



***"I am, first and foremost, an artist. The murders are but provision."***

*- The Family Man*

Following the Great Darkness of 1999, the world has changed massively in the wake of that apocalyptic event. Lives have been ruined, people's minds pushed to the brink, and the very face of the world itself reshaped in accordance to some demented whimsy somewhere between the reaches of both flesh and dream. Now in the place of the old world stand bizarre monuments and locales, enigmatic structures and artifacts - Obscurum - such as the Tower of Teeth, The Coffin of Iver's Green, or the mysterious continent of Grimland, madmen and the deranged - broken by the unknowing horrors of the Great Darkness and pushed to a new level of psychopathy, these 'neo-psychotics' now roam the world in many varieties and plague it as the mortal predators of a world recovering from absolute madness, and in a darkness deeper than the deepest sleep, worse things stir and plot.

There are organizations and powers in this new post-noctum world, some of them even predating the Great Darkness in its entirety such as the Brimstone Society who now seek to take greatest advantage of the world's slide into nightmare and terror, and others like the Esoterium and its various Esoterics emerging to try and quell the various Walks of Darkness and other horrors that became more overt following the Great Darkness. But this is not their story. No, this is about **you** - you have found yourself dropped into this world unceremoniously with no understanding of what has transpired or of anything at all relating to your situation.

And you have found yourself in the midst of a most terrible game. Haunted by the powerful Red Dream visited upon them by the enigmatic **Shepherd of Wolves**, serial killers of the worst order - exopaths, as they'd be known officially - now gather and kill each other at the behest of a mysterious list of killers, with some names being even more infamous than they ever could be.

They have been drawn into the **Shepherd's Game** - the ultimate contest of killers. And the prize is worth every drop of blood spilled in its name. Unfortunately for you, you have also found yourself drawn into the events of this most macabre game of all - and your only options are to either participate or die.

As for Choice Points? There are none to be found in this place. You will have to gain any abilities or skills needed to survive the trials ahead on your own (**You start with +0 Red Fangs**).

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### **Rules**

1. **This is a Gauntlet.** This means that everything you normally have at your fingertips and which you carry with you between worlds such as infinite cosmic powers, your items, your Warehouse or equivalents, one-ups, and what-have-you have all been sealed off for the duration of your time here. The only thing you have left is your Body Mod (or equivalent).
2. **In exchange for this, death is not the end of your Chain.** You will not keep anything you may gain from here, but nor will you chainfail or be sent back home - instead, you are ushered onto the next world in your chain. Should you manage to complete one of the **Lists** however, you may be granted rewards from one of the mysterious benefactors who provides them.
3. **If you would instead prefer to not have to deal with these rules, then you may choose to take this as a traditional Jump - neither of the rules above will apply anymore and you will gain +1000 Red Fangs to spend as you would anywhere else.** The rewards you could gain from completion of a **List** may still be earned, but may be of no use in future worlds.

### **Lists**

Assuming that you have chosen to pursue this as a Gauntlet, then you must take one of the following Lists and strive to fulfill it during your time here, then follow it with one of the Modifiers. If you choose **The Shepherd's Game** as your List, then you may not take **A Pale Path** and vice versa. You may choose to take one or all of the Modifiers, however.

**The Shepherd's Game** - Shortly after your arrival, you find a simple sheet of paper with several names listed on it. Instinctively, you know almost immediately what these are, even if you cannot tell why or how: they are the names of killers. Monsters cloaked in the flesh of men or who were once men (and some who aren't even that) which have been named on the list for initially unclear purpose. It is as you go to sleep that night, finding some quiet abandoned place to rest that the purpose of the list dawns on you.

It is amidst the baying howls and snapping jaws of **Wolves** that you are made aware of what you are being asked to do. You have been invited to a game, a game of killers - where the greatest killer and the one who survives, will be given a prize beyond their wildest imaginings. The prize? Transcendent. The cost? Everything and more. And despite all this, you know you do not have a choice. You are also unfortunately made aware that just as you hunt these killers whose names are on your list, they will also have your name on theirs - and will be eager to hunt you and inflict their particular depravities upon you if given the chance.

Unlike the full breadth of **The Shepherd's Game**, you do not need to slay a killer then transfer the names from their list to your own to keep an ever-expanding number of potential murderers to kill for the sake of 'winning' the game - crossing out all the names on your list, around 10 or so, will be enough to guarantee your own personal victory. The names on your personal list are randomly decided and you have no knowledge or information about them or where they may be found outside of their names - seeking them out or information as to their whereabouts must be done on your own. Examples of 5 of the possible candidates for names and some general information about them is given here for the sake of completeness (**You may choose to fill the other 5 possible candidates with generic selections or via Drawback or fiat, make them adversaries you have previously encountered on the chain**).

- **The Family Man** - A mad visionary who seeks to redefine the very nature of the world itself, the Family Man is a curious sort - completely mad beyond all reason, but also an expert philosopher and contemplative intellectual, he's just as eager to debate the finer points of esoteric philosophies and the histories of the post-noctum world as he is in carving you apart and turning you into a macabre art piece to "free the dream trapped within your flesh". Despite his deceptive politeness however, it should never be forgotten that the Family Man is a literal giant of a man and one who has mastered not only the art of killing, but also the power of the Red Dream - an exopath's ability to suspend the very laws of physical reality around themselves.

Perhaps worst of all when it comes to fighting the Family Man however are his weapons - twin blades and a great axe all made from bone, the remains of his equally psychotic and equally murderous "family", his sisters and his monstrous giant of a father. Not only are they incredibly potent weapons in their own right, but they are infused with the depraved spirits of those they were made from, granting them the ability to harm things dwelling beyond the boundaries of sleep, to possess the bodies of those who wield them or whose flesh they are embedded within, and to intercede when forces would dare to tread upon the boundaries of their beloved family member's mind and soul.

All of these plus his raw intellect make the Family Man a terrifying force to reckon with. And are why he is in the running for a potential definitive victor in the **Shepherd's Game** - all for the sake of his ultimate goal; to shatter the divide between Dream and Flesh, Sleep and the cold banal reality of Waking. To plunge the world into a second Great Darkness, one it might never awaken from.

- **Two-Faced Janus:** Janus the two-faced psychopath, now known as the much less intimidating Frederick Blinkhorn, terrorized the American Northeast for over ten years. He earned his name by wearing a two-faced mask (covering the front and back of his head with monstrous faces) while assaulting his victims (verified by camera footage captured at the site of one of his gruesome murders). The psychopath was equally well known for his propensity for removing the faces of his victims, and often times using those stolen faces as disguises when he moved through the night, stalking new victims and spreading pandemonium.

Blinkhorn's primary motivation, according to notes and essays recovered from his home computer, seemed to consist of 'recovering chaos.' This act was apparently necessary for the purposes of stopping "The Great Ossification": Blinkhorn's name for an event that he believed would inversely replicate the effects of the Great Darkness of 1999. In short, he believed that the Great Ossification was reality's equal and opposite reaction to the Great Darkness, and would cause the world to crystalize into a hyper-solid cube of undifferentiated banality. The two-faced killer supposed that his stolen faces contained some semblance of the chaos his victims had refused to exercise, as they would habitually refuse to entertain their more bizarre inclinations, favoring behaviors that homogenized rather than humanized. By wearing a stolen face during his escapades, Blinkhorn thought to repay his victim's debt to chaos, presumably by engaging the bizarre antics he believed his victims had neglected (killing a neighbor's noisy dog, painting a house with the blood of one's enemies, enjoying a roller coaster ride during a hurricane, etc.), and thus informing the world with the chaos that would keep the world from hyper-solidifying. His "hunting heads" mask (the two-faced mask) was believed to be a representation of the killer's very own concept of his truest self: a being possessed of a far greater share of chaos than was normal, thus requiring two monstrous heads to properly contain. In a bizarre twist to an already bizarre story, Blinkhorn's own face, as well as his two-faced mask, have disappeared from the police morgue, leaving one last faceless corpse in the wake of the two-faced psychopath.

- **Jack Lantern:** Jack Lantern is one of the most notorious murderers in modern history. Unlike other serial killers, who tend to keep on the run, Jack Lantern's hunting grounds are limited to a single metropolitan area: Autumn City - a city situated next to the equally infamous September Woods. Over the years, Lantern has single handedly cast a shadow of fear over the entire city, sometimes causing authorities to impose strict curfews, and increasing their overall presence in the city.

Jack Lantern has been active since the late 1990's, killing his victims and carving their faces to resemble a Jack O' Lantern (hence the origin of his name). Many forensic psychologists believe the murderer's refusal to kill outside the borders of Autumn City is deeply rooted in psychosis, asserting that Lantern's obsession with Halloween drew him to Autumn City, which is host to the largest Halloween festival in the country, and home to the only trees in the world that sport their autumn coats all year round. Forensic psychologist, Dr. Sandra Davies, has posited that Lantern's pathology is based on an obsession with creating an 'infinite Halloween,' and that he wishes to place a 'mask' over the world so that he can perpetuate his desire for living in a Halloween fantasy world. His denial of the real world, Davies goes on to say, may come from a need to rely on fantasies to cope with traumas that the killer may have suffered early in life.

Regardless of his inherent insanity, Jack Lantern is an incredibly skilled, incredibly devious, and incredibly dangerous killer. Perhaps the most dangerous of any of the modern exopaths that wander the post-noctum world.

- **Tom Hush:** Perhaps one of the darkest urban legends to surge to prominence in the wake of the Great Darkness, the mystery of the enigmatic "Tom Hush" is cloaked in blackest rumor and deepest shadow, and most simply represents a well-known boogieman of the post-noctum state of the world on the same level as Black Helen or the terrors of New Victoria. Considered by many to either be a standard albeit notorious serial killer with a massive reputation or the result of a mythological tale growing out of control, the truth of Tom Hush is known to but a small few outside of moderately experienced dark scholars and the Esoterics and their rivals.

The true nature of what we have called "Tom Hush" is a dark deity of an enigmatic pantheon of entities referred to only as "**The March of Silence**", with Tom Hush holding the epithets of "God-Thing of Secrets" and "Eater of Dark Secrets" - a being who holds sway over the dark secrets festering in the hearts of the world. It is said to merely harbor such secrets is to tempt his hand, as the myths warn that Tom holds dominion over anyone who withholds an evil truth, the mere act of possessing a dark secret trapping them within his machinations. Over the centuries, across various locations worldwide, mutilated bodies have been found on eerie altars made of antlers, stone, and skulls. Although the identity of the perpetrator changes with each spree, they all claim possession by the same sinister entity, Tom Hush himself. Legend says that if you hold malevolent secrets, Tom Hush will consume them, possess your body, and carry out his gruesome acts. And though the legends of Tom are old, his origins are even older, having been known under many names throughout the ages.

Of all the participants in **The Shepherd's Game**, Tom is perhaps the one who both knows the most of the true nature of dark game and of the mysterious **Shepherd of Wolves** that administers it, whilst also having no interest in the game himself. He is well aware of what befalls those pawns the **Shepherd** plays with and has no desire to participate in its depraved whimsy, even as he is also aware of how little point there is in

opposing its will. It is for this reason that Tom Hush will not take to hunting killers in the game directly, but will doubtlessly entertain himself by 'playing' with them should they seek him out and force his hand. As an entity existing beyond this realm entirely, Tom Hush must rely on intermediaries and avatars through both the realms of dream and waking to carry out his dark machinations, and any encounter with him is always at a divide.

- **Inflictor of the Scream Eaters:** The warrior caste of the nightmarish **Scream Eaters**, aberrant entities dwelling in the **Bolgia of Screams**, these beings are the ones who fight when their kin are being threatened - as Scream Eaters are not combatants by nature and face many adversaries, including other Walks of Darkness so the "Inflictors" exist to defend the enclaves of Scream Eaters from their enemies with their martial skill and abilities. Powerful and brutal beyond measure, Inflictors are a devastating threat able to walk through almost anything without pause - even directly altering and collapsing reality on top of one is unlikely to slow it for more than a moment. Inflictors harness pain as a weapon, both consuming and dispensing it through various methods.

One of these entities has apparently ended up on your list, drawn into the game unknowingly after being left in our reality instead of returning to the Bolgia of Screams - its 'name' a long-drawn out series of bloody scratches on your list. Whilst it is unlikely for it to be aware that you hunt it in fulfillment of **The Shepherd's Game**, Scream Eaters of all types can taste and manipulate the flows of pain throughout the world, and the anguish wrought both by yourself and other players in the game may yet alert it to your presence well before you arrive.

Successful completion of the list will allow you to wield **The Howling Red Tide**, allowing you to inflict a nightmarish dream state to anyone within your range (roughly 5km) that plunges them into a terror-filled nightmare of being hunted by **Wolves** of reddest fang and claw. To be torn apart by the **Wolves** will condemn the unfortunate victim's mind and soul to become a new slaving member of their pack and merge with the tide itself.

**A Pale Path** - Upon your arrival, instead of emerging in the physical world, you instead come to awareness in a forest of stark white trees, above which a pale sky drenched in an eternal stark whiteness hangs above. The air here is beyond cold, colder than anything you have ever experienced, and despite the presence of trees, you feel a distinct lack of life here. It is as though everything here is clinical, cold, mechanical...banal, almost - like a machine's view of what the world is like. Perfect, structured, but with nothing truly 'alive' within it.

It is then that you see **Her**.

A towering figure stands far above the trees, a bloated woman, her skin corpulent and festering with all manner of rot. Her stomach, distended to degrees simply unimaginable, with dead flesh

sloughing away as a rhythmic ticking comes from somewhere within. And her face, nothing more than a grinning rictus of a skull framed by strands of pale white hair.

You do not know this, but you stand in the presence of **The White Gaia**, **The Mother of The Deadworld**, and deity and agent of **The Pale**. She knows who and what you are, and why you are here, and she has called you here to “do her good work” before she sends you on your way. She explains to you that there is a ‘game’ occurring back on Earth, a game played between killers, a game whose architect has created a dream of red death drawing in the killers of the world to compete and spread their blend of supernatural horror in a howling tide of madness primed to push the world one step closer to a new Darkness. She would see it put to an end, or at least halted. And to that end, she has brought you to **The Pale** to give you a task:

Kill 10 killers of **The Shepherd's Game** and when that task is accomplished, you will be sent on your way, no strings attached. To facilitate this task, you are given a weapon of **Pale** material (a gun or a sword or some other weapon as is your preference), which rejects the supernatural ‘wonders’ of the world and enforces cold harsh banality where paranatural powers would seek to influence or gain purchase, as well as a **list of killers** whose names **The White Gaia** would have you cross out. Much like **The Shepherd's Game** above, the names on the list are random and may come in any combination (**See The Shepherd's Game list above for examples given of potential killers that may appear on your list**).

Upon the successful completion of your list, **The White Gaia** will immediately send you to the next world in your chain, but not before gifting you a miniature version of one of the many **White Machines** - The **White Machines** within **The Pale** are colossal apparatuses that are crucial for maintaining the physical laws and principles governing **The Pale**. The version you have been given however is a smaller replica, in the vein of the ones situated on Earth, where these terrestrial versions have a specific role in overseeing and managing certain unique earthly phenomena. And due to being made entirely out of **Pale** material, the **White Machine** exerts an effect that negates and refuses the influence of any supernatural power in its range of effect.

**(Note: Pale material only exerts its effects on non-approved channels of supernatural phenomena: things not approved by The Pale which violate the nature of Reality. Against certain supernatural effects that are completely within the bounds of existence (such as the nature of the Great Unconscious of all life) then The Pale and anything derived from it will have no effect).**

### **Modifiers**

**Hunted By The Shadows:** You feel that something within the darkness is hunting you, something that creeps into existence within even the dimmest shadows and instills in them a malicious loathing and yearning to rip away the breath of life that courses through you. You do

not know what The Thing In The Shadows is - perhaps an exopath, drawn by **The Shepherd's Game** and eager to cross you off their list, as you have seen the towering humanoid figure of it when light hits the shadows just right. But other times, you think it is some awful creature of the deep darkness from below the earth, as you have seen barbed hooked tendrils of suckling stinking darkness and mottled flesh that gouged into you and left searing scars where they passed. And yet more, the thing moves like a deep sea anemone - a fluttering mass of glowing orifices and jagged chains flowing from one dark expanse to another, never uniform and always in motion.

Whatever the true nature of the Thing, you know very well that it wants you dead. Stepping into any shadow risks it attacking and devouring you in an instant, and staying out at night is a guaranteed death sentence. You must always keep on the move and must never settle in any one location for very long.

**Horrors From The Coffins:** The town of Suttercraft is notorious for its bizarre black wooden coffins, with the most infamous of these being the Coffin of Iver's Green which stretches beneath the length of the entire town. Whilst it is unknown what slumbers in that colossal tomb, beyond the barest whispers from terrible dreams of something so old and so alien that it was already ageless when the Earth was nothing more than billowing dust, what is known is that whenever anyone or anything dies in the vicinity of Suttercraft, a new coffin appears - coffins full of Suttercraft's dead and departed, their souls taken upon the moment of death and warped into something unrecognizable, dreaming a dreamless sleep as they wait for the day they awaken again. Or at least, that's how the story goes.

Too bad for you that the stories turned out to be true. And worst yet, the coffins are following you - stalking you across the countryside are the terrible wooden boxes, who inevitably open to reveal things horrible beyond your ability to properly describe, awful ravenous things eager to rend you apart and add you to the aberrant darkness that they have become part of.

**Dead's Wake:** There are many varieties of Deadborne, that is the undead, that wander the post-noctum world. Whether they be the likes of the aberrant Dead Mind born of the hellish powers of the machine known as the Maelenjiin, the decaying Children of Black Helen, or the mighty Deadnaut, the undead of the world are a varied and terrifying force that torment all who are unfortunate enough to cross their path. And now, a whole host of the terrible creatures has risen up, spurred by the presence of so many deranged killers and determined to feast on the flesh (and perhaps more) of all in their path.

The longer you remain in a given area, the larger the number of Deadborne that will appear or manifest to attack you. There is no limit to how many of these creatures may appear to do you harm and the longer you go without finishing your List, the more dangerous their presence shall become.

**The Hell Seer's Gaze:** There is a silence that has Infected the world, a yawning emptiness eating everything away into nothingness, and there are those that serve that silence. You have

had the misfortune of drawing the attention of one such adherent to silence - a thin figure, dressed in rags standing in front of a towering ruined apartment building amidst a city. A pale man, dried blood and clouds of flies caking his lidded face. It was when you saw him open his eyes, and watched practically an entire block of buildings and stretches of street implode upon themselves into molten asphalt and fiery dust, that you understood that this was no man or anything human. Your inexplicable survival of the Seer's display of unearthly devastation drew his interest, "a spec of noise" that had managed to get away, and now it stalks you with the intent of finally reveling in your silence.

**\*The Hell Seer is a particular breed of ancient Heccan rarely seen in the modern-era of Maeltopia. Enigmatic and utterly vile, this entity possesses the power to destroy anything that falls within its line of sight, along with more indirect powers such as the ability to manifest through mere images or captures of areas in which its influence is present. Alongside its ability to destroy with its gaze however, the Hell Seer possesses an additional level of menace - catching a direct magnified glimpse into the Seer's eyes will directly expose the unlucky victim to the full depth of their contents: "visions of unending corpses on roiling seas, blood-red skies choked black with clouds, entire cityscapes covered in crawling darkness. A world of flies and blood—the seas, the clouds, the cities, all blanketed in a living skin of legs and wings. Visions infested the sniper's mind, a slideshow faster than thought with no screams, no whimpers or pleas, only silence. Boundless atrocities against countless souls, unspeakable horrors of a world ended, a wordless litany of the dead and damned, all conveyed in a soundless moment."** - The mere sight of such atrocities alone is enough to irreversibly destroy both mind and soul beyond any hope of salvation.

**\*Note that if you take the Lost In New Victoria modifier, then the Hell Seer will not begin his pursuit of you until *after* you have somehow managed to leave the grounds of the Nightmare City.**

**Lost In New Victoria:** Well before the onset of the Great Darkness, the entire city of Boston was destroyed in an event that would come to be known as "The Boston Tempest" or simply "The Great Tempest". From the ruins of what was once Boston emerged a new city entirely, what would be christened as New Victoria and for a time, there was a measure of normalcy. But shortly after its founding, New Victoria found itself suffering from the emergence of a slowly creeping horror - a plague of sleep affecting the denizens of the once flourishing city, drawing them into a deep slumber that other residents soon found it impossible to rouse them from as merely the first of many symptoms of the mysterious "Night Plague". Soon after, victims of the plague would engage in bizarre behaviors - sleepwalking, inciting riots, destructive actions taken to people and property, and much more as the sleeping sickness progressed. Finally, it was observed that the very flesh behind their eyelids would exude a haunting pale blue glow and their bodies would float off the ground and up into the skies surrounding New Victoria.

After all this became apparent, the Night Plague was considered a national threat and governments moved to close off and quarantine New Victoria away from the rest of the world.

Unbeknownst to all involved however, the plague of sleep that befell New Victoria was just a symptom of a far worse affliction - for the bodies of women both native to the city and those drawn into it from the outside were being unwittingly impregnated by entities from beyond the limits of human dreams that had come ravaging up from the depths of the Great Unconscious, the Wakeless, the beings who had taken the flesh of men and woman in the city for their own as the culminating stage of the Night Plague, and the spawn of these horrors emerging viscerally from the ruined sacks that were once their mothers were nothing less than nightmares given flesh, the stuff of Dreams incarnated into the physical world - the Marelings.

Now you have found yourself suddenly stranded in the midst of the towering disjointed and run-down architecture of the City That Always Sleeps, full of the unrestrained malice and murderous hungers of the Marelings and their Wakeless progenitors. And whilst you evade razor-toothed nightmares and their reality-perverting influences, the presence of the Wakeless and the very essence of the city itself constantly try to wear down your mind and soul - to fall asleep, so that something else may do what it pleases with your flesh and cast your soul adrift into endless nightmares. You must escape, no matter the cost.

**\*The longer you spend within the grounds of New Victoria, the more its influence increases and tries to push you into sleeping. Should you fall asleep, you will be pulled into the Nightmare side of the city where the Wakeless roam and hold sway alongside other entities, who will proceed to take over your physical body whilst tormenting and defining your dreaming mind/soul for all eternity and this will effectively constitute the end of your run on this Gauntlet**

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### **Drawbacks**

**\*You are free to take as many Drawbacks as you'd like, but Red and Pale Drawbacks may only be selected if you have taken this as a Gauntlet.**

**Dread In The Dark [+100 RF]** - Tall shadowy figures stalk in the undiminished night, their frames gangly looking and awful in the rare glimpses you catch of their hideous forms, the darkness obscuring their faces beyond ever-wide smiles of sharp teeth. Whenever you show even the slightest sign of possible vulnerability, these entities crawl out of the darkness to take advantage of it, eager to feed on both your weakness and your flesh. They are only banished back to their otherworldly domain when the light of morning rises once more, and even then only until night falls again.

**Laughing Mirage [+100 RF]** - A vaguely familiar shape stands in the gloom, watching you or following you around - it bears the faces of all your family members, everyone you've ever cared about, all the people you've failed to save, all the people you've had to kill. And it laughs. And when it's not laughing, it is mocking you for your failures or trying to push you further into guilt

and loathing. Nobody else can see it, which it takes great advantage of in order to make you come across as completely crazy to whatever allies you might manage to find. After all, its only goal is to drive you insane.

**Mounds Of Broken Bodies [+100 RF]** - The City of Nighthead has many urban legends, myths, and rumors of the strange and unnatural. One of these urban legends concerns a creature known as a "Deadbag" - the tale originates from the fact that following the Great Darkness of 1999, there were simply so many bodies that survivors had no idea where to store all of them. As a result, the corpses were tossed into large alleyways in an effort to clear the streets. It is this that is believed to have resulted in the spirits of those unfortunately discarded in this manner consolidating into the entity known as Deadbag - a large centipede-like mass composed of hundreds of body bags, moving about by arms and legs that have stretched and broken through the confines of their prison, now loose to wander the streets of the dark city and prey upon vagabonds and drunks in order to add more to its mass.

A similar, but distinct phenomenon has now decided to make you its target. The lingering resentment of every single person you have ever killed has resulted in their decaying aberrant flesh taking up a life of its own, emerging as a towering blob of flesh and bone and gristle devouring and assimilating everything in its path on its way to get to you, even inanimate objects and foliage. The more people you have ever slain in cold blood, the larger the initial mass of the horror - and for each future life you take, it acquires additional mass and power.

**Hounded By The Torturian [+100 RF]** - A Torturian is hunting you, a disgusting unnatural thing of rusted metal bent into the shape of a hound and powered only by the pain of those trapped within it, their bodies kept 'alive' and in constant unending pain thanks to the Scream Eaters' Limbo Elixir - the harsh yellow-substance enabling their unfortunate victims' souls to persist within their bodies regardless of the damage caused to them so that their pain may be drawn out over the course of years, centuries. The Scream Eater piloting said Torturian takes great pleasure in "hunting the strongest game" and is willing to toy with you for as long as it is amusing to him, letting you run away even when it has you dead to rights solely for the sake of letting you have the hope of growing strong enough to match it someday, the hope of emerging victorious against your pursuer. And when it finally breaks you and snuffs out that hope, it will make your screams all the sweeter.

**Flock Of Killers [+200 RF] - The Shepherd's Game** is the greatest gathering of killers from all over and whilst all of the neo-psychotics invested in it have their own philosophies and designs that invariably prove incompatible and contradictory to the point of conflict, occasional alliances and temporary fellowships have been observed occurring at several points. One such gathering has apparently formed specifically to bring about your end. None of the killers are on your list, but it's likely that you were on theirs - excluding those members who only joined because a "prophetic dream" told them about you and the critical importance of your death. Each of said killers is a master of their respective **Red Dreams** and can suspend physical matter and local reality in an area around them, as well as various unique abilities of their own formed from their particular brands of exopathy.

Even if you do manage to evade them, they instinctively know where you are - their dark dreams guiding them to your location - leaving you with the mounting choice to fight them head-on to end the hunt.

**Dark Rumbings Beneath [+200 RF]** - The ground beneath you groans and cracks upwards, as though something hideous and monstrous was churning beneath it - and that is exactly the case. Some horror from the earth below, a dweller of the deep places where light has no sway, has found itself drawn towards the surface by some irresistible sensation. That sensation being the bloodlust and bloodshed between killers. At random intervals, the entity may burst forth from the ground at the scene of intense showdowns between various exopaths or assorted neo-psychotics of similar caliber with the intent of slaughtering them and reveling in the carnage. And it is just as eager to slaughter you, if you're fool enough to still be nearby when it emerges.

Physically, the beast resembles a humongous assortment of various appendages and flesh-some arthropod, some reptilian, some like the scales and spines of fish, and others resembling no terrestrial life that you have ever seen. Physical and conventional harm, even the Red Dream-enhanced abilities of exopaths, is nigh-useless against the entity, as it is something to which pain is sensation - food and spice as one. The only way to successfully evade the creature is to either lure it away with a greater source of bloodshed or to simply avoid any area where killers may be present.

**Flesh Weaver's Symphony [+200 RF]** - You have fallen into the interests of a "Flesh Weaver" - a mountain-sized interstellar demonic spider whose chief focus is weaving (as the name would imply) the flesh of its victims into its webs and stringing them together. By its own admission, it had once covered entire stellar bodies with its webbing, drowned them in the sweet symphony of their entire civilizations screaming as one collective spanning distances unfathomable to the mind, but that was all before it arrived here and it simply hasn't had much to work with. But you, you will do quite nicely as its first new addition. Despite its sheer bulk, the entity has no issue creeping away through the deep under-darkness below the earth and sneaking upon you when you least expect it - its size and power making it very difficult to escape once it has you within its grip.

**Guidance Amidst The Dim [+200 RF]** - A voice speaks to you, amidst ghostly trees and pale woods, a figure of a strange mechanical woman of ticking clocks made of white gears and frigid banality. She tells you of a screaming choir of endless madness and turmoil, roiling over the world like a storm of incoherent insanity as it trails behind the psychotypes that spread over the world's surface like disease. And for whatever reason, it is now being drawn to you. Whilst she is well aware of what you are, even diminished and deprived of power, and quite blatantly disapproves of your existence if how her mechanical voice and ice-cold tone of frozen metal seem to sharpen when she addresses your nature, she has chosen to assist you whereas her mother refuses to - at least in the direct sense.

She tells you that the Dim is in pursuit of you. That it follows wherever the insanity plaguing the world can be found in sufficient amounts and whilst it would normally be weak and insubstantial still at this point, your presence has agitated it. Now, it creeps and builds up across the land and in places where you linger for too long alongside other killers. If you remain, then it will destroy you and anything else caught in its path. She urges you to finish whatever business you may have here and leave before the spreading Dim grows too powerful to contain.

**Music From Beyond [+300 RF]** - An odd hum buzzes through the air, the taste of copper tingling your mouth the longer you listen to it. It starts to make sense, a symphony darting through your body and bones, golden musical notes appearing within thin air and dancing about freely. And yet you can feel it - eating its way through you. Rewriting you, and making you a part of it. A sentient predatory memplex taking the form of unnatural music with no source. **The Music From Beyond** moves almost without purpose, but it absorbs anything that makes sound in its path, stealing their noises and Voices and adding them to itself - the rustling of trees, the chirping of birds, the slightest breaths, the beating of one's heart, even thoughts. All are swallowed up by the unearthly music.

The demonic song may be temporarily evaded by somehow managing to render yourself and all the natural sounds of both your body and mind, but it will always find you again given time - the enigmatic nightmare yearns to add you to its chorus above all else, though it will not mind eating whatever else ends up placed in front of it.

**Familiar Faces And Dire Threats [+300 RF]** - Have you made many enemies across Your travels? If you have then things will probably get very unpleasant for you in short order - the unconscious power of **The Shepherd** has led to all of your past enemies being returned to life as killers in **The Shepherd's Game**. The good news? Their names appear on your list and you can hunt them to cross their names off. The bad news? Not only do they retain all of their powers and abilities, but they also receive lists of their own and *you're* at the top of theirs. Happy hunting, wolf.

**The Hunting Houses [+300 RF]** - Hunting Houses - monstrous unnatural living houses that move and lure in new unsuspecting victims to devour wholesale - have started to be more of a threat, especially in the midst of the Great game of killers where being able to rest safely is a necessity if you don't wish to eventually get overwhelmed. Every house you enter from now on runs a risk of turning out to be a Hunting House, and if you step across its threshold, it will try to very swiftly entrap and devour you. Even escaping will not deter the monstrosities, as more and more will follow your unique 'scent' and will replace more homes around you until they can eventually ensnare you entirely.

**Labyrinth Of Dust [+400 RF]** - A large pallid labyrinth stretches out before you in your dreams, and within it you can feel the presence of some horrific beast, something that has turned the matter of **The Pale** into a den for its particular brand of entropy and decay. The **Pale** matter buckles under the weight of an unnatural force and it whispers into your mind to hunt the creature - a shadow festering on both the world and existence itself, a cross between a fetid

wolf and a man - before it can hunt **you**. The beast absorbs the skills of all those it kills, growing more and more powerful with each person it manages to kill - and much like you, it is hunting for the killers of the world, specifically to gain their strength for itself before it tracks you to make you the final addition to its 'completeness'. It believes that once it has killed you and absorbed your power, it will be free to walk across the worlds and spread death across the entire sweep of existence. An ever-growing nightmare blessed with the power to escape into all the places beyond.

**The House On A Thousand Corners [+400 RF]** - At nights, you can spot the dark apparition of the aptly named House on A Thousand Corners - a terrifying post-noctum legend. This abode is said to appear in towns all over the world, mysteriously appearing in places where there was never a house. It's been described as a large Victorian home, the interior lavish and gothic. The legend behind the House says that the house lures people into it, its strange placement and sudden appearance attracting the curious. Those who enter are said to be seduced by its elegance and mystery, causing them to wander its halls and spaces. All the bedrooms are said to contain the belongings and pictures of different people, supposedly individuals who had previously visited the house. But all this disguises the true horror of the house - These bedrooms are thought to be the captured souls of those who dared trespass into the house, never to leave the place again. Rumor says there are thousands of rooms in the house despite its seemingly finite size from the outside.

Apparently, rumor also happens to be fact more often than not in the post-noctum world. The demon house seems more than a little interested in you - it follows you across cities and towns, haunting the corners and places where you're *certain* no buildings were present before, its allure trying to draw you in. If it is ever successful, then you shall become another room lining the House's mysterious depths. Then it shall vanish, going out to haunt some other dark part of the world.

**Mr. Undercoat [+500 RF]** - Many people have had imaginary friends in their childhoods, friends or companions, children like them brought to life by their imaginations that they played and shared all the joy of life with. And many people have lost their imaginary friends, with no recollection of the moment when their friends had disappeared. But some, some can recall when they had lost their imaginary friends - when "Mr. Undercoat" came and took them. When he snatched them up and dragged them into his stinking coat of blackest darkness and they were never seen again. Often following these sudden recollections, the people in question mysteriously disappear themselves.

Mr. Undercoat itself is an enigmatic dark deity that snatches away the make-believe companions of people. The thing's moniker comes from the giant billowing coat it wears, where it supposedly keeps all the imaginary children it captures. Victims have claimed that it dragged their childhood friends into toy boxes, beneath beds, the hollows of trees, and other dark places. Then, they are made to forget. It now hunts for its next meal, eager to add more to those already trapped within. It will start with those that follow you, picking them off one-by-one and

making you forget until it finally starts to hunt you at last. The deity yearns for those you're attached to most of all, and will prioritize taking them first if at all possible.

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### **Perks**

**\*You are given two discounts for 200 RF Perks, and two discounts for 400 RF Perks.**

**\*Red Perks may not be taken without taking this in the Gauntlet mode.**

**Crimson Wish [Free]** - With the power of sheer will and focus, you can briefly suspend physical reality around you - not as well as an exopath could via the Red Dream for obvious reasons - but it enables you to force physical law to succumb to your desires for a minute or two. Your body can move faster and hit harder, bullets and blades reach farther and cut deeper than they naturally should, and wounds can either be totally ignored or simply regenerate much faster than they otherwise should.

**Dancing Amongst The Shadows [100 RF]** - The darkness twists around you, almost welcomingly. The shadows move at your will and can cloak and obscure you from notice by those less skilled in manipulating shadows, you may even compel them to engulf your enemies to drag them out into a territory where your control is at its strongest.

**\*This power is very unlikely to take more experienced Exopaths off-guard, and will have next-to-no-effect on most of the common variety Walks of Darkness.**

**Bones And Blood [100 RF]** - You have an uncanny knack for taking the remains of your enemies and fashioning crude, yet effective, weaponry from their flesh. In some cases, such as particularly potent psychotypes, you may even be able to draw out some of their power by instilling the new weapon with a portion of their essence - entrapping them within a prison of their own remains to be used as a tool to wage war against the rest of their kind.

**Grim Visions [200 RF]** - Your dreams flow like endless captures of their near future, ominous impressions of horror and fear having shaped them into representations of what awaits you amidst the darkness. Interpreting these surreal expressions of the surging unconscious is difficult, but once you have deciphered their inner meaning, you may then use them as a method of predicting events that have yet to befall you - enemies you may meet on your journey, places you may discover, dark secrets yet to be unearthed. In its own insane way, the darkness provides just as easily as it takes away.

**Waking Dream [200 RF]** - Not only have your dreams become terrors to haunt you, but so have you become a terror in and of yourself - something followed you up from the edges of sleep, the

thin boundary of waking and surface-level dream traveling, and now your shadow has become a reflection of whatever horror rose up from places not fathomed by the light of human reason or ordered reality. Around you, as long as you give the thing the order, the world may be temporarily subjected to the logic of a dream in a limited zone around you - melted and reformatted in accordance to what you want. Perhaps you desire a building to be made or unmade, or maybe you yearn to turn a train into a mass of mobile cotton-candy and bloody entrails. The sky is truly the limit, but only so long as you can maintain the focus necessary to direct the thing.

**Wandered Through The Darkness [200 RF]** - The shadows trust and welcome you enough now that you may use them as a quick and dirty means of transportation. As long as you have a clear image of somewhere you want to go in the world and as long as there are necessary shadows to transport you to and from your destination, you can go there. The more experience you have with manipulating shadows, the easier it is to move between them.

**Unfeeling Radiance [300 RF]** - An icy chill flows through your bones, radiating up from the very roots of your soul. The touch of **The Pale** is upon and within you, its mark enabling you to express a 'field' of raw concentrated Newtonian-logic enforcing banality - pushing away or outright denying the existence of the supernatural to let nature and the order of the world reassert itself. It is a feeling that you cannot quite describe, sourced from a power whose reckoning and motives are beyond simple comprehension.

**The Destruction Of Causality [300 RF]** - Many people have their own takes as to what constitutes magic and many systems exist, many of which are mutually incompatible when they're not totally anathema to one another. But the simplest way to define it is thus: Magic is the destruction of causality. As you draw upon its power, you feel the ability to defy the powers of a world once thought unbreakable - by moving at cross-purposes along a paradigm it cannot anticipate. Turning things into inanimate objects, moving through inexplicable doorways and tunnels, exploding then reappearing somewhere else completely unharmed, etc. All of these are just minor examples of what your magic can do now that you can touch and feel it as you now do.

**Fury Of The Unshackled Flesh [300 RF]** - Bodies are said to be just shells containing dreams, dreams that yearn to be free of their limitations, free of the structures of an orderly dead world that seeks to confine and restrain them. To unchain one's dreams from flesh is, in the eyes of a wide variety of psychotypes, their sole purpose in this world - to unshackle creation from the scripture of sanity and logic. And now, you can briefly tear down the boundaries between your flesh and the dreams that pulse just below, enabling you to shift and warp your form in impossible ways. Sometimes you may grow scales hard enough to tank artillery fire, other times multiple mouths may sprout from the canvas of your body to bite and consume anything next to you, perhaps you may grow eyes to launch bursts of superheated pus at distant foes, and other accursed details dreamt up by a mind touched by dreams unhindered.

**The Paths Of A Wanderer Slumbering [400 RF]** - The line between what is 'real' and what is 'dream' has always been a thing of debate amongst those more attuned to the unordered sides of the world, where sleep is not as restrictive and where thoughts have their greatest power. It is as you sleep that your unrestricted mind and your body are truly attuned - your thoughts become able to influence the world to greater degrees than you previously imagined, the ability to invert a person's flesh and blood - to make their insides their outsides or cause their brain to burst from the outside of their skull, that power is yours. The ability to transport yourself to specific physical locations simply by searching for the strongest 'dream' of a nearby area is likewise a powerful skill now within your repertoire. You can move between the dreams of people within range of you, perceiving and influencing them in your own unique ways, you may even alter them to allow for specific moments to shine brightest or turn them into harrowing nightmares to drive their victims to the depths of paranoia. You may even converse with these dreamers by trying to present yourself as just a figment of their dream if you wish, though experienced dreamcatchers can suss you out and exopaths will always know of your presence within their dreams.

**Patterns In The Carnage [400 RF]** - You have a fine nose, some would argue too fine. You can smell the details of a scene just by picking up the whiffs of bloodshed, of focused manifest violence that occurred there. And those details become clearer the stronger the amount of violent devastation there is, the amount of blood that was shed in a place. You can pick out names, personalities, even whole faces and builds just based on the whiff of a few droplets of blood in a crime scene or the scene of a brawl. You can even put together motivations and reasoning behind the events given enough time and if there's enough violence in the air to give you the clear picture.

**The Ferocity Of A Starving Wolf [400 RF]** - You've been touched by the **Reddest Dream** more than you'd ever like to admit. Bristling fur crowds the underside of your arms and legs, hugging your skin and shifting around beneath your clothes. Teeth and fangs grow in your mouth, or beneath your skin, tearing out of your flesh and limbs in places where teeth shouldn't be. Muscle builds up, packing on seemingly overnight and you're more than strong enough to crush stone formations into powder in a single punch or leap and race hundreds of meters in single bounds, and you're only growing stronger with time. But worst of all is the hunger - the gnawing incessant hunger, not for flesh and blood on their own no, but the raw hunger to partake in carnage in all its forms. To murder, to kill, to spread depravity around with your fellow **Wolves**. It is a need for the hunt.

**Red Dream [500 RF]** - The ultimate manifestation of an exopath's ability to twist the world around them, the Red Dream dyes the world in the crimson hues of their specific brand of exopathy, suspending the laws of physics in their entirety around them to allow the exopath in question to work their specific brand of corrosive reality-reordering. A localized breakdown of physical law can let already potent exopaths, naturally capable of doing things like building Elaborate labyrinths inhabited by monstrous beasts or infinitely extending distances into endless unreachable horizons, become all the more lethal by making the world of matter that so staunchly restrains them buckle and bend to inherent insanity for but a moment - and a moment

is all that's needed for all that power to come rushing forth in a tidal wave to wash away all sense.

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### Items

**Zeppelin [100 RF]** - Following the Great Darkness, your average commercial airliner very swiftly went out of use following...incidents involving traveling through the skies of the post-noctum world. To rectify this, reinforced and enhanced (sometimes in specific paranatural ways) Zeppelin swiftly came surging back into prominence as the premiere way to travel in a world barely scraping itself out from total madness. And now, you get one of your own for you (and anyone else you may take along) to travel in. Just be mindful that you don't run into any ominous black-colored Zeppelin when flying around. Or giant flying demonic sharks.

**A Chunk Of Raw Pale Matter [100 RF]** - A chunk of unshaped **Pale** matter, weighing almost a ton and radiating the same field of ice-cold logic and physics-enforcing law, straddling the line between simply enforcing things to conform to the laws of a Newtonian reality and sheer crushing banality. Supernatural effects in the vicinity of the stuff are dampened and weakened to the point of being borderline crippled, when they aren't rejected outright. You have no idea how to shape it into anything else, but it makes a pretty decent deterrent for anything hostile that might try to eat your face.

**\*The rules governing this chunk of Pale matter are the same as detailed above in A Pale Path.**

**A Flame Of Old Autumn [200 RF]** - A flame thought to be sourced from the September Woods, speculated to be the lingering essence of one of the Old Bloods of all things, the protectors of the woods and nature spirits who defend the emergent natural balance of the beings that arose in the wake of **The First Darkness**. It feels heavy whenever you carry it, bearing with it the weight of ages untold, but the power within it burns unbridled. On its own it is merely a little flame, but against the creatures of darkness, its true nature reasserts itself and it roars as a raging tempest of orange fire to engulf the things that would violate the natural sanctity of the world.

**Hungry Bones [200 RF]** - A bag full of bones, haunted by the restless and starving souls of their long-deceased owners. The bones yearn to add more to themselves and will rattle and shake in their excitement as a sign that something that has drawn their interest is nearby, acting as a tracker for notable individuals that the bones wish to add to themselves. You may even use the bones as a means of tracking Deadborne, as the bones grow viciously agitated - perhaps even scared - whenever the likes of those entities stray nearby.

**Whispering Dagger [300 RF]** - A blade made from impossibly ossified tissue and which glows with a strange light when viewed from the right angle. The thing the dagger was made from was never human and longs for the taste of a physical form once again and is eager to use you to achieve that, whether by whispering into your mind in a bid to get you to give up your own or guiding you to potential opponents that the blade may slake itself on. Each victim the blade kills increases its power and its abilities to alter the world around it, affecting people's perceptions of you or letting it control minds from a distance or even possess recently deceased bodies, but each kill also makes its whispers and insane demands harder and harder to ignore.

**Soul-Hunting Guns [300 RF]** - A pair of jet-black pistols that not only seem to possess an infinite amount of ammo, but also hold bullets capable of damaging things down to their very souls - literally. Each bullet shreds off a part of the target's soul when they hit, and enough of them (or just one well-placed shot if you're dealing with a normal human) can 'kill' the soul itself, seemingly causing it to vanish entirely even from most means of spiritual detection. Only faint traces that a soul once existed can be spotted if one is advanced enough in soul scrying- an unfortunate fate that renders questioning the victim, alive or dead, a rather fruitless endeavor. **\*Note that on larger targets with significantly larger souls or entities with no souls at all (e.g. Most Walks of Darkness, any entity of The Pale, etc) these guns will either be \*highly\* ineffective to outright having no effect at all.**

**Incandescent Blade [400 RF]** - A blade so steeped in the vicious power of fearsome dreams and soul-searing revelations that it is constantly alight with constantly shifting flames. To be stabbed or cut by this blade is to experience all the raw intensity and anguish from the dreams and dreamers it was born from, which is a level of intense sensation enough to drive one mad and kill all on its own. The blade also constantly melts and drips of parts of itself, which can be compelled and manipulated to stretch along the ground and ensnare others in the roiling flames emerging from the nightmare weapon.

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### Companions

**You may freely import any companion in the Gauntlet mode, but keep in mind that they will lose all access to their powers just like you and they will not be getting any free Items or abilities of their own - on top of that, they will most likely be easy targets for anything that tries to come after you.**

**Companion Import/Creation [100 RF]** - With a purchase of this, you may freely import or create up to three different Companions to accompany you, giving them 500 **Red Fangs** to spend as well as the Crimson Wish perk. You may choose to recruit three additional

non-exopath people from this setting as well for the same price but they will not gain any **Red Fangs** or additional abilities, but will retain whatever abilities and skills they had prior.

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### **Notes & General Terms**

**These constitute information that is mostly unavailable to you but which informs the very nature of the world of Maeltopia.**

**Great Darkness:** A strange enigmatic phenomenon that occurred in the year 1999, in which all of humanity went into a state of total and absolute madness, and through which numerous unnatural and preternatural events, objects, places, and more appeared which would come to be termed "Obscurum" in reference to their mysterious Darkness-derived origins. No one remembers the exact details of the Great Darkness, but the mark and effects it left on the global populace have been made very apparent with the rise of innumerable neo-psychotics of all stripes from exopaths, to hypnopaths, to white wigs, and more beyond.

**White Gaia:** The "**White Gaia**" is a mysterious deity that has manifested before the 'Family Man Killer' and Isaiah Stroud. Seemingly presiding over the mundane, she tends to favor the cold, methodical operations of a clockwork Newtonian world. Her embodiment is portrayed as an obese pallid woman in the process of decay, with gears and rotors purring beneath her putrid flesh.

She is often found amidst the expansive wilderness of ghostly trees and has endeavored to inhibit the bizarre phenomena triggered by the Great Darkness, including its harbingers and benefactors. Though her motives remain elusive, it's unequivocal that she is a nemesis of the supernatural, favoring the ordinary aspects of our preexisting reality.

**Automa:** **Automa, the Lady of the White Clock**, is the progeny of the **White Gaia** and embodies the forces of banality and strict physics. Unlike her mother, she inhabits the Earth, interacting with humans and other beings, aiming to effect changes from within rather than without. Her paramount objective is to purge the world of its wonder, to eliminate those who would shatter the status quo. An entity of laws and inflexible principles, her motivations, while largely obscured, appear to be focused on thwarting another great Darkness.

**New Victoria:** The City That Always Sleeps, borne from the remains of Old Boston and the originator of the Night Plague. Now nothing more than a beachhead for the Wakeless and their Mareling spawn to conduct their war against waking - though certain upheavals within the city of nightmares have called into question just how unified a front the Wakeless and Marelings truly represent.

**Wakeless:** The Wakeless are a sinister race of beings originating from a realm within the Great Unconscious known as the Harrows. They infiltrate our world through dreams, haunting humans with the most terrifying of nightmares. Gradually, they manage to possess the slumbering bodies of their targets, gaining the ability to traverse the Earth and manipulate reality in the same way as they would a dream. Other Wakeless entities can impregnate women during their dreams, leading these women to ultimately give birth to living nightmares called Marelings. The city of New Victoria, formerly known as Old Boston, has become the terrestrial stronghold of the Wakeless and the Marelings, and currently remains isolated from the rest of the world.

In combat, the Wakeless may directly channel the boundless powers of the Harrows into a specific form known as "The Harrowing" to annihilate their foes.

**Marelings:** Nightmare creatures born through the unwilling impregnation of human women by the Wakeless, each Mareling is a nightmare given flesh and often assume forms based on the common fears of humanity.

**Mythra:** The Mythra are a pre-historic race of godlike entities thought to be the source of all human life. They wore gold masks to conceal faces that were so beautiful they could drive onlookers mad. The Mythra originally existed in the point predating our known creation, before existence as a whole had come about - but the actions of Essiah, the First of the Fallen, shattered and tainted the Spheres and not only led to the First Darkness, also known as the **Tanin Fall**, and the malignant influences of **Those From Below** being allowed far more purchase, but it also resulted in the start of creation as we would understand it.

**The Arithym/Arathym:** An ancient race thought to have died out eons ago, the Arathym are the fallen Mythra who fell alongside Essiah, who was considered the first and greatest amongst their number. Corrupted by their contacts with The Great Below, the Arithym were the tainted Mythra who survived the Tanin Fall, also known as the First Darkness. Much about these beings remains shrouded in mystery, but they were notorious for wearing demonic masks that concealed their horrifying faces, visages so dreadful that merely looking upon them induced madness. The Arithym, now believed to be extinct, frequently used serpent lines to conjure dark energies and spawn malicious creatures and beasts. Sometimes, they would employ dark technologies to harness energies from various bogias, embodying their power. Little is known about the Arithym's demise, but the shadow of their existence lingers.

**Unduur:** The mythical ancient city believed to be lying deep beneath the metropolis of Nighthead, Unduur is believed to have existed within the First Darkness, which predated the existence of everything as we currently understand it. The inhabitants of Unduur are said to be incapable of surviving in light or even normal darkness, so they must wear large suits designed to funnel that ancient darkness if they wish to walk upon the surface.

**The Great Below: GERUZELAH** (Otherwise known as Hell), the other name for the Great Below. The home of the Unbegotten.

**Bolgia:** Alien dimensions of absolute evil, Bolgias are utterly inhospitable to any standard of life as we would comprehend the term and are typically home to various Walks of Darkness. Many Bolgias often have an Unbegotten that presides over them.

**Unbegotten:** A member of **Those From Below**, the Unbegotten perhaps constitute the greatest known threats to existence and a single one stepping free would spell the end of all creation as the Unbegotten in question would then become all of creation. Mercifully, the majority of the known Unbegotten are ensconced within their Bolgias and cannot easily enter the world proper.

**Known Unbegotten Include:** **The Shepherd Of Wolves**, **Sathoniss**, **Shuggorinn**, **The Voice Of A Thousand Screams**, **The Bottomless Hunger**, **The Unbegotten Of Despair**

**Shepherd Of Wolves:** The Unbegotten of Murder - **the Shepherd of Wolves** - beckons the world's most infamous killers to partake in his ominous game. This competition is a test of cunning, a spectacle of bloodshed and death, where one killer stalks another until only one remains standing. The number of times this game has been played remains a mystery, but rumors suggest that murderers have been drawn into this crimson sport for thousands of years. However, the true motive of the **Shepherd**, whether this is just a game for his amusement or if there are deeper machinations at play, is shrouded in uncertainty. Also cloaked in mystery is the prize that awaits the victor of this deadly contest.

**Bolgia Of Screams:** The Bolgia of the Scream Eaters, a dimension of pure pain and suffering where the Scream Eaters feed off of the agony of their victims. It may only be accessed through **The Wailing Gates** which can only manifest when sufficient pain and anguish is invoked from a specific individual/individuals.

**Dim:** The Dim is a somewhat recent post-noctum phenomenon that is poorly understood. It is thought to be a wandering manifestation of humankind's progressive insanity. It materializes as a storm of warped reality, where the laws of physics and rational thought are violated in the most disturbing ways. It is often accompanied by thousands of insanity-inflicted faces appearing in the sky, disembodied voices, and gross contortions of local physical reality. Those caught in the Dim are driven mad or physically annihilated. Some have reported that the Dim is attracted to the various psychotypes now inhabiting the world- exopaths, hypnopaths, neopaths, white wigs, etc. However, nobody knows how or why the Dim manifested, only that it seems to grow larger and more powerful as time progresses.

**Tortuaries:** "Tortuaries" are the machines by which Scream Eaters distill pain. These are nether-mechanical devices that can be the size of a large dresser to the size of a building. The Scream Eaters put their victims inside the machine to suffer unspeakable pain. To keep their victims alive longer, the Tortuaries often administer the "Limbo Elixir," which stops the soul from leaving the body. This way, the Scream Eaters can prolong their victim's anguish and feed longer. The Bolgia of Screams - the home of the Scream Eaters - is said to possess Tortuaries the size of cities.

**Torturians:** The Scream Eaters use weaponized Tortuaries ("Torturians") to assault their enemies. The machines contain "pain" batteries - internal chambers containing tortured individuals that serve as the machines' energy source.

**Hunting Houses:** The "Hunting Houses" are living predatory houses rumored to hunt and capture human victims. Little is known what they do with their new occupants, however. Some believe they use them as decoys to lure others into the sentient abode. Others believe that there is a whole city of such houses, and that it roams the world, hunting.

**Voice Of A Thousand Screams:** **The Voice of a Thousand Screams** is the Unbegotten of the Scream Eaters, dwelling deep in the bolgia of screams. It wishes to usher in a universe of pure suffering, where shrieks replace the quiet of space and agony burns as bright as the stars. The cosmic disembodied voice lacks a physical form but utilizes the suffering of others as vessels to communicate its harrowing proclamations. Its haunting voice can sometimes be heard echoing from the nine Great Tortuaries, speaking through the countless wails emanating from them. Occasionally, it visits those who evoke substantial suffering on Earth, extending an invitation to become one of its children and consume the agony of the world.

**Tanin:** According to the Dark Scholars, the Tanin are an ancient race of behemoth creatures that once roamed the earth. These entities were believed to dwell on Dragon Lines, which are understood as geometric alignments of local energies. The creatures drew sustenance from these energies.

Many academics and mystics are of the view that the Hebrews and Canaanites had knowledge of these beasts. In fact, it's posited that numerous cultures may have had different names for them. For instance, in Judeo-Christian apocalypse lore, they are referred to as Leviathan and Behemoth. Nordic traditions speak of the Midgard Serpent - a gigantic serpent that encircles the earth. Greek mythology presents the Hydra, Typhon, Echidna, and the Titans. These depictions may have been different cultures' attempts to understand these massive creatures.

However, the Dark Scholars currently face the enigma of the whereabouts of these creatures. Some hypothesize that they were exterminated by other subterranean races, such as the Bae'ulle. Others theorize that they either departed or were displaced, with the energies of the ley lines serving as portals to other realms.

**Maelenjiin:** The Maelenjiin is a machine steeped in the supernatural, allegedly discovered by the Germans before the World Wars. Following World War II's conclusion, rumors circulated that the enigmatic device was confiscated by the Allied forces. The true nature of this peculiar machine remains a mystery; however, it is believed to bestow immense power upon those who dare to enter, albeit at a terrible cost. This has led to its chilling alternative name - the Damnation Machine.

Composed not just of unidentifiable metals and intricate electronics, the Maelenjiin is also said to incorporate enormous bones and what appear to be alien organics. This has spurred

speculation that its construction involved parts from a deceased eldritch deity, or, as another theory suggests, it originated from another infernal dimension. While the veracity of these claims is still up for debate, a segment of the populace contends it's all part of a vast governmental cover-up. Yet, the mysteries surrounding the Maelenjiin continue to spark intrigue and foster conjecture among those who seek the truth.

**Shuggorinn: Shuggorinn, the Dream Eater**, is often ominously referred to as "God's Nightmare". This enigmatic entity is deemed the Unbegotten Sovereign of Nightmares. Reigning as the deity of the Wakeless, **Shuggorinn** holds sway over the sinister beings that have taken control of New Victoria.

**Shuggorinn** dwells in the boundless realm of the Great Unconscious, ensconced within an enigmatic domain known as "The Harrows". Here, in this shadowy abyss, Shuggorinn harbors dark ambitions to cross over into our realm, leading its nightmarish brood with it.

Should **Shuggorinn's** grim design come to fruition, the consequences would be cataclysmic. The world as we know it would be plunged into a twisted, nightmare-infused reality; an abyss from which humanity may never awaken. Within this darkened existence, mankind would find itself eternally ensnared in a labyrinth of their worst fears, where hope is but a distant memory.