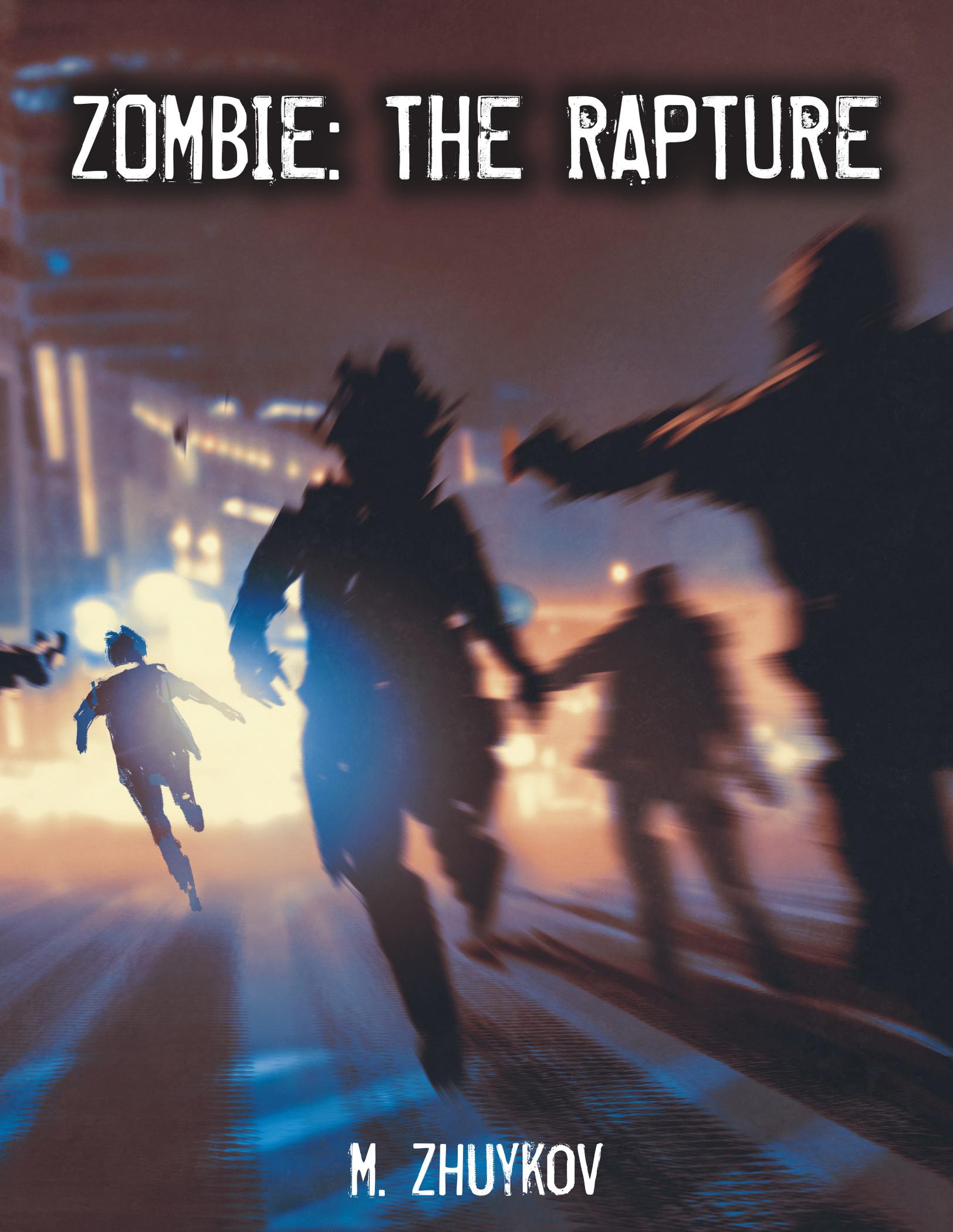


ZOMBIE: THE RAPTURE



M. ZHUYKOV



ZOMBIE: THE RAPTURE

Written by M. Zhuykov

When Zach Snyder closed his *Army of the Dead* (2021) with *Zombie by The Cranberries*, everyone groaned. A song about how trauma, combat, and generations of pain create zombies out of innocent people had been transformed into a pun to end another overplayed entry in an overplayed type of film. The Zombie Genre has stagnated. Walking ghouls that feast on the flesh of the living became oversaturated eight years ago – now, they’re just overplayed.

Frank Darabont said it best in an interview with *The Quarter Bin* – “Now it’s like Grandma goes to the [bookstore] and buys the *Zombie Survival Guide* joke book for her grandchildren, and it’s become so mainstream...” – and that’s the truth. The mainstream has explored Zombies as everything from flesh-eaters to symbols for empty-headed consumerism. The well has run dry – and the genre has become a metaphorical zombie in and of itself, staggering on without any clear goal or purpose. This game doesn’t seek to change that – at least, in the sense of Zombies being flesh-eaters and mindless cannibals. That story has been told time and time again. This is a story about Zombies as tragic protagonists – monsters born out of instinct, detachment, and fear more than anything else. Themes of depersonalization from loss – this is a game about a dark pit, and climbing out of it somehow. It’s a game about Trauma, dealing with violence, and living in a traumatized world.

When Zach Snyder used *Zombie* to close *Army of the Dead*, it was probably born out of a production meeting. The song still moves units – and it’s named after a *Zombie*. It’s a match made in heaven. But the truth is that Snyder never intended to engage with the song, or the meaning behind why the singer believes the listener is being turned into a *Zombie*. This is a game that will engage with that idea – and draw direct parallels between the trauma of something as supernatural and comic-book as a *Zombie* apocalypse, and draw it directly to real-world violence and pain, and how being deprived of the things we define ourselves with – our belongings, our friends, our family, and our lives – can make *Zombies* of us all.

“ONE DAY THEY MIGHT REMIND US WHO WE USED TO BE, AND WHO WE TRIED TO BE, AND THAT RECOLLECTION COULD SAVE THE WORLD.”

– George A. Romero, *The Living Dead*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - OUTBREAK - P4

Describing the basics and setting of Zombie: the Rapture, as well as an overview of the antagonists of a Zombie story.

CHAPTER TWO - ARISEN - P11

Describing Zombies, including deeper information on The Rapture.

CHAPTER THREE - BREATH OF LIFE - P19

Describing the process of creating Player Characters.

CHAPTER FOUR - PROFANITIES - P31

Describing the many strange powers and abilities available to Zombies in Zombie: the Rapture.

CHAPTER FIVE - BELLY OF THE BEAST - P59

Describing the mechanics of Zombies, Hordes, and the various things that they are capable of.

CHAPTER SIX - STORYTELLING - P73

A few miscellaneous tips and ideas to inform a Storyteller setting out to run Zombie: the Rapture.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Hi there! It's me, Misha. I wrote this joint!

If you're reading this, congratulations - this is the first edition of *Zombie: the Rapture* - written, edited, laid out, and published by yours truly. This book is intended to be 100% free, and is a derivative fanwork of the universe created by White Wolf Publishing in the late 1980's. I've always been a huge fan of White Wolf games - they were my introduction to tabletop roleplaying, and were an amazing creative outlet for me growing up. I still have fond memories of my first Vampire - a Gangrel wrapped in bandages who looked like Kakashi from *Naruto*. Yeesh, those were some cringy times. Still, it was the coolest shit in the world - who doesn't want to be a fuck-mothering Vampire?

As I've gotten older, I've been able to more critically analyze and dissect White Wolf's books. The things in them that work - and, more importantly, the things that don't work. The concepts of White Wolf's books always got me so excited - in this one, you can learn how to make a Vampire that has meat magic. In this one, you can play a Vampire that can shoot lightning bolts out of his dick. Pretty cool stuff. But I always felt like there was a conflict of identity. White Wolf didn't really want you to play the Vampire who shoots lightning bolts out of his dick - they just wanted you to know that he exists.

I don't want to turn this into a diatribe against White Wolf. Despite their faults - and they certainly have those - the people who have worked for and on White Wolf products over the years have created a legacy that leads us to play these games to this day. It's just that I feel like books in the *World of Darkness* became too reverent of maintaining the world, and the 'realism' of playing a flying Vampire wizard who you would like to shoot lightning out of his dick, but the Storyteller won't let you.

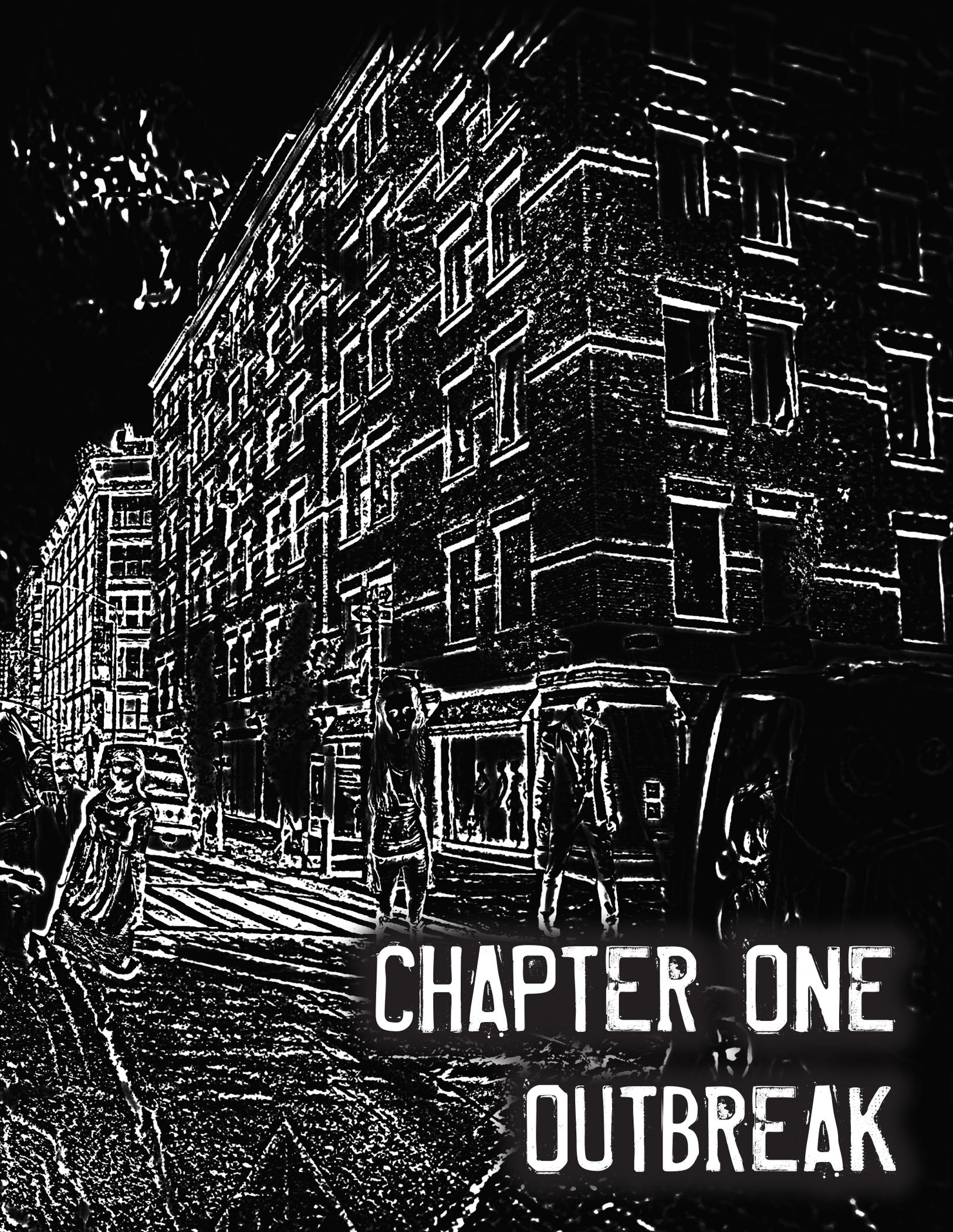
It's with this perspective, and a genuine love and adoration for *Zombie* media that I approach *Rapture*. I owe so much to the people who came before me - Daniel Solis created a *Zombie* line for the *World of Darkness* called *Zombie: the Coil*, and I highly recommend you read his book to get more of a *World of Darkness* take on *Zombies*.

Here, my goal is to give you a *Zombie* take on *World of Darkness*. *Zombies* are loud - they work best in the *Apocalypse*, amidst burning cities and end-times. They mean something. The dead are trying to speak to us, and we can choose to listen, or fail to at our own peril.

This book is a toolkit. It's a messy conglomeration of ideas that may or may not work perfectly. It's a love letter to the ideas behind classic *Zombie* fiction and older ghost stories. It's everything I want it to be. God DAMN does that feel good to say.

Finally, I want to offer a very special thank you to every member of *The Sixth Age*, and everyone on the official *Princess: the Hopeful Discord* server who provided me with valuable guidance and advice during the creation of this book. This one's for you.





CHAPTER ONE
OUTBREAK

“MY STORIES ARE ABOUT HUMANS AND HOW THEY REACT, OR FAIL TO REACT, OR REACT STUPIDLY. I’M POINTING THE FINGER AT US, NOT AT THE ZOMBIES. I TRY TO RESPECT AND SYMPATHIZE WITH THE ZOMBIES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.”

– *George A. Romero*

WHAT IS A ZOMBIE?

A zombie is someone who once was. A zombie is a person who has lost their humanity – or, more aptly, has had it ripped from them. There’s a scene in *Dawn of the Dead* where one of the main characters locks eyes with a zombie through the glass – she doesn’t see a gnashing, hungry monster. She sees someone who’s lost staring back. Someone with a distant, sad relation to their humanity – someone that’s had everything consumed but old instincts to wander a shopping mall, and the basest instinct to feed. This is the essence of what *Zombie: The Rapture* is trying to explore.

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

Respect is a large part of *Zombie: The Rapture*. In our game, Zombies are our player characters. They don’t just represent supernatural flesh-eaters – they represent refugees trapped in warzones, they represent the desecration of human bodies, they represent a callous disregard for human life. They represent victims of the conflict; that the majority of them spread violence is not their fault. This is not to blame their victims – who may very well rise as Zombies themselves – but to establish that cycles of violence are more complex than binary equations of good and evil. As a society, we’re quick to create and blame evils on the direct perpetrators – Zombies are the bad guys, they need to be shot. In this sense, *Rapture*, like many *Zombie* films before it, is a means to examine the flaws in our own society, from high-ended ideals of crime and punishment to baser human response to strange and stressful times.

In *Stiff*, by Mary Roach, she discusses the things that happen to human bodies after we die: not only decomposition, but how society deals with the dead. Burial rituals and caring for the dead are part of every civilization and society on the face of the planet, just as callous disregard for the dead and violence towards those who were is a part of every war. Roach concludes that what we do with the dead is not necessarily for them – after all, they’re dead. It is for us, the living. What does it say about our

world when the dead are heaped in mass graves, or left to lie where they fell? Caitlin Doughty once said, “A corpse doesn’t need you to remember it. In fact, it doesn’t need anything anymore-it’s more than happy to lie there and rot away. It is you who needs the corpse. Looking at the body you understand the person is gone, no longer an active player in the game of life. Looking at the body you see yourself, and you know that you, too, will die. The visual is a call to self-awareness. It is the beginning of wisdom.” And thus, when we leave bodies to rot – we leave ourselves to rot, too. The zombies are not villains in this story. They are reflections of our world - and if they seem villainous, know that they merely reflect the bleak and dismal violence that our society has perpetrated without reprisal.

WHO’S TO BLAME?

So, who are the villains of a Zombie story? Well, that’s the trouble – your villains in this game are all-encompassing and monolithic. They’re human ideas and prejudices. There’s no easy scapegoat like Pentex that encompasses all of human greed and hatred, nor are there two sides of the coin – the thing that is happening is wretched, horrible, and there’s no way around it. But finding someone to blame is difficult.

ZOMBIES AS THE VILLAIN

As above, Zombies are an easy villain to cast – they’re mindless, savage, and absolutely merciless. We have established that Zombies are victims – but this does not mean that they cannot be villainous. The average Husk doesn’t make for a great villain – but what about Brights like the player characters? Remember – these characters might be victims, but they can still perpetrate and seek to perpetrate terrible evils. Pass whatever judgement you wish – but they must be stopped. In this context, it’s often best to explore them as extensions of the greater crimes being committed in the setting. Later in this book, we’ll discuss the possible role of Zombies as avengers - what happens when vengeance is misguided?

HUMANS AS THE VILLAIN

Individual humans can very well be the villains of a Zombie story. Much like the Zombies, however – their evils must be symbolic. After all, who in their right mind wouldn’t grab a gun and defend themselves and their family during an epidemic of flesh-eating cannibals? Even on the offense – who wouldn’t want to reclaim what once was? The truth is that these people are as much Zombies as our Bright protagonists – they’re forced to fight and survive on a primal level. Zombie media has dealt with this topic to death – and Romero’s quote to open this chapter sums up the messaging here perfectly. The zombies, at least the Husks, are incidental to the central human conflict. In a stage play, they’re our Chorus – they’re the Witches that watch Macbeth and bring up toil and trouble. They exist as divine agents of change within the story – and yet their actions only truly come into play during the third act or so.

Since the player Brights are more capable and more independent, they can take a more active role in the story. They represent the supernatural and dark – coming from the world that humans desperately do not want to be a part of. They can represent things similar to the Ghosts in A Christmas Carol – bearers of grave warnings and agents of death. Or – they can represent things like the Maitlands from Beetlejuice – dark, frightening characters that can unlock wisdom for those who are just willing to extend a hand and listen. Finally, the player characters can themselves play the role of villains in this story - and represent something more tragic and sinister.

In I Am Legend (2007), Robert Neville is one of the last survivors of the Zombie Apocalypse that has swept the world – exploring by day, and hiding in fear by night of the terrifying plaguebearers who roam the streets. When he discovers a little girl and her mother who seem to be immune, he decides to save their lives, no matter the cost. At the end of the film, he finds himself cornered in his laboratory, surrounded by the walking dead. In the film’s theatrical ending, Neville pulls the pin on a hand grenade and blows himself up – killing both himself and the zombies just as they reach out to devour him, saving the fate of humanity. He is the Legend that saves the fate of humanity. In this ending, the Zombies purely serve as villainous entities – and the humans as heroic. And this is valid approach for a Zombie chronicle. Zombies are brutal and even Bright zombies can succumb or choose to partake in The Rapture, forcing their destruction.

In the film’s alternate ending, Neville realizes that the Zombies don’t intend to kill him at all. They want to recover one of the victims that he had stolen from them earlier. Neville realizes that in kidnapping and experimenting on the Zombies, he had become the nightmarish Legend – and chooses to make peace with the former humans. This ending was later rejected because test audiences found it too unexplainable. Why would the main character not want to blow them up in a heroic blaze of glory? Why, indeed.

ORGANIZATIONS AS THE VILLAIN

Organizations are larger than humanity – but perplexingly enough, they are never above it. The greed of one corporate banker is remarkably petty when divorced of a brokerage – but it can create calamity and terror the world over if paired with willing accomplices and governments that can turn a blind eye. These organizations can form a strong basis of a Zombie chronicle. Anthropomorphizing these entities is, then, quite tempting – and may be the correct choice.

Anthropomorphizing is the process of applying human traits to a large object and entity – in terms, creating them as a villain and representative of something darker and more sinister. The Resident Evil series has done wonders with doing this – anyone who plays video games for fun can tell you what the Umbrella symbol is. It represents corporate violence, heartless experimentation, and heartless bureaucracy – and every single protagonist of every single Resident Evil game fights against these greater notions, often couched in

Umbrella, representatives of Umbrella, or organizations that are similar to Umbrella.

Our heroes – the Brights – are similarly capable of battling antagonists like Umbrella, or the military, or anybody else. The question is: do we anthropomorphize our villains or not? Do we create an evocative villain like Umbrella that our protagonists can achieve tangible victories against? This might be good on paper – but the truth is, much like the Resident Evil games, this goal can start to make victories themselves feel hollow. After over sixteen games in the franchise, one has to ask – is it possible to defeat the evil corporation? Or will there always be an evil, greedy, amoral group looking to profit off of the horrors brewed up in dark labs and corporate boardrooms? And if so, is it wrong to even give the players the comfort of victory, in place of telling a more direct parable that addresses the futility and challenge of struggling against human evils?

SUPERNATURALS AS THE VILLAIN

What do other supernaturals do as the villains in a Zombie game? Well – they very much can be the cause. Continuing our conversation from above about anthropomorphization – the other supernatural entities in the franchise are often anthropomorphized to represent certain concepts. Vampires are violation, control, and subliminal power. Werewolves are blind rage, seething contempt, and deterministic hatred. Mages are hubris, unchecked ego, and nerve.

Against Vampires, it may work well to make them predators, feeding off of the

existing Zombie apocalypse as an excuse to tighten their grip. They are abusers – and Zombie stories love punishing an abuser.

Against Werewolves, it works well to make them dead set on ending the Zombie apocalypse by any means necessary. The Garou are known for their phyrnic solutions to problems, and not known for their subtlety and discerning taste in victims – and may create more problems than they intend to solve.

Against Mages, it may work well to make them the architects of the Zombie apocalypse – to place them firmly as those responsible, whether through callous use of magic, or simple greed. Mages are the most human of all supernaturals – and they will often work well as substitutes for more traditional human villains.

And what of the Dead? The Wraiths who interact with Zombies? They must be terrified – the Rapture in this game does not allow those who die to return. In a setting where Ends of Empire is non-canon, or has not happened yet – the dead would be terrified and confused as to the implications this has for the world of the dead. If nobody can cross over – are they the last to have a chance at absolution? And should they end the plague?

COOPERATION

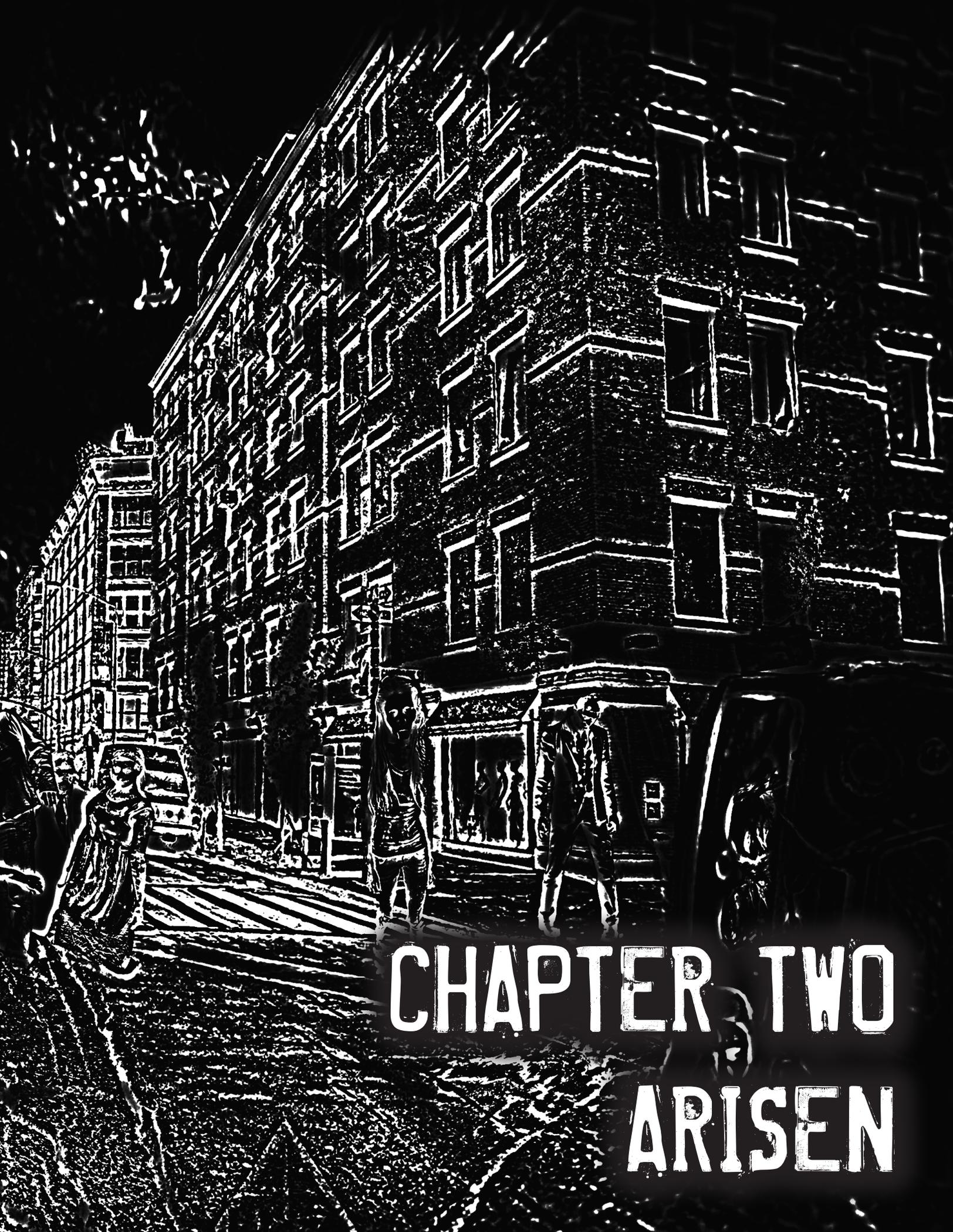
What about casting these characters in roles friendly to the Brights? Well – this is really the question of Zombie: the Rapture. Can the Zombies ever be human again? A big step towards humanity is reestablishing links in your life that

have meaning beyond trauma. It is entirely possible that a character will look past the rotting exterior and see the humanity inherent to your characters. In *Sonny*, by Jakrin Juangbhanich, the main character of *Sonny* is approached by a blind man. The first time a player enjoys the narrative, they may not realize that the blind man fully understands that *Sonny* is a zombie – and there is no great ‘reveal’. He simply accepts that *Sonny* can talk, and is not antagonistic. And that begins *Sonny*’s journey. Perhaps if he greeted *Sonny* with violence and a lead pipe, *Sonny* would become a truly horrifying monster.

ESCAPE

And what about escaping the condition? Is it possible? The Rapture is something that leaves a permanent mark. The undead will always carry their scars – they will always reek, and they will eventually rot away. Victims don’t get to walk away and heal perfectly. But they can come close. *Zombie* will never have a ‘win’ condition – the temptation to fall back and embrace Rapture is always there. And it’s comfortable. Victims in the real-world react in many ways to violence and trauma – but they always cope. The Rapture is unhealthy coping – it’s embracing a blind existence where you spread that violence to others, and simply inure yourself to all the terror that should come with it. That is why it is a Rapture - a blissful, perfect escape that leaves behind ruins and ashes. There are healthier ways to cope. And you can become something whole again – even if you wear your scars.





CHAPTER TWO

ARISEN

“TRUST ME, CLEM, I DON’T WANT TO.
I’M TRYING. I’M TRYING.”

– Lee, *The Walking Dead*

THE RAPTURE

Rapture, in *Zombie: the Rapture*, has two distinct meanings. The condition of zombification is known as The Rapture. It is not a Virus, it is not a microbe or a disease – it is death simply failing to claim its’ victim, leaving a decaying soul within a decaying body. And it is happening on a large scale.

The second definition lies in the feeling of ecstasy that a *Zombie* experiences when letting go. This is not the same sort of letting go as *Wraith: the Oblivion* – don’t confuse it for salvation. The *Zombie*’s soul has nowhere to go. This is disintegration.

To those who believe in it, Rapture is when those chosen by God will ascend to join him in heaven – while Earth is destroyed, along with the sinners remaining upon it. The word is older than Christian belief – it comes from the Roman lexicon. *Raptus* – a religious transfixion, a feeling of absolute fervor. This is the sensation of the darkest emotion in *Zombie*. If you would ask a *Bright* to describe the sensation of Rapture – it is to be swallowed by a white light, surrounded by a constant hum and crackle that blots out screams and pain. Ecstasy floods your mind. It’s a good feeling. But in Rapture lies the loss of focus. When a *Zombie* enters Rapture, they stand to lose the few precious memories they still have.

MEMORIES

Luckily, a *Zombie* has a means to counter this loss of memory – through *Affectations*. *Affectations* are things that are part of the character – but that they can barely remember. Something like a petrol company logo on the ragged jumpsuit they wear, a tattoo on their hip, or a handgun hanging from their side.

When a *Zombie* is first reanimated, they lose their memories, for the most part – only flashes remain. But these flashes are grounded by *Affectations*. And this is the core of the struggle for humanity. A *Zombie*’s *Affectations* are not immortal – they are not immune. Gunfire can destroy a tattoo. Fire can burn away a jumpsuit. A limb that is hacked off is lost for good. Once an *affectation* is lost, the *Zombie* begins to lose the memory associated with it – and unless they begin the associated *Memorial* before their next Rapture, they will lose that memory permanently. With that memory, they will lose the chance to ever recover that part of their former humanity.

MEMORIALS

When a *Zombie* returns to a familiar place, they begin a *Memorial*. A *Memorial* can take some time – and involves the thorough exploration of their old stomping ground, and even the clumsy reenactment of what the *Zombie* once was. Perhaps they go shopping in their favorite store in the mall, or they pick up the phone at their old job and remember a phone call they had. These things seem insignificant when they lived – but they make up the core of a character’s identity.

Whether you hated your job working at the midnight Gas and Gulp or not, it defined your personhood at the time that you died. Call it pathetic, call it unjust – but some part of you devoted yourself to that life. And any emotion to a Zombie – anything that pulls them back – is a good thing.

Locating a Memorial can be difficult. The character must follow clues based on fragmented memories and the Affectations they have. These memories are easiest to follow, ironically enough, within the state of Rapture. Slipping into this state allows the Zombie to witness his memories as they are being corroded – and recover information, even at the risk of damaging their once-psyche. It's recommended that the Storyteller offer hints and cryptic clues to Memorials to the player characters during Rapture.

Once a Memorial is located, the Zombie must begin a process of trial and error to find out who they were in this place. These are often marred by danger. Survivors take up shelter in many once-important buildings, bombings destabilize the structural integrity of these old places, and fire can make objects unrecognizable. If a Memorial has been damaged in some way to permanently mar and disfigure it – a Zombie may still complete the quest. However, this requires careful concentration and the Zombie must recreate some part of their old routine and environment for it to be truly successful.

Once a Memorial is complete, the Zombie gains perspective on who they once were, and are faced with a choice. Consumption is the first choice – it is the more explosive of them. Your Zombie is unhappy with who they were – whether

it is a disappointment, or the sensation of living is so horrifying that it is unbearable – the Zombie annihilates the environment in a blind rage, smashing anything they can find related to their former life. This act grants the Zombie Contempt.

CONTEMPT

Contempt – the sensation of envy mixed with absolute hatred. Some Brights hate who they once were – it reminds them of what they are no longer. This breeds Contempt. And Contempt brings out the worst in Zombies. Much like the Dearly Departed, the Zombie is capable of conjuring terrifying powers and changing themselves, warping into twisted shapes. Some Zombies become muscle-bound masses of Rage, trying to shatter the world they once knew like a dirty mirror. To forget.

Some Zombies become terrifying predators, hunting their prey through city streets with frightening efficiency. It's not enough to simply destroy their environment, for these few – they must annihilate humanity itself. These hunters rack up Contempt quickly, and evolve into more terrifying forms.

CLARITY

There is another option at the end of a Memorial – Epiphany. The Zombie must internalize who they once were. This doesn't mean that our poor gas station clerk goes back to selling hoagies in the Apocalypse. This means that they look at their former life, and pluck something from it – shape it into something new. Clarity – the sensation of understanding, clear vision.

It's easy to look at yourself before your trauma, and see someone who was weak – unprepared to deal with reality. But this isn't quite true. Clarity allows us to look inwards and understand that the person we were before is not the person that we are now – but there are aspects of who we were before that can help us today.

In that same sense, Clarity allows a Zombie to pluck something and redirect it into positive energy. Someone who served gas for three years can still serve – but in a higher manner, giving people what they really need. The things found through Clarity become personality traits and deep-seated convictions. Clarity also provides an opportunity for a Zombie to regain things from their humanity. Gait. Speech. Insight. Some rumor that it even allows you a special window into your condition – and allows you to work strange and beautiful miracles. But who's to say?

ALL THAT REMAINS

The process of becoming a Zombie is universally traumatic – it's not simply Death, but it's undignified, painful, unclean death. It's a Death where your remains are de facto desecrated, and where your death will inevitably lead to terrible consequences for those around you. In the Zombie: the Rapture setting, a person becomes a Zombie when they die – as simple as that. It is up to the Storyteller to define how large the zone for the specific Rapture Event in the story is.

EXCLUSION ZONES

How large the effect of the Rapture is largely depends on the type of story you're telling. Broadly speaking, there are three types of chronicles: Local, Regional, Apocalyptic.

LOCAL

In a local chronicle, the game will be focused on a smaller location – a town or city that is being attacked by the dead. Usually, the cause of the Rapture will be easier to discern – some terrible crime that has taken place, some awful desecration, or some terrible tampering with the laws of nature that someone in town has to know about. These types of chronicles are almost always short-form – the military will clean up a situation like this eventually. Thus, the player characters may not be trying to resolve the problem at all – and if they are, they will be on a strict time limit. If you want, however, your chronicle can grow in size – perhaps the cause wasn't as simple as we initially thought. Consume *Night of the Living Dead*, any of the *Resident Evil* games, or *Shaun of the Dead* to see this sort of story in action.

REGIONAL

In a regional chronicle, the game is focused around a larger area – anywhere from a few cities to a state. The dead are rising because of larger issues – something unresolved, unspoken, or tense. Most characters won't know why – but they'll know that the conflict spread from somewhere. These conflicts require knowledge of history – or a good backstory to pull off. The how and why are very important in a regional chronicle, as it's quite likely that the situation will not be resolved by an external agency like a military within a reasonable timeframe. The military and other entities are players within the setting, but rescue is not immediately obvious to survivors – and Zombies have as much time as they'd like to go about their business. These chronicles are best suited for medium-length games that focus on goals and bad guys. Consume Dawn of the Dead, Project: Zomboid, or 28 Days Later to see this sort of story in action.

APOCALYPTIC

In an Apocalyptic chronicle, the game is focused around a world consumed by the living dead. This sort of campaign turns the focus squarely back on the player characters – with the world destroyed, and no hope of rescue, the question comes quickly: What Now? This sort of campaign is, by nature, quite dark – it involves the deaths of billions, a broad change to the balance of the world – but it also allows a microcosm within which the player characters can decide the fate of this new world. I don't mean that they discover a macguffin that turns them into Zombie gods that conquer the world – more that the choices that they make have an immediate, tangible, and permanent impact on their environment. If they gather human survivors and teach them coexistence, a campaign can lead towards a bright, hopeful future for all humanity. If they choose to become the ultimate predators, the campaign can point towards a dark, bleak future for mankind. This sort of campaign is best geared for introspective, character-focused arcs that delve deep into the faults with humanity that both Storyteller and Player see, and how they impact the post-apocalyptic world. Consume The Walking Dead, Left 4 Dead, or Day of the Dead for this sort of narrative.

THE PECULIAR HOST

When a corpse falls within an exclusion zone, they must have an intact brain. Zombies cannot rise or function without an intact brain. The meaning of 'Intact' falls on the Storyteller, but for the purposes of this book, the Cerebellum must be intact. A freshly risen corpse often falls into two categories. Husks, and The Bright.



THE HUSKS

Husks are those who rise and simply cannot remember. So deeply destroyed by the act of The Rapture that they simply fade into it. Communicating with a Husk produces responses vaguely similar to that of a lost child – they somewhat recognize their surroundings, and even that they are hurt. Their memories are short, and largely linger on places and things. The places they fixate on tend to be places that are important to them – but not in the way one might think.

A childhood bedroom is certainly an option for a Husk to retreat to, but most often, Husks will return to places where they could feel regular, and in tune with human life. These are often public spaces – Malls, Streets, Schools, Office Buildings. These places do not necessarily have positive associations, but they rarely hold negative ones. They're often simply the place where the Husk feels most alive. But even these fascinations are short-lived. Husks are lost to The Rapture, and unable to enter a Memorial. They simply persist, and wander from place to place.

When a Husk spots a living human being, they automatically succumb to The Rapture, and reach out. They are unable to speak, to make connections – they merely shamle towards the living. And once they have found them, they know of nothing better to do than to kill. The precise reasons for this mechanism are uncertain – but Brights observing Husk feeding report that they seem to be entirely unmalicious, even as they're sinking their teeth into human flesh. Another peculiarity of Husks is their susceptibility to The Chorus.

THE CHORUS

The Chorus is the strange psychic link that all Zombies share – a sort of communal language. It is a constant source of voices and gossip for Zombies. Husks tend to have little interesting to say – they are often driven by simple needs. “Need..to..go...” “Where.. am.. I?” “Dark...” – but they are constantly broadcasting into The Chorus. Something peculiar can happen, at times – the Chorus can draw Husks together. Seeking some sort, if any, of human connection, Husks will travel as a mob and accompany other Husks, becoming a Horde.

Hordes can travel for long distances, seemingly spurring one another on to keep moving, occasionally passing through a building or attracted by sound. The Bright are unique in being able to tap into The Chorus directly.

Initially incapable of human speech without great effort, The Bright are still able to communicate with one another and Husks through this capability – and through their intelligence, they are capable of leading Hordes all on their own, creating walls of rotting flesh to accomplish their goals.



THE BRIGHT

The player characters – and other intelligent Zombies of the world of *Zombie: the Rapture* – are known as The Bright. It is unknown why some rise as The Bright and others don't. Be sure not to tie it into a measure of Willpower or Faith – it's seemingly random. Some people succumb to the trauma of The Rapture and simply become Husks. Some rise above it.

The Bright are unique in a few respects. They can understand many concepts – although their intelligence is initially stunted and may not be raised without gaining Clarity. They can understand their state of being, and are often horrified by it. Not all of The Bright survive The Rapture. When some realize what sort of horrific, irreversible damage has been done to them, they simply destroy themselves rather than face the world. It is assumed that our Player Characters have survived past this process.

The Bright are capable of developing into something truly frightening. Bridges between the living and the walking dead – they are able to hear The Chorus, to speak into it and manipulate Hordes, and eventually they are able to change. Contempt breeds the easiest change – mutating the Bright into the sort of monsters mankind fears. Living embodiments of suffering and hatred, they lash out and slaughter until they are killed, or until nothing remains. For those who reject Contempt, Clarity can be a road back. The Bright can learn to speak again. They can learn to walk normally, to wield tools, and to more effectively speak to both Husks and The Living. Even

further, intelligent zombies are capable of tapping into frightening powers that come from The Chorus itself.

Finally, some Brights even seek to combine a hatred and avarice towards humanity with deeper intelligence and understanding. There are good reasons for the dead to hate the living - and this creates the most frightening monsters of all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEAD

All Zombies are capable of tapping into The Chorus, hearing the voices of those dead within earshot through mystic means. The Chorus cannot be tapped through basic science, although some supernatural powers enable access to it.

All Zombies are highly resistant to damage. While their bones can be broken and their flesh can be damaged, their bodies simply don't give out. The traditional chemical reactions that maneuver muscle are no longer functional within the dead – but they move, nonetheless. Disabling a Zombie is, thus, quite difficult. A broken back does not deter a Zombie, nor does it prevent them from moving their legs. However, extensive damage will slowly erode a Zombie's ability to maneuver – while a broken back allows them to keep moving, a leg shredded into mincemeat won't allow them to walk. All Zombies are vulnerable to severe trauma to the Cerebellum – a direct shot to the brain with a firearm will, through hydrostatic shock, wound cavitation, or direct trauma, destroy the brain.

All Zombies move at a relatively slow pace – unless Contempt or Clarity drives their movement, they are unable to move beyond a shuffling gait. Most human

beings are capable of outpacing a Zombie.

All Zombies are incapable of feeling pain. Otherwise, their existence would be agony. This, sadly, proves particularly frustrating to The Bright – who stand to lose Affections without realizing.

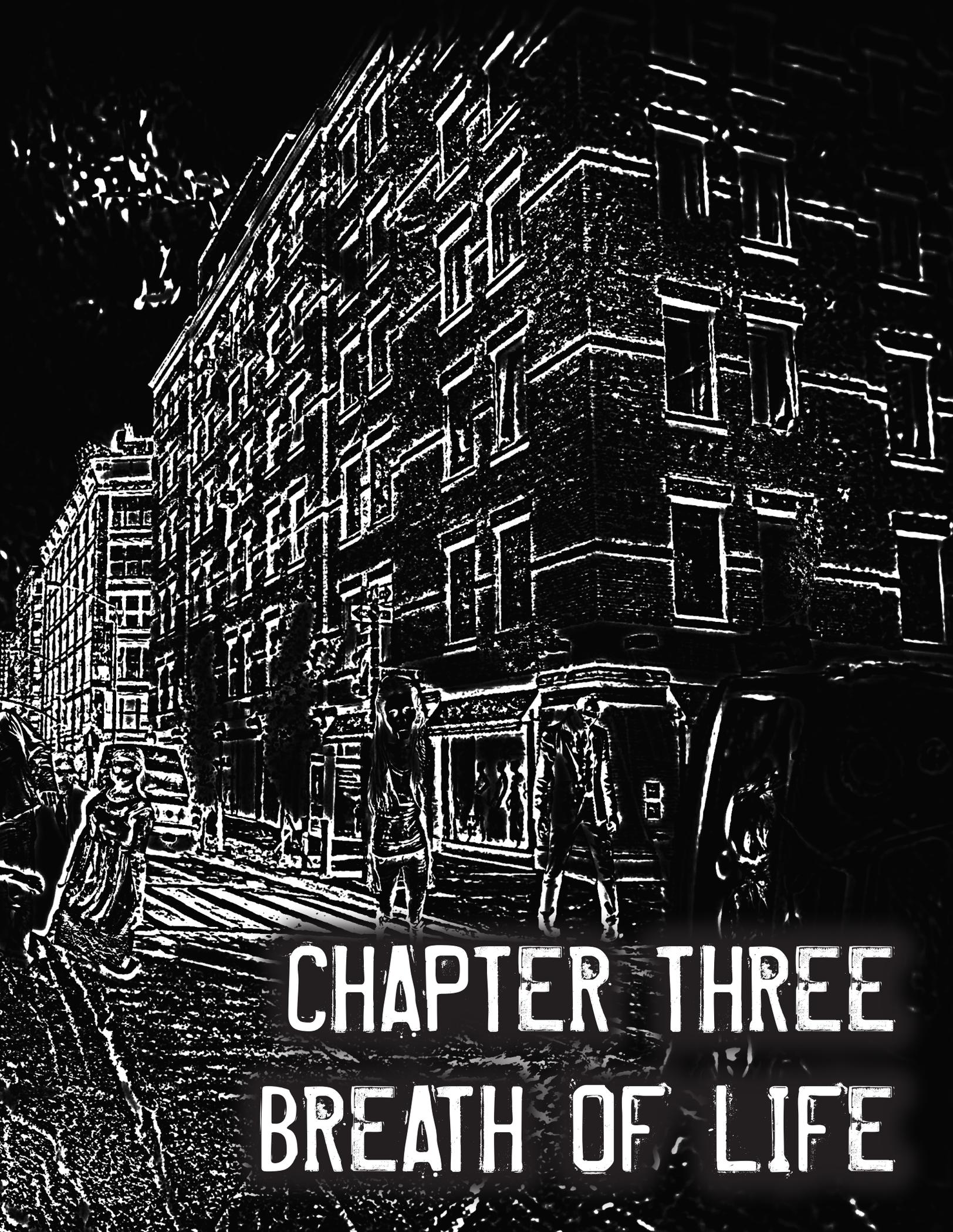
Zombies rot. This rot is somewhat slow compared to regular human beings, and is not accelerated by moisture or bacteria. It seems almost mystic in origin – slowly eating away the Zombie until nothing remains. It is said that Brights with high Clarity, or a particularly high Contempt, are able to stave this effect off.

Zombies are non-infectious. There is no such thing as the ‘zombie virus’ – if you die to the walking dead, it will be through an open wound that became infected, or direct trauma.

Zombies have a fascination with fire. It does not repel them – not directly. But even Brights find themselves compelled to stare into flame. Doing so for too long triggers Rapture.

Zombies are susceptible to Rapture – the state of absolute delirium where they are unable to control their actions beyond finding a victim and feasting on their flesh.





CHAPTER THREE

BREATH OF LIFE

“HE’S DEAD?”
“NOT ANYMORE.”

– Herbert West & Dan Cain, *Re-Animator*

CHARACTER CREATION

This book assumes that you have access to and experience with *Vampire: the Masquerade - 20th Anniversary Edition* or other 20th Anniversary products. *Zombie* is designed for an experienced Storyteller to adjust and alter the game rules as needed, and offers the Storyteller a great deal of leeway with gameplay.

*AN: This is not intended to be irresponsible; I want every game of *Zombie* to be a fun experience. To that end, I don't believe in dictating how to play the game beyond laying a baseline for theme, rules, and 'Zombie shit'. At the end of the day, you can play *Zombie* while throwing all of the rules and character sheets out of the window. All that you need is the first two chapters of the book to create a game of *Zombie: the Rapture*.*

NAMES

Zombies often don't remember their names – unless a character has Mental Clarity above 3, they will not know their old name. Brights will often name themselves after an item of clothing or a peculiar quirk of their appearance. 'Badge', 'Hot Pants', or 'Crawler' are all valid names. More humane Zombies will focus around reclaiming an identity – and may name themselves after something in their environment that they feel befits their role ('Alarm', 'Service',

'Key') – or even assign themselves a name they find on a billboard or storefront.

NATURE/DEMEANOR

Zombies have Natures and Demeanors – reflecting their stance towards the world around them, and how they prefer to deal with challenges and potential hazards. Use these to guide your roleplaying!

CONCEPT

Zombies are expected to form their identity from the things they do and what they experience. To this end, players do not create a Concept ahead of time.

GOAL

Zombies each have a unique goal – a mission in the apocalypse. This is undefined at the start of a chronicle.

CLARITIES

The player must distribute two points into Clarities. All Clarities start at 1.

ATTRIBUTES

Players distribute an ordinary spread of 7/5/3 into Attributes of their choice. While the attributes are held back by Clarity (more on this in the Clarity section below), they represent the Zombie as they were when living. Most Attributes and Abilities are governed by a specific Clarity, and while they may be raised above the Clarity Cap, they are rolled

as though they were equivalent to the associated Clarity.

PHYSICAL

STRENGTH – UNGOVERNED

Brute Strength is a Zombie's easiest and most accessible tool. Zombies begin with 2 Strength instead of 1 default.

DEXTERITY – PHYSICAL CLARITY

Zombies lose a great deal of coordination when they rise – and must relearn it.

STAMINA – UNGOVERNED

Zombies are able to take a beating naturally – Stamina represents greater fortitude beyond their natural defenses.

SOCIAL

CHARISMA – SOCIAL CLARITY

Zombies must use Charisma to influence Husks to do their bidding, and to communicate with humans.

MANIPULATION – SOCIAL CLARITY

Zombies can Manipulate through conversation – but most often they use this through actions. Manipulating fear can be important to a Zombie's goals.

APPEARANCE – PHYSICAL CLARITY

Appearance for a Zombie is a measure of how well they can change their own appearance – and how well they are aware of their own body. All Zombies are horribly scarred, but some know how to hide it.

MENTAL

PERCEPTION – MENTAL CLARITY

Perception is a measure of a Zombie's ability to spot things in their environment. Zombies with low Perception simply wander through, the world seeming dreamlike and ephemeral.

INTELLIGENCE – MENTAL CLARITY

All Brights are intelligent – but this attribute allows them to regain a human-level intelligence.

WITS – UNGOVERNED

Brights are able to fall back on animal instinct and respond to their enemies relatively quickly, and many are driven by the instincts they had in life.

ABILITIES

Players distribute an ordinary spread of 13/9/5 into the Abilities of their choice. AS above, they represent the Zombie as they were when living, and most are governed by the Clarities.

TALENTS

ALERTNESS - UNGOVERNED

Zombies are able to somewhat spot and detect things around them – even if their Perception isn't great.

ATHLETICS - PHYSICAL CLARITY

Zombies are not known for winning the Olympics.

AWARENESS - SPIRITUAL CLARITY

Zombies are capable of sensing

supernatural and spiritual energies, despite what most believe. Husks will occasionally congregate around spiritually active locations.

BRAWL - UNGOVERNED

Zombies know how to grab and drag their foes.

EMPATHY - SOCIAL CLARITY

Feeling somebody out requires you to understand your own feelings.

EXPRESSION - SOCIAL CLARITY

Expressing yourself takes a certain level of tact.

INTIMIDATION - UNGOVERNED

Frightening somebody is something Zombies can do without even trying.

LEADERSHIP - SOCIAL CLARITY

Even leading a Horde of Husks requires some level of natural talent.

SUBTERFUGE - PHYSICAL CLARITY

This talent covers everything from hiding that you're a Zombie to breaking and entering.

SKILLS

ANIMAL KEN - UNGOVERNED

Animals see little difference between Zombies and Humans – a clever Zombie can even tame them.

CRAFTS - MENTAL CLARITY

Building or creating anything from a nice macaroni piece to a full deck. Requires a specialization when bought. A special specialization exists for manipulating the flesh of the dead.

FIREARMS - PHYSICAL CLARITY

Operating a firearm isn't out of the question for some of the Bright.

HUMAN ETIQUETTE – SOCIAL CLARITY

Knowing not to dribble blood all over the carpet is an important skill to have.

MELEE - UNGOVERNED

Most of the dead lack the coordination to use melee weapons unless they were holding one at death.

OPERATE - MENTAL CLARITY

Driving a vehicle of any sort – this requires a specialization to be designated when bought.

PERFORMANCE - SOCIAL CLARITY

Acting as somebody, or playing a jaunty tune – requires some level of humanity. This requires a specialization to be designated when bought.

STEALTH – PHYSICAL CLARITY

Sneaking around effectively takes a great deal of coordination.

SURVIVAL – UNGOVERNED

Brights, with their higher minds, are able to instinctively survive the apocalypse.

KNOWLEDGES

ACADEMICS – MENTAL CLARITY

Remembering anything beyond $2+2=4$ takes some brains.

AREA KNOWLEDGE – MENTAL CLARITY

Remembering the place you're in can help you navigate it.

ENIGMAS - MENTAL CLARITY

Riddles and puzzles take mental horsepower most Zombies don't have.

HUMAN NATURE - SPIRITUAL CLARITY

Human Nature is something Zombies have to discover and understand for themselves. This ability may be rolled in order to predict and understand human actions.

INVESTIGATION - MENTAL CLARITY

Finding the truth takes a working mind.

MEDICINE - MENTAL CLARITY

Working with medical instruments, first aid, and the flesh of the living.

OCCULT - SPIRITUAL CLARITY

Understanding religion and the Eldritch is beyond most Husks – but not all Brights.

SCIENCE - MENTAL CLARITY

Science is at a loss to explain the Zombies – but some can certainly explain Science.

TECHNOLOGY - MENTAL CLARITY

Everything from repairing toasters to working a computer.

PROFANITIES

Distribute 2 points to Profanities your Zombie qualifies for.

ABNEGATION

Defy death again - and again, and again...

ABOMINATE

Become a living chemical plant, developing your body fluids into horrifying solutions.

APOSTASY

Investigate the deeper aspects of Death, and develop powerful magic.

REQUIRES: Mental Clarity 3, Spiritual Clarity 3

APPREHENSION

Stretch your perception, witnessing the apocalypse with abject clarity.

REQUIRES: Mental Clarity 2

EXHORTATION

Manipulate Husks and The Chorus, your words becoming hymns of the dead.

REQUIRES: Social Clarity 2, Mental Clarity 2

PEREGRINATION

Cover immense distances and create markers for other Zombies to follow.

RAGE

Transform into the ultimate killer.

SCOURGE

Invite carrion and lesser beasts into your body, and lead them as a horde.

REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 3



SUBVERSION

Camouflage yourself and evade detection from the living.

REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 3

TYRANNY

Explode with anger at everything around you, and become a titan of the End.

REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 2

PROSPECT

Understand the motivations and goals of Mankind, and become a Judge of all man.

REQUIRES: Social Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 3

VIRULENCE

Spread the Rapture to others, and subvert survivor strongholds.

BACKGROUNDS

Assign 5 points to Backgrounds.

AFFECTATIONS

Your Zombie has more affectations - tokens of their past life - than normal. Each point in this background adds another point to Affectations.

ARMOR

Your Zombie has Armor - each point giving you an additional limb that is armored. Check the 'Chitin' box on the limb of your choice for every dot in this background. If that limb suffers Extreme Damage, the health points are unharmed - but the armor is destroyed.

BRIDGE

A human who is aware of your Zombification - but has chosen not to

kill you. Perhaps they are naïve - but whatever the case, they are likely to hesitate when they see you next, and may form an easy link to the post-apocalyptic world.

1 Point - The Bridge is lucky to have survived up to this point, and are likely a child or otherwise unfit for the Apocalypse who you were protecting up until your rebirth.

2 Points - The Bridge is an average human being.

3 Points - The Bridge is a capable survivor who simply had to leave you behind. They may know other Survivors.

4 Points - The Bridge is a veteran survivor who is objectively capable and likely knows other Survivor colonies.

5 Points - The Bridge is an expert Survivor who knows many other Survivor groups in the area.

MEMORY

Every dot in this allows you to specify a word that the player who creates your Affectations must incorporate into your character's backstory. You may use these to create a short sentence. Your Zombie is aware of these words, and clings to them in undeath - they help guide your search for Memorials.

STOCKPILE

A collection of.. something, near you. The higher the rating, the bigger the Stockpile, and the more varied it becomes.

1 Point - The Stockpile is a small collection of a specific item, fit to

sustain one person for roughly a week.

2 Points - The Stockpile is a mid-sized collection of a specific type of supply, capable of sustaining a group of survivors for about a week.

3 Points - The Stockpile is a large collection of supplies, capable of sustaining a group of survivors for at least a month.

4 Points - The Stockpile is a large and generalized collection of supplies, capable of sustaining a colony of survivors for a month.

5 Points - The Stockpile is gargantuan and seemingly neverending, capable of sustaining a colony of survivors for at least a year.

STRONGHOLD

Your Zombie found a good place to hole up. The higher the rating, the more secure the Stronghold is.

1 Point - The Stronghold is empty of other Zombies or Survivors, but otherwise unsecured.

2 Points - The Stronghold has a few basic barricades and an accessible method of entry.

3 Points - The Stronghold is secure against attack, and a few secure exits.

4 Points - The Stronghold is very secure and difficult to breach, with multiple layers of defense.

5 Points - The Stronghold is a virtual fortress, impossible to penetrate while the defenders man their stations.

SURVIVOR

Your Zombie survived for some time before they were turned. They likely have a map, or a collection of information about the area on their person when they turn. The higher the value, the more survival information the Zombie has on them when they turn.

1 Point - The Zombie has a scrawled bit of information that can point them towards something useful.

2 Points - The Zombie has access to a basic map with a few points marked.

3 Points - The Zombie has a comprehensive map or collection of information on the area.

4 Points - The Zombie has access to something of a dossier on the location, along with a sophisticated map that points them towards valuable items.

5 Points - The Zombie has access to a treasure trove of information, giving them access to hiding places, secret stashes, and covert information about the entire Exclusion Zone.

WEAPON

A weapon your Zombie was carrying when they died. You cling to it in an undying grip, and do not need to meet any requirements to use it in combat, although the weapon rolls are still capped by Clarity.

1 Point - The Zombie may be carrying a small melee weapon or tool like a screwdriver or switchblade.

2 Points - The Zombie was carrying some sort of melee weapon that is

threatening in a prolonged engagement - a hunting knife or a hammer.

3 Points - The Zombie was carrying a large blunt weapon capable of inflicting severe damage, like a baseball bat or sledgehammer.

4 Points - The Zombie was carrying a large bladed weapon or a light firearm, like a machete or a 9mm pistol.

5 Points - The Zombie was carrying a powered weapon or a heavy firearm, like a chainsaw or a pump-action shotgun.



WOUNDS

The more you take here, the more intact your Zombie looks. At 5 points, it's likely that your Zombie died of a concealed bite, and looks almost entirely human.

0 Points - The Zombie is very obviously and gruesomely devoured, with visible tissue and organs, and a great deal of blood. The Zombie cannot conceal their nature.

1 Point - The Zombie is significantly disfigured, but they are able to hide their disfigurement through significant difficulty and heavy clothing.

2 Points - The Zombie's trauma is restricted to surface-level injuries, and

organs no longer protrude. The smell is less noticeable.

3 Points - The Zombie's trauma is localized to one quadrant of the body, and may be hidden with some sort of covering.

4 Points - The Zombie's trauma is localized to one extremity, and can be covered with clothing and gloves.

5 Points - The Zombie's trauma consists of a single bite or scratch, and they are entirely intact otherwise.

AFFECTATIONS

In Zombie: the Rapture - you are placed in the shoes of your Zombie. You must discover the mystery of who you were before you died. To this end, another player at the table will create your Affectations. It is recommended to pass the character sheets clockwise around the table, and to discuss anything in Backgrounds such as Memory or Affectations that could apply here.

The other player then creates your character's Affectations, writing a backstory in secret for each one. Nominally, a Zombie starts with five points of Affectations, although this may go higher. Affectations are rated from a scale of 1-3, depending on how important they are to the Zombie's backstory and who they were. Each Affectation guides the Zombie to a different location that was important in their life, and is placed somewhere on the body. A signed matchbook from a club the Zombie attended in life. A pack of cigarettes from a local gas station. Once the Affectations are created and the player has filled out

a short loresheet on each one, they pass the character sheet (but NOT the Lore sheet) back to the player. The player knows what the Affectations are and where they are on the body – but not what they mean.

CONTEMPT, CLARITY, AND WILLPOWER

Contempt Points are tracked on the Contempt tracker. A Zombie may store up to 25 points of Contempt at a time, and may store up to 10 points of Clarity. Contempt is directly spend as Experience Points or to fuel abilities. Clarity is spent to either stave off Rot, or directly spent to add a point to a Clarity attribute. Clarity may also be consumed to gain 3 Willpower.

The Zombie starts with 1d5 Contempt, and no Clarity. All Zombies start with Willpower at 1. Willpower is governed by Spiritual Clarity.

MERITS AND FLAWS

A lot of World of Darkness books have giant lists of Merits and Flaws. Some players like these. This writer doesn't. Merits and Flaws should be organic – elements of the character and ideas that spring to the players as cool things to incorporate, with the cost worked out with the Storyteller – not a menu to of ways to make your character more interesting.

For the Players – feel free to come up with cool Merits and Flaws for your character! Work with the Storyteller to determine point values. For the Storytellers – ask yourself if a Merit or Flaw is something that will impact the

character's story and gameplay, and how significant this will be. Is this something that should apply a debuff, or is it just a roleplaying trait? (Some White Wolf games have included 'Shy' as a character flaw.)

Something should only give or take away points if it will make a tangible impact on gameplay beyond roleplaying. If a character has the 'Shy' flaw, it has to be a crippling Shyness to the point where they won't speak to most strangers at all, not just a demureness.

FREEBIES

Spend Freebies on Merits, add Freebies with flaws – Freebie points start at 15, and should cap at 21.

Clarities – 8 Points Per Dot

Attributes – 4 Points Per Dot

Abilities – 2 Points Per Dot

Profanities – 6 Points Per Dot

Backgrounds – 1 Point Per Dot

Contempt – 1 Point Per Dot

Clarity Points – 8 Points Per Dot

Willpower – 2 Points Per Dot

CREATION PROCESS

CONCEPT

Choose a Name, Nature/Demeanor, and Goal.

CLARITIES & ATTRIBUTES

Distribute two points between Clarities.
All Clarities start play at 1.

Players distribute an ordinary spread of 7/5/3 into Attributes of their choice.

Strength – Ungoverned
Dexterity – Physical Clarity
Stamina – Ungoverned

Charisma – Social Clarity
Manipulation – Social Clarity
Appearance – Physical Clarity

Perception – Mental Clarity
Intelligence – Mental Clarity
Wits – Ungoverned

ABILITIES

Players distribute an ordinary spread of 13/9/5 into Abilities of their choice.

TALENTS

Alertness – Ungoverned
Athletics – Physical Clarity
Awareness – Spiritual Clarity
Brawl – Ungoverned
Empathy – Social Clarity
Expression – Social Clarity
Intimidation – Ungoverned
Leadership – Social Clarity
Subterfuge – Physical Clarity

SKILLS

Animal Ken – Ungoverned
Crafts – Mental Clarity
Firearms – Physical Clarity
Human Etiquette – Social Clarity
Melee – Ungoverned
Operate – Mental Clarity
Performance – Social Clarity
Stealth – Physical Clarity
Survival – Ungoverned

KNOWLEDGES

Academics – Mental Clarity
Area Knowledge – Mental Clarity
Enigmas – Mental Clarity
Human Nature – Spiritual Clarity
Investigation – Mental Clarity
Medicine – Mental Clarity
Occult – Spiritual Clarity
Science – Mental Clarity
Technology – Mental Clarity

PROFANITIES

Distribute 2 points to Profanities your
Zombie qualifies for.

Abnegation - Defy death again - and again,
and again...

Abominate -Become a living chemical plant.

Apostasy -Investigate the deeper aspects of
Death, and develop powerful magic.
REQUIRES: Mental Clarity 3, Spiritual Clarity 3

Apprehension -Stretch your perception,
witness the apocalypse.
REQUIRES: Mental Clarity 2

Exhortation -Manipulate Husks and The
Chorus.
REQUIRES: Social Clarity 2, Mental
Clarity 2

Peregrination - Cover immense distances and create markers for other Zombies.

Rage - Transform into the ultimate killer.

Scourge - Invite carrion and lesser beasts into your body, and lead them as a horde.
REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 3

Subversion - Camouflage yourself and evade detection from the living.
REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 3

Tyranny - Explode with anger at everything around you.
REQUIRES: Physical Clarity 2

Prospect - Understand the motivations and goals of Mankind.
REQUIRES: Social Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 3

Virulence - Spread the Rapture to others, and subvert survivor strongholds.

BACKGROUNDS

Assign 5 points to Backgrounds – things your Zombie wakes up to.

Affectations – Your Zombie has more affectations than normal.

Armor – Your Zombie gains Chitinous Plating.

Bridge – A human who is aware of your Zombification.

Memory – Specify a word that the player who creates your Affectations must incorporate into your character's backstory.

Stockpile – A collection of.. something, near you.

Stronghold – Your Zombie found a good place to hole up.

Survivor – Your Zombie has information from after the apocalypse.

Weapon – A weapon your Zombie was carrying when they died.

Wounds – The more you take, here, the more intact your Zombie looks.

AFFECTATIONS

Another player must assign your affectations (5 points worth by default), and write about their background.

CONTEMPT, CLARITY & WILLPOWER

Start with 1d5 Contempt and 1 Willpower.

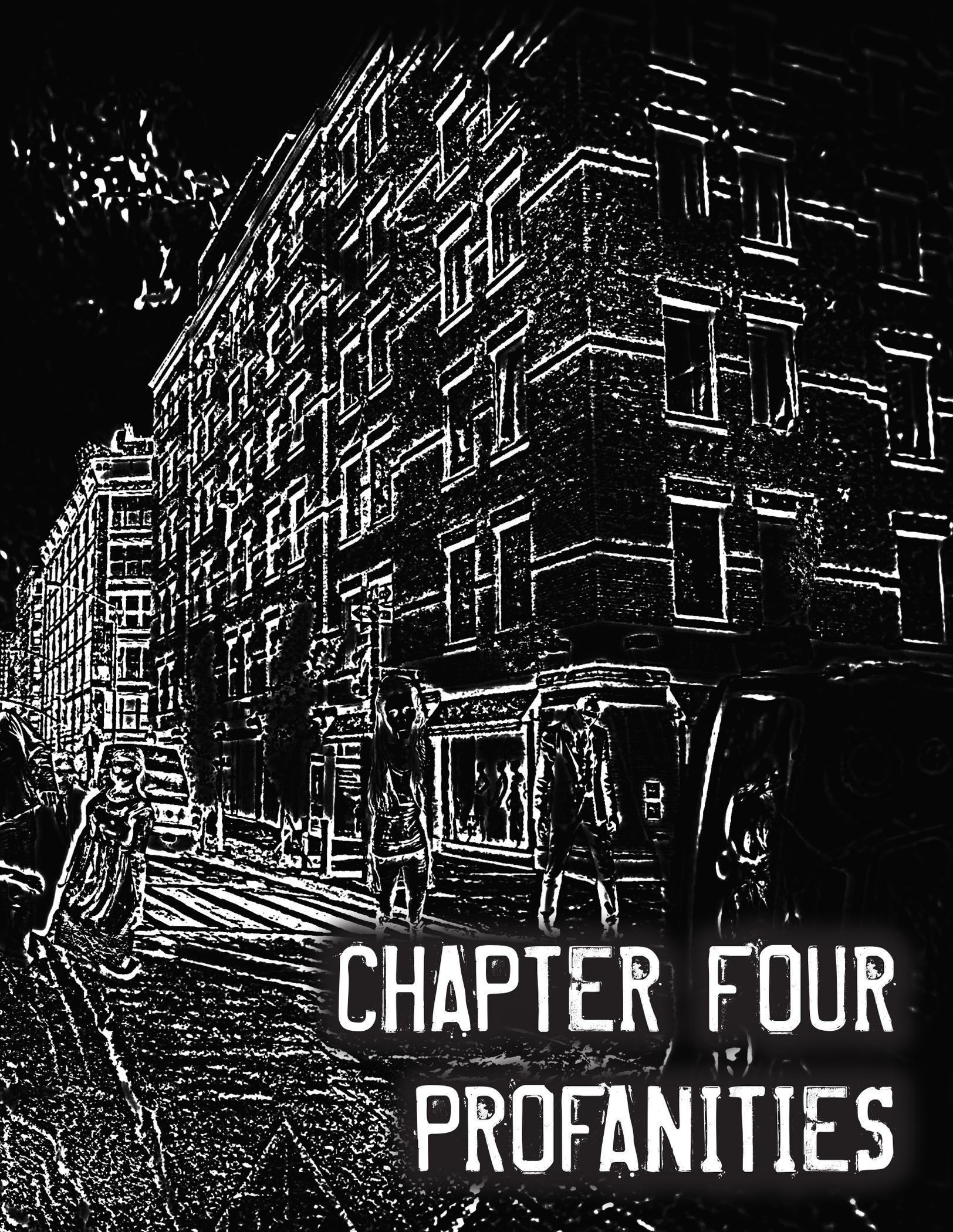
MERITS & FLAWS

Assign and create as reasonable for the character.

FREEBIES

Clarities – 8 Points Per Dot
Attributes – 4 Points Per Dot
Abilities – 2 Points Per Dot
Profanities – 6 Points Per Dot
Backgrounds – 1 Point Per Dot
Contempt – 1 Point Per Dot
Clarity Points – 8 Points Per Dot
Willpower – 2 Points Per Dot





CHAPTER FOUR

PROFANITIES

“AIN’T SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.”

“JESUS. DON’T LET THAT STOP YOU FROM SMEARING
IT ALL OVER YOURSELF!”

“THEY’RE CHANGING.”

– *Bill & Francis, Left 4 Dead*

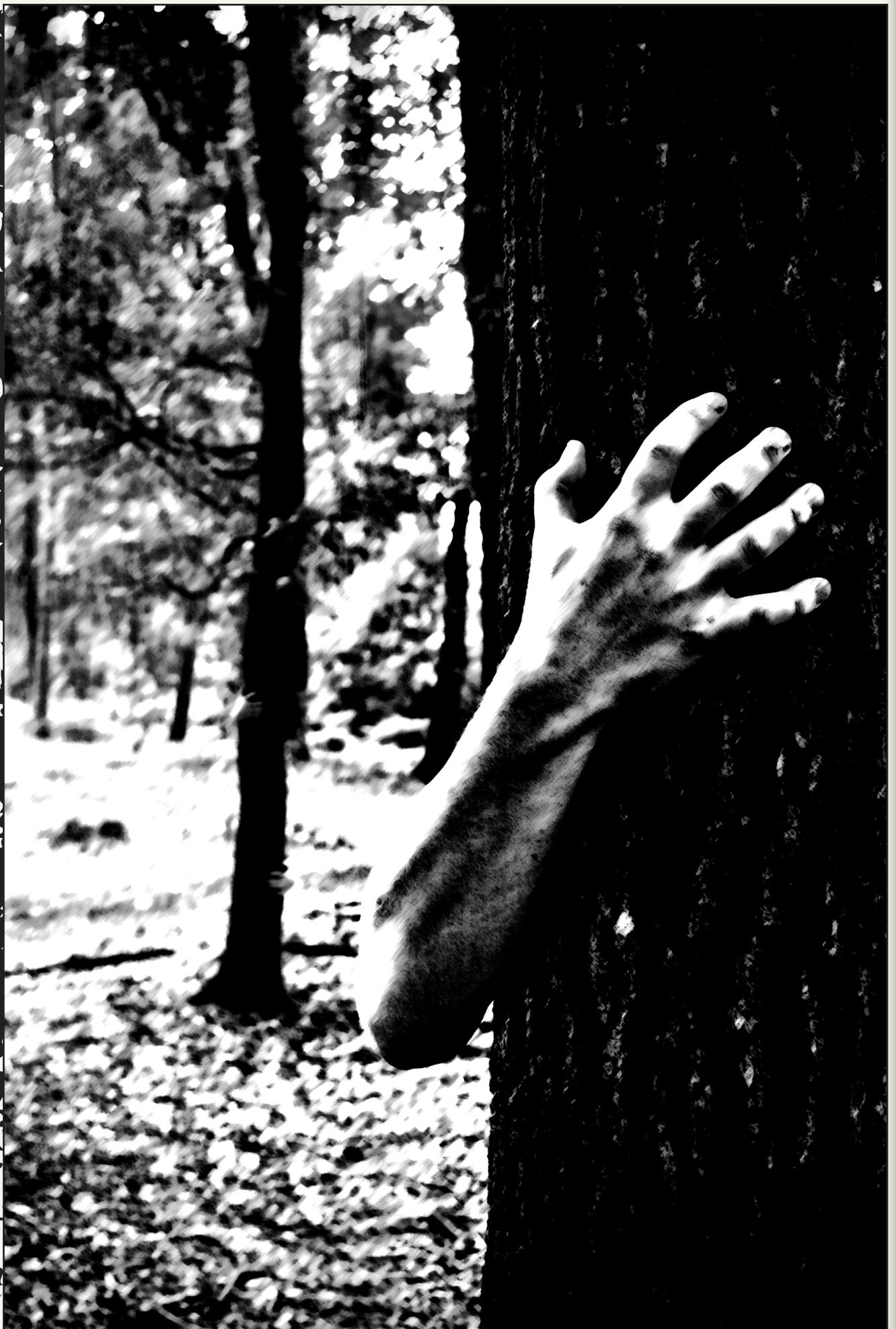
PROFANITIES

Zombies are creatures of dark emotion, memory, and magic. Each of these things informs the eleven known Profanities – dark emotions pull Zombies into fighting more efficiently, warping their physical shapes, and horrifying those who witness them. Memories pull Zombies into trances as they remember and glean insight into the world they’ve been shaped by. Magic enables Zombies to walk, think, and exist, and forms the core of the question – Why?

Profanities are the powers that Zombies are able to tap into – some frightening, some curious, and many downright magical. Some profanities may only be learned with Contempt, as denoted in the Cost field. Some profanities have a Clarity requirement to learn, indicating some level of understanding the Zombie must reach before accessing that particular power.

LEARNING PROFANITIES

Profanities are instinctively learned by Zombies. There is no such thing as a clan or tribe of zombie, nor a restriction on the sort of Profanities a Zombie can learn beyond Clarity or Contempt requirements. A Zombie is not usually aware of learning a Profanity – it simply comes naturally to them, and is usually an extension of who they already are. As a result, each Profanity has an ‘associated behavior’ entry that describes the sort of Zombie who picks up this Profanity. These are not required, but it is encouraged for both the Players and Storytellers to consider them when deciding on how a character will develop.



Abnegation



Abnegation is the process of denial – specifically, a denial of limitations. A Zombie can often feel as though they are immune to pain, violence, that they have entered a sort of blessed state where their numbness to the world makes them stronger – and this Profanity can enable them to become immune to death itself. Practitioners of this Profanity are known as Disbelievers.

COST

10 XP for first level, 5 XP * level for additional levels OR 7 Contempt for first level, 4C * level for additional levels.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Abnegation tends to take root in characters who have either suffered an Extreme Wound, or have survived significant non-threatening damage.

APPEARANCE

Abnegation appears as hard patches of skin – sometimes tumorous and bulging, sometimes flat and dull, but always tough-feeling and unyielding.

goal or target. Roll Willpower, difficulty 6. This ability costs 1 Contempt to activate, and lasts for a scene. When activated, the Zombie must set a goal – this goal can be anything that is achievable within the scene. ‘I want her dead.’ ‘I want to push that door open.’ For the remainder of the scene, nothing short of death will stop the Zombie from achieving their objective – each activation success provides an additional die to the Zombie in any resistance roll against something trying to stop them from reaching their objective – be it a Soak roll, a strength roll to resist a grapple, or anything else. The Zombie becomes single-minded of purpose – and cannot change their mind easily. If their goal is set to kill someone, they will climb on top of the person and maul them until they are dead -and keep going until the scene is out, ignoring any other stimuli. The Zombie can break out of this trance by rolling Mental Clarity against a difficulty of 8, but this roll may only be attempted twice. If failed both times, or botched once, the Zombie is locked into their tenacious purpose for the scene.

LEVELS

ABNEGATE 1 - RUTHLESS TENACITY

The Zombie cannot be dissuaded from a

ABNEGATE 2 - CHITIN

Chitin is the second level of Abnegation, and gives an additional soaking blow for a limb struck by Extreme Damage. The limb gains the characteristic appearance of Abnegated tissue. When a Chitined

limb is struck by Extreme Damage, Chitin is destroyed before Affectations. Chitin may be purchased multiple times, and it can be bought again if destroyed – but it cannot be stacked on the same body part.

ABNEGATE 3 - ANELID MORPHOLOGY

Anelid Morphology grants the Zombie a frightening level of control over their own limbs – even when they are detached from the Zombie. Each individual muscle and part of the limb may be moved independently, even if they would break – allowing you to grip objects backwards, or twist through particularly tight spaces (granting -1 difficulty rolls to get through tight spaces.) The most frightening trait of this power is that the Zombie is now able to simply deny that a missing limb is truly gone – through the expenditure of 1 Contempt, they are able to exhibit control of a severed body part. Eyes can twitch on their own, hands can ‘walk’, and legs can hop along. This control lasts for a scene and may be refreshed or reactivated as needed – although the body part cannot create senses it does not have. A leg will hop around on its’ own, but you need to see it to give it accurate commands. The severed limbs must be reattached. Brights who specialize in this often carry staple guns and stud their flesh with hooks for a reason. A final, wonderful trait that this provides to the Zombie is that limbs ‘destroyed’ via being chopped off for extreme damage are easy to reattach and use once more, although they can still be destroyed by slicing them into little pieces, or blasting the limb apart.

ABNEGATE 4 - BUTTERFLY COCOON

The Zombie may enter a trance using this level of Abgenation, growing a strange, fleshy pod that encases them and resembles a bulging mass of tumors. This ability costs 5 Contempt. While in this state, the Zombie gains one counter of Rot that may not be countered with Clarity – but emerges with all missing limbs restored to full function, although any lost Affectations are still gone. This process takes one full day, and during this time, the Zombie is vulnerable – if they are awakened at any point, the process fails, the Contempt is spent, and they fail to recover what was lost. The Zombie within the cocoon is vulnerable and enters a state of Rapture when the cocoon’s outer shell is broken.

ABNEGATE 5 - DENIAL

The Zombie may simply deny death. This level of Abgenation is the ultimate insurance policy – if your Zombie meets death, they simply.. don’t. Even if their cerebellum is destroyed – the Zombie just keeps moving, fueled only by Contempt. While in this state, the Zombie may continue functioning with whatever limbs they have remaining. They must spend a point of Contempt for every scene (eight points per night) that they want to continue living. If they are able to reach a safe place to enter a Butterfly cocoon, they may be able to fully regenerate – but this horrifying experience provides an additional point of Rot, as the head never comes back fully right.



ABOMINATE

The Rapture should make you sick – to become an undying monster is a horrifying fate. And yet, some seize onto it with a sense of ghoulish freedom. Rapture is a chance to wander a dead world with human eyes, and to exist free of boundaries or limitations. The body twists and turns, and blood runs cold as changes take place. Practitioners of this ability are known as Abominations.

COST

5 Contempt for first level, 4x Current for every additional level.

REQUIREMENTS

3 Physical Clarity

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Abominate is a Profanity favored by those who have little to lose in dispensing of their humanity. This isn't to say that all users of Abominate are twisted and evil, and wish to inflict harm on humanity – but this is to say that all users of Abominate are detached from humanity, and are, for one reason or another, eager to push their bodies to the limit.

APPEARANCE

Abominate turns a body fluid of the player's choice into a glowing, unsettling-looking gak that seeps out of wherever it should be. Eyes run over and turn green, leaking a trickle of it coming out of the mouth.

LEVELS

ABOMINATE 1 - CAUSTIC BLOOD

The Zombie may transform a body fluid, usually spit or blood, into a caustic substance. This requires 1 point of Contempt, and lasts for one scene. While active, the substance in question is capable of melting through most organic materials and some metals, dealing 2 lethal damage per turn to flesh and blood. Melee weapons that strike a Zombie with Caustic Blood that are made of low-quality metal will collapse into slag.

ABOMINATE 2 - PROJECTION

The Zombie may now project any one of their bodily fluids from their mouth. This power does not require a roll or expenditure to activate, although it is limited in range (~20 feet), and the Zombie must roll Wits + Alertness to strike a specific target.

ABOMINATE 3 - LIVING PHARMACY

The zombie is able to create a 'living pharmacy' within themselves, synthesizing various chemical compounds from their innards. Creating enough of these substances for a scene's use requires a Stamina roll (variable difficulty), or an expenditure of Contempt. These include a particularly slippery slick (d5), a thick cloud of smoke (d6), a vomit that attracts Husks via scent (d7), or even a thick epoxy(d8). The glue-like substance can either be used to trap enemies (requiring a difficulty 8 sustained Strength roll to make your way

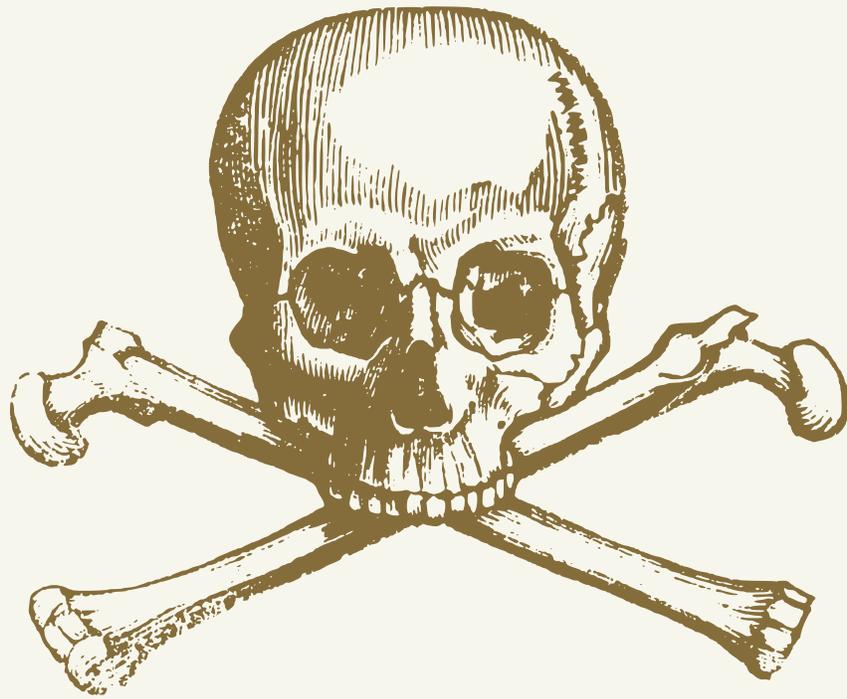
through), or it can be used to seal wounds on the living, stopping bleeding.

ABOMINATE 4 - PROJECTION

The Zombie may now convert any of their above emissions into gases – creating areas of denial, securing a haven, or otherwise hindering their foes. Gaseous emissions, unlike bodily fluids, can remain until an area is properly ventilated – and do not seem to bother zombies much at all.

ABOMINATE 5 - CONTAMINATION

The Zombie may spread their unique levels of Abominate to others – either Husks, Brights, or even human beings. This ability costs 1 Contempt for every five Husks infected, and 1 Contempt to attempt it on Brights or humans. The undead are not harmed by Contamination – but may spread it, dribbling the foul chemical cocktails from their orifices and improving their combat capabilities. Human beings, on the other hand, will panic and spread the Contamination – before meeting a gruesome end. An unwilling recipient of Contamination must be successfully grappled before the Contamination can take place. The Contamination lasts for one scene.



Apostasy

Apostasy is a surprise, even to The Bright who learn it. As interlopers between the world of the living and the dead, Apostates are capable of frightening levels of insight, and even magic – that enables them to master and conquer death itself.

COST

20 XP for first level, current x 7 for each additional level.

REQUIREMENTS

Spiritual Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 3

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Those who practice Apostasy are often interested in the deeper workings of

their being. Researchers of the dead, they investigate their condition – picking at their wounds, timing the resurrection of a dead human into a Zombie, and other phenomena. Zombies that practice this power are universally relatively knowledgeable. Apostates have almost universally stumbled across some display of faith, or the occult within their undeaths.

APPEARANCE

Apostates will often carry some token of their death – whether it be a messily scrawled diary of their time as a member of the undead, a totem made of dessicated body parts, or a symbol drawn onto their forehead – this becomes a focal symbol of their experience as a member of the Bright.

LEVELS

APOSTASY 1 - TOKEN OF PASSAGE

Apostates may create a Token of Passage. This requires an expenditure of Willpower and a small item, usually inscribed with the symbol of the Apostate in question. The Token of Passage is given – or placed – onto the target in question. The effect is different depending on the nature of the individual. If given to The Bright, the target will experience Rapture checks at a -2 difficulty. If given to a human being, they will no longer attract the attention of Husks, and will not transform into a zombie when they die. If given to a Husk, the Husk will ignore human beings and not experience Rapture. The token will last for one night.

APOSTASY 2 - MANIPULATE DECAY

Apostates may reach out and manipulate the decay of inanimate objects. Guns jam, rotten floors hold weight as though they were new, and walls crumble. Roll Willpower, difficulty 5. The range is sight. 1 success is required to subtly weaken an object or reenforce it, 3 successes are required to repair or break a piece of machinery (like a gun), and 5 successes can powder concrete walls.

APOSTASY 3 - LIVING FLESH

Apostates begin to understand the complex energies that made them a Zombie. Though they cannot become fully human – they may take on the countenance of Humanity, enabling them to slip by enemies and interact more comfortably with survivors. This power requires the expenditure of a point of Willpower. Human-looking flesh

ripples across the Zombie's body, giving them a waxy, but human appearance – even still, this disguise is not perfect. A Per + Emp (d8) check can discern that something is wrong. The disguise lasts for a scene, after which the new flesh sloughs off like wax, leaving a disgusting mass.

APOSTASY 4 - TOUCH OF DEATH / ABATE DEATH

The Apostate may manipulate the fates of Death. When touching another Zombie, they may heal a single point of an Extreme Wound, although this requires the expenditure of a point of Clarity. Healing oneself is a tad easier, and merely requires a point of Willpower. The wound seems to mystically restore to the way it was before it was ever damaged. When touching a human being, the Apostate may harm or heal. Rolling Willpower, they may either inflict two points of Aggravated damage for every success, instantly Zombifying the human – or heal two points of Lethal for every success, sealing wounds. The use of this power only requires the roll, and has no limit otherwise. This power may only be used if touching bare flesh. Killing a human being with this power instantly puts both characters into a state of Rapture for one scene.

APOSTASY 5 - AWAKEN EIDOLON

Apostates can awaken the Eidolon, making a Husk a permanently Bright zombie. This process is irreversible and immediate, and requires a laying on hands and eye contact. Something is spoken into the Chorus – the players and Storyteller will never know what it is – and the Husk awakens. This process requires the expenditure of permanent Willpower.



Apprehension

Apprehension is feeling – it is sensing and perceiving the world around you. In short, it is much of what Zombies do. Note that perspective is not understanding - some Brights use this Profanity in order to wreak havoc more efficiently and track their prey. But many use it to glean insights to the world around them. The wielders of this profanity are known as Apprehensives.

COST

9 XP for first level, Current x 5 for subsequent.

REQUIREMENTS

Mental Clarity 2

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Apprehensives are usually witnesses – having seen something that no one else has, or witnessed something terrible. Methodical and relatively quiet, they do not groan – they merely stop and watch, and often seem more keen to observe than to interfere with a developing situation, only acting after they have gathered the facts.

APPEARANCE

The eyes of an Apprehensive tend to be blown out, eight-balled, filled with blood, or just strange. They're immediately captivating, and they seem to gaze past everything they look upon.

LEVELS

APPREHENSION 1 - DETAILS

Apprehensives are good at picking out small details in their environment that most zombies would miss. By centering themselves in a place for one scene, they are able to automatically pick out small details that hint towards greater knowledge – spotting a trail of broken leaves to detect someone's passage, or finding a lost affectation on the ground. This process involves something like meditation, and a slow, methodical pacing – the location can be quite large, so long as it is traversable within the scene.

APPREHENSION 2 - SENSE DEATH / SENSE LIFE

Apprehensives are able to sense concentrations of the Dead near them by rolling Perception + Alertness at a difficulty 6. One success tells them how many zombies are in the block, with 3 successes extending the reach to 5 blocks and granting them additional knowledge of numbers, and if any of those perceived are Bright. 5 successes enables the Apprehensive to sense the precise location and nature of every Zombie within 12 blocks.

Apprehensives are able to sense the Living as well as the Dead by spending a point of Contempt, or rolling Perception + Alertness vs. a difficulty 8. One success allows them to sense the closest living person within a block, three successes extend the range to 5 blocks and allow them to detect multiple living people, with 5 successes granting them perfect knowledge of numbers, temperament, and weapons carried by the living. A point of Contempt spent grants 3 successes automatically.

APPREHENSION 3 - MEMORIES IN THE EYES

Apprehensives are able to glean knowledge by looking into eyes – a strange power that can be used on corpses, Zombies, and the living alike. Roll a Perception + Awareness roll against a difficulty of 8 after meeting eyes with your target. Success allows you to extract a vision of something important or visceral witnessed recently – the Zombie does not choose what they glean, and additional successes improve the clarity and duration of the vision.

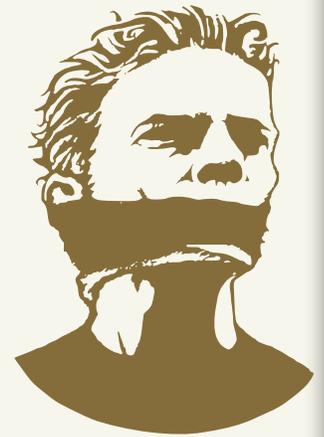
APPREHENSION 4 - CONSUMED KNOWLEDGE

Apprehensives are able to glean knowledge through other, messier ways -by devouring brains. This power works against any suitable target, and costs the Zombie 1 Contempt when used. When the Zombie devours a target's brain, they are able to make an Intelligence + Alertness roll to internalize the knowledge of the individual - each success provides access to either one pertinent memory ('What is the code to this door?') or allows the Zombie to perform one check with the victim's dice pool ('I want to repair this machine using the dead engineer's memories.') The effect lasts for one scene after devouring, and this power can only be activated once per scene.

APPREHENSION 5 - HORDESIGHT

Apprehensives can reach out and witness through the eyes of all Husks in the vicinity, allowing them to coordinate and understand situations with effective ease. The Apprehensive closes their eyes and reaches out, spending a point of Willpower and rolling Perception + Empathy. Success activates the ability – allowing the Zombie to witness through the eyes of any Husk in the localized vicinity (roughly one block). Husks who wander into the vicinity grant sight to the Bright, and Husks who leave drop off of their vision. The Bright is able to speak while this effect is ongoing, and may even move – although complex actions are difficult while in concentration. The Apprehensive gains Contempt for every human being they witness being killed by the Husks during this. The effect lasts for one scene.

Exhortation



Exhortation is community – it's the Bright understanding their role amidst the Husks, and their further interpretation of it. Some Brights view this as a call to responsibility – to shepherd their brethren. Others take this as a dominance – a demonstration of the Bright's inherent superiority. Zombies who practice this power are known as Orators.

COST

10 XP for first level, current x 5 for subsequent.

REQUIREMENTS

Social Clarity 2, Mental Clarity 2

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Orators are often those who have, in some way, used or led large hordes before – they often have an experience where a Horde of Husks seems to follow their whim, and thus learn this ability. Orators are often seen amidst a Horde, where their voice can reach the most through the Chorus.

APPEARANCE

Orators do not have a special appearance –

but are known to release horrifying groans and screams when directing their forces. They are capable of keeping these silent through concentrated will – but it seems almost instinctive.

LEVELS

EXHORTATION 1 - THE CHOIR

The Orator rolls Charisma + Survival against a difficulty of 6. Each success gives them an additional Husk that is considered part of their Choir. Members of the Choir are compelled as though the Orator has rolled 5 successes, and have an unbreakable will – they will follow commands perfectly, and are immune to Rapture for the scene.

EXHORTATION 2 - THE CALLING

The Orator rolls Charisma + Leadership against a difficulty of 7, releasing a primal screech. Each success extends the range of The Calling – 1 success calls Husks within earshot, 2 successes calls Husks within a block, 3 successes calls Husks

within two blocks, 4 successes calls Husks within 5 blocks, and 5 successes calls Husks within 10 blocks. Husks will respond as quickly as they can, and form a massive Horde with some efficiency. This ability is not subtle, and it takes time for Husks to travel in this way.

EXHORTATION 3 - COMPULSION

The Orator's compulsive abilities now stretch to other Brights and Humans. The Orator must speak or make some sort of strange noise, targeting anyone who can hear them – and rolls Charisma + Leadership against difficulty 6. Targets may only resist with Willpower at a difficulty 8. A target that is Compelled in this way will be transfixed, trying to puzzle out what the Orator is saying, finding some deeper meaning in the words, and will even abandon their own safety in pursuit of finding out – although this transfixion only lasts for a turn. So long as the target is not in direct danger, they can be transfixed for an amount of turns equal to the activation successes. This ability can only affect a target once per night.

EXHORTATION 4 - CASCADE

The Orator may send a message or idea through Husks – creating a rippling, powerful chain of thought through The Chorus. Husks will obey the idea, although this has a more limited effect the further that it travels through The Chorus. Roll Charisma + Expression at difficulty 8, and speak your idea to a nearby Husk. The idea may be something like, 'gather near the center of town every dusk', and most Husks will obey – although some on the city limits will

simply wander closer to the city instead of entering the center itself. The idea can also be, 'this man must be hunted down and killed' – and Husks will relentlessly pursue the target. The Communique spreads slowly, but eventually, every Zombie in the city will have heard it, and will quietly repeat it into The Chorus. This power can also be used to send messages. Be careful, though – messages sent in this way can be intercepted by any who can listen into The Chorus.

EXHORTATION 5 - ECHO

The Orator may leave their voice echoing in the local Chorus – allowing it to be heard long after they are gone. By speaking a simple idea or command into The Chorus, it echoes and continues to influence local Husks. 'Stay Away' is a common one for locations with Survivors that the characters wish to spare – but a particularly vindictive Zombie can apply an echo to an individual, as well – creating a beacon for Husks that makes it nearly impossible for the individual to sneak. Roll Charisma + Expression, and spend 1 willpower to target a location, and 1 Contempt to target a living being. The difficulty is 6 to plant an Echo on a location, and 7 to plant an Echo on an individual. To target an individual or a place, the Zombie must be touching it. The individual may resist with a Willpower save at difficulty 8. This power lasts based on the activation successes once resolved – with one success granting a 5-turn duration, two successes granting a scene, three successes granting a night, four successes granting a week, five successes granting a month, and six successes creating an indefinite echo within The Chorus. The Echo sounds otherworldly and frightening when heard.



Peregrination

Peregrination is the urge to wander aimlessly given power – the ability for Zombies to navigate long distances, to move and manipulate Hordes across vast stretches, and to discover strange new worlds to ravage or settle down in.

COST

8 XP for first level, Current x4 for subsequent.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Peregrination often takes root in Zombies

that have traveled a long way – it's simply a trait inherited from crossing distances, seeing different places, and arriving in new locations. They become known as Wanderers.

APPEARANCE

Zombies who adopt Peregrination take on a more worn, weathered look. Feet caked in mud, hair buffeted by wind, and skin covered in tiny nicks from long hours of travel.

LEVELS

PEREGRINATION 1 - WALKABOUT

Wanderers who go on a Walkabout must enter a state similar to Rapture. This ability does not cost anything – the Zombie rolls Perception + Alertness, difficulty 6, and must wander the adjacent area for 6 hours. When they return, each success grants them another question that they may have answered about the location. ‘How many people are here?’ ‘What happened here?’ ‘Is there anything interesting nearby?’ – the Zombie simply gathers a great deal of sensory input all at once, and uses it to answer these important questions. The first question must be declared before the Walkabout begins.

PEREGRINATION 2 - TRAIL OF WHISPERS

The Wanderer may leave a Trail of Whispers, enabling other Zombies to follow them – the ability costs 1 Willpower and lasts for a scene and allows someone to trail the Zombie for up to a mile. Husks will gather near the trail, but will not directly follow it.

PEREGRINATION 3 - CARAVAN

The Wanderer may create a Caravan, moving an attached Horde across a long distance. Roll Charisma + Leadership, difficulty 6. Each success indicates the distance the Caravan can travel. At one success, the Caravan can travel up to a kilometer. At two successes, the Caravan can travel across an entire city. At three successes, the Caravan can travel for ten miles. At four successes, the Caravan can

travel for fifty miles. At five successes, the Caravan merely continues traveling so long as the Bright wills it. As a Caravan travels, Zombies join it instinctively – allowing for Hordes of frightening size to build up as a result. Once a Caravan has ended, the Horde associated with it will quickly disintegrate into multiple smaller hordes that splinter in all directions.

PEREGRINATION 4 - DESTINATION-SENSE

Destinations are important to Wanderers, and once they set their minds to a place, they cannot be disoriented from locating it. The Wanderer must designate a Destination – this can be a place, an objective, or an individual. Once designated, a Wanderer must spend 1 WP to confirm the Destination – from that point forwards, the Wanderer has a perfect sense of the general location of the Destination, and they may locate it with relative ease no matter what.

PEREGRINATION 5 - CRUSADE

Wanderers are able to mark sites as being important to all Zombies – even sites that they have never attended. Crusade is activated by spending a point of Permanent Willpower, or five points of Contempt. A Crusade target lasts for an entire week once activated – the Wanderer may send any Husks they encounter on the Crusade with merely their presence – words echoing into The Chorus informing the Husks of where to go. Brights also hear this call, but may choose to resist it. A Crusade can lead Hordes and entire swaths of the undead across vast stretches of territory, including water, wilderness, and others – and it attracts them in a fervent, feverish pull that seems unending. A crusaded location is decidedly unsafe for the living, and is decidedly safe for the dead.



RAGE

Rage is at the heart of Contempt – it’s searing, white-hot malice directed into one purpose: combat. Rage enables a Bright to hunt living beings with increasing efficiency, destroying their own humanity in the process. Zombies who practice this ability are known as Malcontents.

COST

4 Contempt for First Level, 6x Current for Subsequent.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Adherents of Rage are killers. They must kill human beings, and every level of this Profanity relates to killing human beings more efficiently. Killing can be for the right reasons – but it stains a Zombie permanently.

APPEARANCE

Adherents of Rage often begin to practice self-mutilation – removing lips, eyelids, and even chunks of flesh to make themselves deadlier and more inhuman-looking. These modifications often take place during the heights of Rapture.

LEVELS

RAGE 5 - COLD FURY

RAGE 1 - BURST OF SPEED

A Zombie with Rage is able to move with incredible speed – spend 1 Contempt to double your character’s movement speed and triple your jump distance for a scene.

RAGE 2 - KERATIC GROWTH

A Zombie with Rage is able to exacerbate the sharpness of teeth, fingernails, or toenails – granting them +1 dice to brawl damage (converting the damage to Lethal), and +1 die to climbing as they grow horrifying claws and long, razor-like teeth. This level of Rage may be taken multiple times, up to a maximum of +3. This is a permanent change.

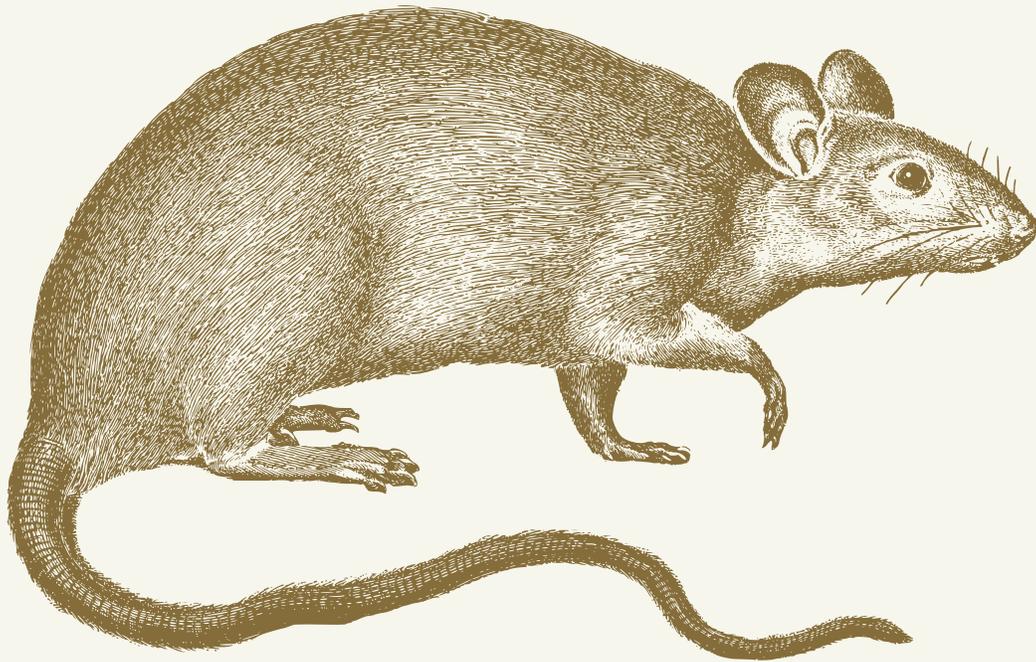
RAGE 3 - FURY

A Zombie who has mastered Rage does not experience Rapture in the same way as others – they enter a wild, frothing state that grants them +3 to all physical dice pools and the benefits of Burst of Speed for the duration.

RAGE 4 - FRENZY

A Zombie who has mastered Frenzy can whip Husks into an absolutely horrifying anger. Any currently active effects of Rage may also be activated on a nearby Husk with the expenditure of one point of Contempt. The Malcontent must elicit a horrifying roar, and may spend as many Contempt points as the amount of Husks they wish to gift with their abilities.

A Zombie who has mastered Cold Fury no longer loses total control during Rapture. They are still in a state of abject frenzy, but they are no longer fully commanded by it, enabling them to act normally in combat.



Scourge

The dead rot – for Zombies, this isn't quite true. They decay through a process called Rot, but bacteria, flies, and environmental conditions don't seem to bother them. Indeed – some even learn to bask in this Filth, becoming dens of filth and disease. They are known as Pariahs.

COST

5 Contempt for first level, 4x Current for every additional level.

REQUIREMENTS

Physical Clarity 3

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Pariahs spend a great deal of time within filthy environments – The Bright who choose to make their dwelling in Sewers, who wade into diseased areas, and who encourage insects and others to feast on their flesh create the conditions to learn Scourge.

APPEARANCE

Pariahs tend to take on an appearance that allows their denizens to emerge. Pariahs who favor insects will grow hives on their torso. Pariahs who favor rats will develop gaping holes that the rats can enter and exit from at will.

LEVELS

SCOURGE 1 - LIVING HIVE

The first level of Scourge involves inviting the new tenants to stay. Zombies can adopt most any sort of beast that can fit into their chest cavity – the process merely requires the expenditure of Willpower and a source of the hive – roughly a hive of insects, or a den of ten rats, etc.. At will, the Zombie may release this hive, unleashing pandemonium around them. Although they cannot control the beasts yet, this can create an effective distraction, or a horrifying display. If the Chest is destroyed, the Zombie may relocate the Hive to an extremity.

SCOURGE 2 - BLOAT VECTOR

The next level of Scourge involves selective bloating. The Zombie may compel their beasts to create pockets of putrid and festering tissue that enables the Zombie to float. The bloat also allows the Zombie to, if necessary, explode. This deals one point of extreme damage to the Chest, but anyone in the vicinity who is touched by the Zombie's abilities is a valid target for any of the Zombie's existing on-touch abilities, not to mention disgusted and blinded. To bloat up, the Zombie must spend 1 Contempt. The ability lasts for up to a day.

SCOURGE 3 - DARK BIDDING

The Zombie may call their Denizens to accomplish simple tasks or even attack a target, spending 1 Contempt to activate

this ability if used against a living target. Otherwise, roll Stamina + Leadership to direct your flock to complete a simple task.

SCOURGE 4 - HANGERS-ON

The Zombie may double the size of their stockpile of Denizens, granting them a second horde of denizens that either roost in another body part, or simply follow the Pariah around. This horde may be directed with Dark Bidding at the same time as the other horde, allowing you two possible actions. This action may be purchased up to twice. The horde does not have to be of the same type as the one within the Zombie (e.g. Rats can follow along, with a nest of flies inside.) This horde can be ordered to remain in an area – and so long as the Pariah is within the general vicinity, the denizens will remain where they are.

SCOURGE 5 - ANIMAL TRANSMISSION

The Pariah is now capable of infecting his Denizens with Rapture. The Denizens become Husks for the purpose of any and all abilities, and are able to speak directly to The Pariah through The Chorus. When one of his Denizens attacks or touches another entity, that entity is considered in contact with the Pariah. The Pariah may even directly speak, see, and act through his Denizens with the expenditure of a point of Contempt.



Subversion

Subversive Zombies are Brights who have, to some degree, internalized the philosophy that it is better not to be seen in the state that they are in. Either in the interest of violence, or in the interest of pacifism – these creatures learn to remain hidden away from the world, only emerging when absolutely necessary. They are known as Mannequins, for their tendency to remain absolutely still in bizarre positions.

COST

9 XP for first level, Current x 5 for subsequent.

REQUIREMENTS

Physical Clarity 3, Mental Clarity 2

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Remaining hidden away and evading human interaction at all costs – even other Brights – is a common trait for Mannequins.

APPEARANCE

Mannequins are often covered in dust and debris – and camouflage very well into their environment.

LEVELS

SUBVERSION 1 - ABSOLUTE STILLNESS

Mannequins are able to remain absolutely still in positively uncomfortable positions – standing on one leg, raising one arm into the air, or otherwise. This allows them to remain undetected by motion sensors and a simple peek into a dark room. Requires a Dex + Stealth roll, difficulty 5. Each success grants another scene of this effect.

SUBVERSION 2 - GREEN LIGHT

A Mannequin is able to instinctively sense when someone is looking at them. By spending a point of Contempt or Willpower, they are able to use this to their advantage – and become still the moment they are looked at, often hugging against the wall or standing amidst other vertical objects, making them impossible to notice.

SUBVERSION 3 - NATURAL CAMOUFLAGE

A Mannequin is able to crawl along walls and move through low, tight areas with particular ease and absolute silence. Spend 1 WP and roll Dex + Stealth, difficulty 6. For a full scene, the Mannequin gains increased flexibility, decreasing any difficulties to squeeze through tight spaces by -1. In addition, the Mannequin becomes whisper-silent, and is able to remain undetected by lying against walls, becoming difficult to see. (difficulty 8 to spot, contested vs. Dex + Stealth)

SUBVERSION 4 - CRAWLER

A Mannequin is able to preternaturally climb up any surface – allowing them to maneuver up walls and even along ceilings. Activating this ability requires a Dex + Athletics check (difficulty 8) or a point of contempt. It lasts for a scene, and allows normal movement – albeit crawling – along almost any surface

SUBVERSION 5 - IN PERFECT SILENCE

A Mannequin's stealth becomes a permanent trait of their movement. Opening doors, moving along crushed glass, or disturbing tin cans simply does not make noise any longer. Husks that are under the command of the Mannequin remain perfectly silent, and anyone the Mannequin attacks remains perfectly silent – their screams simply come out as dead air. This power is passive. Allied Brights may spend a point of Contempt to join in the 'silence' for one scene.



TYRANNY

Tyrants, practitioners of tyranny, are driven by anger much like their Malcontent cousins – but instead of directing it at the living, they direct it into their environment, into themselves, and into anything that moves.

COST

8 Contempt for First Level, 4x Current for Subsequent

REQUIREMENTS

Physical Clarity 2

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Tyranny is the only Profanity that requires the Bright to use physical violence against Husks – destroying Husks in fits of rage is a common trait of Tyrants.

APPEARANCE

Tyrants erupt in hives, tumors, and thick expansions of musculature that render them into walking titans, capable of inflicting terrible levels of punishment.

LEVELS

TYRANNY 1 - SADISM

For every individual the Tyrant destroys – Zombie or Human, they gain an additional point of Strength, up to a +3, that lasts until the end of the scene. The Tyrant may also destroy a Husk to gain 1 Contempt, once per day.

TYRANNY 2 - EXPLOSIVE STRENGTH

The Tyrant may inflict a terrifying amount of damage with a single blow. Spend 1 point of Contempt, and double successes on a single attack, as your character performs a horrifying, ferocious swipe capable of obliterating barricades and sending small cars flying.

TYRANNY 3 - TITANIC SIZE

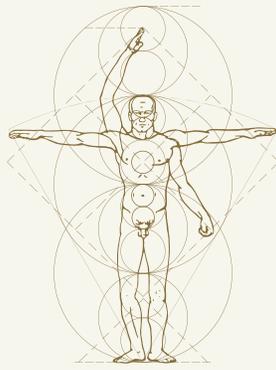
The Tyrant grows in size, gaining an additional two points of Strength (this is not marked in the Attributes section but added afterwards.) The Tyrant's threshold for Extreme Damage now rises – with most weapons short of anti-tank munitions and chainsaw blades being unable to inflict serious damage to the Tyrant.

TYRANNY 4 - ANNIHILATE

The Tyrant performs four rapid melee attacks against a target in fast succession, slamming against it in an effort to destroy it. Spend 1 Contempt. If the Tyrant fails, they collapse, exhausted – and suffer a -4 penalty to all rolls for the remainder of the Scene.

TYRANNY 5 - EXPLOSIVE MUTATION

If any of the Tyrant's limbs are destroyed by Extreme Damage, they may activate this ability for the cost of 3 Contempt. The Tyrant seizes, and the destroyed limb manifests tendrils, gnashing mouths, and oozing acidic ulcers. The limb returns with one point of health remaining, and anyone in melee range of the Tyrant is immediately subject to a grapple check and pulled towards the Tyrant, where the waiting mouths will deal 5 aggravated damage with a bite if the grapple is successful. The Tyrant will target anyone in the vicinity with this strength – including other Zombies. At the end of the scene, the destroyed limb returns, albeit with all but one damage point ticked off.



PROSPECT

Prospect is for those who still wish to understand mankind – even in their lost condition. Those who practice this Profanity seek to understand and comprehend the motives and aims of humanity – even though they may never hope to hold the same aims again. Witnesses, as they are called, seem to understand mankind better than any of the Bright.

COST

14 XP for first level, current x 6 for each additional level.

REQUIREMENTS

Mental Clarity 3, Social Clarity 3

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

Witnesses are often found observing humans – remaining as closeby to survivors as possible, and often interfering in their operations. This behavior tends to invite the development of Prospect.

APPEARANCE

Witnesses often scrounge together clothing that can withstand the apocalypse – given their limited dexterity, they have become known for wearing ragged cloaks and makeshift coverings made out of dark sheets.

LEVELS

PROSPECT 1 - WITNESS FLESH

The Witness may assess a human being from afar, gauging their health and general state of mind. They cannot witness thoughts yet – but they are able to glean if a human is stressed or calm. Roll Perception + Medicine, difficulty 8. Each success grants further insights into the human's health and condition.

PROSPECT 2 - BEHOLD ACTION

The Witness may assess a single action – and determine its' root causes and origins. A soldier gunning down a defenseless person may be following orders from a higher up – this power would allow a Witness to determine the identity of the higher-up, and the Soldier's feelings on their assignment. Roll Perception + Empathy, difficulty 8, with each success giving progressively more information on something the Witness has beheld.

PROSPECT 3- WITHDRAW SECRETS

The Witness may withdraw a secret – whether from a person, a place, or a Husk. Rolling Perception + Investigation (difficulty 8), the Witness may disclose something entirely secret about their target – with each success increasing the detail and information the secret provides.

PROSPECT 4 - EMPATH

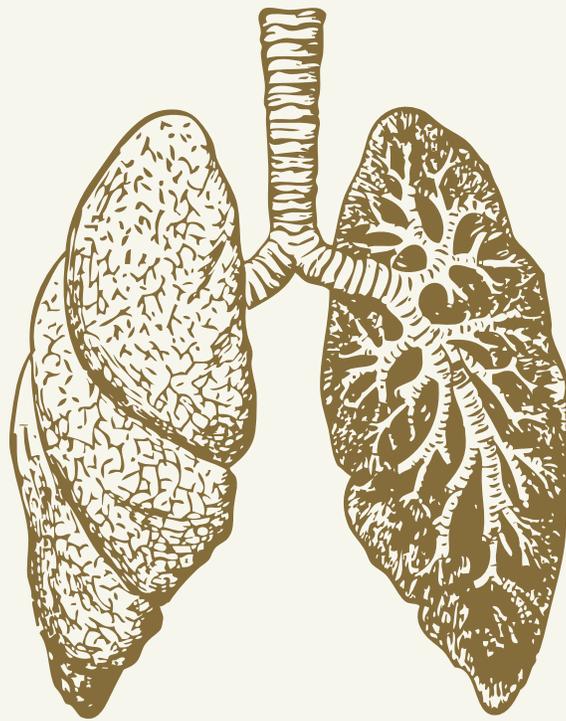
The Witness may now fully and utterly get a measure of an individual's convictions, beliefs, and insecurities by glaring at them. The individual must make eye contact with the Witness, and may resist with a willpower roll at difficulty 8. The Witness rolls Perception + Empathy, difficulty 7. Each success grants them an additional die to any social pools involving influencing the target, or any mental pools to deal with predicting and understanding a target. The Witness may ask and have any questions answered about the target's hypothetical reaction to certain situations, and who they are deep down.

PROSPECT 5 - LIFT THE BURDEN / JUSTICE

The Witness may now alleviate a harsh psychological burden, erasing guilt and pain. They do this by promising the target that their pain will be avenged, and that they are forgiven for the pain that they have caused. Spend 3 points of temporary Willpower. Roll Willpower, difficulty 7. Compounding successes increase the scale of the burden lifted. This does not allow someone to simply continue committing terrible crimes

without guilt – repeating the crime revisits the guilt, only tenfold, drawing some to suicide. This merely gives someone a second chance. Individuals who have had this power visited upon them are seemingly invisible to Husks – and can begin to hear the Chorus. Committing any offensive violence (e.g. – not in self-defense) against Husks, or revisiting their former crimes will result in the individual immediately losing their ability to hear, and makes Husks attack them with increased fervor. Those who are victims have their pain eased – although not entirely removed, and are able to hear the Chorus permanently. They will never be troubled by the dead again. This ability may also be deployed against Husks themselves – and will affect whatever Husk can hear the voice of the Witness, instantly destroying them, and laying them to rest.

Justice, on the other hand, is a terrifying ability. Against those who spread pain and terror wherever they go – even the greatest weapons will not protect them. Spend 2 points of Contempt, and roll Willpower, difficulty 6. Every success will raise a destroyed Zombie into a Revenant – who will pursue their killer with reckless abandon. Nothing can truly kill a Revenant – even blowing it to bits will result in bits and pieces pursuing their aggressor. The Revenants are laid to rest at the end of the scene.



VIRULENCE

Virulence is the final Profanity in *Zombie: the Rapture*, and is about a very different type of Hatred. Someone who practices Virulence doesn't simply believe that the Rapture is warranted – they believe that it should spread as quickly as possible.

COST

5 Contempt for First Level, 5x Current for Subsequent

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOR

The Virulent seek to kill not for sport, or out of anger – but for a desire for companionship. They genuinely believe that those who join The Rapture are better off than if they are living. To this end, the Virulent will often have gone out of their way to kill and turn someone into a Zombie.

APPEARANCE

The Virulent look diseased – broken sores across their mouths, constant streams of drool leaving their mouths, they seem to have taken the Rapture on as something communicable and deadly

LEVELS

VIRULENCE 1 - FATAL BITE

The Virulent are capable of spreading the Rapture through more traditional means. When they bite or scratch a target in melee, they may spend a point of Contempt to infect them with The Rapture. The target will steadily degenerate, rolling Stamina

against a difficulty 9 every day for seven days. A botch instantly kills the target. A failure results in the target losing one die from all physical pools – and this is cumulative over multiple days. Success merely staves off the check until the next day. This ability may be counteracted by removing the bitten limb – but this must be done within the Scene. This ability has a curious effect on Zombies – instantly forcing them into a state of Rapture, that can only be saved against with a Willpower roll (difficulty 9).

VIRULENCE 2 - CARRIERS

The Virulent is now capable of designating Husks or other Brights as Carriers, with each designation costing 1 Willpower. A Carrier will automatically spread the Fatal Bite, and inherits all the traits of the Virulent unlocked on this chain. Carriers cease to be carriers after one day outside of the presence of the Virulent.

VIRULENCE 3- NO WALLS

The Virulent is now capable of directly infecting targets in their line of sight – requiring an expenditure of 1 Contempt, and a roll of Stamina + Survival, difficulty 7. This may be resisted with Willpower, difficulty 8 – but only if the target is aware of the Virulent’s presence. This power may be used once per day, and the symptoms will manifest as in the case of a Fatal Bite. This power can penetrate any barrier.

Characters infected with the Rapture may now be controlled – the Virulent may make one sustained Willpower roll (difficulty 6), and must overcome the victim’s willpower in successes,

while whispering into The Chorus. If they succeed, the victim will follow the commands as dutifully as possible, although they may spend a point of Willpower to resist for a scene. The victim is acutely aware of this influence, and can hear the voice of the Virulent.

VIRULENCE 4 - DORMANCY

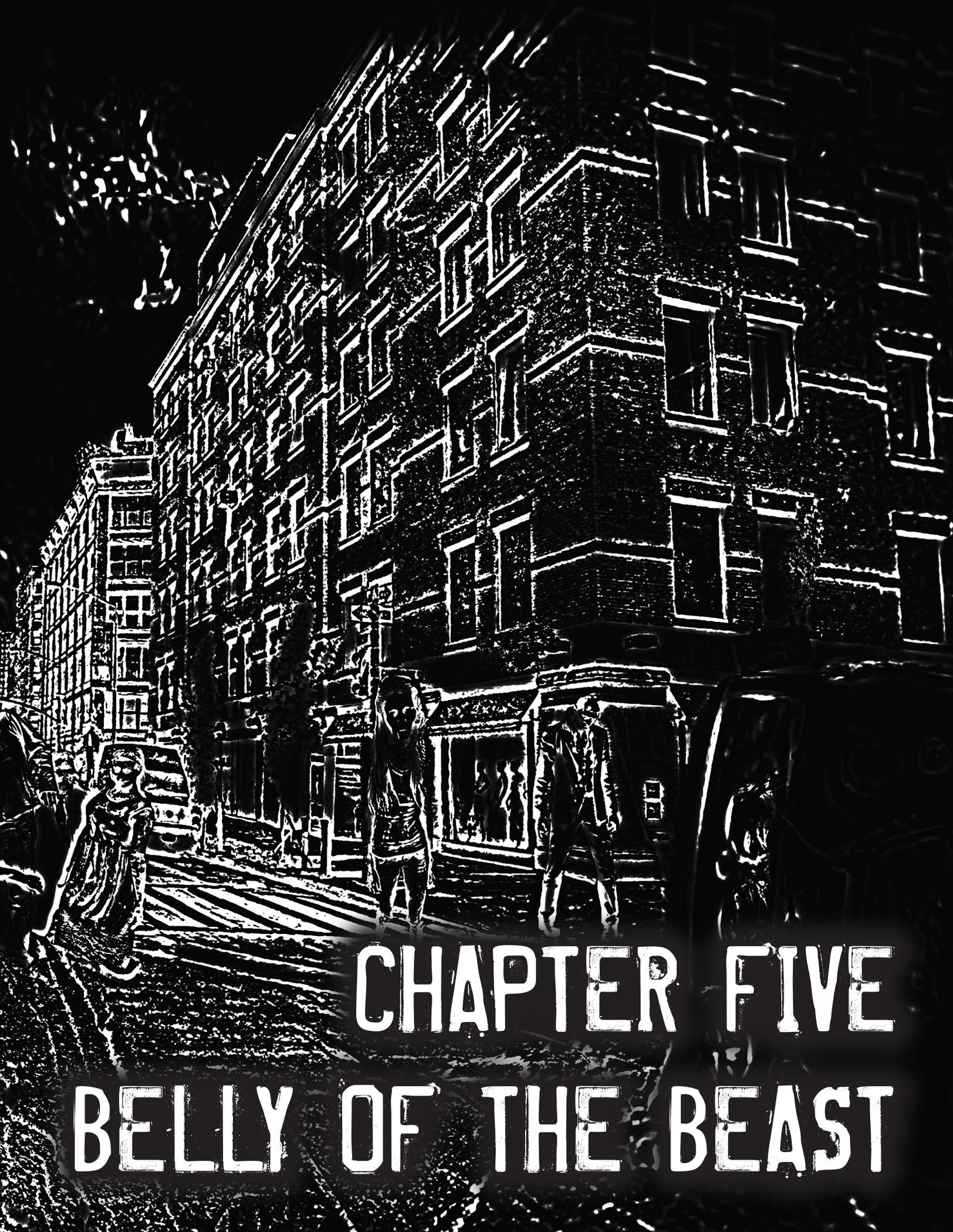
A victim attacked by the Virulent can be made ‘dormant’ – the Virulent no longer has to activate the bite at the point of contact, but may activate it at any point in the following day, with a point of Contempt required to extend the time limit by an additional day.

VIRULENCE 5 - CONTAMINATION

The Virulent’s bodily fluids are now a vector for Rapture – they can be dispensed into water supplies, used to spike drinks, smeared onto doorknobs, and otherwise placed in locations that would infect anyone who comes into contact with them. Note that the fluids must have an adequate concentration to ‘infect’ someone – a Virulent cannot poison an entire city’s water supply by bleeding into it. Virulent fluids stay infectious for up to 6 hours after leaving the Zombie’s body.

The Virulent may also ‘aggravate’ infected individuals from a distance – spending 1 Contempt to aggravate their condition. An aggravated individual will no longer be able to save against the infection, and will make quite a mess – spreading the infection to anyone who fails a Stamina roll (difficulty 8) after coming into contact with their fluids. The aggravated individual will collapse, dead, and reanimate shortly afterwards.





CHAPTER FIVE
BELLY OF THE BEAST

“WITH ENDLESS LOVE, WE LEFT YOU SLEEPING. NOW WE’RE SLEEPING WITH YOU. DON’T WAKE UP.”

– *Mother’s Note, 28 Days Later*

ENNUI AND MEMORIAM

We’ve established the core of Zombies, and how to build one – this chapter directly deals with the systems of *Zombie: the Rapture*, and will teach you how to simulate the sort of narratives and adventures that are part and parcel of a *Zombie* chronicle.

BECOMING

When a human being dies within an Exclusion Zone, they become a *Zombie* within roughly 1-2 minutes from the moment of death – when the Heart stops. If examined with medical equipment, some unsettling things can be uncovered.

Although most of the body parts are atrophied, brain activity continues – in fact, the brain seems, in part, immune to the decay of a *Zombie*. The chemistry of the body seems to function in illogical and downright supernatural ways, allowing the *Zombie* to move dessicated limbs, maneuver atrophied muscle, and think with dead tissue. In the world of *Zombie*, there is more to man than simple flesh.

On the spiritual side – *Zombies* show up in a particularly strange way. To many supernaturals, while spirit and body are linked – and often in unison – they are something that can be decoupled. Amateur

Necromancers can separate the spirit from the body, just as a murderer with a long dagger can. In *Zombie: the Rapture*, this is simply impossible: The soul of a *Zombie* cannot move on, cannot transcend, and seems to graft itself directly into the body.

The process is visibly traumatic – the soul looks damaged, in disrepair, and cannot be easily repaired. In turn, however, this makes *Zombies* immune to most of the magic that would otherwise target a soul – it’s both damaged, and woven into their bodies, making them quite resilient.

THE CHORUS

Zombies are always able to hear The Chorus near them, as though other *Zombies* were speaking at a clear, conversational volume. Husks are unable to control this, and will constantly repeat their thoughts and ramblings into the air – constantly signposting their location to Brights.

A Bright is able to choose when to speak into The Chorus, and when to do so. It is not possible to whisper into The Chorus, or otherwise obfuscate a conversation had through The Chorus – any discussion in The Chorus is audible to all *Zombies* in the area.

HUSKS AND HORDES

Husks will, when the notion seizes them, fall into a Horde – moving as one large entity through abandoned places. Hordes are often fluid in composition – funneled, tight areas will often gather hordes to be much larger and more focused. Open, wide areas will cause attrition, and the horde will gradually dissipate.

CALLING THE HORDE

A Bright may call a Horde to them by eliciting a call using a Charisma + Leadership check at a difficulty of 6. This check takes roughly 30 seconds to execute as the Bright gathers the Horde towards a singular purpose. Points of Contempt may be directly spent to increase the successes, with each point granting an additional two successes to the call.

Once a Bright has successfully attracted the attention of the Horde, they cannot fail – some sort of strange obligation to their fellow Zombie makes the Hordes listen. Each success on the activation roll instead increases the duration that the Horde will follow commands without being directly addressed and coerced, and also increases the complexity of possible commands.

BOTCH

The Husks completely misinterpret the command, and follow it through without hesitation, ignoring subsequent commands as a group. Each member of the Horde must be dissuaded separately to cancel this.

FAILURE

The Husks attempt the task, but without provocation or some sort of guide, they are only capable of the most rudimentary tasks, and quickly forget what they were doing.

ONE SUCCESS

The Horde understands the command and reluctantly, uncertainly follow through, pursuing a simple command 'break', 'walk', 'attack' for 2-3 turns.

TWO SUCCESSES

The Horde understand the command, but have little fervor for their goal, pushing for it, but understanding little more than, 'break that wall', 'walk into that doorway', or 'attack that group'. For 4-5 turns.

THREE SUCCESSES

The Horde understand the command, and seek to accomplish it as best as they can. The command must still involve things that are directly obvious, but the Horde is capable of recognizing complex tasks such as, 'climb up that ladder and kill that sniper'. The command persists for at least 30 seconds.

FOUR SUCCESSES

The Horde understand the command and push themselves to accomplish it. The

command may now involve things that are not immediately obvious - 'check that room and break anything red'. The command persists for at least one scene.

FIVE SUCCESSES

The Horde understand the command and internalize it, carrying it for some time. Commands may now reference rules of thumb - 'Walk down that road and destroy any car with this logo'. The command persists for a full night, and can even persist for longer, trapped in the Zombie's subconscious.

Husks cannot ever be compelled to attack other Zombies. Conflict between Brights will never resolve with the Husks turning on their own - in fact, the Husks will intentionally seek to break up any sort of conflict of this sort, hurling themselves on all parties that are attempting to hurt one another and pinning them in place before whisking them away, gently carrying them away with the mob.

Husks will always instinctively defend Brights and one another. If they detect a sign of human activity, they will always investigate it - albeit stupidly - and will violently destroy anyone trying to kill a Bright.

HORDE COMBAT

A single Husk is of little threat to an average human being. Moving slowly and unable to dodge, Husks are easy pickings. Hordes provide them with a frightening buff. Although Hordes move at the same speed as Husks, they are numerous, and often attracted by the sound of Survivors trying to fight. When a Horde attacks a survivor, the number of participants in the Horde must be calculated - this is the Horde's Size value. Next, the Encirclement value must be determined - this is how many of the undead are able to surround a character within a given space. Some sample values are provided below.

TRUCK CABIN - 1

HALLWAY - 2

ELEVATOR - 3

MANSION DOORS - 4

SUPERMARKET AISLE - 5

And so on. The maximum initial encirclement value is always 5. An average Husk has all physical rolls set at 2d10 - but for every additional member in the Horde capable

of participating in an attack, they gain an additional +2d10. Husks always move last in initiative.

When a Horde reaches a target, their first move will always be to grab at the target with their encirclement value multiplied by 2d10 dice. For every two successes over the target's defense (if they're able to defend), a Zombie grabs hold of them. The target is able to act immediately after this roll, gaining a free action – and must kill or break free of the assailants with a Strength roll contested against the amount of successful attackers x 2d10.

If the target does not break free or kill all of the assailants, the Zombie horde immediately rolls a drag check - a contested Strength roll to pull the target back into the Horde. Each success to the Zombies on this roll adds an additional point to the Encirclement value, representing another Zombie that can successfully latch on.

On the Horde's next action, take the number of successful grapplers, and roll a simple brawl check by multiplying that number by 2d10. For each success over the defender's defensive roll (if they attempt one), another member of the Horde sinks their teeth in for 2 lethal damage apiece. After resolving this, compare the amount of successful grapplers with the Encirclement value. Multiply the difference by 2d10, then roll this as another dice pool to represent more grapplers closing in, with each success increasing the amount of successfully latched Zombies. Finally, roll another drag check, until you reach a cap of 10. This is the absolute maximum Encirclement within the system, and represents a character being in the center of a Zombie horde – and likely taking

20 dice of lethal damage every turn. The defender does not receive a free action this time and must use their turn to break free.

A character who is grabbed suffers a +1 difficulty to dodge rolls, cumulatively, for every attacker that is latched on. At four attackers, this makes dodging impossible.

MULTIPLE HORDES AND MULTIPLE ATTACKS

A Horde is capable of attacking multiple victims at the same time – whatever saturation they are able to achieve counts as part of their attacks.

So long as they have the numbers to swarm When two Hordes meet and attack the same group of people, they are functionally treated as one horde for the purposes of attacking – although they may break the starting Encirclement limit of 5 if attacking from multiple sides.

When survivors attack a horde with weapons capable of dealing larger-scale damage (flame weapons, chemical weapons, explosives), the weapon's damage is done against the size of the horde, with each success on top of the damage value of the weapon dealing an additional casualty to the oncoming Zombies.

DAMAGING ZOMBIES

Husks are incapable of defending themselves. A character merely has to pass a successful attack roll to instantly kill a Husk – so long as they know what they are doing. Damaging a Bright is an entirely different matter.

Brights are capable of moving – and, to some degree, are aware that if they are shot in the head, they will die. Combat resolution is much the same as in your chosen World of Darkness edition – what is not the same is damage.

When a Zombie takes an undirected, random attack, resolve it with the following table on a 1d10 die.

1 – HEAD

2 – LEFT ARM

3 – RIGHT ARM

4-6 – TORSO

7-8 – LEFT LEG

9-10 – RIGHT LEG

An attack that strikes anything but the head is considered to be ineffective. However, Zombies are not immune to extensive damage. This comes from Extreme Damage.

Extreme Damage is inflicted on a Storyteller's whim – and is defined as an attack capable of causing significant and permanent damage to a body part. While a 9mm bullet or a combat knife blade may not be capable of the vast trauma necessary to trigger a moment of Extreme Damage, a heavy sniper rifle round, or a chainsaw swung at the waist can.

When a character's limb takes Extreme Damage, they must roll a Stamina save against a difficulty 7. Passing this check indicates that the character miraculously sustained superficial damage from the Extreme Damage, and does not suffer any structural damage or defects. They simply gain a point of Extreme Damage on that limb. Failing this check grants the point, and also destroys one Affectionation on that limb.

Subsequent instances of Extreme Damage to the same limb in the same

encounter are rolled at an increasing difficulty of +1, capping at a difficulty of 10. Each limb has 4 Health Points to start with. A point of Limb Health may be regenerated by spending contempt - the wound bubbles and scabs over, becoming grotesque - but healed. You cannot regenerate a destroyed Limb without Profanities.

Certain Profanities provide points of Chitin or Armor. If these are present, the Stamina roll is not made - the Armor or Chitin is destroyed and the Limb survives unscathed.

If the character passes the Extreme Damage check, the Limb in question takes a point of Extreme Damage.

If the character fails the Extreme Damage check, the Limb in question takes a point of Extreme Damage, and one affectation on that limb is destroyed.

If the character botches the Extreme Damage check, the Limb is instantly destroyed and all affectations on it are lost.

If the player character takes a point of Extreme Damage to the head, the difficulty for the Stamina roll increases to 9 automatically.

GETTING A HEAD IN LIFE

If a Zombie's head is severed, they may continue functioning as a character. The player may want to decide if this is truly the life they want for their Bright, but it is certainly an option to allow a player to continue playing - albeit in a disembodied fashion - after Death.

MEMORIAL

Zombies can locate their memorials by following the clues in their Affectations - when a Zombie is close to a Memorial, the GM may trigger a Perception + Awareness check at difficulty 8, with the Zombie sensing that their Memorial is close, but not precisely where. A city map can be helpful here.

After a Zombie has located their Memorial and performed the adequate rituals, reenacting a passage from their life, they must immediately look at the experience and decide how to interpret it.

If the character wishes to sink into Contempt and destroy the Memorial, they immediately gain five points of Contempt to use as they please, multiplied by the

value of the Affectation that led them there. They immediately fall into Rapture for a period of 6 hours.

If a character wishes to embrace Epiphany, they must choose a value of their past life to draw on as they have a vision of their previous existence. This vision is intense and feverish – but gives them clarity into who they were. Upon the vision's closure, they gain a point of Clarity multiplied by the value of the Affectation that led them there. The Affectation and Memorial are considered permanently resolved, and the Value that the player chose is recorded on the character sheet.

Once per day, a chosen Value may be called upon to automatically succeed in a single Social or Mental roll. This success comes from the character's deep-seated inner strengths rising up and allowing them to succeed. The roll must be related to the value – if the value is service, it must be related to helping or serving those that need it.

CONTEMPT

Zombies gain Contempt via four means: killing human beings, destroying untouched places, suffering a Rapture check and through Memorials. Killing humans is relatively easy – find a human and slaughter them, gaining two points of Contempt. Every additional Bright involved in one of these actions gains the Contempt, so long as they are directly involved in the act of killing. Finding an untouched place in the apocalypse can be difficult – but annihilating traces of humanity also grants you Contempt, at 1 point for every successful destructive scene.

Contempt may be spent directly as experience points for Invocations, or it may be spent on its' own to bolster the Zombie's abilities. Points of contempt can grant two free successes on efforts to direct hordes, may be used to heal Extreme Damage, and may even be spent to put off or counteract Rapture, allowing you to maintain mental control for an additional scene. Staving off Rapture will inevitably cause your next roll against it to fail – but may be done for as long as the character has Contempt to spare.



RAPTURE

Rapture is a mad, blind state of instinct that has no reason, no remorse, and no mercy. Spiritual Clarity determines the trigger for a Rapture check:

SPIRITUAL CLARITY ONE

Seeing a Human Being.

SPIRITUAL CLARITY TWO

Seeing a human being performing any rapid movement or creating a loud sound.

SPIRITUAL CLARITY THREE

Seeing a human being committing a violent action.

SPIRITUAL CLARITY FOUR

Seeing a human being committing a heinous action.

SPIRITUAL CLARITY FIVE

Deep personal revulsion and horror.

To counter Rapture, a Zombie rolls their Willpower against a difficulty varying from 5 to 8, depending on the proximity and intensity of the exposure. Success prevents Rapture from setting in.

Failure instantly begins Rapture, which lasts until the stimulus is extinguished, or for an hour.

A botch immediately forces the character into Rapture for 6 hours.

Being prompted for a Rapture check automatically gives a character a point of Contempt.

FIRE

When a Zombie encounters Fire, they are instinctively drawn to the flame – Brights can generally ignore this compulsion. This changes when a Bright is face-to-face with fire (if the flame takes up a sizeable enough part of their environment that they can't quite look away). All Brights within the vicinity of fire must roll Willpower every turn against a difficulty of 6, increasing by 1 every turn until it reaches 10, so long as they are within the radius of the flames. Failing this roll, or being a Husk,

forces the Bright to stare deep into the flames, becoming enraptured by them. At this point, Brights must pass a Willpower roll at difficulty 10 within 5 rounds, allowing one roll per round. Success enables them to break free of the enchantment – it is the only thing that will. Not even direct violence against the Bright, aside from Extreme Damage, will pull them away. Husks automatically stare into the fire for the required five rounds – and if they pass, no matter Bright or Husk, the Zombie will immediately enter Rapture until out of the radius of the fire.

CLARITY

Clarity is gained in one of three ways. The first is through a successful Epiphany. The second is through deep, meaningful relation with something human – either a place, or a person. The Storyteller decides when it is appropriate to give a point of clarity for the latter, and is expected to be relatively reserved with offering this. A meaningful relation can only be had once – a Zombie can stumble into a nursery and play with alphabet blocks to remember their childhood, but they cannot do it indefinitely to farm Clarity. Finally, it is possible to spend Experience points to gain more clarity, at a rate of 10 XP per Clarity.

Clarity is spent directly to improve the following attributes:

PHYSICAL CLARITY

The character's ability to coordinate their body normally. At 3 points, the character can move with sufficient dexterity that their movements do not betray their nature – although their appearance might.

PHYSICAL CLARITY ONE

A shambling, barely mobile Zombie. What we think of as Romero zombies.

PHYSICAL CLARITY TWO

These characters are able to break into something resembling a lope – although certainly not a sprint. They still have a distinct limp at all times. Characters at this level are able to use simple levers, doorknobs, and other machines.

PHYSICAL CLARITY THREE

These characters are able to move their body with enough dexterity to camouflage their condition at a distance, although their appearance is still a dead giveaway. They also become able to break into a light jog. Characters at this level are able to use tools and weapons independent of a larger machine – although they are limited to melee weapons and simple tools.

PHYSICAL CLARITY FOUR

These characters are able to jump and run, effectively recovering their mortal dexterity. These are what we think of as Rage zombies – ‘runners’. Characters at this level can use more complex machines and tools, and have the coordination to operate machinery.

PHYSICAL CLARITY FIVE

These characters are able to coordinate inhuman and frightening actions such as dislocating fingers at will to slip out of bindings, and squeezing through immensely tight openings by breaking and dislocating bones.

MENTAL CLARITY

The character’s ability to coordinate their mind and thoughts.

MENTAL CLARITY ONE

A barely-thinking wretch that can put together basic thoughts and ideas, but only understand who they were in a very dim, distant sense.

MENTAL CLARITY TWO

At this level, the character may understand the function of people and places – they recognize a police officer and a police station. They can read again.

MENTAL CLARITY THREE

At this level, the character can remember a good deal of information about the world before. The faces of loved ones begin to swim up and surface.

MENTAL CLARITY FOUR

At this level, the character can put together more advanced hypotheses, and figure out who they were before all of this with some level of accuracy – although Memorials are still necessary to have Epiphany and Clarity.

MENTAL CLARITY FIVE

At this level, the character is as they were before they died. They remember. Not only that, but they can begin to glean deep, disturbing understanding of their condition.

SOCIAL CLARITY

The character's ability to coordinate their more human aspects.

SOCIAL CLARITY ONE

Absolutely inhuman, these characters can only stare fondly at what they once had. Cannot speak, and any attempt at communication with human beings requires rolling this attribute at difficulty 8.

SOCIAL CLARITY TWO

Traces of humanity still linger. Human Speech becomes possible – just barely, requiring a roll of this attribute at difficulty 8.

SOCIAL CLARITY THREE

Speech becomes reflexive, although the voice is an eerie, breathy groan.

SOCIAL CLARITY FOUR

The character becomes capable of more complex emoting – allowing them to convey tone and emotion in their words.

SOCIAL CLARITY FIVE

The character is able to speak as though they never died.

SPIRITUAL CLARITY

The character's ability to look deeper and understand their condition.

SUPERNATURAL CLARITY ONE

Spiritually blank, the Zombie merely shudders on, lacking any will beyond the will to push on.

SUPERNATURAL CLARITY TWO

The Zombie becomes aware that there is something pushing them onwards.

SUPERNATURAL CLARITY THREE

Spend Willpower to gain automatic successes.

SUPERNATURAL CLARITY FOUR

Resist mind control, magic, and efforts to control you by using your Willpower score.

SOCIAL CLARITY FIVE

Become intimately aware of your character's entity and soul – the Storyteller better have some good explanations ready for why the Zombies have risen.

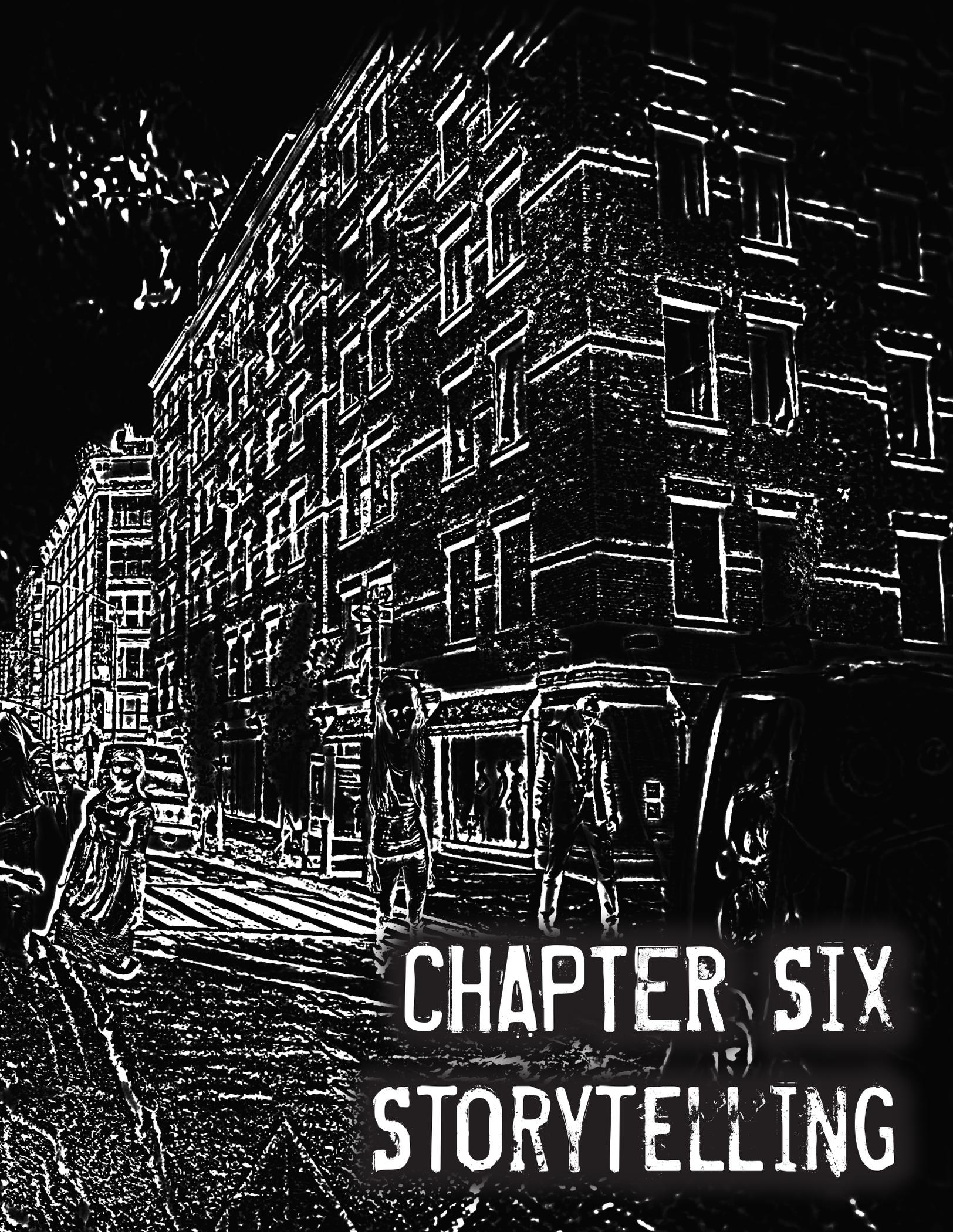
Each of these attributes cap related attributes and abilities, which are color-coded on the character sheet. These statistics can technically have higher scores, but if Clarity is too low, they are capped – e.g., a character can have Perception 3 and Alertness 3, but a Mental Clarity of only 2, making their effective perception + alertness roll four dice instead of six.

GOOD AND EVIL

Clarity is not good, although Contempt is certainly evil by human standards (being a broad hatred and disgust for humanity.) Characters that do evil may necessarily need to increase their clarity in order to improve their ability to survive. Clarity is merely self-awareness and knowledge. What is done with that knowledge is in the hands of the character.







CHAPTER SIX

STORYTELLING

“SOMETIMES YOU FIND YOUR PATH,
SOMETIMES IT FINDS YOU.”

– Max Brooks, *World War Z*

THE CHRONICLE

So – what do you do in a Zombie chronicle? In a game set during an apocalyptic event, what are the stakes? Where does one go in such a bleak world?

The answer is – the predicament of a Zombie apocalypse is no more bleak than any other setting in the World of Darkness. Does the presence of working convenience stores, the false vanity of civilized behavior, and TV dinners make the world a more hospitable place? The World of Darkness has always teetered on the brink of destruction and apocalypse – and Zombie is not much different.

The world is changing in Zombie: the Rapture – but that does not mean that it is over.

THE CITY MAP

It is highly recommended that the GM create a map of the city, separated into multiple districts and zones – this fosters exploration, but also creates a chance for Zombies to find their Memorials more easily. Knowing which district to search can help immensely.

MANKIND

Survivors – human beings who have somehow eeked out an existence amidst the ruins of Exclusion Zones. A long time ago, George Romero understood that small collections of people are an excuse to deal with greater issues that mankind faces – greater evils and ills borne from within and without. You should see *Survivors* in much the same way.

Who are they? What does this band of survivors do to stay alive? How does this mirror our own world, and the imperfect systems that we’ve built for survival? Not all *Survivors* are evil – by all means. But some people are cruel and malicious. Look at things that make you angry in the world, and use them to guide your storytelling with *Survivors*. The Zombies are just set dressing – and the Brights are the ultimate adjudicators of justice.

ZOMBIE GOALS

Zombie Goals can be quite myriad in *Zombie: The Rapture*. This largely depends on the outlook of the Bright player characters – and most *Zombie* campaigns will begin with characters trying to find themselves, and understand more about the world around them before making direct judgement. Once judgement comes, however, a few goals stand out.

PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Some Zombies believe that if the deeper causes of the Rapture can be solved, that Brights, Husks, and human beings can

co-exist. A mutual understanding can be reached. Husks feel no pain, work tirelessly, and attack human beings out of compulsion – not out of malice. This ending has been played for comedy (see *Shaun of the Dead*) – but if you're willing to hope for a brighter tomorrow, this is the sort of story that *Zombie: the Rapture* is built around – the Bright forging bridges to mankind, and allowing them to see the error of their ways, and the terrible crimes that have brought about the Rapture.

ABOUT THE END

Some Zombies believe that Zombies as a whole are a horrible crime against nature – that the Rapture's coming is lesson enough for humanity. They wish to destroy Zombies, and end their existence by resolving whatever deeper issues lie at the heart of the *Zombie Apocalypse*. This can put them into direct conflict with militaries, evil corporations, individuals – and the question remains if it is even possible to end a Rapture in this way. If they are able to avenge the crime – will it all be over? Will sunshine fall upon the world oncemore, and will the dead simply collapse, falling back to their graves? That is up to the Storyteller.

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

Some Zombies view Humanity with contempt – they believe that the inevitable goal of the Rapture is pure vengeance against all mankind – those who have perpetrated the crimes, and those who have idly allowed them to happen. These *Zombie parties* tend to focus on exterminating humans as efficiently and directly as possible,

around cultivating Hordes, and snuffing out bastions of resistance. The campaign ends when humanity's light finally dies, and all that remains is a dead world.

WARDENS

Some Zombies don't view the end of humanity as enough – their role is to punish mankind into changing their ways. There is no such thing as coexistence: but there is a new covenant that can be forged. Zombies are dark, cannibalistic monsters, and exist to horrify mankind into being better. In this campaign, the Zombies take on the roles of judges – tormenting Mankind when it strays, and protecting those who are doing the right thing. They are no friends to people, but they certainly aren't enemies.

A NEW WORLD

Zombies can end up viewing their new existence as a new form of life – where the Husks and Zombies around them understand trauma and pain on a level that mankind simply doesn't. To this end, they can seek to create a new world, simply for themselves. These campaigns can end in any number of ways – the Zombies can simply claim a city and seek to hold it and negotiate with mankind, or they can climb onto a cargo ship and sail off into the sunset.

CREDITS

A special thanks to Pixabay authors and publishers who provided images used throughout this corebook under the Pixabay License. Specific thank you to:

506967
Ahmadreza89
anunusualwoman0
Clker-Free-Vector-Images
currens
dieselVUK
GDJ
Jozefm84
markusspiske

Michael_Luenen
Mysticsartdesign
OpenClipart-Vectors
psbitnev
ractapopulous
Roses_Street
simonwijers
XukaSa

Another special thanks goes out to the creators of the various Fonts used in this book. Fonts were sourced from Google Fonts, DaFont.com, and Adobe Fonts.

A Bebedera by deFharo
Bungee by David Jonathan Ross
Dirty Old Town by 1000 Free Fonts
Domine by Impallari Type
Downcome by Misprinted Type
Evil Bunny by Sheenie Richards
F-Rotten by Guido Piccione
Futura Hand by AJ Troxell

Horrorfind by Sinister Fonts
Packard Antique by Dieter Steffmann
Parents Suck by Davy Meykens
Staatliches by Brian Larossa & Erica Carras
Stampete by JOEBOB graphics
Vehicle Breaks Down by Linafis Studio
Zombified by Sinister Fonts

And finally, a very special thank you to everyone on The Sixth Age and otherwise who helped with the development and writing of this book.

Alexclonette
Annie
Chris
Eve
James
Kalzky
Lars
Lambert

Matt
Narf
OblivionAlpha
Orga
Pascal
Red
Rowan
Ryry

Sage
Shivers
Styx
Tatsuya
Tim
TMM

Contact me anytime at mishazhuykov@gmail.com or find me on Facebook!

Portions of the materials are the copyrights and trademarks of Paradox Interactive AB, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. For more information please visit worldofdarkness.com.





