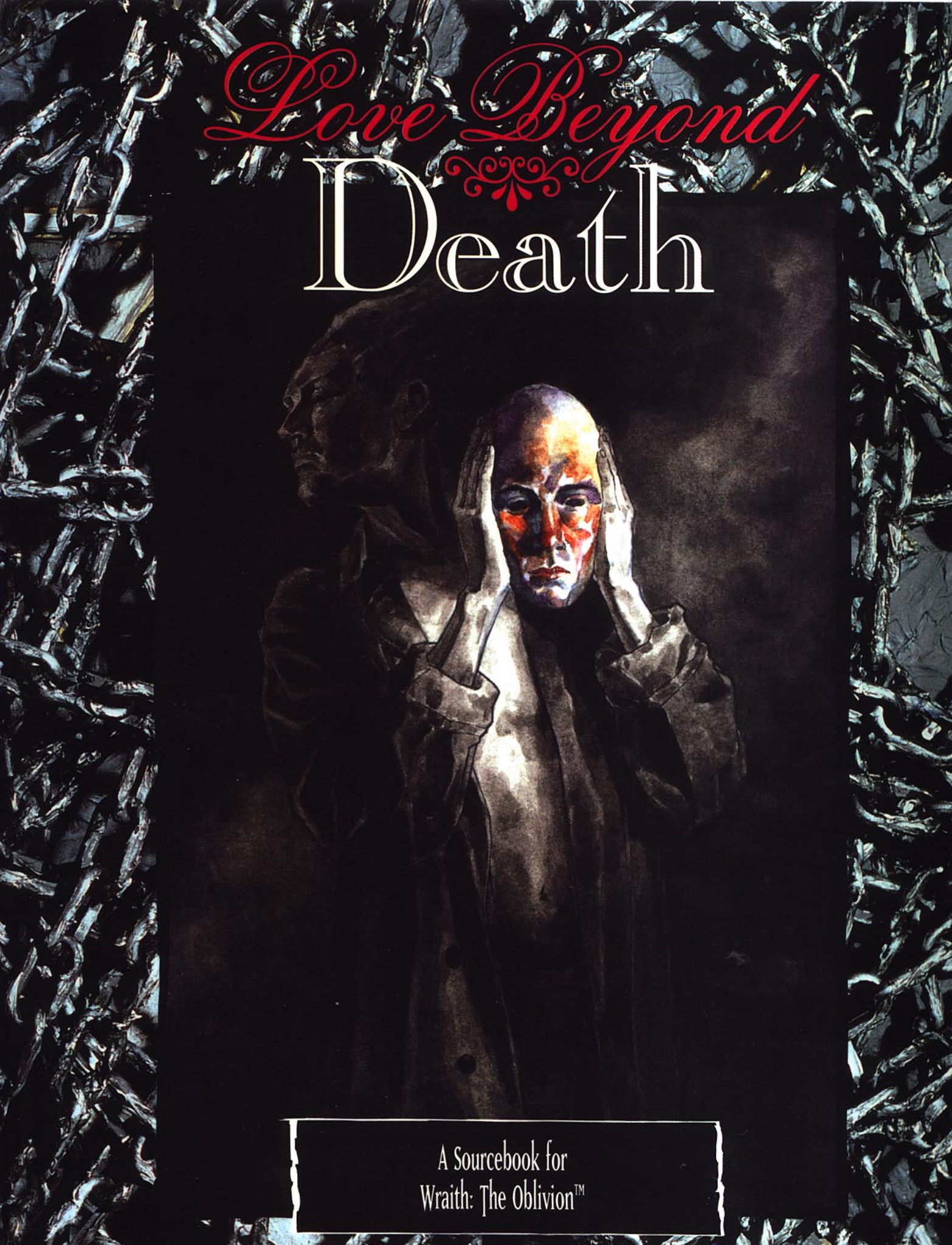
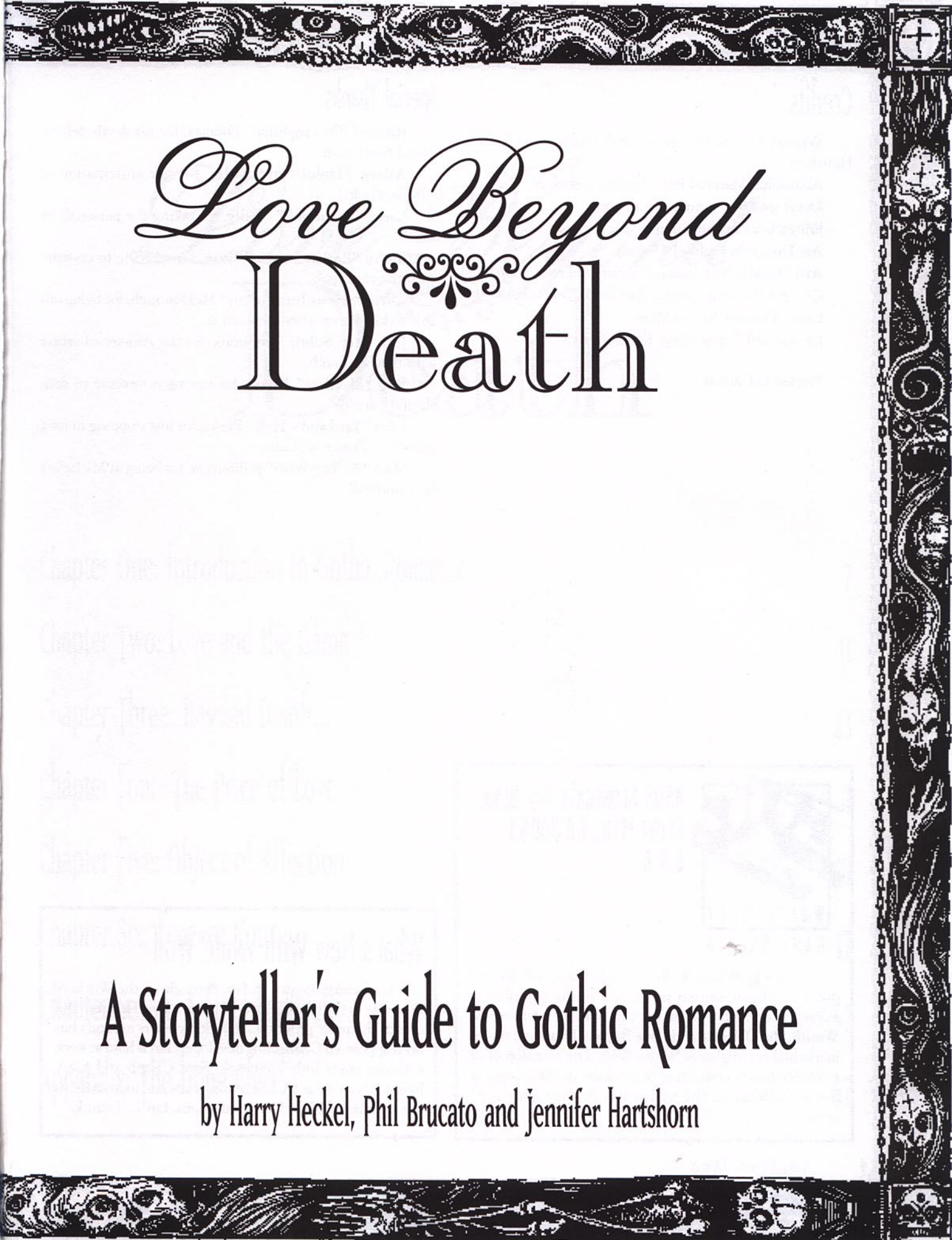




Love Beyond Death

A Sourcebook for
Wraith: The Oblivion™



Love Beyond Death

A Storyteller's Guide to Gothic Romance

by Harry Heckel, Phil Brucato and Jennifer Hartshorn

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What's New With White Wolf

Ian Lemke, known to fans throughout the World of Darkness as the co-developer of **Mind's Eye Theater** (and one of the most prolific LARP Storytellers around) has been appointed **Changeling** developer! Ian is hard at work with designers Josh Timbrook, Sam Chupp and Mark Rein•Hagen to get **Changeling** ready for its release in the summer of 1995. Congratulations, Ian!... I think.



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The Phantom Wooer

by Thomas Lovell Beddoes

A ghost, that loved a lady fair,
Ever in the starry air

Of midnight at her pillow stood;
And, with a sweetness skies above
The luring words of human love,

Her soul the phantom wooed.
Sweet and sweet is their poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,
Ever singing, "Die, oh! die."

Young soul put off your flesh and come
With me into the quiet tomb,

Our bed is lovely, dark and sweet;
The earth will swing us, as she goes,
Beneath our coverlet of snows,

And the warm leaden sheet,
Dear and dear is their poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,
Ever singing, "Die, oh! die."



ELLIOTT 94

Introduction to Gothic Romance

*All the fear has left me now
I'm not frightened anymore
It's my heart that pounds beneath my breast
It's my mouth that pushes out this breath
And if I shed a tear I won't cage it
I won't fear love*
—Sarah McLachlan, "Fumbling Toward Ecstasy"



Only vengeance and injustice lurk behind more famous real-world ghost stories than love. While romance may seem an unusual theme for a Gothic-Punk roleplaying game, few story archetypes embody the essence of true tragedy better than the story of love thwarted by death.

Wraiths are creatures of passion, existing day to day in a world clouded by despair. Theirs is an intensely solitary existence, cut off from the life they once knew and often afraid to trust those around them. After all, why fall in love with someone who could be easily torn from you at any moment to be shipped across the Tempest and reduced to raw materials? Yet there are those who willingly accept the risks for the chance that they might one day find the kind of love that transcends even death. In these cases, the reward is more than worth any risk involved.

Romance can prove to be an excellent theme to incorporate into any game, but especially **Wraith**. With the possible exception of vampires, wraiths are nearly unrivaled among the denizens of the World of Darkness for their (melo-?) dramatic and romantic storytelling potential.

How To Use This Book

Love Beyond Death is designed to be used as a guide for both new and experienced Storytellers on how to handle themes of Gothic romance within a chronicle. Within are several complete stories, as well as information on how to successfully tell stories dealing with a subject that most roleplaying games seem afraid to discuss — romance.

Wraith is, by its very nature, a game that deals with intense passions, yet it's not always easy to know how to put that into a game setting. How does the presence of a Shadow affect the dynamics of a relationship, changing every romance into a kind of bizarre love triangle? And how can a Storyteller and troupe unaccustomed to playing with such potentially dangerous themes get started in a chronicle based around romance?

Star-Crossed Lovers



*pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents strife.*

— William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

In Wraith, love usually means that the two people involved are separated by the Shroud, and therefore the relationship is condemned to a tragic ending from the start. Still, it is easy to understand why many players choose loved ones as Fetters and why so many Passions focus on the people left behind when the wraith passes on to the Shadowlands. In many cases, the Memoriam provided by grieving survivors keeps the character's memory alive and provides some amount of Pathos to sustain them as well. But because of the very nature of wraith existence, nearly every relationship of this kind is destined for tragedy. Not that this means that no Wraith story can have a happy ending; it is the very promise that somehow, against all odds, those who love one another can be reunited that gives many wraiths the courage to stave off Oblivion. And even in a story that does not have a "happy" ending, the players and Storyteller can still have a tremendous amount of fun.

Romance and ghosts

By their nature, ghosts are an amalgam of the beautiful and the grotesque. The notion of an immortal soul that continues on past death is inherently intriguing, yet frightening as well. The powerful emotions involved with romance have provided inspiration for some of the greatest poets of all time. Almost all of the ghosts found in poetry carry some romantic theme. Sonnets and odes of intense suffering and grief stood side by side with verses of love during the Romantic period. The combination of fear and desire generated by the frighteningly beautiful ghosts of lovers long dead continues to inspire poets and dreamers...and more than a few Storytellers as well.

Even though there are many people who believe they have had an encounter with a ghost at some point, ghosts have been primarily relegated to campfire stories in the present day. Perhaps the reason that ghosts of loved ones aren't reported more often has to do with the personal nature of the visions. The people most likely to see or feel the presence of a ghost are the deceased's loved ones. According to some studies, almost 70% of all survivors of a relationship will have a vision of their loved one in a dream or while awake. The nature of these dreams differs from regular REM sleep. The dreams are remarkably vivid, and they occur at a different

point in the sleep cycle from regular dreams, during deep sleep. A section of the brain called the Silent Zone seems to be the source of these visions.

Many theories exist about the nature of these visions. Some say that they are some sort of traumatic hallucination, a way for the brain to help right the chemical imbalance of love and for the subconscious to remove some of the shock. No one wants to believe that their love has gone forever. Many people believe in an afterlife where they will reunite those who have passed before them. Interestingly, ghostly visions occur regardless of a person's religious belief system.

While the death of a loved one is never easy, many people who report some form of contact with a departed lover or family member shortly after death state that after their experience they felt relieved, as if they knew that their loved one could pass on in peace now that their relationship was resolved, so to speak. Perhaps there is some hope for the Restless Dead after all...

The Nature of Romance



*he world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours*

*And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. —Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.*

—William Wordsworth, "The World Is Too Much With Us"

There is more to romance than simply the love shared between two people. The term "romance" implies an entirely different mood and texture for a chronicle, one in which there is a sense of another time, another place...and isn't that part of what roleplaying games are all about?

The period called "the Romantic Age" was characterized by a reverence for nature. People watched the growing industrialization with excitement and trepidation. It was the beginning of a new era, and as a result, a kind of nostalgia for the age just past sprang up. There was a newfound reverence for classical and regional mythology, as the poets and dreamers looked to the past for a time when things were simpler, but also a little larger than life.



The Gothic period that followed shared a great deal in common with the Romantics. However, when the Romantics looked to the past, they discovered pastoral landscapes, whereas the Gothics found crumbling abbeys and cobwebbed mansions. They shared a wistful desire for things of the past, but there was an underlying darkness, a condemnation of the modern corruption that tainted everything in the Gothic landscape, physically as well as spiritually. The notion of "tampering with things beyond nature," a mainstay of horror literature, had its genesis in the "unnatural" desires and actions of the Gothic period. Ghosts, as the personification of death entwined with life, are the epitome of that "unnatural" horror.

So what are we left with? Gothic Romance is the predecessor of the "Gothic-Punk" milieu that forms the basis for the World of Darkness. But where *Gothic-Punk* focuses in part on the violence that arises from corruption, Gothic Romance focuses on the corruption itself and the way it twists what might have been beautiful into something that is too often tragic.

Today, at the close of the twentieth century, the Romantics hold a special resonance in popular culture. Like them, many of us hearken back to an idealized, simpler time. Like them, we see the world as growing far too complex and jaded and often choose to spend our time fantasizing about an idealized past or future world. As a result, much of any romantic chronicle will focus on that sense of a better world now long since past, as well as the sense that now matter how we try, we can never regain that lost innocence. The World of Darkness is characterized by heroes who fight on against the darkness within as well as in the world around them, and a darkly romantic chronicle is no exception.

Gothic-Punk, not Harlequin Romance

Remember that **Wraith** is a game of intimate horror, not a game of intimacy. Just as you wouldn't want violence to take over your game, don't let romance take over the game. If every character has a passionate relationship with no problems, and that's all your players are doing, then things will wear thin very quickly. Romance has its disadvantages as a Storytelling tool as well, such as when the Storyteller has to spend time running long conversations with a single player while the rest of the group destroys the Heretic stronghold. The greatest disadvantage of too much romance is that it cheapens the value of the emotion. When this happens, you lose a great deal of the Storytelling value. People can become jaded about romance just as easily as they can about horror.

But remember, **Wraith** is set in a Gothic-Punk world. True love is hard to find. The desire for love is often more important than the actual discovery of love. Unattainable love is often seen as more valuable than love which comes easily and without great effort or sacrifice.

How to Use the Stories

First, read over the entire adventure, including the variations and future ideas sections. Get a good idea of the things that you like and want to use, then make appropriate changes so that the story you have chosen fits into your chronicle. Some statistics for hunters and shades are included in the character sections of each story, and more information for designing hunters and other antagonists can be found in the appendix to **Wraith: The Oblivion**.



Love and the Game

Storytelling Romance

*Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge
for it;
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's
gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.
— Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Past"*



Desire. Hatred. Frustration. Comfort. Regret. Misery. Protectiveness. The passions evoked by love and its loss are the strongest known to Humanity — living or dead.

Wraiths are passion incarnate, walking souls motivated by the things they have left behind. The many Passions connected with love — whether familial, romantic, spiteful or unrequited — play an important part in most wraiths' existence. A player who wouldn't want to explore such Passions is a cold ghost indeed.

Translating those emotions into numbers and scenarios, however, is problematic at best. In this chapter, we'll offer Storyteller tips about integrating love, romance and sex into an ongoing chronicle.

Creating the Bond

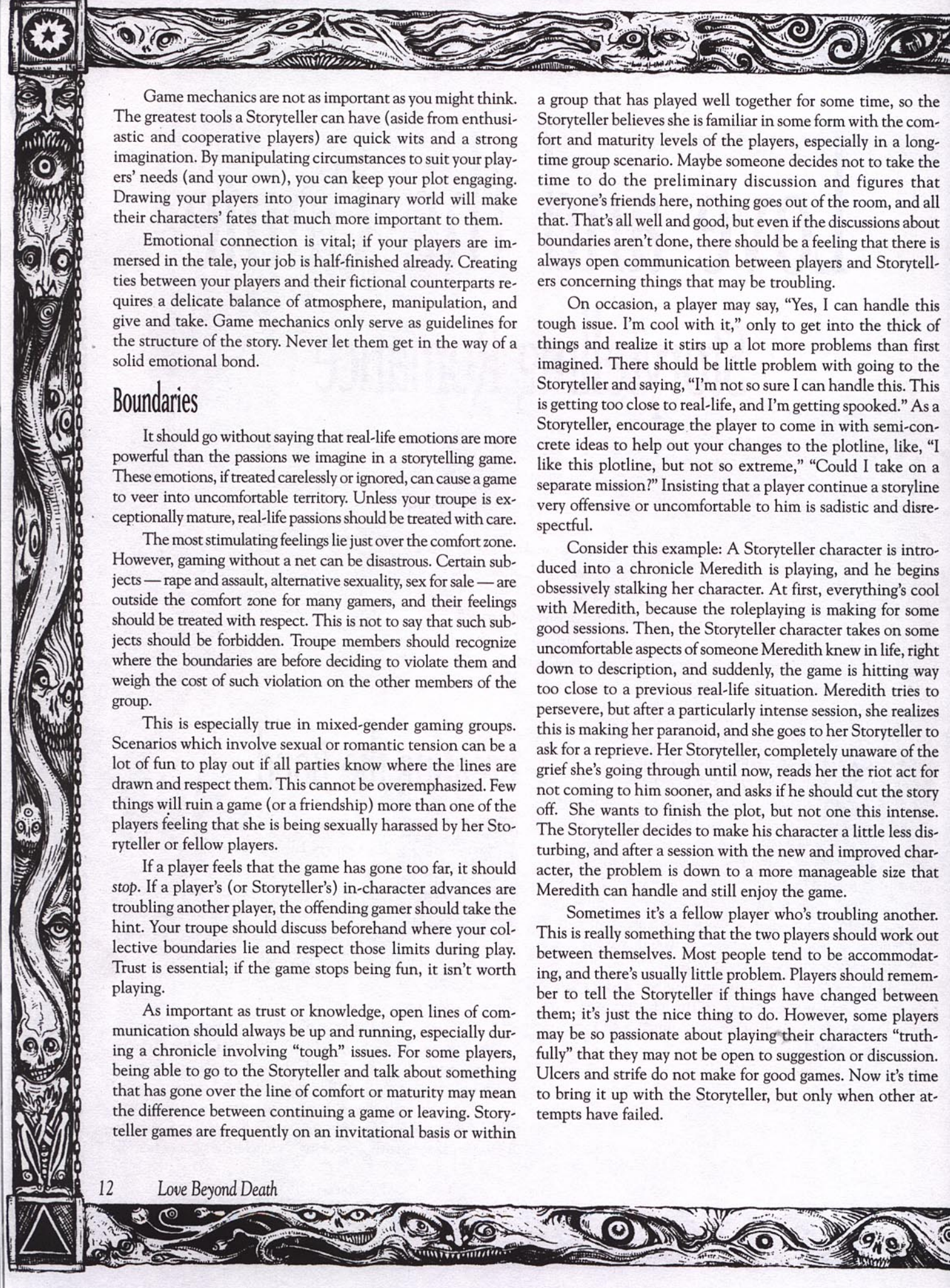


*Hopelessly drift in the eyes of a ghost again
down on my knees and my hands in the air
again
pushing my face in the memory of you again
but i never know if it's real never know how i
wanted to feel never quite said what i wanted*

*to say to you never quite managed the words to
explain to you...*

— The Cure, "Untitled"

So what's a Storyteller to do? How will you run that climactic face-off with a spurned former lover? Or that budding romance between a parapsychologist and the ghost she's been tracking? Or the wraith-child's reunion with his favorite pet? How will those multi-layered emotions translate into dialogue and Passion points? How can the Storyteller stir her players to fictitious passions without making a complete ass out of herself?



Game mechanics are not as important as you might think. The greatest tools a Storyteller can have (aside from enthusiastic and cooperative players) are quick wits and a strong imagination. By manipulating circumstances to suit your players' needs (and your own), you can keep your plot engaging. Drawing your players into your imaginary world will make their characters' fates that much more important to them.

Emotional connection is vital; if your players are immersed in the tale, your job is half-finished already. Creating ties between your players and their fictional counterparts requires a delicate balance of atmosphere, manipulation, and give and take. Game mechanics only serve as guidelines for the structure of the story. Never let them get in the way of a solid emotional bond.

Boundaries

It should go without saying that real-life emotions are more powerful than the passions we imagine in a storytelling game. These emotions, if treated carelessly or ignored, can cause a game to veer into uncomfortable territory. Unless your troupe is exceptionally mature, real-life passions should be treated with care.

The most stimulating feelings lie just over the comfort zone. However, gaming without a net can be disastrous. Certain subjects — rape and assault, alternative sexuality, sex for sale — are outside the comfort zone for many gamers, and their feelings should be treated with respect. This is not to say that such subjects should be forbidden. Troupe members should recognize where the boundaries are before deciding to violate them and weigh the cost of such violation on the other members of the group.

This is especially true in mixed-gender gaming groups. Scenarios which involve sexual or romantic tension can be a lot of fun to play out if all parties know where the lines are drawn and respect them. This cannot be overemphasized. Few things will ruin a game (or a friendship) more than one of the players feeling that she is being sexually harassed by her Storyteller or fellow players.

If a player feels that the game has gone too far, it should stop. If a player's (or Storyteller's) in-character advances are troubling another player, the offending gamer should take the hint. Your troupe should discuss beforehand where your collective boundaries lie and respect those limits during play. Trust is essential; if the game stops being fun, it isn't worth playing.

As important as trust or knowledge, open lines of communication should always be up and running, especially during a chronicle involving "tough" issues. For some players, being able to go to the Storyteller and talk about something that has gone over the line of comfort or maturity may mean the difference between continuing a game or leaving. Storyteller games are frequently on an invitational basis or within

a group that has played well together for some time, so the Storyteller believes she is familiar in some form with the comfort and maturity levels of the players, especially in a long-time group scenario. Maybe someone decides not to take the time to do the preliminary discussion and figures that everyone's friends here, nothing goes out of the room, and all that. That's all well and good, but even if the discussions about boundaries aren't done, there should be a feeling that there is always open communication between players and Storytellers concerning things that may be troubling.

On occasion, a player may say, "Yes, I can handle this tough issue. I'm cool with it," only to get into the thick of things and realize it stirs up a lot more problems than first imagined. There should be little problem with going to the Storyteller and saying, "I'm not so sure I can handle this. This is getting too close to real-life, and I'm getting spooked." As a Storyteller, encourage the player to come in with semi-concrete ideas to help out your changes to the plotline, like, "I like this plotline, but not so extreme," "Could I take on a separate mission?" Insisting that a player continue a storyline very offensive or uncomfortable to him is sadistic and disrespectful.

Consider this example: A Storyteller character is introduced into a chronicle Meredith is playing, and he begins obsessively stalking her character. At first, everything's cool with Meredith, because the roleplaying is making for some good sessions. Then, the Storyteller character takes on some uncomfortable aspects of someone Meredith knew in life, right down to description, and suddenly, the game is hitting way too close to a previous real-life situation. Meredith tries to persevere, but after a particularly intense session, she realizes this is making her paranoid, and she goes to her Storyteller to ask for a reprieve. Her Storyteller, completely unaware of the grief she's going through until now, reads her the riot act for not coming to him sooner, and asks if he should cut the story off. She wants to finish the plot, but not one this intense. The Storyteller decides to make his character a little less disturbing, and after a session with the new and improved character, the problem is down to a more manageable size that Meredith can handle and still enjoy the game.

Sometimes it's a fellow player who's troubling another. This is really something that the two players should work out between themselves. Most people tend to be accommodating, and there's usually little problem. Players should remember to tell the Storyteller if things have changed between them; it's just the nice thing to do. However, some players may be so passionate about playing their characters "truthfully" that they may not be open to suggestion or discussion. Ulcers and strife do not make for good games. Now it's time to bring it up with the Storyteller, but only when other attempts have failed.



One thing that may be worthwhile exploring to help with comfort levels is “take it down a peg.” Maybe the plotline’s really fun, and the players are enjoying it, but a few are becoming distinctly uncomfortable with something. They want to keep playing it, but not this way. Taking the intensity level down a notch or two may be helpful in keeping reasonably true to the storyline and reasonably within the boundaries of feelings. This takes a little effort, exploration, and some give and take to find the right amount of notches, but it goes a long way.

Example of toning down: Player character Susan is being romantically pursued by player character Benjamin. While Susan’s player likes where the plotline is going, the intensity of Benjamin’s pursuit is going over the line. The two players meet out of game and discuss the situation. He wasn’t aware he was making a problem for her and is sorry for it, but how can they fix the situation? She says that she doesn’t want to end the story, but what if he was less “ardent?” He’s willing to give it a go. After a little trial and error through the next game sessions, they find a good plateau for both. The story goes on, and everybody’s still friends.

Trust, knowledge and open communication— It may seem like a lot of balls to keep in the air, in addition to the storylines, setting and characters. We certainly can’t tell you how to handle every different situation that comes your way, but the above examples and resolutions should be helpful in dealing with a lot of the thornier aspects you encounter. Storytellers and players who learn to work with each other and these elements will hopefully be rewarded with richer roleplaying experiences and a troupe ready to handle anything that comes their way.

Setting Atmosphere and Tone

Our emotions are governed largely by the environment around us. A hot and stuffy room often makes us irritable, while a crackling fireplace makes us feel comforted and secure. It’s no accident that the traditional trappings of romance — candles, soft music and comfortable surroundings — have retained their place in courtship for centuries. Mood is everything, especially in romance. Or in horror.

A good game requires a sense of “otherness,” some slight deviation from the everyday world that lets us know that, for now, the real world is on hold and different rules apply. A story which evokes some powerful emotions will benefit from an extra “something special” in the way of decor.

Setting the right mood can be as simple as placing candles in the center of the game table. Even if those candles are unlit, the props carry a connotation of grace. A covering for the table (white lace, black velvet, or satin, for example) adds another layer to the mood. A CD player with appropriate music, and the key word here is appropriate, will also go a long way towards bringing the desired atmosphere to life. Carefully chosen incense



— pine or pinion for nature, patchouli for nostalgia, frankincense for an exotic air — adds a strong, sensual texture. Subdued lighting is always a good idea when running a **Wraith** game. Candlelight, though difficult to read by, works wonders on a player's mood, especially if that light is suddenly snuffed out.

This kind of set dressing need not always be pretty or romantic. A fancy empty glass in the center of the table creates an air of anticipation. A CD of subtle thunder, discordant string music (like Bartok or Ives), Gregorian chants or depressing rock (Joy Division, The Doors) can evoke a sense of loss. An industrial soundtrack, glaring spotlights or colored bulbs give the game a more rough-edged attitude. A harsh atmosphere might be more effective for a certain kind of romance than the more traditional settings. Whatever dressings you use, however, should not detract from the most important atmospheric tool at your disposal — your voice.

Commitment

When setting the mood, don't be afraid of making a fool out of yourself. Set your sights on what you want your players to see and feel, then go for it. Immerse yourself in the setting of your tale. See the faces and the rooms, project yourself into the world you are creating, then describe it to your players with your voice, eyes and gestures. If you can picture it, they will too.

Commitment is everything. Many actors claim that the most important part of acting is acting *upon* one's audience, inspiring the desired emotions and reactions within them. This inspiration can be subtle or vigorous, depending on the atmosphere you want your scene to have. The most important element is a total commitment to your chosen emotions and to the atmosphere that invokes them.

This is where Storytelling games really come into their own, when players step out of their everyday behavior and join into a consensus of non-reality. By setting the desired tone for your session, you can create a more effective atmosphere for tales of love, romance and passion.

Pulling the Strings

Storytelling requires a delicate form of manipulation, guiding both the players and the events their characters endure with a sure but careful hand. Without any form of guidance, a story flails all over the place and loses any underlying themes or direction it might have had. Under too firm a hand, however, the players feel like they are being shuffled from place to place without any say in the outcome. This is where quick wit comes in; a good Storyteller can give her players a lot of lead, yet maneuver events around them so that the overall story concept remains intact.



First of all, accept that the story will rarely turn out the way you plan it to. This is one of the joys of interactive gaming — the unpredictable nature of the medium. Unlike a step-by-step dungeon hack, a well-played game becomes more than the sum of its parts. Given this, a list of overall themes and motifs is good way of maintaining a hold on your tale's direction.

This kind of list includes the major theme(s) of the chronicle or story, important images that occur, major settings and set pieces and the names, personalities and goals of your important Storyteller characters. Knowing who is doing what to whom "out of frame" will help you keep events moving around the player characters. Knowing what your characters are supposed to be like (and why they do the things they do) will help you make them more real and more engaging to the players.

Secondly, do not drive your players down a certain path of action or force their characters to do things just for the sake of the plot. This only pisses your players off, distancing them from the story instead of involving them in it. Encourage them to follow interesting leads by piquing their curiosity or bringing in necessary plot elements through Storyteller characters if the player characters miss them. Guide them according to your plans, but don't push or contrive; that defeats the purpose.

Romance is an especially hard thing to force. The harder you try, the more your "victim" resists. This is as true in real life as it is in gaming. Consider your characters' personalities (and, by extension, your players'), their likes, tastes and hangups, then tailor the love interest to those desires and weak spots. This allows you to create characters with built-in appeal.

If, for example, Beth wants Ryan's character Rob to fall for a paranormal researcher, she could observe Ryan's own taste in women (or men) and plan accordingly. Knowing that her quarry has an interest in barefoot hippie chicks, she gives the researcher a basement apartment in a bohemian neighborhood, christens her "Alexi" and has her hang out at Dead shows and occult bookstores in her spare time. Unless Rob shares none of his creator's tastes (a rare thing), he will become interested because Ryan is interested.

Familial love works much the same way, although Storytellers should be careful when mining real-life family relationships. Playing on memories of past abuse, dead relatives or emotional estrangement is bad form, to put it mildly.

Difficult Players

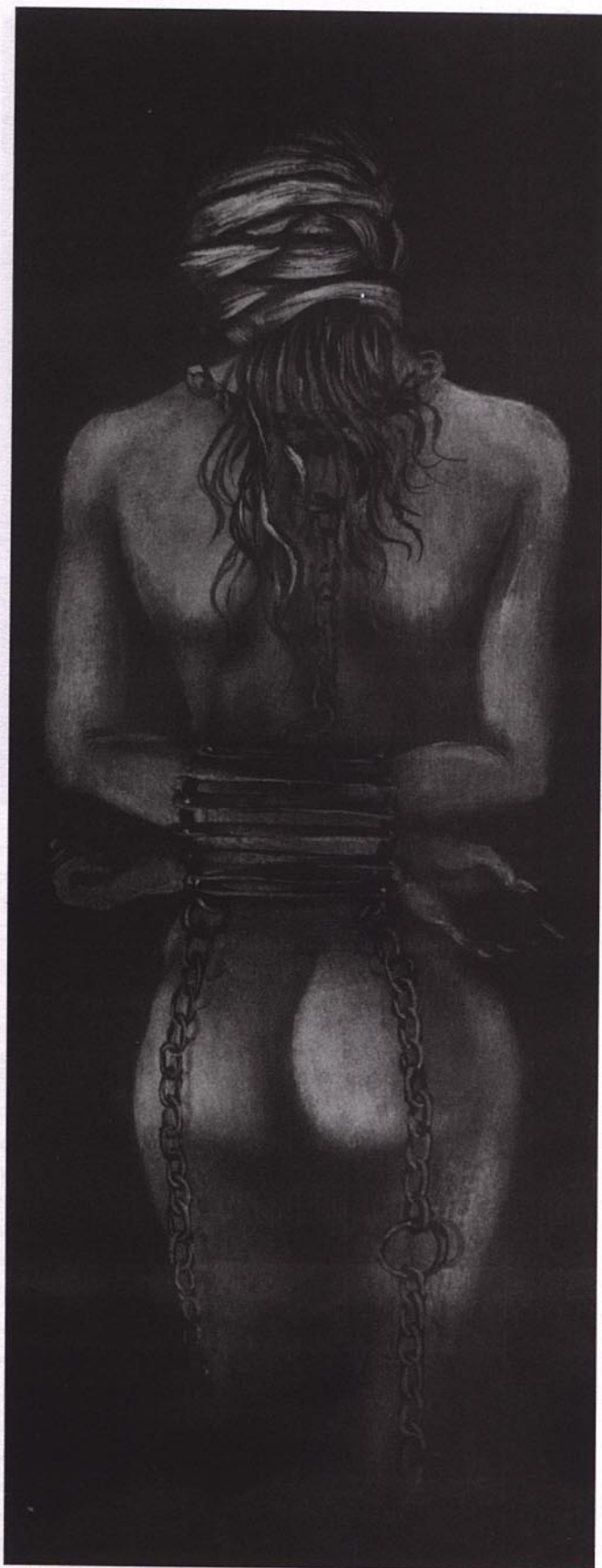
*I don't need no walls around me
And I don't need no drugs to calm me
I can see the writing on the wall
Don't think I need anything at all*

— Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall, Pt. 3"

Wraith allows players to act out their more self-destructive urges in fiction rather than in life. Some gamers are romantics by nature and love deep passions and tragic affairs; these types are easy to drag into endless grief. Other players are concerned more with winning and acting cool than with getting into the spirit of the game. The latter variety offers a challenge to the Storyteller who wants to involve that player and his character in a Gothic doomed romance.

More often than not, a "too cool" player just needs to be inspired to care about something. If the character begins without any form of love or romantic interest, and the Storyteller wants to lure him into one, the method above will probably entice him into a new relationship. Does Sam's ice-cold killer have a "Vengeance" Passion? Send a gun-toting beauty with a similar background into the line of fire. Most power-oriented players have fallen into a "me verses him" mentality and resist making their characters vulnerable (lest they "lose"). With a little encouragement, such players usually get caught up in the larger-than-life melodramas of Gothic storytelling and realize they really have nothing to lose.

If the character began with a Passion which the player refuses to play out, the issue becomes more difficult. If inspiration doesn't work, drastic tactics may be necessary. Find something that these players find valuable, then put it at stake. Is Ryan ignoring his "Protect My Daughter" Love Passion in favor of making some oboli on the side? Let him learn of a plan to kill his family and convert their souls to cash and *their* belongings to relics. Or figure out some detail or trait that would make the player interested in his character's paramour despite himself. If all else fails, remind a player who ignores a powerful Passion that his character is losing his place in the Shadowlands through numbing and reduce his Passion score. This last-ditch solution is unsatisfying, but may be the only way to bring an uncooperative player into line.



Seduction

What is it men in women do require?

The lineaments of Gratified Desire.

What is it women do in men require?

The lineaments of Gratified Desire.

— William Blake, "A Question Answered"

To give a sensual or romantic scene some real electricity, work at stimulating the object of your attentions for real. Obviously, both parties should know where they stand in real life before using this advanced Storytelling technique; misread intentions can be confusing and painful. Always ALWAYS be certain of where all participants stand before considering playing this very delicate kind of scene out. There's a dice system in *Wraith* that reduces everything to the appropriate statistics, and in some situations that is the best way to play things. If all is well, however, an actual appeal to your "victim's" ego (and libido) can add power to a romantic scene.

Seduction is a subtle art; the club-over-the-head routine is rarely effective nowadays. Make (and keep) eye contact with your "victim," speaking clearly and meaningfully. Bear your character's attitude in mind, but make an appeal to the *player* to create a real impression.

Keep an eye on his reactions and adjust accordingly. Does he look away? Maneuver to meet his eyes or implore him with your voice. Is he distracted? Do something to draw his eye to you, some quick gesture or witty remark. Flirt, if that comes naturally and works with the story. A light touch or a close lean is good for the later stages of seduction, when you have your subject's full attention and trust. Don't blow it by moving too hastily or grabbing him unexpectedly. Attraction is a trust issue. If your "victim" trusts that he will not be repulsed, discarded or ridiculed, he will warm to you.

If you both fall into a light banter, go with it. If a silence develops, some emotional appeal ("Robert? Did you hear me?") may be in order. If you find yourself laughing, laugh in character. Ride the rhythm of attraction to whatever goal serves your characters (and story) best. We have a cultural, if not inbred, attraction to attention and react favorably to intimate contact, even if that contact is strictly verbal.

Most importantly of all, enjoy. The chase is half the fun.

Tricky Elements

To gamers whose experience consists of battle and pil-lage, romance and desire may seem like mushy stuff. Some players never overcome that impression (their loss), but most jump eagerly at the chance to live out the larger-than-life Passions of the heart. Some elements of love, sex and romance stories can be tricky to pull off, however, especially if the troupe is new to Storytelling.

Our culture frowns on open expressions of vulnerability, passion and affection, especially if those feelings stem from some “deviant” behavior — homo-eroticism, dominance and submission, interracial romance, etc. Even in fiction, the boundaries some place on such relationships hit a nerve. It is difficult, in a social situation, for two men to express attraction — even if it occurs between a fictional man and woman — without being labeled “queer,” if only in their own minds. Likewise, a hot flirtation between a female player and a male player (or another woman, for that matter) may be misconstrued as an actual come-on. If touchier issues such as rape, incest, or sado-masochism, come up in the game, the ice gets thinner. How can the Storyteller incorporate sexual themes, and their attendant passions, without embarrassing herself or offending her players?

Some troupes will ignore the whole issue. If the players involved are all friends, everyone should (ideally) know where the lines are drawn. For other groups, however, the issue of boundaries (see above) is an important one. A great story stirs deep feelings. An interactive game brings those feelings out into public view.

Naked Emotion

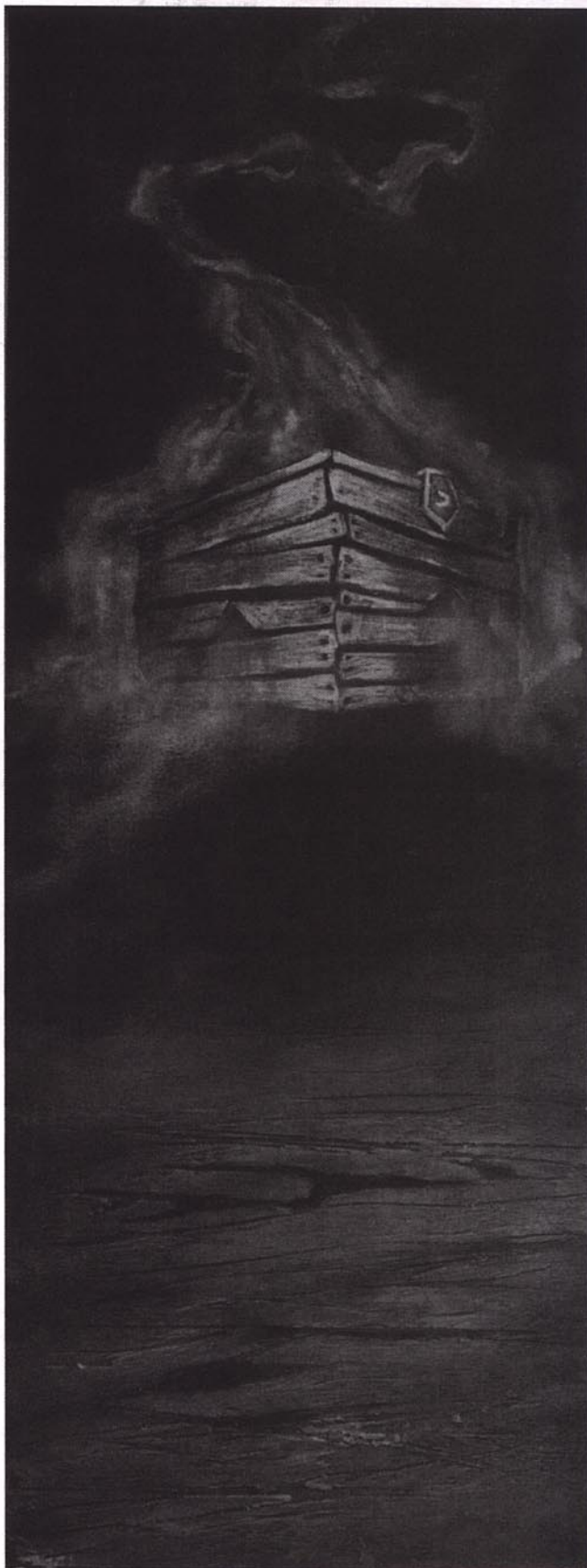
*however far away i will always love you however
long i stay i will always love you whatever
words i say i will always love you i will always
love you*

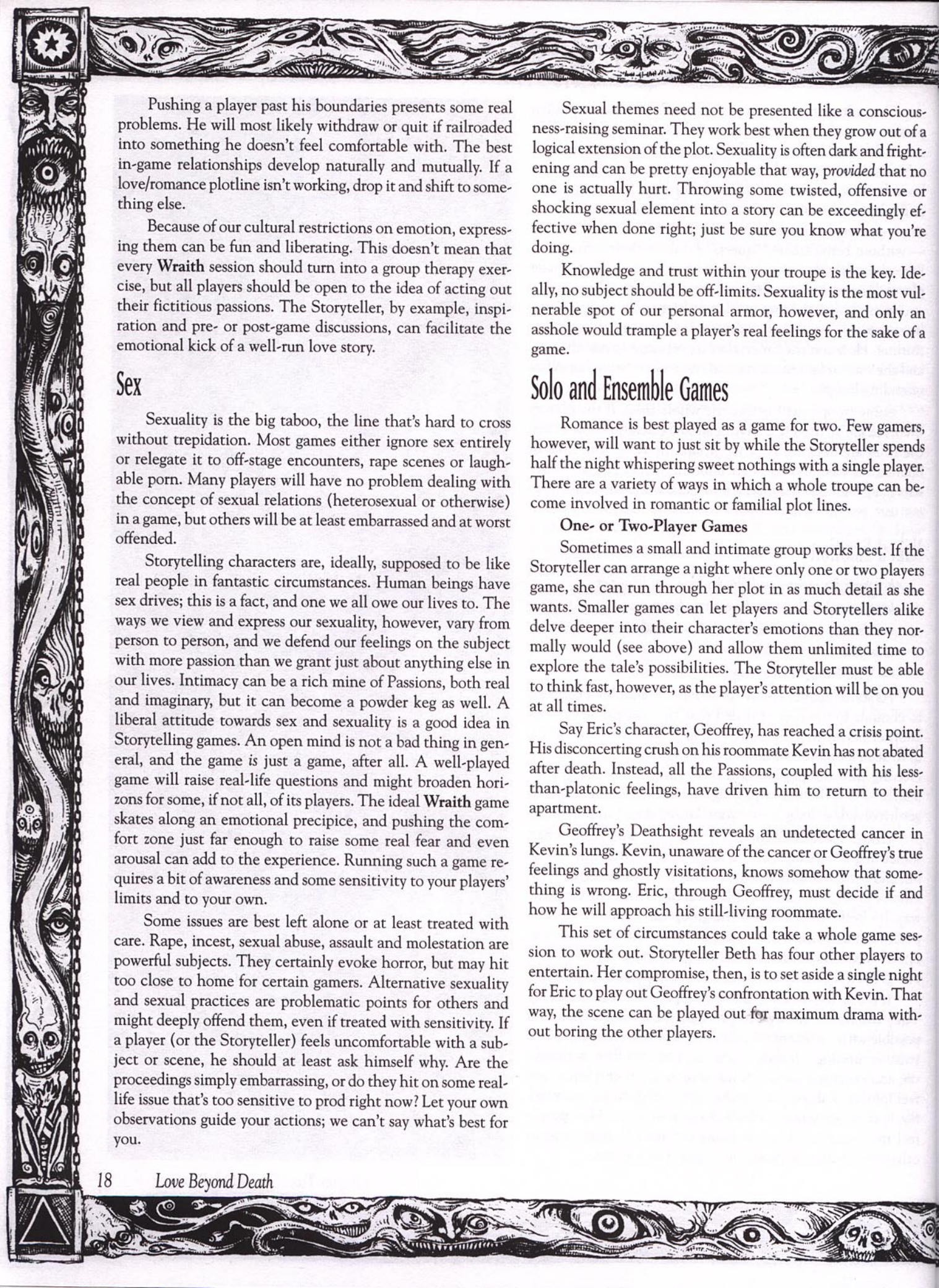
— The Cure, “Lovesong”

As stated above, a player or Storyteller shouldn't be afraid to commit to a scene, provided that the scene dose not put another player in an uncomfortable situation. Games allow us to act a lot more silly and forward than we normally would. Getting into the passion of a tryst, flirtation or spoiled romance is half the fun of playing one out. Don't be afraid to get involved, so long as everyone knows it's all in fun.

Under most circumstances, everyone will know when something is “in game” or “for real.” Blurring that line can be fun and stimulating, granted, but only if all parties agree. This kind of ambiguity can get complicated in the long run anyway. It's best avoided unless the group can cope with a little psychodrama. Again, this where pre-game discussion or fore-knowledge comes in handy. With a good sense of how far you can go, you'll be able to jump into your romances head-first.

It is also important to allow your players the same luxury. They should be allowed to get into their roles as much as possible without fear of ridicule or rejection. If Ryan and Mark (who is running a female character, Celeste) flirt in character, and everyone starts making comments, both players will feel inhibited about playing the relationship to its potential. Solo games (see sidebar below) can help with this. Most people feel more comfortable expressing intimate feelings (real or otherwise) with one person as opposed to a group.





Pushing a player past his boundaries presents some real problems. He will most likely withdraw or quit if railroaded into something he doesn't feel comfortable with. The best in-game relationships develop naturally and mutually. If a love/romance plotline isn't working, drop it and shift to something else.

Because of our cultural restrictions on emotion, expressing them can be fun and liberating. This doesn't mean that every **Wraith** session should turn into a group therapy exercise, but all players should be open to the idea of acting out their fictitious passions. The Storyteller, by example, inspiration and pre- or post-game discussions, can facilitate the emotional kick of a well-run love story.

Sex

Sexuality is the big taboo, the line that's hard to cross without trepidation. Most games either ignore sex entirely or relegate it to off-stage encounters, rape scenes or laughable porn. Many players will have no problem dealing with the concept of sexual relations (heterosexual or otherwise) in a game, but others will be at least embarrassed and at worst offended.

Storytelling characters are, ideally, supposed to be like real people in fantastic circumstances. Human beings have sex drives; this is a fact, and one we all owe our lives to. The ways we view and express our sexuality, however, vary from person to person, and we defend our feelings on the subject with more passion than we grant just about anything else in our lives. Intimacy can be a rich mine of Passions, both real and imaginary, but it can become a powder keg as well. A liberal attitude towards sex and sexuality is a good idea in Storytelling games. An open mind is not a bad thing in general, and the game is just a game, after all. A well-played game will raise real-life questions and might broaden horizons for some, if not all, of its players. The ideal **Wraith** game skates along an emotional precipice, and pushing the comfort zone just far enough to raise some real fear and even arousal can add to the experience. Running such a game requires a bit of awareness and some sensitivity to your players' limits and to your own.

Some issues are best left alone or at least treated with care. Rape, incest, sexual abuse, assault and molestation are powerful subjects. They certainly evoke horror, but may hit too close to home for certain gamers. Alternative sexuality and sexual practices are problematic points for others and might deeply offend them, even if treated with sensitivity. If a player (or the Storyteller) feels uncomfortable with a subject or scene, he should at least ask himself why. Are the proceedings simply embarrassing, or do they hit on some real-life issue that's too sensitive to prod right now? Let your own observations guide your actions; we can't say what's best for you.

Sexual themes need not be presented like a consciousness-raising seminar. They work best when they grow out of a logical extension of the plot. Sexuality is often dark and frightening and can be pretty enjoyable that way, *provided* that no one is actually hurt. Throwing some twisted, offensive or shocking sexual element into a story can be exceedingly effective when done right; just be sure you know what you're doing.

Knowledge and trust within your troupe is the key. Ideally, no subject should be off-limits. Sexuality is the most vulnerable spot of our personal armor, however, and only an asshole would trample a player's real feelings for the sake of a game.

Solo and Ensemble Games

Romance is best played as a game for two. Few gamers, however, will want to just sit by while the Storyteller spends half the night whispering sweet nothings with a single player. There are a variety of ways in which a whole troupe can become involved in romantic or familial plot lines.

One- or Two-Player Games

Sometimes a small and intimate group works best. If the Storyteller can arrange a night where only one or two players game, she can run through her plot in as much detail as she wants. Smaller games can let players and Storytellers alike delve deeper into their character's emotions than they normally would (see above) and allow them unlimited time to explore the tale's possibilities. The Storyteller must be able to think fast, however, as the player's attention will be on you at all times.

Say Eric's character, Geoffrey, has reached a crisis point. His disconcerting crush on his roommate Kevin has not abated after death. Instead, all the Passions, coupled with his less-than-platonic feelings, have driven him to return to their apartment.

Geoffrey's Deathsight reveals an undetected cancer in Kevin's lungs. Kevin, unaware of the cancer or Geoffrey's true feelings and ghostly visitations, knows somehow that something is wrong. Eric, through Geoffrey, must decide if and how he will approach his still-living roommate.

This set of circumstances could take a whole game session to work out. Storyteller Beth has four other players to entertain. Her compromise, then, is to set aside a single night for Eric to play out Geoffrey's confrontation with Kevin. That way, the scene can be played out for maximum drama without boring the other players.

Solo games also allow both Storyteller and player to act through scenes that might embarrass them if they were played out in a roomful of people. Both participants should also be aware, however, of the intense emotions that can come from one-on-roleplaying, especially where strong passions are concerned. Solo gaming can be a great way to flirt (if flirting is welcomed by both parties), but it can be a pretty uncomfortable experience if both players are unsure where the game ends and real life emotions begin.

Ensemble Casts

Allowing players to assume the roles of Storyteller characters is another good way of keeping the game moving while playing out important scenes. If Beth wanted to preserve momentum, she could pass Kevin off to Elizabeth, who sets aside her own character for the duration of the scene. Role-switching requires a fairly mature group of players and a lot of trust, but frees the Storyteller up to concentrate on the background details while offering her players an opportunity to change gears once in a while.

Complications

Tying two or more characters into the same plotline or character allows the Storyteller to sit back from time to time and just watch the players complicate the matter beyond anything she could have arranged on her own.

If Kevin, from the preceding example, was the younger brother of Elizabeth's character, the plot gains a new complication: what will she think of her Circle-mate's new obsession on her sibling? What if Kevin secretly murdered another player's wraith who now wants revenge?

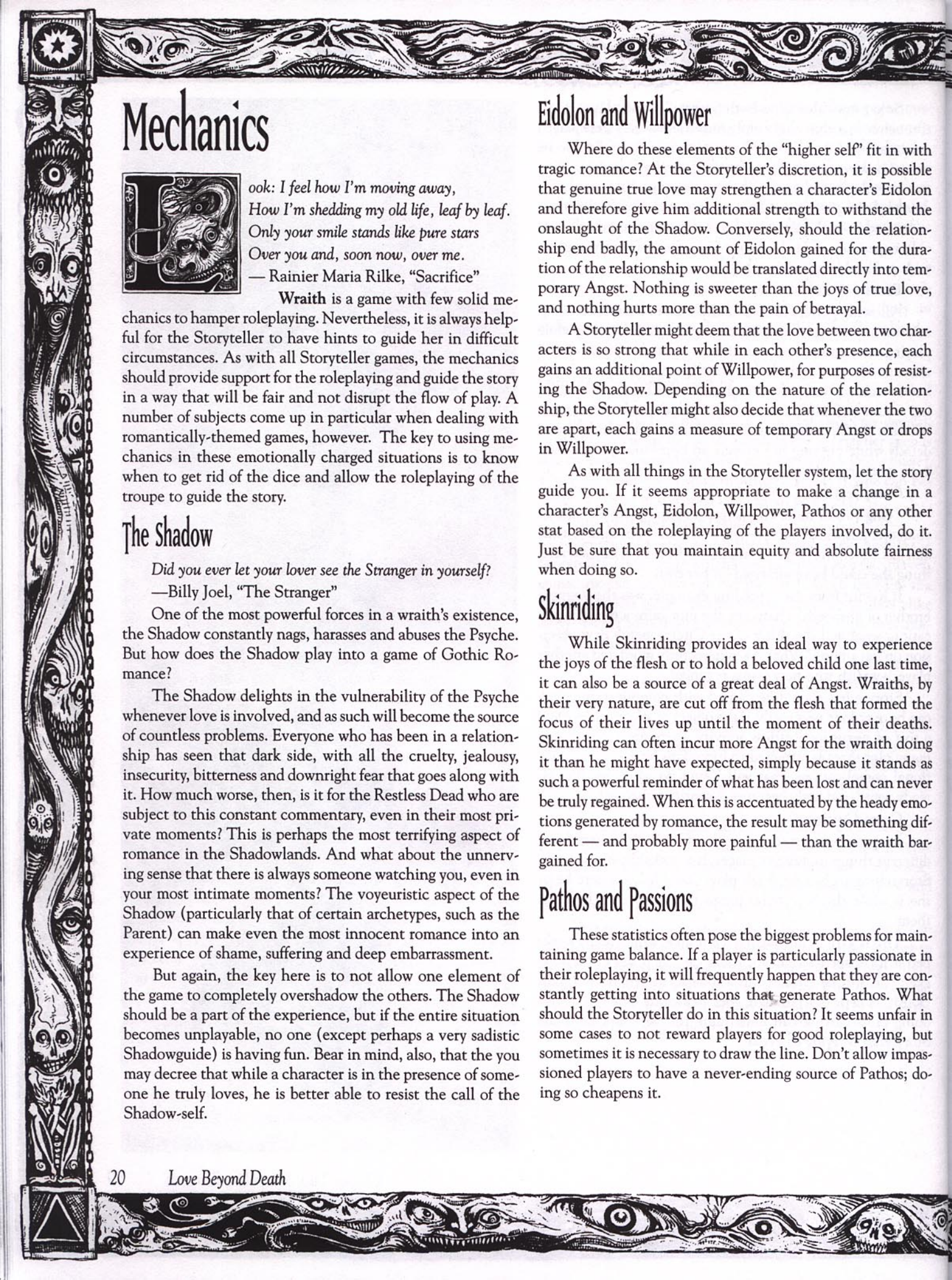
Storytellers should be careful with complications; they can be overdone very easily. If the object of affection becomes a sort of nexus for Restless activity, there are probably too many plot threads attracted to him. This brings up an additional complication: what will Kevin do when his life, already weird, suddenly becomes downright chaotic?

Cross-Cutting

Jumping between scenes, with different characters doing different things in separate places, is a workable, if advanced, Storytelling technique. Each player establishes where he or she is while the Storyteller jumps back and forth between them.

This is a tricky and jarring technique, which really works better for suspense than for romance. Such suspense, however, can still be effective in a love scene when used judiciously. A little of it, though, goes an awfully long way. Overdoing cross-cutting can undermine the very emotions the Storyteller is trying to evoke.





Mechanics



*Look: I feel how I'm moving away,
How I'm shedding my old life, leaf by leaf.
Only your smile stands like pure stars
Over you and, soon now, over me.*

—Rainier Maria Rilke, "Sacrifice"

Wraith is a game with few solid mechanics to hamper roleplaying. Nevertheless, it is always helpful for the Storyteller to have hints to guide her in difficult circumstances. As with all Storyteller games, the mechanics should provide support for the roleplaying and guide the story in a way that will be fair and not disrupt the flow of play. A number of subjects come up in particular when dealing with romantically-themed games, however. The key to using mechanics in these emotionally charged situations is to know when to get rid of the dice and allow the roleplaying of the troupe to guide the story.

The Shadow

Did you ever let your lover see the Stranger in yourself?

—Billy Joel, "The Stranger"

One of the most powerful forces in a wraith's existence, the Shadow constantly nags, harasses and abuses the Psyche. But how does the Shadow play into a game of Gothic Romance?

The Shadow delights in the vulnerability of the Psyche whenever love is involved, and as such will become the source of countless problems. Everyone who has been in a relationship has seen that dark side, with all the cruelty, jealousy, insecurity, bitterness and downright fear that goes along with it. How much worse, then, is it for the Restless Dead who are subject to this constant commentary, even in their most private moments? This is perhaps the most terrifying aspect of romance in the Shadowlands. And what about the unnerving sense that there is always someone watching you, even in your most intimate moments? The voyeuristic aspect of the Shadow (particularly that of certain archetypes, such as the Parent) can make even the most innocent romance into an experience of shame, suffering and deep embarrassment.

But again, the key here is to not allow one element of the game to completely overshadow the others. The Shadow should be a part of the experience, but if the entire situation becomes unplayable, no one (except perhaps a very sadistic Shadowguide) is having fun. Bear in mind, also, that the you may decree that while a character is in the presence of someone he truly loves, he is better able to resist the call of the Shadow-self.

Eidolon and Willpower

Where do these elements of the "higher self" fit in with tragic romance? At the Storyteller's discretion, it is possible that genuine true love may strengthen a character's Eidolon and therefore give him additional strength to withstand the onslaught of the Shadow. Conversely, should the relationship end badly, the amount of Eidolon gained for the duration of the relationship would be translated directly into temporary Angst. Nothing is sweeter than the joys of true love, and nothing hurts more than the pain of betrayal.

A Storyteller might deem that the love between two characters is so strong that while in each other's presence, each gains an additional point of Willpower, for purposes of resisting the Shadow. Depending on the nature of the relationship, the Storyteller might also decide that whenever the two are apart, each gains a measure of temporary Angst or drops in Willpower.

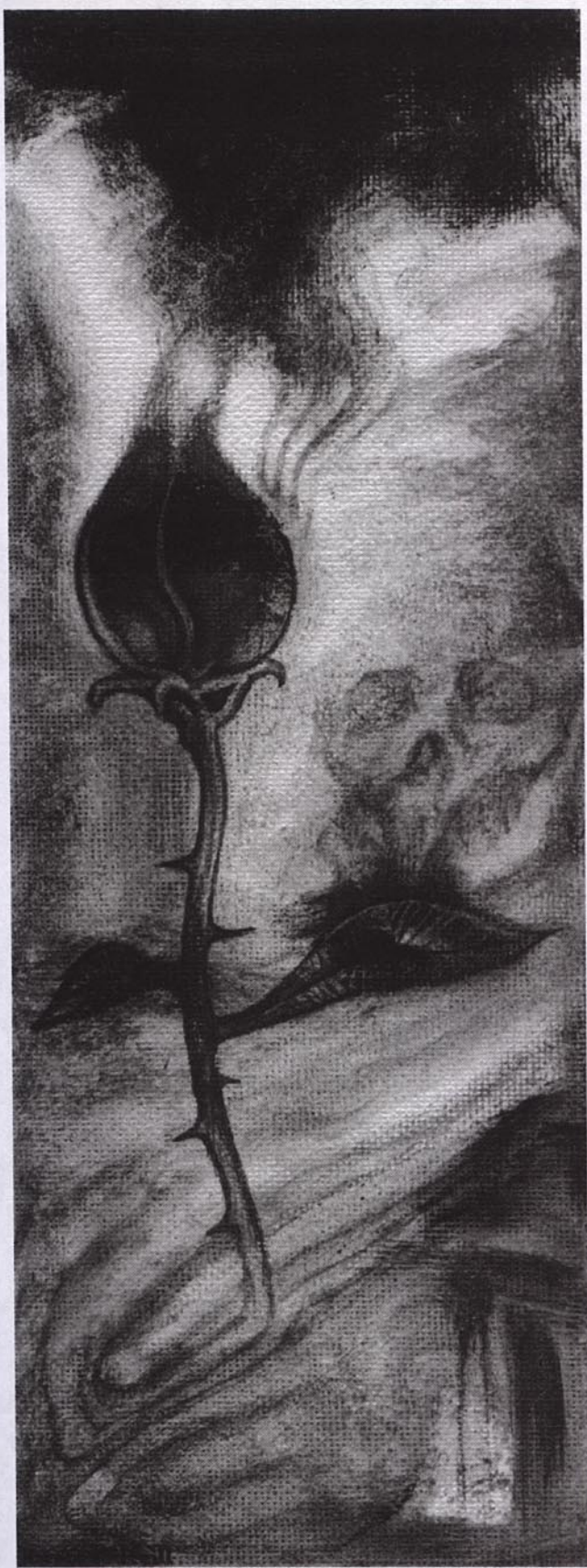
As with all things in the Storyteller system, let the story guide you. If it seems appropriate to make a change in a character's Angst, Eidolon, Willpower, Pathos or any other stat based on the roleplaying of the players involved, do it. Just be sure that you maintain equity and absolute fairness when doing so.

Skinriding

While Skinriding provides an ideal way to experience the joys of the flesh or to hold a beloved child one last time, it can also be a source of a great deal of Angst. Wraiths, by their very nature, are cut off from the flesh that formed the focus of their lives up until the moment of their deaths. Skinriding can often incur more Angst for the wraith doing it than he might have expected, simply because it stands as such a powerful reminder of what has been lost and can never be truly regained. When this is accentuated by the heady emotions generated by romance, the result may be something different — and probably more painful — than the wraith bargained for.

Pathos and Passions

These statistics often pose the biggest problems for maintaining game balance. If a player is particularly passionate in their roleplaying, it will frequently happen that they are constantly getting into situations that generate Pathos. What should the Storyteller do in this situation? It seems unfair in some cases to not reward players for good roleplaying, but sometimes it is necessary to draw the line. Don't allow impassioned players to have a never-ending source of Pathos; doing so cheapens it.



Affecting the Skinlands

This is another area where it is entirely possible to bend the rules for the sake of the story. For the wraith who returns to see her lover (a Fetter to whom she is attuned), is it really necessary to set an egg timer to make sure she doesn't Embody for too long? Bear in mind, though, that the alienation the Restless feel because of their separation from the world of the living is one of the best sources of roleplaying conflict.

Angst

Tragic romance is potentially one of the most Angstful (but fun!) plotlines to involve a character in. The pain of loss, the horror of watching a loved one forget you one day at a time and the frustration and rage generated at being unable to comfort an orphaned child can provide moments of bitter-sweet pain for a wraith character. But how does the Storyteller deal with such situations, with regard to Angst? Some situations may be judged to generate Angst automatically, others may require a roll on an appropriate Shadow Passion. Just as with Pathos, the Storyteller should feel free to award—or not, as the case may be—on the basis of roleplaying.

But won't this cause the character to gain Angst rapidly and therefore be all the more vulnerable to her Shadow? Well...yes. That's the nature of tragedy, folks. What should the player do, then? Should he avoid any potentially Angst-filled situation or relationship? Alas, that is an even quicker route to Oblivion, as the soul attempts to numb itself to safeguard the Psyche from further anguish. Doing so will only bring the character closer to Oblivion, as he attempts to forget, hide or avoid all taint of Passion, good or bad, in his life.

The only guideline for this sort of situation is to remind the Storyteller of two of the basic principles of **Wraith**: first, that the game is ultimately one of high drama and Gothic tragedy. If there were no risks or obstacles to overcome, it would be a boring game indeed. But just as importantly, remember that the main objective in any game is to entertain. If the players aren't having fun, if they feel so completely frustrated and upset at having failed time and again that they stop playing, you have failed as a Storyteller. Tragedy can be fun, and the Angst generated by in-character drama should never be allowed to overshadow the enjoyment of the players. Bearing all that in mind, award Angst as seems necessary or appropriate to the plot and the character's reactions to it.





Beyond Death...

Romance in a Chronicle

*And troubled dynasties, like legions lost, have blown away
Hounds hard upon their heels call to their quarry — wait and play
Before the last faint light is gone
Wish you good-bye till further on
Will you still be there further on?
— Ian Anderson, "And Further On"*



Love is, more often than not, a personal affair. Although outsiders can be easily dragged into their friends' relationships, a chronicle based solely around romantic entanglements can quickly turn into a soap opera. How, then, can a Storyteller work love affairs into her chronicle without overshadowing the central plot or descending into camp?

Overuse is overbearing. Successful romantic plotlines rely on the passions (and Passions) stirred by the relationship. Such passions grow stale or silly if the players have them constantly shoved down their collective throat. Like a pungent spice, passion is best employed in moderation.

If the characters (both player and non-player) have some degree of substance and rapport, all kinds of relationships will simply grow out of the game itself without any prodding from the Storyteller. When that Storyteller wants to add some new element of love Passion to her game, however, there are many ways she could go about it. Is the object of affection a holdover from a player's old life, or is she a Restless spirit in her own right? Is the player in love, or is he on the receiving end of someone else's attentions? Are those attentions welcome? If so, or if not, why? And what will come of it all in the long run? Is the love

familial, friendly or romantic? Did it begin this way, or has it grown over time? Has this love become obsessive or destructive? What complications could come with it? What obstacles do you want to throw in the player's path, and why?

The suggestions below are not gospel; we couldn't possibly answer these questions for you. Your game alone will supply the missing pieces. In general, however, romantic elements will either take center stage or become elements in a larger game. The role love plays in your chronicle will color your characters, the stories and the tone of the game itself.

Love as a Central Theme

The most obvious romantic plotlines dominate the chronicle. The tale as a whole revolves around a given relationship or series of relationships. Beth's game, in the earlier example, might be called "Odysseus Wept for Adonis." The various stories involve Geoffrey, Kevin and Elizabeth's character Suzanne. Other elements (a Hierarchy informant, a slaver who has a crush on Suzanne, some mortal arsonists who try to torch Kevin's building, etc.) come and go, but the interrelationship between the three central characters provides the hub of the overall plot (even if one of them doesn't know he's the focus of ghostly attention!).



This can be a very effective approach in a small group, where the troupe numbers three or less. A larger group, however, will strain the social dynamics to the point where the average game plays like an episode of *Dynasty*. This isn't necessarily a bad thing — such a game might be a lot of fun — but may not be what you had in mind.

Epic Romance

A larger game could be constructed around a single epic romance; the Trojan War was essentially fought over a single love triangle (or was that lust...?). Ghosts are, after all, beyond mortality. Imagine the labyrinthine intrigues spawned by a tryst between Napoleon and Eleanor of Aquitaine or the mass heartbreak connected with James Dean's Restless soul. Stories like *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Beckett*, *The Lion in Winter* and *The Three Musketeers* illustrate the repercussions that occur when powerful people love fall in, or out, of love with each other.

Characters in an epic romance game might find themselves in the midst of intrigues between lovers, or their rivals, or condemned for associating with some unwelcome tryst. If a powerful Anacreon has an interest in one of the players and won't be satisfied with a "No thanks, really," the rest of her Circle will be hard-pressed to avoid the consequences. If two players, a Heretic and a Legionnaire, are engaged in a forbidden romance with each other, their Passions may affect anyone within reach on many different levels.

Such a game would have to involve at least one wraith of considerable power or influence, whose Passions literally change the world around her, and several parties with some stake in her affairs. The living have been known to start wars, burn cities and murder their own children for love. Why should they have all the fun?

Small-Scale Loves

Humbler romances, like Geoffrey's obsession with Kevin, are best suited to small troupes. A larger group would seem meddlesome if they were regularly wrapped up in Geoffrey's love life (or lack thereof). Even then, a creative Storyteller can come up with a variety of threads that bind a larger group to the relationship. A passionate triangle, where Geoffrey contends with a new character, Joanne, for Kevin's memory while Suzanne looks out for her brother, has possibilities. If some of the players are still alive (there's no reason why all the players have to be wraiths), Beth can throw in a whole new set of complications. Kevin might get a crush on his upstairs neighbor (another player character), completely oblivious to the jealous ghosts who follow him.

Logic might soon go out the window, however, if Kevin and his apartment became the focus of too much attention, and the game would probably deteriorate into an undead sitcom. Humor has its place in *Wraith*, but a romance that complex can turn too easily to high camp. If too many people get involved in an intimate affair, that affair often becomes a farce. In general, then, subplots are the best place for love relationships in a large troupe.

Love as a Subplot

This is a pretty common way to work romantic concerns into an ongoing game. Does one of your wraiths have a lover left behind? Is her daughter a Fetter? Is she determined to make up for the rotten way she treated her ex-husband? If so, then her love for those people will color her Shadowland existence, whether she works for the Anacreon of Justice, follows the Cult of Eternal Sunlight, or sells souls to pay a Pardoner.

Subplots work best for large groups. That way, the players can get badly entangled in each others' affairs without overdoing a single relationship. The fallout from a variety of relationships will, of course, give rise to still other subplots. If Shirelle falls in love with Marius, who pines for his lost love Camille but Skinrides the living to continue having sex, the Storyteller has plenty to play with. What if Camille was turned into a Stygian pocket watch which still cries for Marius? What if another Circle member got his hands on that watch? Would Marius recognize Camille, and, if so, would he steal the watch? What would the owner do? How might Shirelle react? Might she try to get rid of the watch for good, or would she help Marius, even if it meant losing him to someone who might never be "human" again? These events could, of course, be the center of events in any given chronicle, but they would work better as complications in a larger tale.

With subplots, everyone can have their turn at love and loss without straining the game's internal logic. A variety of relationships also offers the Storyteller an endless supply of complications with which to entice and torment her players. Subplots have a tendency to multiply, and the "offspring" can get pretty fierce. When a group of people, dead or otherwise, come to care about each other, they inevitably get involved in their friends' emotional turmoils. In *Wraith*, where Passions have a tangible form, this kind of concern can have many levels indeed...

Story Suggestions



*s you pass through fire as you pass through fire
Try to remember its name
When you pass through fire licking at your lips
You cannot remain the same
And if the building's burning
Move towards that door*

*But don't put the flames out
There's a bit of magic in everything
And then some loss to even things out
— Lou Reed, "Magic and Loss"*

Romance and love can spin off more stories than we could ever list. The suggestions below are just a few possibilities to get Storytellers off to a good start. Remember, customization is everything. Nothing we could create will fit your own chronicle perfectly. The suggestions below are only a few of many potential plots. Any one of them could provide the basis for a chronicle, but would work as well or better as subplots in a larger game

Unrequited Love

He'd looked for her at the gravesite, but Ramona never came. He'd waited patiently, believing she'd show up sooner or later, but after four days of dodging the harvesters, it was pretty obvious to Michael that his beloved was never going to come.

The Fetter drew him onward to Ramona's Northlake apartment. She wasn't home when he arrived. With a bit of effort, he passed through the familiar door and hovered in her living room, examining the faded pictures and dusty knickknacks. His Deathstight of this lively room depressed him further; he couldn't wait for her return.

She came home around 9:15, laden with groceries and fumbling with her keys. Michael watched, amused, as she dropped the orange juice and mopped it up, cursing. She shucked her shoes and clicked the TV on, muttering to herself. The ghost admitted he'd never seen this side of her, this private puttering that he supposed all people did. As she settled into her chair to chew on leftover pot roast, Michael ached to go to her, to talk with her again and rekindle their friendship into love. He'd seen her with so many other men, guys who never treated her right. He would, he vowed. As soon as he learned how, he would return to her life. Once she got over the shock, she'd be so happy...

She would, wouldn't she?

We do not, in life, always get what we want. Sometimes the longing for what we never had follows us into eternity.

Unrequited love is some affection (often obsessive) which was never returned, at least not in kind. Whether the object of the wraith's affection is a Fetter or just some person he wishes he had known a little better, a Restless existence gives him more time to regret what had never happened — and, perhaps, the power to still let his affections be known.

This kind of love is deeply tragic. The character, now dead, has forever lost any chance of winning his beloved over and having a normal life with her. On the other hand, it can be rather creepy. Such relationships often have a voyeuristic quality. How would you feel if some spook was always watching you? The Shadow can be hideously destructive if it manifests around a would-be lover, especially if the character harbors some deep resentment towards that person. The heartbroken lover might harm his beloved while under the influence of his Shadow, then become torn with remorse afterward. A ghost may even drive the mortal to her death, hoping to win her over in the Shadowlands or just to get her out of his sight.

Unrequited love between wraiths verges into standard roleplaying situations, but has possibilities nonetheless. What if a Renegade becomes infatuated with a Hierarchy official? What if the would-be lover dies, becomes a wraith herself, and is taken to be melted down in the Stygian forges, or worse still, becomes a simple Drone? The Passion cannot be consummated then, ever.

A living person who expresses endless love for one who died, not knowing that the object of her affections is still around, presents other possibilities. Perhaps the Restless one wishes he had realized his feelings while he was alive. What if he doesn't want her love, even now? The situation is easy to avoid once you're dead... unless that person is a Fetter, an Awakened or someone very close to a Circle-mate. An unrequited love can last for generations and seep across all aspects of a soul's continued existence.

Historical

She was a flapper when they met. She tossed him off like a cheap martini, but Shelby still loved her. There should have been an element of satisfaction in watching her slow decline from dancing beauty to speakeasy lush to sodden hobo, but Shelby knew she would recover someday and jump back on the fast train. He wanted to see it happen, even if he couldn't take her arm as she went.

Cassie let him down, though. She died, the stupid broad, in a ditch after falling off a Northbound Chessie outside Williamsburg. The fast train was a bit too fast for her, in more ways than the obvious. He checked out the place where she'd kicked off or wandered over to her apartment on off-hours. No dice. She was gone. He met other chippies over here, on the Other Side, but no one took the place of Cassie. Ten years gone, she still haunts him, a ghost on a ghost, dogging his steps as he whistles his way across the fatal tracks, hoping to catch sight of her again.



Ghost stories come from every time; there is no reason why a **Wraith** chronicle cannot be set in a past historical period. The Old South, Depression Era, early 1800s, Dark or Middle Ages and even Classical periods make excellent settings for Restless tales. With a little research, you can create a truly unique game.

Imagine a Circle of ghosts from the Industrial Revolution, when factory workers died almost daily from working hazards, leaving their families alone and poor. A romance set during the westward expansion has many dramatic possibilities, especially if some of the ghosts are displaced Native Americans and others deceased settlers or cavalry. The arranged marriages of feudal Europe (which still continue in many cultures today) inspired many folk tales of ghostly lovers and vengeful hauntings when true love was shattered by duty. What might it be like to play one of Robert Burns' lost paramours, or a murdered slave returning to her homeland to search for her rightful husband?

Other chronicles may span decades of mortal time. What sorts of things will the Restless witness during the course of the game? What lengths might they go to in order to rescue a living loved one or to slow down (or hasten!) that person's eventual death? Some ghosts, especially spirits from tribal cultures, remain as guardians until their last relation dies. What might they do if their tribe or clan is threatened? How might they react if they can do nothing to stop the invaders?

Love and death are universal. There are few limits on what an imaginative Storyteller can do with period pieces. Plenty of information about various time periods and cultures, and their social and marriage customs, can be found in your local library.

Time and Mortality

I have wept for him since the days of hill bonfires. I saw my people trampled beneath the boots of conquerors, watched our ways turn to dust and relic, mourned our fallen glory, but still I weep only for him.

We met during Mayfeast, dancing on the winter-chilled earth. We rushed off into the cool fog to warm it with our passion, and I bore him three fine sons before my stillborn daughter left me to wander the Shadowlands. Naihl carried on, remarried, and had new sons, but the sorrow of my passing left a darkness in his eyes till death took him also. I waited to rejoin with him, but he went beyond — perhaps to the Far Shores, perhaps to nothingness. I do not know. Though I have watched, sought and gossiped, I have not seen nor heard of my love since his dying day.

I watched our children as they raised children of their own. I saw the flames and shame of blood, betrayal and infamous conquest. Still I weep only for my love and for our too-short days together. The vagaries of worlds living and dead lack splendor for me.

The Quick pass away; the Restless do not. At some point, wraiths must confront the deaths of those they love if their Passion stems from an earthly union. Such Passions may never be resolved and leave many ghosts wandering the Shadowlands for eternity.

Wraiths who carry a Passion for some mortal often watch over that loved one, sometimes protecting, occasionally tormenting, usually simply observing. Sooner or later, however, that mortal dies. Her Restless paramour has nothing to watch now but the grinding wheel of time.

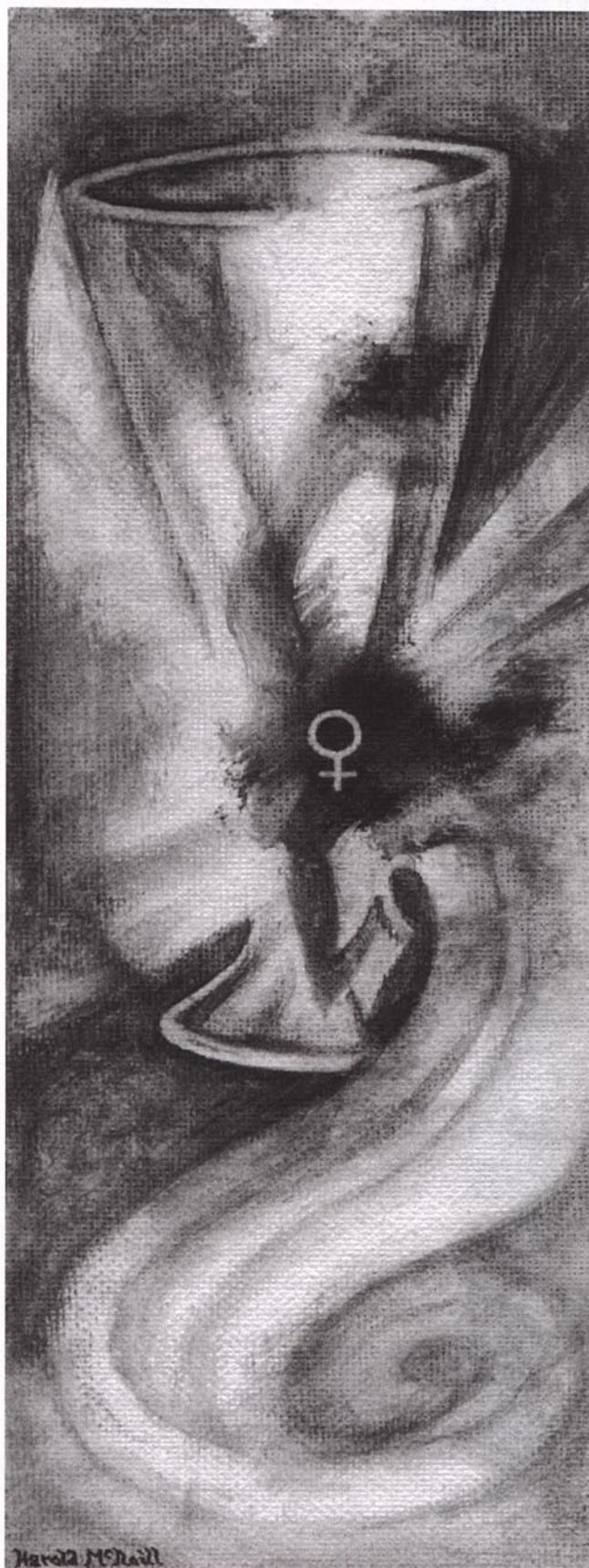
Imagine watching someone you love die, day by day, while you are locked outside of their world and cannot spend those days with her. Imagine seeing your lover sicken while still healthy, your Deathstight revealing the death within her long before it strikes. Consider the anticipation of greeting her on the Other Side when she passes over. What if she does not pass over and is lost to you forever? Now *that* is the stuff of high Gothic tragedy!

The greatest torment of the Restless is to remain outside the mortal world, still caring about the events and people there. Too often, this pain turns to anger or greed, resulting in the ruthless shadow trade or violent poltergeist activity. Others simply pine over their loss, haunting their special places until they either accept time's passage or are destroyed. Many Spectres, it is said, began as heartbroken ghosts.

The mightiest wraiths are those who bury their Passions deepest. These feelings still flicker inside them, though, and drive them to more barbarous acts than they would ever have performed while alive. When the lives and cultures they hold dear decay before their eyes, who can blame them for their misery? Transcendence, or even Oblivion, seems preferable to an endless, loveless existence.

Storytellers should bear the passage of time in mind when creating new stories. What happens, for example, if one character died years before the current setting's time? How will he feel about love, romance and emotion when he has seen so many mortal treasures crumble? What might it take to ignite his Passions again? Some Restless seek ghostly lovers for just that reason — to comfort them in their loss. Many such "rebound" relationships soon fall apart (as they do in the living world), but some endure for centuries.

A truly eternal love offers a new host of possibilities. Suppose a character's mortal love does pass over? What effect might the transition have on her and their relationship? A pair of lovers whose affection survives their deaths will be hard to separate once on the Other Side. Likewise, two wraiths who find comfort in each others' presence might build a strong love together over time. On the living side, however, time moves on. Regardless of the love that one of the Restless may bear, the places and people that meant so much to them will eventually change or fall away.



Familial Love

I still feel my mother watching over me. She died when I was only six, but I know she's still there.

Once I woke up out of a really bad dream to see her sitting beside my bed. She reached out and patted me on the forehead, like she did when I was a little girl, and calmed me down. I'd missed her so much I felt like crying, and I did. She ran her cool hand through my hair until I stopped. When I wiped my eyes clear, she was gone.

I don't know where my mom is or where she goes when I don't need her around. But when I'm hurting or something, I always feel her by me. Wherever you go after you die, it can't be too bad, 'cause Mom comes back sometimes, and I can tell that she still loves me.

Not all love is romantic or sexual. The powerful bond between close friends or blood relations often transcends anything a purely sexual love could offer. This kind of love often continues in the ghost's protection of the living party, sometimes for generations, and becomes a hideous haunting in the grip of the Shadow.

Many of us never realize the bonds of family or friendship until the people close to us are beyond our reach. When the Restless find themselves wandering the Shadowlands, they often reach out for comfort to those they remember from life. These living Fetters do become sources of Memoriam and Pathos, but the emotional ties that transcend death mean so much more to a wraith. Remaining close to a loved one reminds a dead soul of the things that mattered.

More often than not, the Restless one will strive to keep his friend or relation from harm. This is especially true in cultures where tribal or family closeness is prized. The dead still watch over their communities here, giving guidance, comfort and occasional protection when they can. Memoriam feeds these guardian spirits, true, but their watchfulness is often given out of love, not obligation. As the loved ones of a given spirit pass away themselves, the ghost dissolves her bonds to the living world or finds some new source of comfort and emotion. The Far Shores are thought to be close and attainable to those with such a firm grounding in their relations.

In places or cultures where the living drift around with few close ties, however, their souls continue wandering after death. The people they had loved — the favored daughter, old flame, even beloved pet — become even more important to the ghosts than they were when the dead one was alive. Such mortals receive powerful guidance or protection, if such is within the wraith's ability to give. The living, especially sensitives, children and animals, know that their relative is watching. Even if communication is impossible, the ghost often clings to his living Fetter. Her presence gives him peace.



Harold McNeill



When the Shadow takes over, however, a wraith can wreak horrific vengeance on his family or friends. Many ghosts idealize their loved ones to heights no person could live up to. If a protective father watches his young daughter lose her virginity, or a wistful lover sees her old paramour throw the reminders of their relationship in the trash, their love can warp into a murderous frenzy. The Shroud may protect that person for a time, but if the ghost ever gets an opportunity to punish the offender... Other wraiths grow obsessive, seeking to draw the living person into the Shadowlands by inspiring suicide or causing accidents. Naturally, harming a loved one inevitably hurts the wraith in turn, and events fall into a tragic cycle (which only gets bigger if the loved one becomes a wraith herself). This kind of mess can be sorted out, but it requires work and soul-searching on the part of the wraith, and anger is so much easier to sustain than to break...

The majority of familial relationships between the Restless and the Quick remain peaceful, if sad. Eventually, the tie dissolves, and the ghost finds another focus for his affection. Unless some dark undercurrent disrupts the bond, a love based on family or close friendship can be the most comforting thing a wraith can ever know.

Sexual Passion

The tingle of her fingers was electric, crackling along Ryan's borrowed skin like a static charge. Through another man's lips he moaned, burying his face in the fragrance of her hair. God, it'd been so long since he'd felt this way! With nervous fingers, he traced the outline of her jaw, savoring the warmth of living skin.

"I see you're all ready." Susan's smile was teasing, not mocking. Her eyes melted into his own (Brett's own, he reminded himself; his host's name was Brett), deep brown in the firelight. With another man's lungs, Ryan breathed woodsmoke and womanscent. The dizziness of possession mingled with his host's arousal and his own. He purred slightly, and the rumble felt good in his throat. Susan ran her hands from his forehead to his thighs, slowly, God, so slowly. "You're not too eager, I hope," she whispered. "I want to take my time."

"I'm not going anywhere," Ryan answered in Brett's voice. He kissed her lightly, and her soft shiver pressed his eyes shut with ecstasy. "I want to enjoy this for all it's worth. I wish it could last forever."

She chuckled quietly, "Maybe it will."

"I wish it would," he said softly. "I wish it would."

Wraiths are creatures of passion, and sexual passions are among the most volatile kind. If a young girl dies without ever experiencing a lover's caress, if a shy man passes on without ever having had a woman make love to him, they might

well return as ghosts, driven by a craving for the physical touch they never knew in life. This kind of frustration can, in the Shadowlands, turn into pathetic longing or terrifying rage. The Shadows of such ghosts have plenty to feed upon...

Sexual Passions, in a wraith, might stem from frustration, unrealized sexual conflicts, untested desires, a defiance of death, new and exciting Passions or partners, or a simple remembrance and love of the act itself. Some Skinride the living during sex or simply watch lovers voyeuristically. Others still indulge with ghostly partners. Certain Arcanos — Puppetry, Castigate, Embody, Keening, Usury, and even Phantasm — can stimulate sexual responses even though the chemical reactions of living sexuality are no longer active. Sex, as anyone will tell you, is as much mental as it is physical. For all the power of wraithly Arcanos, though, most Restless agree that sex is best experienced while living, even if that life technically belongs to someone else.

There is an uncomfortable edge to ghostly sexuality. The idea of being observed while making love, even by ghosts, is unsettling to the Quick. Possession itself carries overtones of rape. Indeed, some mortal rapists might be controlled by angry spirits who take their frustration out on the living through the living. Castigation often carries a sado-masochistic thrill, especially if the ghost in question is working out some sexual conflict or guilt. Usury is just that — usury; such commerce is not romance and lacks the empathy of true sexuality. Even if the stimulation is strictly consensual, there is still a great sadness when ghosts make love. Much as they might wish to become mortal again, they cannot. The Passions that course through them are borrowed, simulated or remembered. The thrill of real sexuality is lost to them forever.

Many wraiths still make love because the act comforts them. Unsatisfying as it may be, it's better than admitting that you're dead. For those who have unrealized frustrations, however, the Shadow is a fearsome enemy which feeds on their insecurities, guilt, shame or fury. The acts such a Shadow performs only reinforce the despair that fueled it in the first place, thus driving the character closer to Oblivion. On a lighter note, sex can offer amusing sidelines or interludes in an otherwise serious story. It's no accident that a good deal of Western humor is based in sexuality. The urges of sex and the act itself can be uproariously funny. Either option presents a wealth of potential to clever Storytellers and players.

The double blade of sexuality can be played both ways. A pair of Skinriding ghosts could live out fantasies that would make a Penthouse editor blush, while a truly needy couple could find tender solace in the arms of living proxies. The effects, methods and motivations of sexually-driven wraiths can be as dark, silly, pathetic or touching as the Storyteller cares to make them.



ELLIOTT 94

The Price of Love

*Heav'n has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd
Nor Hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd.*
—William Congreve, *The Old Bachelor*



Jessica Wyndham was an executive secretary who fell in love with her boss, Kendall Bentley. He was a powerful insurance executive, the head of Hartford Worldwide Insurance Corporation (HWIC), and a man with no time for anything but his own wealth and vanity. Jessica's infatuation

started slowly, a casual glance here and there, but as time went on, Bentley started to become something more in her eyes. He represented money, power, security and success, things that she didn't have. She started to glamorize her own life by building up her own image of Bentley. She imagined that the executive spent his days alone in his penthouse office, desperately wishing that he could share his success with someone else. Jessica convinced herself that if she could attract his attention, then she could break through his hardened exterior to the man inside.

Bentley became the focus of her life. Jessica studied him, learning his idiosyncracies and his likes and dislikes. She started re-making herself to please him. Jessica worked out, dieted, changed her hairstyle, and borrowed to purchase a new wardrobe. Despite her best efforts, nothing drew his attention for more than a moment. Instead of noticing the other heads that she turned in the office, Jessica took each unnoticed day as a defeat. She pushed herself to the breaking point, criticizing herself mercilessly, having nightmares about her inadequacies, and then working herself to death to remove the perceived imperfection. Eventually, the stresses she put on her body took their toll. She became sick with pneumonia while suffering from bulimia, but she refused to stop.

Bentley gave her a week off to get better, but instead of seeing a doctor, she stayed in her apartment, psychically abusing herself for failing Kendall. At the end of the week, her windpipe closed, and she died.

Death didn't end Jessica's struggle to win the affection of Kendall Bentley. If anything, death worsened the situation. Jessica's Shadow was so strong from all of the anger, frustration and self-pity that had built up preceding her death, that she was transformed into a Doppelganger, a kind of Shade. As a Doppelganger, Jessica's love twisted into a passionate obsession. She determined that if she couldn't have his love while she was alive, then she would find it in the afterlife. Her plan had three stages. She would first get Kendall's attention. Once he realized that her love for him transcended death, his eyes would open, and he'd confess his love for her. Then, he would kill himself and join her for all eternity.

Jessica started attacking HWIC, doing a tremendous amount of damage with her Pandemonium Arcanos. She has drawn the attention of Kendall Bentley by leaving debris arranged to spell out his name at the sites of the carnage.

At first, Kendall Bentley thought that some maniac was out to get him. But when HWIC's own investigators failed to explain the incidents, the superstitious Bentley suspected a supernatural influence. He hired the best ghost-hunters money could buy and set them loose on Hartford to make inspections of all buildings covered by HWIC insurance and hopefully exorcise unwanted spirits.



The legions of ghost-hunters have made life difficult for the residents of Hartford's Necropolis. All wraiths, Hierarchy, Renegade and Heretic alike have agreed that the attacks on Bentley must end. Unfortunately, as the ghost-hunters increase their activity, Jessica increases her efforts to convince Kendall of her intentions, haunting him more frequently and scaring him out of his mind. Unfortunately, doing so only makes him more insistent that the hunters remove the spirit attacking him.

Hartford, Connecticut

Some people refer to Hartford, the state capital of Connecticut, as the insurance capital of the world. Located in the same region that inspired the chilling tales of H.P. Lovecraft, Hartford contains several old Gothic churches and moldering cemeteries. The state Capitol has a magnificent golden dome and the majestic Old State House is the oldest such building in the country. A couple of museums are dedicated to the development of insurance companies, and some of the most impressive modern structures are the headquarters of insurance companies, including the Travelers Towers which offers a grand view of the surrounding area. Hartford has a number of historical and interesting sites, too many to document completely. Among these is the Wadsworth Atheneum, the oldest public art museum in the country. Of special note among Hartford's museums is the Museum of Medicine and Dentistry, which gives tourists a rather horrifying view of the evolution of the medical field, including antique

Preludes

Storytellers may want to preface this story by inserting elements of it in characters' preludes or solo sessions. A player character may have worked for one of the powerful insurance agencies in the area, and through that she may know of Jessica Wyndham and Kendall Bentley. A wraith may witness one of Jessica's wild rampages or be falsely accused of performing the actions. One of the ghost-hunters used in the story may be an old enemy or associate of one of the players. If the Storyteller wants, she can build up to "The Price of Love" by having hunter activity in the area slowly increase to intolerable levels.

surgical instruments. Hartford also has a number of parks and gardens and a wide array of specialty shops and restaurants.

The wraith community in Hartford's Necropolis has strong Hierarchy and Heretic ties. Many of the Heretics believe in some variation of Christianity, and a relatively amicable dialogue exists between the servants of the Hierarchy and the Heretics. This dates back to the charter of the early Connecticut colony that set the laws of the church as the law of the colony.

In the World of Darkness, Hartford Worldwide Insurance Corporation, or Hartford World as the residents call it, is the most affluent insurance company based in Connecticut. They have a corporate headquarters building located near Constitution Plaza.

Chapter One: Attack of the Ghost-Hunters

Abrahms, an older wraith who stays outside normal Necropolis politics, has sent a messenger to summon the player characters to visit his Haunt. The request is highly unusual, but the players have heard rumors of ghost-hunters attacking wraiths and other difficulties in the Necropolis. Hopefully, a few of them should respond. If extra enticement is needed, then inform the players that Abrahms knows much about Arcanos and has taught secrets to other wraiths in exchange for favors.

Abrahms lives in the abandoned West Hartford Church near the affluent area just outside of the city. Despite the tranquil surroundings, the windows of the church are broken, and the wood is rotting in the physical world. When the wind blows, the rusty bells in the steeple fail to move. In the Shadowlands, nothing remains but a skeletal structure of wooden pillars. Surrounding the church are moldering grave-stones. A precious few of these stones shine with Pathos in the Shadowlands, but most are dark. The ancient trees behind the husk of a church shudder as winds continually blow through their branches.

Abrahms greets the characters solemnly, coldly shaking the hands of each one. His voice is a bit gravelly, and he speaks slowly, taking his time to pronounce each word in turn.

"Welcome, all of you. I am pleased that you responded so quickly. Few others would have done the same. Time is of the essence. I have seen the destruction of this Haunt. I have seen the destruction of the Necropolis. And I fear that the end draws nigh." He pauses and studies the characters for reactions.

"The mortal world, the masses of the living seek us out. The Fog somehow seems to have thinned in our city. One of our number, a young wraith like yourselves, interferes with the Skinlands. She tries to awaken eyes that could not see in life from beyond the grave. But..."

He raises a hand.



The White Box

This “ghost-hunting” piece of equipment emits a powerful electromagnetic pulse which disrupts the corpus of any wraiths within a hundred feet. Every round that a white box remains active, any wraith within its field receives a single automatic wound level. Any unshielded electrical equipment in the area suffers from power fluctuations. White boxes consume a large amount of energy when they are active, and they can only remain active for at most 10 rounds before their power supply needs to be recharged. More experienced ghost-hunters use white boxes to clean a building by clicking them on and off as they walk around, hoping to disturb or drive off any unwanted spirits. These boxes are almost always the targets of the Inhabit Arcanos.

“She must not be sent down the path of Oblivion yet. She has great potential, and I have seen a role for her in the future. She must be saved from herself and her own misguided desires. Do this, and you shall be rewarded.”

“The woman’s name is Jessica Wyndham.”

As his words hang in the air, a breeze starts to howl through the structure. Several vehicles arrive at West Hartford Church in the Skinlands. Men and women clad in coveralls with the letters HWIC on them step out in front of the ruined West Hartford Church. Then a glow breaks through the Shadowlands as one of them activates a metal box. There’s one ghost-hunter for each wraith, and they start attacking the abandoned church with axes.

During the fight, Abrahms hangs back, using his abilities to support the young Circle and concentrating on the hunters with axes. If any of the characters’ Circle taunts old Abrahms, then he starts to unleash against the hunters with Outrage.

The strength of the Shroud at the West Hartford Church is only at level 6. A wraith player character who causes the white box to flicker off, either by inflicting five wound levels to the box or through using the Inhabit Arcanos to cause a Surge will force all of the ghost-hunters to make a Willpower check or flee in terror as they realize they are facing formidable odds here. Once the hunters realize that they’re under attack, they start swinging their axes around wildly, hoping to disrupt a wraith (difficulty 9).

Hartford World Hired Hunters

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2,

Skills: Firearms 1, Melee 1, Repair 2, Stealth 2

Knowledge: Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

Willpower: 8

The player characters should win the battle, and on the off chance that it looks like they might lose, the hunters start to have their nerve give out and flee. Abrahms tells the characters to go into Hartford and find Wyndham.

After the fray, Abrahms reminds the characters that attacks against the Restless Dead will only get worse if Jessica isn't found and stopped. He informs the group that he would search with them, but he must remain to protect his Haunt. Abrahms agrees to reward the characters handsomely with knowledge and power if they can stop Wyndham's assaults.

Chapter Two: Ripples

The search for Jessica may take many forms. If the Storyteller wants to embellish the story, she can go ahead and make up accounts of Wyndham's attacks against the insurance company and also make up stories about the retaliation against known haunts by ghost-hunters. The longer it takes the characters to find Jessica, the more effective the ghost-hunters become. This provides an opportunity for a Storyteller to eliminate any NPCs who've gotten stale in the chronicle. The hunters should help spur reluctant player characters into actively trying to stop Jessica.

Wraiths with Contacts may learn that Wyndham is a beautiful young wraith who is obsessed with Hartford World. She's attacked several houses insured by the large corporation, and it was after she used her Pandemonium Arcanos at some of the company's offices that the ghost-hunters came into the city. She uses Argos to flee from her attacks, and sometimes she's accompanied by Shades.

The best place for the player characters to catch up with Jessica is at one of the offices of Hartford World, near the Tower. Ms. Wyndham terrifies the people inside the office by knocking books off shelves, tipping over desks and even causing the walls to bleed. The tacks from one overturned desk spell out "Kendall Bentley." The Shades around her (two less than the number of player characters) are going berserk, violently attacking the humans and anything else they can find. Once the player characters enter the scene, they have no more than a round to flee before the Shades attack them (for stats on shades, see **Wraith: The Oblivion**, pgs. 231-233). The Shades should be designed to challenge the characters, not massacre them.

If the characters choose to flee or ignore Jessica, then she uses her Argos to vanish once the first Shade falls. The characters continue to have run-ins with Jessica until they decide to do something about her problems. If one of the characters directly attacks Jessica and tries to prevent her from using her Pandemonium to terrorize the office workers, then she tries to flee without using Argos.

If the characters manage to follow Jessica, she leads them to her apartment near the Hartford World Tower. She collapses inside her Haunt, and she starts to sob. As long as the characters approach her calmly, she won't harm them. Assuming that the characters talk to her and ask her to stop the attacks, she tells the group her story. She constantly maintains that all she wants is to make him notice her. After she finishes, tears streak down her cheeks.

"Can't you understand?" she pleads. "I've got to make him see."

She pauses.

"I've waited too long. I have to go confront him." Before the characters can react, she uses her Argos to vanish, but it shouldn't take them long to realize where she is going. If it becomes necessary to give the players a hint, then a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8) with three successes lets a character notice her stare out her window at the Hartford World Tower before she vanishes. Five successes mean that the wraith sees her look at Bentley's office.

If a fight breaks out, she uses her Argos to flee. If necessary, she spends Willpower or lets her Shadow surface so she can escape. In order to run the next scene, she must escape. Inside her home, she leaves a relic, one of her Fetters, a scrapbook hidden in an uncleaned closet. The scrapbook contains clippings, photos and copies of memos from and about Mr. Kendall Bentley, the young president of Hartford World, one of the 100 richest men in America. She has a picture of the two of them working together in his office.

Chapter Three: Happily Ever After?

After her flight from the characters, Jessica heads to confront Kendall directly at the penthouse offices of the Hartford World Tower, for better or worse.

Kendall is working late, as usual, and sitting in his large, plush office. His new secretary has a large desk just outside the office. When Jessica arrives, she starts by unleashing the full effects of her Pandemonium Arcanos against the poor woman, causing a horde of rats to start devouring her. The secretary flees, screaming, into an elevator.

Then, Jessica enters Bentley's office. Her Shadow begins to surface. This is a good moment for the player characters to appear on the scene. Bentley can't see Jessica, but he feels the presence of the spirit. He stands slowly and he starts calmly stating "No one needs to get hurt... I don't know what you want..."

She uses her Embody Arcanos to whisper, "I love you, Kendall."

"Jessica?" says Bentley. He looks confused for a moment. "The secretary who could barely do her job? Is that who you are? I gave you every chance, even stuck with you when you starting getting a bit crazy. What the hell do you want from me? You're dead! Stop bothering the living! Stop making our lives here a nightmare!"

The next few moments are crucial. If the player characters don't intervene, then Jessica goes berserk, and she tries to murder Bentley and demolish the building. Jessica will start the combat by summoning Shade allies. If the players try to stop her, she will fight them to the death. If they let her go, she kills Bentley. Without the money to back them, the ghost-hunters will leave.

If one of the players gets her attention and says something kind or sympathetic, then she collapses into tears. Bentley runs out and calls one of his ghost-hunter squads. Jessica falls to her knees and sobs in agony, murmuring things like, "I knew it couldn't happen, I'm useless." The characters can leave Jessica to get obliterated by the ghost-hunters, or they can take her away as she weeps over and over, "He could never be in love with me." Once the ghost-hunters destroy Jessica, then Bentley lets them go. In any event, Jessica will not attack Hartford World any longer, and she will find a new focus for her obsessive love. After two quiet weeks, the ghost-hunters filter out of Hartford.

Characters

Abrahms

Abrahms once took care of the West Hartford Church, too many years ago to remember. One night, the church caught fire. Despite the pleas of others, Abrahms raced inside to try to save all that he could. He died from smoke inhalation. Since then, he's charted his own course in the Shadowlands, learning to survive where others could not. He plays a dangerous game with the factions, trying to stay apathetic to all of them yet inoffensive at the same time. As rumors of his power grow, it becomes less likely that he will be able to remain unaligned.

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Judge

Circle: None.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 2, Leadership 4, Meditation 5, Melee 1, Performance 2, Stealth 5



Knowledges: Bureaucracy 1, Enigmas 5, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Occult 5, Politics 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Eidolon 3, Haunt 4, Memoriam 1, Hierarchy Status 3, Heretic Status 3, Renegade Status 3, Wealth 1

Passions: Guide New Wraiths (Hope) 4, Restore the West Hartford Church (Love) 3

Arcanos: Argos 3, Castigate 3, Fatalism 4, Keening 1, Lifeweb 2, Outrage 3, Usury 3

Fetters: West Hartford Church, 5

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 7

Shadow: The Parent

Angst: 5

Thorns: Bad Luck, Pact of Doom

Shadow Passions: Destroy the Will of Others (Hate) 4, Remove All Traces of Abrahms in the Skinlands (Sorrow) 3

Image: Abrahms appears as a kindly older man, dressed in tattered robes that may have once belonged to a priest or minister. He has a gleam in his hazel eyes and a salt-and-pepper beard with white hair.

Roleplaying Notes: You are concerned for the higher good and the future of the Shadowlands. You don't want to see Hartford destroyed by the hunters, and you don't want to see poor Jessica suffer. You don't know for certain that Jessica's important, but if you've had visions of her, then she must have some role to play in the future.

Jessica Wyndham

Jessica Wyndham always felt imperfect and inferior. She wasn't the prettiest or the smartest or the most athletic girl in her classes as she grew up. Her mother tried to push her toward achievement, but she never managed to find a way to come out on top. Jessica received a business degree, and she took a job as a secretary at Hartford World while she tried to get her master's at night classes. Jessica never felt safe around men, and she went through one boyfriend after the other. Finally, she got her master's degree, and she was promoted to work as Kendall Bentley's personal executive secretary. Kendall was everything that she wanted herself to be: strong, aggressive, confident and handsome. Jessica grew obsessed about Kendall, and she tried to get him to notice her, dyeing her hair red, wearing seductive clothing, but nothing worked. She dieted and worked out regularly. Before long, she grew sick with her infatuation and her regimen. When she failed to see the doctor about her pneumonia, she died alone in her apartment. Her last thoughts were of her failure to win Kendall's attention.

As she passed into the Shadowlands, Jessica was consumed by her Shadow, becoming obsessive and prone to fits of rage. Her only thoughts were to try to send a message to Kendall. When she failed to get him to notice her, she started to try to gain his attention by attacking the only thing he ever cared about— his business.



Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Fanatic

Circle: None.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Empathy 1, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Etiquette 2, Leadership 1, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Computer 1, Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Law 2, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Haunt 5

Arcanos: Argos 1, Embodiment 3, Pandemonium 4

Fetters: Desk at Hartford World Towers, 3; Scrapbook of Bentley, 2; Kendall Bentley, 3; Senior Class picture, 1; Apartment, 1

Willpower: 4

Pathos: 6

Shadow: The Perfectionist

Angst: 10

Shade Powers: Spectral Scream, Pathos Drain

Shadow Passions: Hurt those who ignore her (Anger) 5, Punish self for lack of perfection (Depression) 5

Image: Jessica is a tall beauty with platinum blonde hair, permanently dyed red except for the roots. She wears a gold-colored catsuit and heels with a black sash as a belt. She has glistening blue eyes.

Roleplaying Notes: You believe that you want Kendall Bentley with all your heart and soul. This god among men represents everything to you. You hope that he'll kill himself and join you in the afterlife, where you can stay together forever. The thought that he might not love you scares you more than anything.

Kendall Bentley

Kendall Bentley was placed on the fast track to success as a young man, and he never cared about anything else. A Yale business graduate, he joined Hartford World, and his ability to manage others led him up the corporate ladder. Now, he's one of the youngest and richest company presidents in America. Business is his life, and he's happiest when he's working hard. Bentley never had time for women, or anything else. He remembers Jessica Bentley, but he doesn't think much of her as a secretary.

Nature: Loner

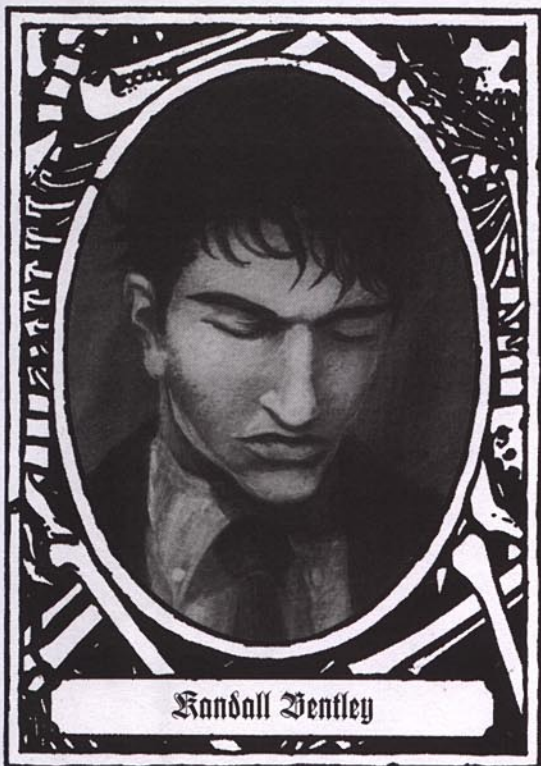
Demeanor: Director

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 4



Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Meditation 1, Performance 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Business 4, Computer 2, Enigmas 1, Investigation 2, Law 2, Occult 3, Politics 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Resources 4

Willpower: 10

Image: A tall man in excellent physical condition, Kendall has dark eyes and hair, and he carries himself with a quiet intensity. He doesn't talk very much, unless when he has something important to say. He always dresses immaculately, and he gets confused on the streets for a half-dozen Hollywood leading men.

Roleplaying Notes: You are always in control. People listen to you. This whole ghost thing is embarrassing and frustrating to you. You don't even really believe in ghosts, but you don't have any other explanations. If someone doesn't produce some answers or some results, there'll be hell to pay.

Aftermath

- If Jessica has freed herself of her obsession with Kendall Bentley, then she will try to cleave to one of the party members for security. Alas, she will probably turn her obsessive love on this new target now...

- Although Bentley's no longer funding the ghost-hunters, several of them may take up residence in the Necropolis, continuing their activities. A few disparate groups may start coordinating their operations, sharing information and resources to destroy the spirits. The characters may have to hunt down and destroy these mortals.

- The group's actions have drawn the attention of others, attention that will not be welcome. Renegades moving into the area may try to recruit them. The Hierarchy wraiths and the Heretics may both attempt to gain the support of the characters, forcing them into the world of politics beyond death.

- Abrahms thanks the characters for their aid, and he offers to serve as a mentor for the Circle. Having connections to this powerful old wraith could prove to be a two-edged sword.

Variations

- With minimal work, the setting of this adventure can shift to any city in the world that has business executives. Storytellers should strongly consider moving the adventure close to the location of their chronicle.

- If the Storyteller owns **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, then this scenario can become a crossover. To make things a bit darker, have Kendall Bentley work for a division of Pentex, and, instead of hiring ghost-hunters, have him employ Black Spiral Dancers, fomori or other Wyrms creatures to hunt down all supernaturals.

- With a few adjustments, a completely different story can be told with almost the same plotline. If Bentley had murdered Jessica, then the basic problems (Jessica terrorizing Kendall, Bentley hiring ghost-hunters) would remain, but a different ending might occur.

- For the hopelessly romantic, give Kendall a secret crush on Jessica as well, and then let a *truly* tragic relationship begin.



ELLICOTT 94

Object of Affection

Delight that never fades, bliss that is eternal, is only yours when that which you most desire is just out of reach.

—C.S. Lewis, *Shadowlands*



Love takes many forms, and it often remains blind to reason and understanding. Love may also give way to jealousy and violence. This story is a tragic one without any simple solutions. The group must make a moral choice, weighing two solutions that both have drawbacks, and ultimately accept the responsibility of their actions. This story has no easy way out.

This story takes place in Philadelphia, where a member of the Hierarchy, Linda Cartwright, hires the characters to go into a Renegade Haunt and retrieve an Artifact, a small lantern. Linda offers the characters wealth and favors, but she refuses to give her reasons for wanting the Artifact, maintaining that they are personal. When the characters break into the Renegade Haunt, they encounter Tania Washington, one of the Renegade leaders, and they discover that they've walked into a trap. Although the Renegades catch the player characters, they don't try to send them into the Tempest. Tania explains the story of the lantern, herself and Linda Cartwright. She has her people take a member of the Circle (preferably not one of the player characters) as a hostage. Then she instructs the player characters to lead her minions to Linda. The player characters must decide whether to feed Linda to Tania's ravenous hordes or see if they can discover another solution.

The story behind the lamp is that Linda and Tania had both been in love with a mortal named Paul Rogers. Unfortunately, the Hierarchy captured him upon his death, and Artificers bound his essence into the lamp. Both Linda and Tania love Paul, and they want the lamp for sentimental reasons. Either one will go to any lengths to get her hands on the lamp.

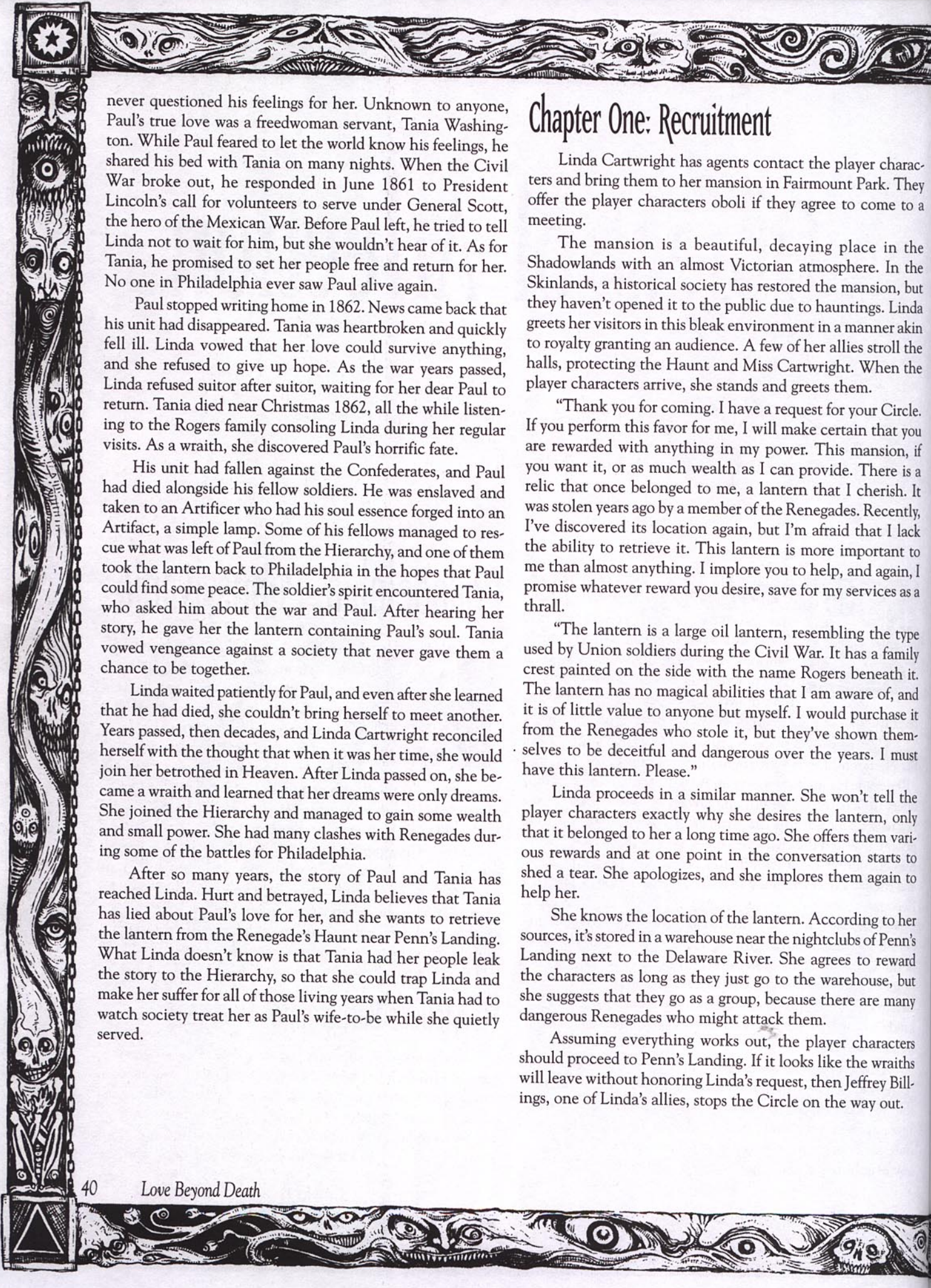
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Philadelphia is the home of many ghosts. Once a stronghold of the Hierarchy, the order in Philadelphia fragments as Renegade influence in nearby Camden, New Jersey, grows. Not far from the ferry landing for Camden, at Penn's Landing, the city has turned old piers into nightclubs and restaurants filled with people and haunted by Renegades. Philadelphia has several historic sites, including Independence Hall, Old City Hall (where the Supreme Court first passed judgment), Congress Hall (which held the national legislature until they moved to Washington, DC) and too many more to list. The combination of revolutionary American history alongside urban decay gives Philadelphia a very Gothic-Punk feel. Fairmount Park is a large urban park containing many historic mansions, including the one haunted by Linda Cartwright.

Storyteller's Background

In the mid-19th century, a man named Paul Rogers was part of Philadelphia high society. Paul Rogers was an educated man from a good family, but he had several unusual ideas. His parents helped "arrange" a wedding between himself and Linda Cartwright, a member of another important Philadelphia family. Linda absolutely adored Paul, and she



never questioned his feelings for her. Unknown to anyone, Paul's true love was a freedwoman servant, Tania Washington. While Paul feared to let the world know his feelings, he shared his bed with Tania on many nights. When the Civil War broke out, he responded in June 1861 to President Lincoln's call for volunteers to serve under General Scott, the hero of the Mexican War. Before Paul left, he tried to tell Linda not to wait for him, but she wouldn't hear of it. As for Tania, he promised to set her people free and return for her. No one in Philadelphia ever saw Paul alive again.

Paul stopped writing home in 1862. News came back that his unit had disappeared. Tania was heartbroken and quickly fell ill. Linda vowed that her love could survive anything, and she refused to give up hope. As the war years passed, Linda refused suitor after suitor, waiting for her dear Paul to return. Tania died near Christmas 1862, all the while listening to the Rogers family consoling Linda during her regular visits. As a wraith, she discovered Paul's horrific fate.

His unit had fallen against the Confederates, and Paul had died alongside his fellow soldiers. He was enslaved and taken to an Artificer who had his soul essence forged into an Artifact, a simple lamp. Some of his fellows managed to rescue what was left of Paul from the Hierarchy, and one of them took the lantern back to Philadelphia in the hopes that Paul could find some peace. The soldier's spirit encountered Tania, who asked him about the war and Paul. After hearing her story, he gave her the lantern containing Paul's soul. Tania vowed vengeance against a society that never gave them a chance to be together.

Linda waited patiently for Paul, and even after she learned that he had died, she couldn't bring herself to meet another. Years passed, then decades, and Linda Cartwright reconciled herself with the thought that when it was her time, she would join her betrothed in Heaven. After Linda passed on, she became a wraith and learned that her dreams were only dreams. She joined the Hierarchy and managed to gain some wealth and small power. She had many clashes with Renegades during some of the battles for Philadelphia.

After so many years, the story of Paul and Tania has reached Linda. Hurt and betrayed, Linda believes that Tania has lied about Paul's love for her, and she wants to retrieve the lantern from the Renegade's Haunt near Penn's Landing. What Linda doesn't know is that Tania had her people leak the story to the Hierarchy, so that she could trap Linda and make her suffer for all of those living years when Tania had to watch society treat her as Paul's wife-to-be while she quietly served.

Chapter One: Recruitment

Linda Cartwright has agents contact the player characters and bring them to her mansion in Fairmount Park. They offer the player characters oboli if they agree to come to a meeting.

The mansion is a beautiful, decaying place in the Shadowlands with an almost Victorian atmosphere. In the Skinlands, a historical society has restored the mansion, but they haven't opened it to the public due to hauntings. Linda greets her visitors in this bleak environment in a manner akin to royalty granting an audience. A few of her allies stroll the halls, protecting the Haunt and Miss Cartwright. When the player characters arrive, she stands and greets them.

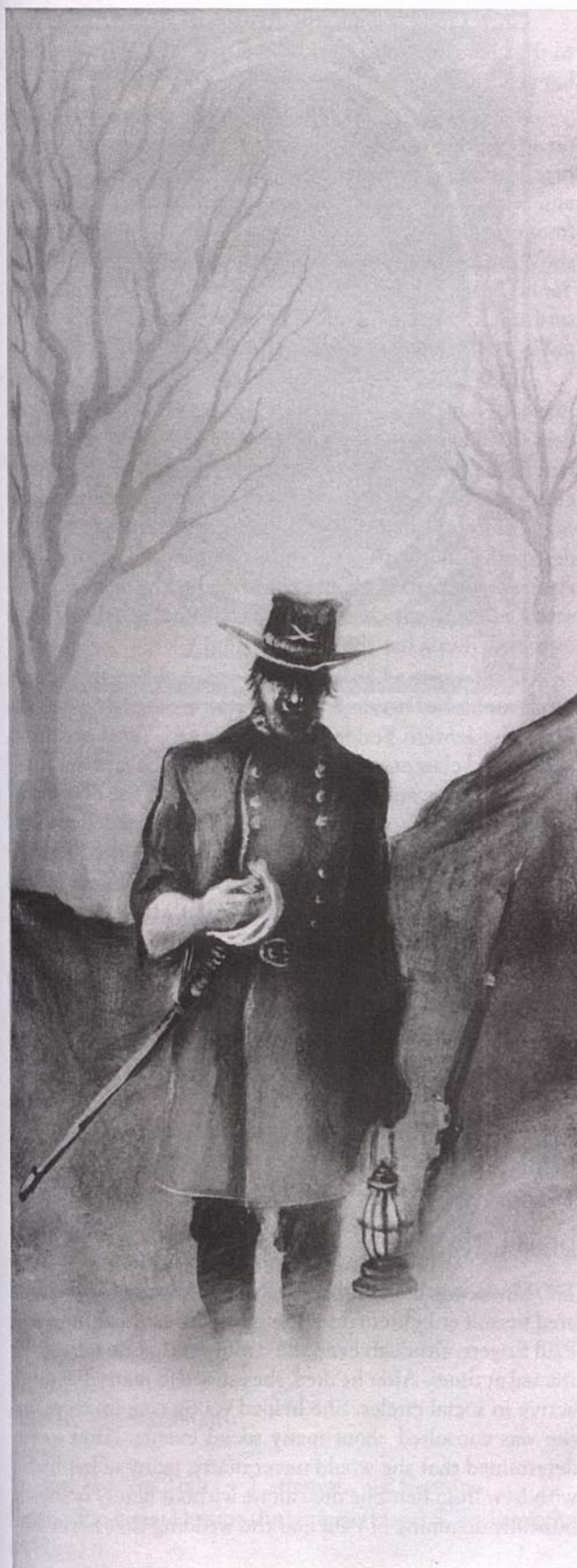
"Thank you for coming. I have a request for your Circle. If you perform this favor for me, I will make certain that you are rewarded with anything in my power. This mansion, if you want it, or as much wealth as I can provide. There is a relic that once belonged to me, a lantern that I cherish. It was stolen years ago by a member of the Renegades. Recently, I've discovered its location again, but I'm afraid that I lack the ability to retrieve it. This lantern is more important to me than almost anything. I implore you to help, and again, I promise whatever reward you desire, save for my services as a thrall.

"The lantern is a large oil lantern, resembling the type used by Union soldiers during the Civil War. It has a family crest painted on the side with the name Rogers beneath it. The lantern has no magical abilities that I am aware of, and it is of little value to anyone but myself. I would purchase it from the Renegades who stole it, but they've shown themselves to be deceitful and dangerous over the years. I must have this lantern. Please."

Linda proceeds in a similar manner. She won't tell the player characters exactly why she desires the lantern, only that it belonged to her a long time ago. She offers them various rewards and at one point in the conversation starts to shed a tear. She apologizes, and she implores them again to help her.

She knows the location of the lantern. According to her sources, it's stored in a warehouse near the nightclubs of Penn's Landing next to the Delaware River. She agrees to reward the characters as long as they just go to the warehouse, but she suggests that they go as a group, because there are many dangerous Renegades who might attack them.

Assuming everything works out, the player characters should proceed to Penn's Landing. If it looks like the wraiths will leave without honoring Linda's request, then Jeffrey Billings, one of Linda's allies, stops the Circle on the way out.



"If you will give me a moment," he says, "I will ask you again, please help Miss Cartwright. If you have any sense of humanity, then you must see that she suffers greatly from this loss. She will reward you, as will I, if you go to the warehouse and try to find the lantern. I cannot stand to see a dear friend like Linda suffer so terribly."

If the characters still don't react, then Jeffrey tells them that the lantern contains the soul of Linda's lost love, who was transformed by Artificers.

"Don't you think that she's suffered enough pain to have this calamity befall her love? Must the Renegades take his soul from her as well? Please, help. If you need aid, I will go with you."

If Jeffrey joins the group, then he will be the hostage in Chapter Two. The characters will hopefully agree to help her. If they don't, just have Linda's request become a recurring event until they do.

Chapter Two: The Haunt of the Renegades

The area around Penn's Landing swells with the living as they enjoy one of the best night spots in Philadelphia. If the characters follow Linda's directions, they come to a warehouse up against the water behind some of the restaurants. A wraith with Fatalism might sense danger. The door to the warehouse is propped open, and the inside contains nothing in the Skinlands but rotting walls, floorboards and mold. In the Shadowlands, one item adds to the scene — the lantern. It sits quietly in the center of the warehouse, apparently abandoned.

Before the characters touch the lantern, or if they try to flee, three wraiths appear for every member of the party. They are all tough-looking Renegade warriors. Tania steps forward from the masses. If she gets a chance, she starts speaking. Otherwise, her people attack the player characters and try to immobilize them.

"If you want to get out of here intact, then you'll answer this question. Where is Linda Cartwright? Is she here?"

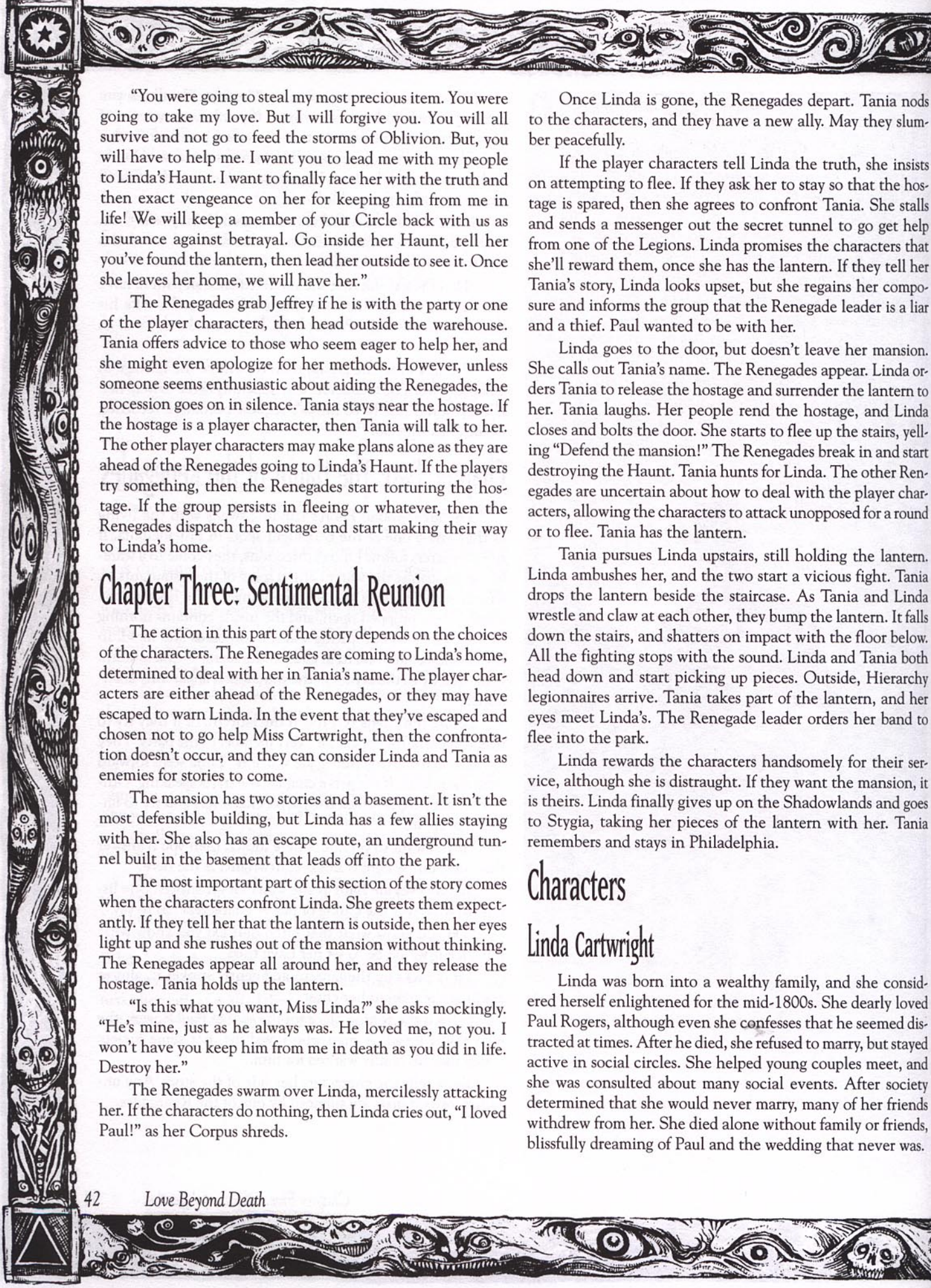
Tania's eyes are hard as she waits for an answer. She listens to whatever the Circle of player characters has to say.

"Do you know what that bitch did? Do you know what injustice it would be to let her have this?"

Tania picks up the lantern and gently strokes it, almost cradling the item to her chest.

"This is the resting place for the soul of Paul Rogers, the man that I loved. A man who loved me, not some society tramp that his family wanted for him."

Tania tells the characters her side of the story. Any un-called-for outbursts are silenced by one of the Renegades.



"You were going to steal my most precious item. You were going to take my love. But I will forgive you. You will all survive and not go to feed the storms of Oblivion. But, you will have to help me. I want you to lead me with my people to Linda's Haunt. I want to finally face her with the truth and then exact vengeance on her for keeping him from me in life! We will keep a member of your Circle back with us as insurance against betrayal. Go inside her Haunt, tell her you've found the lantern, then lead her outside to see it. Once she leaves her home, we will have her."

The Renegades grab Jeffrey if he is with the party or one of the player characters, then head outside the warehouse. Tania offers advice to those who seem eager to help her, and she might even apologize for her methods. However, unless someone seems enthusiastic about aiding the Renegades, the procession goes on in silence. Tania stays near the hostage. If the hostage is a player character, then Tania will talk to her. The other player characters may make plans alone as they are ahead of the Renegades going to Linda's Haunt. If the players try something, then the Renegades start torturing the hostage. If the group persists in fleeing or whatever, then the Renegades dispatch the hostage and start making their way to Linda's home.

Chapter Three: Sentimental Reunion

The action in this part of the story depends on the choices of the characters. The Renegades are coming to Linda's home, determined to deal with her in Tania's name. The player characters are either ahead of the Renegades, or they may have escaped to warn Linda. In the event that they've escaped and chosen not to go help Miss Cartwright, then the confrontation doesn't occur, and they can consider Linda and Tania as enemies for stories to come.

The mansion has two stories and a basement. It isn't the most defensible building, but Linda has a few allies staying with her. She also has an escape route, an underground tunnel built in the basement that leads off into the park.

The most important part of this section of the story comes when the characters confront Linda. She greets them expectantly. If they tell her that the lantern is outside, then her eyes light up and she rushes out of the mansion without thinking. The Renegades appear all around her, and they release the hostage. Tania holds up the lantern.

"Is this what you want, Miss Linda?" she asks mockingly. "He's mine, just as he always was. He loved me, not you. I won't have you keep him from me in death as you did in life. Destroy her."

The Renegades swarm over Linda, mercilessly attacking her. If the characters do nothing, then Linda cries out, "I loved Paul!" as her Corpus shreds.

Once Linda is gone, the Renegades depart. Tania nods to the characters, and they have a new ally. May they slumber peacefully.

If the player characters tell Linda the truth, she insists on attempting to flee. If they ask her to stay so that the hostage is spared, then she agrees to confront Tania. She stalls and sends a messenger out the secret tunnel to go get help from one of the Legions. Linda promises the characters that she'll reward them, once she has the lantern. If they tell her Tania's story, Linda looks upset, but she regains her composure and informs the group that the Renegade leader is a liar and a thief. Paul wanted to be with her.

Linda goes to the door, but doesn't leave her mansion. She calls out Tania's name. The Renegades appear. Linda orders Tania to release the hostage and surrender the lantern to her. Tania laughs. Her people rend the hostage, and Linda closes and bolts the door. She starts to flee up the stairs, yelling "Defend the mansion!" The Renegades break in and start destroying the Haunt. Tania hunts for Linda. The other Renegades are uncertain about how to deal with the player characters, allowing the characters to attack unopposed for a round or to flee. Tania has the lantern.

Tania pursues Linda upstairs, still holding the lantern. Linda ambushes her, and the two start a vicious fight. Tania drops the lantern beside the staircase. As Tania and Linda wrestle and claw at each other, they bump the lantern. It falls down the stairs, and shatters on impact with the floor below. All the fighting stops with the sound. Linda and Tania both head down and start picking up pieces. Outside, Hierarchy legionnaires arrive. Tania takes part of the lantern, and her eyes meet Linda's. The Renegade leader orders her band to flee into the park.

Linda rewards the characters handsomely for their service, although she is distraught. If they want the mansion, it is theirs. Linda finally gives up on the Shadowlands and goes to Stygia, taking her pieces of the lantern with her. Tania remembers and stays in Philadelphia.

Characters

Linda Cartwright

Linda was born into a wealthy family, and she considered herself enlightened for the mid-1800s. She dearly loved Paul Rogers, although even she confesses that he seemed distracted at times. After he died, she refused to marry, but stayed active in social circles. She helped young couples meet, and she was consulted about many social events. After society determined that she would never marry, many of her friends withdrew from her. She died alone without family or friends, blissfully dreaming of Paul and the wedding that never was.



Linda Cartwright

Nature: Caregiver

Demeanor: Conformist

Circle: The Park Families

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 4, Expression 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 4, Etiquette 3, Leadership 3, Meditation 2, Performance 2, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 1, Occult 3, Politics 4

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 3, Eidolon 3, Haunt 4, Hierarchy Status 3, Wealth 4

Passions: Desire for the lantern (Love) 5, Preservation of Historical Sites (Love) 3

Arcanos: Castigate 3, Keening 3, Phantasm 3

Fetters: Engagement Ring, 4; Family wedding dress, 3; Old portrait of Paul, 4

Willpower: 6

Pathos: 6

Shadow: The Rationalist

Angst: 7

Thorns: Shadow Traits + 2 Strength, + 2 Stamina

Shadow Passions: Destroy the lantern (Hate) 5, Enslave others (Lust) 3

Image: Linda is a pale woman with soft brown hair. She wears a tattered, Victorian style wedding dress. She has expressive, deep brown eyes. She's about 5'3" or 4" and carries herself with an aristocratic grace.

Roleplaying Notes: You have a strength of character about you. You consider yourself to be an American noblewoman and play the part to the hilt. You're remarkably intelligent, although not entirely familiar with the modern world. You always look at the portrait of Paul before you make a difficult decision.

Tania Washington

Tania's family was set free when her old master died. They moved to Philadelphia, hoping to find freedom and escape from slave owners. The City of Brotherly Love was hard on her parents. They died from disease at an early age, but she found work in the Rogers' household as a servant. Here she met Paul and fell in love with him. They shared secrets and stories. He respected her, and as the two of them grew older, he confessed his feelings for her. The two agreed to let him go through the motions of society to meet its expectations until he received his inheritance. Afterwards, they planned to run away together. When she lost him, she lost her will to live. After she became a wraith, Tania realized how terrible the system of master and servant was, even in the North. She rebelled against the Hierarchy and rose in status among the Renegades.



Tania Washington

Nature: Bravo
Demeanor: Rebel
Circle: Hands of Liberty
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 4
Skills: Crafts 3, Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Repair 1, Stealth 5
Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Law 1, Medicine 1, Occult 3
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 2, Haunt 5, Renegade Status 4
Passions: Destroy the Rich (Hate) 5, Fight for Freedom (Hope) 4, Destroy Linda Cartwright (Hate) 4
Arcanos: Argos 4, Lifeweb 3, Outrage 4, Pandemonium 3
Fetters: A first printing of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 2; A locket given to her by Paul Rogers, 5
Willpower: 7
Pathos: 7
Shadow: The Monster
Angst: 6

Thorns: Bad Luck, Freudian Slip
Shadow Passions: Kill all rivals (Hate) 5, Punish self for failures (Depression) 3, Let others dominate you (Insecurity) 2
Image: Tania is a tall, statuesque African-American beauty with an athletic frame. She likes to wear gowns, but often goes in leather in this day and age. She has long, braided dark hair and dark eyes.

Roleplaying Notes: You are confident in yourself and your abilities. No one will ever rule you. You dream of Paul when you slumber, and you miss him dreadfully. He was a friend, brother and lover for you. Now, you want to destroy Linda for all the pain of your life.

Tania's Renegades

For one reason or another, society rejected you. Now, you're going to reject society.

Nature: Rebel
Demeanor: Bravo
Circle: Hands of Liberty
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3
Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 2, Melee 2, Stealth 3
Knowledges: Investigation 1, Law 1, Occult 3



Backgrounds: Renegade Status 2, Haunts 5
Passions: Follow Tania (Loyalty) 3, various
Arcanos: Argos 2, Moliat 1, Outrage 1
Fetters: Varies.

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 4

Shadow: The Pusher

Angst: 5

Thorns: Pact of Doom

Shadow Passions: Overthrow Tania (Lust) 3

Image: This band looks tough. They are scarred, leather-clad men and women who carry weapons and glare at people that they don't like.

Roleplaying Notes: You obey Tania, and you enjoy causing a little pain and terror.

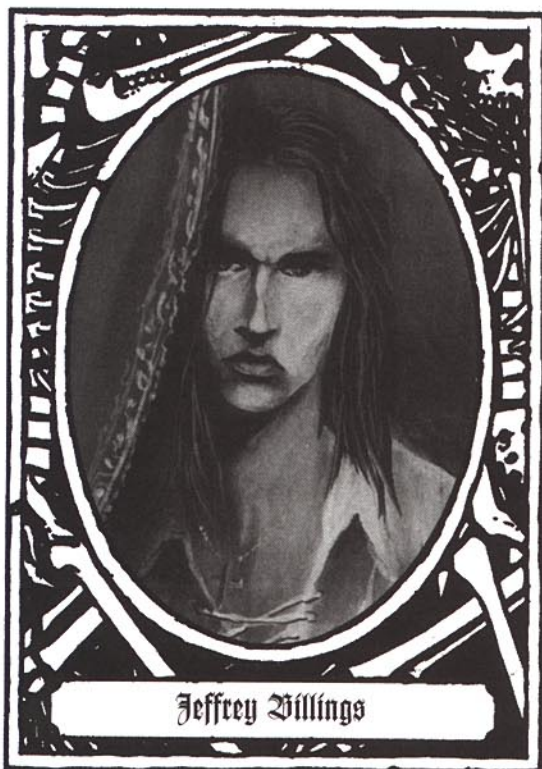
Jeffrey Billings

Jeffrey was killed in duel many years ago when he challenged a man for the hand of his lady. Since that day, he has spent his afterlife attempting to redeem himself. He is falling in love with Linda Cartwright, but he respects her love for Paul Rogers. He hopes that if she gets the lantern, she can come to terms with his death and learn to love again.

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Judge

Circle: The Park Families



Jeffrey Billings

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2
Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 4, Subterfuge 3
Skills: Etiquette 3, Leadership 2, Meditation 1, Melee 3, Stealth 3
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 1, Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Politics 3
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Hierarchy Status 3, Wealth 3
Passions: Love of Linda (Love) 3, Desire for Peaceful Resolutions (Hope) 4, Personal Honor (Honor) 3
Arcanos: Castigate 2, Lifeweb 1, Moliare 3
Fetters: Fencing blade, 3; Favorite black cape, 2; Old City Hall, 4
Willpower: 6

Pathos: 5

Shadow: The Freak

Angst: 6

Thorns: Trick of the Light, Freudian Slip

Shadow Passions: Hurt Linda (Hate) 3, Rebel against Authority (Anger) 3

Image: Jeffrey Billings appears as a dashing young man from a time long past. He wears 19th century clothing and a swordbelt. He has black hair and black eyes, and he stands about 5'10". He spends a lot of time quietly pondering.

Roleplaying Notes: You are honest and forthright, despite what your Shadow makes you do. You were slain behind the Old City Hall, and your wanderings through the city often take you there. You hope that one day, you will have a chance to prove yourself worthy of Linda.

Aftermath and future ideas

- If Tania's still around and an enemy, then the characters will have to watch their backs. On the other hand, if Linda was destroyed, then agents of the Hierarchy will want some answers. Also, Jeffrey will seek out Linda's slayers to exact his own revenge.

- Regardless of the outcome, Jeffrey could become a recurring character in the chronicle, as an ally, a contact or (depending on the way things turned out) a potential nemesis.

Variations

- The roles of Tania and Linda could be switched with little effort. Instead of Linda asking for help, Tania could send the characters to the mansion to retrieve the lantern.

- A group of Shades have stolen the lantern, and neither Tania or Linda have the Artifact. Both sides could join forces in an attempt to save it from a worse enemy, then they could resolve matters.

- Linda doesn't want the lantern, just a chance to kill Tania. When the Renegades arrive, the Hierarchy's Legions are waiting for them.





Forever Yours

*But our love, it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above
Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee
—Edgar Allen Poe, Annabel Lee*



he wraith community of the world has a large problem growing just outside of Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Stephen Ward's discovery opens the door to massive abuse by both wraiths and the living. Not only does the psychiatrist understand how to allow the living to see into the Shadowlands using electrical stimulation, but he can transform anyone willing to die on his machine into a wraith. Depending on the viewpoint of the dead, Dr. Ward's discovery could disrupt the entire political balance of the Underworld, or it could provide a method to fight off Oblivion. Fatalists in Richmond and surrounding cities start having visions of masses of Enfants swelling their ranks.

James Doyle finds the player characters after he escapes from Ward's lover Alexander and Dr. Ward. He begs them to put an end to this madman. Doyle wants to prevent any of Dr. Ward's notes or equipment from surviving. He leads the characters to Dr. Ward's labs, but the doctor has moved. During the time since James died, Alexander and Dr. Ward have stayed busy. The doctor has hired a new assistant, Maria Nash, who will be the subject of his next experiment.

Note to Storytellers: Dr. Ward's research is highly specialized, and it is doubtful that others would be able to repeat the results of his experiments without his original equipment and/or a great deal of time spent trying to decipher the few notes he has left. In short, Dr. Ward's techniques will probably not be found in use by other paranormal researchers.

I'm trembling as I write these words into my journal. In all my years of research, I never expected to make a discovery this important. I've studied the human brain for my entire life, especially since my dear Alexander passed on. With electrical stimulation, I've made people remember things long forgotten, and I've learned to induce convulsions of agony and tears of joy. Few people know about Broca's section of the brain, the section on the left hemisphere which controls language. Fewer still realize that Broca's area has a connection across to the right temporal lobe to a set of similar neural connections called the Silent Zone, which produces vivid hallucinations and lucid dreams.

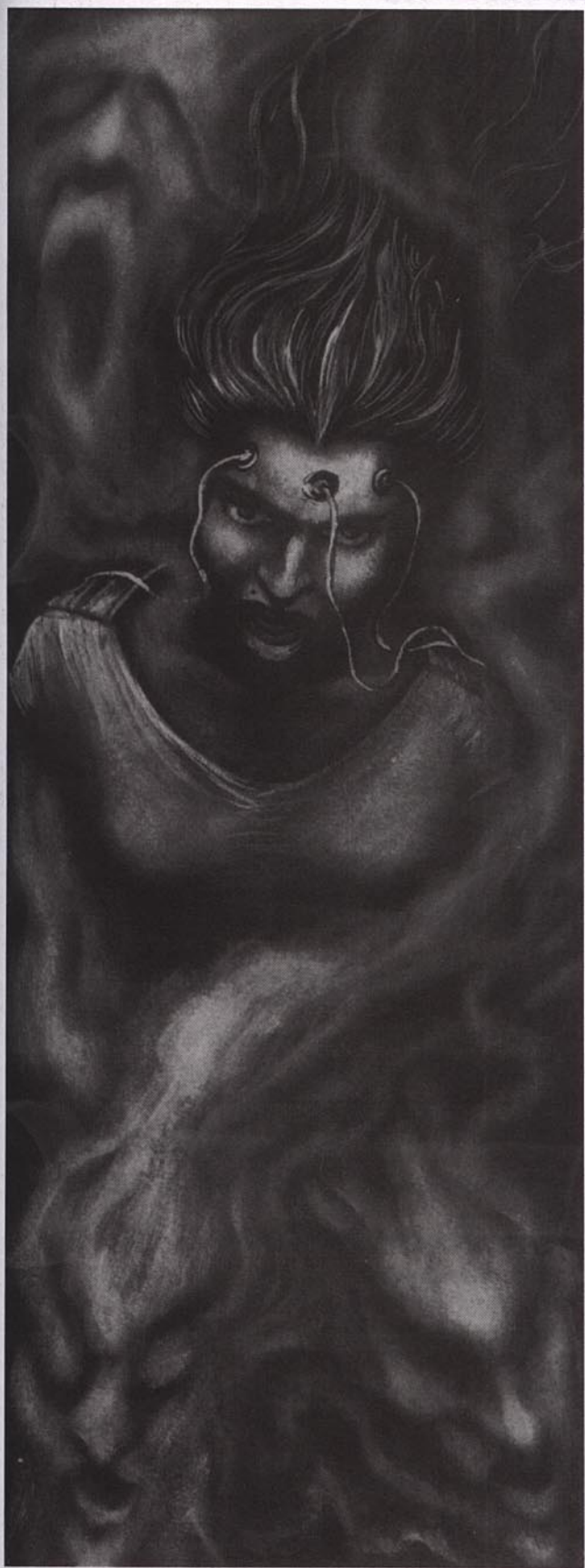
But I digress. Posterity will certainly be better educated and have access to this simple anatomy. What I have done for years is stimulate that section of the right brain in an effort to determine its purpose. Shocks over the region provided little results. Then, I found a small portion of the neurons, when stimulated, produced an astounding effect. The patients reported seeing the world differently, more transparent, more decayed. Some claimed that they could hear the voice of God talking to them. Others saw ghostly lights. We recognized several comparisons to near-death experiences. But, what did this mean? Were the patients suffering from hallucinations? Or had we tapped into something important? A psychic sensory region? A level of the subconscious with a connection to the unknown, a connection to the Other Side? The others grew nervous, afraid of what we might find. I clutched the hope that perhaps there might be some way to contact Alexander. The Medical College of Virginia cut my funding. Other scientists tried to steal my notes, but I escaped and continued my work. Now it's complete.

After setting up a laboratory in Henrico County to the north of the city, I managed to convince a young medium, Ms. Karen Compton, to volunteer for my experiments. She claimed to have the ability to channel spirits. While I was skeptical of such a claim, I wanted to see if her Silent Zone was developed differently than in other patients. I wished to find out whether or not the brain allowed us to contact the world beyond, if such a thing existed. She signed the paperwork, and I began my work. The results astounded me.

We stimulated the Silent Zone. She reported seeing the world of the dead more clearly than ever before. We continued to experiment with stimulation, until the day came when I asked her to try to contact a spirit, my lost love, Alexander Lowery.

It worked. Imagine my shock, my surprise, when Karen's eyes opened, and she looked at me with the gaze of my Alex. Although I had never desired a woman, that night I held Karen's body close as Alexander whispered to me of the horrors that lay beyond the Shroud. He let me know of the dark Shadowlands, the Hierarchy, the Tempest and much more.





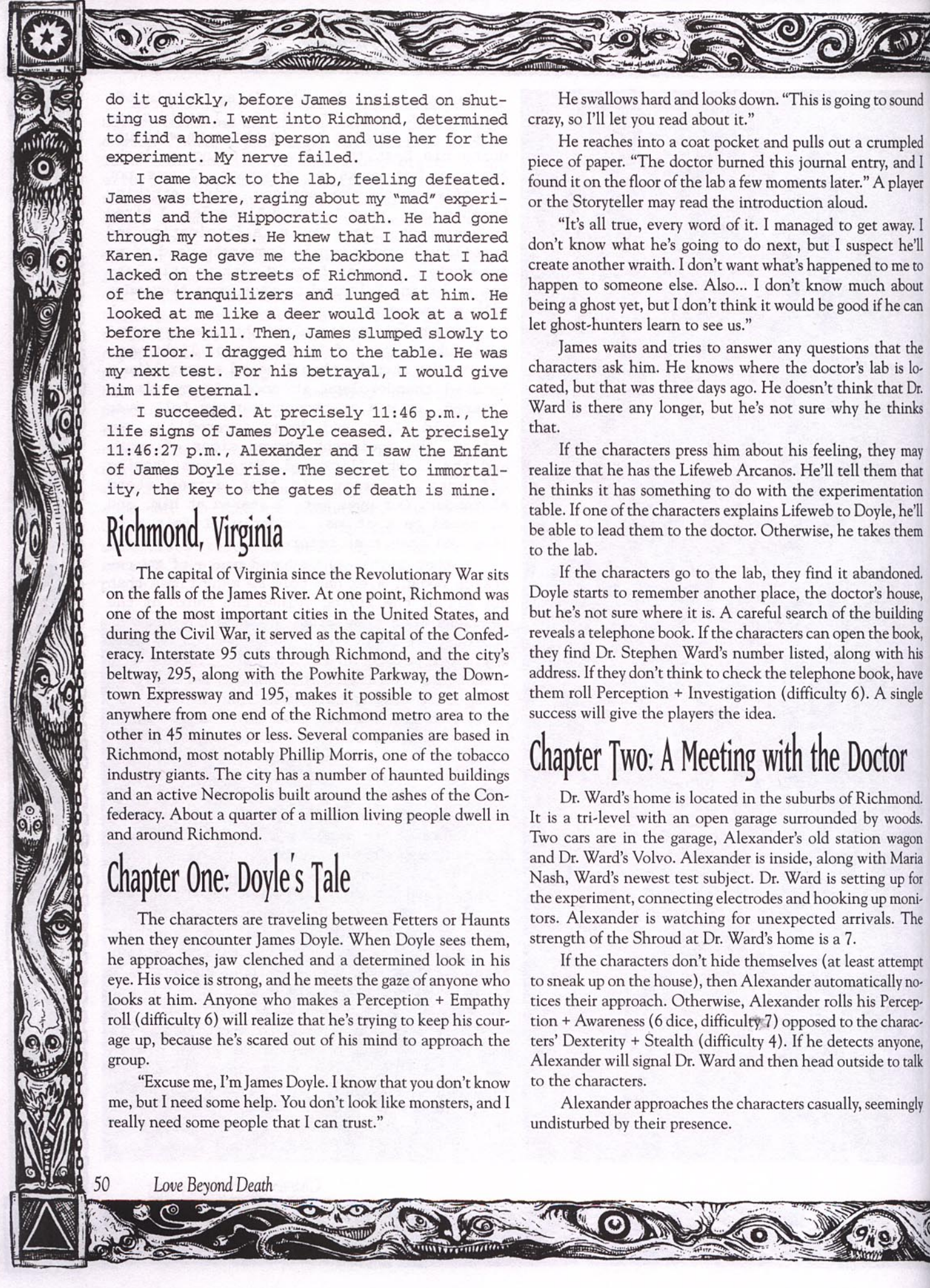
As my research with Karen continued, Alexander's spirit stayed near. I could close my eyes and imagine him in the room with us, doing his best to aid us, wishing us luck. After a few weeks of progress, I was not satisfied with the séances, with stroking Karen's hair, when I wanted Alexander. I hired an assistant, James Doyle, a fascinating and intelligent young man in desperate need of an internship, so that I could work on stimulating my brain. I longed to gaze upon Alexander with my own eyes.

Doyle helped me stimulate the "séance nerve" as I dubbed it. I felt a burst of light when the shocks struck, then I heard a roar like a hundred thunderclaps at once. As my vision cleared, it was as though a gloom fell over the world. Dust and decay covered the new office, the equipment showed signs of wear, and the lights flickered. Karen was staring off into a corner. In that corner stood Alexander. Our eyes met. I stared at him, and he gazed back at me. Suddenly, I felt more inspired than ever before.

On that night, the second phase of my research began. Alex had told me many times that not all of the living joined the ranks of the Restless when they died. I could not bear an eternity without Alex. There had to be some way, some method of inducing the process that transformed the living into ghosts. Karen proved invaluable during this work. She started researching the various moments of death among various wraiths that she could channel. Patterns began to emerge. Borrowing information from occult and religious texts, I found hope. Finally, I believed that I could artificially induce the process. I needed a test subject.

James was too important to consider, so I decided to try the experiment on Karen. I kept what I was doing a secret from both her and James. If it succeeded, Karen would understand, and I wasn't as sure about James, who had started spouting medical school ethics during his research. Unfortunately, we failed. Karen died on the table without producing a wraith. James thought the entire incident was the result of an unfortunate power surge.

The police threatened to stop my experiments, but I couldn't let poor Karen die in vain. I wouldn't give up on dear Alexander. That night, Alexander and I had a long talk about what went wrong. Finally, inspiration struck again. I needed to try a slightly different method of stimulation, and I needed to



do it quickly, before James insisted on shutting us down. I went into Richmond, determined to find a homeless person and use her for the experiment. My nerve failed.

I came back to the lab, feeling defeated. James was there, raging about my "mad" experiments and the Hippocratic oath. He had gone through my notes. He knew that I had murdered Karen. Rage gave me the backbone that I had lacked on the streets of Richmond. I took one of the tranquilizers and lunged at him. He looked at me like a deer would look at a wolf before the kill. Then, James slumped slowly to the floor. I dragged him to the table. He was my next test. For his betrayal, I would give him life eternal.

I succeeded. At precisely 11:46 p.m., the life signs of James Doyle ceased. At precisely 11:46:27 p.m., Alexander and I saw the *Enfant* of James Doyle rise. The secret to immortality, the key to the gates of death is mine.

Richmond, Virginia

The capital of Virginia since the Revolutionary War sits on the falls of the James River. At one point, Richmond was one of the most important cities in the United States, and during the Civil War, it served as the capital of the Confederacy. Interstate 95 cuts through Richmond, and the city's beltway, 295, along with the Powhite Parkway, the Downtown Expressway and 195, makes it possible to get almost anywhere from one end of the Richmond metro area to the other in 45 minutes or less. Several companies are based in Richmond, most notably Phillip Morris, one of the tobacco industry giants. The city has a number of haunted buildings and an active Necropolis built around the ashes of the Confederacy. About a quarter of a million living people dwell in and around Richmond.

Chapter One: Doyle's Tale

The characters are traveling between Fetters or Haunts when they encounter James Doyle. When Doyle sees them, he approaches, jaw clenched and a determined look in his eye. His voice is strong, and he meets the gaze of anyone who looks at him. Anyone who makes a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 6) will realize that he's trying to keep his courage up, because he's scared out of his mind to approach the group.

"Excuse me, I'm James Doyle. I know that you don't know me, but I need some help. You don't look like monsters, and I really need some people that I can trust."

He swallows hard and looks down. "This is going to sound crazy, so I'll let you read about it."

He reaches into a coat pocket and pulls out a crumpled piece of paper. "The doctor burned this journal entry, and I found it on the floor of the lab a few moments later." A player or the Storyteller may read the introduction aloud.

"It's all true, every word of it. I managed to get away. I don't know what he's going to do next, but I suspect he'll create another wraith. I don't want what's happened to me to happen to someone else. Also... I don't know much about being a ghost yet, but I don't think it would be good if he can let ghost-hunters learn to see us."

James waits and tries to answer any questions that the characters ask him. He knows where the doctor's lab is located, but that was three days ago. He doesn't think that Dr. Ward is there any longer, but he's not sure why he thinks that.

If the characters press him about his feeling, they may realize that he has the Lifeweb Arcanos. He'll tell them that he thinks it has something to do with the experimentation table. If one of the characters explains Lifeweb to Doyle, he'll be able to lead them to the doctor. Otherwise, he takes them to the lab.

If the characters go to the lab, they find it abandoned. Doyle starts to remember another place, the doctor's house, but he's not sure where it is. A careful search of the building reveals a telephone book. If the characters can open the book, they find Dr. Stephen Ward's number listed, along with his address. If they don't think to check the telephone book, have them roll Perception + Investigation (difficulty 6). A single success will give the players the idea.

Chapter Two: A Meeting with the Doctor

Dr. Ward's home is located in the suburbs of Richmond. It is a tri-level with an open garage surrounded by woods. Two cars are in the garage, Alexander's old station wagon and Dr. Ward's Volvo. Alexander is inside, along with Maria Nash, Ward's newest test subject. Dr. Ward is setting up for the experiment, connecting electrodes and hooking up monitors. Alexander is watching for unexpected arrivals. The strength of the Shroud at Dr. Ward's home is a 7.

If the characters don't hide themselves (at least attempt to sneak up on the house), then Alexander automatically notices their approach. Otherwise, Alexander rolls his Perception + Awareness (6 dice, difficulty 7) opposed to the characters' Dexterity + Stealth (difficulty 4). If he detects anyone, Alexander will signal Dr. Ward and then head outside to talk to the characters.

Alexander approaches the characters casually, seemingly undisturbed by their presence.



"You can all come out now," Alexander announces with a smile. "Welcome. Thank you for bringing poor James back to us."

James looks confused. He wants to attack Alexander, but he won't make a move unless one of the characters does as well.

"Look, Alexander, you can't fool me or them," says James.

Alexander raises an eyebrow. "Fool you? Why would I want to?"

At this point, the players may roll Perception + Empathy (difficulty 8). If they get more than 3 successes, then they can tell that Alexander's trying to stall them, learn what they know, and defuse the situation. If it seems to be working, Alexander continues in a similar vein, trying to discredit and confuse poor James, while acting like he sympathizes with the characters.

If the characters look like they are going to rush Alexander or assault the house, Alexander yells "Wait!" and holds up his hand.

"Listen, do you want to know what's really going on?" he asks.

If the characters stop, then he tells them the entire story, but he puts his own spin on it. He portrays Dr. Ward as a kind man, attempting to find a way to contact a loved one. He says that Karen's death was accidental, the doctor planned to resuscitate her. As for James, it was a tragic mistake. Alexander claims that with the Ward process, families can stay together after death. No one need ever lose a loved one again. He asks the characters, "What's wrong with that?"

If one of the characters comes up with a great reply, reward that character with an extra experience point at the end of the evening.

Alexander will follow the characters if they insist on entering the house. The front and back doors are open to let Alexander move about freely.

Inside the house, Dr. Ward has transformed his living room into a laboratory. If the characters haven't alerted Alexander, then he is in the living room with Dr. Ward. Maria is strapped to the table and inhaling gas heavily. As soon as the characters enter the room, Dr. Ward, on the opposite side, moves over to a lever.

"Greetings," says Dr. Ward, "and yes, I can see you. I want to ask you not to try and stop what we are doing here. Before you decide otherwise, I want you to know this: several documents containing my conclusions and discoveries, particularly involving the stimulation of the séance nerve, which lets the living see the dead, are in the hands of important government officials, ready to be opened upon my death. Now, we are about to begin an important experiment. Please, sit down."

He's bluffing. If one of the characters can score three or more successes on her Perception + Empathy roll, she will determine that the doctor is lying.

James isn't going to wait any longer, and he launches himself at the doctor with a roar. Alexander tries to intercept James and manages to tackle him just in time. If one of the characters tries to help Alexander stop James, then Dr. Ward stays put. Otherwise, Dr. Ward throws the switch before anyone can react. If one of the characters has the Inhabit Arcanos, she can stop the machine from activating and killing Maria.

If the machine activates, a shower of sparks fill the room, and Dr. Ward runs out to the garage. Alexander will fight the characters and hold them off as long as possible, trying to give Dr. Ward a chance to escape. Maria screams as her soul is slowly rent from her body. Attacking the machinery will cause it to explode, setting the house aflame. If the process is interrupted, Maria will quickly die a very natural death. The Storyteller may allow heroic actions to save her. Otherwise, Maria's *Enfant* slowly takes shape over the table. It will succumb to any attacks.

If the characters manage to capture Dr. Ward, he begs them to not to kill him. If they are going to destroy his life's work, then at least, he begs, let him reap the benefits of his efforts and join Alexander. If the characters allow it, Dr. Ward will hook himself up to the machine. He grabs the lever and stares into Alexander's eyes. "Alexander," he whispers, "I love you." He pulls the lever and gives a loud echoing scream as his body twitches. If James is still aware, he acts, using his Inhabit Arcanos to cause a surge. The machine explodes, killing Dr. Ward. Alexander screams in terror, then stares into space for a moment. After he recovers his senses, he attacks James in a murderous rage. When the fight ends, so does the story. The house has caught fire, and all of Dr. Ward's research goes up in smoke.

If the machine is undamaged, and the process remains uninterrupted, then Dr. Ward's spirit slowly steps out of his twitching body. Alexander grabs him and starts crying. Alexander looks up at the characters while he strokes Dr. Ward's caul. "Go ahead, destroy the machine." Unless the characters attack Alexander and Dr. Ward, the story ends.

If Dr. Ward got to his Volvo alive, he squeals out of his driveway. Unless the characters have powerful Argos or do something dramatic, like leap atop the speeding car, then they have only one option: Alexander's relic station wagon. For the car chase, have the driver roll Dexterity + Drive (difficulty 6) opposed to Dr. Stephen Ward's roll. Both cars have a maneuverability of 5. For more details on stunt driving, see *Wraith: The Oblivion*, pg. 214. If the characters beat the doctor by 4 or more successes, then they manage to pass Dr. Ward or run him off the road. Beating Dr. Ward by 3 or more successes means that the characters pull alongside the doctor. A brave character may leap out of the station wagon into Dr. Ward's Volvo. As long as the characters don't botch when Dr. Ward succeeds dramatically, they remain in pursuit. If they lose him, then the story ends. He leaves the area in search of

a new place to set up his experiments. Clever characters may use Alexander to track Dr. Ward wherever he goes. If Arcanos become involved, such as Pandemonium or Inhabit, then it is up to the Storyteller to resolve what happens. If Dr. Ward botches his role, then he fails to see a bend in the road and crashes, right into the tree where Alexander died. The doctor doesn't become a wraith, and his knowledge dies with him.

Characters

Dr. Stephen Ward

During the 1980s, Dr. Ward was an up-and-coming premed student, then an up-and-coming doctor, well-respected by his professors and considered one of the Medical College of Virginia's future success stories. It was at Virginia Commonwealth University that he met the love of his life, Alexander Lowery. When Lowery was killed in a car accident, Stephen felt like his life was over. Although he continued to excel with his grades, he had lost his zeal for scholarship and spent more time alone, brooding and mourning.

Finally, he rediscovered his enthusiasm for psychology and medicine when he started exploring parapsychology. After reading over countless case studies of patients who had experienced vivid visions of their dead loved ones, he wondered why he couldn't have that experience. Why couldn't he talk to Alexander one last time? Why couldn't they laugh together? Why didn't he get a chance to say good-bye? Was such contact a neurological

phenomena, just some way for the brain to let a person experience closure? Was there something more to it all? He wanted to know.

After conducting a number of unsanctioned experiments that involved electrically stimulating sections of the brain, he was quietly dismissed from the staff at the Medical College of Virginia. Both he and his administrators agreed it would be best not to publicize the incident.

Dr. Ward couldn't give up. He contacted people who had seen ghosts, especially those of loved ones. He solicited donations to continue his work, and he moved into some isolated office space in Henrico County to set up his experiments. At night, he had dreams of Alexander, which inspired him to press forward. Now, he has his discovery.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Architect

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 4, Empathy 4, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 1, Leadership 2, Melee 2, Repair 5, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Computer 3, Enigmas 5, Investigation 3, Medicine 5, Occult 4, Science 4

Backgrounds: Mortal Wealth 4 (based on grants from anonymous sponsors), Wraith Allies 1, Mortal Contacts 2

Willpower: 10

Health: 7

Image: Dr. Stephen Ward appears as a disheveled but attractive man in his early 30s, with long dark hair graying at the temples and glasses. The doctor always has dark rings around his eyes and seems in perpetual need of a shave. He has a cunning gleam in his gray eyes. He's about 5'11".

Roleplaying Notes: You are an extremely intelligent, slightly arrogant man who has bent the laws of the supernatural. You have achieved a basic understanding of the afterlife, and against all odds, you have found a way to reunite with your dead lover. As far as you are concerned, nothing is impossible. No obstacle can deter you from your destiny with Alexander and scientific history.

Alexander Lowery

In life, Alexander Lowery always wanted to be an actor. He could tell stories in school and make anyone believe them. He learned how to turn his emotions on and off at a whim. The first time he got up on stage though, he was convinced. The applause of the audience was overwhelming. He adored the attention. When the time came for college, Virginia Commonwealth was his first choice. There he met Stephen Ward. It was a casual meeting at one of the local restaurants, when



Dr. Stephen Ward



Alexander Lowery

Stephen and another fellow were discussing something intellectual. Alexander made a joke following their remarks. Stephen laughed, but the other man didn't. That was the beginning of a wonderful friendship, which somewhere along the way developed into love. Stephen's zeal, passion and his amazing mind appealed to Alexander. He knew that Stephen Ward would be someone important someday.

Then, the accident happened. It was a late night, and Alex was exhausted from a performance and the party afterward. He got lost on a back road, and when a raccoon jumped out in front of his car, he swerved to avoid it, just as the road turned. He wasn't wearing a seat belt and died on impact.

Alexander watched Stephen at the funeral, and his love's sadness moved him. He wanted to find some way to contact Stephen, to let him know that it was all right. Perhaps not good, considering the nature of the Shadowlands, but all right. He watched Stephen over the years and started pushing Stephen toward finding a way to make contact. If anyone could do it, he believed that Stephen would be the one. Nothing will keep them apart.

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Gallant

Circle: None

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Etiquette 1, Leadership 1, Meditation 2, Melee 1, Performance 4, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Enigmas 3, Investigation 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Occult 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 1, Eidolon 2, Haunt 3, Relic 3 (Station Wagon), Wealth 1

Fetters: Grave, 2; Crash site, 2; Dr. Stephen Ward, 3

Passions: Loves Stephen Ward (Love) 3, Wants to change the dark world of the Shadowlands (Hope) 5

Arcanos: Keening 3, Phantasm 3, Puppetry 4

Willpower: 8

Corpus: 10

Pathos: 6

Angst: 3

Shadow: The Director

Thorns: Shadow Life, Pact of Doom

Dark Passions: Make others suffer (Anger) 4, Destroy Stephen Ward (Hate) 3

Image: A thin blond man with short-cropped hair dressed in loose fitting clothing. He has pale blue eyes contrasting his tan skin. He stands about 5'8" and has a dancer's physique. Smiling comes easily to him.

Roleplaying notes: You are a very calm, patient man. You'll change your manners, voice and entire demeanor in a moment if you think another will serve you better. You have nerves of steel and prefer subtle manipulation to serve your ends. You have a dream of a better afterlife for the entire wraith community. Hopefully, with Stephen's process, you can change the world.

James Doyle

James Doyle was a typical medical student at MCV, who decided to try out an exciting internship. James knew he'd be a doctor soon enough, and he wanted to go into brain surgery for the excitement and money. He found yourself working with Dr. Stephen Ward, a fascinating man with ingenious theories. He questioned the doctor's ethics, but never his intelligence. Then, Karen Compton died. When James discovered that it wasn't an accident, he decided to go to the police. Unfortunately, Dr. Ward killed him first. James proved the doctor's ultimate theories.

Nature: Traditionalist

Demeanor: Architect

Circle: None

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3



James Doyle

Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 2, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Drive 2, Leadership 1, Meditation 1, Repair 2

Knowledges: Computer 3, Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 3, Occult 2, Science 2

Backgrounds: Memoriam 2

Passions: Kill Dr. Ward (Hate) 4, Preserve Life (Faith) 2, Have people mourn his passing (Sorrow) 4

Arcanos: Inhabit 1, Lifeweb 1, Usury 1

Fetters: Dr. Ward's examination table, 4; Wristwatch given to him at graduation, 2; Grave, 2; Glasses, 1

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 3

Shadow: The Leech

Angst: 3

Thorns: Shadow Trait: Dexterity + 2, Doppelganger: Dr. Stephen Ward

Shadow Passions: Keep Dr. Ward's Process Alive (Loyalty) 2, Replace Alexander in Dr. Ward's Life (Lust) 3

Image: James has short brown hair and brown eyes and stands about 6'. He wears glasses. His wardrobe consists of a sweatshirt and worn blue jeans.

Roleplaying Notes: Until you avenge yourself, almost nothing else matters. You have to stop Dr. Ward. You are stressed about your death, and you are still trying to figure out how this wraith existence works. A little compassion would do you a lot of good.



Maria Nash

Maria Nash

Maria has always wanted to be a psychiatrist. When she was younger, she had a bout with suicidal tendencies, and she attributes her survival to a school counselor who recommended an excellent psychiatrist. She doesn't care about parapsychology, but she wanted an internship, so she responded to Dr. Ward's call for an assistant.

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Caregiver

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Empathy, Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Leadership 2, Meditation 1, Repair 1, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Computer 3, Investigation 3, Law 1, Medicine 3, Science 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 1

Willpower: 5

Health: 7

Image: Maria is about 5'1" with dark hair and eyes and a tan that never fades. She has a bouncy walk and wears jeans, sweaters and T-shirts.

Roleplaying notes: You're an innocent volunteer trying to help Dr. Ward with his experiments on the human brain. You don't know what's truly about to happen to you.

Aftermath and future ideas

- It's highly unlikely that Dr. Stephen Ward, no matter how ingenious he might be, could have discovered his wraith process without some help. Who pulls his strings? Does he work for mages? Or is some other power behind his diabolic devices, such as the Wyrn or a vampiric Antediluvian? Cross-overs are possible involving any of the White Wolf games.

- Although his notes were burned, they aren't necessarily protected from the dead. James Doyle's Shadow or another wraith could discover the notes and use Arcanos to contact a living scientist, one that they could possess or manipulate into building them an army of thralls.

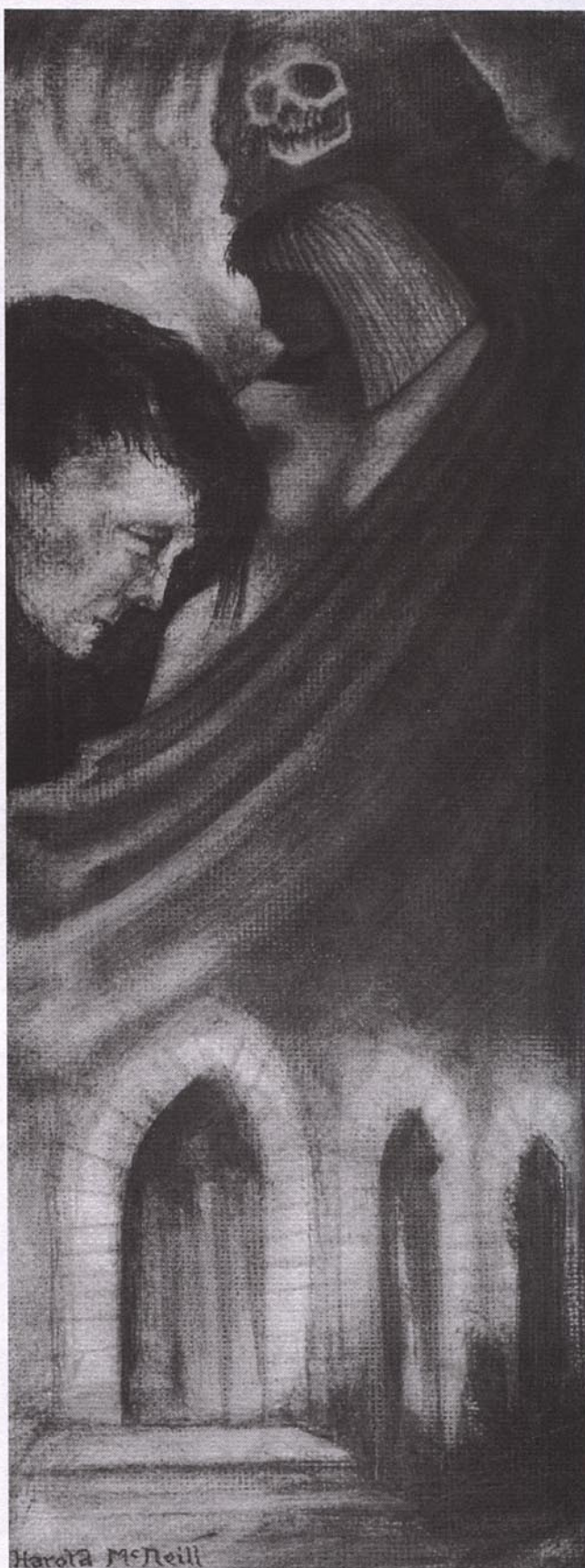
- If Stephen died, then the characters may have a new enemy, Alexander Lowery. He will try to manipulate the characters into a situation where he can eliminate them without getting his hands dirty.

Variations

- If any player characters are connected to a consort or have a relationship with a mortal, Dr. Ward could place a classified ad in the Richmond Times-Dispatch offering to improve the gift of gazing beyond the Shroud. The living character could get in touch with the doctor and quickly become his latest experiment, something that the wraith might not desire. If a Storyteller doesn't want to use one of her ongoing non-player characters, she could have James Doyle encounter a character while he's still among the living.

- Alexander might not be the real Alexander Lowery, but a Spectre Doppelganger with his own agenda for Oblivion. Dr. Ward's machine may damage the reality of the Shadowlands when it operates, creating more nihil.

- For a more involved story, Dr. Ward could be employed by the U.S. Government (perhaps even as a fringe member of Project Twilight), or he could be a *barabbi* Son of Ether from **Mage: The Ascension**, giving him powerful support if the characters try to stop his experiments.





NO
FEAR

ELLIOTT 94

A Final Farewell

The only regret I will have in dying is if it is not for love.

—Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*



An ancient Heretic, known as Gabriel of the Hunters, has entered the Necropolis. He has dozens of thralls and allies, and his forces start attacking all the wraiths they can find. Gabriel is not trying to conquer the Necropolis; instead he is searching for a love that he lost centuries ago. When he encounters the player characters, he recognizes one of them as his lost love, Amanda. An influential wraith in the Necropolis comes up with a plan to manipulate Gabriel by using his love for Amanda. The characters are caught in a web of deception and love in which their enemies may be their friends.

"A Final Farewell" has an extremely flexible plot. Much of the action in the story hinges on what the player characters choose to do. Fighting may win the day, but in most cases, combat is just a good way for wraiths to get disincorporated. Intelligence holds the key to victory. Storytellers should feel free to make changes or embellish the story. Although "A Final Farewell" can be run without any changes, the more that a Storyteller adds from her own chronicle, the more personal the tale will become.

Setting

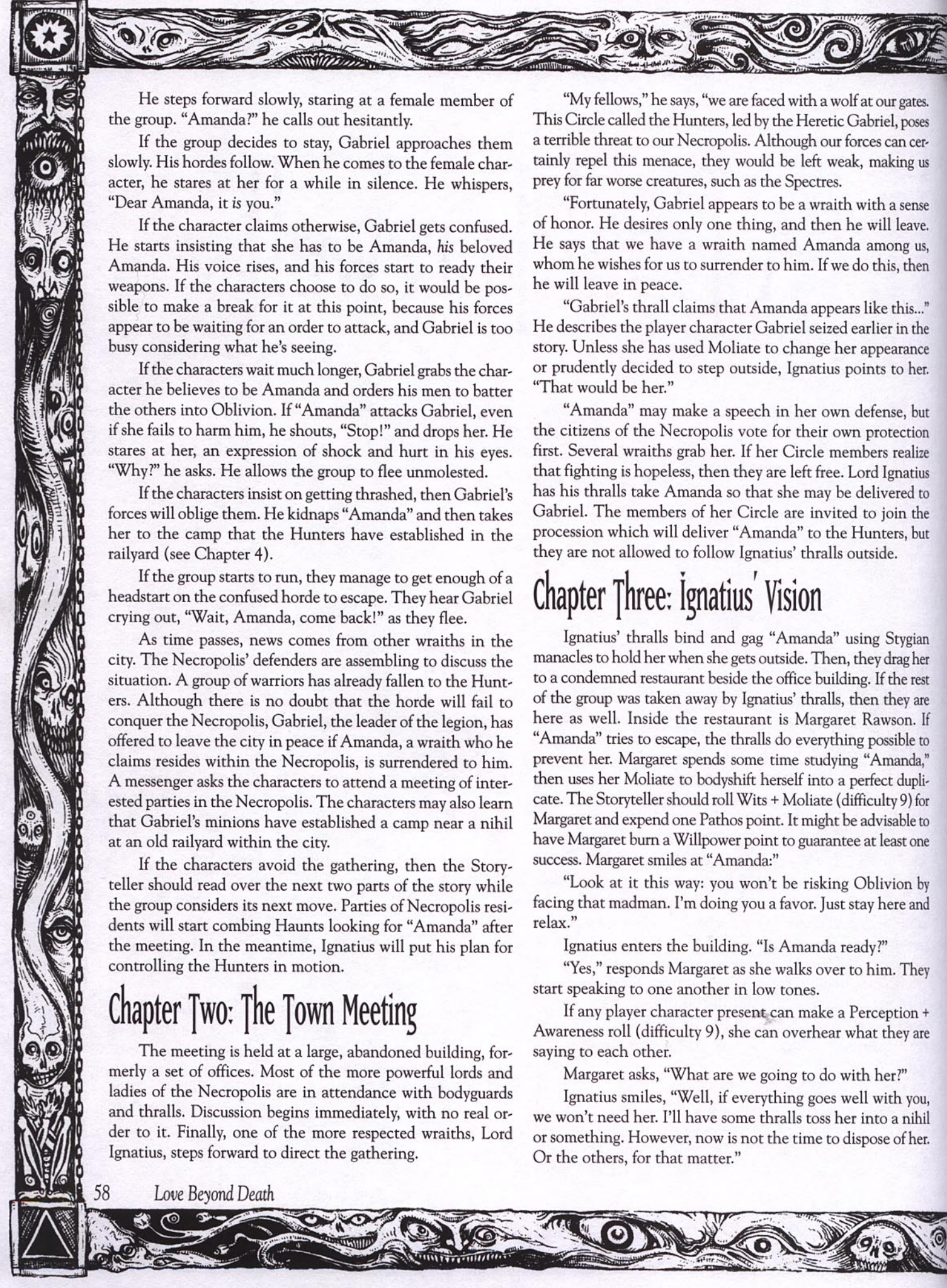


Any Necropolis will work for the setting, although older cities, especially European ones, may capture the atmosphere of the story better. The story uses three locations: an abandoned office building, a boarded-up restaurant and a deserted railway.

Chapter One: The Hunter Appears

For a few days, the Necropolis has been relatively quiet. Clashes between the Hierarchy and Renegades have subsided. A sense of deadly calm has fallen. As the characters travel through the Necropolis to visit their Fetters and gather Patos, they encounter the breaking storm.

The characters first hear screaming, then laughter. A low fog rolls across the street. A horde of wraiths is smashing up the Necropolis in front of the group. Along one side of the street, a strange wraith clamps manacles down on a Lemure, a young woman with long tousled hair. She cries out for help. In the forefront of the chaotic mass stands a tall wraith in black, openly wielding a sword. He spies the group, and then he raises a hand. The carnage stops.



He steps forward slowly, staring at a female member of the group. "Amanda?" he calls out hesitantly.

If the group decides to stay, Gabriel approaches them slowly. His hordes follow. When he comes to the female character, he stares at her for a while in silence. He whispers, "Dear Amanda, it is you."

If the character claims otherwise, Gabriel gets confused. He starts insisting that she has to be Amanda, his beloved Amanda. His voice rises, and his forces start to ready their weapons. If the characters choose to do so, it would be possible to make a break for it at this point, because his forces appear to be waiting for an order to attack, and Gabriel is too busy considering what he's seeing.

If the characters wait much longer, Gabriel grabs the character he believes to be Amanda and orders his men to batter the others into Oblivion. If "Amanda" attacks Gabriel, even if she fails to harm him, he shouts, "Stop!" and drops her. He stares at her, an expression of shock and hurt in his eyes. "Why?" he asks. He allows the group to flee unmolested.

If the characters insist on getting thrashed, then Gabriel's forces will oblige them. He kidnaps "Amanda" and then takes her to the camp that the Hunters have established in the railway (see Chapter 4).

If the group starts to run, they manage to get enough of a headstart on the confused horde to escape. They hear Gabriel crying out, "Wait, Amanda, come back!" as they flee.

As time passes, news comes from other wraiths in the city. The Necropolis' defenders are assembling to discuss the situation. A group of warriors has already fallen to the Hunters. Although there is no doubt that the horde will fail to conquer the Necropolis, Gabriel, the leader of the legion, has offered to leave the city in peace if Amanda, a wraith who he claims resides within the Necropolis, is surrendered to him. A messenger asks the characters to attend a meeting of interested parties in the Necropolis. The characters may also learn that Gabriel's minions have established a camp near a nihil at an old railway within the city.

If the characters avoid the gathering, then the Storyteller should read over the next two parts of the story while the group considers its next move. Parties of Necropolis residents will start combing Haunts looking for "Amanda" after the meeting. In the meantime, Ignatius will put his plan for controlling the Hunters in motion.

Chapter Two: The Town Meeting

The meeting is held at a large, abandoned building, formerly a set of offices. Most of the more powerful lords and ladies of the Necropolis are in attendance with bodyguards and thralls. Discussion begins immediately, with no real order to it. Finally, one of the more respected wraiths, Lord Ignatius, steps forward to direct the gathering.

"My fellows," he says, "we are faced with a wolf at our gates. This Circle called the Hunters, led by the Heretic Gabriel, poses a terrible threat to our Necropolis. Although our forces can certainly repel this menace, they would be left weak, making us prey for far worse creatures, such as the Spectres.

"Fortunately, Gabriel appears to be a wraith with a sense of honor. He desires only one thing, and then he will leave. He says that we have a wraith named Amanda among us, whom he wishes for us to surrender to him. If we do this, then he will leave in peace.

"Gabriel's thrall claims that Amanda appears like this..." He describes the player character Gabriel seized earlier in the story. Unless she has used Moliat to change her appearance or prudently decided to step outside, Ignatius points to her. "That would be her."

"Amanda" may make a speech in her own defense, but the citizens of the Necropolis vote for their own protection first. Several wraiths grab her. If her Circle members realize that fighting is hopeless, then they are left free. Lord Ignatius has his thralls take Amanda so that she may be delivered to Gabriel. The members of her Circle are invited to join the procession which will deliver "Amanda" to the Hunters, but they are not allowed to follow Ignatius' thralls outside.

Chapter Three: Ignatius' Vision

Ignatius' thralls bind and gag "Amanda" using Stygian manacles to hold her when she gets outside. Then, they drag her to a condemned restaurant beside the office building. If the rest of the group was taken away by Ignatius' thralls, then they are here as well. Inside the restaurant is Margaret Rawson. If "Amanda" tries to escape, the thralls do everything possible to prevent her. Margaret spends some time studying "Amanda," then uses her Moliat to bodyshift herself into a perfect duplicate. The Storyteller should roll Wits + Moliat (difficulty 9) for Margaret and expend one Pathos point. It might be advisable to have Margaret burn a Willpower point to guarantee at least one success. Margaret smiles at "Amanda."

"Look at it this way: you won't be risking Oblivion by facing that madman. I'm doing you a favor. Just stay here and relax."

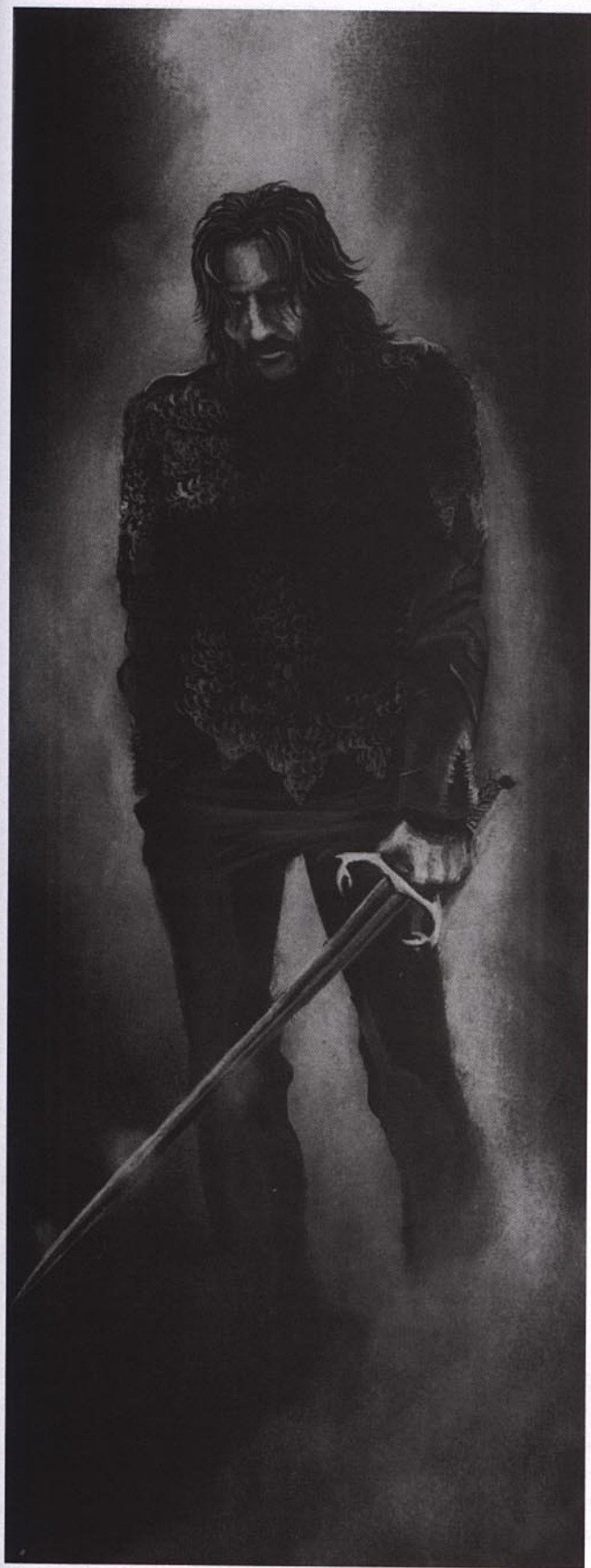
Ignatius enters the building. "Is Amanda ready?"

"Yes," responds Margaret as she walks over to him. They start speaking to one another in low tones.

If any player character present can make a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 9), she can overhear what they are saying to each other.

Margaret asks, "What are we going to do with her?"

Ignatius smiles, "Well, if everything goes well with you, we won't need her. I'll have some thralls toss her into a nihil or something. However, now is not the time to dispose of her. Or the others, for that matter."



"You just want to keep her around if Gabriel sees through me," states Margaret.

"I didn't say that." Ignatius' eyes narrow. "Time is slipping away from us. Let's go."

What Ignatius doesn't notice is that Margaret drops a key to the manacles on the floor near the character(s). If the entire group is trapped, then each one has a chance to crawl over to the key after the procession leaves. Margaret hopes that "Amanda" will escape and leave the city.

The procession begins outside the office building. Many important wraiths in the Necropolis intend to help escort Amanda to Gabriel. If the members of the Circle are waiting outside and see Margaret-Amanda, they all receive Perception + Empathy rolls (difficulty 5). If they roll more than 3 successes, they see through the transformation and realize that Margaret isn't their Circle-mate.

If the characters launch a protest or claim that the Amanda before the crowd isn't the real one, Ignatius accuses them of trying to place the safety of their Circle member over the interests of the city. Numbers of centurions and Hierarchy warriors silence the group (using force if needed) and lead them away from the procession. The characters are left with a warning not to interfere in these matters or else they will be dragged to Stygia in chains.

If the group can make it over to the restaurant which Margaret-Amanda exited from, they have a chance to free their "Amanda." Two wraiths with the same stats as the Hunters guard her. The key to the Stygian manacles lies unnoticed on the ground near the two guards.

If the group is manacled inside the building, a member of the group may get the key by making a Dexterity + Stealth roll (difficulty 8). If he botches the roll, the two guards notice the key and take it. If "Amanda" is alone, she can also make the attempt.

Storytellers should feel free to help alter the story so that the group can escape and, hopefully, go to the railway to stop Ignatius' scheme.

Chapter Four: Gabriel's Stronghold

The Hunters have established a stronghold at the city's old railway amid rusted train cars. The train cars form the boundaries of the camp. In many ways, it resembles a circled wagon train. Members of the Hunters stand between the cars, watching for attacks. An empty 200 foot radius "kill zone" extends outward from the camp. The low fog which surrounds Gabriel conceals the tracks on the ground, raising the difficulty of all movement rolls in the area by 1. The Shroud here is 8, and the area has an eerie feel to it in the Shadowlands.

Even if the characters escaped after getting captured in Chapter Three, they may make it to the railyard before the procession. There are faster ways through the Necropolis, and the procession moves slowly.

When they get to the "kill zone" around the camp, about a half-dozen different weapons are aimed at them. If they don't have someone who looks like Amanda with them, they are told to halt. Groups that rush the camp will be fired upon. Gabriel comes over to speak to the Circle. If he recognizes any of them from Chapter 1, he orders his men to let them approach. Otherwise, he asks them their business. If they mention Amanda or make a great Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 9), Gabriel lets them enter the camp.

Gabriel's reaction to Amanda depends on their earlier encounter. He wants to believe that she's his lost love, returned to him by some trick of fate, and with even a barely plausible story, he will convince himself of this. If "Amanda" tells him about Ignatius' planned deception, Gabriel becomes furious. He has his men get ready to ambush the procession. He wants the false Amanda captured and brought to him, and he wants to send Ignatius screaming into Oblivion.

Gabriel will behave like an absolute gentleman around the woman he believes is Amanda. He does anything he can to please her, and he spends a great deal of time gazing fondly at her. If she humors him, even a little bit, he will grow much kinder.

If the characters don't have "Amanda," then he listens to whatever story they may have, but keeps them as his prisoners until the procession arrives.

When the procession reaches the edge of the kill zone, Ignatius steps out from the crowd of wraiths. He looks over at the camp and announces, "Gabriel of the Hunters, we have agreed to surrender Amanda over to you. May I present her." He bows low.

Margaret walks up into the kill zone, looking nervous. In a soft voice, she cries, "Gabriel? Is it really you?"

If the characters warned Gabriel, or if the player character "Amanda" is with him, then Gabriel shouts, "Yes, it is me, my dear! But I'm afraid it isn't you, is it?" He presents his version of Amanda or reveals the information that the player characters gave him.

Ignatius steps up. "They are trying to deceive you, Gabriel. This is Amanda. She even remembers you."

Margaret gives Ignatius a quick, nasty glare.

"If she remembers me, then let her tell me about the time we first saw each other in this Necropolis!" roars Gabriel.

Murmuring begins in the procession.

Margaret swallows hard, then falls to her knees. She starts to fake tears, and she points at Ignatius, "He made me do it! He forced me to impersonate her."





Gabriel's eyes go hard. Only an appeal from the character "Amanda" can stop him from ordering his men to kill Ignatius. "Fire!" he shouts.

If the player character "Amanda" arrives late, a good time for her to make it onto the scene would be when Gabriel asks Margaret about the first time they met.

Ignatius gets riddled by gunfire (for more complete rules on archaic guns in **Wraith**, see the **Wraith Player's Kit**) and collapses.

Margaret runs into the crowd of Necropolis citizens, who start running back toward the city.

If the player characters don't get involved at all in this scene, then Margaret manages to pull everything off, until she gets into the camp and Gabriel asks her about when his eyes first met hers in the Necropolis. As soon as that happens, he realizes that he's been deceived. He orders his men to scour the city and find his true love.

Chapter Five: Confrontations

Even if the player characters have somehow managed to avoid most of the story so far, Gabriel's men find them. They should be either in hiding or in Gabriel's camp. If they are in Gabriel's camp, use the section entitled, "In Camp." If the characters start on the run or in hiding, use the section entitled, "On the Run."

In The Camp

After the deception comes to light, Gabriel turns to Amanda. "I must speak with you, lady. Please, come with me."

If she refuses, then he has the conversation in the open.

"I know that you do not think that you are my dear Amanda. I wish that I had all eternity to re-awaken the memories of our past together. Unfortunately, my time here is short. I am no fool. Our band of Hunters cannot stand before the power of the Hierarchy. Once the Legions assemble, we will have to flee or be destroyed. I would like for you to come with us. Before you refuse, I open the invitation to the members of your Circle as well. I will guard and protect them as I would any of my Hunters."

He pauses. If she says no, he looks dejected, but he continues to speak. If she says yes, he smiles broadly and orders the men to break camp. Any hesitation on her part causes him to begin his entreaty again.

"I have another question for you, my love. Have you completely forgotten me? Are you in love with someone else?" His eyes are almost fearful.

If she says yes, then he nods and swallows hard. His eyes mist over a little, and he grinds his teeth. After pacing for a minute, he gazes into her eyes. "Dear Amanda, my love, my life, my soul, if he makes you happy, then I shall not stay in

Potential Problems

If the player says yes, but the Storyteller doesn't want to change her chronicle to "The Hunters," then a member of Gabriel's Circle comes up to him and kneels. He requests to speak freely. Gabriel nods. The man asks his master if the journeys of the Hunters would be safe for the lady, with the implicit suggestion that they would not. Gabriel furrows his brow and thinks on the matter, then dismisses the man without answering. He studies his chosen lady sadly and then tells her that his life is too harsh. His Circle needs him, or else he would stay. At this point, Gabriel talks to her softly and sadly, and he says goodbye.

your path. I shall leave... and forget you, just as I've forgotten everything else." He pauses. "May I have one last gift? Just a parting kiss, for our final farewell?"

She may decide whether or not she wishes to kiss him. If she does, then his last Fetter is resolved. Gabriel gathers his Hunters and departs into the Tempest, never to return.

If she says no, then he gazes deeply into her eyes and strokes her cheek. "One day, I shall return for you."

He turns and leaves, calling for the Hunters.

On the Run

If the characters are traveling through the Necropolis or holed up somewhere, use this section. A group of Hunters, one fewer than the members of the player character Circle, discovers the wraiths.

The Hunters demand that the wraiths surrender. They want to know what's going on, and why anyone had the audacity to try deceiving Gabriel. The Hunters are slightly belligerent, and they wouldn't mind a fight. However, they won't attack the characters unless they have to defend themselves or keep them from escaping.

If the characters try to run, then the Hunters go after them. "Amanda" is their first concern. If the group splits up, the Hunters follow "Amanda." If she's not present, then they split into pairs and randomly select a few members of the group to chase. If they catch any of the wraiths, they'll attack, trying to subdue them.

During the chase scene, if any of the characters botch their movement rolls, they encounter a group of Hierarchy soldiers, equal in number to the Hunters. Lord Ignatius sent these wraiths out to find the characters so they wouldn't in-

terfere in his plans. Give them the same stats as the Hunters. If the characters lead the Hunters into the Hierarchy soldiers, the two groups start to fight immediately, giving the characters a chance to escape both sides.

Once the characters think they've gotten away, or if they don't flee from the Hunters, then Gabriel steps out in front of them. He looks angry.

"Lemures!" he snarls. "Let me see my Amanda... now!"

If there is any hesitation on the part of the player characters, Gabriel glares at them. He makes a Charisma + Intimidation roll opposed to the characters' Intelligence + Intimidation in an attempt to frighten them into surrendering Amanda.

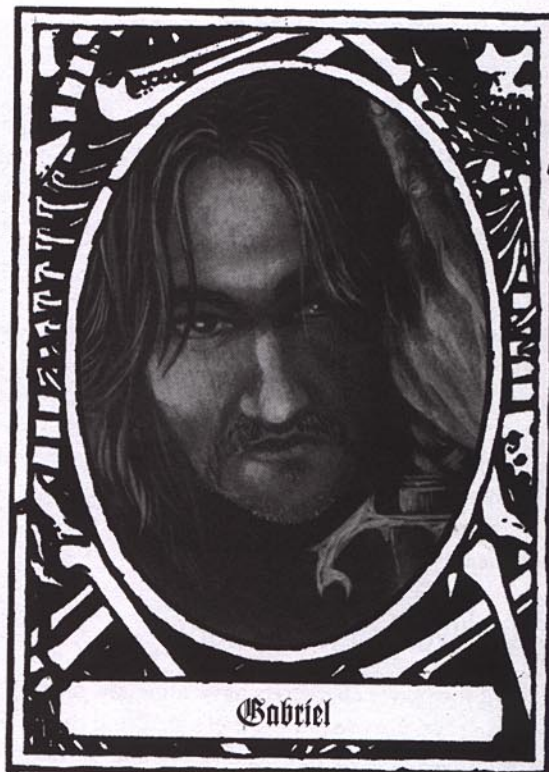
If he fails, then he attacks wildly, using his Arcanos and swinging his blade, until he gets to see her. If the party manages to defeat Gabriel, a member of the Hunters at camp senses her master's failure, using Fatalism. The Hunters leave the city. If any of the Hierarchy members saw the characters' victory, then they hail the Circle as heroes. They all gain a point of Hierarchy status, and the hunt for "Amanda" is over. The player character can have her name back.

Gabriel will not try to harm "Amanda," only immobilize her. If given the opportunity, he tries to send her into slumber with his Phantasm Arcanos. If he gets the opportunity, he tries to speak with her. First, he asks her to describe their first meeting in the Necropolis. If she answers satisfactorily, then he treats her like his lost love. If she answers incorrectly, he goes into a rage, giving himself over to his Shadow. In this state, he lashes out against all the wraiths around him, including Amanda. He won't stop until he is dragged into the Tempest to undergo a Harrowing. After a satisfactory answer, he uses the speech on Amanda found in the "In the Camp" section, starting with the second paragraph. The outcome of their discussions remains the same. After they finish speaking, Gabriel leaves the Necropolis.

Characters

Gabriel

Ages ago, the man who became Gabriel went on a long and arduous journey. He sustained himself through the worst parts by clinging to the memory of his betrothed, Amanda, inspired by a pair of her silk gloves that he kept with him. While he was away, Amanda sickened and died. After his return, he was heartbroken to learn of his love's demise. Depression consumed him, and he committed suicide. Once in the Shadowlands, Gabriel searched for his love, recruiting those allies that he could and defeating any who opposed him. He has hunted for her for more years than he can remember. His band of Hunters has gained infamy in the Shadowlands, but still he searches, tearing apart even small Haunts looking



for a clue, a hint of Amanda's presence. His Fetters have rotted away except for the silk gloves, now in an exhibit on period costume in a local museum. He's forgotten what his name was in life. All he remembers is Amanda.

Gabriel is a Heretic, believing in the power of love to bring anyone to Transcendence. It is his belief that anyone who is able to find the kind of love that can last a lifetime, pure and beautiful, will achieve Transcendence.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Visionary

Circle: The Hunters

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 3

Skills: Crafts 1, Etiquette 2, Leadership 4, Meditation 3, Melee 4, Performance 1, Stealth 2

Knowledge: Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 4, Occult 5

Backgrounds: Artifacts 5, Notoriety 3, Wealth 5

Passions: Find his lost love, Amanda (Love) 5, Act with Honor (Faith) 5

Arcanos: Argos 5, Castigate 5, Pandemonium 3, Phantasm 5, Usury 4

Fetters: Amanda's silk gloves, 1 (on display in a museum)

Willpower: 10

Pathos: 8

Shadow: The Abuser

Angst: 5

Thorns: Tainted Touch, Shadow Familiar (raven), Death's Sigil (a low fog which constantly follows him)

Shadow Passions: Kill off his followers (Hate) 5

Image: Gabriel is an imposing figure with bright blue eyes, shoulder-length brown hair and a body hardened by years of conflict and searching. He wears a shirt of black chainmail and dark clothing underneath. He carries a sword at all times as well. When he speaks, his voice holds the sound of authority.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a warrior, first and foremost, and you have a strong sense of personal honor. Your word is your bond. You believe in honest open combat. You love Amanda with all your soul, and you believe that the player character who resembles her was your love in a past life. You want the chance to marry her before you will consider letting her go.

Equipment: Gabriel's black armor automatically soaks the first wound he takes from every attack.

Typical Members of the Hunters

Each member of the Circle was saved or taken in by Gabriel. Many of them are escapees from the slave chains of Stygia or just wraiths on the run from powerful enemies. Each one sees Gabriel as the key to their own Transcendence and eventual salvation.



Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Fanatic

Circle: The Hunters

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2

Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Occult 2

Backgrounds: Notoriety 3, Heretic Status 3

Passions: Serve Gabriel (Loyalty) 5, various others

Arcanos: Argos 1, Outrage 1, Usury 2, Various 1

Fetters: Weapon, 3

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 4

Shadow: The Leech

Angst: 5

Thorns: Shadow Trait (Firearms +1, Brawl +1)

Shadow Passions: Cause as much pain and suffering as possible (Anger) 3

Image: The Hunters are a bunch of dangerous-looking warriors and punks, armed with knives, guns and anything else they can find. They have clothing dating from a number of time periods.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a member of a battle-hardened Circle of warriors, and you'll let nothing stop you from achieving the Hunters' goals. If you want something, you take it, as long as it doesn't break Gabriel's commands. You will serve Gabriel until the end of time.

Margaret Rawson

You were young, in love, recently married and making more money than you knew what to do with. You became a social chameleon, moving with the nightclub crowd and helping your husband impress his more conservative superiors with dinner parties. Then, one day, you were diagnosed with a terminal case of bone cancer. Everything came crashing down at once. You remember lying in bed, waiting to die as your bones weakened and snapped, one by one, from the weight of your own body. The pain was excruciating, but even worse was the sense of helplessness. When death came, it was a blessed release. You took advantage of your life as a wraith and slowly moved up in your Circle. Little terrifies you, because, in your mind, nothing could be as horrible as your death. You've spent over a decade in the Shadowlands. Your Circle, the Brazen, dedicated themselves to finding the excitement in the afterlife. You try to keep up with the mortal world, but you realize that you've started to forget your husband and your former life.



Margaret Rawson

Nature: Conniver
Demeanor: Avant Garde
Circle: The Brazen
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Etiquette 2, Melee 2, Performance 4, Stealth 3
Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Law 1, Occult 4
Backgrounds: Allies 2, Artifacts 5 (Skeleton Key, Chalice of Venus), Memoriam 3
Passions: Never Lose Complete Control of a Situation (Fear) 2, Love your husband (Love) 1, Gain influence in the Necropolis (Lust) 4
Arcanos: Argos 1, Lifeweb 3, Moliat 5, Usury 3
Fetters: Michael Rawson (her husband), 3; Her House, 2; Wedding Dress, 1
Willpower: 9
Pathos: 10
Shadow: The Martyr
Angst: 6
Thorns: Devil's Dare
Shadow Passions: Seek out Oblivion (Self-Destruction) 5, Put others in danger (Anger) 2

Image: Margaret is an attractive woman with shoulder-length red hair and blue eyes. She likes to keep up with all of the latest fashions in the world of the Quick.

Roleplaying Notes: You owe Ignatius a debt for sparing members of your Circle from the Hierarchy long ago. This "Amanda" incident provides an opportunity for you to gain real power in the Necropolis. You have no intention of leaving with Gabriel. Instead, you hope to play on his love for Amanda and get him to drink from your Chalice of Venus. Once Gabriel's in your pocket, then you'll have all the power in the Necropolis.

Lord Ignatius

Lord Ignatius leaves nothing to chance. Ever since he became a wraith, he has thrown in with the right crowds at the right times. Ignatius vaguely recalls life as a businessman when he used the name William, because Ignatius wasn't "right." As a wraith, he found that William didn't carry the powerful overtones needed to intimidate others, so he returned to his previously discarded name with a new respect. Lord Ignatius controls much of the trade in the Necropolis, and he uses his resources to buy political power. His Circle, the City Masters, guides the Necropolis. It is a cut-throat Circle, and each member plots against the others. Ignatius has so far managed to manipulate events to his own ends, but he worries that if doesn't take advantage of every opportunity, all that he has will slip away.



Lord Ignatius

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Circle: The City Masters

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 1, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Etiquette 4, Leadership 5, Meditation 3, Performance 3, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Law 3, Occult 4, Politics 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Haunt 5, Hierarchy Status 4, Wealth 5

Passions: Seize control of the Necropolis (Greed) 5, Hold the respect of others (Insecurity) 3

Arcanos: Argos 1, Keening 3, Phantasm 4

Fetters: Office Building, 4; Book of accounts, 2

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 7

Shadow: The Pusher

Angst: 8

Thorns: Devil's Dare, Pact of Doom

Shadow Passions: Ruin all who have enough power to threaten him (Hate) 4

Image: A tall man, about 6'5", he towers over most wraiths. He dresses in underworld extravagance. He has slicked-back black hair and amber eyes with a chilly gaze. His voice is deep and powerful.

Roleplaying Notes: You see this situation as an opportunity. Hopefully, Margaret will do her part and seduce Gabriel. If things work out, then you will keep "Amanda" in your possession to play as a trump card if you believe that Margaret is betraying you. You know how to tell people what they want to hear, and you trust no one.

Aftermath and Future Ideas

- Gabriel comes back from the Tempest after having a vision of the true Amanda. He's half-crazed. He wants to find Amanda and take her back with him.

- If Margaret survived, she plays the role of the martyr to try to gain political power in the city. She tells everyone about how Ignatius forced her to impersonate Amanda. She will try to make friends with the characters in the hopes of using them later.

- After the Hunters are gone, several wraiths become suspicious of the entire incident. Rumors spread that somehow the character who Gabriel thought was Amanda was behind everything. The Circle has to defend itself against a number of accusations.

- If Lord Ignatius survived the story, then he seeks revenge against the characters who spoiled his plans. He hires agents to kill them, and he spreads rumors of their involvement in heresies and Renegade activities.

Variations

- Instead of using a player character wraith as the target of Gabriel's affections, make the target a living mortal connected to one of the characters. The story will need major changes, but the fear that Gabriel could generate in a nearly helpless mortal might be worth it to motivate your players.

- After the character who resembles Amanda sees Gabriel, she starts to have strange visions. The player begins remembering life in a royal court long ago. She has memories of Gabriel courting her. If the player decides that she doesn't like this variation once it starts, then the Storyteller can have the memories be the result of Gabriel's Arcanos.

- For something different, make the Hunters a group of Spectres and Gabriel their leader. Keep the rest of the story basically the same, but this time, when he sees "Amanda" in Chapter 1, it wakes something of his humanity, pulling him back from Oblivion.

- Margaret could succeed in getting Gabriel to drink from her chalice. With his support, she would then strike against Ignatius and attempt to take over a section of the Necropolis. Only the player characters would have a chance of freeing Gabriel's mind from the chalice's effects.



ELLIOTT 45

The Hope Chest



In days gone by, when a woman married, she often received a chest filled by her mother and older female relatives with things she would need to set up her new household. An evolution of the dowry or "bride-price," a hope chest usually included bed and table linens, lace, and sometimes other household supplies. This appendix is designed to be much the same as the hope chest of yore. In it you will find some of the tools with which you can set up your own Wraith chronicle. Have fun!

Artifacts

Wedding bands (Level 4)

These rings may take many forms, but when two lovers wear them, they impart a mystical bond. The rings link the lovers spiritually and emotionally. The pair may communicate with each other over great distances with a thought, seeing a vision of their partner in their mind's eye. Once the rings are accepted by both lovers, they cannot be removed unless a member of the couple falls to Oblivion.

The Bitter Rose (Level 3)

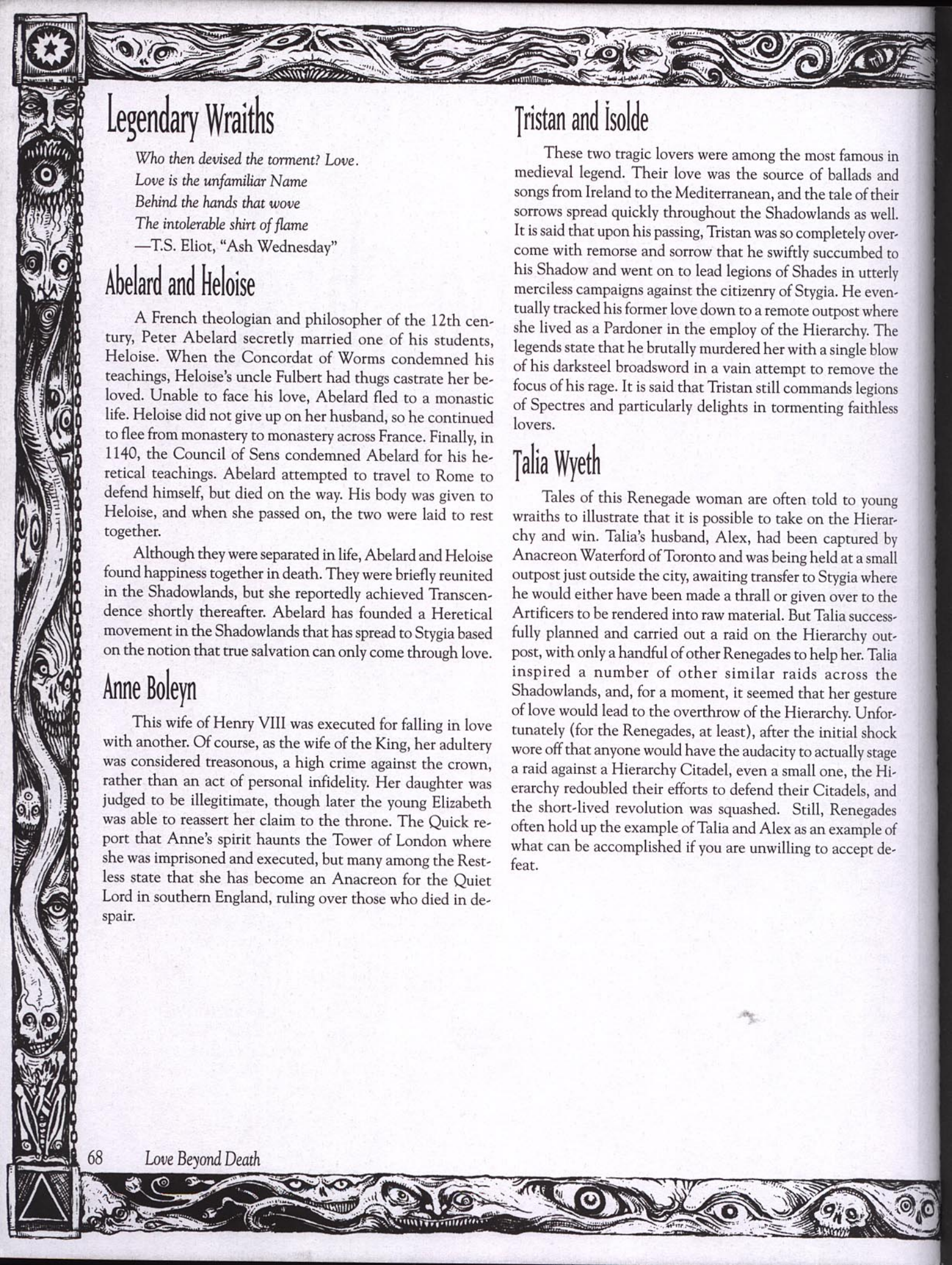
A dark crimson closed rosebud, this Artifact reacts to the emotions of love and hate. When its holder spends a point of Pathos to activate the Artifact, it blossoms when next to a person with strong Passions of love, and the holder of the rose learns the nature of the love Passions and their intensity. When the holder activates it near a wraith with strong hate Passions, its thorns stab the holder's flesh, causing him to lose a Corpus level, but conveying to him the knowledge of the hate Passions and their intensity. The Bitter Rose never reacts to the holder's Passions.

Chalice of Venus (Level 3)

This magnificent cup stores the Pathos of love. Those who drink from the chalice gain 4 points of love Pathos, but unless they make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8), they fall hopelessly in love within the next day. When the chalice is empty, it may be refilled by keeping it near emotional lovers for an hour per point of love Pathos collected.

The Strauss Anklet (Level 2)

A unique item, this gold anklet reportedly has the power to bind the souls of two mortals together forever. While one is alive, she will be the other's Fetter. In the Shadowlands and even beyond, they will retain a mystical bond. It is whispered by some who believe in reincarnation that the bond will even extend into the next lifetime.



Legendary Wraiths

Who then devised the torment? Love.

Love is the unfamiliar Name

Behind the hands that wove

The intolerable shirt of flame

—T.S. Eliot, "Ash Wednesday"

Abelard and Heloise

A French theologian and philosopher of the 12th century, Peter Abelard secretly married one of his students, Heloise. When the Concordat of Worms condemned his teachings, Heloise's uncle Fulbert had thugs castrate her beloved. Unable to face his love, Abelard fled to a monastic life. Heloise did not give up on her husband, so he continued to flee from monastery to monastery across France. Finally, in 1140, the Council of Sens condemned Abelard for his heretical teachings. Abelard attempted to travel to Rome to defend himself, but died on the way. His body was given to Heloise, and when she passed on, the two were laid to rest together.

Although they were separated in life, Abelard and Heloise found happiness together in death. They were briefly reunited in the Shadowlands, but she reportedly achieved Transcendence shortly thereafter. Abelard has founded a Heretical movement in the Shadowlands that has spread to Stygia based on the notion that true salvation can only come through love.

Anne Boleyn

This wife of Henry VIII was executed for falling in love with another. Of course, as the wife of the King, her adultery was considered treasonous, a high crime against the crown, rather than an act of personal infidelity. Her daughter was judged to be illegitimate, though later the young Elizabeth was able to reassert her claim to the throne. The Quick report that Anne's spirit haunts the Tower of London where she was imprisoned and executed, but many among the Restless state that she has become an Anacreon for the Quiet Lord in southern England, ruling over those who died in despair.

Tristan and Isolde

These two tragic lovers were among the most famous in medieval legend. Their love was the source of ballads and songs from Ireland to the Mediterranean, and the tale of their sorrows spread quickly throughout the Shadowlands as well. It is said that upon his passing, Tristan was so completely overcome with remorse and sorrow that he swiftly succumbed to his Shadow and went on to lead legions of Shades in utterly merciless campaigns against the citizenry of Stygia. He eventually tracked his former love down to a remote outpost where she lived as a Pardoner in the employ of the Hierarchy. The legends state that he brutally murdered her with a single blow of his darksteel broadsword in a vain attempt to remove the focus of his rage. It is said that Tristan still commands legions of Spectres and particularly delights in tormenting faithless lovers.

Talia Wyeth

Tales of this Renegade woman are often told to young wraiths to illustrate that it is possible to take on the Hierarchy and win. Talia's husband, Alex, had been captured by Anacreon Waterford of Toronto and was being held at a small outpost just outside the city, awaiting transfer to Stygia where he would either have been made a thrall or given over to the Artificers to be rendered into raw material. But Talia successfully planned and carried out a raid on the Hierarchy outpost, with only a handful of other Renegades to help her. Talia inspired a number of other similar raids across the Shadowlands, and, for a moment, it seemed that her gesture of love would lead to the overthrow of the Hierarchy. Unfortunately (for the Renegades, at least), after the initial shock wore off that anyone would have the audacity to actually stage a raid against a Hierarchy Citadel, even a small one, the Hierarchy redoubled their efforts to defend their Citadels, and the short-lived revolution was squashed. Still, Renegades often hold up the example of Talia and Alex as an example of what can be accomplished if you are unwilling to accept defeat.

Love Beyond Death

Better To Have Loved And Lost...

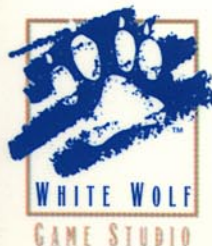
The fiery passion of love denied form knows no bounds, and for those who choose to risk the pain of loss for the chance for a tender caress, life-in-death is endlessly bittersweet pain. In such a bleak and hopeless existence, the promise of love is one of the only beacons of hope in the face of Oblivion.

Than Never to Have Loved at All!

Love Beyond Death is part of a new series on the art and craft of Storytelling. This exceptional new guide for experienced and first-time Storytellers alike demonstrates how to infuse your chronicle with the romance of Death.

Love Beyond Death includes:

- Ready-to-run adventures based around the themes of tragic romance;
- Storytelling tips on how to base a chronicle around a central theme;
- Legendary wraiths known for their tragic lives and deaths.



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