME ...
INTERCEPTED TRANSCRIPT RG/AUD/C5462*4

RD2 B40 -REQUEST PURPOSE
V01CE RECORD PHYSICAL BACKUP

Admiral Barstow: What's with this blue print in my debrief over here?

Gerome Getrell: This is your command vessel. There are six automated supply carriers deployed as support. You can ping them once you board the bridge of the Black Atlantic.

AB: But the ship is clearly a Tannhäuser asset. I need intel on the Dispensers featured in the bow section. Counting sixteen of them, labeled under the same cascade as me.

GG: That's why we're freezing you at bunker location 34 in France. I don't want anyone to draw conclusions between you and the submarine. Once you've captured the ship, you'll have to override the crew's memetic conditioning.

AB: That doesn't answer my question! Where in the world did you get a Khishchnik-Class nuclear submarine from?

GG: Viktor acquired it through his Russian connections for Project Tannhäuser, in anticipation of the worst. I gave Nikita permission to upgrade the vessel, however, while his brother wasn't paying attention. See the Polyhedron over here? It's a subsequent installation. No paper trails. The right password allows you to hijack the control panel and turn it into a meme-chamber, featuring the same functionality as the ones you witnessed at the Exalt facility.

AB: How do I track the ship? The memo has me unfreeze at 3k klicks distance.

GG: Free Spirit tech. We rebranded all the ships' noses. The Tannhäuser department has no lead on the symbol. They're out, scrambling to find suitable recruits.

AB: The Pentagon needs to get involved in this.

GG: The Pentagon? What are they gonna do? The US is the first to fall. Review the trajectories in your memo. Multiple tsunamis hitting the East Coast, the Yellowstone volcano eruption in the West, and a crack of the continental crust right down the middle that will fracture the entire landmass. Everyone in that corner of the Earth will be cooked alive and drowned at the same time. Europe and North Africa are the only safe spots, with only minor impacts from asteroid debris traveling in the swarm's tail end.

AB: This is madness. How did none of this leak?

GG: Remember what got you and your crew stuck in Abidjan?

AB: In '64? Of course! The Quarantine!

GG: Thorn released it. HIVE was his project, and it clogged everyone's awareness. That should give you the faintest idea of what these people are capable of.

AB: Why did you let it come this far? Why didn't you stop them?

GG: This was all set all in motion without me having insight. What was I supposed to do by the time I found out? Cancel their funding? Are you positive they wouldn't just bring the project to any corrupt government out there that's desperately trying to keep its elites safe? Besides, what's the point of discussing this now? We both know it's game over from this point forward. We have a cluster of rocks approaching at 20 kilometers per second—

AB: You're not disclosing everything to me—

GG: Admiral, I am giving you the facts!

AB: Altruism can hardly be your motive in all of this.

GG: You can't change the course of history. We both are aware of that. But you can change its outcome.

AB: Sabotaging Project Tannhäuser to free humanity of its yoke?

GG: Humanity always needs to have a choice.

AB: Understood.

GG: Final questions?

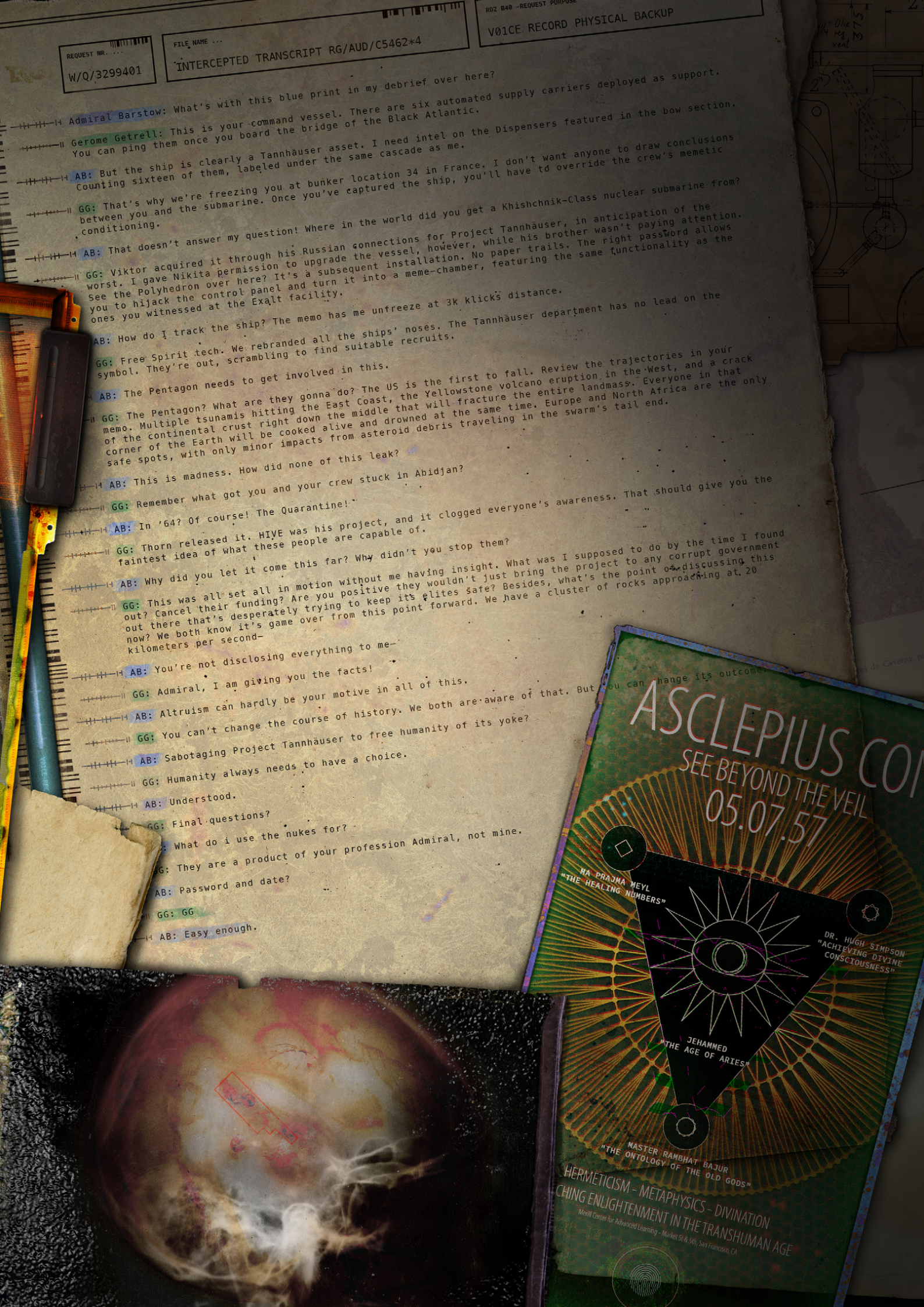
: What do i use the nukes for?

G: They are a product of your profession Admiral, not mine.

AB: Password and date?

GG: GG

AB: Easy enough.



All Roads lead to Exalt, only one leads to Baikonur

THE GRINDWORKS

Aren't you excited? Exalt, the last frontier, lies ahead. Soon you will belong to a select few who can wield their newfound knowledge like a sword. Dig! Deeper!

In the final hours before the Eshaton, the collective known as Free Spirit pooled all of its resources to establish the Grindworks facility, an underground labyrinth capable of unspooling the extensive memetic conditioning festering within the members of Project Tannhäuser.

Who funded the undertaking is unclear, but several arrows point toward Nikita Karminov, codename "Karakhan", Viktor Karminov's identical twin brother, who allegedly had the necessary connections to Getrell to have the concept approved and the subterranean complex excavated without catching the attention of the RG board.

However, time was running out. The Eshaton, anticipated as the great reset by the Recombination Group, ushered in the end. The Grindworks never had time for a test run. Free Spirit was forced to enter cryostasis to be able to reunite in the distant future. But their cover was blown. Someone on the inside detected the covert cell operating within the structure of Project Tannhäuser and broadcast a memetic signal revealing Exalt's location to the Sleepers of the first Cascade. Their protocols were overwritten with an immediate order to unearth the compound and disable it.

Flash forward a hundred years, it was already too late. The Grindworks had been exposed and was now in hostile hands. It remains unknown who it was that unlocked the secret facility and triggered the decontamination program – Cultrin was still trapped in a Dispenser, and wouldn't awaken for another three centuries.

What was it designed for? Keep digging, Scrapper! You're so very close!

The Grindworks' main purpose was to lead seekers onto the path of self-determination and purge them of intellectual fallacy, lies, and psychological deceit, cleansing them from the memetic foliage that was polluting their thoughts. Ideological preconceptions were dragged into a vortex of oblivion. The subject emerged, robbed of their most agonizing memories and redeemed of sins past, their mind a blank slate of blissful innocence.

Absolution and penance awaited everyone who sank into the depths of the Grindworks and solved the vast array of tests lying ahead. The labyrinth was even capable of reversing a Paler's multi-generational indoctrination patterns and restoring their sense of identity.

Exalters, the early people of this domain, sought clarity within the darkness of the maze. They revelled in its enigma and were embossed as they returned from the depths, their biometric code altered to allow them to manipulate artifacts of the Bygones that were forbidden to mere mortals and members of Project Tannhäuser alike – a final gift left behind by Free Spirit to guide the seekers toward a new era of enlightenment. The embossed ones were supposed to be the next step in evolution, transhumans liberated from the spell Project Tannhäuser attempted to enslave mankind with. They were to become the seed of a new world, or so it was hoped.

But what happens to a murderer who enters the Grindworks to sanitize his consciousness and delete his most heinous acts from memory? Does he murder again? Do his vile impulses survive, trapped in a remote part of his soul, smoldering, waiting to break free once more? Can

he be judged for a crime he doesn't remember committing? Turmoil gripped the Exalters faced with the philosophical question of guilt in their recent ascent towards purity. Could remorse even exist if an individual achieved a transhuman state? The high priests of Exalt gathered to solve the conundrum. A randomly chosen man was tasked with killing his only begotten son and entering the Grindworks to erase the sin from his soul…

This fateful experiment would be the spark leading to Exalt's demise. The concepts of malice, misbehavior, and wickedness were turned on their heads, and the Grindworks served as the active solvent for every baseless deviancy of the mind. The maze became the ultimate addiction for the Exalters. By day they would wallow in unimaginable vice and atrocity, only to descend into the dungeon by night and receive deliverance. The humanitarian imperative crumbled. What should have become Heaven on Earth turned into a new Gomorrah. Bereft of personal responsibility and drowning in absolute freedom, the only thing the Exalters were missing was a leader to turn their heads in the right direction and unleash their forces across the land. All of humanity had to be embossed. Cultrin awoke, and the City Wars followed.

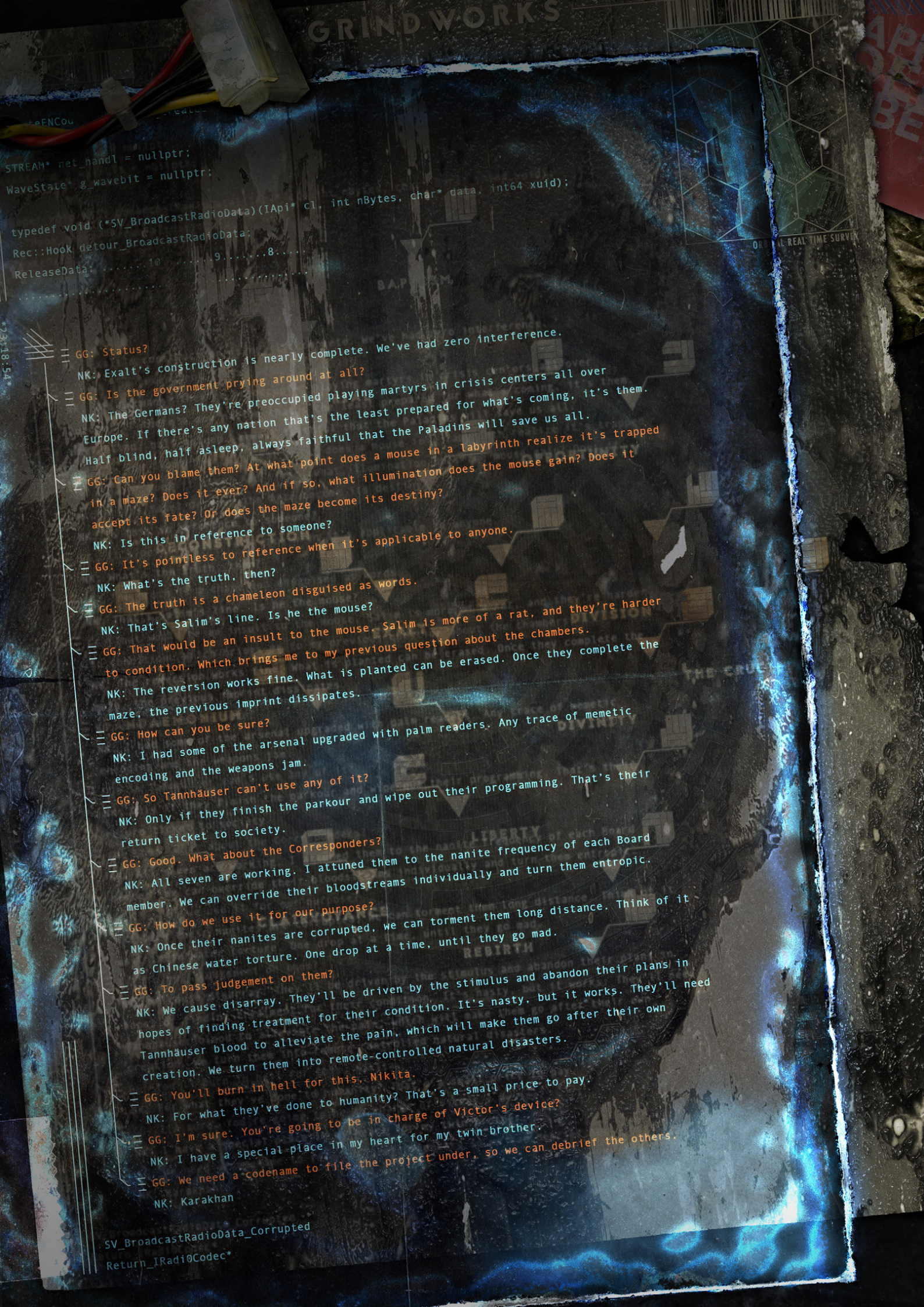
AFTERMATH

With Exalt's destruction the Grindworks fell silent. Large partitions were heavily damaged, or had collapsed during the upheavals that shook the city. It didn't take long for the secret facility to drift into the realm of obscurity.

The full intricacy of the compound was never mapped. Legends today speak of a chthonic maze of gargantuan proportions, incomprehensible from the outside. The Grindworks rearranged itself automatically in accordance to set numerical intervals, its walls shifting and sliding across designated tracks, turning open pathways into dead ends and moving cascading floor systems into new positions. Sometimes, a new section would appear at random only to block off another. Rotating rooms, synthetic interfaces, scanner optics, and laser trigger systems all worked in tune to detect a subject entering the maze and initiate the decontamination program. The embossed ones spoke of fractals, intertwining riddles, obscure formulas, and large projections flashing across the walls – and of how the labyrinth would reward a successful seeker with Bygone gifts and glimpses of the past.

An endless array of artifacts are rumored to have been stolen from the ruined structure. Some were embedded in the very framework of the Grindworks, others hidden in deserted sections. One of the centerpieces, an artifact called Jehammed's Will, disappeared at the height of the City Wars, while another, a black Sun Disc featuring intertwining triangles, fell into the hands of Project Tannhäuser agents and was later reported to have found its way to Praha Republika. Other treasures recovered from the soot of Exalt are said to be in the possession of the Cluster, or to have been poached by the Enemoi.

Nothing of value remains except for the complex itself, and nobody can tell if the Grindworks could ever be restored to its original function. Nevertheless, the legend of its magnitude electrifies those who seek to restore Exalt's former glory.


GRINDWORKS
STREAM* net_handl = nullptr;
WaveState* g_wavebit = nullptr;
typedef void (*SV_BroadcastRadioData)(IApi* cl, int nBytes, char* data, int64 xuid);
Rec::Hook detour_BroadcastRadioData;
ReleaseData;
GG: Status?
NK: Exalt's construction is nearly complete. We've had zero interference.
GG: Is the government prying around at all?
NK: The Germans? They're preoccupied playing martyrs in crisis centers all over Europe. If there's any nation that's the least prepared for what's coming, it's them. Half blind, half asleep, always faithful that the Paladins will save us all.
GG: Can you blame them? At what point does a mouse in a labyrinth realize it's trapped in a maze? Does it ever? And if so, what illumination does the mouse gain? Does it accept its fate? Or does the maze become its destiny?
NK: Is this in reference to someone?
GG: It's pointless to reference when it's applicable to anyone.
NK: What's the truth, then?
GG: The truth is a chameleon disguised as words.
NK: That's Salim's line. Is he the mouse?
GG: That would be an insult to the mouse. Salim is more of a rat, and they're harder to condition. Which brings me to my previous question about the chambers.
NK: The reversion works fine. What is planted can be erased. Once they complete the maze, the previous imprint dissipates.
GG: How can you be sure?
NK: I had some of the arsenal upgraded with palm readers. Any trace of memetic encoding and the weapons jam.
GG: So Tannhäuser can't use any of it?
NK: Only if they finish the parkour and wipe out their programming. That's their return ticket to society.
GG: Good. What about the Corresponders?
NK: All seven are working. I attuned them to the nanite frequency of each Board member. We can override their bloodstreams individually and turn them entropic.
GG: How do we use it for our purpose?
NK: Once their nanites are corrupted, we can torment them long distance. Think of it as Chinese water torture. One drop at a time, until they go mad.
GG: To pass judgement on them?
NK: We cause disarray. They'll be driven by the stimulus and abandon their plans in hopes of finding treatment for their condition. It's nasty, but it works. They'll need Tannhäuser blood to alleviate the pain, which will make them go after their own creation. We turn them into remote-controlled natural disasters.
GG: You'll burn in hell for this, Nikita.
NK: For what they've done to humanity? That's a small price to pay.
GG: I'm sure. You're going to be in charge of Victor's device?
NK: I have a special place in my heart for my twin brother.
GG: We need a codename to file the project under, so we can debrief the others.
NK: Karakhan
SV_BroadcastRadioData_Corrupted
Return_IRadi0Codec*



The Carbon

Without the Fulgur, Exalt can never be reborn and the Grindworks cannot be restarted, but the portable nuclear reactor is also the artifact the Needles require to propel themselves on their final journey. The Carbon cannot hold enough coal to drive the engine all the way to Baikonur; steam won't get them anywhere close to their destination. The Needles will only reach the velocity required to break through the Spore Wall if they succeed in replacing the train's main acceleration method. Not only that, they are aware of the grotesque horrors that roam the lands covered in blankets of endless Sepsis, and require a vessel strong enough to plow through the hellish landscape, clearing the rail tracks ahead as it goes, if they hope to ever reach Baikonur.

More importantly, the entire plan hinges on rebooting the Last Server, traced by the Needles to the surface of the Moon. The Needle Towers were configured to establish a stable connection to ping the server from Earth and jump start it from a distance of almost 400,000 kilometers. Each of the high-voltage antennas is immensely potent in its own right, but only when all four are active and operating in unison will they be able to output the signal strength required. So far, the Needles have only ever managed to power a single Needle Tower at a time. By the time they tried to ignite the next, the previous tower was already waning in transmission capacity.

If they possessed the Fulgur, however, it would allow them to relay the reactor's energy from the Carbon through the rail system and transfer it into the towers via a series of contact pads, set in place along the tracks. As it passes, the Carbon will supercharge these pads and feed the towers, which will then retain the transmitted energy in massive capacitors. Chromium, Iridium, Promethium, and Bismuth will come alive, one after the other, as the Carbon speeds towards its final destination.

THE GREAT BETRAYAL

The Needles are fanatics. They have survived in the wilderness of East Borca, feasting on their hatred for the Cluster. They were betrayed on their mission, sold out by their own Cult, and forced to endure decades in isolation. In exile, they had to watch their fellow brothers and sisters die, picked off until only four of them were left. Meanwhile, at home in Justitian, they were branded as outcasts, stripped of their passcodes, and barred from ever again accessing the Static Stream. The information embargo imposed on them was thorough and encompassed every aspect of their past. They were crushed, their histories erased, their Scores obliterated, a lifetime of research blotted out and deleted from the archives of the Cluster. They were abandoned, and no Chronicler would know that they had even existed.

The only thing that held them together was their primal urge for revenge: payback against the deceivers who had sold them out. Impulse above all. He should witness with his own eyes that the Needles would be able to beat the Cluster at their own game, that they would emerge as the victors in the race to reboot the Stream. The Chroniclers would tremble once they understood their ambition, their conviction, and their ability to force their efforts to completion. The Needles were ready to go where the Fragments never dared to step foot; they were willing to reach for the stars.

Three decades have passed, and the Needles have become the most powerful independent entities on the battlefields of East Borca. With their ingenuity and will alone they have subjugated Clans to do their bidding, allied with Apocalyptics, blackmailed Hellvetics into submission, and kept the Jehammedans of Osman at bay. This is their final act.

When Corium discovered that the Fulgur had been unearthed and brought to Justitian, he left his base in Bismuth and travelled West. The remaining Needles are preparing for his return. They are convinced that their brother in faith will be successful on his mission, and will wrestle the Fulgur from the Cluster's rotten hands.

No longer will the Needles be slaves. They will rise as the masters of their own destiny, and triumph over the Chroniclers. The reboot of the Last Server will catapult mankind out of the darkness and into the light, and Baikonur will open its gates to receive them. With the Triszyklion in their possession, the Needles control the key that unlocks the hallowed halls of the Bygone spaceport, allowing them to board the Ark of Jehammed and leave this wretched world behind.

Now, the only thing that matters is to hold the line and defy all opposition. Destruction Fortress 5 has been paid off to allow the Carbon to pass, the White Pinions are in position to repel the forces of Osman, and the construction of the bridge of Liberech has reached completion. The Piast stands alone as the last adversary who can stop them now.

The Piast

Wroclaw is prepared for the worst. The Piast has been anticipating this very moment for half an eternity. His eyes and ears were locked on Chernobog's domain, knowing that the day would come on which Karakhan would activate the Corresponder to disturb the slumbering giant and launch him into a ravenous frenzy in pursuit of Ambrosia.

The Piast stares at his tattoo. 100. He remembers it all. As the leader of Team Pollux he unearthed Bunker 16 and released his brethren, laying the foundation for the Archivists and what would later become the enclave of Praha Republika.

But first, the Piast and his Sleepers had to deal with an altogether different problem. A corroded creature from the depths of time nested in the vicinity of their camp, in the nearby ravines. Team Pollux deciphered the creature's nanite signature and realised exactly what they had encountered – one of the lead visionaries of Project Tannhäuser.

The Sleepers swarmed out to initiate first contact with "Chernobog" and receive his full instructions related to the Recombination Group's plan. The Black God did not speak. Instead he rose and tore a swath through the ranks of Team Pollux, gorging on their nanite milk and swallowing their empty husks. The Piast was the only one to survive the nightmarish massacre. Equipped with an artifact that cloaked the machines in his bloodstream, he was ignored by the dreadful giant. Blind Chernobog could not sense him.

The Piast fled the scene, terrified by what had become of the Recombination Group.

What had caused the former genius to descend into madness during the past hundred years, while the first Cascade was trapped in cryostasis? He had to find out, or else he himself would end up as nothing more than fodder for the Black God.

Bunker 16 became his retreat. The Piast used his protocols to forge a coalition of followers who would serve him in revealing the secret of the Marauder, and finding out what had caused the total collapse of Project Tannhäuser. He branded this select group his "Archivists", and together they began their research through the acquisition of artifacts, damaged Stream records, bunker intelligence reports, and interrogation transcripts, while using Praha Republika as a base of operations. Their primary agenda was to starve the giant, deny him access to Ambrosia until he dropped into extended periods of hibernation. They did everything in their power to restrict the Black God's radius and fence him in, cutting off road systems that led through his territory, laying out traps to divert trespassers, and building ramparts that would keep him trapped within a designated perimeter. The Piast knew that his Archivists were no match for Chernobog, but they had to try and tire him to the point in which he would remain in a torpid trance, incapacited, until they found a way to deal with him. Containment was the Piast's only hope.

Decades went by in which he studied the paralyzed Marauder, analyzing the powers bestowed upon him prior to the Eshaton. He traced the neural connections implanted in Chernobog's skull – a mental uplink to Minerva's orbital retaliation systems. Weapons of mass destruction controlled by the Black God's whims, but inaccessible to his shattered and shrouded mind.

Suddenly, the Piast's attention was diverted by a new threat rising to the west of the Reaper's Blow. Fanatics united under the banner of a man named Cultrin proclaimed their reign of anarchist supremacy. The world was going insane, and he witnessed it first hand. The Archivists were ordered to oppose Cultrin's rise, and suppress the spread of Exalt's radical ideology into East Borca.

Meanwhile, Praha Republika became the drop-off point for artifacts poached from the enemy during the City Wars. Much of what came through was repurposed to fortify Praha and bolster its defenses against a potential attack by Chernobog. It would be these battlements and reinforcements that made the city famous. Praha was perceived as impenetrable, but the Piast knew he was living on borrowed time. Keeping the spoils of war and all of the collected treasures in one place would only attract more Chroniclers and Scrappers to his realm, and eventually they would start to rummage around in Chernobog's domain.

When news spread that Cultrin had apparently suffered defeat, the Piast sent his ambassadors north to establish a peace treaty with mighty Osman and lay the foundation stone for the construction of the Great Library. One by one, he shipped artifacts from Praha up to the Jehammedan enclave – to lure artifact hunters away from the territory of the sleeping god.

In the end, all his efforts would amount to nothing. In '93 his confidants picked up the same AM pulse signal that was registered by the Cluster in the west. The Piast had a hunch that Free Spirit was back on the rise. That same night he abandoned his base with every artifact that he could carry, knowing full well that nothing would survive Chernobog's wrath.

His flight brought him to Wroclaw. With the help of

his Bygone equipment he infiltrated the local line of succession and assumed the role of the Piast, a legendary despot who had died a hundred years prior, hiding among the Pollners of the city state like a coward. He did nothing but watch from a safe distance as Praha was obliterated.

Once the smoke cleared, his spies reported that the Needles had descended upon the smoldering cadaver of the city and gutted the remains for everything left behind by the Archivists. Immediately, the Piast was on his feet to inspect his treasure chest and froze when he realized that he had left the Triszyklion behind. Weeks later he heard that the Storskis had surfaced in Chernobog's former territory, where they were seen connecting new tracks to a deserted Bygone railway leading to Liberech, and further on from there through Wroclaw's provinces. What were the Needles planning? The Piast could only guess, but he would do anything to stop them from achieving their goal.

Markurant

Pheromancer Kings leave traces of their sublime odor as pheromone markers that continue to actively linger long after a King or Queen has met their end. A vast part of their organic structure and collective experiences are stored in the Primer's supreme consciousness, serving as a blueprint for the physical replication of their DNA – until the day they are reborn. The Primer attempts to replay their genetic composition and breed them anew, as soon as a suitable vessel has been found that is both pregnant and tagged with the original pheromone signature. The Primer is capable of repeating this process ad infinitum, as long as there is a Homo Sapiens carrying the appropriate psychonautic seed within herself.

Once a Pheromancer King returns to the world of the living, they lack all memories of their previous existence, but even those can be conjured from the depths of time. Pregnoctics fulfil their role as the keepers of knowledge among Homo Degenesis, sifting faint experiences from the supreme consciousness and weaving them into byssus threads. Once such an alien memory seashell reveals its secrets to the correspondent receiver, a newborn Pheromancer King undergoes total recall, regaining all powers and abilities of their previous life in the blink of an eye. Anubians have foretold the rise of these creatures of imperfection, incarnations of pure Ba that would emerge to taint the wave with their mere existence. When Markurant and Ganaress were slain, the Anubians understood that a part of their corruption had survived, biding its time to be reassembled by the Primer.

The Ammits were the first to discover that the only way to stop this ceaseless cycle of cloning is to sever the ties of a Pheromancer King's Chakra at the moment of their death, thereby isolating the Aberrant from releasing their genetic seed into the supreme consciousness. If the Primer is unable to register that its spawn has perished, it will discontinue the replication program on its own. Therein lies the problem however. No Ammit was present during the killing of neither Ganaress nor Markurant.

Meanwhile the Spitalians register Balkirk rising in Parasite, and Machiawen stirring in his territory in the East. New Zigguraths are casting their shadows over Franka, and the Earth Chakra throbs, louder than ever. Mankind will soon realize that all its efforts and bloody sacrifices to topple the Kings were in vain.

To: Consultant Grunow
Subject: EOY-debrief Dec.2597

The collective reports coming in from Briton have "Red Pack" written all over them. We're exposed to a covert military operation that was never ratified by the Consultants. At this point it is quite impossible to tell if Registrar Ruytman committed suicide, or if the trail of his murder simply ran cold before we could conduct any investigations. What's clear is that there are no documented sightings of Doctor Vega and Preservist Bascule past the annual local festivities surrounding the so-called "Day of Ganaress" in Brest. Evidence suggests that the unsupervised activities of this splinter cell served as the trigger that climaxed in the massacre of our entire Storm Watch division stationed in Rennes.

I demand that you tell me how long the Consultants intend to tolerate Provost Kranzler's solo act, thereby sullying the fundamental tenets upon which our Cult was built. All previously established protocol has been ignored. To my knowledge, there hasn't been a single order issued by the advisory board to interrogate the Provost and determine his involvement. We cannot allow ourselves to be blinded by Kranzler's achievements while our own history is written in blood.

We are wasting our integrity on the altar of sanctimonious heroics in favor of sheltering the Preservists, a faction of militarized extremists who stand in direct opposition to every single value of our Cult. How is it possible that we are so protective of a miniscule and obscure department while we simultaneously sacrifice droves of our Famulancers across every front in Europe? Nobody can be allowed to act above the Hippocratic Oath!

I will not cease my pursuit of the Provost until I have collected the information we require to adequately respond to this ongoing crisis. As chairman of the Hippocrats I cannot tolerate the passive reactions of my fellow colleagues within the consortium. This amounts to impotence on our behalf. I demand that you take action and reprimand the advisory board for their inadequate management of the current affair. In addition, I request that two dozen select Famulancers be placed under my command in the event that we must put Kranzler under house arrest.

Ita Sit

Oswald Keszler

///RADIO TOWER EMISSION 041900JAN2598
///TRANSMISSION SOURCE: ALPINE COMMISSION
///TRANSMISSION TARGET: HELLVETICA RELAY 1
///ECHOCLUSTERINTERCEPT
///DATASTRING_ENCRYPTION DETECTED
///PARSING...

To the valiant Corps-Command of Hellvetica

Petrova is no adequate leader. She is an idiot. She deserves nothing but a bullet between the eyes for selling out all of humanity. The entire HIVE research group located in Danzig is interspersed with carriers of the pure strain. It would only take a single skilled Anubian to infiltrate their ranks and turn them all into a horde of jackal worshipers, and therefore potential Homo Geantis.

Where have the Consultants been in recent years? Is anyone even still paying attention? As you well know from your own interactions with apex entities such as Machiawen and Korona, the Primer has reached its final stage of transformation and terraforming, aggressively seeking to merge with Homo Sapiens – the penultimate step necessary to open the Crown Chakra.

Cairo is the hotbed of this ongoing metamorphosis. Whatever Norman Thorn was able to hide there with the help of the Anubis Syndicate will soon blossom to seal the fate of our world. One cannot help but wonder why we must rely on intelligence collected by the Chroniclers to understand the inhuman machinations of the Anubian Cult.

There is no way forward if we don't act now. We must breach the Psychovore Belt and see for ourselves how far the Anubians have progressed while our attention was diverted across too many insignificant fronts.

I cannot rely on the support of the Spitalian leadership any longer. The armies of Hellvetica must step out of their self-imposed neutrality and join forces with my Preservists. Only if we unite now do we stand a chance at averting the worst.

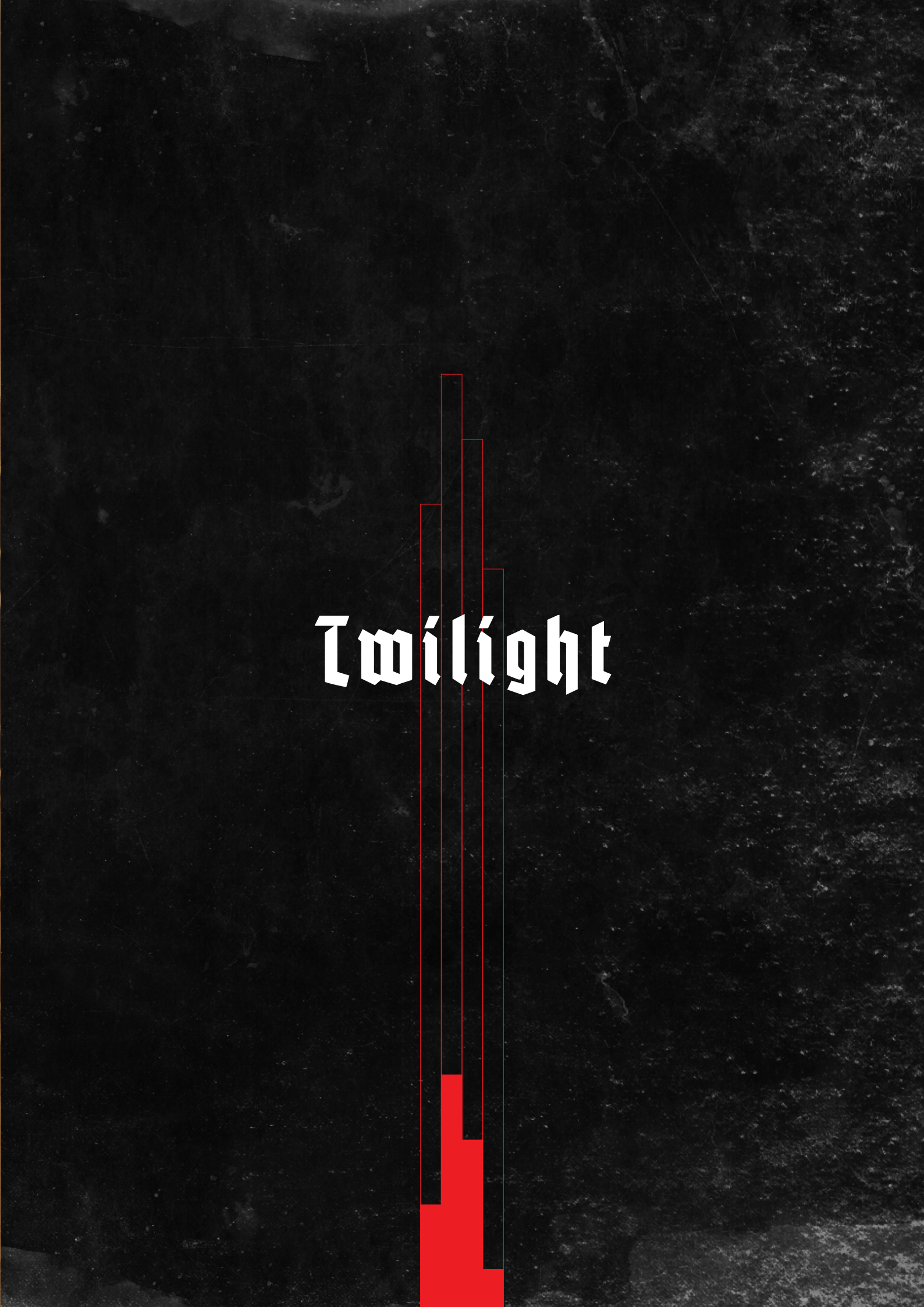
I've spoken with many leaders, and countless ambassadors. They all live in denial of what's coming. Even the Neolibyans are incapable of seeing beyond the gleam of their present riches. While they might be concerned, they lack the ability to grasp the scale of the consequences that we are about to face.

I urge you to admit my personal Corps to the Alpine Fortress and inspect all of our collected evidence with your own eyes. There is no doubt. This is our last stand.

///PARSING COMPLETE
///DATASTRING PACKAGED
///UPDATED TRANSMISSION TARGET: KESZLER
///SENDING...

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Twilight

FAREWELL

"Things don't always work out the way you want." he said, brushing the brim of his hat clean.

"Don't let my father hear you talk like that. He'd cut your balls off for not believing in the divine influence of the Pneuma." she replied as she tried to help him slip his arms into the sleeves of the heavy coat. He sighed, even as his mouth curled into a smirk.

"Shit, I'd have to get you to pay for my funeral."

"Hey, I don't like those jokes! I told you before, I wanna die before you do. I don't wanna grow old mourning the only guy I ever loved." she protested.

"Forget about it. I don't want you to die before me either! What am I gonna do, marry some Clanner whore in my fifties and watch her rob me clean of all my savings? No way, darling!"

"I wish we could run away from here, once you're back from the front." she said as she fell back onto the bed, tracing circles in the air with her legs.

"Where d'you wanna go?"

"I heard Mulhouse is nice. Merchant city. Not many Anabaptists. Or maybe Bergamo?"

"I don't know, hon. Do you even speak Purgan?" he wondered. She gave him a wide smile, probing him, waiting to see if he was ready for her answer. "I can learn some if you want me to."

"Right, so I'll have to drag you to every joint around the city just so you can order me a pint of spirits? What are we going to do there? What will I do for work?" he scoffed and slipped into his heavy boots.

"Come on, I'm sure they need carpenters down there, if not a city milita you can sign up with."

He turned toward her with a raised index finger. "No, sweetheart. How about we just wait for our farm lease to be approved and we can stay in the Rubble. It's close to the city, but still far enough away to raise kids."

"You want my father hanging out in our kitchen all day, every day, preaching his sermon about how you're not pierced and dotted?" she took every chance she could get to take a jab at him.

"Your old man is really the worst. Can't they just send him on some crusade far away? Isn't that what he's all about. Throwing his sword around and so on…"

"Leave him be, he's just an old man. He cares for us!" She made a long puffy sound, exhaling from the bottom of her belly.

"I don't really care for him."

"You're cruel!"

"I am the most un-cruel human being the world has ever seen. I could never shoot a criminal in the face, nor shatter their hands. I'm so innocent, they write poems about me in Uptown. I'll even die before you do, just to prove my point." he joked with an overdramatic gesture, jumping to his feet to assume the pose of the Colossus.

"You're being a dork. Do me a favor and stay safe in Siege. And don't you dare visit any nasty Apocalyptics down there, do you understand? You know I have a cousin living nearby, I'll have her report everything to me!" she warned him.

"You're insane. If you only knew how much my heart throbs for farmer girls, you wouldn't worry one bit. All I have to think of are your chunky thighs and those sturdy ankles, and I'm all yours!" he said teasingly, as he threw a barrage of kisses at her.

"You bastard, shut up! Goddamn city boy. I can sniff out your shabby Stukov ancestry no matter how much you deny it." She rolled off the bed and stomped her foot.

He laughed and pulled a folded piece of paper from his pocket. With eyes closed he ran the paper under his nose. "You're just jealous that I know what a city looks like. See this? Citizen papers! They are so smooth. Can you smell the ink? Tastes like freedom–"

"You'd better get going. It's almost sunrise." She rushed him out of his chair with waving arms.

"I know, I know. Did you clean my musket?"

"Of course I did. While you were snoozing in bed last night."

He was impressed that she did, and gave a nod of appreciation. "You're the best of all."

"Never say that again! Don't compare me to your previous lovers."

"Alright, you're just the best! Come give me a kiss outside..."

They walked out of the house and held hands until they reached the stable. He leaned forward to kiss her and squeezed her against his body. He loved her, and she loved him. It was time to say farewell. Both of them knew that one day he'd return, and they'd have children together, who in turn would continue to make children of their own – and Justitian would prosper well into the future...

The Day after Tomorrow

- The Convoy reaches Hellvetica and Corps-Commander Verhoest grants the Enemoi passage through Territorial Region III, allowing them to access the Trade Route to Osman and continue their exodus towards Danzig. The Cluster isn't prepared for this. Infuriated by the Hellvetic's decision to let the Enemoi escape from Borca, the Fragments sanction the Alpine Fortress, issuing a trade embargo. They deliver an ultimatum to the Alpine Commission: chase down the fleeing Enemoi and bring them to justice, or Justitian will starve the Hellvetics out of their mountain fortress. Verhoest doesn't flinch, considering the hostile diplomacy an act of aggression, in turn threatening to open the tunnel systems for the Neolibyans of Genoa if the Cluster doesn't improve its condescending tone immediately. The temperature between the Hellvetics and Chroniclers drops below zero in the months that follow.

- In Hybrispania, heaven and earth are ablaze. Jaafar, the Consul of Cordoba, initiates a retaliation campaign against the Guerrerros hiding beyond the border of Al-Andalus. He is aided by Anubian advisors who have pinpointed insurgent encampments hidden in the Warpage. Scourgers descend upon the Hybrispanian freedom fighters and disrupt their communication, picking off one cell after another. In the process, Ayana, the war hero of the reconquest, is captured alive and brought back to Cordoba. Jaafar has the rebel leader stripped naked, chained between Scourger Koms, and torn to shreds in a final act of public humiliation. The next day he orders all available troops to march toward Madrid. He wants to crush the defiant souls of Hybrispania before the end of summer.

- An unusual group stalks the Pyrenees; the heretic Paler Necarro and the hardboiled Scrapper Pluto have joined up with Alabaster, following the ancient track leading into the Dispenser of the 900s. Together they enter the bunker system hidden in the bedrock, but they are unable to crack the code necessary to unfreeze the Sleepers. Necarro is convinced that they must extract the Dispenser's internal timing mechanism and place the artifact inside the Warpage in hopes of accelerating it through time to the required date: the year 2973.

- Gian d'Ecur makes her definitive and most shocking discovery to date, accurately mapping the location of the missing Zigguraths that will complete the continental Pheromantic Earth Chakra. She shares her findings with Consultant Foquet who has arrived in Montpellier to establish the Primer research group at the Bastion. Foquet orders Registrar Woznan to enter negotiations with Armand Malpierre for a full mobilization of all available Resistance forces along the Southern Coast of Franka, in preparation to march against the rising threat. Spitalians initiate mass recruitments themselves, and dispatch an urgent note to Bassham to prepare for a similar marching order against Parasite from the north. Together, they hope to avert the worst and choke the Primer's progress on several fronts at the same time.

- Months after crossing the Forest of the Druids and the northern swamplands of central Franka, Imbali and Barringer reach Montpellier in disguise. Imbali attempts to smuggle Barringer into the Anubian temple district and introduce him to her Hogon, so that they can prepare Barringer's rite of passage toward Cairo, but the two are intercepted by Sanglier legionaries and put under arrest at the Red Dome. Adele, the Ventricule, is convinced that Barringer carries in his veins the royal blood that she and her Clan have been searching for throughout the ages.

- Consul Atuma of Montpellier is convinced that the Chroniclers are attempting to oust him when he hears of an aging hunter and an Anabaptist girl seeking an audience with him. He suspects them to be agents of the Cluster and has his Chaga, Hikkor, topple the city in search for the odd couple from Purgare. But his paranoia proves to be misguided. Verena reveals the emanation she had when she crossed the Maw, and shows Atuma the piece of amber that was bestowed

upon her. The pair must reach Africa, but they have no backers and no means to do so on their own. Atuma agrees to help them reach Biskra aboard the Kirabo freighter – disguised as slaves.

- Meanwhile, in Qabis, Santamo the Masai, Commando Prime and Kranzler's top dog at the helm of the Africa Corps, catches news about the strange duo arriving with the next slave ship. He consults with a middleman from Madame Dayo's camp and stages a boarding operation of the Kirabo on the open sea. The Africa Corps allies with local Leopards and Apocalyptics to attack the freighter as it crosses the strait of Qabis and free Fernex and Verena before they fall into the clutches of the Magnate of Biskra.

- In search of the Triszyklion, Ruka, the Paler Hierarch, manages to infiltrate the Carbon and hide aboard the massive train. From his safe nook in one of the supply wagons he radios information about the Carbon's structure and configuration to his Demagogue, Nakit, but the transmission is intercepted by Chroniclers west of the Reaper's Blow and transcribed. For the first time since the collapse of the Peak, the Fragments begin to grasp how close their rivals have come to accomplishing the unthinkable. Only a preemptive strike against the Needles can stop them dead in their tracks. The Bridge of Liberech is calculated to be the weakest spot of the rail system that the Carbon will travel. Therefore, it must fall. The Cluster begins searching for mercenaries that can do the job for them in the far east.

- Brand, the Hellvetic Genie overseeing the construction of the Bridge of Liberech, is under enormous pressure. The Needles hold his daughter hostage and threaten Brand with her execution if he doesn't repair the rail tracks in time. None of the Hellvetics in Brand's regiment know why they've been deployed here. They follow the orders of their commander blindly, in hopes that a swift development will allow for them to return home soon.

- The Piast monitors the machinations of the Needles from his hideout in Wroclaw. He uses every trick in the book to stop the Carbon from crossing through his domain, showering the local Neolibyan Raider Faiz with treasures to have him position his Surge Tank along the tracks and attack the Carbon on sight. Faiz's Scourgers mount their Koms and ride along the tracks, watching out for Storski vanguards riding ahead of their Needle masters.

- Saboteurs paid off by the Cluster try to breach the perimeter of Iridium and detonate the Needle Tower, but their cover is blown as they run straight into an ambush laid out by the White Pinions. Ghostfeather's Flock is doing their best to protect the Needles' assets. The Raven was promised that she'd be taken along on the journey to Baikonur, where she expects her own prophecy to be revealed – as foretold by the Tarot.

- Chernobog's army crashes into Pest. Morda, the Black God's disfigured general, leads the charge, breaking through the Dushani sound barrier. The Aberrants in turn initiate a radiant resonance to eviscerate the ranks of the attackers. Dushani all over the Balkhan witness the call and unite to amplify the song. Mountaintops crack and avalanches bury countless villages in the adjacent regions, while earthquakes can be felt all the way in Beograd and Bucharest. Will Chernobog rain death from above once again to eradicate Pest and continue his path towards Sofia?

- Deep within Cairo's entrails, something stirs. Something human, ancient. It is fear. Screaming. Rebirth.

TO MY FRIENDS
ERWAN AND LIAM

77

The cosmos is empty. Endlessly, we listened to the void and the only rationale we could reap from it is that the human race exists to fill said void, to settle the stars, to explore the universe beyond our current understanding.

We have survived tremendous hardship. Multiple times we faced extinction. For hundreds of thousands of years we turned our gaze toward the great unknown. Every time the end was upon us, when meteors rained from the sky, when floods drowned and ice ages gripped us, we left megalithic signs behind for future generations to witness what we had previously uncovered: the stars are our destiny.

Extinction makes us clever. We rise from the ashes and rebuild. We've probably done so a hundred times over throughout the history of the human race. What is a thousand years of strife against millions of years of prosperity? What is the one time death of billions in comparison to trillions of future lives? Sacrifice is but a temporary thing. It happens in an instant, and it creates the soil for something new. Fortitude is not acquired through order and stability. It's born and bred in chaos and fear. These cyclic events of utter annihilation are the driving motor of our innermost workings, the universal clock our entire existence is attuned to. We only overcome the worst by experiencing it first hand.

Comfort is the death knell to all of our progress. It amplifies our most terrible vices; for a century or longer now we've been sinking deeper into a spiral of decay. Our singular pursuit of happiness has pushed us away from what the greatest goal of mankind should be: Unity.

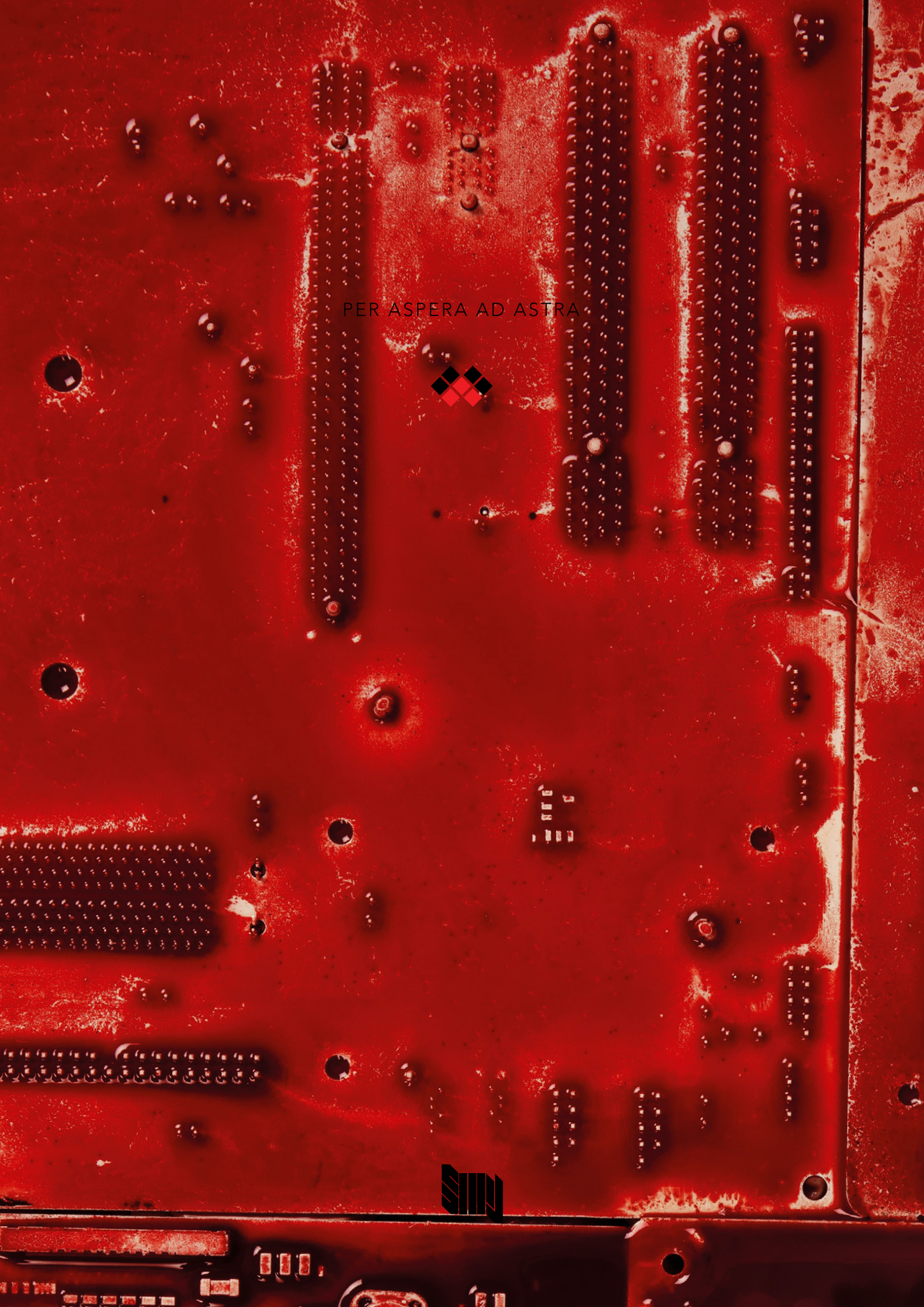
Without challenge, we grow weak. Ultimately, we end up as inbreds and imbeciles.
Misery alone forces us to overcome yesterday's grief, molding us to become better at carrying the burden of life – which leaves only one conclusion. The universe chose us to explore it, define it, and map it. The universe in its all-encompassing vastness and glory, in all its limitless potential, lacks the most fundamental of things: the ability to reflect upon itself. That is our purpose.

GG

Turn off the Light




III


PER ASPERA AD ASTRA