

# WHITE WOLF QUARTERLY

SPRING 2008  
VOLUME 7

**FREE**

APRIL TO  
JULY

## SCION: RAGNAROK

THE END TIMES ARE HERE

## VAMPIRE: THE REQUIEM

GANGREL: SAVAGE AND MACABRE

## HUNTER: THE VIGIL

AND WHAT IT'S NOT

## CHANGELING: THE LOST

LORDS OF SUMMER

FAN SUBMISSIONS FOR MAGE,  
PROMETHEAN, EXALTED, AND MORE!

NEWS EVENTS AND MORE



# APRIL 2008 – JULY 2008 RELEASES

## WHITE WOLF GAME STUDIO



### APRIL 2008

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| TRIBES OF THE MOON                            | Werewolf | RPG      | 978-158846-742-3 | 30103   | \$29.99  |
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| TITLE                                       | IMPRINT | CATEGORY | ISBN             | STOCK # | US PRICE |
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| DAUGHTER OF NEXUS                           | Exalted | SAS      | N/A              | 80909   | \$6.99   |
| SCION COMPANION PT. 2                       | Scion   | PDF      | N/A              | 75007   | \$5.49   |

### JUNE 2008

| TITLE  | IMPRINT    | CATEGORY | ISBN             | STOCK # | US PRICE |
|--|------------|----------|------------------|---------|----------|
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| HUNTER QUICKSTART 2  | Hunter     | RPG      | N/A              | 55559   | \$0.00   |

### JULY 2008

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| SCION COMPANION PT. 4   | Scion   | PDF      | N/A              | 75010   | \$5.49   |



# HOWLINGS

Greetings, fans and friends. We have worked diligently to bring you the latest White Wolf eQuarterly, the contents of which I assume you will devour with gusto. What's in store for your reading pleasures? Some exclusive excerpts of upcoming books (tasty tidbits of content); interviews galore (get to know your game designers); and, of course, the winners of our fiction/art contest, chosen by me, the wonderful intern editor. Oh yeah, and if you're really good, there might just be a special (anti)preview of *Hunter: The Vigil* thrown in for good measure. Enjoy!

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# A PAGE (OR TWO) FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE

This excerpt is taken from the upcoming **Mage: The Awakening** supplement, **Grimoire of Grimoires**. Enjoy *The Book of Life*, one of many grimoires available in the book.

## *The Book of Life*

*The Book of Life* is a leather-bound grimoire written more than 400 years ago. It contains a series of rites all relating to life and health, including the rare and powerful rite "Vital Balance," which allows for indefinite life extension. This last spell has rarely been recorded and is difficult to safely cast as an improvised spell. This book also makes this spell easier to use.

*The Book of Life* appears as a large tome bound in thin and exquisitely prepared doe hide, dyed forest green and chased with silver. Its age is not at all apparent; the pages are still flexible, the ink has not faded, the silver is untarnished and, most impressively, the leather of the cover is fresh and flexible, and almost still feels alive. Mortal scholars and appraisers who have studied this book have all pronounced it to be a product of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but are somewhat puzzled by its excellent state of preservation. To both mages and Sleepers alike, when the book is closed, it appears to be a mundane, if also large and beautiful leather-bound book. However, whenever and as long as it is opened, it seems almost to radiate the warmth and presence of a living being, instilling a vague sense of peace and joy upon everyone within a half dozen yards.

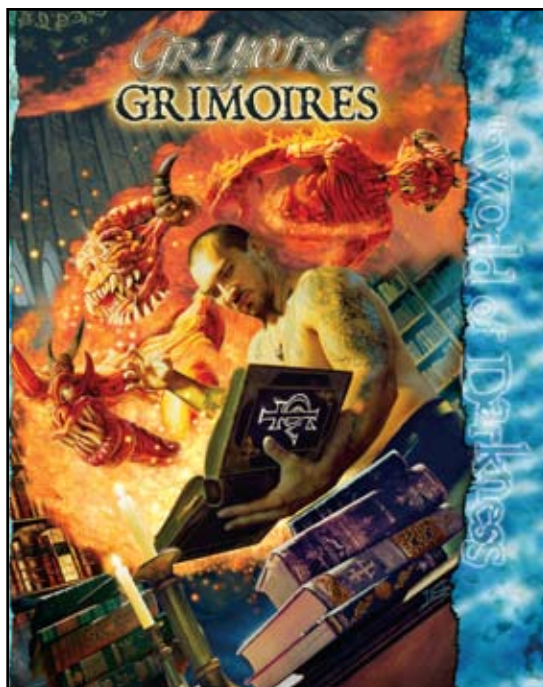
## *History*

*The Book of Life* is attributed to Nicholas Kollar, an Obrimos mage belonging to the Mysterium. Kollar

was known to have worked as both an alchemist and a physician, in Prague in 1572. He had a keen interest in magics for both healing and prolonging life. His surviving papers also contain claims that he perfected something he called *The Lesser Philosopher's Stone*. Many mages now believe Kollar's work in alchemy is responsible for both the book's excellent condition and the fact that its presence can enhance the power of any of the rites it contains. No record of either the nature of *The Lesser Philosopher's Stone* or its properties survive, but Mysterium researchers believe it was a physical substance that was somehow fused with the book's pages or ink.

Despite its origins as a grimoire designed to preserve life, *The Book of Life* has had a troubled and violent history. Both the powerful rites it contains and the book's own unique properties can literally make the difference between life and death. As such, many mages have considered it worth killing for. Kollar wrote *The Book of Life* when he was 67, supposedly for his dear friend and fellow mage Jan Tyl, in order to enable him also to avoid the ravages of old age. Jan Tyl died in a duel 36 years later, and at this point Kollar vanished from all mundane and magical records. He is rumored to have lived for several centuries after this, and some mages believe he is still alive. *The Book of Life* was missing when other Mysterium mages came to collect Tyl's effects. The rumor at the time was that the unnamed duelist stole it and several other of Tyl's books. At this point, the grimoire vanishes for more than a century.

Although never proven, the break-in and fire at the estate of the infamously debauched mage William of Lyon in 1724 was said to involve the theft of this book, despite William claiming to have never heard





# MAGE

## THE AWAKENING

of it. The book next appears at a London auction house in 1791, after the elderly French aristocrat and reclusive mage Colette De'Raine, was struck by lightning and killed, in what was presumed to have been a magical attack by an unknown assailant. The book was purchased by Lady Jane Leopold, the wealthy widow of Cornish mine owner and Mastigos mage Geoffrey Leopold who was known to have a keen interest in old and exotic manuscripts.

The time the book spent in Lady Leopold's possession forms several of the most mysterious decades of its long history. Lady Leopold was known to be a Sleeper, but she steadfastly refused to sell the book to any of the several buyers who attempted to purchase it. In addition, mages from the Mysterium made three separate attempts to steal the book, but were always blocked by an impressive series of coincidences that several of the mages involved ascribed to exceptionally well-concealed Covert magic. To further this impression, Lady Leopold is known to have lived to an age of at least 98. In 1839, her London townhouse burned down, and she is presumed to have died in the fire, although her body was never found. Rumors speak of her having a mysterious companion, who is widely assumed to be an unknown mage, and who a few people identify as Nicholas Kollar.

Report filed in the Guardians of the Veil Archive, May 17, 1956

The review of the 1931 murder of the mage Blau Nacht in his apartment is now believed to be associated with The Book of Life. The runes that were burned into his dying body were clearly designed to prevent him from returning as a ghost. This, combined with the strong evidence that the purpose of the break-in was clearly to both steal some item of great value and kill Blau Nacht, strongly suggests the book was the reason for the theft and murder. The identity of his assailant remains unknown, but we are currently investigating leads that mages associated with the Nazi party may have been involved in his murder, especially because of Blau Nacht's outspoken communism.





The book was found undamaged in a chest located in the basement of Lady Leopold's townhouse. In the auction that followed, a London chapter of the Mysterium purchased the book, which it immediately placed in its Athenaeum. The book remained there for almost 50 years, where it was carefully studied by several dozen mages. This was the only time that copies of the "Vital Balance" rote were known to have been made, but all of them soon vanished into various private libraries. The Athenaeum was located near the London docks, and during the chaos caused by the massive dockworker strike of 1889 was broken into, and several items including *The Book of Life* were stolen.

The book next resurfaced in Germany in 1946 in a cavern containing a variety of other Nazi treasures. Nothing certain is known about the history of the book from 1889 to 1946, but some mages assume that at least some of the attacks on mages that were common in post WWI Germany were due to attempts to acquire this book. The most infamous of these incidents was a series of three gas main explosions under the house of a mage believed to own this grimoire. The presumed owner survived all these explosions, but the attacker did not. She was found on the floor of her nearby house by the police, an apparent victim of spontaneous human combustion. The local Guardians of the Veil investigated and discovered she was killed by a powerful being from the Abyss, apparently summoned by the vast backlash.

Brought back with him to the United States by a soldier with an interest in old books, the fate of the tome remained unknown until the soldier died in a car accident in 1959 and his wife sold it at an auction in New Jersey. At this point, the many mages who had been searching for the book since it vanished shortly before WWII now redoubled their efforts to acquire it. For the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> the book remained in the United States.

Between 1978 and 1992, the book was owned by the Mysterium and stored in its New York headquarters, where it was regularly used by the leadership of this branch. A small and exceedingly wealthy cabal known as the Country Group, located in the wealthy New

York suburbs of Westchester County, stole *The Book of Life* and several other valuable grimoires from this Athenaeum in 1992. The thieves managed to do so in a manner that left no evidence of their identity.

With the increase in the ease of both global communication and international travel, the members of the Country Group have also done their best to keep all hints of the book's whereabouts a secret, knowing that mages from all over the globe are attempting to find it. Part of this effort involved obtaining a

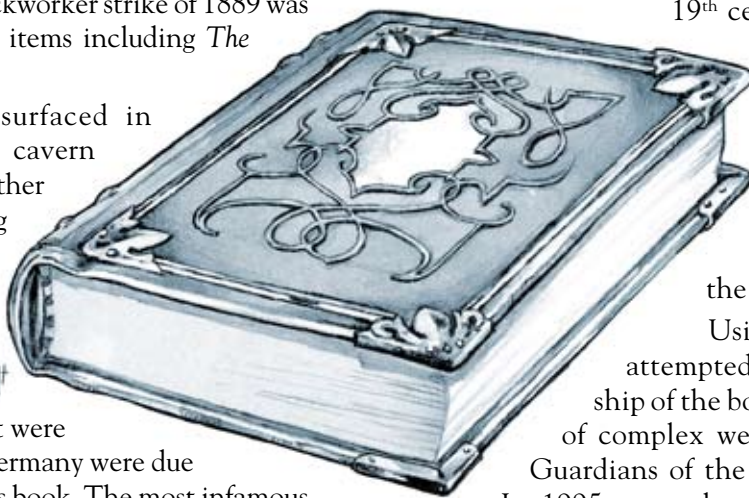
19<sup>th</sup> century copy of the book and using it to make a modern copy. Both copies contain all the rites that are found in *The Book of Life*, but provide none of the other benefits of owning the original.

Using these two copies, they attempted to conceal their ownership of the book behind the same sort of complex web of lies for which the Guardians of the Veil are so well noted.

In 1995, several members of the Country Group leaked a few discreet rumors about owning *The Book of Life*, and then allowed one of the thieves who showed up to attempt to steal it to discover the location of the heavily guarded 19<sup>th</sup> century copy. Thinking this was the actual book, the thief stole it. Since that time, the owners have kept track of the thief and leaked information about the location of the copy she stole to other prospective thieves. Then, they let it be known they still possess a modern copy of *The Book of Life* and charge mages high prices, including both tass and copies of valuable rites, to be able to study it and learn the rites. As a result, almost no one suspects they also possess the original.

## Contents

The book contains several relatively common Life rites from **Mage: The Awakening** that are all related to health and healing. These rites are: "Body Control" (p. 182), "Self-Healing" (p. 183), "Self-Purging" (p. 183), "Banish Plague" (p. 185) and "Healing Heart" (p. 186). Unlike the versions listed in **Mage: The Awakening**, for each of these spells the Medicine skill is the one used when performing the rote. In addition,



The *Book of Life* contains the spells “Body Mastery” and “Vital Balance.”

### *Body Mastery (Life . . .)*

This spell enhances the mage’s health, boosts the speed of his healing and lengthens his lifespan.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (1 scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** 1 Mana (optional)

The mage can also use this spell to cause all forms of damage to heal more rapidly. Each success allows the mage to halve the time (round down) it takes to heal bashing, lethal and aggravated damage. 2 successes allow a mage to heal 1 lethal wound in 12 hours and 1 aggravated wound in a little over a day and a half. To gain this benefit, the mage must either cast this spell with the required duration or recast it whenever the duration expires. This healing is compatible with the Quick Healer Merit. Each success also acts as 1 automatic success on all extended and instant rolls to resist diseases, poisons or drugs. Finally, characters who spend most of their time (at least 75%) under the influence of this spell lengthen their life spans by 25 years for every dot of the Life Arcana they possess. Decrease this latter bonus proportional to the amount of time the character spends using this spell. By spending 1 Mana, the Duration of this spell can be made to last for 1 day. Most mages who use this spell cast it at the beginning of the day, as part of their morning rituals.

**Mysterium Rote: Enduring Body**

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Life

One of the greatest and most profound limitations of the life of all scholars and experimenters is the unavoidable combination of ill health and mortality that cuts short their ability to continue their research. Although no form of magic can avert these universal problems, this spell can certainly postpone them.

### *Vital Balance (Life . . . . . + Death . . . . .)*

This spell slows down aging. The mage ages far more slowly and thus can live much longer than normal.

**Practice:** Ruling

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Prolonged (1 scene)

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 1 Mana

By precisely balancing the forces of life and death within the target’s body, the caster slows the rate by which the target ages by a factor equal to her level in the Death Arcanum + her Gnosis. A mage who has 4 dots in Death and a Gnosis of 3 who uses this spell on herself ages 1 day for every 7 (4 + 3) days that pass while she is under the influence of this spell. Mages who use this spell regularly often live for several centuries. Unless the mage learns 6 dots in the Life Arcanum, she cannot use the advanced prolongation table to cast this spell, and even then the maximum possible duration of this spell is only 1 week.

Rolling a Dramatic Failure on this spell causes the mage to automatically age 1 year, which serves as a great disincentive against attempting to prolong this spell without using ritual casting. Most mages use ritual casting to allow them to cast this spell with a duration of several days. In addition, many mages who regularly use this spell mark themselves with a small tattoo or scar in the shape of the appropriate Atlantean runes needed to prolong the spell. If the mage rolls an Exceptional Success when casting “Vital Balance” she does not age at all for the duration. There are rumors of mages many centuries old who manage to regularly manage this level of success with the “Vital Balance” spell.

The slowed aging due to this spell is compatible with the Death spell “Steal Lifespan.” It is also compatible with the “Body Mastery” spell described above, but the additional years granted by either of the aforementioned spells are not affected by the slowed aging provided by the “Vital Balance” spell; they are simply added to the mage’s lifespan. In addition, this spell cannot be cast by or on a Tremere Liche; attempts to do either automatically fail. All other mages can cast this spell on both themselves and others with equal ease.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Life

Nicholas Kollar was a skilled and brilliant occultist who was also nominally a member of the Mysterium. As a result, he designed this rote to make the best use of his prodigious intellect and his occult studies.



# WEREWOLF THE FORSAKEN

## Love of the Tribes

An exclusive excerpt from the upcoming **Werewolf: The Forsaken** supplement, **Tribes of the Moon**. In this sample is some mythology from the Blood Talons, as well as a new power for the Tribes: Milestone Gifts.

### *Frankenstein vs. the Wolf-Man*

This story comes from my grandfather, Emmet Royce. You're probably not going to believe it, but Grampa Emmet never lied to me my whole life, so I'm not going to say it's not true. Grampa Changed back in '41, just a few months before Pearl Harbor. He and his pack had a little patch of hardscrabble in Iowa to call their own, nothing too special, never really had any big problems. But the night of December 7th, the pack's seer wakes up screaming about some huge turmoil in the Shadow, something not too unlike the end of the damn world. So naturally, they hear about the attack, they do what any red-blooded American boy would have done, Uratha or not: They signed up.

Somehow, and I was never entirely sure on the details, they struck a deal with one of the bloated bureaucracy-spirits that popped up like weeds as soon as the Army started mobilizing. The spirit made sure they all got sent to the same boot camp, all shipped out at the same time, even all ended up in the same squad. Grampa's got a hundred stories about that war, from D-Day to Berlin, but he tells most of them better than I do.

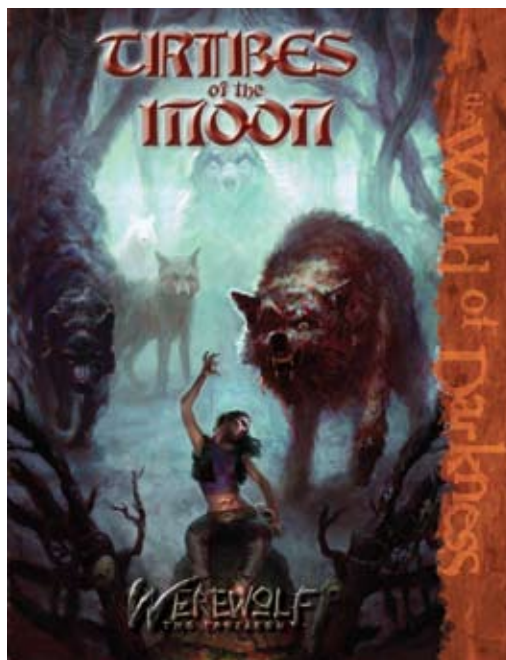
So anyways, a few months in, and the pack starts getting a reputation. I don't think anybody knew they were werewolves, not even the top brass, but the officers figured out pretty quick that the "Hellhounds" of Baker Company were the go-to guys for weird shit. War's a breeding ground for nasty spirits and fucked-up resonances, and that's before you even account for the occult craziness the Nazis were throwing around.

Around winter of '43, Grampa's pack gets some orders in: the Nazis have got some kind of weapons lab set up in a castle somewhere in the Alps, and the Hellhounds are going to go in, figure out what they're making, and blow it up real good. Intel said there was some freaky shit going on up there. Corpses disappearing from the town cemetery, weird lights on the mountain, all kinds of stuff.

You see where this is going, right? Yeah. The pack gets up there, takes out the sentries on guard and storms the place like avatars of Fenris himself. But the Nazis aren't making bombs or guns or planes, they've got about a dozen or so goddamn Frankensteins, all apparently made by this creepy old dude covered with stitches and scars. I have no idea what they really were, and neither did Grampa, but they were some kinda tough bastards, and between them and the SS guards on the place, Grampa lost three of his packmates before they killed the last of the SS.

But you haven't even heard the best part of the story. Somehow one of the SS commanders got a message off to headquarters. Grampa swears the guy must have been some kind of wizard, because while the three surviving Hellhounds were still setting the charges to blow the castle, an entire panzer brigade comes rumbling up the pass. All of a sudden, Grampa and his boys have to hold this 500-year-old castle against a bunch of SS tank crews.

It was Grampa's pal Ollie White who came up with the plan. He found an old escape tunnel that led from the castle out to the village, right smack into the middle of the churchyard — the same churchyard that, thanks to the Nazis' grave-robbing hijinks, was now the happy home of a minor locus. Thanks to the Nazis' generous raping of the local Shadow, the Hellhounds had a perfect way to slip out into the village, step sideways and pinpoint the





# WEREWOLF

## THE FORSAKEN

Nazis' precise positions. A few negotiations with house-spirits to force the explosive charges back through the Gauntlet, and you had the perfect trap.

While the Germans were still combing the streets for the American soldiers they'd been warned about, Gramps and his boys managed to blow up all but two of the tanks. After that — well, I'm no stranger to the hunt and the kill, but the look in Grampa's eye when he talks about how easy it was to peel those panzers open like sardine tins still creeps me out.

Like I said, you probably won't believe it. Half the time, I'm not sure I do — it sounds like a bad Saturday matinee serial. But Grampa has this trophy on his mantle, one he puts away whenever human company comes to visit. It's a man's skull, almost the size of a soccer ball, and all the bones are fixed together with these copper plates with, like, electrodes sticking out of them, and these old Norse runes carved all over the bones. Weird, huh?

### **Milestone Gift: The Destroyer's Jaws**

**Prerequisites:** Glory 5, Honor 3, Harmony 6 or greater

This Gift is granted by Fenris-Ur himself, in recognition of a Blood Talon who embodies the warrior ideal. This blessed personage need not be a Rahu; the Destroyer Wolf recognizes the role of the warrior in all his children. This Gift allows the Blood Talon to take on an aspect of his patron spirit's terrible destructive

rage, losing himself in a killing frenzy that inspires witnesses to recall stories of Shiva, or the Fenrisulfr of Norse mythology.

Once earned, this Gift is permanent and requires no activation roll. Any time the Talon enters Death Rage, he takes on The Destroyer's Jaws: his muzzle becomes a huge, distended mass of razor-sharp and saw-edged fangs, and when he opens his jaws to bite, witnesses see only an utter, absolute blackness like the end of all things. His howls seem to make reality itself shake on its foundation, and in the power of his limbs it seems as though the glory of Father Wolf is come to the world once again. The Destroyer's Jaws is devastating in combat: Whenever the Blood Talon fills an enemy's rightmost Health box, that enemy dies instantly. Even if the wound was only bashing or lethal, it is instantly fatal. The recipient of this Gift gains a point of Essence for every creature he kills while in Death Rage.

As a Milestone Gift, The Destroyer's Jaws is available only to a Blood Talon who performs some great service to his tribe or pack, usually heroically defeating a superior enemy or destroying a grave threat to the tribe. If the character's Harmony drops below 6 after he learns this Gift, he has one cycle of the moon to regain this level of spiritual balance, during which he must perform the Rite of Contrition to the Destroyer Wolf. If he fails to do this, he loses The Destroyer's Wrath and can never regain it.





# WHITE WOLF

## Just What the Hell Are Alternative Products?

By Eddy Webb, *Alternative Products Developer*

As I'm writing this, it's mid-February, a couple of days before Valentine's Day. Nearly four months ago, I started working at White Wolf Publishing/CCP North America as the new Alternative Product Developer. It's been an insane ride over the past several months, but it's also been exciting to work with some of the most talented people in the hobby game industry on new ideas to revolutionize how we deliver game content to our customers.

Of course, the question I've been asked the most since I got the position is: "Just what the hell are alternative products?" They're not organic RPG supplements made with real bean curd or a kinky new way to run **Exalted** in your bedroom (**Sexalted**). Instead, they're products that are released through alternative publishing methods. That means we're trying to print products in different ways instead of printing up crates full of boxes that get shipped to your local gaming store or bookseller.

Alternative publishing ("AP" for short) includes books in purely electronic format as well as print-on-demand books that are built after you click a button on a website. It's not only a way to get our products into people's hands through more publishing avenues, but it also allows us to actually produce some products that normally would never see the light of day. I've been working with the developers of our various Storytelling game lines to find new areas of our worlds to explore through the use of this new technology.

Which sounds great, right? But still there's that question: "Just what the hell are alternative products?" Let me give you a short tour through some of the AP products I'm cooking up for 2008.



The foundation of the AP area is our *Storytelling Adventure System* stories. (We're a big fan of acronyms here in the office, so these are often called "SASs.") If you've never heard of SAS, we have a short guide covering the basics, which is available on our website at <http://www.white-wolf.com/sas>. Basically, it's a

series of stories in PDF format for our various Storytelling game lines. Think of a Storytelling Adventure System product (SAS) as a story kit, as if you'd bought a piece of modern furniture and brought it home in a big flat box. The basic parts that make up most SAS

stories are simple: Storyteller characters, scenes and some advice on how you can put them together. Each of them can be used in different ways to keep the story building towards its climactic end. These parts are designed to make the job

of being a Storyteller easier, faster and more fun for you. The wondrous game experiences you've read about that shock and satisfy your players come from doing a great job, and everything in an SAS product is intended to pick up the slack so you can focus on creating the best story you can.







# WHITE WOLF

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>SCENE:</b> <i>Hired by Mr. Petrovsky</i>   |   | <b>MENTAL</b> •<br><b>PHYSICAL</b> —<br><b>SOCIAL</b> • |
| <b>HINDRANCES</b><br>Practiced story (-2)<br><br>Previous positive interaction (-1 to -3) | <b>HELP</b><br>Previous negative interaction (+1 to +3)<br><br>Strong distrust (+2) |   |
| <b>STs</b> Convey information to the players; leave a strong image of Mr. Petrovsky.      |   |   |
| <b>PCs</b> Find out what Mr. Petrovsky wants.   |   |   |

The scenes in our SAS products are actually individual elements that can be shuffled around and used in a variety of ways. We provide scene cards with all of our SAS products in order to make it easier for Storytellers to rearrange their stories on the fly. Did the players send their characters to the graveyard when you expected them to investigate the library? Dig out the card for the graveyard and run that instead. Found a really cool scene in a **Vampire** SAS that you want to use in your **Mage** story? Print up the scene card and slide it into your current story.

I'm planning to develop a new SAS for release every month in 2008. That's at least 12 new stories for you to explore this year, covering not only our **World of Darkness** games, but other Storytelling lines like **Exalted** and the upcoming **EVE** game. I say "at least," because the SAS line is also where new writers can prove themselves, and they may produce wonderful stories that I haven't planned for in my 2008 release schedule.

## PLAYGROUND FOR NEW WRITERS

One of my secondary duties as Alternative Products Developer is to go through our unsolicited proposals and find new writers for our games. Since the SAS line covers all of our currently-produced lines (thus, requiring me to work closely with all of our line developers), I end up acting as a gateway for new freelance writers wanting to make their mark. The SAS line is actually a great way for new writers to get their feet wet in our game lines. It's a good balance of game world flavor and mechanical crunch, which are both important if you're going to be an RPG freelancer. It also establishes a mutually-beneficial relationship between us: you're working on an actual

product for us instead of submitting a dry writing sample, and I get to see how you work on an actual manuscript, as well as having something concrete I can show to the other developers.

If you want to write for us, check out the submissions page on our website: <http://www.white-wolf.com/MoreInfo/Submissions>. Please please please read and follow the instructions there. I have to destroy about 10% of the proposals I receive because someone can't follow instructions, and I'd hate to have to shred your idea because you didn't read the submission guidelines.

## USING SAS SCENES CARDS IN MIND'S EYE THEATRE

One thing that I was asked a few times as I started releasing SASs was if they could be used with our **Mind's Eye Theatre** line of games. Given the strong mechanical compatibility between the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Mind's Eye Theatre**, I thought this was a pretty cool idea. A product like **Scenes of Frenzy** (an anthology of.... well, various scenes in which a vampire frenzies) is ideally suited for **Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem**. Reading an SAS might help spark the inspiration for your latest live-action session. Having a collection of characters and scenes on hand from a plethora of SASs is helpful if you're stuck with a group of bored players who don't want to sit around for the Prince's monthly court again. By having them all in electronic form, you can bring your laptop and have your entire library right there at the game. Or just print up the cards and character sheets you might need and put them in a good old-fashioned folder to take with you.

## BONUS MATERIAL

Sometimes our writers produce more great material than we can use in the book. Other times, we come up with a late-stage idea that ties in well with a book we've released or we're about to release. Or maybe we want to put something out that supports one of our game lines, but it doesn't make sense as a traditional print product.



# WHITE WOLF

All of these fall under bonus material (which abbreviates to BM, so let's just stick with "bonus material"). Bonus material can cover a wide swath, but generally they're short PDF products that we release for free or for sale. I like to think of it as "DVD extras" for our books. Some examples include the popular **Imperfect Lotus** for **Exalted** and the three bonus files for **Lords of the Damned**.

Bonus material isn't often something we can plan for. Something falls into my lap, or a developer ends up with some material that he'd love to use *somewhere*. This is where AP has to be flexible and willing to turn around products in a much-faster timeframe than usual. But if we can pull it together, the results are exciting and add texture to our standard printed material.



## PRINT-ON-DEMAND (POD)

*Print-on-demand* (or PoD for short) is a new printing technology in which new copies of a book are not printed until after a customer has submitted an order for it. By taking away our need to print, store and ship large orders of books, we can offer products that otherwise wouldn't be financially viable. After a lot of searching, we settled on Lulu.com as our PoD partner, and they've been wonderful to work with so far.

Our first PoD offering through Lulu.com was **Mind's Eye Theatre: The Awakening** (coincidentally it was also my first development project for White Wolf before being hired to work here full-time). We're going to be offering more books through Lulu.com this year, but one of the key areas for our PoD program is to provide low-cost softcover alternatives to some of our hardcover products like **In-**

**nocents** and **Manual of Exalted Power: The Abyssals**. This way, fans on a tight budget can still get access to important books for their favorite game lines.

## SCION COMPANION

I'm also developing the **Scion Companion**, the fifth book in the **Scion** series. At the end of the development cycle, you'll be able to pick up a nice hardback book in your favorite store, just like the previous four **Scion** books. How this is an alternative product, though, is that prior to release I'll be launching a series of four sections of the book that you can buy the book is printed: two new pantheons and a whole slew of rules and toys for players and Storytellers. The other two sections will be exclusive to the final print and PDF release, including a third new pantheon and a whole-new background for your **Scion** games, as envisioned by **Ennie**-award winning **Scion** Line Developer, John Chambers.

Why are we doing it this way? To be honest, it's an experiment to see if serially produced PDFs will sell. The **Scion Companion** is a great test of this format, as each section is self-contained each part is a mini-sourcebook, and you can pick and choose which ones you want right now. If you want to subscribe to all of the sections and buy them as they come out, you can (and maybe we'll slide you a little something at the end for being such a loyal fan). Or you can just patiently wait until the final book comes out and devour all of the **Scion** goodies that'll be crammed in there.

## AND MORE...

All of this is just the stuff that I can confirm, the stuff that I've planned for in 2008. There's a lot more that we're experimenting with, and we're always kicking around new ideas. There isn't a week that goes by without someone coming into my office and saying "Wouldn't it be cool if AP could do *this*?" It's an exciting time, and that translates into more exciting stuff for you guys, the fans that have stuck with us for so many years. I'm having a blast helping to develop all these great ideas, and I hope you enjoy reading them and using them at the table with your friends.

*Up next: a sample page from the **Scion Companion Part One: Tuatha De Dannan**. Enjoy!*



# LOUISE “LOU” MACETHAN

## SCION OF LUGH

LOUISE  
MACETHAN

Louise always knew she was meant for great things. Not because she was inherently better than anyone else. It's just that her mother was a strict advocate of the idea that those who worked were those who won. Talent got you only so far — it was hard work that made someone great.

Still, it helped that Lou was really talented at just about everything she tried her hand at. She excelled academically with hardly any effort whatsoever. She split her time between the gymnastics floor and the stage, loving both of them dearly. When she was sixteen, she competed in the Olympics for the United States, and only the sudden death of her mother prevented her from going all the way to the gold (something she still regrets to this day).

The exposure from the Olympics still did her quite a lot of good, however. By the time she was eighteen, she'd been in multiple commercials, and when her talent agent discovered her singing voice, he quickly flipped that into a record deal. She was well on her way to a life of fame and fortune when Cooshie found her.

At first, the big dog scared her a little, but when she saw how nervous he made everyone else, she was determined to be the one to approach and befriend him. It was a point of pride that he took to her as immediately as he did. Things grew stranger, though, when he led her to the odd fellow practicing alone in the stadium at night. Fortunately, the gorgeous man there turned out to be shining Lugh, her father. He told her of her legacy, and that she was, in fact, inherently better than most. How could she not be, with the blood of a God in her veins?

Her life is certainly more difficult of late, what with battling fomorians and meeting others like her. Still, Lou knows that she's up to the task — after all, she's never met a challenge she couldn't overcome, and this whole Scion thing is just one more challenge. Right?

**Roleplaying Hints:** Lou is bright and cheerful, though she's not naïve or vapid. She is just happy to meet any challenge head-on and tackle it to the best of her ability. Though she would never admit such, she loves the adoration that others give her and does her best to show off without seeming to show off. On some level, though, her Visitation has shaken her. She can't get rid of the nagging suspicion that all of her victories up until now have simply been because she is better than other people. They weren't her victories — they were her father's. She also finds being around other Scions somewhat disconcerting; it's difficult to shine when those around can do everything with as much ease as she can.

**Birthrights:** Lou is always accompanied by Cooshie, her pure white Irish wolfhound with red ears (its coloration a sure sign of otherworldliness to those who know their Irish mythology). She always wears her bronze cloak pin depicting a vertical spear behind the head of a dog, usually either at her waist or on her lapel. This pin grants her access to the Animal, Health and Magic Purviews. Her spear is the Spear of Lugh (see pp. 26-27 for more details).

**Geasa:** *The Bard's Geas.* Louise is bound by a Legendary Skill Geas, associated with her Art (Singing) Ability. She acquired it when she took the Hero's Geas (the second power in the Enech Pantheon Purview). Lou regains Legend at double the normal rate, and additionally regains a single point of Legend each time her dedication to improving her singing skills makes her life difficult.



# WELCOME TO THE UNDERWORLD

By SALEEM HALABI

I recently caught up with John Chambers, developer of Exalted, for an interview about *The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV: The Underworld*, a new supplement coming out for Exalted.

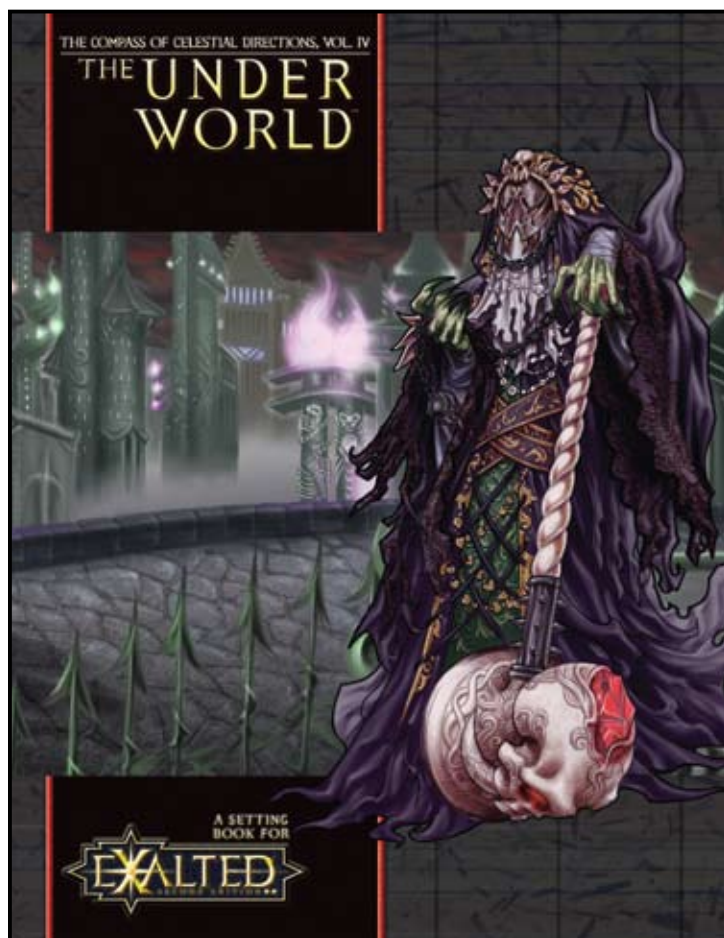
**Are there any new locations in the book that weren't detailed in First Edition?**

A few, yeah. Places such as Shacklegrieve, Fallen Lotus, the Empire of Hunger, Saigoth and Zhokai are all new to this edition of Exalted. In addition, a number of locales that date to first edition get explored in more detail.

**What are the primary locations covered in the book?**

There are chapters devoted to all the Underworld directions (including the center and Stygia), as well as a chapter devoted to the Labyrinth itself.

**How did you decide what locations were important enough to cover and which ones had to be left out?**



A lot of that had to do with the interests of the authors and the locations that excited them, though there were certain locales that I insisted had to be explored because of their established importance in the game.

**Can you give us some examples of creatures that will be in the book?**

Sure. There are tons of antagonists, from the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Water and his subordinates, Ebon Saika and Moray Darktide, to the ubiquitous Green Lady, as well as others, from the ghostly Councilors of Stygia to the macabre plasmics of the Labyrinth.

**Will the book contain rules for playing as ghosts?**

No. Those rules will be detailed in *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. V—The Roll of Glorious Divinity II*.

**What do you think is the coolest thing in the book?**

The introduction of the Underworld constellations. The concept has a lot of potential that Storytellers can expand upon as they need for their games.



## Meet the Beasts

Character previews from *Savage and Macabre*, the upcoming Gangrel clanbook

What follows are two sample Gangrel characters (both fully-statted as potential combatants). Both are neonates, meant to serve as examples for players and Storytellers, though they can also be used as characters by either.

The first is actually the narrator of the book, Alice Sewell. These stats roughly apply to her throughout the text (though by the end, one can argue she's quite different and might necessitate more extreme stats). She might make an interesting Storyteller character or player character who is acting as a compiler for a mysterious patron, putting herself in harm's way to get what she needs for the "book."

The second is a less urbane Gangrel, one who falls more in line with the stereotype of the clan: wild, unkempt, a survivor at heart.

### Alice Sewell

**Quotes:** "I... need your help with something. I know, *quid pro quo*. But can I ask you a few questions?"

"I've been having dreams, lately. I see me, you know? But it's not me. It's me, but bloody, wild, murderous. Do you dream?"

"I can't do this anymore. It's killing me. It's driving me fucking nuts. I just want this to end, I want to know that my family is safe..."

**Background:** Alice never really made much of herself. Born of baby boomers, she found that her parents were too self-indulgent and narcissistic to actually care about her; she was more a point of pride by dint of her presence than by her actual actions or disposition. They were proud of *having a child*, but they were not proud of

the actual child. They disapproved of her "dreamer" sensibilities: she often stared out the window at the trappings of suburbia... and focused past all that. Watching birds at the feeder. Clouds drift across the sky. Two white cab-

bage moths whirling in some mad aeronautic dance. They punished her for this. It only encouraged the behavior.

And it translated over to school. In high school and college, Alice went to class stoned or bombed, because it was easier to disconnect, then. Far simpler to unhook oneself from all the bullshit and just float free, right?

One night, she left a frat party, "celebrating" the letter she received that her financial aid was going down the toilet because of her persistently abysmal grades. She stumbled out in a haze and took a walk. It was her last walk as a living being.

She doesn't know her sire. Whoever it was, he was

a hulking brute in rags and one arm curled into a lame hook. He beat her, he drained her, and he made her into what she is.

Up until recently, she's lurked at the margins of the Damned. She has a few contacts among the lower caste of neonates, but no real friends or allies. She hasn't bothered anybody and they haven't bothered her. Then she got the letter. With the pictures of Sarah and Little Jack, and the command to begin compiling.

**Description:** A bit of a tomboy, Alice has a short mane of red hair she usually keeps pulled back. She's pale with a few tattoos here and there. She's got curves, but keeps most of them hidden beneath boyish clothes: an army jacket, a pair of baggy pants, a clompy pair of hiking boots.



# Vampire

THE REQUIEM

**Storytelling Hints:** Alice hides her fear beneath a smartass veneer. In truth, she dwells in constant trepidation of the world around her and, worse, the world within her. She knows what she is, and she knows what she has to do.

But that doesn't make it any less frightening, at least not yet. The dreams she has frighten her. The Savages she encounters frighten her not just for what they can and might do to her, but more specifically because she worries *that's* what she may one day become. She still feels human, and still expresses things in a human way. This is what she fears losing the most. That touch of humanity, that connection with mortal society. She feels it slipping...

**Playing Alice:** Alice is still getting used to this whole thing. She's developed her survival abilities to a sharp point and tends to avoid violence when she can — she's going to get out alive, come hell or high water. Thus, she has a sharp Wits rating, and plenty of Empathy to figure out what people's intentions around her are. She's developed the second dot of Resilience, though that supernatural power has come as a result of seeing and doing some very hard things; this character's Humanity is reduced by one dot, and the resultant five experience points used to purchase a second dot of Resilience.

**Clan:** Gangrel

**Covenant:** None

**Embrace:** Just under two years ago

**Apparent Age:** 25

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 1, Investigation (Intuition) 3, Occult 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl (Self-Defense) 2, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize (Tense Situations) 3, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Contacts (Clan Gangrel) 1, Danger Sense, Fleet of Foot 3, Resources 1

**Willpower:** 5

**Humanity:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope. Alice is a very human vampire — *for now*. She is capable of holding onto hope, and it may be what saves her in the end or, alternately, what falls away and dooms her.

**Vice:** Sloth. Chosen perhaps for this reason, Alice was a very non-dynamic, steady and static creature even as a human. The compilation of this book and its culmination is likely to change this to another Vice (likely Lust or Wrath).

**Health:** 7

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 13

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Disciplines:** Protean 2, Resilience 2

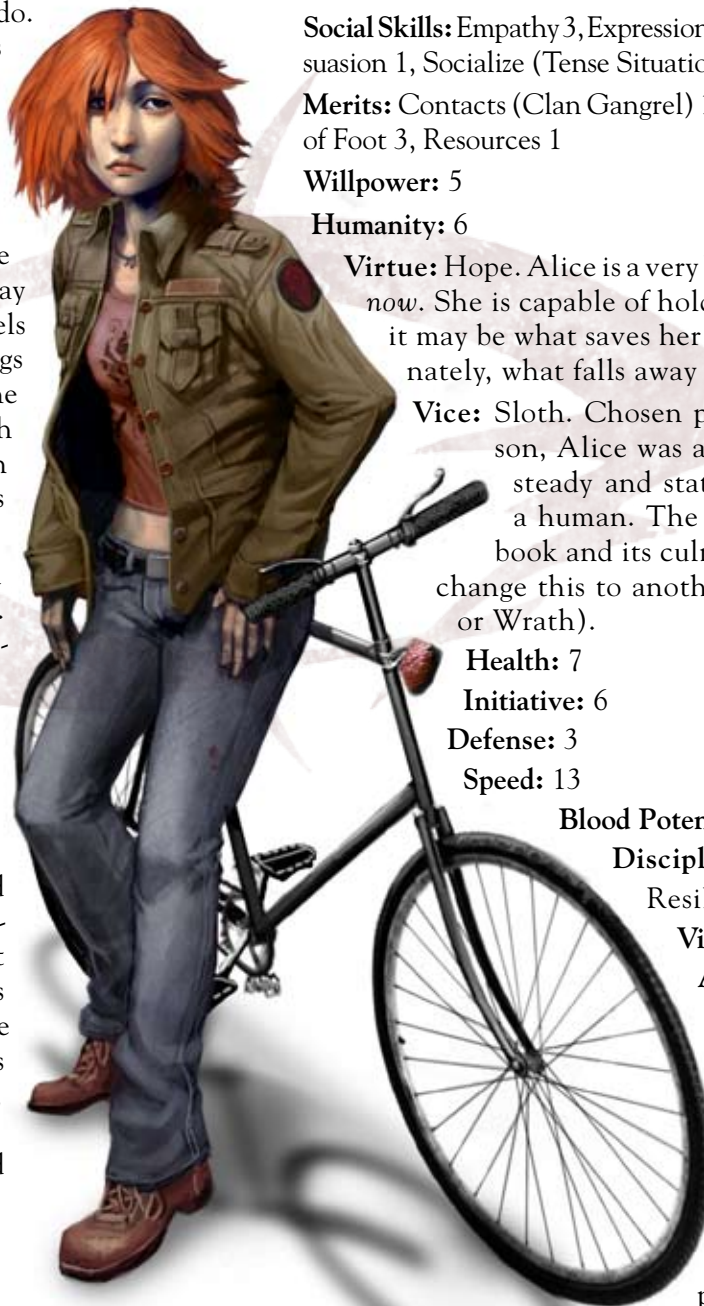
**Vitae/per Turn:** 10/1

**Alice The Compiler**

As compiler, Alice is a dynamic figure who travels the country and the world compiling bits for the mysterious patron who demands the completion of these books.

Characters may interact with her in the midst of this book, perhaps even helping

her to compile it. Alternately, they may work to oppose her, or may even see her slow crawl toward the Beast and may try to forestall this gross downturn.





# Vampire

THE REQUIEM

## Burn Barre (Matty)

**Quotes:** “Yeah, yeah, I get it. You think I’m funny. You like to laugh at me. That’s cool, that’s cool. You won’t think I’m funny one day, though.”

“Is that a threat? Fuck yes it’s a threat! Step off, suit. I’ll tear you some new holes, boy.”

“Whoa, whoa, man, I’m just kiddin’ around, man. Don’t sweat it. Yeah, no, I know who you are, it’s all good, it’s all on the up and up. I was just, y’know, joking.”

**Background:** Matthias Tyrell Johnson trained for war with the United States Army. And he went to Afghanistan to fight, to use his training to promote democracy and kill the evildoers and protect America. He was good with his rifle. He was good with his hands. He had keen eyes like a hawk. Matthias didn’t make any bones about it – he knew how he was going to die. He’d lose a limb in a grenade attack. Maybe an RPG would come busting through a car window and blow him to burned bits. Might just be a bullet. Some Taliban motherfucker would kick down the door and spray the room with wild fire, and Matthias would take a couple past the jacket and would fire back before all went dark. Matthias expected to go out as a soldier. Blaze of glory and all that. How wrong he was.

It was two weeks after he got to Afghanistan that they were on the road to Kabul, and the Jeep hit a hidden crater and did a rough bounce. Matthias fell off the vehicle. He wasn’t wearing his helmet because he’d been scratching his head – the same head that cracked against a rock and messed up his brain.

Cut to the States: Matthias got some medical attention, but not enough of it. The Veteran’s Administration wasn’t really up to the task of all the soldiers coming home

with missing limbs or head trauma. They did what they could with him. But the VA only handled so much of it; the bills mounted. Matty wasn’t non-functional, but his brain had been damaged. He could remember things pretty well but it felt like he wasn’t the same guy anymore. It was harder to think. Everything sat behind a kind of cloud.

Working jobs was tough, and the work he could manage didn’t pay for the mounting debt.

Matthias ended up on the street. “Matty,” the other bums called him. At first he hated them: disgusting creatures, never done nothing to help themselves or their country. But over time he saw how he and they were alike: rejects of society, some of them had put in time or tried to make the effort but were punished instead of rewarded for it. Over the course of a few years, Matty started working real hard at his friendships with the other bums, keeping one another safe, a small army of street people. One would go missing and they’d find out what happened to him. And if they needed to break some legs, they’d break some damn legs.

Well, something had been preying on his brothers and sisters of the street, so he and a few others went after the crazy sonofabitch: some killer or lunatic, probably. Always seemed that they practiced on the homeless and itinerant, so Matty and the others tracked the killer down to a chop shop that had burned down the year before that and remained a charred shell. And there she was, a mindless thing with a mouth full of awful teeth, and cold dead eyes. She gibbered and howled, and then attacked.

Matty remembers dying. He remembers her biting open her own bottom lip and bleeding into his mouth. And he remembers the fire inside of him, an acid burn that tore everything up. He saw her doing the same to his boys, too: but they didn’t get up like he did. They didn’t



stand straight and they damn sure didn't have clear eyes. They were gutted of their souls, it seemed, and Matty still had his mind about him. They attacked him. His muscle memory from his days as a soldier suited him well. He broke their necks. Kicked their kneecaps so hard the legs bent the wrong way. Beat their heads to an unrecognizable pulp with a board with a nail through it. His "sire," too, if such a name even applies, lay smashed up in front of him: and as the morning sun threatened to rise outside, the bodies before him belched gas and blood and turned to ash.

These days, Matty exists as a joke among the local Damned. They think him stupid, when really he's smart but just slow getting to those smarts. They think he's some kind of freak the way he stands kind of hunched, and maybe he is. They think he's a crazy fool the way he tempts himself by standing closer and closer to the old bum burn barrels, the Beast within him like a spider on fire trying to put itself out. But he gets closer night after night. It's his test. It's his testament.

**Description:** He was once lean and ropy, but now? Matty's a hunched-over cretin, a face barely visible from beneath the frayed green hoodie, his body concealed by layer after layer of rags and jackets. His head, if one gets close enough to see it bare, is bald and marked with a puffy, jagged scar: where the skull met the rock on the road to Kabul. He moves like a loping animal, long strides, a strange mammalian rhythm to his gait. You'd almost think him gorilla-like, the way his arms dangle at his sides, the busted-up knuckles damn near dragging. Like a gorilla, it's easy to sense the power coiled up inside of him; he may seem slow, he might even appear gentle, but in the deep of his eyes it's easy to see that he could maybe tear your arm out of its socket.

**Storytelling Hints:** Matty's all right. Treat him nice and he'll treat you the same. Problem is, few of the Damned really treat him right, do they? They abuse him. Throw things at him. Parade him around Elysium: even the Nosferatu freaks have a good time hiding behind his humiliation. Those who don't treat him well earn a special angry place in the dusty red chambers of Matty's heart. It's hard to keep that place a secret: all too often, he babbles out some threat or insult to someone far beyond his station, but he's smart enough to retract it in time. For now. But that angry place is getting filled up awfully quick. He needs

friends, allies to help either calm him down or to give him extra hands when the time comes to tear the city down around its ears.

**Playing Matty:** Matty gets around, and he's fairly good at getting his way — his Manipulation + Intimidation means that he scares folks fairly easily, and can usually depend on getting what he wants that way. He's got the Resilience in case things go bad with that route, and an ace in the hole in the form of a big, mean ghouléd pit bull that he can communicate with.

**Clan:** Gangrel

**Covenant:** None

**Embrace:** Just under three years ago

**Apparent Age:** 31

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

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

**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Firearms (Military) 3, Larceny 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Strays) 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise (Homeless Population) 2

**Merits:** Allies (Shelter) 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Herd (Homeless) 1, Retainer (Stray Pit Bull) 1, Strong Back

**Willpower:** 4

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity. Matty knows the value of charity, requiring it often enough himself. He's generous enough with those in his situation, though, giving to those who don't quite have his skill at scavenging.

**Vice:** Envy. Of course, the other side of the coin is his envy: everybody has something he doesn't, something he wants by the mere fact he cannot have it.

**Health:** 9

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Disciplines:** Animalism 1, Resilience 2

**Vitae/per Turn:** 10/1





# WHITE WOLF

## DEMO TEAM SPOTLIGHT: LUNA MUERTA

*An interview with the Luna Muerta Wolf Pack, based in Chile, by Jason Bolte*

[Note: this interview has been edited for clarity.]

### How many people do you have in your demo group?

Currently there are three of us. Matias Cardenas (a.k.a. Geo) is in charge of the **Exalted** line; Jose Herrera (a.k.a. Pancho) is in charge of the card games (mostly **EVE: The Second Genesis** because we want people to play it!) and some roleplaying stuff; Mario Varas Arévalo is in charge of the **World of Darkness** line (with an emphasis on **Vampire** and **Promethean**), **Scion** and **Long Live the King**. We also have other people to announce demos, find locations to play, work the sign-in desk at events, etc.

### What White Wolf products do you primarily work with?

We primarily work with the **World of Darkness** and **Exalted** lines. We try to fulfill requests for specific games if we can. We are especially trying to make a lot of noise with **EVE** because it's such a great game. But since it's new, we have to work harder to get interest going. We love **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle** as well. We organized a **Scion** campaign not too long ago. Honestly, we have no problem creating demos for most of the White Wolf games.

### Where do you do the majority of your demoing?

Our game-playing base is Guildreams, the official distributor of White Wolf products in Chile. We reserve a couple of days there for conducting the demos. If only one or two people show up, no problem! The idea is to have fun, isn't it? We try to have demos in other stores in Santiago and other provinces as well.

Our goal is to be at every gaming event we can, giving away posters, cards and candy to get people interested and involved. That really helps a lot.

### What's the gaming scene like in Chile? Is there a lot of interest in these games?

It was icy in the beginning, but as time passed, more people began to show interest in the games. We present roleplaying games as a sort of collective book writing, focusing on the story and characters, and most people like that approach. Once we get the rookies to come play again and again, then we introduce them to organized groups in order to find players. Then, hopefully, they begin playing on their own!

One of our barriers is the language gap. At first, a lot of the roleplayers buy the books in Spanish. Now it's about a 50/50 split between Spanish and English, possibly due to the high quality of the White Wolf books and the growing number of people who can speak English.

The interest in these games is increasing (as we predicted years ago), and we like the fact that we are creating interest in our beloved hobby.

### What is/was your favorite product to demo?

**Demon: The Fallen** was a big hit. A lot of people really like that game. **Hunter: The Reckoning** was also big. Lately, we've been playing a lot of **EVE**. The game is very entertaining and relatively easy to explain.

Collectively speaking, we like to demonstrate **Long Live the King**, due primarily to the interactivity of it (and it's really fun, too). Obviously, it's hard to find seven or eight people to play, but when you do, nobody wants to stop playing.

### Do you have any memorable stories from your gaming experience?

Probably my favorite moment was incorporating "The People's Elbow" (The Rock's finishing move) into a game of **Demon: The Fallen**. It didn't do any damage, but it sure was spectacular. I also enjoyed when a Garou had to drive a FIAT 600 (a tiny car). The player drew a picture to show how it could work.

### What are the most difficult obstacles to a successful demo and how do you work to overcome them?

One of the most difficult things to do is to tell a good story when the people involved have never played the game before. We try to simplify things with easier character sheets and less rigid rules. Improvisation is the key.

You can get past all the obstacles with imagination and love for the game. When you have the story and the people get involved, nobody can stop you!

Aside from that, a lot of coffee helps, especially for the nocturnal events.

# ALL HAIL THE UNCONQUERED SUN

In **Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun**, players assume the roles of heroes among the Solar Exalted. These men and women are selected by the powers of Creation to rise above the mortal masses. They become champions of the people and protectors of the world. That means undertaking missions and challenges scattered across the land, and gaining prestige and virtue for adventurous deeds. And yet, despicable villains and forces of nature lurk in Creation, threatening the land and the Solars themselves.

The Exalted who prove most valorous in the face of all these dangers are found worthy of undergoing an epic quest for Solars' celestial patron. Those who complete their epic quest are the winners of the game, the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun.

Players can work together to achieve such renown, or rise to glory individually. They can even advance through a combination of the two, relying on each other in times of

need and forging out on their own when they're ready. Cooperation among players makes for a fast-play game as all Solars mutually benefit. Players who forge out on their own or who compete directly face steep challenges in a longer game, but achieve glory all for themselves. The choice is yours.

**Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun** is a two-to five-player game.







## SOLAR CARD: HARMONIOUS JADE NIGHT CASTE

As the sun sets upon Creation, darkness claims the world, but so too do the hunters, spies and rogues of the Night Caste who stalk the creatures of shadow.

**Base Movement:** 3

### Traits

Fighting: 3, Resilience: 3, Wits: 4, Stealth: 5, Socialize: 2

**Starting Essence** 6

**Anima Banner:** Spend 3 Essence to confuse, deceive and confound a Rival. The trait normally rolled to resolve a contest with a Rival you face changes to Stealth. This effect must be activated before a roll is made.

**Starting Location:** Kirighast

## REWARD CARD: ORICHALCUM POWERBOW (ARTIFACT)

Use this weapon to stage a Stealth contest with a Rival located up to three dominions away from your current position. If you win the roll, the Rival is considered successfully resolved and is discarded. If you're defeated, you lose any applicable Renown Tokens, but don't go dormant for any tokens you don't have. You must play this card during your action in a month according to initiative order.

## CHARM CARD: STEALING FROM PLAIN SIGHT

This Charm allows you to take one Reward Card in another player's possession for your own. The Reward can't currently be in use.

### EXALTED: LEGACY OF THE UNCONQUERED SUN CONTAINS:

|                          |                             |                       |                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Game board               | 5 Solar Action Wheel Pieces | 50 Reward Cards       | 50 Caste Markers  |
| Rulebook                 | 30 Rival Cards              | 70 Quest Cards        | 50 Renown Tokens  |
| Action Wheel             | 5 Rival Character Pieces    | 5 Epic Quest Cards    | 50 Jade Coins     |
| 5 Solar Cards            | 5 Rival Action Wheel Pieces | 50 Dominion Cards     | 50 Essence motes  |
| 5 Solar Character Pieces | 50 Charm Cards              | 12 Quest Card Markers | 10 ten-sided dice |

# WINNING YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN

By Jason Bolte

In White Wolf's upcoming boardgame, **Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun**, players compete with and against each other to become the champion of Creation and the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun. Traversing Creation, the Solar Exalted face quests of all sorts as they achieve Renown and glory throughout the lands, resulting in them becoming the true Champion. This distinction may be bestowed upon a single Solar Exalted, or it may be shared between a group of them. Everybody playing the game may also achieve the highest distinction awarded in the game. Does this mean that every player can win the game at the same time?

In theory, yes. In practice, who knows?

Playing a boardgame where everyone can win may seem like anathema to many gamers. Roleplaying games are innate in their ability to have shared successes: "Hooray! Together we slayed the dragon," or "Our troupe used their political machinations to oust the Prince!" But a boardgame? You don't normally hear this sort of congratulations after achieving a stalemate in a game of chess: "Good game! I really like how our chess match ended with no winner. That was satisfying."

Why, then, would we make a boardgame with a similar outcome? Has White Wolf gone the way of recess and made it so that everybody wins in order to avoid hurt feelings?

No. Absolutely not.

A game in which everyone can win also has the possibility that *nobody* wins. You might think that this is just the same story but in the opposite direction. Has White Wolf achieved the ultimate in cynicism by making an unwinnable game?

No. Absolutely not.

Rather, **Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun** is more about the journey than the destination. Everyone might win and everyone might lose; when it comes down to the endgame, you'll just be glad for the help (or enlivened by the complications).

## WORKING TOGETHER

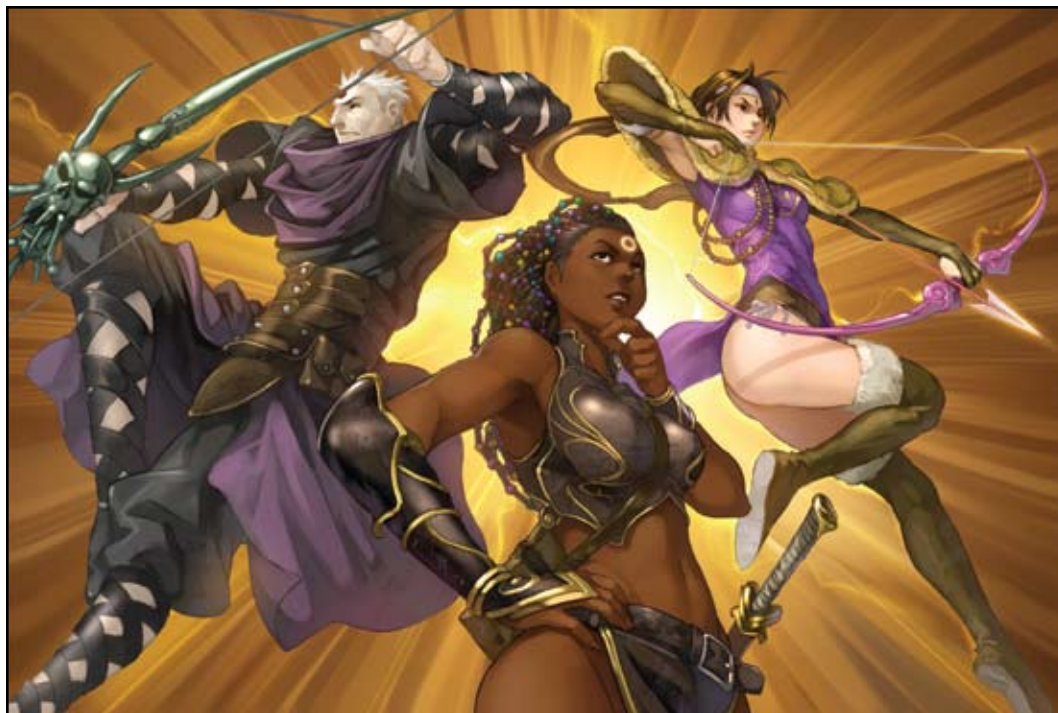
In this game, players traverse Creation, fulfilling quests and battling villains on their way to achieving glory and honor. Sounds typical enough, right? What gives this game any sort of distinction over other games? One word: Time. Not only are the Solars traveling the Scavenger Lands in order to quell uprisings, defeat undead armies, negotiate truces and quash nefarious plans, but they are doing so while the Unconquered Sun continues its cycle, month after month and year after year. A hero can only do so much in one day, and Creation is a big place. While I'm over here hoping to gather ingredients for a witch, a villain targeting me is on the other side of the world, ruining my reputation by flaunting my absence. What's a hero to do?

Ask for help. It's OK. Even mighty Panther needs aid once in a while. You can't do everything at once, and if you try to, you'll end up exhausted. **Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun** is a game of favors earned, favors spent and favors broken.

## MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND

Exchange between players is encouraged in this game. Exchanges can include many things, from the bartering of items and jade to the dealing of favors and promises. The latter two are especially important. The other Solars, while they're not exactly there to help you, can offer to





take care of that demon over yonder, your declared Rival whose plot is about to come to fruition. It would be no problem for, say, Dace, who is only a domain away from the fiend. But you can certainly expect him to ask for a favor in return, especially since his Rival, a god-blooded mortal, is only a month's travel away from your Solar. Or maybe he just needs you to help him in the fight. That's how favors work. Of course, you can always "forget" to honor your promise and run away after Dace defeats your Rival. There's no rule against that.

In addition to these favors, you can exchange items (weapons, artifacts, equipment, etc) with other Solars as well as jade. This can occur at any time except when you're character is dormant (i.e. knocked out). How is this important? Let's use an example.

*Harmonious Jade is about to face a demon horde in a fight to the death, the horde set to destroy a nearby village. Harmonious Jade is clearly outmatched in this regard and does not have enough Essence to activate her Anima Banner. On the other side of the Scavenger Lands rests Arianna, whose Seven-Section Staff is exactly the piece of equipment that Jade requires. Without it, Jade will most likely lose this fight, forcing her Renown throughout the land to decrease and setting her back further in her quest for glory. Arianna has the upper-hand in this deal, with multiple options open to her: She can lend the staff to Jade, who must return it directly after the battle (regardless of*

*outcome); she can sell the staff to Jade (for a steep price, of course); or Arianna can ignore Jade's pleas and let her suffer the ignominy fated to her.*

For argument's sake, let's say that Arianna lent the staff to Jade free of charge, with the only stipulation that it be returned to her after the battle. Jade is not victorious in the battle, but the favor afforded her is most appreciated. (One stipulation in the rules is that all physical exchanges of

rewards and jade must be honored; promises, however, are not required to be kept). The next time Arianna requires aid, Harmonious Jade is more willing to lend a hand. Thus, an alliance is formed.

## MY FRIEND IS MY ENEMY

Alliances come naturally in this game. For every other Solar willing to join a particular quest, the challenge increases, but not nearly at the rate of the additional hero's added ability. For this reason, groups of Solars form bands, allowing them to accomplish heroic quests at a more favorable (though still daunting) difficulty. Their Renown grows together, as does their coffers. This is what teamwork is about.

Until, that is, when egos increase and spoils of battle are not evenly distributed.

*Harmonious Jade, Arianna and Panther have been working together for nearly a year, completing quests, gaining Renown and gathering boons to aid them in their quest. They have just defeated a Terrestrial Exalted, who left behind a lot of Essence for them as well as the Veil of the Fates, an item that Arianna is particularly hoping to receive. As per their agreement, Panther chooses first and gets some Essence. Arianna declares her intentions of taking the Veil, but Jade takes it instead, as per their specified order in the game. Arianna is polite and acquiesces to Jade, taking the rest of the Essence. Secretly,*

however, she is fuming. The trio decides that they have enough Renown to begin their search for the Crown of Thunders, an Epic Quest that, once completed, will allow them to be the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun. Arianna completes the journey, but with secret plans of her own.

## A GREAT MONTH FOR AN AMBUSH

As you can tell, the bonds that hold an alliance of Solars together are tenuous at best. Part of this is due to the vast array of possible play styles. Some players are more inclined to work together in order to achieve their goals, no matter who is with them. These players will be loyal to the group so long as the group is together. Others are users and abusers, taking advantage of the loyal player for only as long as he is needed. Still others are neurotic and spiteful players, taking every slight as an incredible affront to their being and reciprocating with unnecessary revenge schemes and obsessive turf wars. (The author ascribes himself to this philosophy. He also overcharges jade when exchanging artifacts). Regardless of playing style, this game has a system by which these players may express their preferences. In the former two cases, their play style is rather straightforward: work with a group for as long as it is together. The latter player, however, has more options.

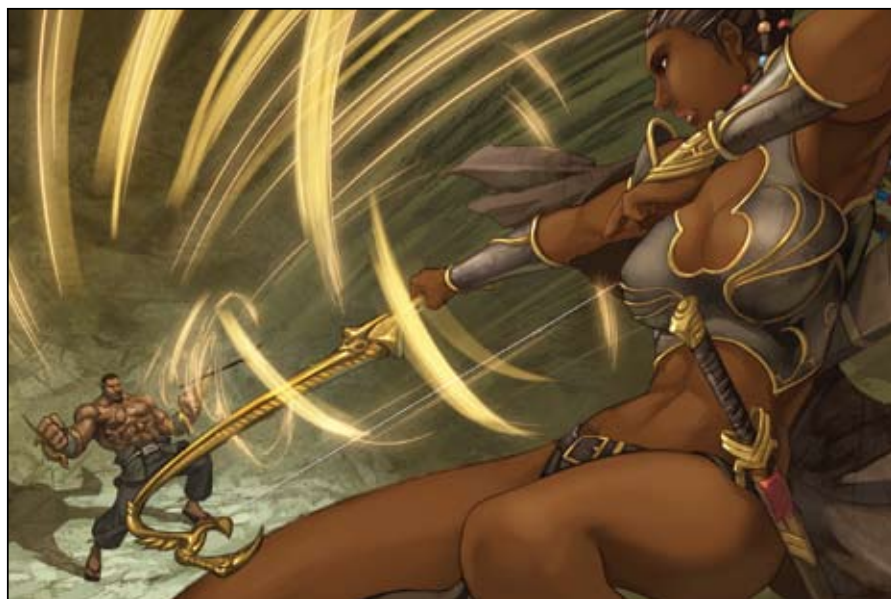
One of the sneakiest stratagems this player can employ is the ambush. The ambush can occur through a number of ways. After a certain player has charted his destination and determined how long it would take to arrive there, a second player may sneak to that destination at an earlier time and lie in wait for the first player. Not only can this second player attempt any quests while the first player travels, but he may also gain the upper-hand in an impending battle between the Solars (and such

a fight is almost always inevitable). For example, Dace may wish to attack an Abyssal Exalted, taking him three months to travel to the destination. Swan, however, can get there in one month, defeating the Abyssal and taking the spoils, as well as lying in wait for Dace in the hopes of stealing Dace's jade.

The ambush may also occur in a more subtle manner. Any Solar may declare a battle with any other Solar while they are both in the same place at the same time. For the roving bands of Solars, this is an imminent threat to the sanctity of the alliance.

*Arianna, Harmonious Jade and Panther arrive at their destination: a library containing lore that can direct them to the Crown of Thunder. Together, they have achieved more than enough Renown to gain entrance to this library. Arianna, however, has attained enough Renown on*

*her own to fulfill this quest. While they wait outside the library, Arianna surprises and attacks Harmonious Jade and Panther, striking the first blow. Her attack is enhanced by activating a Charm, Adamant Skin Technique, further aiding her in this assault. Even with Panther's Devoted Spirit (a companion*



*Reward), the two Solars are no match for Arianna, and she easily outwits them. In her confusion, Harmonious Jade drops her Veil of the Fates, tempting Arianna to take the artifact from Jade.*

However, Arianna instead sees an opportunity to move ahead and seals the entrance to the library behind her, but not before leaving the others lost and confused outside. Harmonious Jade and Panther are lost for two months while Arianna continues further on her Epic Quest, that much closer to becoming the sole Chosen of the Unconquered Sun. The greed that originally formed the rift in this band was thus supplanted by an even greater force: ambition.



## SO THIS IS WHY IT'S CALLED 'EPIC'

There is an endgame to **Exalted: Legacy of the Unconquered Sun**. The player(s) that fulfill their Epic Quest win the highest honor of being the Chosen One(s). There are only five Epic Quests in the game, but their availability rapidly declines as the game progresses. In fact, two Epic Quests are removed from the game at the outset, and after each solar cycle, once the game reaches Calibration, another Epic Quest disappears from the game forever. Thus, after three solar cycles, all the Epic Quests are gone. The only exception to this is any Epic Quest that is currently underway. As Solars, the players must act fast in order to achieve their glory before the sun sets on it forever.

Epic Quests may be attempted by individual Solars. In fact, like most boardgames, the assumption is that players will strive for these quests on their own. And that is a perfectly viable way to play. However, as they progress through the tiers of the Epic Quests, the players will soon realize why they are called "Epic" to begin with.

The Epic Quests are difficult. Not just difficult, but downright nasty. Most Solars who attempt these quests will suffer greatly through its trials and tribulations. An allied band of Solars is a fine solution to counteract these endtime woes. The challenges increase with more Solars attempting them, but as with the more mundane quests, the odds are at least more favorable.

However, only Solars who have collected the proper amount of Renown may join an Epic Quest. A group of Solars may pool their Renown instead of facing the Epic Quests alone. As long as the Renown is there, the Epic Quest is open to all comers. Early in the game, this is no problem: There are enough options on the table for players to choose the quest that best suits them. Once the sun completes its cycles, however, the options are more limited. Eventually, multiple Solars are vying for only one or two Epic Quests, and not everybody has the Renown necessary to join in the fun. What can these unfortunate souls do to achieve their rightful place in the Sun?



Sneak their way onto the quest, of course. Or good, old-fashioned bribery.

Even if a Solar does not have the Renown for an Epic Quest, she may still be invited to join the Epic Quest by the other Solars. Of course, this would require either incredible amounts of kindness on the part of the other players or a vast bounty of items in the invited's possession. Granted, the latter is most likely the case. Alternatively, a Solar that engages another Solar in battle and is victorious has the opportunity to invite himself on the Epic Quest (provided he defeated a Solar already on the quest). Like an unwanted dinner guest, this ruffian Solar has found an adequate shortcut on the path to glory. Now he must hope that the other Solars agree to play nice with him, or at least recognize how much they need him, despite the underhandedness. You cannot force yourself into an alliance, but you can make it so it would be in a band's best interest to bring you along. That is, of course, if they don't just try to steal that Renown back.

*Arianna has found the key to the Crown of Thunders' location. Journeying to the Blessed Isle, she takes stock of her resources. Knowing that the objective ahead of her is perilous, she decides to invite Swan and Dace on the quest, whose prowess in fighting will be essential on the treacherous island (not to mention their*

*copious amounts of jade and weaponry). Their journey is successful, and they made it to the Blessed Isle with no complications. But before they can find the Crown of Thunders, Harmonious Jade and Panther attack the band, defeating them in battle. At the point of a blade, the band relents, and Jade and Panther take the Renown necessary to finish the quest. With limited options, Arianna and her company agrees to let them join the quest. Together, the Solars successfully find the Crown of Thunders, each becoming the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun.*



## EVERYONE WINS? REALLY?

The five players of the game each achieve victory at the same time. Everyone wins, the game is over. Is that really how the game can end?

Yes.

Is that a bad thing?

No. Considering the journey they took to get to the endpoint, I would say absolutely not. Lying, treachery, backstabbing, manipulation, bribery, bullying. All this took place on the road to victory. Everybody used everybody else on the path to glory.

This is not to imply that you can't win the game by yourself. You certainly can and probably will, too. However, like most games, that's assumed from the get-go, and there is little controversy in winning by yourself.

Thus, in the end, so what if everybody won? It's the journey, not the destination, that matters, right?





# WHITE WOLF

## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: PETER BERGTING

By Priscilla Kim

With art in the blood - he comes from a family of artists and began drawing and painting at three - Peter Bergting skipped the whole “art school” fad and went directly into the business, where he’s made his living for almost twenty years. His most recent work for White Wolf is with **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**. In addition, he’s also illustrated for dozens of publications and non-publishing companies, including Target Games and FASA. He was born and currently resides in Sweden with his wife, daughter and two cats. In his little free time, he enjoys playing guitar, writing music, painting (even more) and eating banana pizza with curry, peanuts and chicken.

### How did you start working for White Wolf?

I can’t remember any more. Must be ten years ago. I think I was contacted when I was still freelancing for FASA, probably around 1997 or so. White Wolf was always a company I wanted to work for, especially since I really loved **Vampire**.

### How long have you been a fan of **Vampire**?

Since it first came out. I was sucked in by the Bradstreet art mainly, and the game was a real breakthrough with the Storytelling system.

### Have you done any other work for White Wolf?

Quite a bit in fact. **Mage** and **Demon** comes to mind. I might have done something for **Werewolf**. Can’t remember.

### Do you have any specific inspirations you draw upon when you’re working on **World of Darkness** material?

I tend to look, as most of us probably do, at the classics of the genre, and I’m really dating myself when I mention stuff like *Near Dark*. But stuff like that. The scripts are usually enough inspiration to get me started.

### How does the process of doing card art usually work, from contracting to submitting the final piece? Do they send you specific details on what they’d like to see? Or do they just give you the general gist that you then work from?

I usually get a name for the card, a description and even requests for different characters to put in there. After that, I do a rough sketch that is then approved. The next step is to do the final art. It’s usually a smooth process, since the card art is small and leaves little room for making too many mistakes.

### What’s your favorite card that you’ve done for **V:TES**?

Gosh... I can’t remember the name of it, but there’s a bloke in the wilderness and some spooky wolf is coming out of his chest. I think that’s my favorite.





# WHITE WOLF

## Do you play **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle** yourself?

Not any more. It's been ten years since last we gave it a shot. We're too old now. Work and family takes too much time.

## What sort of subjects do you enjoy doing most?

That's a tough one. The fantastical, I guess. Evocative settings. I'm not a big fan of painting action.



## How did you get started doing art?

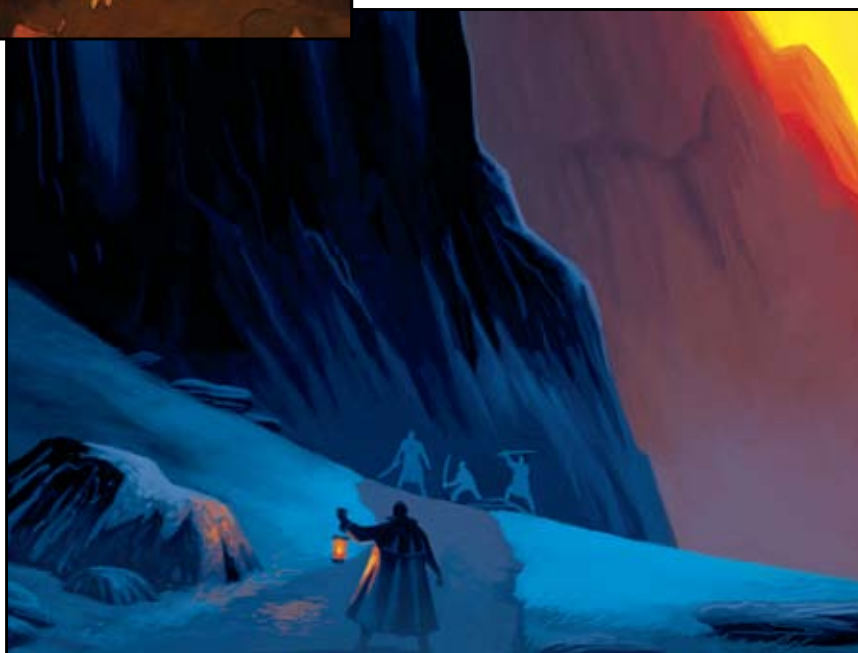
I began doing RPG art for a Swedish company and then moved on to freelancing for FASA for years and years. It was a fun time: I was really trying to find my own style. A couple of other guys and I really became some sort of watershed artist that you either loved or hated because we had no particular style. It was a good time and I remain friends with many of the other freelancers.

## What tools and medium do you prefer?

I prefer acrylics, really, but so rarely have time to work with them. Most of my art gets finished in the computer anyway, even my comic book pages.

## What are you currently working on?

Right now I'm knee deep in doing storyboards for a Hollywood movie called *Shelter* and writing the script for the movie based on my own comic book, *The Portent* ([www.theportent.com](http://www.theportent.com)). Still don't know if it will ever be a movie, but it got picked up by a production company last year, so I'm hopeful. At least it's opened doors to Hollywood, which is fun.





# VAMPIRE

## THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

## News from the Blood-shadowed court

BY L. SCOTT JOHNSON, developer for *vampire: The eternal struggle*

The Eternal Struggle revisits the rowdier district of the World of Darkness with the upcoming release of the **Twilight Rebellion** expansion in May. It's an Anarch-themed set, and, not coincidentally, it serves as a springboard to this summer's storyline tournaments as well.

We've included more three-way cards for the Anarchs. These are a little beefier than the original Anarch expansion's three-way cards. The reason? Well, the original idea was that versatility would be the foundation of the Anarchs in general and of the three-ways in particular. But it turned out that the versatility alone didn't usually give enough of a boost to offset the set-up required for most Anarch decks to work. The three-ways printed in subsequent sets have had more inherent power to help compensate, and that tradition continues in *Twilight Rebellion*.

New ways to make a vampire go Anarch are included in the set as well. One of

those is a crypt card bearing a novel mechanism that lets it play more like a library card. Shifting it to the crypt means the problem of getting it early in the game while avoiding jamming your hand late in the game

also shifts to the crypt, where it is easier to manage. Another such card follows a more traditional approach, but it also includes an effect usable late in the game.

Those two things, increasing the power of the three-ways (and other Anarch-requiring cards in general) and making it more efficient to get your vampires to become

Anarchs, were key design goals of this set. The Anarch trait isn't designed to be a crypt-construction choice like the black hand trait, and we didn't want to lose the unique feel of the Anarch movement by introducing a bunch of vampires who have that trait inherently. Instead, the focus is on improving the value of going Anarch, both by reducing the cost (including deck space and hand jamming as costs) and increasing the payoff for being Anarch.

Naturally, the set also includes cards that non-Anarchs can use (as well as a bunch of crypt cards that are usable in non-Anarch decks). Some of them are Anarch-themed general-purpose cards, like *Baseball Bat*, some are designed for the independent sect as a whole and some are simply utility cards, like *Failsafe*.

The majority of the library cards are specifically for the Anarchs, though. That shouldn't be too surprising, given the size of the set.

One more thought before I sign off: The last expansion, **Lords of the Night**, sold out already, making it only the second expansion to sell out before its successor goes to press (the first being the **Sabbat Wars** expansion). So, to all the players that snapped that one up, enjoy!





# Ragnarök and Roll

*An interview with Dean Shomshak, developer of Scion: Ragnarök, by Jason Bolte*

## What exactly is Ragnarök?

Ragnarök is the “Doom of the Powers” – the End of the World, as described in Norse mythology. All the enemies of the Norse gods attack them at once. The Aesir and the forces of Chaos destroy each other, leaving only the fire giant king Surtr to burn what’s left.

**Scion: Ragnarök** is the first supplement for the Scion game, now that the trilogy of core rulebooks is complete. It deals with the Aesir and their final, doomed battle against the Titans.

## Why did you decide to use the Norse pantheon’s “end of the world” scenario as opposed to any other pantheon’s?

Most other pantheons actually don’t have “end of the world” stories. The Egyptians never imagined a final battle; they expected their world, and their gods, to endure forever. The cocky Greeks couldn’t imagine anything wiping them out. The Aztecs believed in periodic destruction and re-creation of the world, but not much of the mythology survives. The Norse, however, imagined a vivid, exciting myth about the end of the world, and writers from Snorri Sturlason to Richard Wagner used it to link other myths into grand epics. Ragnarök is just a great story!

## How would this book best be utilized by the average roleplaying group?

Is there such a thing as an average gaming group? **Scion: Ragnarök** is meant to be as broadly useful as possible. If you play an Aesir character, or run a **Scion** game where the Aesir play a significant role, this book has lots of information for you. Even if you aren’t a big Norse fan, **Scion: Ragnarök** includes new places, powers and other material that you can use in your **Scion** game.



## What can people expect to find in Scion: Ragnarök? Is this aimed at one particular part of Scion (Hero, Demigod, God)?

Like the corebooks, **Scion: Ragnarök** is divided into halves for players and Storytellers. Chapter One gives an overview of Norse mythology, from the creation of the World to its end. Other chapters describe the Aesir in greater depths and supply new powers, creatures and mythic locations. The Storyteller’s half supplies three adventures – one each for Hero, Demigod and God characters – that climax in the final battle, Ragnarök itself!

## I think a lot of people come into Scion with the hopes of experiencing a true epic quest. Will their thirst for the epics be quenched?

If they think the end of the world and a no-holds-barred battle between the Gods and Titans is epic enough...

## In the hopes of spoilers, how does Ragnarök end? The good guys win, right?

Oh, please. Everyone fated to die, dies. Anything less would be a cop-out. The myth of Ragnarök says, however, that some of the younger Gods survive to see a new world arise from the ashes of the old. The players’ characters can be among them... but there are no guarantees.

Most importantly, the Scions of the Aesir can change the fate of Midgard – the mortal World. Asgard must burn; that’s Fate. The Scions have not yet bound themselves to a specific Doom, however, so if anyone can save the World from destruction, it’s them. Their enemies are many and mighty, however, and Fate itself is against the Scions. If they can pull victory from the Doom of the Gods, they will truly earn the right to be called legends!



# THE ABYSS HAS TOYS, TOO

This excerpt from the upcoming *Exalted* supplement, *Manual of Exalted Power: Abyssals*, showcases some of the finer aspects of necrotech.

## EXAMPLES AND INSTRUCTIONS

The macabre genius of necrosurgeons produces many wondrous crimes against the laws of nature, men and gods. Here are just a few.

### REANIMATED TOOLS

Compared to the precision of magitech, the less-developed ways of necrotech can seem clumsy. It's true that an organic medium brings a certain inherent level of inaccuracy and unpredictability. Necrosurgeons strive to remove those elements that make necrotech seem incapable of anything other than gross destruction. They have achieved several successes. Here are some of the more common designs that one might encounter serving as tools of their reanimators.

#### GLITTERING LOBOTOMIZED RAPTOR (COIL RANK 4)

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Martial Arts 4, Presence 4

**Join Battle:** 7

**Attacks**

Diving Talon: Speed 7, Accuracy 6, Damage 1L, Parry DV 6, Rate 1

**Special Abilities:** *Infection, Stench, Terrifying*

**Soak:** 0L/1B

**Health Levels:** -1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 3 **Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 1

**Augmentations:** *Dark Fortitude* (1), *Flier* (8), *Keen Sense (Sight)* (4), *Lethal Attack* (1), *Undead Dexterity* (2), *Very Small* (4)

With a just a few surgical strokes to the brain of a hawk or falcon and a few shiny implants, a once-great living hunter becomes a relatively effective mortal-finder. The bird's reduced undead vision and glistening metal



parts, combined with its natural aura of menace, make it an ineffective hunter of most animals, but people are rarely so cunning. A clever deathknight came up with the idea of tying a string to such a lessened creature, which would lead them to its slow prey. Occasionally, the glistening lobotomized raptor leads the hunters to a wounded deer, but results have been excellent overall.

## ARM SPIDER (COIL RANK 3)

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Dodge 3, Martial Arts 3, Resistance 1, Stealth 1

**Join Battle:** 4

**Attacks**

Hungry Clinch: Speed 7, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Defense 7, Rate 1, Tags: C

**Special Abilities:** *Infection, Stench, Terrifying*

**Soak:** 0L/1B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 3 **Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 1

**Augmentations:** *Clinch Enhancer Attack* (1), *Extra Legs x 2* (2), *Lethal Attack* (1), *Undead Dexterity x 3* (6), *Undead Strength* (1), *Unholy Accuracy x 2* (2), *Unholy Damage x 2* (2)

The arm spider serves as makeshift cavalry to catch fleeing prey and break archery formations. It consists

of a short man with three extra pairs of normal arms stitched to his sides and four more short arms stitched to his torso. These last four arms end with hands that have three blades for fingers. The top-heavy creation runs on its 12 arms, using its legs for jumping and extra propulsion.

The arm spider overruns and tackles its prey. Six hands grab, punch, rip and choke, while four hands slash and stab. The creation would work better in the field if it were less brittle. In order to achieve the speed and coordination that the design requires, most of the frame and internal organs must be removed. As a result, a well-placed blow can smash the agile design.

## MEAT PUPPET (COIL RANK 4)

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Melee 3, Presence 2, Resistance 3

**Join Battle:** 4

**Attacks**

Poleaxe Arm: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 19L/2, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags: O, R

**Special Abilities:** *Infection, Stench, Terrifying*

**Soak:** 3L/10B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1x4/-2x4/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 0 **Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 1

**Augmentations:** *Big x 3* (6), *Funereal Armor x 3* (3), *Melee Weapon Graft* (4), *Undead Dexterity* (2), *Undead Strength x 3* (3), *Unholy Damage x 2* (2)

This crude creation does its job with heavy muscle and a thick blade. Stitching a meat puppet requires five full-grown human corpses and as big an axe as can be found. The necrosurgeon grafts the muscle from four men directly onto the largest cadaver, whose bones are disjointed and flesh shredded to add height and reach. Bolt the axe into one extra-long arm, and *voila*, destruction.





# CHANGELING

## SUMMER OF THE LOST

by Jason Bolte

Following is an interview with Ethan Skemp, developer of **Lords of Summer**, the new supplement for **Changeling: the Lost**.

*What exactly can players find in the Lords of Summer?*

Lords of Summer is about the social units that make up changeling society.

The basic outline goes something like this:

Chapter One deals with freeholds. Stuff on their origin, organization, particular customs that become common, things like that.

Chapter Two is a huge look at the Seasonal Courts, with each one getting a lot of space. Lots of information on rituals, titles within each Court, governing practices, freehold roles, even some new Contracts and maybe an Entitlement for each.

Chapter Three is all Entitlements. We really played around with some of the ideas of what you could do with an Entitlement here; hopefully the noble and eldritch orders on display will tickle the imagination no small amount.

*The Lost, much like the vampires, seem very obsessed with the notions of nobility. Why do you suppose that is? Besides both being supernatural*

*creatures, there is very little the two groups have in common.*

The Lost certainly indulge in noble titles and the like, but it's probably more accurate to say that they're keenly aware of the concept of status. If they care about "nobility," they care about it as an expression of virtue and achievement. That sounds a bit romantic, but the other way we think of nobility, as inherited status, can't really get a foothold among changelings. For obvious reasons, there are no noble bloodlines per se in

changeling society; there's no way to inherit status as an accident of birth (or since we're using vampires as a basis for comparison, an accident of the Embrace). Since every scrap of status associated with a title has to be earned, one way or another, each title means a lot more to them. Now, some titles may be unscrupulously earned with wealth or illicit favors, but still, everything associated with a title is still achieved some way or another.

That reflects on the whole nature of what it is to be a changeling in the first place. Again, you don't become a changeling by an accident of birth - you may have been abducted for random reasons, but you got out of Faerie on your own merits.

You're bound by ages-old promises and customs by your very nature. The very old concepts of kings and queens are another way of observing these old bonds, even if the Autumn King wears a three-piece instead of an ermine robe.





# CHANGELING



*You have a chapter on the four seasonal Courts. Which one is your favorite? Any really juicy new rituals?*

Man... I hate "What's your favorite?" questions. It's not that I want to seem totally impartial, but if you find that one or more of the factions you work on aren't your favorite, then that's kind of a sign that you didn't quite make them as compelling and visceral as you could have. Thankfully, I think enough work went into the Great Courts that I can honestly say I don't have a favorite. I love the Summer Court because I will always have a fondness for groups with that level of raw defiance and courage. I love the Autumn Court because I love autumn, and its ineffable October flair is neatly captured. I love the Winter Court because they're not just clever and duplicitous, they're good at it - they pull off their intrigues for good reasons, and they do them well. And I love the Spring Court because there's no better group to point at to say that being a changeling does not in fact have to be about stewing in regrets and suffering from old wounds - it can be about the entire future laid out in front of you, a future that you won for yourself and you plan to seize every moment.

And I also love all these Courts because they're also nicely stocked with individuals who fall rather short of their lofty ideals, and become treacherous and callous fey-hearted knaves as a result. And that keeps the Courts damn interesting.

*Any fancy new dances or parties? Changelings seem to love parties.*

There are dances and parties, though they vary widely in pomp, circumstance and exuberance. Don't wear anything to July at Christmas that you wouldn't want to see mused.

*Finally, what can you tell us about the Entitlements section? Those orders were always some of the wildest parts of the game. Are there any particularly crazy ones that you would like to divulge?*

Well, let's see. We do debut the idea of the eldritch order here, so you'll see some Entitlements with particularly remarkable scope. The Legacy of the Black Apple, for

instance, is dedicated to interaction with the True Fae - not a job for the light-hearted.

On the other hand, you also see some examples for how to use the Entitlement ruleset and general toolkit to build things that aren't quite noble orders, such as the Solstice Court.

But certainly for sheer toying with interesting details, I'm fond of the Knights of the Knowledge of the Tongue. If you ever wondered what would happen if there was a head-on collision between the Food Network and the outrageous, exotic weirdness of the Hedge, well - the Knights have got you covered. Bon appetit!





## Hunter Is Not...

by Chuck Wendig, developer of *Hunter: The Vigil*

I keep trying to tell you people what **Hunter: The Vigil** is about. I try, but they censor me. I clamber atop a radio tower and try to scream to you all how awesome it is that hunters can use [REDACTED], and snipers take me down. I try to broadcast on local cable stations just how [REDACTED] might [REDACTED] so to help the hunters [REDACTED] and what happens? Giant cyborg Dobermans run me down. They bite my legs. They vomit up a Non-Disclosure Agreement in my face. I am hobbled, literally, in my efforts. Not to mention covered in dog puke.

So, here's what I'm gonna do. I can't tell you what **Hunter** is going to be. I can't. They'll kill me. They'll mentally control me, and make me slit my own throat with a cheese knife. Can't have that. Thus, the plan is: I'll tell you what **Hunter** is not about. You follow? Wink wink? Nudge nudge?

Okay. Here goes. **Hunter Is Not...**

... Hopeless. The world's a fucked up place, sure. The supernatural lurks in the shadows, beneath the ground and in the hearts of men like a layer of sepsis, a foul infection. But it is not insurmountable. Not every hunter's a hero. Not every hunter saves the day, and some victories are all-too-Pyrrhic. But they're casting light in the dark places. They're keeping the candles lit. Sure, maybe hope is only found after you carve your way through some cult's mad army, the blood and bile cloying beneath your shoes. Maybe you only find hope in some blasphemous book of ritual or lost prayer. Or maybe you find it in the eyes of a child rescued from the grip of some foul fiend. Hope is what keeps the candle burning.

... A New Phenomenon. The awful things that lurk in this world have been around for a long time. And at every turn, hunters have responded. This response is far from universal, of course, but such is the complexity of man. Hunters have long been a part of the secret histories, make no mistake.

... About Being the Monster. Hunters are humans. Flawed humans, yes. Some aren't just flawed; they're downright broken. But they are alive. They are human. Their hearts beat, their brains need oxygen. Of course, beyond that, the definition of "humanity" starts to get a bit sticky, doesn't it? Do monstrous actions a monster make?

... A Game of Easy Answers. Hunters are besieged by uncertainty. Most of them don't have instruction manuals or directives from above, and even those that do, well, who says that information is right? Moral complexities abound. Who can you trust? Can you trust yourself, even? Your friends who carry the Vigil with you? Some even wonder, "Is it possible to trust the monsters? Just this once?"

... Pie. I wish it were. Pie is freakin' awesome. You ever have one of those appley-caramely-drizzley pies, all sugar and brown goo and golden crust? Hunter isn't that. If it was, my job as developer would've been so much better than any job ever. You think your job is cool? Try developing pie for a living. In a perfect world, you know?

... About a Single Approach. See earlier, "no easy answers." The questions surrounding a hunter's Vigil (how, why, when, where, with whom?) are not dictated by single, universal answers. Every hunter's Vigil is different; no singular directive exists. With whom will she join? Why does she take up the candle and keep the flame burning? Is her flame a lamp held over an infernal artifact so she may study the warning etched upon it, or is it a burn barrel in which the bones of many vampires lie? The hunt is not about a single approach. If only it were — the hunters might not be so suspicious of one another if that were true.

... A Lot of Things, Really. Swamp monsters, nope. Is it *Hunter: The Reckoning* or *Hunters Hunted* or the North American Hunting Club or *The Deer Hunter* starring Robert de Niro? Uh-uh, sorry (though one day I may try to develop **Hunter: The S. Thompsoning**, with Gonzo as your power stat!). Reliant on other corebooks? I hope not, or I did something wrong. Devoid of story hooks? Ooh, definitely not that one, the writers pumped this sucker full of Raw Narrative Adrenalin.

So that, dear readers, is what **Hunter: The Vigil** isn't about. If you'll notice, I kind of maybe snuck some hints in there, too, some choice little meaty bits. Appetizers, if you will. If only I could tell you how awesome the [REDACTED] system is, or how you can modify your [REDACTED].

Damn. Do you hear that? The distant sound of cyborg Dobermans barking — nay, howling for my blood? Zoinks. Gotta run!



# WHITE WOLF

## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Contrary to my surly nature, I decided to open my heart and select five (count 'em, 5) winners for the eQuarterly Fiction Contest. Add in the two winners for the Art Contest, and that's a whopping seven fan-submitted entries for this publication. Consider this my gift to you, dear reader and devotee of White Wolf products. You're welcome.

I had one simple criterion for the winning entries: Be the best and most deserving story/artwork for a particular line. These stories and artworks were chosen out of the dozens of submissions because they encapsulate one aspect of their setting's world. Congratulations to all the winners. If you weren't chosen, simply send us your story next time. The next editor might have an even softer heart than mine. Enjoy.

## ART BY THE FANS



“zombie waiter”

ERIK BORRER



## Maddy's Night Out

By William Acks, with art by Shiloh Penfield

We only move at night. It seems logical, the pretext of a skin disease that my Papi has; sensitivity to ultra-violet lights, they said. His skin is pale, almost waxy, and looks cadaverous against his mop of tangled brown hair. Some might find him scary and introverted, but I never felt estranged from him. My Papi loves me and protects me. Oh, there are nights when he gets angry. Very angry. He locks himself away, and I try to shut out his screams. The pitch starts low, a bass-moan that cultivates into a shrill howl high enough for my ears to vibrate in pain. When his cries reach this level, I do as I was instructed long ago and stumble quickly to a safe place to hide.

I can still hear him though, his earsplitting cry echoing through the night no matter how far-flung I run, calling out for "Maddy." That's my name. This happened habitually when I was young, but it has tapered off in recent years. I'm thirteen now, and the last attack was several cities back.

We're on the road tonight yet again. Papi drives a paint-peeled '88 Oldsmobile with a flat-bed trailer hitched to the back. The back groans with the weight. On top of the flat-bed, we're pulling our livelihood, a little deep-fry shanty stand. Its edges are traced with light bulbs that shine a bright yellow when turned on, framing a sign with red letters that reads "Deep-Fried Dough." Poking my head out the window, I let the wind whip my short-cropped brown hair against my forehead. My Papi always likes to kiss my forehead, brushing the wild strands of hair behind my ears.

Our car is in the middle of a rag-tag stretch of cars pulling similar flat-beds filled with grills, tents and

stands. There's a kaleidoscope of signs that read "Falafel," "Red-Hot Sausages," "Gyros" and the like. Some vans are garishly painted on the outside with swirls of color and tarot-card depictions. These vans carry small trade goods: knitted Technicolor sweaters, glass smoking pipes, cardboard re-prints of concert posters from the 60s, and the like.

We drive through the night, bearing toward our next destination. It's routine by now. We'll find a spot just outside the city where the rich folk don't tend to tread as freely: boardwalks by the sea with aging buildings nearby or an open field near a trailer park with a rusted chicken wire fence. We might attach ourselves to a circus for awhile, until the local townships start to demand a fee for our services.

In the distance I glimpse the lights of a Ferris wheel and hear the joyful cries of roller coaster rides. My eyes light up as I look over to Papi. He smiles, aware of my excitement before I am. He knows I love it when we set up near amusement parks.

It doesn't take long for Tank to talk to the management and negotiate a small fee for setting up adjacent to the park. Tank, the unspoken leader of our troupe, is a big and bulky man; hence his name. I've always thought of him as a big bear, with his thick black beard and bristly arms jutting through a tight black shirt. He isn't fat, just...big. He's gruff with dad, but Tank always smiles when he looks at me. I often sit with Tank's wife Raven and help make scarves. Raven looks funny in juxtaposition to those brash and bright scarves: She always wears black clothing, applies thick eyeliner and almost never brushes her wild, dark



# Vampire

THE REQUIEM



mane. But Raven likes to teach me things, and I find her company soothing, like a mother I never knew.

In under an hour our troupe is set up, and people begin breaking from the Tilt-a-Whirl and Teacups to feast on fried dough sprinkled with cinnamon and white powdered sugar. My Papi and I work the deep-fat fryer, dipping in pound after pound of the risen dough. The hours fly by in a flurry of oil and money, but I'm happy working with my Papi. As the customers dwindle, I sense that it's time for me to explore. I look up at my dad, and the ritual begins: A raise of the eyebrow and hesitant shake of the head leads to me running out of the stand with a tattered five-dollar bill and my Papi yelling at me to slow down.

I love exploring new areas. The people, the local fashions, food and sites create a dizzy anticipation in me. Raven always warns me to be careful, saying that there are things in the darkness that will stare back if you linger too long and corners to be turned that will not lead me back home. Raven and Tank can get protective of me; in fact, everyone in our traveling band is like their children. There are other children like me, but I'm one of the few that is permitted to run around. Tank often yells at my Papi for giving me this freedom, but Papi always ignores him.

After gorging myself on cotton candy, sugar-coated cashews and a can of Coke, I queasily make my way to the edge of the park and empty my stomach. I always over-do it. The park is closing, the lights lingering on the rides,

but the machinery's rotating and whirling and the dull hum of park-goers is muted. I scrub the back of my hand against my mouth, spitting out the last of my stomach's bad decisions. It's dark; no stars are overhead. Squinting, I realize that we're on the edge of a beach. Delighted, I bound for the water's edge, wondering how I could have missed the sound of waves.

My bound is abruptly halted as a sharp blow crushes my stomach. My eyes bulge while I gasp for breath, attempting to gulp in waves of air that don't seem to come. I dry retch, forcing my lungs to expel a breath, frantically trying to breathe. I'm on my knees, and my vision is hazy from the shock. I feel a hand grasp my arm, fingernails digging into my flesh. Another hand grabs my throat, lifting me off my feet. The hand squeezes, and my labored gasps cut off as I struggle against an immense force.

"It's unforgivable, raising young humans to breed a new generation," the voice wheezes out, a sharp hiss punctuating the syllables. I can't concentrate on what he says; I can only feel my lungs pounding with fire and my throat begging for air. I don't understand what he is talking about.

"Know this before you die, young one. Long ago there was only my kind, my covenant, my people. We were the First Kingdom, until your kin came and destroyed us. We will have our revenge on you. Our mark will be carved into every face of those who dares to call themselves one of the Blood!"



# Vampire

THE REQUIEM

The hand loosens from my throat, but before I can breathe again, I feel a sharp pain enter my throat and course through my blood. My skin feels damp and I can sense every breath of the wind against my body, every pore, every thread of hair. I make out details in the sand, count every grain. Miles away, I can still hear the seagulls cry. The smells of dead fish mingle with salt, and sweat flares in my nostrils. I cry softly, guilty at the feeling of pleasure, panicked at the feeling of entrapment.

What felt like an eternity of emotions washes away into pain. Pure, unbridled hurt. The figure moves his mouth away from my neck, which I knew was cascading blood. I cannot make out his features, but I hear the dull click of a switchblade issue forth.

I don't scream as the throbbing rages on my forehead. He carves something into my flesh, the knife hot and searing like liquid fire. Blood dribbles down into my eyes, the burning blood like rivers of acid gouging into my face. I hear a quick snap and fall in a heap, my arms and legs flopping in awkward angles like a rag doll. There are footsteps and voices shout out in an anguished howl. It's my father, my Papi.

Papi's hands wipe the blood from my eyelids, pulling my body close to his in a hug. I see Raven crying, Tank holding the body of my assailant and beating the head in with his fist. The pulpy smacks give way to cracking bones until there is no discernable head. Papi howls. I press against his chest, not used to the contact but enjoying it nonetheless. His face feels cold and clammy. I feel my heart racing. His yells grow higher in pitch. Tank and Raven claw at him now, begging him to let me go and not to embrace me, that I was too young. I am confused, frightened. I look into my Papi's eyes and see a violent beast. I feel genuine fear of my Papi for the first time. He lunges down onto my neck and bites me. Soaring feelings replace the electric shock, and I lose consciousness.

"It will never heal. She'll be stuck with it for eternity. It will be difficult for her," Tank's voice rumbles softly. I lie in the back seat of our car. We always sleep this way: Papi in the front and me in the back.

"I don't care," my Papi's voice replies. They are outside the car. I can make out the muted light of a lamp post. I see the electricity inside the bulb, hear the flow of currents in the wires. Raven sobs softly somewhere near.



"Too young. Too young to be sired. Too young to be taught," Tank says in exasperation.

"I don't care."

I rise, surprised that I can do it so quickly. Too quickly. My reflection in the rear-view mirror is hazy. I focus and scream. My skin is pale like my father's. I touch the fangs that stab through my gums. On my forehead is a scar, an angry carving of the "VII," the Roman numeral. I scream, holding my head, shattering the windshield of the car with the noise

"We always wait until they're 18. If they stay, we let them know what we are and ask if they want to join. Never before. Her life will be hard, turned so young. There are rules," Tank hisses as my screams bounce into the night amid the cataclysmic shattering of glass and tinkling of shards falling on the pavement all around.

Raven walks forward as Tank signals for everyone to pack up. She opens the door and slides in. I've never noticed how elegantly she moved. My scream subsides and I cry. The tears burn my cheeks. Raven places my head against her chest, stroking my hair.

"There are basic rules, rules that you need to know, Maddy," Raven whispers, trying to calm me. I look through the empty husk of our car and stare at my Papi. I stare with eyes of hatred. Eyes of cold disgust, betrayal and hurt.

"In the world of the Blood, which you now have entered, we must adhere to following the Masquerade, so that you do not reveal your true nature to those not of the Blood. Doing so forfeits your claim to the Blood..." Raven continues, her words hollow in my head. I stare at my Papi with eyes of repulsion. I hate my Papi. I will hate him forever.

## You Can't Go Home Again

by Jessica Sirkin

The pages were worn thin from reading every night, and a couple of them were disintegrated from the rain. Her bridge was no shelter from the rain, but it was the best home she had. The book was one of the few things she had to remember her family. It belonged to Kevin, the younger brother who was never really her brother, and she'd read it to him over and over again when the voices in the wind whispered in his ear and brought nightmares. Without thinking, her hands opened the book to his favorite story. It was the story of three goats and a troll who lived under a bridge and was always hungry.

"Lexi! Oh God, Lexi, is it really you?"

The man in the doorway was shouting at her. He seemed to recognize her, but she still had no idea who Lexi was. The name on the driver's license was Alexandra Fischer. She'd been training herself for this for the last eight months; now it was time and she didn't know what to do. She thought she was ready. When she waited in line at a store, most of the time someone would come and help her. And now, when she went to a restaurant, someone would take her order. Not always, but most of the time. She was getting better. She didn't really need to eat at a restaurant. She could eat most anything, but it helped her feel human, eating their food.

Her creator had said that she couldn't do it, when she found the driver's license in her back pocket

and told him she knew who her body used to be; she used to be someone named Alexandra Fischer and she lived on Holly Street. He told her not to go, but here she was. He was still hiding under the bridge, too scared to come out into the sunlight.

The man was moving toward her with open arms. She flinched away from his touch. She'd been told that her skin didn't feel quite right, too much like plastic, so she didn't let anyone touch her anymore. She tried to stay out of fluorescent lights too: they made her look less human.

"Lexi? Oh God, Is it really you?"

"My name is Alexandra Fischer. Is this 232 Holly Street?"

"What happened to you?"

She knew what to say to that. "I don't remember. I don't remember anything."

"We thought you'd run off with that boy. Oh, thank God you're here." A woman had walked up behind the man.

"She says she doesn't remember anything."

"Don't just stand there. Let her in."

It was her first time in a house. A real house. Not like the place under the abandoned bridge where she'd stayed with her creator, hiding like two monsters from a faerie tale. This was somewhere people were meant to live. There was a couch in front of a TV, and the woman led her there and sat next to her. The man took the other side.





# PROMETHEAN

## THE CREATED

"Are you my parents?"

"You really don't remember?" she asked.

"No, I don't."

"What's the first thing you remember?"

"Um, pain, I guess. My head hurt a lot."

"Do you remember anything before that?"

She shook her head. All she remembered was what came after: pain and the feel of her creator's lips on her own. Breathing in, breathing out; breathing until she pulled her head away from his mouth. She was cold and lying in a bath. She knew the edges of her body because they stung from the liquid. All her new senses screamed: the dim bulb was too bright, the sound of his breath too loud, the smell of herbs was sickening.

He said, "Welcome to the world, my child."

She clawed her way out of the tub and stood naked and shivering on the cement floor. He brought her a towel and dressed her in the dead woman's clothing. He told her he loved her and all she wanted was to run.

"Sweetheart?"

The woman's face hovered close. She could tell that Alexandra's mother was worried from the way the muscles below her skin pulled her face.

"Mom?"

"Yes, I'm your mother. This is your father. Our names are Frank and Viviane. We love you and we are so happy you're home."

The woman cried. The man put his arm around her shoulder.

She remembered the way to make her face smile. It took fewer muscles than a frown.

She met her brother later that day when he came home from school. His name was Kevin, and he had blonde hair like his father. Her own hair was dark brown like their mother's. They called her Lexi. They fed her home-cooked meals: potatoes, green beans and beef stew. It was the most delicious thing she'd ever tasted. Her smiling improved; she'd been practicing in front of the mirror.

She read through Lexi's diary, which she found under the floorboards beneath her bed, and began pretending to remember bits of things: the name of their childhood dog (Scout), boys Lexi had dated, Kevin's birthday. Her own.

One day, Lexi practiced her fake memories. She walked in from the cold, kicked off her shoes and saw her father walk by in his bathrobe and scuffed slippers.

"You remember how long it took to get Scout to fetch you those slippers?" Lexi asked.

"You remember that?" he said, his face frozen in disbelief.

She nodded, thinking of the diary. According to the entry, they spent days putting kibble in the slippers, the way the dog trainer had told them. The family watched Scout eat the kibble, licking the shoes until they looked like they'd been out in a rainstorm. The slippers did not move an inch. Finally, exasperated, Lexi went down on all fours, picked up the slippers herself and carried them over to Dad.

"I can't believe I really put those in my mouth." She laughed, thinking of all the things she'd eaten when she and her creator spent that week hiding in the sewer. She could never tell him about that.

He started crying then, silently at first so that Lexi wouldn't notice. She knew, though; she could tell from the way his arms shook when he put them around her and held her close. She could feel his heartbeat against her ear, and she knew he could feel the linoleum texture of her skin. For once, she didn't care.

After that moment, she tried to forget that Frank wasn't really her father. He didn't look anything like her or her creator. Frank was short and round in the middle. His hair was thin on top and stuck up straight no matter how much he brushed it. He talked with his mouth full and gestured with his fork when he wanted to make a point at dinner. He was wonderful. Her real father, her creator, was tall and handsome, with jet black hair and eyes like blue marbles. In the right light, he glittered like cut crystal. She would never have let him hold her.

Of course, it didn't last, but for a while she was happy. She fell asleep every night to the sound of their voices. And when she didn't sleep, she could just lie in bed and listen to them breathe. She'd lived with the Fischers for three months when it started. A draft started blowing the front door open every day. They had to start locking it. Then the windows wouldn't stay

# PROMETHEAN

## THE CREATED

shut, and they could hear the wind blowing outside. It sounded like voices.

Kevin started walking at night, trying to hold off falling asleep. Lexi opened her door to him. He came in and sat on the scrap rug Lexi had made with her mother eight years ago, according to the diaries. Kevin began to tell her about the nightmares. They started with the sound of the wind outside almost becoming words, but those words always faded away as he began to comprehend them. In the dream, he knew they were important.

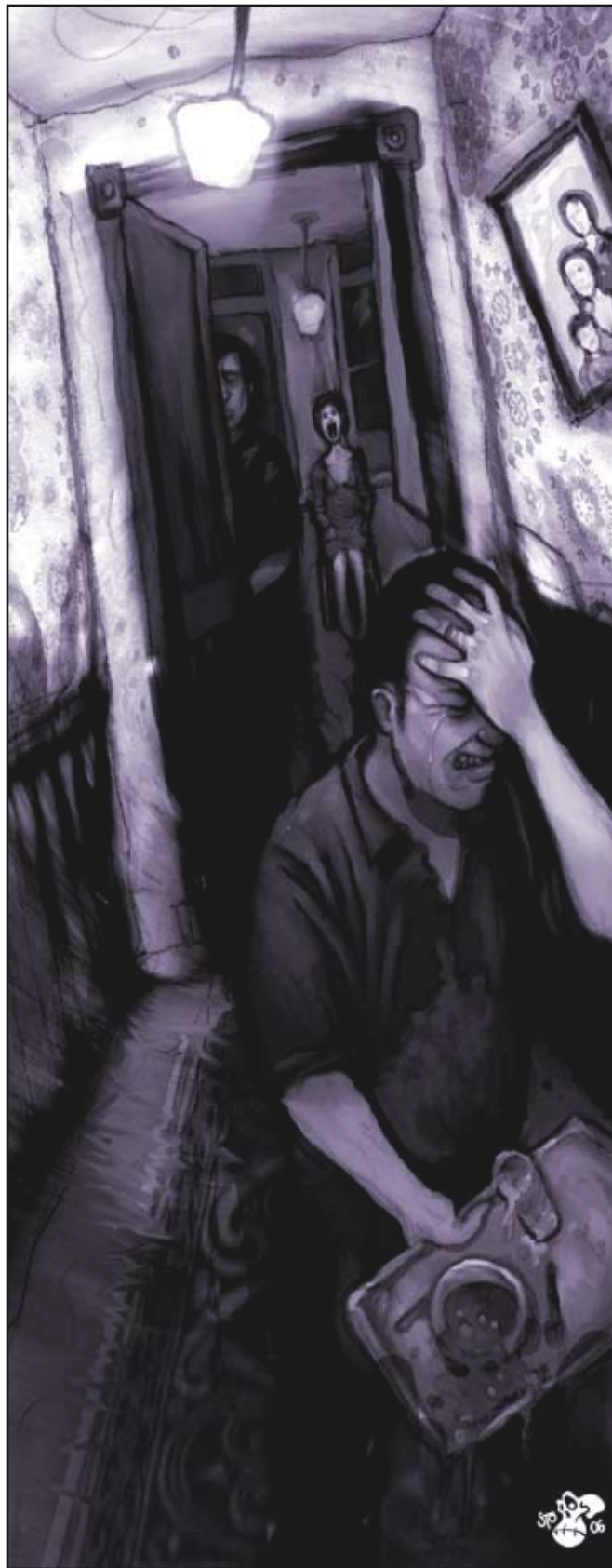
Lexi started reading to him at night before he curled up next to her, too afraid to walk the twelve steps down the hall between their rooms. But the nightmares only grew worse. He dreamed of a woman with pearls in her hair rising out of a pool of blood. He wouldn't tell her who the woman was, but eventually he didn't want to sleep in her bed any longer. So she knew.

Then Mom and Dad started fighting. Mom thought that Dad was doing something with that new woman at work, who had her skirt slit up "past decency," as Mom put it. Lexi could hear them talking from all the way in her room, even with the door shut and the television turned up loud.

Dad started coming home later and later. He said all the noise at home was giving him a headache. He said that maybe if Mom kept shouting at him, he would take that woman out. Sometimes Lexi would hide under Mom and Dad's bed at night, so she could hear them better. The bed springs didn't creak anymore, and they slept facing away from each other.

One day Dad tried to kiss her. He'd been dreaming of Lexi, saying that she was as beautiful and regal as Cleopatra with her pearl earrings dissolving in vinegar. In the dream, Lexi's eyes were blue marbles and her skin glittered like cut crystal. But she was still his daughter, so he started crying and said he didn't know what was happening to him or to the family. She didn't know what to do, so she hid in her room and read Lexi's diaries. It hadn't been like this before.

Not long afterward, she came down the stairs and heard them talking. Dad said, "I love you," and Mom just stared at him as if she didn't know what it meant. She said, "It's going to be okay," but she didn't mean





# PROMETHEAN

THE CREATED



it. The words were just air. That was when Lexi knew she had to leave.

She packed her bag that night, taking Mom's locket and Dad's wedding band while they were both at work. He didn't wear it anymore, saying it was giving him a rash. Lexi took one of the books she used to read to Kevin and a photo of the family all together. Finally, she took the diaries and left without a note. Words were just words now and didn't mean anything anymore.

Lexi lives under a bridge now. She's made a place in the framework where she can stay for a while, like they had when she was with her creator. It's warm there, and when she gets hungry she can eat a little piece of the wood or scraps from someone's forgotten lunch. She only comes out at night, not wanting to see anybody. The daytime, however, is when she can sit under the bridge and listen to the sound of footsteps passing above her. She can hear the people talking to each other or on their cell phones. She can hear children playing, daring each other to cross the haunted bridge. She even heard a pair of lovers talking once and the sounds of their kisses.

But it's been a while since she's heard anyone cross the bridge. They stopped coming about a month ago, so she knows it's time to move on. Home is just a word, she tells herself, and the bridge was never home.



# CHANGELING

## VERUCA

*By Kaelee Dean*

The shadows seemed to beckon her deeper.

She thought she could see something silver and gray just ahead moving further into the woods. Peering through the trees, she tried to make out the shape. A kitten turned to look at her with bright gray eyes and mewed softly.

"Pearl?" Veruca called softly, "come here, Pearl!" She pondered why her kitten was all the way down here. She must have followed Veruca's bicycle. The silver kitten pounced playfully on a budding flower and pranced further along the path, almost out of Veruca's sight.

"Come on, Pearl, come to Mummy!" Veruca jogged after her pet. "Here Pearl! Come on, sweetie!" Veruca was practically giggling as the kitten caroused ahead of her. Everything around her was dark from the gathering dusk. Except, that is, the kitten.

Pearl glowed unnaturally in the burgeoning darkness, illuminating a path for Veruca that was fast becoming uneven, overgrown and slippery. Pearl didn't have any trouble navigating the thickening woodland; Veruca did.

"Ow!" Veruca cried out suddenly, but the noise didn't ring far. In fact, it sounded almost muffled. The thicket of thorns was unusually profuse here, and they scratched at her hands. She shook them a bit, coaxing some warmth into their digits and trying to disregard the stinging sensation. Pearl had stopped and was looking back at Veruca in expectation. Veruca was mesmerized by the kitten's glowing silver eyes, and she felt like something was calling her, urging her on.

Veruca's cell phone jangled loudly, breaking the silence. She paused to check it: Heathcliffe, her husband. She answered the phone with a hesitant smile on her face. The phone greeted her with static and the sound of Heathcliffe's broken voice filtering through. "Ver- ... Where are y-

"Heathcliffe? I can't hear you." She turned away from Pearl, looking back through the woods. She was a lot further than she realized. She could still just see the edge of the woods. A sense of worry crept in when she understood that she was way off the path she knew.

"-ome an hour ago, I cou-" The static roared for a moment, and she held the phone away from her ear, wincing. When it fell silent, she listened again, her eyes widened in amazement. There was no static.

There was also no Heathcliffe.

A strange, bewitching song started on the edge of her hearing. It sounded like it was played with whistles or flutes or something of that ilk. She didn't know what it was or where it came from, but she wanted to hear more.

Veruca took a few steps toward the path. The sound became softer and even more distant. She could barely hear it at all now. The woods were thicker in that direction. Thorns were already catching on her clothes and skin. But the enchanting melody had captured her senses, and it pulled her onwards. A curiosity, practically a compulsion, propelled her forward into the dark.

The haunting melody was accompanied by a rhythmic beat, distant drums pulsing out a rhapsodic cadence. It seemed to rise from all around her. She threw a worried glance back in the direction of the road.

The ghostly kitten mewed a few yards away, pulling her attention back to the music. The drums pulsed louder. She stumbled forward, compelled to follow.

The ground was uneven and perilous. Her boots were wet and slick with mud. She wanted to hear more of that music. Her languid footsteps dragged on the ground. Veruca could barely lift her feet.

She kicked a hollowed log lying in front of her, and it rolled onto something that sounded distinctly metallic, followed immediately by a loud snap.





# CHANGELING



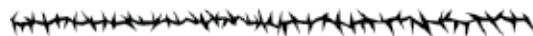
The sinister jaws of something resembling a bear trap clamped shut, shattering the log and showering her with detritus. Dampened and aged splinters caught in her hair.

She turned and bolted like a rabbit down the path (or at least where she thought the path was), straining her eyes in the darkness. Her feet beat out an irregular and protean tattoo on the woodland floor. The thorns caught on her

body more frequently, pulling her back, the branches closing around her and tugging on her red hair. Her breathing was ragged, and she slowly grew aware of how exhausted and starved she felt. These weren't the woods she knew: This forest terrified her.

"Help!" she rasped, her voice sounding strangled. The panic choked her, making it hard to breathe. Her ears were filled with the sound of something heavy and fast chasing after her. The adrenaline burned her blood as she struggled against the twisted forest, which was now a different world from the one she knew. She kept her eyes focused on the distant edge of the woods.

She burst through the woods and was momentarily stunned by a bright light: a flashlight. It swung straight at her and flashed in her face. She stumbled, blinded and dazzled, and her slick boots slid out from underneath her. She fell face first into the dewy grass.



A muzzle flash, paired with a deafening and unexpected crack, sounded from behind her, and a bullet soared over her body. Another shot followed, and another, in quick succession, each round hitting the monster in the chest and neck. It caught the thing off guard, and the monster screeched in rage.

Heathcliffe couldn't move. That thing was slinking away. It was pitch black, as if made of either void or swallowed light. Only his sinister, glowing eyes emitted an eerie light. Against the backdrop of the night, Heathcliffe thought he could make out the shape of long, elegant stag's horns. The body of the thing looked almost human: slender, lithe, sinewy and dangerous, but still not wholly human. Within an instant, the darkness of the woods swallowed it, and the heavy atmosphere lifted.

"Veruca, are you ok?" Heathcliffe helped his wife to her feet. She was pale, wide-eyed, tattered and dirty.

"I'm ok. I'm ok. I'm...ok," she whispered. She trembled violently.

"What were you doing out here?" He wrapped his jacket around her. "You've been gone for hours."

"Pearl. I was following Pearl." She seemed less and less lucid as the adrenaline wore off.

He looked at her.

"Veruca... Pearl's been dead for weeks."

## Hand of the Silver Mage

by William Taylor

The little girl pushed her tiny legs as fast as possible, her jeans protecting her from scrapes as she screamed for help. She skirted thorny bushes while she strove to escape her pursuer.

Before Trent could see the little girl's face, the scene was gone. He passed a hand over the water in the silver bowl. He spoke resonant words, the water responding with another brief image. The girl floated in midair, kicking and struggling against the powerful arms in red sleeves that held her.

Who was she?

Hours passed in the damp cave. The clear water in the silver bowl flashed another brief image of red. Color drained from Trent's face: he knew the girl. Cindy Johnson.

He collapsed onto his elbows over his silver laptop computer. Who would do this to a child? He glanced at his watch: Prophecy work took over nine hours, and now he was late. He frowned, pulled his cell phone from his pocket and dialed a number as he pushed himself to climb the stone stairs that led up to his home. "Sister Thompson? Trent Thane. Sorry, gonna be a little late. Got caught up in things."

He closed the trap door to his underground sanctum, moving his worn and comfortable easy-chair over the trap-door as he made his way up the basement stairs. After a quick shower he was on the highway, headed south to Binghamton and St Jude's soup kitchen.

"Trent's here."

Carl struggled with a table. "I could use some help here, Trent. We need six more tables set up before they come." Trent went to the corner room, grabbed a table and the furniture into position in the dining hall. "How long has the ham been cooking?" someone called from the busy kitchen. A woman in a black and white habit hurried over to Trent.

"We need signs out. We're fifteen minutes behind," began Sister Thompson.

"Let me finish helping Carl," Trent said, glancing at Carl, who was losing hold on the table. Sister Thompson smiled in appreciation. When the preparations were complete, Trent ran upstairs to greet the guests, the downtrodden of the city, who chatted among themselves.

Trent picked up patches of conversation while doing his rounds. "Another child is missing," and "What is happening to this city?" were the common themes.

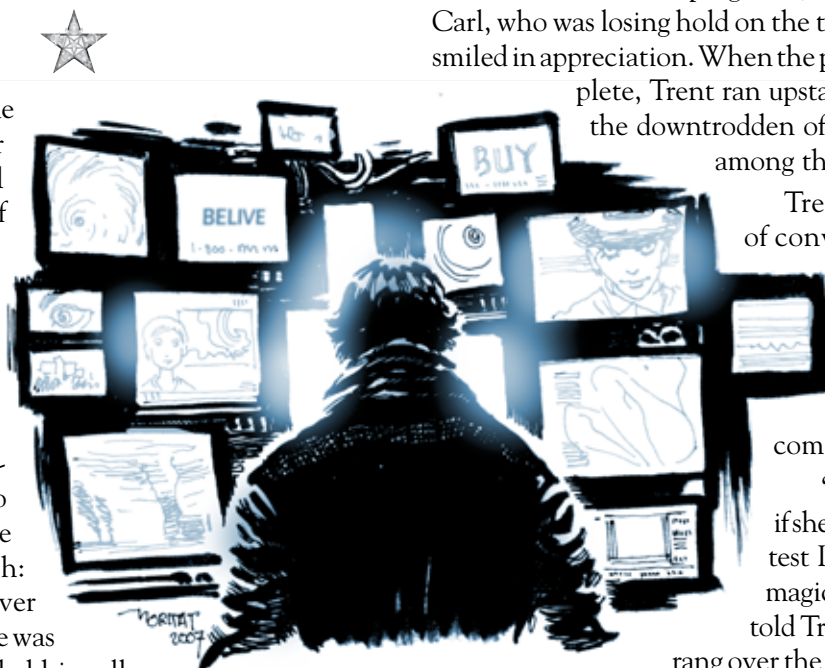
"I promised Cindy that if she did well on her spelling test I would ask you to do a magic trick for her," Janice told Trent in a loud voice that rang over the din. All of the children (and half the adults) stopped their conversations in an attentive silence. Trent's magic was not to be missed.

"What did you get, Cindy?" Trent asked.

"An A+!" she exclaimed.

"Good! I'll do a magic trick for you right now, before we eat," Trent replied. Before he was able to begin, Sister Thompson called, "Dinner's ready." Everyone present frowned for a moment before rushing the stairs. Cindy and her mother stayed behind.

"After dinner, Cindy," Trent said.







"If it's OK with you, I don't want a magic trick," Cindy whispered.

Trent raised his eyebrows: this was a first.

"She's having dreams about monsters," Her mother began.

"I want a magic weapon to keep the monsters away. Like Emeron in that story you told us," Cindy whispered again.

"The magic stone," Trent whispered back. "But Cindy, you must reach into a magic bag for that. I don't have a magic bag."

"Maybe this will do," said Janice, holding out an empty shopping bag. Trent gave her a dirty look, and she responded with a pleading one. He relented and reached into his pockets, quickly throwing things into the bag. With a few items in place, he reached into his right pocket and took out a shining crystal.

"This is my magic crystal. It lets me work miracles," he told them as he brought them into a conspiratorial huddle. After his prompting, Cindy reached into the bag and drew out a silvery crystal. Trent frowned as he did not remember putting a sanctum crystal in his pocket. He stared at Cindy for a moment.

"That kills monsters," He proclaimed, his tone low and serious. Cindy nodded.

"You will meet monsters," he whispered in her ear. Earlier images of little running legs flashed through his mind. He wanted to cry, but instead touched his own crystal to hers.

"The monsters will find you protected by the power of magic. That stone you hold is power. The more you believe, the more powerful the spell becomes. If you don't believe, you will be normal." Trent paused, searching for words. "If you believe, then wherever you are, magic is there. You may not be able to see it or feel it, but it will be there. Do you understand, Cindy?" Trent asked.

"Yes sir," Cindy promised.

"Then let's eat," Trent said.



"No!"

Trent stood. He had been sitting at his desk in his underground sanctum for hours, typing furiously on his laptop. Next to his computer rested the silver bowl, the water inside jostling as he brushed against the table. The air in his sanctum was thick and damp.

He watched the video on his laptop again, leaning against the table, his fingers rifling through the odd wires, ports, crystals and cables connected to the machine.

Cindy was in the back seat of a car with a bald man. The driver hummed. Her magic crystal glowed through her left pocket. Trent turned up the volume on the computer and typed.

The man holding Cindy licked his lips. "This baby is not struggling anymore. She's gonna like it. Maybe we don't need to kill her, I think she's going to be nice. She ain't screaming no more." He tested his theory by removing her hand. Her eyes followed the shifting glow from her left pocket. She did not scream, only whispered "I believe."

The man beside her pulled her closer, hugging her. "Yeah baby, you believe." The driver turned around, smiling, leering at her. "Me too, little girl. Me too."

Trent typed as he watched the scenario. The scene stopped, and Trent attached a new cable to his laptop, threading the silver wire through his bowl and dropping



a crystal into the water. On his screen, a tractor-trailer jackknifed ahead of the car containing Cindy. Had he been watching the road, the driver could have swerved to avoid it; but as it was, the car collided with the truck, its driver's side caving in from the collision.

Trent shut down his computer. He had no more magic to perform. All he could do was wait and see if this scene, and his influence on it, was the way things would pass in the near future. All he had was hope.



Within two weeks, Cindy Johnson was drugged and kidnapped from a restroom by two men. On their way to a hunting cabin, the kidnapper's vehicle hit a jackknifed truck. The driver died, and a man in the backseat was killed by the impact and the shrapnel. Cindy was unharmed, rescued by a ranger who was hunting a nearby brown bear.

Three weeks later, after the St. Jude meal, Cindy and Janice cornered Trent.

"I don't know why, but I feel I should thank you, Trent," said Janice.

Trent smiled.

"Meet you in the car, dear," Janice told Cindy, pushing her in the direction of the door despite the protest forming in Cindy's eyes.

"You knew what would happen all along, didn't you?" Cindy said.

"How could I?" said Trent.

"I saw the crystal glow," Cindy said. Her mother glared at her, but Cindy stayed put.

"You are a very special girl," said Trent.

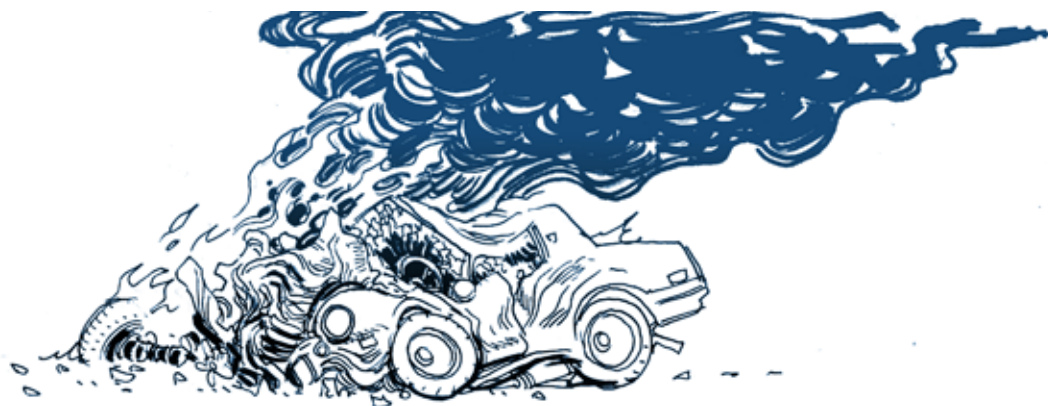
"Why didn't you stop them?" Cindy asked.

"I did."

There was silence.

Cindy stood on her toes, gesturing to Trent. He stooped over, placing his ear next to her face. Cindy cupped her hands over his ear and whispered to him. "I wish I could do magic like you."

"We'll talk later. Your mom's waiting," Trent winked at her, scooting her towards her mother. Cindy left, and Trent helped Sister Thompson close up the dining hall for the night.





# SISTER OF SOULSTEEL

*By Kevin Hallock*

I was frustrated by the futility of my struggle, so I surrendered to gravity and dangled from the unfinished daiklave. I closed my eyes and listened to my chains scrape across the stone floor as I swayed in the darkness, whispering to myself, “Let this be a dream. Oh please be a dream.”

The soft green and yellow glow that greeted my eyes shattered all hope. I wasn’t in my bed, comfortable and at peace, nor was I on my favorite couch on the porch: I was still hanging upside down in Siros’s shadowy workshop.

“Help! Please?” Only silence answered my cries. I hung there like a piece of meat in a butcher shop, waiting for my brother’s return.

The workshop’s heavy stone door opened, and Siros entered, wearing a well-worn apron and gloves, both items thick and leathery and intended for heavy use. He

slammed the door closed and plodded towards his tool bench, glancing at me as he walked past.

“I know this is tough, sis, but we’re almost done.” He stopped at his table and shuffled among his instruments, preparing for another day of misery.

With a heart full of rage, I clawed to the top of the forge and twisted my body in his direction. Each link of my chains clanked as they dragged over the rigid iron braces supporting the daiklave. The bastard was facing away from me.

He turned around, his expression almost tender, like the brother I had known my entire life. “Tara, you know I love you more than anything. And that’s why I must do this. This daiklave requires the hateful soul of a betrayed loved one to imbue it with anger and rage. The more I love you, and the more you hate me, the stronger

the magic will become. I would give my life for you, and you’ve said many times you would do the same for me.” He walked across the workshop and grabbed several bottles from a cupboard .

“I didn’t mean this. Not like this...” My eyes swelled with tears, but anger dabbed them dry.

“This is the only way. The only way to avenge our father. We must stop the Anathema, and jade is too weak alone. The Elemental Dragons are too weak.” He emptied the bottles into a large bowl.

“Blasphemer!” I hissed.



"And what have our gods done for us? Nothing." He stopped his preparations and assumed the stance of an advocate defending his case in front of a judge. "The Anathema returned; we prayed and received no aid. This weapon will help; it has to. I will die, but you will continue our fight forever. You will drain the life of countless adversaries. We will protect Creation!" He gripped the bowl with both hands and carefully carried it to his tool table.

"We?" I asked with a somber tone.

"Yes. Both of us. This hurts me more than it does you."

I motioned to spit at him, but my mouth was too dry for any saliva to form. Defeated, I bowed my head. "How is that possible?"

"You still don't understand how hard it is for me to do this. I weep every night when I leave here. But this must be done."

"No it doesn't. We'll find another way. If you loved me, you would stop."

Siros ceased his preparations, removed his gloves and walked to the table holding my corpse. He continued his defense.

"Didn't I encourage you to wear your favorite dress, the red silk one with ibis feathers?" He motioned to the dress that lay on the other side of the table as if it were evidence. Bending over my head, he scooped up a nearby empty glass.

"And we toasted with your favorite wine so that its exquisite taste would be the last taste on your lips."

My death was painless. I remembered that much. He sat the glass down before his closing argument. "If only you knew the techniques normally used to secure a soul. Torture. Vivisection. I could never do that to you. I love you."

I reflected back on those moments when I woke up, my first memories of life after death. First, he'd beaten my legs into the daiklave, and I stared at the wisps they'd become. They felt like they were being frozen and crushed

by a two ton block of jade. I struggled against the searing pain and tried to move them, but they only writhed as they extended from my waist into the daiklave. I knew that this was my future.

Siros interrupted my thoughts with the promise of more suffering. "I'm sorry, sis. You know I love chatting with you, but we've got work to do."

He pulled a pair of beeswax earplugs from his apron and inserted them into his ears before sheathing his hands with the gloves. He returned to the solutions and

arranged his tools. I continued my pleas, but he gave no response. He walked over and grabbed a chunk of black metal. It exuded pain and terror. He set it in the bowl and whispered some words. The chunk sizzled as it crumbled, smoke bubbling out of the bowl and the stench of sulfur filling the room. After a few minutes, Siros



grabbed a handful of smoldering shavings from the bowl and gripped a rune-covered sledgehammer. He walked over and placed the shavings on the daiklave's blade next to my right hip.

"Don't wriggle too much. This will all be over soon." That was the last thing he said to me.

The hammer screamed with each swing; a scream I echoed loudly with the impact. Sometimes I swore at Siros; other times I cursed him. I begged and I prayed. But in the end I knew the gods would not help me in this awful place. I would be beaten into the blade — would I suffer forever? I hoped not. But I did know that I wanted to endure long enough to watch Siros die a horrible death. Maybe an Anathema would imprison his ghost like he was doing to me. Or maybe it will kill him with the daiklave, the one that harbored my soul. I begged whoever the god of memories was to let me remember this day. If granted my revenge, I wanted to recall every hammer hit as he died. Then, hopefully, my soul can rest.