



HUSK

A Storytelling Game of Survival Horror

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For Use With Wraith: The Oblivion, Orpheus and Exalted: The Abyssals

PREFACE

Our world was conceived when the world went dark. Nobody noticed at first, how the night seemed to get blacker and more absolute as time went by. When there were literally thousands of stars in the sky, what was wrong with a few missing here and there? They weren't even visible over city lights, under which most of humanity strolled obliviously in their promenades. Few people missed the stars in the beginning.

The so-called "sensitive" was the first group to uncover the truth. Television psychics and pop occultists found themselves possessed with a meaner, more primal streak than before, as they waxed poetic on the darker aspects of the psyche. More and more spirit mediums found their companions becoming restless and violent. Those possessing any faith in the divine suddenly found it more difficult to maintain. Both the New Age public and the arcane underground slowly transformed to fit a coming era.

And still the stars went out, one by one.

The people of science were next. When the distinguished gentlemen and honorable ladies of civilization discovered that things were not as they should be, they dutifully stayed by their devices and their theorems, determined locate and fix the problem as they had done many times before. But this task turned out to be impossible, and as it frequently happens, panic soon ensued in the halls of academia.

Having the general public find out was inevitable. The days were becoming much too short to not notice. The moon was a dying shade of blue, and the stars were now a feeble mass of lights, barely enough to make a mark in the sky. The dark was oppressive, almost living, swallowing up the light before it seemed to get blacker and more absolute as time went by. The sun itself almost seemed afraid to rise, and when it did, it was a red, angry thing. It showed less and less with each passing night, and soon it was gone entirely.

Riots and demonstrations filled the streets, as terrified masses began to construct mammoth bonfires to stave off the darkness. Thousands knelt on the pavement and prayed tearfully before the flickering light for salvation.

Churches were filled to bursting, as men of the cloth tried desperately to give the people strength that they didn't have themselves.

The governments of the world tried to control its citizens, but what could they do? For once, even they didn't know what was going on. No one had any idea, and a confusion this deep could only create fear. Alone in their rooms, presidents, ministers and kings privately wondered if this was the end of the world.

In the end, a terrible savior answered the prayers of mankind.

From the night, from the darkness that seemed infinite and eternal, a crimson light began to shine. Like the unforgiving Eye of God, the red star harshly gazed upon the world, offering humanity the light it had been begging for so earnestly. The world became warm again with the pulsing heat of blood, and the world became visible in shades tinged with scarlet.

Then the dead rose to greet us.

And that is the way the world has been ever since.

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This is a work of fiction, and exists for the purpose of entertainment. It contains mature themes; discretion is advised.

INTRODUCTION

What This Is

Husk is a resource for you to tell a very unique kind of ghost story. Within the following pages, you'll be able to take **Wraith: The Oblivion**, **Orpheus, Exalted: The Abyssals**, or any other book by **White Wolf Games** and play them in concert, taking your favorite elements and mixing them together.

Husk is also a post-apocalyptic setting, which you can attribute to whatever fits best in your game. It could be set immediately following the **Time of Judgment**, or shortly after the end of the **Orpheus** run, or an entirely different world that is unique to itself. The point isn't to draw definite lines between **WWGS's** canon and what's been provided here; the point of **Husk** is to provide a kind of 'universal adaptor' for your game, in whatever fashion best appeals to you.

What This is Not

While **Husk** allows you to use several books at a time, it certainly doesn't replace any of them. In order to play **Husk**, you'll need at least one of the three books mentioned above. The concepts explored here are unique, but they depend on pre-existing source material in order to be useful.

Having said that, there won't be an official set of rules here, either. The rules from many different books will be discussed (in order to give you as many options as possible), but the decision is ultimately yours, depending on which books you own and which system you prefer. Where we make reference to something that requires a system rule, relevant items in several books will be provided for you, with the corresponding page numbers.

Errata & Supplements

Husk is a closed system: everything you need in order to play is provided in one book. As such, we've tried to make it as concise and accurate as possible. Should you find any glaring errors, please report them to the author at jl.williams@gmail.com.

If you really enjoy **Husk** and want to contribute source material, you're free to send a submission or proposal to the above address.

Basic Primer

Husk is about grim desperation in a world that has quite literally become Hell on Earth. Humanity has been reduced to small tribes in isolated cities, struggling desperately to survive in the face of disease, famine and complete social breakdown, while flesh-craving monsters push the boundaries of safety a little more every day.

Taking the role of ghosts, the players pit their skills and powers against the evil that is eating the world, while battling their own inner demons in an effort not to join the ranks of the hungry dead. Feared and hated by the masses they work to protect, ghosts must help to rebuild the crumbling world, and find their own place in it before the red sun claims humanity once and for all.

For Mature Minds

Though there is a basic disclaimer at the bottom of the front page, it should be reinforced that **Husk** is a work of fiction, in which players take on the role of supernatural creatures in an imaginary setting. It in no way encourages people to go out into the real world and behave like savages.

You are not your character, nor do you possess any of the supernatural traits or powers that your character does. The world of **Husk** is completely imaginary. If there is ever a point where you cannot tell the difference between yourself and the character you portray, it's time to think about leaving the game.

Here There Be Monsters

This book contains scenes of extreme, graphic violence and coarse language, and is not suitable for anyone under the age of 18. The themes and concepts explored in this book are of a sort that some may find offensive. Cannibalism, death, ghosts, dismemberment, drugs, plagues, demonic entities, serial killers, undead predators, terrorism and animate body parts all have a place in this book with many similar, likewise disturbing things. Discretion is advised.

Survival Horror

A good Survival Horror story is one in which the basic necessities of life have become scarce. Proper food, adequate shelter and working tools must be hard to come by, and a great deal of depth is found in exploring what otherwise good people are willing to do in order to get those things.

Secondly, there must be isolation and fear. One group of people exist in a closed, tight-knit family that has little contact with others, unless there is a need to compete for valuable goods or ally in the face of major adversity. People in **Husk** have only recently begun to form large communities, but even these are mistrustful of outsiders, keeping to themselves unless an acceptable, temporary agreement can be made for mutual benefit.

Inspirational Media

To get the proper feel for **Husk**, it might be helpful to take a look at various examples of the genre:

- **Alas, Babylon (book)** — Pat Frank writes of a small Florida town, following it through the anticipation, devastation and aftermath of a colossal nuclear war. Short, but compelling.
- **Dawn of the Dead (film)** — Quite simply, the world is besieged by legions of zombies. The remake isn't as good as the original, but it captures **Husk's** sense of constant, overwhelming horror.
- **The Postman (book)** — David Brin's story of a man who wanders a desolate America in search of hope. Not the best example of post-apocalyptic horror, but it was better than the movie.
- **Mad Max (film)** — Through barren landscapes and long stretches of highway, a man's humanity is burned away in a high-octane hunt for vicious pirates. The first of a trilogy.
- **The Stand (book)** — Stephen King's tale of a world destroyed by plague, and the struggle to determine whether it will be ruled by good or evil. Very good book, though rather long.
- **28 Days Later (film)** — A horrible disease has turned most people into murderous, rabid animals, while a small band of survivors struggles to find safety. Zombie horror re-imagined.

Source Material

Husk is inspired by three books, all published by **White Wolf Games**. If you don't own all of them, we strongly recommend you get your hands on the ones you're missing and at least read through them.

Wraith: The Oblivion

Arguably the best book for playing ghosts in a modern setting, **Wraith** is a game that explores the pain of death, the power of regret, and the inner struggle of good vs. evil. The setting is a macabre Underworld where ancient ghostly factions fight for their empires, their faith and their destiny.

Despite its system holes (of which there are a few; the line never made it past 2nd Edition), **Wraith** is an excellent game for players to explore the ghost story from the viewpoint of the haunter, and an exercise in psychological horror that you won't find elsewhere.

Orpheus

A limited run of six books, **Orpheus** presents a post-modern world in which science has blurred the line between life and death. Players take on the role of 'projectors': persons — both dead and alive — capable of traveling in disembodied form, and confronting angry ghosts one-on-one.

This game's allure is in its cinematic presentation and user-friendly simplicity. Each book advances the plot and provides more options for play, while a very basic set of rules allows for the living and the dead to share equal footing.

Exalted: The Abyssals

Set in the long-forgotten Second Age, **Abyssals** tells the tale of those claimed and empowered by the Deathlords to bring about the end of Creation. Some accept the power of death willingly, while others seek freedom or redemption — but their taint ultimately spreads to everything around them, serving Oblivion's cause no matter what.

As the book promises, **Abyssals** provides fans of the **Exalted** game line a detailed look at the Underworld of the Second Age, the ghosts that exist there, and the array of powers and traits unique to the Abyssal Exalted. Most notably, there are rules for creating 'hungry dead', which translate very well to this work.

PART 1: SETTING

Overview

The world as we knew it is gone, consumed by a terrible, ungodly force. The exact nature of the event is unknown, but it doesn't matter. What's important is the here and now: a world gone to Hell, in which people are forced to do whatever they must in order to get by.

Each city has become an isolated environment. All communication with the outside world has become impossible, as the areas between cities are a barren, murky wasteland where the monsters live. No one can truly leave, and so must find a place in the chaos where there can be safety.

Even in the cities, there is danger. The monsters from beyond the borders creep steadily in on all sides like walls of gnashing teeth, but in the rural wasteland, any stranger is a deadly enemy. For thirteen years, mankind has been forced to resort to inhuman, unspeakable acts, killing each other for things as simple as food, clothing and adequate shelter.

There has been some progress, among those who refuse to sacrifice their basic decency. Resources have been gathered, and communities have formed. Humanity has gained enough of a foothold that they can defend themselves against the darkness while recovering what they have lost. Military, police, fire, and medical personnel have become the leaders of the new world, while engineers, mechanics, architects and laymen work round the clock to rebuild it.

In the present day, society has become somewhat stable. A local trade-based economy has taken shape, a working industrial sector has turned the power back on, and there are food stores, finite as they are. Enormous pits have been dug to house the dead and discourage vermin, and regular patrols scour the barren areas of the city for resources, tools, raw materials, and souls both lost and hungry.

Bit by bit humanity is struggling to get itself back to where it was before the world was swallowed by Oblivion, but it isn't easy. With each new day, more innocent lives are claimed by disease, famine, insanity and predators. Survival is a daily concern, and the possibility of dying — or worse, becoming one of the creatures outside the walls — is ever present.

Cataclysm

In the beginning there were subtle clues, though no one believed those who saw them. One by one, the stars in the sky were snuffing out. Pop occultists, self-confessed psychics and televangelists warned of a coming disaster, when the masses would turn on each other in the streets, consuming one another like wretched animals.

Naturally, they were scoffed at.

As the sun grew hotter and angrier, cancer swept through the world, claiming lives by the thousands. The oceans steamed, water became scarce, and violent crime escalated. The seers spoke of this, and were ignored.

When electromagnetic disturbances fried the power grids, collapsed the Internet and rendered most technology useless, society finally reacted. Widespread panic led to looting, riots and fires, and the major cities burned for weeks. Martial law was declared in many places, the military forced to step in to contain the situation, which it largely failed to do. Economies and governments collapsed, and thousands died by causes unknown. The only absolutes were uncertainty, fear and chaos.

When the sun finally stopped its assault, it had grown in size, and taken on a deep, blood red. It anchored itself in place, a constant crimson eye that did not rise or set, marking day and night by intensity alone.

The flames and noise died down, and scavenger camps scrounged the debris of their fallen world for food, medicine and weapons. For weeks they lived underground, venturing out only when the day was at its darkest and the heat from the sun was bearable.

When it was decided that it was finally time to move back to the surface, the bravest men and women ventured upward again to rebuild their world. Armed for whomever might be waiting for them, they reclaimed their cities, erecting fortresses, establishing power cores, and stabilizing a trade-based economy.

Things were finally hopeful again, at least until the red eye in the sky opened, and thousands of rotting hands burst from the earth, awakened by the smell of fresh meat.

The New Frontier

In the new world, the very forces of nature have changed. The red sun is the only celestial body in the sky; there are no stars, no clouds, and no moon. The endless blue that was once the sky has been replaced by a murky sea of reddish-gray that swims and melts like a surrealist's nightmare. Some see shapes in the oily muck like faces, mouths or unblinking eyes. Others claim to hear the sky moaning and wailing, or whispering at them in the darkest hours.

When the red sun is at its most intense, the heat is almost unbearable, making it nearly impossible to grow food or raise livestock on the surface. A person can only stay in direct sunlight for a couple of hours before suffering fatigue, dehydration and heat-stroke — which is why these hours of the day are when most people sleep.

Not that anyone would dare venture out in the daylight hours alone — to do so would be suicide. When the red sun flares, its radioactive energy beckons to the dead, who rise from their graves to feast on the living. The how and why of it is unimportant to most; the bottom line is that a seemingly endless army of undead, rotting cannibals is out to consume every living thing it can find, but only during the brightest parts of the day. At night, the legions recede to the outskirts of the city, to rest in their lairs.

As a result, mankind is forced to live in darkness. It is most safe when the sun is 'dim', though there are still obstacles. A vicious storm surrounds the city limits, dangerous even at night. Ground tremors, geysers of toxic sludge, and freak storms erupt throughout the city, making travel unpredictable.

In addition, patrols need to be on the lookout for rogue tribes; small bands of outsiders who choose not to be a part of any organized society, fending for themselves with lawless brutality. Religious cults, pirates and scavengers roam the city for whatever they can, and have no qualms about resorting to inhuman tactics if they must.

All in all, it's a very different world than it used to be. One thing everyone can agree on is the authority of the sun. Its dull, crimson glare permeates everything, bathing the earth in a radioactive wash that can't be stopped. Some even say that the sun itself is alive, a thinking, plotting evil that has set these horrid events in motion — but the truth remains shrouded in mystery.

The Red Plague

Even in the dim hours, the red sun's radiation can cause birth defects, mutations, and deadly cancer. Regardless of form, these afflictions are lumped together into what humanity calls the "Red Plague": an unstoppable force that taints the species from within as its undead soldiers hunt it down from without.

Victims are classified by the medical community into three general headings, based on the symptoms they present. All types are contagious, but have different modes of contamination.

The Infirm

Initially, these patients suffer fatigue, reduction of appetite and dramatic weight loss as their bodies self-cannibalize. Over a period of months the body gradually deteriorates, rendering the victim physically powerless while driving him mentally insane. Painkillers and hallucinogenics can make him more comfortable, but there is no way to reverse the process.

This affliction spreads by means of physical proximity. The disease spreads to the environment around it, and anyone can get ill if they aren't protected.

The Feral

This variety worms through the brain, destroying all reason and impulse control while boosting the body's adrenaline levels. The victim becomes a snarling, vicious animal until its energy overpowers its self-control, and it dies violently. There are drugs that can help, but the best treatment is a quick death.

This condition is transmitted through bite. Once bitten, a victim will begin manifesting symptoms within hours, and be dead within a week.

The Tainted

The least deadly variety is one which brands the victim with a birth defect, or later marks them with tumors or twisted limbs. These mutations usually sit within normal medical boundaries, but there have been cases where patients have developed paranormal abilities, despite being normal in every other way.

This variety is also the least contagious, though it can be passed through transfusions, sexual relations or transplants. Most victims can be treated with surgery or therapy, but will die within a year or two.

The Ravenous

When the first scavenging parties went out into the devastation to look for anything useful, they had no idea what was out there, beyond vague words like "monster" and "zombie". Everything modern society knows about the enemy was learned because they encountered it, and it bit them. Nobody went out with a notepad - they went out with bullets. When the bullets failed, they retreated, and returned with fire bombs.

After they'd amassed enough first-hand information about what they were dealing with, they didn't bleed as much. Things were still dangerous, but fewer people died, because they were educated.

Essence

When a creature uses its powers, it spends Essence to fuel them. Usually a creature can spend as much as it wishes to produce a given effect, but its discretion gets less precise as its Essence decreases, because its ravenous hunger makes it less careful.

Essence has a permanent rating, and a temporary pool. Spent Essence always depletes the temporary pool; when they run out of temporary Essence, a point of permanent Essence is immediately spent to replenish the temporary pool (this is not something the creature can control or prevent), self-cannibalizing to gain a boost of power.

Hungry dead draw from the same Throes that ghosts do, but they may only have two: the one listed here, and one of your choosing.

As permanent Essence is lost, the creature's physical form is ripped apart, and its awareness of anything other than its own hunger shrinks. This also occurs when the creature takes damage: fire destroys one point of Essence per round, and venturing out when the red sun is dim consumes one point of Essence per hour.

When the sun is active, hungry dead regenerate Essence. If Essence is lost in combat, it is regenerated at a given rate, depending on the damage dealt, but spent Essence doesn't regenerate at all.

To destroy a point of Essence, one must deal three Bashing damage, two lethal, or one aggravated. Bashing damage regenerates at a rate of one per fifteen minutes, lethal at a rate of one per hour, and aggravated at a rate of one per six hours -- but only when the red sun is active and visible.

Commonalities

There are a few characteristics that all hungry dead share. Some of them are painfully obvious, but they are all essential things to know if one expects to survive an encounter with them. There may be more common traits, but these are the ones everyone knows:

- All hungry dead have a single mission, to seek out living flesh and consume it. Regardless of how complex their plots and strategies might be, the eventual goal is to feast.
- The hungry dead are invisible and intangible in bright lights. While some can use certain powers to overcome this, it is especially useful for moving undetected.
- Fire scares the hungry dead, and does real, lasting damage. Torches and explosives are the best defense; guns or other weapons only slow them down and anger them.
- As they get hungrier, they get faster, stronger and tougher. Allowing them to feed makes them easier to kill, but often it's a sacrifice not worth making.
- When they have fed, they are physically slower and weaker, but they become smarter. Often it is a difficult choice: starve them into mindlessness, or slow them down with food.

Strains

There are several blanket terms that people use to describe the hordes outside the fortress walls, like "living dead", "walking dead", or simply "undead". None of these are accurate; "hungry dead" is probably the closest to true, but the reality is, they're all people suffering from different strains of the same condition. Through experience, people have identified four definite 'Strains': varieties of monster that have identifiable traits, special abilities and behaviors.

At present, there is no way to prevent a dead person from turning into one of these Strains. The reasoning behind what is required to create such beings isn't yet identified, so the only way to truly prevent someone from becoming one of these creatures is to utterly destroy the body by fire -- a much easier job than defending one's self when they reanimate and attack. It is known that a victim must be dead for at least a month prior to 'rising', but that's a small comfort.

Echoes

Echoes are the ghosts of people who died so violently that their sole motivation is to punish the living, exacting their own brand of messy revenge. They can be very compelling and persuasive, playing on the emotions of others to get what they want, which is usually the destruction of their target so they can feed on the remains. All Echoes are spiritually anchored to the place where they were killed.

Base Throe: *Fog*

Special Ability: Can travel instantly to any location it can see, or to its anchor from anywhere. This is provided it is not grappled, restrained, or involved in physical combat.

Starting Essence: 6

Starting Hunger: 7

Eels

Eels are made entirely of a ghostly ectoplasm, and can take nearly any shape imaginable — from animals and insects to reptiles, birds, squid, or any combination. It's rumored that eels were never *alive* purely the stuff of nightmares — there's no way to know. Their shape shifting capability makes them difficult to find and contain. They don't feed on site, preferring to lure their prey to hidden lairs instead.

Base Throe: *Writhe*

Special Ability: Can communicate telepathically with any eel they can see, and tap into a group consciousness that allows them to share traits, skills and powers.

Starting Essence: 7

Starting Hunger: 6

Gremlins

A gremlin has no body of its own; it must bind itself to objects, places or people in order to exert any power. Once they've chosen a host, they'll stay there until the vessel is utterly drained of power, at which point it will move on. They can change hosts quickly if they need to, which can make them difficult to track — but they *require* a host in order to exist. Without one, they dissipate within minutes.

Base Throe: *Strangle*

Special Ability: Can travel to another host without being tracked, provided there is three seconds (or a full turn) of physical contact.

Starting Essence: 4

Starting Hunger: 9

Liches

A lich is a corpse that has burst from the grave, ravaging the flesh of the living to regenerate its rotting corpse. Their minds and bodies are tattered and incomplete, but they can possess cunning, speed and strength — assuming they have the body for it. Even when they've been fed, Liches are vicious, wild animals without conscience or self-control — they will fight until one side is destroyed, and don't feel physical pain.

Base Throe: *Rattle*

Special Ability: Can control any severed limb within their line of sight, provided it is in working order. It need not be their own limb, though they certainly have an easier time with those.

Starting Essence: 5

Starting Hunger: 8

Civilization

Every city in the world has isolated places where humanity struggles to survive, usually no more than a thousand people to an area. Generally speaking, a city is divided into four crucial groups, which work together to ensure human survival. The groups themselves are listed on the following page; each might have its own laws and customs, but all sectors share a social contract with one another, because it's the only way the city will prosper.

Law & Order

Ideally, mankind should live by the same set of fundamental laws that he did before the cataclysm, but some sectors are stricter than others. For example, the industrial Core requires everyone who works there to contribute at least 8 hours a day, and theft or hoarding is as vile as murder to them. The underground Labyrinth has rules against open flames, due to heavy use of methane, and the Fills require that everyone be skilled in hunting, tracking and firearms in order to even be in the area.

When laws are broken, it falls on the individual sector to deal with the offender. Common punishments include mandatory work, sentry duty or imprisonment. Repeat offenders are often exiled to the empty areas of the city to fend for themselves, but more aggressive cities have been known to execute them if the crimes are severe enough.

Jobs

Being part of organized society guarantees a citizen will be protected from the outside, and can sleep at night knowing that the monsters can't get in. He's entitled to food, medical care and education in whatever skills those around him are willing to teach. There's no such thing as money, but he doesn't need it; everything he needs is provided for him.

In exchange for that, though, is serious responsibility and obligation. He is expected to contribute the fullest extent of his skills in whatever sector they can be best used, and when necessary, he is to help out with whatever menial labor needs doing. He must learn the basics of survival and self-defense, and can expect that his services can be requested at any time, which he would be foolish to refuse.

Patrols & Cells

Each sector has its own version of an 'away team', which they send out into the city to gather essential resources, scout for people who have yet to be found, and hunt down the hungry dead in their lairs. These people are highly trained and well-armed, equipped to deal with whatever they come across and report their experiences to their sectors — which is then circulated throughout the city so everyone is in the loop.

Patrols also secure small places where independent groups have taken refuge, and attempt to ally or negotiate, turning the area into an extension of a sector, known as a Cell.

This isn't as easy as it sounds, though. Most of the time the people in these would-be cells are grateful for the protection, but often there's hostility. Some resist being assimilated by a large militant organization, and some, such as criminal gangs, react violently to being told how to live, and aren't willing to share. Most gangs like this have ties to larger organizations, so things can quickly escalate into all-out warfare — which is one reason why patrols are so well armed.

City Sectors

Every character in a **Husk** chronicle has a sector that they reside in, and receive the resident bonus from. This is more for the sake of simplicity than anything else; determining where your character chooses to live does a lot to influence the beliefs, values and priorities that are most present in his thoughts.

You might describe your character as a 'floater': one who moves from sector to sector without any real 'home' (this is perfectly suitable, given that ghosts aren't really bound by human walls), but you may only receive the resident bonus from a single city, and must choose which city that is before the character enters play.

If you insist that your character is not affiliated with any of these places, that's acceptable also. After all, there are independent people who prefer to fend for themselves, for many different reasons. However, be aware that you receive no resident bonus, and the Storyteller might impose a flaw if he feels that being a rogue-type character would be especially dangerous.

The Fortress

Enclosed in high walls and heavily guarded, the Fortress is a military-style compound where laws are re-drafted, people are educated and housed, and basic needs such as food and clothing are stored and distributed. This is 'home base' for many people, because it's the closest thing they have to a civilization they recognize. The Fortress makes and enforces the law throughout the city's secure areas, provides education and housing, and attempts to maintain the best quality of life it can.

Resident Bonus: The purpose of the Fortress is to reinforce civilized human culture. As a result, anyone who takes up residency there will find it easier to learn abilities relating to research, education, etiquette, bureaucracy, diplomacy and law (he may choose only **two** abilities that come with this bonus.)

The Core

The industrial area of the city is where engineers, mechanics and technicians live and work. From here, raw materials such as scrap metal and engine parts are gathered and sorted, essential power sources are maintained, and new machines are constructed from the bones of the old. The main focus of the Core is to repair and rebuild, so their codes of conduct are founded on work ethic, quality and safety. Living in the Core means putting in a regular, full time shift every day, living in a warehouse with several others, and being paid in scrap materials.

Resident Bonus: Chiefly, the Core's job is to maintain the city's industrial re-development. Anyone who spends the bulk of their time there receives a bonus to learning skills relating to computers, crafts, engineering, mechanics, technology and vehicles (he may choose only **two** abilities that come with this bonus.)

The Labyrinth

Deep in the city's sewer system, a society older than any of the other sectors makes its home. By far the biggest in population, the Labyrinth is a vast network of tunnels and conduits, where goods, refugees and victims are moved from one sector to another. While its laws allow for all manner of illicit activity, it's also a major center for the faithful: dozens of religious groups roam the underground, foretelling of the day when they will ascend once more, or crying apocalyptic warnings to the masses.

Resident Bonus: The Labyrinth allows people to get anywhere, and to get all manner of illicit materials, from drugs to sensitive information. Its denizens receive a bonus to any abilities relating to stealth, investigation, larceny, streetwise, subterfuge and deceit (they may choose only **two** abilities that come with this bonus).

The Fill

Before it was discovered that burying the dead was useless, an effort was made to collect the bodies of those who died in the cataclysm, and bury them in a remote location to avoid attracting disease and vermin. Now, the Fill needs to be contained, because the thousands of dead who lie there are constantly trying to burst out. Bit by bit the bodies are incinerated, but there needs to be a constant, martial presence — a force that works its way through the outer rim of the city, keeping the ravenous hordes at bay.

Resident Bonus: The Fill is a single place, but those who focus on it take shelter in various places, depending on strategy. Those dedicated to the Fill receive a bonus to skills relating to melee, survival, firearms, explosives, security and tactic (they may choose only **two** abilities that come with this bonus).

Commerce

In a world where the notion of paper money has dissolved, and a stable economy is impossible, every transaction becomes an intimate, personal exchange. The sectors have laws against hoarding, but they certainly don't believe that people obey it, especially when even the most common of things is scarce.

When there is a need for something that a person has in their possession, there are two ways to obtain it. The first is to take it by force, though this creates resentment and a risk of retaliation. The second is negotiation, a far more effective way to get what one needs without resorting to or creating violence. If each party is satisfied, there is a better chance of gaining trust, and a tentative alliance in the face of a common threat.

On a one-on-one basis, an item's value depends on how badly one wants or needs it. Obviously food and survival gear have a high value to anyone, but sometimes trivial things like chocolate, cigarettes or coffee can be considered precious to some.

The Hub

In the spirit of fair trade, the sectors share a zone in the city center called the Hub: a communal area where anyone in the city can negotiate a deal for whatever they might need. Open during the 12 safest hours of the day, the Hub is a bustling community of merchants, rovers and vendors, offering anything from electronic parts to designer clothes, wild animals to seeds for growing vegetables.

Just because it's open to all doesn't mean there isn't a sense of bias. People from the Fortress or Core can get a better deal than those who don't contribute to those places, at least when it comes to basic resources. The Fill acquires weaponry and communication equipment for far cheaper than anyone else, and medical personnel can guarantee that they can refresh their supplies at almost no cost.

Security for the Hub is provided by organized crime. The most frequented market in the city is vice, which doesn't require money. Drugs, prostitution, contract killings and theft-for-hire are alive and well in the city, but rather than money or trade, payment is made in favors. In a world with so very little to enjoy, people will do just about anything to feel good, if only until the euphoria passes and they need another hit; a process that works even more now than ever before.

Medicine

Not surprisingly, anyone with medical training is crucial to a society where injury is a daily expectation. Every sector has its medics, physicians, therapists and surgeons, and many of them stay within their sector's borders.

Many more, however, are part of an independent group that moves throughout the city, more concerned with the oath they swore than any political allegiance. This group is ruled only by their conscience and their pledge to help anyone in need, and are usually given free reign throughout the sectors, provided they don't break any laws in the meantime.

Clinics

Rather than a single 'base', the group has several isolated clinics that are equipped to handle most eventualities. Stored blood, medications, surgical tools and cots are squirreled into these remote places, which the sectors are made aware of and expected to leave alone. If a clinic is damaged, looted or destroyed, it's considered a disrespect for the work the group is willing to do, and most sectors consider it a major offense.

Every doctor in the city is supplied with a map of the city where existing clinics are marked; this is so that in the event of an emergency, a doctor always knows where the nearest clinic is, and how to get to it quickly and covertly.

Projects

Usually there are a number of projects at work in the medical community, for the betterment of everyone. If a team of doctors makes an appearance and a request, they're usually accommodated without argument, unless there's a major issue already on the table.

Common projects include blood drives and organ harvests, though there are occasions where controlled experiments or studies require guinea pigs. The Red Plague is a huge concern, and the more people give, the closer the group gets to beating the disease — or at least finding a treatment.

Teams of emergency personnel also make regular trips to the Core in ambulance convoys, to get fuel, oil and maintenance. They have a long-standing contract with the Core, and never need to wait for service or make any form of payment, especially considering how many Core employees are injured on the job.

The Quag

A person can leave the safety of his home, and there's a good chance that if he's careful, he'll probably make it to wherever he's going and return in one piece. However, if he leaves the city altogether, he's on his own. The spaces between cities is the surreal turf of the damned.

Short for "quagmire", the 'Quag' is the name given to the freakish storms outside the city. During the active part of the day when the red sun is most dim, the highways cut through a murky wasteland of cracked earth and fog. There are hellish storms, some so violent and angry that one would likely be swept away forever, if the howling winds and hallucinations don't drive him mad. Fragments of bone and gobbets of torn flesh rain down on the desolate terrain, and the sky wails and howls in a chorus of torment and rage.

There are some who have dared to travel the storm in an effort to understand it, but few have come back alive. Those who have are driven mad by inner voices and paranoia, culminating in violent nightmares, psychosis, and suicide.

The Husks

When the red sun flares, the murky soup thins to reveal a glimpse into Hell itself: an endless array of giant, eviscerated beasts, inside which lie a million industrial cities. In these Husks, chained slaves are forced to construct hungry dead from the souls of the innocent; night after night the death-machines churn and grind, tearing the dead limb from limb, building new forms from the useful parts, and blasting the rest through smoke stacks where it can rain down on the world.

The imagery is enough that living people cannot fathom looking at it, and avoid discussion. Some ghosts have tried to venture into the Husks, and a few have returned in one piece (more or less), but the reports they give are muddled by confusion and terror, so there's no way to know exactly what's going on there, other than apparently, the ocean of Husks has no end, seeming to go on forever.

Modern occultists argue about the new cosmology all the time. Some believe it to be an optical illusion, while others claim the new world surrounds the sun like the inside of a globe — as if the cataclysm turned reality inside out.

Belief in Supernatural

The world is crawling with monsters, most of whom bear resemblance to people who were once alive; that much can't be denied. Most people believe in the supernatural because they confront it on a daily basis, but there are many different theories that explain the *how* and the *why*.

The scientific community attributes 'hungry death' to the sun's radiation, which they believe prevents or stalls the natural process of death. The cancer keeps its victim alive on a very low level, ignoring the body's deterioration and allowing the victim to remain ambulatory despite the fact that it shouldn't be.

Religious circles believe that the red sun has its own will, and turns the souls of the dead into ravenous demons. Either that, or the souls of the deceased are forced back into their bodies after 'judgment' (accounting for the time a corpse stays in the ground before rising to feast).

Where ghosts are concerned, people generally lump them in with the hungry dead. Ghosts might exist on a higher level than their ravenous cousins (ghosts don't crave the living, and are far more intelligent and controlled), but ultimately they are not human beings anymore, and so are regarded with fear, mistrust and prejudice. After all, if a ghost is a more intelligent and controlled type of monster, they're less predictable, and thus more of a threat.

Disbelief

Because the living and the dead exist side-by-side, there's no barrier of 'disbelief' that keeps people from acknowledging what they encounter, or accepting it for what it is. The appearance, tendencies and powers that the dead wield are perfectly visible to the living, provided it is dark enough in the area. Under bright lights, the dead remain unseen and unheard by the living — but in a world where humanity must live its life away from the sun's rays, this is hardly a barrier at all.

Just because people are forced to believe in the supernatural doesn't mean they don't react with shock and horror, though. From the perspective of the living, the dead are amoral cannibals who will gain their trust, only to use it against them later. The fear of being eaten alive — or, worse yet, *becoming* one of these creatures — far outweighs their open-mindedness.

PART 2: GHOSTS

The main characters in a **Husk** chronicle are ghosts: people who are in some measure 'touched' by death, and are therefore not truly alive — but they don't carry the craving for living energy that the hungry dead do.

Before creating a character for this game, you first need to find inspiration for the kind of character you want to play, and then develop a rough idea of who he is. This book will give you some broad tools for creating characters from scratch, but it's also possible to migrate an existing character from **Wraith**, **Orpheus** or **Abyssals**, if you'd like.

Step By Step

Husk doesn't discriminate with regard to the system rules you choose to employ. The character's Attributes, skills and basic traits will vary depending on which book(s) you use, but the **Husk**-specific choices happen in a specific order, as noted below:

- **Choose a Vein:** A Vein is a species of ghost. The five Veins are detailed in Part 3; you must choose one of them for your character. Later, you may also specify a sub-Vein for your character, giving him an affinity for a particular sector of the city.
- **Choose an Eidolon:** An Eidolon is the basic nature of the character's soul, and determines the motives behind his behavior. The five Eidolons are covered in Part 4; you must choose one of these, and can then specify a Haunt, if desired.
- **Assign Throes:** Part 5 is entirely devoted to the ghostly powers; your character begins with 2 of them, and you may choose an additional one as well — or, in the case of a five-level system for powers, you receive three total levels of Throes.

Other Traits

Once you've determined all of the above, you can then assign the character's Attributes, Backgrounds, Abilities, Merits and Flaws (outlined at the end of this section). Whichever book you choose to employ for this purpose is fine, and shouldn't affect the choices you've already made.

Polishing the Character

The most important part of character creation, at least in terms of character development, is the application of personal detail. In most cases the finer details are represented systematically through traits, but it's also possible to have a character whose background details influence how they think and act, rather than rationalizing the numbers they throw around.

- **Appearance:** You should take some time to describe what your character looks like, especially if you are translating **Husk** to a Live-Action form. Obviously the type of ghost the character is will add unavoidable details to his appearance, but there should be personal items that allow others to recognize him at a glance.
- **Background:** You need to create a background history describing his existence before becoming a ghost, how he dealt with it, and how he has managed in the world up to the present. Many ghosts find it difficult to abandon their former lives, and cling to certain attitudes and behaviors — so where did those aspects come from?
- **Equipment:** What does your character carry with him, and what value does he place on those things? Your character's equipment can be useful things that help him in the world, but they could also be things with deep sentimental value; these items will add layers of complexity and depth.
- **Secrets:** Every character has secrets of some sort, things he doesn't want others to discover. Part of the character's motivations should revolve around these secrets and the effort it takes to protect them, though they don't necessarily have to be dangerous to him if they're uncovered.
- **Quirks:** By giving your character small, personal details, you add a great deal of depth. Think about the little things that define your character, such as a twisted sense of humor, gentleness to animals, a habit of grunting when answering yes to a question, or even something odious like a lack of tact or a tendency to curse too much.

Redefining the Ghost

Husk describes a ghost as a being who is trapped between life and death. In many ways, they may look and act like living people, but in other, more obvious ways, they are not. There are several different types of ghost (described in Part 3), but each of them exists at a specific point on the life/death spectrum, and so qualify as neither living nor dead.

As Part 3 of this book will show, the differences between one type of ghost and another are drastic, almost appearing as though they are entirely different species of dead. However, all ghosts share a few common characteristics (those with heavier system requirements are on the following page, though you may also assign system rules to these, if you wish).

For those wishing to bring characters from other games into a **Husk** chronicle, there are two choices: either the creature was transformed in the cataclysm into something *else*, or it uses the same definitions and trait pools it did before, as do any other creatures that are moved from that game.

The Becoming

The transformation into a ghost can happen under many different circumstances, but it is always traumatic and painful. All ghosts in **Husk** were created during the event that ruined the world, surrounding the ordeal of 'undeath' in chaos and confusion — so most ghosts don't remember the finer details of it.

Ghosts are not human. They exist according to a set of natural laws that the average person would find completely alien, and they don't possess humanity anymore. Though they may carry some of the memories and personal attachments that they did prior to their trauma, their connection to the human race itself has been severed, and can never be permanently reattached.

When he finally comes to terms with what he is not, a ghost realizes what he is: a thing that is tainted by the forces of death, employed by the red sun to do whatever work he excels at. His new energy, his powers, and the ectoplasm of which he is made give him the tools to do this work, but he himself decides the method and the means — for to give in to the darkness would drive him to desperation, no better than the hungry dead.

Misconceptions

The general public knows that ghosts exist, and accepts them as part of an unnatural environment. However, it's important to note the differences between popular myth and truth.

- **Ghosts are the souls of dead people.**

Not exactly. Some ghosts are not dead in the pure sense, but their bodies are dying, leaving the soul to wander as if it were. A more accurate statement would be that ghosts are the souls of people trapped *between* life and death, but truly belonging to neither side of the spectrum.

- **Ghosts don't have physical bodies.**

True, and false. A ghost's 'neutral' form is often very similar to a human form, to the point where it often behaves in the same manner, with bones, muscles and flesh. However, it is not flesh; it is a material called 'ectoplasm' that allows a ghost to appear as human — or inhuman — as his circumstances and behavior demand.

- **Ghosts are invisible to the living.**

False, most of the time. All ghosts are perfectly visible and tangible to the living, so long as they are not exposed to bright lights. This doesn't count the light of the red sun; it must be a bright, artificial light that originates from a tangible source. If exposed to it, ghosts lose all of their visibility, and can often suffer penalties to their power use.

- **Ghosts can pass through solid objects.**

Very true, though it takes real, genuine effort to do so willingly. Exposure to light can often cause them to drop objects they are holding or fall through a floor, but to voluntarily pass through a solid object requires concentration, power expenditure, and often causes a great deal of pain. Ghosts can pass through people as well, but this hurts a lot more.

- **Ghosts are evil and self-interested.**

No. A ghost has the choice to be as good or evil as he wants to be, just as anyone else. Their emotions are far more intense, and their moral paths are often wildly divergent from what human beings define as right and wrong, but they do *have* them.

Passion

A ghost's spiritual essence — that which fuels his powers and maintains his state of 'health' — is his Passion: the sum total of his emotional force. Love, lust, hate, rage, sorrow, suffering and pain - the very experience of feeling for its own sake is both fuel and substance to the ghost. When he channels those feelings into the world, he is capable of shaking it to its foundations.

Passion doesn't discriminate between good and evil; there is no opposing force of negativity that twists his actions when he behaves 'badly'. A ghost can use Passion to whatever end he desires, and as long as it does not conflict with his moral path, he doesn't accumulate any sort of taint. Instead, his gradual lack of Willpower (which he loses each time he violates his Eidolon, covered in Part 4) loosens his grip on those internal forces. Instead of calculated uses of Passion, he becomes a slave to them, lashing out without moderation.

Loss & Gain

Primarily, Passion is used to fuel ghostly powers called Throes; costs for effects will vary by preferred system. Passion also represents a ghost's state of health, inflicting wounds as he spends from the pool, or suffering normally as he takes damage. Each ghost has a starting Passion rating of 10.

To regain Passion, a ghost can rest at his Anchor (recovering 1 per hour) or he can get it via a process called 'Flaying': he may rip life force directly from a living target. This refreshes his Passion completely, and may or may not be a violation of the Eidolon; that depends on the ghost in question.

Hunger

If a ghost loses all of his Passion (but has some Willpower left), he is immediately yanked back to his Anchor (following page), and placed in a sort of nightmare called Torment until half of his Passion is rejuvenated. When he returns, he will be down one permanent Willpower and is a little shaky, but otherwise okay.

When all of his Willpower is gone, he suffers a permanent state of Hunger; his Passion becomes nothing more than banal Essence, and his focus becomes feeding by whatever means necessary. He is a raven-

Torment

All ghosts carry a personal Hell within them, all of the time. The memory of becoming a ghost might not be a conscious one, but it's always there, meshing the horror of the event with every loathsome, filthy thing that he believes about himself. Every indiscretion, every bad deed and error in judgment is played out for him every time he closes his eyes, a constant reminder that he is no longer human — he has been wrenched from humanity, and can't go back again.

The exact nature of Torment is subjective. The ghost's history, life, Eidolon and Vein all play a role in the shape of his nightmare, but the basic principle is always the same: ghosts can't truly rest, because they are perpetually forced to confront their own self-loathing. Only through the Eidolon can they achieve peace, and so every ghost is on a journey of self-actualization.

Trauma

Not surprisingly, ghosts are emotionally unstable. Their Passion is so intense that they can use it to wreak havoc on the environment, and though the Eidolon is designed to help them make right choices in where to channel it, they're still prone to occasional lapses. Certain forces or circumstances can trigger painful memories that the ghost isn't prepared to handle, causing him to withdraw into hallucination and emotional breakdown; this period, which can occur throughout play, is called Trauma.

Like Torment, every ghost's Trauma is different, and has its own set of triggers and conditions. During the character creation process, the player needs to decide the exact nature of his Trauma, and what sorts of events will trigger it. There are no system rules attached to Trauma; when it happens, it lasts for the remainder of the scene, during which the ghost isn't consciously aware of his actions. The ST might allow for Willpower rolls to be made in order to stave this off, but that's up to him.

Trauma might force the ghost to flee the scene entirely and return in the next one, or he might mindlessly attack whatever he believes is the source of his pain — but his actions are always the same, and he has no control over the actions he takes during that time.

Chains

Chains are what tether a ghost to the world, keeping him from achieving rest. A ghost has many Chains, most of which appear and disappear beyond his control, yanking him in specific directions. In many ways they are a blessing, but for the most part they are heavy, uncomfortable obligations that he is forced to fulfill before he can achieve what he truly wants: to realize his true self, and pass on into whatever is waiting for him beyond this place.

Every piece of a ghost's former self is a Chain, if it carries a measure of duty — these are Regret Chains, which represent his failures in life. These can't be affected by outer forces; only he has the power to release himself from these shackles, and does so at his own discretion.

His Eidolon Chains represent the tenets of his spiritual path. These will pull at him in situations where he is forced to make choices, and should he make the wrong ones, his 'higher self' will push farther away as he descends into Hunger.

Chains can also manifest in cases where the ghost shares characteristics with other people. His nature, skills and other resources can form Chains where others share them, which strengthen and weaken as he spends time with them. If he wishes, he may develop relationships with others that aren't based on commonality — these can easily become Personal Chains, if alliances strengthen and bonds are made.

Anchors

Every ghost has an Anchor as well: a physical place that he calls home. This could be the place where he became a ghost to begin with, but not always; an Anchor can be the place he felt most comfortable in life, or it can be a place that the newly created ghost fashioned for himself.

In any case, an Anchor provides a ghost the opportunity to refresh his Passion, and is attuned to his own being in a way that makes it easier for him to use powers there. His Torment is weaker, too — he still carries it within himself, but it isn't strong enough to hinder him as often, and he doesn't need to worry about suffering Trauma within an Anchor, because it's assumed that the location has been made as safe as possible.

Circles

A Circle is a group of ghosts that travel and work together, sharing a set of common priorities. The characters in a **Husk** chronicle are all members of the same Circle, though each of them might belong to other Circles as well, giving them a number of things to do during play. There are as many kinds of Circles as there are types of ghost, but the most common are those based on obvious connections between ghosts.

Eidolon Circles are ones in which all members share the same spiritual path, at least superficially. Individual interpretations of the Eidolon will vary, but the purpose of an Eidolon Circle is to explore those forks in the path and develop methods of helping each other. Eidolon Circles are important, because they give ghosts a moral yardstick with which to measure their actions.

Vein Circles are based on ghostly species, and tend to focus on a kind of dissection. Veins differ wildly from each other, and these types of Circles give a ghost the knowledge that others suffer the same physical, mental and paranormal afflictions as he does. Vein Circles often have agendas for everyone within their type; goals that unite the Vein into some kind of force, whether good or ill.

City Chains occur based on sector. A number of ghosts who share a base location in the city will often form goals that are more political than supernatural; these have more to do with the sector's development and progress than with ghostly existence. They can be humanist or maleficent in their plots, but they work on a local level rather than a cosmic one.

Circle Chains

A Circle can develop Chains and Anchors, just as its individual members can. The driving goals and areas of interest that keep the Circle intact will often manifest Chains and Anchors that apply to everyone in the group, forcing ghosts to add yet more obligations to the ones they've amassed on their own. While this can seem overwhelming, it is possible to give a Circle's members the ability to reap the benefits of group bonuses, a more comfortable atmosphere when the group is together, or even the ability to soothe one another's Trauma, if enough connections exist between members.

PART 3: VEIN

A Vein is a ghostly 'species'. Your character will belong to one of the five Veins in this section, whether created from scratch or migrated into a **Husk** chronicle from another game (unless the Storyteller has different intentions). There are various stories about the names and varieties of ghost, but there aren't any definitive answers; ghosts know that they were either created or changed by the cataclysm in a specific way, but that's all they know for certain.

Each Vein has several distinctive features, as well as a unique perspective on not being entirely alive. Veins also possess distinctive sets of supernatural talents and powers, and a singular weakness that affects every member of the Vein. Mechanically, each Vein has the following list of features:

- **Advantage:** Each Vein has a specific merit that relates to his nature. The player should add this to his character sheet, which the ghost may use whenever applicable and can never expect to have taken away.
- **Disadvantage:** Each of the Veins has a singular failing, a weakness that they must contend with on a regular basis. This should be recorded on the character sheet as well; it can never be removed or 'bought off' with experience points.
- **Throes:** Each Vein has two inherent Throes; ghostly powers that are fueled by Passion. The ghost will find these particular Throes much easier to learn than others, though he is capable of learning them all, if he can find a teacher.
- **Trauma:** Because all ghosts within a Vein are created in the same manner, their Trauma takes on a specific aspect — though the character still chooses what forces trigger it. This is more of a role playing detail than anything.
- **Character Drives:** Each Vein describes how members go about dealing with the world around them on different levels. If your character has none of these drives, you might wish to develop one in the future.

Misery Loves Company

A ghost will feel more at ease among others in his Vein than with anyone else — including the loved ones he left behind. Every ghost has his own emotional baggage, but on some level, members of the same Vein share an understanding — or at least are misunderstood by the living in the same way: Festers are mistaken for drooling zombies, and Coilers for angry poltergeists — neither of which is true at all, mostly. These fallacies can't be helped, but that's all they are: blanket generalizations based on fear, hatred and an inability to accept the truth.

And at the very least, ghosts within a single Vein share a particular 'ugly truth'. Externally, they make excellent teams, functioning more like a pack of wild animals than anything, but at deeper levels, there exists a kinship that ghosts can't get anywhere else. This is his safety net, his most trusted circle and the closest thing to a family he will ever know.

Organization

When dealing with each other, Vein Circles usually don't have leaders. They don't have strict sets of rules, nor do they have much interest in politics. When Vein Circles form, it's usually based on communal territory, or mutual interest — but this is a completely different story where the human sectors are concerned.

Vein Circles usually form when there are a large number of similar ghosts in a sector. A leader is chosen based on who's best suited for it, or who's willing to speak for the rest; his job is to keep those ghosts who share his Vein organized and useful.

In these cases, the sector itself takes precedence over their actions, because that's where they choose to reside. If a given ghost doesn't agree with the rules, he's not required to stay, and will often be cast out, either by the sector's human authority, or the 'active Vein' that works there.

Typically, the active Veins in all the sectors communicate with one another in relative cooperation, but rarely work as a single, citywide force. If they do, it's usually whenever a large-scale crisis or threat affects the whole city.

Relations Internal

Though they do interact with one another on a regular basis, ghosts of a given Vein don't understand much about the others. Their mutual need for safety forces them to acknowledge and assist each other, but their perception of what it is to be a ghost is so radically different from one Vein to the next that in a lot of ways, ghosts are isolated creatures.

The hungry dead don't discriminate between one Vein and another — to them, all ghosts taste the same, so the need to band together in times of crisis can't be avoided. Being stuck in a nightmarish world means a ghost has to put his trust in things that might not prove trustworthy, if only until the ravenous hordes have been evaded or destroyed.

In the sectors, where Veins are more public entities, different Veins get along as much as they are required to. Because of how busy the sectors are and the constant stream of things to do, it's relatively easy for ghosts of different Veins to ignore their differences and put their skills to work. When the sector's work is done, a ghost is required to put his Vein first, and his other Circles second — though a lot of ghosts do what they please anyway.

Relations External

If ghosts don't understand much about Veins other than their own, the human population comprehends even less. Most people don't know that there's a difference between ghosts and hungry dead, fearing both in equal measure. Of those that do separate ghosts from monsters, their grasp of different ghostly 'species' is tenuous at best, and they understand only that there are certain people who exist despite the fact that they shouldn't.

A ghost can always find a way to contribute to society, but it's never easy. Having the support of his Vein allows him to prove his worth and be taken seriously, and if the sector's authorities are willing to put their trust in his kind, it quells the fear and prejudice, to a degree.

Being part of the 'active Vein' also protects a ghost from being exploited or persecuted. A large number of people are still very afraid of ghosts, equating 'inhuman' with 'evil'. They would see no wrong in destroying every ghost they came across, and a Vein's support ensures safety in those conditions.

Roles

In a city, a given Vein is split into two camps: the 'active' Vein, which interacts with the city on a productive level, and the 'inactive' Vein, which disassociates itself from society and does its own thing. When we talk about a Vein's role, we're referring to its activity in civilized society, and not the activity of every ghost within that Vein. Each Vein has some 'active' ghosts who act as a bridge between zones; rather than individual sectors, the Veins consider all these areas to be smaller components of a human whole.

Variants

A Variant is a "sub-type" of one of the Veins, similar in layout and system to the Bloodlines in **Vampire: The Requiem**. There are a great many Variants, though each follows the same pattern: a Variant has all of the same traits and powers as its parent Vein, but carries an additional weakness. In addition, it possesses a third Throe from the common list which it uses as normal, though the Variant can't teach to anyone (the power works the exact same way as it would for any other ghost, but is treated as a 'special' version that can't be shared).

At character creation, players may choose a Variant, though they aren't required to. Doing so adds another layer of depth to the character, in the sense that his ghostly existence takes on a more specific context — at the cost of additional weaknesses. Keep in mind that in a political sense, a Variant is considered a member of his parent Vein, whether he wants to be or not.

Variants are rare, so it's common for Variant Circles to form if there are more than three of a given type in the city. When this happens, it's usually because several people died in the same place (and in the same way), and are bound together by that small aspect of the cataclysm.

It's not possible for a ghost to change Variants, nor is it possible to create new ones during play (here's where Variants and Bloodlines part ways); it is possible, though, for players to create a new Variant for their character, as long as the same pattern is followed. Bear in mind that if a player chooses to do this, he is the only Variant of his kind in the city — Storytellers are under no obligation to use the Variant for other ghosts.

Blights

Blights are those whom pestilence has infected, ravaging the body and feasting on the soul. Most victims of the disease die quickly, but there are some who develop some kind of twisted kinship with it, using internal negotiation to control it, even if it can never be utterly erased.

Blights view the world through a lens of pestilence: every imperfection in the world stands out like a tumor, plain to see. They seem to know the deepest, darkest things about people, finding peace in the knowledge that even though he's the most obvious source of rot, he's not the only one.

Appearance: One Blight never quite looks the same as another, but they're all touched by decomposition in some form. Their physical appearance is a reflection of their social demeanor; they often act in ways that are shocking or offensive, whether to cut through the non-sense of etiquette, or purely for shock value.

Most of the time, it's assumed that a Blight could be 'alive' and still suffer the afflictions he carries. Under dim light, however, the true extent of their nature becomes obvious: open sores ooze black pus, maggots and worms tunnel and squirm, and the stench of death hangs in the air.

Descent to Hunger: The existence of a Blight hinges on his ability to develop his condition as a tool or weapon, but never a crutch. If he allows rot and decay to be the only definition of himself, he will slowly lose his will, and become an Eel: little more than loose tatters of memory in a writhing abyss of pestilence.

Role: Within civilized society, Blights are advocates and critics. Their insight into the flaws and imperfections in things gives them the ability to control social corruption. They will often stick up for those who are unable to defend themselves, but only in cases where it's obvious that someone is oppressing or exploiting someone else.

Blights will also take work in the field, sifting through the urban debris for useful resources and scraps. They are experts at separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, but they don't involve themselves in heavy physical labor, because most of them simply aren't built for it.

Advantage: By rolling the appropriate traits, a Blight can determine a target's precise state of health, or any physical/mental flaws a target might have, even if they're not immediately obvious. The target need not be a living person, either; diagnosing flaws in a physical object or structure is possible as well.

Disadvantage: A Blight's condition is extremely contagious. Any living person they physically touch must roll against their current Health rating; failure will give them the disease, which will kill them within a week. For this reason, more humanitarian Blights will wear gloves, allowing for safer physical contact.

Throes: Blights use the power of *Taint* to infect things with pestilence and rot: a reflection of their kinship with decay. Also, because their physical bodies have deteriorated so severely, they are able to bend and shape them in different ways through the power of *Writhe*.

Trauma: For a Blight, there is some security in knowing that the entire world is suffering some kind of decay — it makes them feel like they're not alone. Encountering things or people that are clean and healthy is very difficult for them, often compelling them to taint or damage those targets in order to maintain a universal state of decay.

Character Drives

- **Emotion:** Blights in the grip of powerful emotions will often keep those feelings buried. They will act on them, but will rarely express personal interest or desire to others.
- **Survival:** Blights looking for personal security tend to rely on hidden lairs, which they rarely disclose to others and don't enter or exit in ways that are easily detectable.
- **Companionship:** Blights are most comfortable with others like them, whether they are Blights themselves, or just very ill. The 'dirtier' someone is, the more trustworthy they are.
- **Enlightenment:** Blights draw their concepts for enlightenment almost exclusively from their Eido-lons; because they're more solitary than other Veins, there's no universal philosophy.

Blight Variants

Lepers

Victims of the Red Plague, Lepers are stuck in perpetual illness and deterioration. This is the most common type of Blight; they usually have a room somewhere that they call home, which is equipped with medical supplies and drugs that don't do anything for them, but make them feel safe. Lepers tend to be the most socially abrasive Variant, shouting expletives through a constant hacking cough, and using guilt, shame and pity to cut people down a peg when they dare to dwell on their 'problems'.

- **Additional Throe:** *Rattle*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Lepers are universally disliked, mostly because they will say almost any nasty, foul thing in order to draw attention to themselves. They possess no tact, and are incapable of expressing sympathy of any kind, even if they genuinely feel it.

Remnants

Some people experienced the cataclysm in the golden years of their lives, and the trauma was simply too much for their fragile bodies to handle. Though they are frail and tend toward old-fashioned traditionalism, their wealth of experience in a wide variety of fields makes them excellent advisors. Their affliction makes them slow to move, and prone to aches, pains and lapses of memory — an annoying inevitability — but Remnants push through that pain, using their new existence for the second chance that it is.

- **Additional Throe:** *Surge* (most Remnants have artificial bones, or were attached to life-support machines.)
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Because of their infirmity, Remnants are very slow to move, and are physically frail. They don't do well in combat situations, though they can possess tactical skills, or even a working knowledge of weapons.

Tweakers

For some, the cataclysm was too much to face, and so they escaped into substance. Though many of them overdosed on mainstream drugs or poisoned themselves with alcohol, most Tweakers were already addicted to their vice of choice, and were pushed over the edge when the chaos erupted all around them. They are sketchy and erratic, prone to wild behavior and a constant euphoria, but they have a knack for spreading their addled perceptions to other people — a useful tool for dealing with enemies and covering up shady deals.

- **Additional Throe:** *Fog*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Tweakers have a drug of choice: alcohol, narcotics, pain pills, or even something like gambling, pornography or serial murder. They must feed this addiction regularly; once per session, they must fulfill this need, or all of their actions will carry a penalty that gets more severe as they put it off.

Withers

Emaciated and stringy, these ghosts fell victim to extreme poverty and hardship. The cataclysm deprived them of their most basic needs, and without that sustenance, they were left to die. Withers don't typically last very long before crossing into mindless Hunger, but in the meantime, they hoard everything they find, insisting that everything has a use (even if it's clear that they'll never use it). They can't stand wastefulness, and tend to plan things well ahead of time, budgeting their resources carefully.

- **Additional Throe:** *Glimpse*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Withers need to know that their pool of resources is always increasing. Even if they can't use something themselves, that doesn't mean it can't be traded. Once per session, they must acquire something of use, even if that means stealing it from someone else.

Coilers

Coilers don't know if they're dead or alive. They've lost most of their original memories, and most of them don't even know who they are. Their bodies have vanished, leaving them little more than loose energy, desperate for a container — regardless of what form that vessel may take.

A Coiler senses the world through the vessel he possesses. In a very real sense, he *becomes* the vessel for a while, adopting its perception, memories, skills and other traits as if they were his own — an unavoidable side effect of not knowing what belongs to him and what doesn't.

Appearance: Coilers are more than capable of existing outside a body — they just aren't very comfortable or coordinated. Little more than a few loose tatters of spiritual energy, they remain conscious of what's going on around them, but they have a lot less control of their movements.

When exposed to direct light, a Coiler's host appears creepier. The eyes emit a faint green glow, the features are contorted and blurred, and their motion seems jittery and robotic. Electrical vessels simply malfunction: videotapes warble, CDs skip, and lights flicker.

Descent to Hunger: The sensations that a Coiler feels while inside a host are very intense, and can become addictive. If he's not careful, he will become so at home in his vessels that venturing out of them will cause excruciating pain — he will become a Gremlin: a mindless, parasitic slave to his own craving.

Role: Coilers can take a number of roles in society, from diagnosticians in the industrial zones to diplomats and spies throughout the city. When he can be everyone and everywhere, there's no secret he can't uncover, and no plot he can't unravel.

Naturally, Coilers are mistrusted, because one never knows if someone is possessed or not, and one can never tell if a Coiler's personality and demeanor will change for the better when he changes hosts. A general rule in the city is for Coilers to make their presence known to the authorities at all times, even if the population at large is unaware of the Coiler's existence.

Advantage: Because a Coiler's spiritual energy is mostly undefined, he can use it as a source of power for odd 'ghostly' technology. This can be used to power an existing device with his own Passion, or to build ghostly machines that function on regular power sources, though he may need other skills.

Disadvantage: Coilers are missing a great deal of their personal memories, including their own identity. During character creation, the Storyteller will choose the Coiler's Anchors and Chains, or his Eidolon (player's choice). If outside a vessel, Coilers also take double damage from all sources.

Throes: A Coiler's use of *Strangle* allows him to possess living creatures, and steer their actions in various ways. Through the use of *Surge*, they can exercise similar control over technology, as well as treating ghostly essence as a source of power similar to electricity, though this costs Passion.

Trauma: The problem with not having a whole identity is that a Coiler has no idea what the circumstances of his death were like. The Storyteller may use specific events in the Coiler's past to trigger a gradual 'awakening' of his memories, filling the gaps in his memory through very difficult realizations — locking in his personality, bit by bit.

Character Drives

- **Emotion:** When Coilers experience powerful emotions, the only way they can act on them is if the vessel is similarly upset. If not, they will find a host who is before using *Strangle* to force action.
- **Survival:** Coilers tend to stay in densely populated areas with a wide array of potential hosts. They often have a preferred host-type, but they never allow themselves to be isolated for long.
- **Companionship:** When they ally with others, Coilers choose ghostly associates before living ones. To them, the living are potential hosts — while ghosts are useful allies.
- **Enlightenment:** A Coiler's existence is about redefining himself, both through recalling the past, and accepting his nature in the present. As more is discovered, the Coiler's sense of self grows.

Coiler Variants

Enigmas

Enigmas have no clue who they are; all memory of their former lives has been completely wiped away, leaving a blank slate. Because the only real context they have is a ghostly one, they aren't entirely sure they're human beings at all, and approach everything with a fresh set of eyes. For these Coilers, existence is about deciding —not discovering — who they are, based on exploring themselves. Enigmas are more obvious with their power, because they don't understand how their actions can be 'wrong' if they're built into their nature.

- **Additional Throe:** *Writhe*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Enigmas are in many ways alien to the ways of humanity, and it takes them a lot longer to recall their pasts because many of them have no real desire to. Most are content to be what they are, even if they are separate from the human race in many ways.

Orphans

Orphans are those who awoke from the aftermath in an unfamiliar place, and floated alone for a long time before finding a host and returning to civilization. Many are child-ghosts, but the vast majority of them were reported missing long before the cataclysm erupted. They know their name and a few details about their lives, but they have no memory of who took them, or how they ended up where they awoke. Some of them don't even know they're ghosts — at least initially.

- **Additional Throe:** *Flicker*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Orphans have a hard time realizing that a significant period of time has gone by since they were abducted; a new Orphan's 'missing time' can be measured in months, years or even decades. As such, they may have a hard time adapting to the new world, and their new nature.

Silicates

These ghosts are among the strangest, because they don't remember ever being *people*, and exist entirely within machines. Many define themselves as a sophisticated 'intelligence', claiming dominion over higher forms of technology like computers and electronic systems. While they are capable of extending ghostly power beyond their hosts, they place themselves entirely outside biological classification. When they do decide to possess people, it is completely strategic — they don't prefer the organic medium, but will use it if necessary.

- **Additional Throe:** *Rattle*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** While they are capable of intense emotion, Silicates don't know they are, and are unable to process or control it when it happens. For the most part, they approach things logically and efficiently, but any evidence of their lives as human beings is enough to send them into Trauma.

Transients

During the chaos, entire city blocks were reduced to ashes and rubble in an instant. Those trapped in these places might remember the initial shock of the event, and many might be drawn to specific places that they know are keys to their past — but there's no body. Transients are trapped in a situation where they know everything about themselves, and have a pretty good idea of what happened to them, but there's no evidence of it. Their physical bodies have entirely disappeared, so they don't know if they're alive or dead.

- **Additional Throe:** *Kindle*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Transients have the hardest time using their powers to possess people. Along with using the Throe of *Strangle* is an intense guilt, and so they will only use it if there is no other option — and only if the host is aware of the possession beforehand, and agrees to allow it.

Festers

Aside from death itself, there's nothing quite as terrifying as being *left* for dead. Festers found themselves buried alive, forced to claw their way through tons of debris, only to emerge trapped within their own rotting corpses.

The time between burial and first emergence is wiped from a Fester's mind, but the tremendous force they must summon in order to dig themselves free stays with them, twisting their minds into unstable, often homicidal knots that they can neither understand nor expel.

Appearance: Simply put, Festers look like their former selves, after being buried under mountains of waste, left to rot, and set upon by carrion feeders. Their initial psychosis prevents them from hiding their appearance, so their presence is shocking to the living — especially those who knew them in life.

When a Fester is exposed to light, his attempts to look human fall away, revealing gnarled hands with broken nails, dead skin crawling with insects, and a face that has been frozen in a mask of terror and rage. As well, their motion becomes less coordinated, slower and mechanical, more like a marionette than a human being.

Descent to Hunger: A Fester must come to terms with what he is, no matter how much it scares him. If he can't, his inner monster will convince him that it doesn't matter if he has no living flesh — there are plenty of people who *do*, and his jealous anger will turn into the crazed, mindless hunger of a Lich.

Role: Festers don't suffer normal fatigue or feel physical pain, which makes them well-suited for physical labor. They don't work well in groups unless there are clear tasks in front of them; they don't mind being told what to do, but they have a hard time compromising with other people.

Because of their appearance and unnatural aggressiveness, Festers are often mistaken for Liches and attacked, initially. It takes a fair bit of convincing to keep from being forced into a fight, but when they are, they typically make their intentions clear by besting their opponent, but not killing him.

Advantages: Festers don't feel pain, and may ignore any and all wound penalties until destroyed. If they lose a limb, they can spend a turn reattaching it, and then use it as normal. Also, a Fester can control any severed limb within his line of sight, and command it to act within its range of functions. The limb need not be his own, but its owner cannot be alive.

Disadvantages: Festers have an inner hostility that they can't always keep bottled in. When what they value is seriously threatened, they find it hard to avoid immediately seeking out the source of that threat and annihilating it, and it takes a lot of convincing (and often a few turns of combat) to calm them down.

Throes: A Fester's appearance is usually enough to keep people at a safe distance, but he can use the power of *Dread* to turn apprehension into pure terror. In cases where he must remain inconspicuous, he can use *Fog* to cloud or distort the minds of witnesses, making them see what he wants them to see.

Trauma: Festers are angry and unstable, but this is amplified considerably if they are cornered or trapped. All Festers have an intense aversion to being confined or restricted from moving freely, and experience deep psychological regression. Usually this is a healthy process, but it can also be violent and messy.

Character Drives

- **Emotion:** In the grip of intense emotion, Festers will act on their feelings with very little impulse control. Their outbursts are public, honest and dangerous — they are rarely discreet.
- **Survival:** Festers set up shelters wherever they choose, and they're very private about them. They react violently to trespassers, though it's common for Fester lairs not to possess doors.
- **Companionship:** As stated, Festers don't work well with others. However, they have a great respect for people with strength and conviction, and will make allies based on their respect for that.
- **Enlightenment:** A Fester's sense of personal growth comes from his ability to do whatever he sets his mind to doing. He may have been weak in the past, but it won't happen again.

Fester Variants

Chokers

When the cities were engulfed in flames, hundreds of people were killed by the fire, and thousands more were taken by the smoke. Chokers are those whose final breaths were snatched from them, and though many of them are severely charred, most were dead long before the fire ever got to them. These Festers are by far the angriest and most volatile, but they make excellent leaders in dangerous times; their command over others is unparalleled, rivaling even a Coiler's best efforts.

- **Additional Throe:** *Strangle*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Chokers aren't afraid of fire, nor do they have any aversion to being surrounded by it. On the contrary: Chokers are notorious firebugs, entranced by flames, explosives or places of incredible heat. They aren't random about it, but their enemies don't last very long.

Creeps

During the cataclysm, some deaths were quick and clean, while others were violent and messy. Creeps were quite literally ripped to pieces, and swarmed by all manner of vermin. Their bodies are held together by sheer force of will, their insides crawling with bugs. They are hideous to behold, and the way in which they move is truly horrifying — every part of them, from their own rotten flesh to the insects that burrow through them is animated and frantic.

- **Additional Throe:** *Taint*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** A Creep's body is full of insects and rats, which makes their presence very dangerous to the living. While they don't have the same contagion that Blights do, there is still a significant risk of infection and disease, if they don't work to control the spread of filth that surrounds them.

Floaters

Floaters are those souls who met a watery end, plunging into dark waters and left to drown. When they finally emerged from the murky depths, their bodies were shriveled and blue, skin hanging limply from their bones. These Festers are slower to move than most others, their bodies eternally cold and stiff — but their ability to manipulate their bodies more than compensates for their lack of mobility. Floaters typically take shelter near water, though they are terrified of going in it.

- **Additional Throe:** *Writhe*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** As stated, Floaters have an intense, irrational fear of open water. While getting wet doesn't bother them, they are terrified of being submerged, and have problems crossing bridges or swimming. The possibility of being trapped underwater is enough to trigger instant, frenzied panic.

Mongrels

When the city fell, there were a lot of people trapped underneath it. A great many of them clawed their way through the debris, only to be ripped apart by the monsters waiting to devour them, but some had shrugged off the weakness of their former lives, and fought like starving dogs for their freedom. Mongrels are the most feral type of Fester, gifted with an unshakable will, and new instincts that let them adapt to the dangers of the new world. They may be dead in the literal sense, but they are exceptional survivors.

- **Additional Throe:** *Glimpse*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Mongrels are one of the few beings that can move through the hungry dead without fear, because in a fight, they lose the powers of speech and reason, becoming vicious, snarling beasts. Even when calm, Mongrels define things in predatory terms, rather than human ones.

Mediums

Mediums are living people, but their souls have been seized by the red sun anyway, irrevocably chained to the dead and tortured by sleepless nights and hellish premonitions.

Mediums don't just see the living and the dead at all times; they see things that both sides of the spectrum cannot. Old memories, energy signatures, brief flickers of emotional resonance that surround people and places, old voices, surface thoughts, all at once. As a result, Mediums will often drown it out with alcohol, drugs or other vices.

Appearance: Mediums look like living, breathing people, but they never look healthy. Their eyes are deep set with exhausted bags under them — the result of migraines and sleep deprivation — which they hide behind dark glasses when they can. The stress of their sensitivity grays their hair very early, eventually turning completely white.

When exposed to direct light, a Medium looks like a moving x-ray. His skin becomes murky and transparent, his bones clearly visible underneath. He doesn't suffer any side effects beyond the usual, given how close he is to being truly 'alive'.

Descent to Hunger: There's no telling what will happen to a Medium if he allows himself to spend too much time with the dead. The urge to abandon the mortal coil is strong, but if a Medium dares do that, he risks the same desperate scramble for sustenance that all ghosts do, becoming any one of the Strains, depending on circumstances.

Role: Within society, Mediums are exactly that: intermediaries between the living and the dead. They can almost always find a mundane use for themselves in any given sector, but their sensitivity allows them a measure of respect, even if people are a little freaked out by what a Medium can see.

Generally, others don't mistreat Mediums very often, as long as they do their jobs and don't say much. Usually there are one or two other people a Medium will associate with, mostly for necessity: he needs someone to watch over his body when his soul isn't inside it.

Advantages: Because of how aware they are, Mediums are immune to any powers or effects that are meant to affect his perception or understanding. All attempts to affect his mental faculties will fail automatically — though if the source of the effect is a Throe, he may make a Willpower roll to ignore the effect completely.

Disadvantages: Mediums must leave their bodies to use ghostly powers; a process that they all know how to do, but don't always have control over. Without warning, he can find himself suddenly thrown from his body, which will fall to the floor if he was in the middle of something.

Throes: A Medium uses the power of *Glimpse* to see through illusions, receive flashes of premonition, or read psychic impressions from objects and places. With *Kindle*, a Medium channels his Passion into explosive bursts, or uses it to manipulate light in order to keep himself from vanishing accidentally.

Trauma: The forces that transform a normal person into a Medium are very powerful and disturbing, but they're also very personal. One might watch his entire family slaughtered or be the only survivor for blocks — but reliving that trauma is part of accepting it, and moving past it.

Character Drives

- **Emotion:** When Mediums experience powerful emotions, they're usually accompanied by headaches, muscle spasms and cramps.
- **Survival:** Mediums will take shelter near people, mostly because they need their lives to have some measure of predictability. They settle easily into the routines of society, and lay low.
- **Companionship:** When they decide to be social, it's usually with a small group that knows them intimately. Mediums don't trust most other people, but they aren't obvious about it.
- **Enlightenment:** A lot of a Medium's thoughts revolve around interpreting the things he sees. Through his visions, he learns about the world, which helps him find his place in it.

Medium Variants

Empaths

These Mediums pick up on the deep emotions that run through people, gleaning intense waves of feeling simply by being in the same room. While there are moments when he can vicariously experience someone's joy, amusement and affection for others, the strongest 'vibes' he picks up on are darker ones like anger, spite and desperation — and if there is malicious intent behind those feelings, he will often gain a sense of that as well. He is a very good judge of who can be trusted, but it is very exhausting to be bombarded like this all the time.

- **Additional Throe:** *Dread*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Empaths feel the emotional energy of others so strongly that they are often swept away in the wave, so to speak. If he isn't careful, an Empath can find himself consumed by the sensed emotion, though there may be very different reasons for it.

Scanners

These Mediums work exclusively with physical objects, reading their emotional resonance to gain a sense of where the object has been, and its spiritual significance to other people. Scanners can also develop a type of kinship with technology that is similar to the innate powers of a Coiler, but they don't have the same control over energy or electricity; devices need to be functional and equipped with a power source in order to be used remotely. It's not uncommon for Scanners and Coilers to work together, though.

- **Additional Throe:** *Surge*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Scanners get energy readings from everything they touch, but when they contact other people (especially other ghosts), the energy can often be physically damaging. Scanners must always wear gloves, and have a general aversion to physical contact of any kind.

Shadows

Shadows are capable of traveling in the dreams of other people, gaining an intimate sense of who those people are, and what they value. This starts out reflexively: the Medium given no control over who he spies on at first, but with time and concentration, he can bend and shape the dreams of anyone he chooses. Luckily, these ghosts usually do most of their work while others are asleep, and so don't suffer the same inconveniences that other Mediums do.

- **Additional Throe:** *Fog*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** While it can often be disturbing to peer into the private dreams of the living, it is especially so if the Shadow inhabits the personal Hell of a ghost. A Shadow trapped in such a place can suffer injury that carries over to his physical body, and it's very difficult to leave at will.

Warners

In places where a lot of violent activity happens (or has happened in the past, or *will* happen in the future), the energy can reach out to a specific kind of Medium, and rip his soul from his body to bear witness. Warners often find themselves yanked in odd directions, either to warn people of impending danger or resolve a traumatic event for someone else. Their principal focus is to help people, but the power to do so often comes at the expense of their personal lives — since there's no way to predict where he'll be from one moment to the next.

- **Additional Throe:** *Flicker*
- **Additional Disadvantage:** Since their unique psychic projection is largely beyond their control (a power they can utilize, somewhat, via *Flicker*), Warners suffer from a kind of narcolepsy; when they project, their bodies often slump to the ground instantly, and it's very difficult to wake them.

Shrieks

A Shriek is trapped in a personal realm of torture, fear and rage, and uses that personal horror as a tool to overcome its obstacles and find an escape from the prison of its afterlife. Their perceptions are surreal and jagged, as though reality is panicked and distressed by their presence.

Shrieks try to relate to everything in the mortal world, because the more Chains they establish, the easier it is for them to interact without extreme effort. They are the most 'dead' of all the Veins, and so require intimate connections in order to feel whole.

Appearance: When he is still, a Shriek looks like he did the instant he died, complete with injuries that never heal. A slight transparency makes them wispy and intangible; when they move, their features bleed into each other and facial expressions exaggerate, as if underneath their calm 'skin' is another version of them, screaming at the top of its lungs.

A Shriek under bright lights appears more fluid and insubstantial: the features and details vanish, leaving a transparent, wispy figure like a sheet in the wind. During emotional distress, this can be accompanied by cold drafts, creaky noises or faint whispers.

Descent to Hunger: A Shriek's journey to spiritual freedom is long and difficult, but ultimately he needs to know that his life (and afterlife) had significance. Should he fail, he will lock himself inside his Hell, and throw the key away. His Passion will be consumed by his obsession, and he will become a mere Echo of his former self.

Role: Because of how removed they are from the living, Shrieks can travel in the Quag without suffering as much danger, and walk among the hungry dead with a lesser risk of discovery. They are the perfect spy and insider, tracking the enemy's movements and exploring the uncharted spaces.

Because they have the hardest time concealing their nature, it's obvious that they aren't alive anymore. Their presence makes even the other Veins uneasy, and difficult to get to know. They're very useful allies, but it's not uncommon for them to completely ignore someone if they don't identify with them in some obvious way.

Advantages: Because of their focus on Chains, Shrieks can 'see' the Chains of any ghost near them, including hungry dead. They can also spot any commonalities between people, regardless of how obscure or hidden those connections might be — especially if those traits are similar to his own.

Disadvantages: A Shriek's presence tends to disturb the physical environment, causing odd phenomena to occur. Walls that bleed, mirrors that suddenly fog over, cold drafts and flickers in the corner of one's eye are all common, and the only way to keep from causing these things is to stay calm, and avoid getting excited or upset.

Throes: Shrieks use *Flicker* in order to move quickly, either through flight, teleportation or a quick burst of speed. When they are especially agitated or desperate, they can use *Rattle* to move physical objects at a distance, or manipulate variables like speed and mass.

Trauma: A Shriek will suffer Trauma whenever a connection he has with someone or something is severed. He needs to resolve these ties before his personal Hell will release him, but the process is very painful, often followed by a burst of emotion, and a period of very intense grief.

Character Drives

- **Emotion:** The more a Shriek tries to conceal his true feelings, the bigger the effect on the surrounding environment. It's fairly easy to tell what they're feeling, and it's usually extreme.
- **Survival:** Shrieks are anchored to the location where they died, and are very protective of that space. Others might live there, and the Shriek doesn't mind, but he died there. The space is *his*.
- **Companionship:** A Shriek's personal relationships are based on common traits. The more a Shriek relates to someone, the more important they are, and the more loyal he is to them.
- **Enlightenment:** Shrieks seek to resolve their unfinished business. Whatever meaning they draw from that is up to them, but the end is always the same: to know that their existence had purpose.

Shriek Variants

Shrieks of Rage

These ghosts strike out at everything, their inner spite and hate thrashing out of them and razing their surroundings. A Shriek of Rage is intimidating and fierce, even when he doesn't mean to be — these ghosts get along very well with certain Festers and Blights, and tend to stay in places where their near-uncontrolled anger can have a practical use: most typically as soldiers in the fill, or sentries for the sectors. They're capable of being calm, but it's easy to see the boiling rage beneath their demeanor, much as they struggle to contain it.

Additional Throe: *Kindle*

Additional Disadvantage: A Shriek of Rage is a ticking bomb, his ferocity evident in the surrounding environment. Aspects of the immediate area tend to lash out at people, with the intention of causing real harm — a side effect that takes a Shriek's effect on the world to a potentially lethal degree.

Shrieks of Terror

Jittery and paranoid, these ghosts are consumed by the knowledge that evil lurks around every corner, and while death is certainly a thing of the past, outright destruction is imminent. Most Terror Shrieks stay in their anchors most of the time, venturing out only when it is safe to do so — but many of them will cultivate fear among others. They don't want to terrify others for personal amusement, though; their goals usually center on making sure people never lose sight of the fact that they are always in danger.

Additional Throe: *Dread*

Additional Disadvantage: Shrieks of Terror aren't very good in combat, preferring to flee instead of standing their ground. They won't sacrifice anything that is meaningful to them, nor will they give up their Anchors — they will fight if cornered or forced, but will otherwise find a way out.

Shrieks of Agony

An Agony Shriek's death was surrounded by pain: physical torture, emotional torment, even deep psychological wounds that must be resolved before the ghost can move on. Often these Shrieks are Chained to the source of that pain, whether a person, a place, or a single event replaying in the mind, but their activities in the present involve forcing others to hurt. Agony Shrieks can be torturers, but in their own minds, they're working through their trauma by turning others into survivors — whether they like it or not.

Additional Throe: *Strangle*

Additional Disadvantage: Shrieks of Agony are not afraid of pain, and willingly volunteer for missions where there is a significant risk of injury or destruction. This doesn't mean they're stupid, though; there must be a chance of coming out in one piece.

Shrieks of Despair

The most common cause for the existence of a Despair Shriek is suicide, but there are some who died alone, or were swept away by powerful loss that they couldn't control. Despair Shrieks are obsessed with decay, and the natural process of age that affects everything, living and dead. These ghosts are most commonly found associating with Blights, but it's often the case that they will help other people to avoid the crushing weight of loneliness and sorrow by helping them accept that everything dies — it's inevitable.

Additional Throe: *Taint*

Additional Disadvantage: The environment touched by a Shriek of Despair suffers age. Walls crack, windows break, support beams crumble, and metals will gather rust like fungus. This process is usually slow enough not to matter, but if the Shriek is especially emotional, it can accelerate very fast.

PART 4: EIDOLON

Where a ghost's Vein determines his paranormal 'species', his Eidolon determines his spiritual identity. It is a mark of his innermost nature, driving goals and motivations.

Every person in **Husk** has an Eidolon that conforms to one of the five types here, but for ghosts, it becomes much more than a personality archetype; the Eidolon guides his priorities, mitigates his Passion, and instills in him an almost cosmic sense of purpose.

Which Soul is Mine?

The Eidolon that manifests in a ghost can come from a lot of places. It can stem from the type of person he was, or the job he held in life if he felt it defined him in some way. Alternatively, it could come from the type of person he *wanted* to be, arming him to achieve things he was ill equipped for earlier.

Often the Eidolon can be based on the ghost's beliefs, distilling his sense of self — though it can just as easily turn his living faith on its ear, the death-event changing his nature in cathartic, traumatic rebirth.

What's important to note is that choosing an Eidolon doesn't predispose your ghost to good or evil, nor does it force him into a 'job' that others depend on him for. It merely puts the ghost's nature in a context, providing a vague, over-arching objective that he defines in his own way.

If you want a better idea of how the Eidolon model works, a lot of different parallels can be made. The Shades presented in **Orpheus** give characters a sense of their basic nature — and there are five of them — though they are closer to Veins in terms of what they manage systematically. The Auspices in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** are closer, because they're more broad, and changing one's Auspice is a tricky affair — but Auspices are most definitely jobs within Garou society.

If you want, you might even draw lines between Eidolons and **Abyssal** Castes, but that still defines a sort of occupation, and an affinity for certain skills and powers. Eidolons aren't nearly as limiting... unless you require them to be. As always, do what works for you.

Angels and Demons

Husk is about survival in a horrific, carnivorous world. For most people, daily life is about doing whatever they must to guarantee that they will live another day, regardless of what they must do for that security. Humanity and its moral codes are being consumed by things that don't possess conscience or compassion — and ghosts are no different, though their struggle is much more difficult, happening within *and* without.

For a ghost, it's not about mere survival; it's about what he is willing to do to obtain it. The purpose of the Eidolon is to allow him to fulfill his goals in a way that won't result in his becoming ravenous; he isn't human anymore, so it's much easier for him to abandon previous codes of behavior in favor of a more selfish existence. Through the Eidolon, he considers the world around him and puts his effort toward developing it, rather than simply consuming everything he can before someone else does. This doesn't necessarily make him 'good' or 'evil', and it certainly doesn't require him to be nice. It provides him the ability to look further ahead than today, and to occupy himself with a set of goals that will guarantee him a place in the world.

Systematically, his Eidolon manages his Willpower, giving him better self-control — but only if his deeds and efforts are in accordance with his Eidolon. Violating it decreases his conviction, moving him closer to mindless hunger.

That being said, Eidolons are very flexible. Each of them has a set of dos and don'ts, but they're only broad strokes that allow you to fill in the blanks as your character demands. How your ghost follows the path he chooses is up to him; there's nothing saying that a ghost can't be moral, neutral, obsessive, chaotic or even monstrous if he's fulfilling his true nature. As long as you are playing your character in a way that best suits him, and he is adhering to his own code of conduct, he can work toward enlightenment.

Should he wander from his path, he will sacrifice the very essence of who he is, and become a soulless parasite — instant gratification will take the place of long-term security, and the ghost will become unplayable.

Internal Relations

Where ghosts aren't drawn together by common Vein or similar background, they are chained together by Eidolon. It's not always an easy fit, but ghosts that share a given type of soul have a bond that enforces itself on very subtle, subconscious levels. They might be different in every conceivable way, but on a spiritual level, such groups are working toward the same things, whether they recognize that or not.

When they do, it's not uncommon for them to form tangible groups called Haunts that have a presence in the city's affairs. When the goals are big enough, ghosts can put aside their differences and work together, developing strategies from a lot of different angles, approaching a city with a more diverse set of tools and perspectives.

Separate Haunts might not get along, though; often there's competition, rivalry, or outright conflict. Haunts don't make a habit of war, but they do tend to step on each others' toes. For the individual ghost, belonging to a Haunt gives him something to do beyond serving humanity out of obligation, or hanging out with his own kind just for the company. There's a greater sense of 'task' involved, and many jump at it, if for no other reason than to take their minds off being inhuman.

External Relations

In a lot of cities, Haunts have a lot to do with what happens in the Fortress, Core and Labyrinth, whether the human population likes it or not. Less hospitable cities often force these groups to work in the shadows, accomplishing their goals inconspicuously.

There are cases, though, when the human population welcomes ghostly assistance — and in the face of such bizarre enemies, it's a wonder more cities don't follow suit. Haunts are concentrated groups that have a specific, detailed agenda, and most of the time the human population has a role within those plans. It would only make sense for the major social forces to accept that unique kind of help... but ignorance, fear and prejudice run deep.

In the meantime, Haunts continue their work, drawing on the skills and talents of all the Veins. Their itineraries and methods might be utterly alien, but for them, success in those goals is paramount — and could easily hold the key to a better tomorrow.

The Others

It's possible to play human characters in a **Husk** chronicle; while they don't have Throes or Passion, they do have an Eidolon, and can regain/lose Willpower in the same way as a ghost.

However, because the spiritual essence of a person isn't as intense, it might be wise to allow only three of the five Eidolon tenets to apply to them (as well as three of the five taboos), just to give human characters a bit more latitude.

Hungry dead don't have Eidolons. They don't have any sense of conscience, willpower or self-control. However, it is possible to force one of them back on the path they abandoned, if one can determine what that path was. Isolating the creature and 'training' it can result in a cognizant, lucid ghost that doesn't suffer Hunger — but this is very rare, and few ghosts would bother trying.

On Eidolon Variants

Rather than providing a list of sample Haunts for you to use in your chronicle, we've decided to leave those details up to you — after all, it's your game, and the groups that involve themselves in your stories are going to depend entirely on plot.

Instead, we've given a peek into the way each Eidolon is filtered through the ghostly Veins, to give you a sense of how Eidolon and Vein work together in a character. With these two key ingredients, you can define your character in a paranormal *and* personal way, and then bring it into the game with a well-rounded series of goals.

Breaking the Mold

Aside from the advantages, disadvantages and tenets, everything in an Eidolon's description is flavor text. You're free to interpret your character's spiritual path however you choose, using as much or as little of what we've given you as best fits the character.

Most of the time, the best course is to stay as close to a given Eidolon's description as you can, breaking the pattern only in places where your character's attitude or personality would otherwise suffer. The ways in which Willpower is lost or gained shouldn't change, but the individual's spin on the path as a whole can and should be personally unique.

The Artisan

Knowledge is power. There's no way the world can be what it was before; everything that society built has been consumed by unholy fires and gnashing teeth. Rebuilding it as it was would be an exercise in futility; the sun would only consume it again.

The only way that humanity or anything else is going to survive in a long-term sense is if a new world rises from the ashes of the old: one that houses the living, the dead, and everything between. People must be willing to use everything at their disposal to make this happen: technology, ectoplasm, Throes — even the hungry dead have their uses, if you know how to employ them.

The Artisan is he who studies the scorched, ruined earth for anything of use, and then looks for ways to use his findings. He explores the boundaries of para-science, tests unusual theories and devices, and seeks to break new ground whenever possible.

Priorities: The Artisan has two main goals. The first is to plumb the depths of everything this new world has in it, and redefine the principles of how things work. Resources of all kinds are gathered and sorted, so that a new, lasting society can be erected.

The second goal is to actually *build* everything. It's not enough to toss around ideas and gather information; one must be prepared to dedicate himself to tangible, quality work that has lasting value.

Archetypes: Artisans work in a cycle of three phases: research, theory, and implementation. As such, a variety of personality types are present, from all three aspects of the archetype.

The first phase is where explorers, relic hunters, detectives and researchers are found, their personalities ranging from introverted scientists to cocky daredevils.

The intellectual phase yields philosophers, theorists, visionaries and architects, poring over their findings and attempting to discern how everything can fit together.

Finally, the implementation phase is found in such people as carpenters, smiths, tinkers and inventors, and spread to others through teachers, mentors and pedagogues.

Advantage: Artisans are very resourceful souls, capable of turning even the most archaic, broken scraps into treasure. Once per scene, an Artisan can take whatever raw materials are nearest him (organic, synthetic, dead or alive), and shape them into something immediately useful. He must spend a number of Passion equal to the trait value he wants the item to have, which lasts as many turns.

Disadvantage: Artisans believe that everything can be improved — especially things they didn't create themselves. Whenever they encounter something that they did not engineer themselves, they must work to destroy it. This isn't a savage process, though; they look for its weaknesses, and find a way to exploit them so that such flaws won't be repeated in the future.

Tenets

Once per session, your Artisan can regain spent Willpower in all of the following ways:

- **Discovery:** When you discover a secret, item or principle before anyone else, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Inspiration:** When you come up with a new idea and convince someone that it is better than what's currently in place, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Theory:** When a theory you have developed yields impressive results, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Creation:** When you engineer something never seen before, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Destruction:** When you bring about the undoing of something without destroying it outright, regain 1 Willpower.

Your Artisan will lose Willpower if he does any of the following:

- Avoids working on something for no real reason, or expresses laziness about his work.
- Criticizes something without making suggestions about how it can be improved.
- Implements a theory that results in a worse situation than those involved were in before.
- Creates something that has no practical use, or generates no interest.
- Destroys something out of spite rather than testing its integrity and allowing it to self-destruct.

Artisan Variants

Artisan Blights

Given their affinity for putrefaction, Blights are experts at spotting the flaws in almost anything. They have a general cynicism that makes them good critics, because they know that nothing is permanent or invulnerable. A Blight excels at breaking things down to the very basic elements in order to better examine them, though they have to be very careful not to corrupt the things they're trying to analyze. Their skeptical eyes approach their subjects from a variety of angles, ensuring that every eventuality has been considered, and resources can be purified for maximum use and value.

Artisan Coilers

Obviously, the ability to inhabit mechanical things and use them as bodies makes for incredible craftwork, but there's another angle at work here: Coilers are on a quest to find answers, and unearth secrets. They jump headfirst into their work with unmatched dedication and focus, and it's in their best interests to make sure things are improved as much as possible; any weak points could jeopardize a potential host, which would be very dangerous to them in a crisis. Granted, the vessels they work with have a profound effect on their personalities, but that emotional bond only solidifies their effort.

Artisan Festers

Festers can utilize several limbs at a time, and are often very strong and tireless — traits that make short work of physical labor. They work with incredible speed and coordination; watching an entire crew of them can be both awesome and unsettling. The creations that emerge from a Fester's mind can be as disturbing as they are useful, because a bizarre illogic seems to run through their work that yields strange tools, weapons, talismanic devices, or any combination of the three. However, they approach their work with unparalleled conviction and ethic, even if the product of that work isn't necessarily beneficial to everyone.

Artisan Mediums

These ghosts have a sensory edge that allows them to spot most hidden things before anyone else does, and their ability to walk among living and dead alike gives them access to almost anything. Mediums tend to work long hours, filling their sleepless nights with creativity, work and theory. They are dedicated and attentive, often obsessing over things until they're complete, but it's not uncommon for them to take a long time finishing a given project, because their minds are scattered. They tend to multitask, biting off far more than an ordinary person can chew and moving between several things at once before presenting a finished product.

Artisan Shrieks

A Shriek's need to resolve his unfinished business can be a long, trying ordeal, and often there is purpose to be found in more tangible, immediate things. In helping to build a better world, Shrieks find a kind of peace; they are finding a use for themselves that is more for the benefit of others than for personal closure, which makes for a more substantial presence in the world. On a personal note, Shrieks have legacies and memories they don't want to lose, so finding new ways to house and protect what they value is crucial in ensuring that they will have enough time to resolve their issues.

The Heretic

Faith can move mountains, but lack of it can crumble them. The world of Man has been swallowed by evil, and Hell has been allowed to thrive under the glowing, pulsing eye of Death itself. The evils of the world aren't implicit or subtle anymore; one need only walk outside at the wrong time of day to see that. Agents of horror and sin are everywhere, gorging themselves on the pure and innocent. They devour without restraint, bent to the will of their great red idol — and it cannot be allowed to go on.

If the world of Man is to be preserved, people must unite under a banner of virtue, humanity and faith. Only then will they have the strength to push the demons back into Hell where they belong.

The Heretic is a vessel of faith: faith in the Divine, faith in one's self, and even faith in the Heretic. He amasses the people into congregations, and spreads his message of enlightenment, unity and devotion.

Priorities: Heretics believe in a power greater than themselves, and believe that they are an agent of that power. As such, their first duty is to amass a group of people, and teach them whatever he believes to be the true path to salvation.

The 'higher power' can be God, Death or the human spirit, or something more personal like identity or hedonism. Whatever faith the Heretic professes, it requires a group of people, and hard work.

Archetypes: Depending on the nature of their faith, Heretics can come in many forms. Three common types are Purifiers, Evangelicals and Karmics.

Purifiers believe the world is unclean, and the burden of cleansing it falls on their shoulders. Appropriately, they fall upon the filth of the world with a ferocious — often monstrous — sense of duty.

Evangelicals are more social, using whatever platform they can to rally people into self-actualization. They are very charismatic, garnering support through their ability to inspire and motivate.

Karmics believe in striking a balance between order and chaos, life and death. They tend to be more subtle and quiet, spending more time in contemplation than action.

Advantage: In situations where he needs to reveal the true power of his faith, a Heretic can unleash his Passion, manifesting an aura of incredible presence, awe and terror. This can be used to seize onlookers in a kind of trance, or drive enemies away as a type of ward. The number of Passion he spends on the effect will determine the 'ward radius', and the difficulty in engaging in actions for the rest of the scene, other than fleeing completely.

Disadvantage: The central conflict of a Heretic is his insistence that his belief is 'right', and everyone else's is 'wrong'. Normally this doesn't cause too much friction, but if two Heretics with wildly different belief systems are forced to work together, they are caught in a difficult spot — they must point out the inconsistencies in each other's faith, and spend a lot of time in debate, argument, or even outright conflict.

Tenets

Once per session, your Heretic can regain spent Willpower in all of the following ways:

- **Support:** When someone else puts their support behind a decision you make, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Wisdom:** When someone else credits you with helping them fulfill a goal, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Piety:** When you successfully prove another Heretic that they are wrong, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Glory:** When you successfully convert another Heretic's follower, regain 1 Willpower.
- **Honor:** When a follower voluntarily brings another into the flock, regain 1 Willpower.

Your Heretic will lose Willpower if he does any of the following:

- Concedes a point concerning his faith, admitting that he is wrong.
- Is proven to be contradictory or hypocritical by a group of people.
- Violates a tenet of his faith, regardless of whether he believes he has a choice.
- Fails an attempt to convert someone to his faith, or fails to give good advice.
- Witnesses someone violating a tenet of his faith, and does not act to correct the situation.

Heretic Variants

Heretic Blights

Septic ghosts often believe themselves to be incarnations of pestilence — agents of rot and filth that have a duty to infest what's still alive in the world. However, they can also develop the idea that they are being punished for past sins, their disease a physical mark that they must work to remove through repentance and good deeds. Blights make excellent Purifiers, forcing their decay and filth to engulf the things that refuse to be cleansed — or they can stand as a testament to what happens when someone doesn't lead a good, clean life, encouraging right-living among those who follow them.

Heretic Coilers

Many times faithful Coilers are sensualists: they seek pleasure in all its forms, experiencing it through as many sensory lenses as they can. Not surprisingly, their cult followings are huge, as people are desperate to find anything that will drown out the horror they face on a daily basis, and make them feel good for a change. Unfortunately, a Coiler's biggest setback is their lack of personal memories and experiences; without a clear sense of self, it can be very difficult for him to cultivate a personal faith — which makes their quest for enlightenment a journey of self-discovery at the same time.

Heretic Festers

Regardless of what faith a Fester nurtures within himself, he is almost always some kind of soldier or paladin. Their anger can easily and quickly turn into zeal: all they need is a cause to fight for, and a clear goal to work toward. They can (and often do) take that fanaticism to extremes, hailing themselves as warriors of the faith and bringers of justice, peace, victory or whatever it is that fuels their passion, but this can be a difficult path for a Fester, because their righteousness is often mistaken for blind wrath — an assumption which, ironically, can force the transition and turn a holy warrior into an angry demon.

Heretic Mediums

Mediums are prophets, seers and doomsayers. Their gift of sight is interpreted as prophecy, which they read as the voice of their faith speaking through them, showing them the way to enlightenment. Many Mediums embrace faith as a way of overcoming their own reluctance to accept their gifts, or to rationalize the stress and pressure they must endure by chalking it up to 'learning through suffering'. Through a strict regimen of prayer and ritual (and in many cases sacrifice), Mediums embrace what they are rather than flee it, and in many cases the energies they pick up on get easier to handle.

Heretic Shrieks

Faith can often be difficult for the disembodied, because the intensity of their core emotions don't often allow much else to get through. Happiness, closure and peace can often be seen as the ultimate reward to be earned, but can just as easily be a task to avoid eternal disconnection from life. Because of a Shriek's incorporeal nature, and the surreal context in which he exists, it's common for his kind to believe they are messengers of the Divine: angels, demons, loose spirits, and the like — especially when the physical environment is affected by real, tangible force whenever a Shriek is near.

The Hierarch

No matter who or what is to blame, the world has been swallowed by chaos and turmoil. The joint efforts of Fortress, Core and Labyrinth are the best attempt at a working 'civilization', but without support from those who can defend, organize and propagate it, such a system is doomed to fail.

The current system is a noble idea, and certainly something to get behind, but it has two crucial weak points. First, it lacks unity. The Fortress, Core and Labyrinth are in many ways antagonistic, which is foolish. Second, they aren't big enough individually to survive long-term, because they aren't willing to enforce laws beyond their own borders.

The Hierarch is the soul who seeks universal order and stability. He doesn't necessarily care what that order is, so long as it is solid, all encompassing and permanent.

Priorities: The Hierarch wants there to be a single, universal system of order, regardless of the shape it takes. All of a city's resources and goals should be part of this effort, and a common set of laws should govern everyone — not just those who agree with it.

Also present in this government should be a large, well-trained army. The hungry dead are an enemy that will not respect rules of any sort, and without a dedicated, united front that can keep them out, civilization will suffer extinction.

Archetypes: More often than not, Hierarchs insert themselves into the existing system as Diplomats, Enforcers and Bureaucrats.

Diplomats keep the lines of communication open between parties that would otherwise avoid each other. They strive to hammer out agreements and treaties, as impartial third parties.

Enforcers are interested in maintaining order by upholding law. Normally they won't dispute the existing laws unless they're impractical — where there's a conflict, they do what they feel is most efficient.

Bureaucrats keep records, draft contracts and organize information. They work behind the scenes overseeing projects and ensuring that everyone involved is on the same page.

Advantage: Hierarchs are the kinds of souls who command a lot of authority. Once per session, a Hierarch can spend a number of Passion, and surround himself in an aura that commands others to listen and obey. The command must be something that the targets are capable of doing, and will not push them into direct harm. The number of Passion invested is multiplied by ten yards of radius in which the effect is active, which lasts a full scene.

Disadvantage: By virtue of a Hierarch's nature, it is very difficult to break a law or a contract. If a Hierarch puts his support behind something, swears an oath or signs a contract, he is bound to it until that commitment is either nullified by outside circumstances, or is proven by the majority to be inefficient or undesirable. In order to break such a deal, he must spend a great deal of his own Willpower (Storyteller's discretion).

Tenets

Once per session, your Hierarch may regain spent Willpower through each of the following means:

- **Oath:** When he enters into a contract he knows has significant risk, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Loyalty:** When he puts his safety aside to uphold society's law, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Courage:** When he refuses to back down from a fight, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Control:** When he demonstrates self-restraint in enforcing order, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Honor:** When he accepts a punishment for wrongful acts he committed, he regains 1 Willpower.

Your Hierarch will also lose a point of Willpower if he does any of the following during play:

- Breaks an oath or contract he agreed to based only on personal interest or convenience.
- Willfully violates a law that he claimed responsibility to uphold.
- Fails to fulfill his duty in a situation where it would be expected of him.
- Allows someone else to challenge the system of order in his presence.
- Punishes someone who violates a law by using unnecessary or extreme measures.

Hierarch Variants

Hierarch Blights

Being a Blight depends on an environment with at least some stability, as much for their own peace of mind as the safety of everyone around them. Hierarch Blights will often work to ensure that their surroundings are safe and clean, or at least that their contagion isn't going to hamper society's attempt to live comfortably. Many work within the system to develop treatments and facilities for those suffering the 'red cancer', maintaining hospitals and clinics and using their expertise to keep sickness contained, but others will use their powers to clear areas that are *unstable*, making room for future development.

Hierarch Coilers

For a Coiler, having a structured environment that is well-maintained and protected is crucial. Such an environment allows them a wider array of vessels, and gives them more of a central role in society. It's often the case that Coilers will lobby for a set of laws to govern their use of possession, making it legal under specific conditions, and in that spirit they will fight for laws that regulate the other ghostly powers as well. Hierarch Coilers also put effort into keeping machinery and electronic systems working properly, to better organize and fuel whatever system is in place.

Hierarch Festers

Festers make excellent police and rescue workers. Being a Hierarch gives them the opportunity to use their natural ferocity to a positive end, and they take their jobs very seriously, instilling in people that laws exist for a reason, and that breaking them is never without consequence. As more Festers crawl tormented from their tombs, it's not uncommon for their trained brethren to induct them into the ranks right away, giving them a common enemy to hurl their anger at and avoiding the inevitable panic that occurs when a Fester is suddenly aware of his situation and left to fend for himself.

Hierarch Mediums

Hierarch Mediums are good mediators and diplomats, their insight allowing them to see an argument from many different sides and gauge how people feel about the laws that govern them. A regular occurrence is to see Mediums taking a place within law enforcement as detectives and investigators, using their near-forensic eye for details and clues to solve crimes, follow paper trails and get to the bottom of things so everyone stays honest. They are a vital part of maintaining order, because the living are more likely to trust a Medium than any other type of ghost — meaning a Medium can usually find work in a city before the other Veins.

Hierarch Shrieks

To be a restless spirit is a lonely existence, one in which illusion and instability are commonplace. Being part of something concrete allows a Shriek to stay grounded, using that stability as a safe, trustworthy place to dwell. Within a government, some Shrieks appreciate being bound to mundane laws; it helps them feel connected to other people, and it gives them a clear purpose in society, but for them, the laws and regulations themselves are secondary to the feeling of permanence. An existence rife with instability and confusion needs to know that there are some places and things that do not change, and won't anytime soon.

The Renegade

When the dust finally settled, society learned that it was trapped in a nightmare, from which there was no awakening. In the modern day, mankind has very little in the way of choices. The last thing in the world that would be a benefit is to tack more restrictions on people, or force them to conform to a system they might not agree with.

Some see the Fortress as an institution that promises food, security and work — so long as there is unquestionable obedience. This doesn't sit well with Renegades, who argue that one should be free to pursue his own fortune in his own way. Any system that imposes laws and obligations is restrictive to the common individual, and therefore untrustworthy.

This doesn't mean Renegades are immoral or anarchist by default; it only means that they choose to live outside any large system of law, preferring to deal with things their own way.

Priorities: Renegades want the freedom to live however they wish. For many, the new world is an opportunity to stake new claims, erase old debts and start clean — even if the landscape is ugly and carnivorous.

There are some who actively seek to bring down the local government, and they're very persistent about it, but this certainly doesn't reflect how all of them behave. Most simply want to be left alone.

Archetypes: Renegades are individuals, and so can come from anywhere; the most visible of them are Activists, Criminals and Pioneers.

Activists challenge local laws and regulations by pointing out their flaws. They act in the best interests of those they feel are being treated unfairly, and many civilizations appreciate their presence for that.

Criminals hold no respect for law, but leech off the resources of their community anyway. They look for ways to get ahead without effort, conniving and stealing their way through life.

Pioneers don't interact with society in any opposing way, but choose to live elsewhere. They often trade for needed supplies, but they make deals and arrangements instead of contributing effort.

Advantage: Renegades are very protective over what they consider to be property, including their personal freedom. Once per session, a Renegade can spend a number of Passion to completely cancel any attempt to control, command or manipulate him. Rather than simply resisting the attempt (which a Willpower roll can be used for), the attempt is completely nullified for as many turns as the Passion spent. This can't be used to cancel physical attacks, though.

Disadvantage: Renegades often have a hard time trusting people they don't know, or who don't have anything in common with them. This can stem from a general mistrust, but can also manifest as intense paranoia. The more Chains a Renegade shares with another ghost, the better he will be able to work with him — if there is nothing he can identify with in someone else, his immediate reaction is suspicion.

Tenets

A Renegade may regain Willpower in any of the following ways, once per session:

- **Conviction:** When he stands up to an obviously more powerful foe, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Advocacy:** When he successfully defends another's right to be free, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Protection:** When he successfully defends his property, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Audit:** When he humiliates or discredits an authority figure, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Independence:** When he finds a way out of a problem without help, he regains 1 Willpower.

Your Renegade will suffer a loss of Willpower if he does any of the following during play:

- Relents to an adversary that he has a chance of defeating, physically or otherwise.
- Allows someone else to call the shots, despite disagreeing with what they say.
- Fails to point out that a rule or law is oppressive, if it's obvious to others.
- Willingly allows someone to do something for him, even if he is unable to do it himself.
- Turns down an opportunity to break a rule that he has publicly dismissed as nonsense.

Renegade Variants

Renegade Blights

Blights find it relatively easy to distance themselves from society, given that everyone tends to avoid them, and they are physically unable to touch other people for fear of making them sick. Renegade Blights tend to turn criminal, if for no other reason than to get the things they need — but even an unlawful Blight isn't going to make people sick for the sole purpose of defying authority. They're careless, in the sense that if people *happen* to get sick when they're around, it isn't their problem, but to infect people for no reason has no real defiance behind it, and only risks the creation of more hungry dead.

Renegade Coilers

Renegade Coilers reject authority because it rejects them. Possession — the basic survival tool of the Vein — is seen by many as invasive and demonic, leading people to assume that Coilers are, too. Once they've gone rogue they have no choice but to keep a low profile, seeking vessels that don't draw attention to themselves, but these Coilers have to lead a nomadic existence, because the possibility of being discovered is often less dangerous than degrading the host too much and leaving a trail for people to follow. When they employ machines in their work, they tend to fuel existing tools and weapons instead of crafting their own.

Renegade Festers

Renegade Festers are very common, because a lot of them don't accept the world as it is. They emerge from their tombs to find that everything they knew in their former lives has been utterly destroyed, and go off to find their answers — the result being a creature that is left alone for a very long time, living by its own rules and doing what it must. Joining a civilization (especially one that is totally different than the one that came before) is tough, because they've become so accustomed to worrying only about themselves that they can't adjust to considering other people.

Renegade Mediums

By default, Mediums are already set apart by the rest of humanity, even though they don't fit the typical definition of 'ghosts'. Most human-based laws are things that Mediums are used to living in (so there isn't a big change of lifestyle for them), but there are situations in which their uniqueness is compromised, and they're forced to do their own thing, or risk breaking the law if they want to stay. When they choose to be independent, Mediums make their living as spirit-guides, private investigators and dowsers. Their prices can vary, depending on what they need in the present moment.

Renegade Shrieks

These ghosts are the least commonly understood, and tend to do whatever they like without a lot of people getting in their way. They're not bound by the laws of physics or nature, so why would they acknowledge the laws of men? Unless their presence or activities are dangerous or obviously illegal, Shrieks are usually left to their own devices, and tend to be free agents. If circumstances don't fit their personal context, they can ignore them altogether — and often, their interests can be completely alien to what most consider important. If they chose to live in a sector, they usually make their intentions clear, but they won't compromise their goals.

The Spectre

Like it or not, the world has been invaded by Hell, its demons quickly devouring every form of life they can find and gaining more ground every day. Regardless of what mankind is ready to admit, it cannot survive in its former state — it simply isn't strong enough.

The only way the species has a hope of surviving at all is to adapt: discard its previous notions of sympathy, compassion and morality, and embrace the power of Death. Without developing stronger tools, weapons and attitudes than the ravenous monsters outside the walls, humanity's dead — it's that simple.

The Spectre knows that he is not human anymore, and embraces his own monstrosity. He acknowledges that his former self is dead, and while he may mourn it for a time, he leaves it behind and embarks on a dark journey of personal metamorphosis, shedding his remaining human 'skins' as he goes.

Priorities: A Common misconception is that Spectres are evil. They don't necessarily want to become hungry or destructive; their main drive stems from a belief that they aren't human, and shouldn't act like it.

This belief is interpreted in a lot of ways. Some revel in their taint, using it as an excuse for deviant behavior, while others isolate themselves from civilization, testing to see how much they can leave behind.

Archetypes: From the outside looking in, people group Spectres into three general types: Demons, Freaks and Tempters.

Demons believe that they are agents of Hell, ranking far above the hungry dead. Their work involves forcing the human masses to adapt to violent change, usually through war, deprivation and pain.

Freaks are little more than mutated beasts, who bathe in deviant behavior and inhuman rituals. Their goals vary wildly, and are often incomprehensible to outsiders.

Tempters encourage other people to indulge in crime, vice and perversion, either to strengthen them against temptation, or to turn them into dependent pleasure-junkies.

Advantage: Spectres are close to the hungry dead, and can communicate with them on a very primal level. By spending Passion, a Spectre can scream into the air, and summon as many hungry servants as the Passion spent. This can only be done once per session, and he cannot give them complex instructions; they will do what is most appropriate to do, and if there is no clearly obvious task, they will turn on their master in a heartbeat.

Disadvantage: Spectres are as able to resist outright Hunger as well as any other Eidolon — but that doesn't mean they don't eat people. As a matter of fact, ghosts of this Eidolon can *only* regain spent Passion by consuming living flesh, whether human or animal. They can survive on other things, but their power is rejuvenated by hunting and devouring life.

Tenets

Once per session, your Spectre may use any of the following means to regain spent Willpower:

- **Monstrosity:** When he abandons a human concept completely, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Transformation:** When he embraces change that could be detrimental, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Instinct:** When he allows his instincts to trump his logic, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Efficiency:** When he uses the best solution instead of the nicest one, he regains 1 Willpower.
- **Closure:** When he successfully resolves one of his personal Chains, he regains 1 Willpower.

Your Spectre will lose a point of Willpower if he does any of the following during play:

- Exercises compassion and mercy for no other reason than personal emotion.
- Willingly participates in a human custom that no other species recognizes.
- Allows himself to be defeated by a foe he knows to be weaker or inferior to himself.
- Killing for no other reason than personal sport or emotional gratification.
- Resisting change, especially a physical one that would be non-detrimental.

Spectre Variants

Spectral Blights

Spectral Blights are grotesque, hideous manifestations of filth and disease, and revel in it without restraint. By forcing people to confront things that are absolutely disgusting and crude, they remind everyone of how foolish and pretentious their social customs are — because no other species bothers with such pleasantries, least of all the dead. On a more destructive note, these ghosts spread their disease like a plague, cleaning out entire areas of people whom they believe to be parasitic or useless — the homeless, weak or infirm. Many claim that this will result in a better, stronger population, but some do it purely for their own amusement.

Spectral Coilers

These ghosts are the sole cause of the negative attitude toward their kind, treating vessels as nothing more than containers that they can use and discard as they see fit. It's still impractical for them to totally drain a vessel's power before moving on, but that doesn't mean they can't force people to do things they otherwise wouldn't. This they do without regret or remorse, often putting people in situations that leave them mortified, shocked and often times physically endangered. It is in a Coiler's nature to stow away in a chosen host, but they certainly don't require that the hosts do anything against their will.

Spectral Festers

A Spectral Fester is a vicious, unfeeling predator. Though he can be lucid and even social, he doesn't bother with trying to assume any human guises. Though he will often feign emotion in order to get what he wants, he is a monster and a sociopath, and proud of it. Regular practice among these Festers is to bury people alive, believing that the experience of burial will force the victim to rely on instinct rather than reason, the trauma un-hinging the mind just enough that he emerges better equipped to handle the world around him. There have been far more deaths than survivors, and of those that live, few last long.

Spectral Mediums

When Mediums are Spectral, the result is a psychopath. They live and work among human beings, using their sensitivity to gain power over people by exploiting what's important to them, but the voices and nightmares they endure have driven them to believe that they are creatures tainted by evil. Mediums of this type are calmer than most others, because their nightmares are a window into what they are truly capable of — which others fear, but which these Mediums embrace. This line of thinking can easily turn them into serial killers and criminal masterminds, and most of them eventually become hunted.

Spectral Shrieks

These ghosts take perverse pleasure in their separation from life, using it as an excuse to taunt and torment the living. Their Anchors become elaborate traps; haunted places that cause confusion, madness and death. Such "poltergeists" are difficult to tolerate, mainly because they don't care about collateral damage. They unleash their destructive forces without compassion or hesitation because it's part of what they are, only to re-construct their pit of death as soon as they find themselves alone again. If they travel away from their Anchors, it's usually out of spite toward someone or something — who then becomes a target of the Shriek's depraved amusement.

PART 5: THROES

The unusual powers of the dead are called Throes: powerful bursts of emotional energy that only ghosts (and to a lesser extent the hungry dead) can use. With these, ghosts can contort their own bodies, twist the perceptions of others, hurl physical objects with a glance, and a whole host of other feats.

Throes manifest based on Vein, but it's possible for the others to spontaneously appear as well, based on situation. In this way, every ghost is capable of learning and using any of the Throes — whether through a teacher (for those powers that can be taught and learned), or through observation and practice. In both cases, Throes not given to your character by the system will usually cost extra points to buy, and be more expensive to advance if the system you use has a 'tier' system (**Wraith** does, but **Orpheus** doesn't).

More complex are the Charm trees from **Exalted: Abyssals**, but that model can work if one assigns a base ability to a Throe and builds individual effects into a hierarchy. We won't do that here (to avoid the reams of paper it would require), but that doesn't mean it can't be done.

Other Powers

If you want to develop a set of powers that isn't listed in this book, that's possible, too. You could invent a unique Throe with a new theme, or you could migrate Arcanoi, Horrors or Charms from the relevant books and use them — so long as they are Storyteller approved. There aren't any system rules listed here beyond a Throe's basic theme and the effects he can achieve with it, so a theme we haven't covered could easily become a new power; new uses of Passion manifest all the time, as do new Veins, Variants and strains of hungry dead.

The only real caveat to developing new Throes is that they become available to all ghosts as soon as they manifest. Unlike the source books **Husk** is based on, there are no powers that a particular ghost is *unable* to learn, nor can a Throe be hoarded; any ghost can manifest any power, so long as the circumstances are appropriate and the player is prepared to pay the required experience cost.

Throe Construction

Each Throe starts with a basic theme, be it transformation, intuition, motion, and so on. The themes are very broad, allowing for any number of effects to occur within them, without any specific limitations. Storytellers can place their own limits or side effects to a Throe's use, and the system you use will help to regulate the Throe as well.

Each of the Veins and Variants that treat a Throe as 'inherent' will have an individual use of the power, taking it in a specific direction and narrowing the possibilities a little. Whether this is represented systematically in terms of "paths" or "alternate arts" is up to you — the different uses of a Throe are only present to give you an idea of how broad the power is, and to show how different types of ghost (because of their nature) will change a Throe's manifestation.

From there, a few sample effects will be listed; feats the Throe allows a ghost to perform that are appropriate to the **Husk** environment. Obviously this is not an exhaustive list, but the samples will give you a springboard to developing new effects of your own. Again, there won't be any system rules attached to these effects.

Sources

Finally, each of the three source books will be referenced, providing relevant Arcanoi, Horrors and Charms (in that order) that fit within the Throe's theme. The Throe will be approached from the perspective of the relevant book, and put into a context that fits that source material. After that, the relevant powers will be listed in order of page number.

Be aware that the effects referenced in the source material might not be congruent: for example, Arts from several different Arcanoi might fit a specific theme, and several different Horrors might have applications within a single Throe.

In cases where the link between a referenced power and a Throe aren't obvious, we'll provide a little insight for you, so as not to leave you scratching your head too much.

System Options

When a ghost uses a Throe, he focuses his Passion toward a specific end, whether to achieve a small effect, or unleash his emotional energy in an “area effect” that touches a number of nearby targets. In whatever case, the use of dice and system rules becomes apparent, and it’s time to decide how the effect will be managed.

Each of the sourcebooks uses the same basics of the Storyteller system, so for the most part, resolving conflicts within the game is relatively consistent. However, each book has a separate system to manage the use of powers, each one radically different from the other two.

When you choose which of these systems your **Husk** chronicle is going to use, you’re not just picking a set of rules, you’re also determining how Throes behave in the game; how obvious they are, what abilities come into play, and how much Passion is required to fuel them. You’re also determining the point costs and learning procedures that accompany it — and a host of other variables. Since we don’t give the Throes any specific system rules, here are a few things to consider when using each book.

Wraith and Arcanoi

The system for using Arcanoi is always (Attribute + Arcanos), the relevant traits determined by the nature of the effect. Using this system depends on the Throes having a 5-tier structure, though the specific arts you choose might vary from one ghost to the next. Also, each art requires a cost of Pathos, Corpus and/or Willpower, and in some cases Angst. Since Passion encompasses everything but Willpower, it might be easier to decide that each art costs a number of Passion equal to the art’s level.

Since **Husk** has no Shroud, the difficulty in using a given Throe doesn’t depend on local conditions. A set difficulty of 5 or 6 should suffice; powers are easier to use, because there’s no disbelief in the way. Botching a Throe roll should produce an undesirable effect, and you can use the examples provided with each art or devise entirely new ones.

Finally, you might decide that Throes have physical ‘markings’ similar to those of the Arcanoi — but these should be temporary, lasting only as long as the effect (unless botching makes them more permanent).

Orpheus and Horrors

Unlike Arcanoi, Horrors don’t have 5-tier systems, which makes them easier to translate. The basic system is a set power cost that ranges from 1 to 5 traits, and the roll attempt is based on the most relevant (Attribute + Ability) combination. For **Husk**, this means that the number of Passion spent to activate a Throe will determine the scope, range and duration of the effect. A roll is never required, but can add precision to the effect, based on prowess and skill.

This also means that a Throe is a single, specific effect that doesn’t have alternate ‘arts’, and either a ghost knows a Throe, or he doesn’t; he spends the required experience, and purchases the entire Throe. His prowess in it isn’t based on how much of it he learns — it’s based on how much of his own Passion he’s willing to push into it in a given scene. Botching might

Horrors have simple effects that cost no ‘power’, which are akin to **Wraith’s** “Basic Abilities”. You can assign these to the appropriate Veins or Variants as an additional starting advantage. You might also include Benefits that allow Throes to benefit the powers of other ghosts, but that’s up to you.

Abyssals and Charms

Exalted Charms are greater in number than the powers in the other books, and the way they are arranged is a lot more complex. First, each Ability has a group of Charms that stem from it, arranged in a small ‘tree’. A given Charm within that tree requires its ‘base Ability’ at a given level, as well as a ‘power cost’ and other Charms as prerequisites.

If you wish to use this system, Throes will divide into smaller effects that are purchased in a certain order, each of which extends the character’s normal skills to unnatural levels. The ‘pool’ of power that fuels these effects is **not** the same as an Abyssal’s; because a ghost’s Passion rating is higher than an Abyssal’s permanent Essence, the temporary pool can be determined by multiplying his permanent Passion by 2, not 3.

When Charms manifest, the effect is usually public, highly visible and awesome to witness. This is an entirely cosmetic effect, and depends entirely on how subtle you want your ghosts to be.

Dread

Dread is a Throe that taps into strong emotions, particularly negative ones like spite and fear. With it, a ghost can not only sense the moods and feelings that come from people, but can also pick up the ambient energy that surrounds places and things. Once he has honed in on those energies, he can dampen, amplify or change them, and even inspire entirely new vibes.

Though it's possible to work with 'lighter' emotions like joy and pleasure, ghosts are creatures of death. It's much easier to work with energies that are dark, so the roll difficulty in working with 'good' vibes should always be higher than that of 'bad' ones, regardless of the effect's purpose.

Applications

Festers use *Dread* purely for intimidation. When a Fester walks into a room, his presence immediately puts people on edge, which can force them to back up a step, but can also put their focus on him for as long as he desires. It's especially useful in scaring off potential enemies; the hungry dead have been known to flee in screaming droves when a Fester makes himself known.

Empathic Mediums have a use for *Dread* that is far less aggressive, though no less useful. Their ability to assess the emotional state of a given person (or the 'mood' of a room) is unmatched, such to the point that he can often probe deeper and establish a context for those feelings. If he's particularly focused, he might even glean their immediate surface thoughts, if there's enough emotional energy behind them.

When Terror Shrieks use *Dread*, their presence darkens the environment surrounding them, making it seem more brooding and hostile. Working almost exclusively in 'area' effects, they place strong negative energies on certain targets to ward people away. If done properly, it can steer groups in specific directions, using mistrust and paranoia to keep people from venturing where they shouldn't.

Hungry dead use this Throe to blacken entire regions of territory. It's especially evident in the Quag, where things are more intimidating and hostile; with the use of *Dread*, the ravenous hordes increase the size of the Quag by allowing it to creep into areas that are newly 'condemned'.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Dark Secrets (p.138)
- Housecleaning (p.139)
- Dirge (p.146)
- Ballad (p.146)
- Requiem (p. 147)
- Aura of Corruption (p.171)
- Tempest Wrack (p.274)

Orpheus

- Wail (p.100)
- Unearthly Repose (p.113)
- Withered (p.199)
- Chill (p.268)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Hungry Ghost Form (p.163)
- Five Shadow Feint (p.167)
- Haunting Inflection Trick (p.176)
- Heart-Sculpting Oration (p.177)
- Morale-Shattering Method (p.178)
- Hardened Killer Training Style (p.178)
- Elegant Tyrant's Majesty (p.179)
- Heart-Stopping Mien (p.180)
- Superior Predator Style (p.184)
- Infallible Barghest Mien (p.187)
- Deception-Piercing Stare (p.189)
- Lingering Echo Meditation (p.190)
- Wyld Shield Meditation (p.192)
- Wyld-Slaying Burst (p.193)
- Infallible Ailment Sense (p.193)
- Touch of Gentle Repose (p.195)
- Through Dead Eyes (p.199)
- Cunning Criminal Style (p.208)
- Corruption-Sensing Scrutiny (p.212)
- Cunning Subversion Style (p.212)
- Iron Tyrant Mien (p.213)
- Ghost-Warding Glyph (p.216)
- Glyph-Unveiling Meditation (p.216)
- Loyalty Withering Technique (p.221)
- Heart-Hardening Method (p.221)
- Passion-Unveiling Glance (p. 222)

Flicker

Flicker is a Throe that focuses on motion, stealth and speed. A ghost can use it to travel to locations instantly, fly through the air, walk through physical objects as if they aren't there, and achieve bursts of speed that the living can only dream of.

Since different Veins of ghost have different physiological natures, the way *Flicker* manifests can vary. The same system rules should always apply; any ghost can use the Throe to achieve the same effect, and the forms they take while doing so are up to the character. The only real hindrance to *Flicker* is light; if exposed to bright light, *Flicker* becomes more difficult (or in some cases involuntary).

Applications

Shrieks, because of their loose, flowing form, find *Flicker* indispensable. It's common for them to use teleportation, high speed and flight almost passively, as if unaware that they are using it at all. Among Shrieks, it's considered a mark of status to master the Throe, because knowing how many different ways the wispy form can move keeps things from getting too chaotic.

Orphan Coilers, because they have no idea where their physical bodies are (or if they are alive or dead), have the luxury of spending more time outside their hosts than others of that Vein. However, they still rely on *Flicker* to keep their movement under control, a task that gets easier once they come to terms with what they are.

Warner Mediums have a very hard time at first, because their sensitivity shoves them to foreign places and people against his will. One of the first things he will do is learn to exert control over this motion, so that if he is going to be sent outside his body at random, he can at least move freely within that scene.

The hungry dead who manifest *Flicker* are dangerous, because the combat applications are terrifying. Near-undetectable motion makes them hard to track, but even when they are ferreted out, their instinctive use of the Throe makes them very hard to defend against, much less destroy. Passively, *Throe* allows enemies on both sides to spy on each other — and without the power of *Glimpse* (or extreme levels of investigation skills), there's no way to detect things that are so well-hidden.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Enshroud (p.137)
- Phantom Wings (p.137)
- Flicker (p.137)
- Jump (p.137)
- Phantom (p.141)
- Leap of Rage (p.152)
- Tempest-Weaving (p.272)

Orpheus

- Storm-Wending (p.114)
- Flicker (p.268)
- Flit (p.268)
- Rend (p.269)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Withering Feathered Maelstrom (p.158)
- Owl Seizes Mouse (p.161)
- Shrouded Claw Attack (p.163)
- Unnatural Shambling Deftness (p.165)
- Lunging Phantom Method (p.165)
- Ebon Lightning Prana (p.168)
- Unfurling Iron Lotus (p.168)
- Void Sheath Technique (p.169)
- Elegant Flowing Deflection (p.170)
- Lightning Clutch of the Raptor (p.172)
- Ghost Leaves No Trail (p.187)
- Shadow Races the Light (p.202)
- Flickering Image Strike (p.202)
- Crouching Gargoyle Stance (p.202)
- Mist Over Ice (p.202)
- Flitting Shadow Form (p.205)
- Fivefold Shadow Form (p.206)
- Flickering Wisp Technique (p.206)
- Flowing Evasion Assault (p.206)
- Incomparable Phantom Form (p.207)
- Striking Snake Grab (p.209)
- Concealing Distraction Discipline (p.210)
- Noiseless Phantom Style (p.211)
- Shadow Cloak Technique (p.211)
- Unseen Wisp Method (p.211)

Fog

Fog taps into the chaos, confusion and distortions of the new world. Ghosts use it in a number of ways, from creating illusions and altering the perceptions of others to manipulating memories and dreams. The chief focus of *Fog* is the *act* of distortion itself, which can be applied to any medium that has even the slightest degree of instability.

Unfortunately, *Fog* has a tendency to backfire on the person using it, causing him to lose trust in his senses, his sanity, and his surroundings. A ghost who mishandles the Throe can be driven mad by it — especially in conjunction with other Throes like *Glimpse* or *Dread* — and the effect his botches have on the physical environment can be horrifying.

Applications

Festers use the subtle aspects of *Fog* to cloud the minds of others, making their appearance and presence seem normal and comfortable. They will often weave illusions that run the gamut of sensory data, from concealing their foul odors to masking a grisly appearance. Their use of *Fog* is mostly passive, used more for disguise than anything.

Shadow Mediums employ the Throe to walk in the dreams of others, and using the symbols and events therein to understand people or convey messages. After a time, they will focus this power into *creating* dreams, or even removing souls from their bodies temporarily as a form of psychic projection.

Tweaker Blights, because of their addiction to substance, already have a distorted sense of time and space, and the world swims and blurs in their eyes. *Fog* allows them to bestow their addled visions on other people — either to give them a taste of their constant euphoria, or to confuse the hell out of them and drive them temporarily insane.

The hungry dead have a number of uses for *Fog*, most of which involves setting traps and manifesting lures. In the Quag, the power of *Fog* is most intense; the terrain ignores the familiar laws of time and space, and all manner of nightmarish creature lurks in its depths.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Pandemonium (p.154)
- Phantasm (p.156)
- Death's Sigil (p.171)
- Trick of the Light (p.172)
- Shadowed Face (p.172)
- Miasmal Breath (p.273)

Orpheus

- Shifting Identity (p.198)
- Chill (p.268)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Eye of the Tempest (p.171)
- Aid of Ill Wind (p.173)
- Unsurpassed Interrogation Method (p.189)
- Incomparable Agony Technique (p.190)
- Cunning Scrutiny Style (p.190)
- Corpse Questioning Technique (p.190)
- Labyrinth Circle Necromancy (p.198)
- Spirit-Draining Ward (p.200)
- Sense-Eroding Gesture (p.204)
- Theft of Face (p.206)
- Theft of Mien (p.207)
- Artful Conjurition Trick (p.209)
- Encounter-Banishing Gesture (p.210)
- Splinter in the Mind's Eye (p.210)
- Stifled Cry Exercise (p.211)
- Authority-Eroding Technique (p.211)
- Argument-Slaying Remark (p.211)
- Theft of Words (p.214)
- Confusion of Tongues (p.214)
- Glyph-Unveiling Meditation (p.216)
- Ghost on the Deck (p.219)
- Imprecation of Ill Manners (p.221)
- Craft (Pandemonium) (p.233)
- Painting the Sunset Picture (p.238)
- Midnight Canvas Unfurled (p.239)
- The Ichor Cauldron (p.239)
- Messenger of the Grave (p.239)
- Six Plague Summons (p.240)
- Flying Time Technique (p.241)

Glimpse

Glimpse is a ghost's power of sensitivity, awareness and premonition. It amplifies the range of normal senses to far beyond the human spectrum, and at its highest intensity can allow a ghost to peer into the past and future, as well as achieve a telepathic link with others.

While *Dread* offers a measure of insight into the emotional energy that surrounds things, *Glimpse* gives targets a direct context; the user is able to glean hard fact, rather than subjective feelings. The two Throes work extraordinarily well together, but *Glimpse* in conjunction with *Fog* can be dangerous and unstable, so most ghosts don't use the two in combination.

Applications

A Medium's prowess with *Glimpse* is such that most of the flashes he gets are beyond his control, at least in the beginning. Throughout his experience with it, the visions he receives are factual, even if they're vague; looking into the future is much more confusing and murky than peering backward.

Wither Blights find *Glimpse* very useful in spotting things of use, which they squirrel away almost immediately. Even items with no apparent purpose seem to have importance to them, and their odd findings almost always come into play later on. They can gauge an object's importance by holding, it, and are experts at tracing things back to their original owners.

Mongrel Festers employ *Glimpse* as a means of becoming better hunters and survivors. The Throe's affect on their senses gives them the instincts of an animal, able to track and hunt with the greatest predators. The precognitive aspects of *Glimpse* give them an uncanny danger sense and a spooky kind of luck when it comes to getting out of tight spots.

The hungry dead lack the focus and discipline to interpret the deeper levels of what *Glimpse* has to offer, but the basics of the Throe give them a telepathic edge over their prey: groups of monsters have been known to develop small "hives", where senses, traits and powers are shared by everyone in the swarm. This is a relatively new development, but if allowed to spread, their advantage over the civilized areas could become too great to defeat.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Fatalism (p.142)
- Shadow Call (p.171)
- Bad Luck (p.172)
- Hive-Mind (p.272)

Orpheus

- Forebode (p.102)
- Hive-Mind (p.268)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Flawless Archer Discipline (p.158)
- Essence Discerning Glance (p.162)
- Incomparable Assassin Method (p.172)
- Maze-Unraveling Concentration (p.187)
- Excellent Inquisitor Attitude (p.189)
- Deception-Piercing Stare (p.189)
- Cunning Scrutiny Style (p.190)
- Corpse Questioning Technique (p.190)
- Spirit Sensing Technique (p.198)
- Fivefold Sensory Exercise (p.204)
- Sense-Eroding Gesture (p.204)
- Ominous Portent Method (p.205)
- Superior (Sense) Focus (p.205)
- Owl Eyes Treatment (p.205)
- Incomparable (Sense) Technique (p.205)
- Lock-Weathering Touch (p.209)
- Corruption-Sensing Scrutiny (p.212)
- Words Beneath a Whisper (p.215)
- Scathing Cynic Attitude (p.216)
- Exquisite Etiquette Style (p.220)
- World-Bridging Meditation (p.251)
- Death-Avoiding Monitor (p.251)
- Extension of the Friendly Gaze (p.251)
- Veil-Piercing Binding (p.252)
- Mark of the Relentless Hunter (p.252)
- Sensing the Delicate Strands (p.252)

Kindle

This Throe focuses a ghost's Passion into explosive bursts of fire, light, weather, or even raw force. Subtle uses of *Kindle* will manipulate light and small flames, but when he is emotionally driven, a ghost can manifest his strong feelings in the form of an inferno, thunderstorm or heat flare.

Unlike *Rattle*, the force that comes from *Kindle* can't be used to simulate telekinesis. It comes from the purest, most potent feelings that a ghost carries with him: a burst of Passion is released on the world that can be concentrated, but not finely manipulated. Many ghosts will seek out *Rattle* as well, because the two can work very well together.

Applications

Mediums usually develop *Glimpse* first, but the bombardment of energies and sensory input can cause unbelievable stress. When that stress comes to a boil, *Kindle* forces him to vent his anxiety, usually to the detriment of his environment. Once he learns to control it, the Throe is very useful for protection; a counterbalance to his more passive abilities.

Transient Coilers manifest *Kindle* because the vast majority of them were surrounded by fire and chaos prior to their disappearance. If they remember nothing else, their souls are seared by that trauma, and so *Kindle* is seared into them as well.

Perhaps the most volatile and unpredictable wielders of *Kindle* are Rage Shrieks, whose very presence can cause waves of heat, sudden fires and odd shifts in local weather patterns. Depending on their nature, Shrieks will usually work to control this power — but those who don't are a moving ball of flame; fueled by anger, and feared by all.

Kindle is quite common among the hungry dead: roughly half of them will manifest the Throe at some point. When they use it as a weapon, the results are disastrous, an unfettered blaze that devours everything it touches. However, the good news is that hungry dead who use *Kindle* are less likely to develop control over it; most are extremely dangerous, but wind up engulfing themselves (and a few others in their pack at the same time).

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Crescendo (p.147)
- Stonehand Punch (p.152)
- Death's Touch (p.152)
- Obliviate (p.153)
- Dark Ether (p.154)

Orpheus

- Wail (p.100)
- Witch's Nimbus (p.104)
- Juggernaut (p.111)
- Immolate (p.268)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Splinter of the Void (p.159)
- Ravaging Strike (p.161)
- Lashing Tempest Attack (p.161)
- Bone-Shattering Blow (p.162)
- Soul-Flaying Strike (p.165)
- Furious Blade (p.165)
- Savage Shade Style (p.166)
- Reaper of Men (p.167)
- Soul-Cleaving Strike (p.167)
- Glorious Carnage Typhoon (p.168)
- Eye of the Tempest (p.171)
- Aid of Ill Wind (p.173)
- Radiant Blight Technique (p.192)
- Corpus-Rending Blow (p.199)
- Soul-Eating Strike (p.199)
- Spirit-Draining Ward (p.200)
- Falling Scythe Attack (p.201)
- Flickering Image Strike (p.202)
- Ghost Wind Prana (p.219)
- Black Breath of the Abyss (p.238)

Rattle

This Throe deals specifically with manipulating physical bodies using Passion alone. In addition to moving objects at a distance (as if with invisible hands), the variables that affect these objects can be adjusted such as mass, speed and acceleration — assuming a ghost has the finesse for such feats.

The Passion invested in *Rattle* can be applied in one of two ways, depending on the desired effect: either the ghost becomes able to manipulate larger and heavier bodies as his power intensifies, or his manipulation of surrounding physical forces becomes more precise, allowing him to push, pull, drag, throw or lift them as he desires.

Applications

Shrieks find themselves able to use *Rattle* almost immediately after becoming ghosts, manifesting the Throe as raw force before learning to focus themselves. During emotional highs, their Passion will often reach out on his own, grabbing the first thing it can find and hurling it without restraint. It takes a lot of time and discipline for a Shriek to control the Throe, but once he does, there's nothing a more solid being can do that he cannot.

Silicate Coilers use *Rattle* to turn the objects they possess into versatile physical bodies. Under the control of a Silicate, several devices come together in a makeshift body, where the limbs, fine manipulators and defenses are a jumble of different parts. These bodies are usually temporary 'golems': once they've served their purpose, they fall to the ground into piles of miscellaneous scrap.

Leper Blights have a more utilitarian use for *Rattle*: because their physical bodies are feeble and unreliable, Lepers will often use the Throe to compensate. However, their abrasiveness leads them to use *Rattle* in ways that shock or provoke others; it's not uncommon for them to pull chairs out from under people, send things tumbling from shelves, or spend an entire day slamming the same door over and over again.

The hungry dead use this Throe as a purely offensive power. In their clutches, every piece of the world's rubble becomes a deadly missile, and they will rarely pick and choose or waste any time.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Ghostly Touch (p.140)
- Claim (p.145)
- Web Presence (p.148)
- Wraithgrasp (p.152)
- Death's Touch (p.152)

Orpheus

- Inhabit (p.103)
- Helter Skelter (p.106)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Bloodthirsty Arrow (p.157)
- Twisting Spiteful Shaft (p.157)
- Pulse of the Prey (p.158)
- Blade-Summoning Gesture (p.168)
- Thieving Raiton Claws (p.169)
- Incomparable Sentinel Stance (p.171)
- Eye of the Tempest (p.171)
- Hungry Missile Technique (p.172)
- Aid of Ill Wind (p.173)
- Pitiless Scything Razor (p.173)
- Ox-Body Technique (p.174)
- Armor-Calling Kata (p.183)
- Form-Restoring Touch (p.188)
- Stifled Cry Exercise (p.211)
- Hand of the Wind (p.240)
- Strike of Dead Hands (p.240)

Strangle

Strangle is the ghostly power of possession and domination. It can be used to enter a physical body (whether organic or synthetic), and observe the outer world through the host's perspective. More aggressively, it can override the host's normal functions, causing it to move and act against its will.

Note that controlling a target with *Strangle* doesn't necessarily require that the ghost be physically "inside" the host. Some ghosts are bound to their forms in such a way that projecting the soul outward isn't possible; for them, only visual contact is required. Anything from people to animals to machines can be dominated with *Strangle*, even other ghosts.

Note that while *Strangle* allows for possession and control over mechanical devices, it does not provide them with power, nor does it allow broken devices to function as if they are in good repair. In order to accomplish those feats, the Throe of *Surge* would be necessary.

Applications

Coilers need a 'host body' in order to perform actions with any degree of control or finesse. Most of the time they will adopt 'consorts' that are aware of their role, and accept it willingly — in these cases, they speak on the ghost's behalf, and relent to the spirit when ghostly issues arise. However, some Coilers dispense with such courtesies, hijacking people at their leisure.

Choker Festers are consumed by rage, but often their bodies are so severely damaged that they will command others to act in their place. As long as they can see their 'recruits', their word is law, and there are few who would dare disobey. In most cases they can be excellent squad leaders (especially during war-time), but they can just as easily be merciless tyrants.

Shrieks of Agony are broken, tortured souls in constant pain. They will assume control over the weak, forcing them to endure the worst atrocities they can find in order to grow stronger.

The hungry dead choose hosts to infiltrate sectors, and rarely switch hosts unless their presence is discovered. Mostly, they will bleed a host's reserves until there is nothing left, and then move to the nearest available vessel.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Gremlinize (p.145)
- Claim (p.145)
- Skinride (p.158)
- Sudden Movement (p.158)
- Master's Voice (p.158)
- Rein in the Mind (p.159)
- Obliterate the Soul (p.159)
- Shadowed Face (p.172)
- Freudian Slip (p.173)

Orpheus

- Inhabit (p.103)
- Puppetry (p.109)
- Virus (p.269)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Command the Dead (p.179)
- Fetter the Beast (p.185)
- Corpse Questioning Technique (p.190)
- Authority-Eroding Technique (p.211)
- Words Beneath a Whisper (p.215)
- Scathing Cynic Attitude (p.216)
- Soul Reins (p.216)
- Mount-Breaking Method (p.216)
- Forceful Spirit Spur (p.217)
- Imprecation of Ill Manners (p.221)
- Raise the Skeletal Horde (p.225)
- Summon Ghost (p.226)
- Lord of the Dead (p.229)
- Call the Ravening Hound (p.242)
- Command the Hungry Devil (p.243)
- Dust Commands Litany (p.244)
- Ghostly Harness Exercise (p.244)
- Skin-Riding Prana (p.248)
- Mortal-Shadowing Technique (p.249)
- Puppeteer's Masterful Hand (p.249)
- Nemissary's Ride (p.250)
- Dead Fur Cloak Method (p.250)

Surge

Surge is a Throe that deals specifically with technology. With it, a ghost's Passion manifests as a type of electrical energy, overriding the power that's already in the device or fueling it on its own. In some cases, Passion can also be solidified into ectoplasm, which becomes a bonding 'patch' for broken machines— though effects of this sort would likely require a working knowledge of technology.

The Throe of *Strangle* allows a ghost to inhabit a machine and use any functions it can perform, but *Surge* makes possession of machines far more versatile and personal. A ghost with *Surge* can speak to others through a radio, appear on a television screen, or travel instantly over telephone lines and power cables.

Applications

Coilers are experts with technological devices, and it is their early work that led to the discovery of Passion as a source of power. It was clear that such a thing was possible, but Coilers were the majority among the early pioneers. Knowing this, most Coilers uphold that legacy by aiding cities in getting their power back on, re-establishing telephone communication, and so forth. It is also to the Coiler's credit that ectoplasm, when cooled, can be broken into small 'power cells' that replace batteries — though they don't last nearly as long.

Remnant Blights have the benefit of decades of life experience, during which they witnessed all of the technological changes in society. Many of them were factory workers at one point or another, and so have a good feel for machines; many others found themselves bound to life-saving machines and equipment, and view those devices as part of their bodies.

Scanner Mediums combine the Throes of *Glimpse*, *Dread* and *Strangle* to 'read' physical objects, but *Surge* allows them to infuse a device with power in order to get more accurate readings. Broken devices lose their ambient energy faster because they lose 'relevance' quicker — so Scanners circumvent that by forcing 'dead' machines back to life, if only for a moment.

The hungry dead have been known to use *Surge* to power devices, but this kind of sophistication is rare; most of the time they will flood a device with power, causing it to malfunction or self-destruct.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- **Surge (p.144)**
- **Ride the Electron Highway (p.144)**
- **Empower (p.145)**
- **Glow (p.150)**
- **Investment (p.161)**

Orpheus

- **Inhabit (p.103)**

Exalted: Abyssals

- **Inescapable Iron Grip (p.160)**
- **Furious Blade (p.165)**
- **Reaper of Men (p.167)**
- **Attunement-Shattering Block (p.171)**
- **Hungry Missile Technique (p.172)**
- **Maze-Unraveling Concentration (p.187)**
- **Fault-Finding Scrutiny (p.187)**
- **Form-Restoring Touch (p.188)**
- **Lock-Weathering Touch (p.209)**
- **Phantom Sail Technique (p.219)**
- **Hull-Hardening Technique (p.220)**
- **Hull-Restoring Meditation (p.220)**
- **Unsinkable Derelict Preservation (p.220)**
- **Shade Prison Amulet (p.225)**
- **Walking War Machine (p.226)**
- **Craft (Soulforging) (p.233)**
- **Craft (Jadecrafting) (p.234)**
- **Filling the Precious Vial (p.247)**
- **Death-Avoiding Monitor (p.251)**
- **Soulfire Crystal (p.254)**
- **Essence-Containing Gem (p.255)**
- **Repeating Maggot-Caster (p.259)**

Taint

This Throe allows a ghost to affect things with the forces of disease and decay. Illnesses of all kinds can be bestowed on living things, and other materials can be made to rust, melt or deteriorate through physical contact. A ghost with *Taint* may also be used to command agents of rot, such as vermin or bacterial infection.

Taint can be used to diagnose age, disease or the quality of a substance, and it can even hasten, slow down, transfer or cancel previous effects of the Throe, but it cannot reverse the natural aging that affects all things. Once the condition of a target has been determined, other means of treatment can be pursued, but *Taint* is only capable of doing what its name implies.

Applications

A Blight's affinity for disease is so strong that any physical contact with him whatsoever carries the risk of infection. As such, most Blights keep a safe distance from healthy people until they've learned to control the Throe, and even then, they must take protective measures in order to keep from making people sick. However, their ability to diagnose exactly what's wrong with someone is indispensable, more than making up for their contagion.

Creep Festers develop *Taint* as a means of controlling the plagues of vermin that burrow through them. Initially these creatures react to the emotional state of the ghost at any given time, but have a tendency to swarm from the Creep on their own. *Taint* allows the creep to keep them reasonably contained, wielding them as a tool and weapon only when he needs to.

Despair Shrieks corrode and melt physical objects, both on purpose and as a side effect of just being in the area. The crushing weight of sadness that surrounds them impacts the physical environment in a slow, subtle way most of the time, but during emotional highs, this process can be almost instant: stone crumbles, metals rust away in moments, and even living creatures can suffer rapid aging.

Taint is one of the most common (and popular) powers among the hungry dead. With it, they spread disease and rot in vicious waves, causing outbreaks, infestations and plagues wherever they can find a suitable opening.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Foul Humour (p.155)
- Tainted Touch (p.172)
- Miasmal Breath (p.273)

Orpheus

- Leper (p.196)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Scouring Erosion Method (p.161)
- Consuming Entropy Strike (p.164)
- Corrosive Parry (p.171)
- Pain-Eating Focus (p.175)
- Insensible Corpse Technique (p.175)
- Agony-Savoring Spirit (p.176)
- Morbid Fascination Style (p.177)
- Plague Knows its Master (p.182)
- Scarlet Venom Technique (p.183)
- (Material) Withering Method (p.187)
- Decay Resistance Preparation (p.188)
- Radiant Blight Technique (p.192)
- Infallible Ailment Sense (p.193)
- Contamination of (Form) (p.193)
- Rampant Pestilence Method (p.194)
- Taint Extraction Technique (p.194)
- Unsurpassed Plague Kiss (p.195)
- Touch of Gentle Repose (p.195)
- Winter Strikes the Forest (p.196)
- Spirit-Draining Ward (p.200)
- Infirmary Inflicting Gesture (p.203)
- Lock-Weathering Touch (p.209)
- Poisoning the Well (p.229)
- Black Breath of the Abyss (p.238)
- The Ichor Cauldron (p.239)
- Messenger of the Grave (p.239)
- Six Plague Summons (p.240)

Writhe

Writhe allows a ghost to transform his body in any number of ways, ignoring the limitations of human physiology and twisting into surreal, horrifying shapes. It can also be used to transform the bodies of other ghosts, but using *Writhe* on a target ghost doesn't carry any permanence — in order for lasting effects to be possible, the ghost must perform them on himself.

When a ghost removes a piece of himself, it becomes a loose chunk of 'ectoplasm' that is attuned to him, but has a variety of uses (this is covered in more depth on page 58). One such use is that if attached to a living person, *Writhe* can be used to warp their bodies in similar fashion. While these effects are bound by human physiology, they can still create mutations, odd growths, and some new physical abilities.

Applications

Blight has human bodies, but so much of their functionality has been eaten by disease that they can bend and shift those bodies into nearly any shape they wish. Their use of *Writhe* occurs in temporary effects that only last a scene, after which the body reverts back to its standard shape. If they do anything permanent, it's usually for practical reasons rather than aesthetic ones.

Enigma Coilers don't have any memory of their human shape, so they don't have a 'neutral' form. These ghosts shift constantly between one form and another, experimenting with different combinations in order to achieve a body that fits their changing self-image.

Floater Festers are cold, slow and stiff in their neutral forms, but their dead flesh is moist and soft. *Writhe* allows them to shift, pull and stretch their skin like a wet, leathery rubber. This obviously has a lot of martial application, but they tend to use it defensively rather than as a weapon.

Hungry dead, on the other hand, use *Writhe* to turn their entire bodies into deadly weapons. Coupled with their constant blind starvation, the adaptive properties of *Writhe* increase their brutality exponentially, making them almost impossible to predict or destroy.

Source Powers

These are some powers that you might use to simulate the effects of this Throe.

Wraith

- Molate (p.150)
- Bind (p.272)
- Ectoplasmic Tentacles (p.272)
- Shark's Teeth (p.273)
- Talons (p.273)

Orpheus

- Congeal (p.108)
- Stains (p.195)
- Spectral Arsenal (p.267)

Exalted: Abyssals

- Five Knife Strike (p.162)
- Writhing Blood Chain Technique (p.162)
- Hungry Ghost Form (p.163)
- Blood Freezing Technique (p.165)
- Ivory Spine Attack (p.173)
- Thousand Needle Torrent (p.173)
- Burrowing Bone Maggot (p.173)
- Irresistible Succubus Style (p.180)
- Spirit-Hardened Frame (p.181)
- Ivory Blossom Carapace (p.181)
- Bone Arsenal Method (p.182)
- Crimson Petal Armor (p.182)
- Flowing Wound Defense (p.182)
- Snake Bites Its Tail (p.183)
- Inauspicious Shadow Plate (p.184)
- Bone Graft Technique (p.188)
- Crouching Gargoyle Stance (p.202)
- Enhanced (Attribute) Discipline (p.203)
- Theft of Face (p.207)
- Flawless Doppelganger Disguise (p.207)
- Craft (Moliation) (p.232)
- Craft (Soulforging) (p.233)
- Shifting Ghost-Clay Path (p.234)

PART 6: HYBRIDS

As stated in the introduction, **Husk** isn't a game that can be played by itself. It requires one or more of three different books: **Wraith: The Oblivion**, **Orpheus** or **Exalted: The Abyssals**. Using whatever aspects of those books you like, you should be able to create a chronicle that is set in the **Husk** environment.

Smooth integration of the concepts you choose is about more than slamming elements together and launching into the game, though. Each book has its own metaplot, terms and definitions, and the way the characters define themselves is different from one book to the next — so there are a few things you need to consider before starting play. How much of your favorite book's elements are going to be preserved, and what will be sacrificed? Which terms are still in your game's Lexicon, so to speak?

Game Translation

The creation of a **Husk** chronicle happens in three steps. The first is to establish how your chosen source book's environment has evolved (or *devolved*, as the case may be) into a post-apocalyptic nightmare. Each book has a unique cosmology, and a setting that relies on it. The end product is a war-torn landscape that houses the living and the dead on one plane, but the source book you choose will determine what was in place before, and give you a few ideas about the cataclysm that changed that world.

Events don't just happen; something — or *someone* — sets them off, whether intentionally or not. The second step of your chronicle should be to determine what entities are responsible for the state of things, even if you don't share those secrets with the rest of the group.

The final step is to determine the changes that happen on an individual level: the characters. How do the character creation steps in a given book differ from **Husk**, and what alterations need to be made in order for players to move their characters from one game to another? The unique traits in a given book are meant to make specific character types, so how do the necessary alterations change a given ghost's nature, power level and details? How does the trauma of complete transformation affect the character's personality?

Theme and Mood

Husk has its own theme, mood and milieu, but you might want to inject the atmosphere of your source material into the chronicle, so that the context of your game matches your inspiration. The next few pages will give you some ideas on how to preserve the themes of your favorite books; a game that draws from **Wraith** is going to feel very different from one supported by **Orpheus** — both of which will be radically different than an **Abyssal**-inspired game. The ultimate decision is yours, but hopefully the ideas presented here will be of some use.

Theme is a big part of character creation, too. **Wraith** characters are based on personal emotion and inner conflict, while **Orpheus** characters are employed by corporate entities that give them specific jobs to do, without a lot of time for personal interests. **Exalted** characters are far more powerful, bound to ancient evils to cultivate chaos and death wherever they can. Thematically, a lot of the character can be lost in translation beyond the traits and powers, so we've tried to give you ideas on how players can retain some of their characters' feel as well.

A Word to the Purists

Husk utilizes three different books, but not three different *game lines*. What this means is that we have ignored all of the books' respective supplements, considering only the core books as a source of inspiration. You're free to employ whatever supplemental material you like to reinforce the metaplot of your game, but this book takes the core books, and expands on them in its own way.

There are two exceptions to this. **Wraith: The Oblivion** has two "Editions", and the basic framework and major details are the same from one book to another. There are some differences, and where they become important, we will mention them.

Secondly, **Exalted: The Abyssals** relies on the **Exalted** core book in order to be played. The cosmology of the **Exalted** Underworld is described in detail in the **Abyssals** book, but that is only one aspect of the cosmology — so the **Exalted** book might come into play, too.

Wraith & Husk

When violence and war in the Skinlands escalated to the breaking point, the Shadowlands were bloated with new souls. Competition for these poor Enfants turned the Deathlords' petty squabbling into outright conflict, and over a period of thirteen years, the Underworld was wracked by an unending Maelstrom assault.

Entire armies of barely trained souls were devoured by Oblivion, and when the howling winds became so loud as to rouse the Dread Beasts from their nightmarish slumber, the membrane between life and death was stretched until it burst. Unimaginable forces of death and destruction tore through the living world, and Oblivion feasted very well, indeed.

When the screaming finally died down, the survivors were left haunted by Spectres, hunted by hungry Risen, and tortured by starvation, disease and their own nightmares. There was no escape from the dead, and even the sun had become an evil Shadow of itself, bathing the world in merciless radiation.

The Present Day

With no Shroud to separate the Quick and the Dead, wraiths are able to interact with mortals far more freely, but there is no guarantee that they will be wanted. After all, many of their loved ones have long since moved on, working through their grief and leaving the departed behind them. Some have come to a point where they can finally function without dwelling on the past — and the sudden reappearance of that past is a trauma unto itself.

The wraith experiences his own trauma at the same time; just as the Shadowlands have absorbed the lands of the Quick, so too have his Psyche and Shadow been re-grafted. Though it no longer speaks with a separate voice, its power has become far more dangerous, a starving, howling demon that wants him to consume everything he can.

With the factions of the Underworld in ruins, the Dark Kingdoms consumed by whatever Hells lurk beyond the Quag, a wraith's existence becomes even more lonely: he can reach out and touch the living as he has long yearned to do, and he can certainly aid in their effort to rebuild the world, but can he achieve some kind of Transcendence, or is his fate sealed?

Character Migration

The themes that define a **Wraith** character are very personal, internal ones. Central to the process are the way in which he lived, the manner in which he died, and the regrets that tie him to the living world. None of those things need to be changed — in fact, his Fetters would become Chains, shackling him to the **Husk** environment, and his Haunt, assuming he has one, would become an Anchor.

Vein

To determine your Wraith's Vein, consider the Guild he used to belong to, the Arcanoi he has accumulated to this point, and the manner in which he died. There will be some necessary adjustments, but the key thing to examine is the *kind* of wraith he considers himself to be. Self-image has a lot to do with appearance in **Wraith**, and those things will affect how his physiology changes when transforming into a **Husk**-appropriate ghost.

Eidolon

The basic concept of his personality would remain the same, though his Nature and Demeanor would be consumed by his Eidolon. A key component of the Eidolon is a ghost's political affiliation, so the now-extinct factions that he was once a part of (or secretly wanted to be part of) would impact on his Eidolon as well. Guild allegiance carries a lot of self-definition — so that would be relevant to both Vein *and* Eidolon, the specifics of which are up to the player.

Other Traits

A wraith's Pathos, Angst and Corpus are combined into a communal pool called Passion. His Willpower remains untouched, and you may choose to bring him into play with as much as he normally has, or a 'reset' amount for starting characters. This also applies to Spectres, who would meld their Angst, Composure and Corpus into Passion as well.

Vein would determine their starting Throes, but the rest of their Arcanoi (Dark or otherwise) would be cashed in to purchase any appropriate Throes that match their other powers.

Orpheus & Husk

With increased paranormal activity and a steady rise in violent crime, it was only a matter of time before the ghost-quakes began. Beyond the Stormwall, the Maelstrom gained power until it could no longer be contained, and the ghost meteors pounded the earth with merciless wrath. The masses ran in terror, ghosts of all kinds among them.

The Orpheus Group went into a mission frenzy, sending Crucibles all over the country to contain the damage before the inevitable nuclear response. An obvious shortage of qualified personnel forced Orpheus to recruit untrained ghosts, often pulling them off the street and throwing them into the field without a clue — a hint they took from Terrel & Squib — and NextWorld's military arsenal allowed victory to be about raw power, and not skill.

Externally, Crucibles were largely unable to withstand the Spectral assault — much less do anything to stop it. Hundreds of agents were lost, but the powers that be weren't concerned. Their prime focus (even within the three-way alliance they were forced to accept) was how their individual entities would emerge from the devastation at the expense of the other two. A world in the midst of collapse became a battleground for corporate warfare and industrial espionage — and in the end, there was nothing left. The involved entities had destroyed each other, leaving fledgling agents to fend for themselves, and green-lighting the Spectral hordes to devour the world.

The Present Day

The end of the world has come and gone, and as survivors claw their way out of the aftermath, employees of one organization or another are caught in the middle of it. Many of them have lost their fellow operatives, memories and resources. For the first time since the creation of Orpheus Group, Radio-Free Death is silent. There are no answers, no hints and no new orders; only a low, steady buzz of empty static and one hell of a mess to clean up.

These ghosts are the only hope society has against the hungry dead. Ghosts possess the organization, the knowledge and the guts to stand against the demons, and put them back where they belong. Whether society accepts that or not is up to them.

Character Migration

An **Orpheus** character is designed to do specific work, based on his approach to outer conditions and his ghostly manifestation. The concept and role you choose for your character should remain the same, as well as all of his Attributes and Advantages (since those things are mostly straightforward). All resources and contacts the spook may have had prior to the cataclysm will be lost, since no higher organizations exist anymore in a large scale.

Vein

The nature of life and death is vastly different than it used to be, and so a spook's Lament would have a large affect on the Vein he transforms into. Because there are only four Laments and five Veins, the transition won't be smooth — a little more latitude is given to the player in terms of what Vein he chooses. The Throes that accompany each Vein would stay the same, and other Throes would be added for the ghost's Shade (which applies more to Eidolon, as we'll discuss in a moment), as well as any Stains he carries.

Eidolon

A spook's Role, Nature and Shade would work together to determine his Eidolon, but not necessarily the organization he works for. Since recruitment into one of the entities isn't always voluntary, so it might not have a bearing on his spiritual type: in other words, the player has more freedom of choice in this aspect.

Other Traits

When he becomes a ghost, a spook adds his Vitality to his Spite, the resulting number being his Passion score. His Willpower remains the same, and he keeps all of the Stains that he accumulated throughout past play (or begins play with, if this is a starting **Husk** character that uses the **Orpheus** system). The Storyteller might decide to allow the character some starting gear, though he is just as likely to declare that high-tech gear is rare, damaged or simply useless unless built from scratch.

Abyssals & Husk

Countless millennia have passed since the Second Age. The Realm's lands have calcified and shifted, civilizations have risen and crumbled away, and through it all the dead Primordials have waited in the shadows, for a time when a new Age of Sorrow would descend upon the world.

They watched as mankind built its empires and fought over them. Through the ages, iron and brass gave way to glass and steel. Vast cities overran the earth, and entire lands were claimed in the name of freedom and liberty, only to fall into moral bankruptcy and needless war — the food and drink of the Deathlords.

Sword and shield were replaced by cannon and rifle, which in turn gave way to harnessing the true essence of matter itself: the atomic bomb. Millions were sent to the Underworld during this time, bloating the Deathlord's armies like fattened ticks, and at the end of man's rule over the earth, the explosions rippled straight down into the Labyrinth itself, turning the very fabric of Creation inside out. The Deathlords were awakened, and looked upon their new frontier with a glee they had not felt for eons. Finally, it was time for them to emerge from their dread tombs, and choose their champions.

The Present Day

For most, the cataclysm was a time of horror and death, where buildings were crumbled, fires engulfed the innocent, and people ran screaming for their lives only to be devoured by the hungry dead. However, some were irreparably twisted and reborn in that chaos, granted incredible power in exchange for allegiance.

For them, the hellish nightmare that consumed the world was less a tragedy than a baptism — these are the Abyssals, empowered by the taint of Death and Destruction, able to walk between life and death with obligation to neither.

And yet, some do not wish to serve. Many Abyssals in this new world struggle to free themselves of their dark pacts, seeking to redeem themselves and escape slavery by aiding the human effort. After all, they were human once, and the world still belongs to Man — even if he must be taught to master it.

Character Migration

Obviously, there are major changes that need to occur before bringing an Abyssal Exalted into a **Husk** chronicle. The most important thing to note is that **Husk** is a modern setting, so the eloquent language is for the most part absent — unless you decide that the Abyssal retains the mentality of his ancient master. Also, this is not an age of swords, steeds and ships; it's one of guns, cars and industrial machines. Though the power level and cinematic of **Exalted** characters can stay, a lot of the magic of the ancient world will not.

Vein

An Abyssal's Vein will be largely determined by the Deathlord he serves, if anything — but a more mythical approach to the Veins might help to determine the ghost's physical nature. Blights could be living manifestations of disease, and Shrieks could be deadly emotions given form. Given the loose, flowing nature of Abyssal characters, choose whichever Vein is most appropriate, and choose the right skills to accommodate the appropriate Throe effects (which could work in the same fashion as Abyssal Charms).

Eidolon

The ghost can translate his Nature and Caste directly into his Eidolon with much less effort. The Eidolon would determine the role his Deathlord has assigned him, or it could be a path he has chosen himself — but in choosing the Eidolon, he could select a number of skills upon which to build more Throes.

Other Traits

An Abyssal character retains his Willpower score, but to determine Passion, his Essence rating is multiplied by 2, and not 3 (assuming that the character is being moved to a game with characters from **Wraith** or **Orpheus** in it, this will keep the power level a little more fair). If all of the characters in the group are from Abyssal stock, you may ignore this rule.

An optional rule (to enforce more balance) is to strip the character of all of his Backgrounds (other than *Liege*, *Necromancy* and *Whispers*, p.133-135).

PART 8: APPENDIX

Ectoplasm

Ectoplasm is ghostly substance: solidified Passion of which all ghosts (including hungry dead) are composed. Ectoplasm comes in many forms, depending on its environmental conditions, location and who (or what) it's attached to.

Within a ghost, ectoplasm behaves in a manner suitable to his Vein. On a Blight it crawls like a swarm of insects, while it will retain the form of muscle and bone on a Fester or Medium. In Coilers, ectoplasm is much less dense, acting more like a free-floating gas or very thin liquid when he isn't inside a host. The same is true of a Shriek, though it tends to react very strongly to the ghost's emotional state: it will bubble and steam when he is angry, and flow like thick syrup when he is morose.

Outside a ghostly entity, ectoplasm takes on a life of its own that depends on its environment. The Labyrinth is where it thrives, down in the deep, filthy areas where death and decay are everywhere. In these places it will grow and spread like a fungus, which some use as a source of food; it holds little nutritional value, but it is highly addictive and causes side effects similar to pigment (**Orpheus, p.244**).

Ectoplasm reacts evasively when exposed to light, but at the same time has a host of uses. It can be applied as an adhesive, ingested as an anesthetic or pain-killer, or heated into a corrosive acid. If cooled and broken into chunks, it can function like a temporary battery, and if focused through a ghost can become a power source that replaces electricity.

Perhaps the most unsettling use of ectoplasm, though, is the Throe of *Writhe*: with it, a ghost can bend, stretch, twist, pull and shape his body (and the bodies of others, if the ectoplasm is used as a topical gel) into any imaginable shape, with varying density, texture and durability.

On its own, ectoplasm will dissipate after about an hour of exposure to normal light conditions. The only way to keep it for long periods is in a cold environment that is completely absent of light.

Gear

When the cataclysm erupted, solar flares and EMPs rendered most electronic technology useless, burning out most of the components in devices that were active during that time. For a long while, the world sat in silent darkness, and it was a long time before cities could get their power grids working and rebuild the technology they'd lost.

In the present day, most technology is possible, though it is exceedingly rare. The devices themselves are easy enough to locate (and repair, if the right skills are used), but power sources are another matter. Ectoplasm is a chief ingredient in most of the things that ghosts use, meaning that in addition to the standard gear one might expect in **Husk**, a number of odd 'artifacts' are in existence. Below are a few items that one might find (or can devise, if the materials are available), taken from each of the three source books.

Wraith: The Oblivion

- Soulfire (1st Ed., p.246)
- Nhudri's Embrace (1st Ed., p.246)
- Souled Weapons (1st Ed., p.249)

Orpheus

- Ghostshot Ammo (p.277)
- Kirlian Camera (p.277)
- Kirlian Goggles (p.277)
- Labyrinth Cage (p.277)

Exalted: The Abyssals

- Grave-Prison Chains (p.257)
- Visage-Distorting Mask (p.258)
- Ghost-Strengthening Links (p.258)
- Repeating Maggot-Caster (p.259)
- Shroud of the Unquiet Dead (p.261)

Husk Bestiary

Razorweeds

Rolling through cities on the howling winds of the Quag, Razorweeds are similar in form to tumbleweeds, aside from their 'thorns' being a mess of slashing claws and rusty teeth. They move at incredible speed, turning on a dime as their living targets dodge and scatter. When they do catch a target, they rip through him like a moving blender, catching loose bits of flesh and gore within their tangled vines and branches.

Thankfully, Razorweeds have no sensory organs (other than a supernatural hunger that guides their motion). They can dodge if an enemy is close enough, and they cannot be shot, slashed or attacked physically, but they are extremely flammable. If exposed to any degree of fire, they will ignite immediately, reduced to smoldering tendrils of dead weed within three rounds.

Insects

There are a million species of insect that live under the ground, especially in the Labyrinth and beneath the parched terrain of the Quag. These bugs are similar in shape and variety to ants, mosquitoes, leeches and bees, but much larger and more vicious. When they feed, they will do so in the manner that best fits their form (ants bite, mosquitoes and leeches attach to the flesh and suck juices, and bees sting), doing lethal damage to their prey. They are edible, but are made primarily of ectoplasm, and bestow the same euphoria and addiction. Some species are also carriers of the Red Plague, but it's impossible to tell which ones.

Insects of this type are very difficult to kill, because they hunt in swarms. The best way to deal with them is to avoid areas where they frequent, but they can be destroyed by fire, and are as sensitive to light.

Raptyles

These creatures resemble large tree frogs, aside from their mouths full of shark-like teeth and raptor-like talons. They are mostly found in the Quag on rock walls and dead trees, and drop on passers-by from above. Once they've landed, they dig their claws into the top of the victim's head, and burrow downward in a feeding frenzy. Once they reach the stomach, they burst outward, and the victim's eviscerated shell slumps to the ground.

It is very, very difficult to get a raptyle off of a victim once it starts to feed. The merciful thing to do is shoot the victim dead, because while the brain itself feels no pain, the sensation of being fed upon is horrifying, and watching it is gut-wrenching. The only way to destroy the creature while it is feeding is to set the victim ablaze, trapping the raptyle in a tomb of burning meat.

The Skinless

Beyond the worst of the Quag's storms is a barren, parched region where no life can survive for very long. Part of that is the searing heat and blinding crimson light, but a tribe of dead does reside in that area, hunting the various animal species and any unwary travelers. Once they secure prey, they will remove the victim's skin (a process that doesn't kill the victim, since no living thing can exist there), replacing their own scorched, leathery flesh and leaving the skinned victim to wander blindly in the desert.

Not much is known about the Skinless — they don't speak any comprehensible languages, they don't seem to employ Throes in any way, and though they are obviously not alive, they don't feed on living flesh. In all respects, these tribal savages are a mystery, and it would seem as though they prefer to remain that way. The best way to avoid them is to stay out of the Quag, since they've never been seen outside their territory.

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