

MALLEUS

A Roleplaying Game of
Witch Hunters & Inquisitors



Malleus

A
ROLE-PLAYING GAME
OF
Monfter Hunters and Inquifitors

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This game is derived from, and inspired by:

Apocalypse World by D. Vincent Baker & Meguey Baker

Urban Shadows by Andrew Medeiros & Mark Diaz Truman

Monster of the Week by Michael Sands

Dungeon World by Sage Latorra & Adam Koebel

Simple World by Avery Alder



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What is Malleus?:

Malleus is a fantasy role-playing/story game about hunting monsters, evil-doers and abominations in 17th century Western Europe - or at least somewhere like it. The players take the role of those tragic and desperate people driven to confront the evil of the Darkness head on.

The player characters are brought together by their need to battle the monsters of the world, but will be driven apart by their needs and beliefs. There is more than one way to follow the Light, but not all followers of the Light recognise this fact.

At its heart, Malleus is an action and adventure game. The primary focus of the player characters is to locate minions of the Darkness, find their weakness and destroy them in the name of the Light. In this sense, the game is inspired more by modern day fictional works such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Supernatural. It is a thriller more than it is a mystery.

Nevertheless, Malleus adopts its setting for a reason. Western Europe in the 17th Century was plagued by war between Catholics and Protestants in the Wars of Religion. In England it saw the English Civil War and the execution of King Charles 1, and later the Glorious Revolution. It saw the British colonisation of the Americas and the beginning of the Golden Age of Piracy.

It was also the peak of witch hunting in much of Europe, and in America, including the Lancashire Witch Trials of 1612 and the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 to 1693. It was a time when people were deeply divided by their beliefs.

Malleus attempts to capture some of the conflict, division and paranoia of the time through its rules surrounding the character's drives and beliefs. While it is a game about hunting monsters it is also a game about the people who hunt them.

A note on the setting

As noted previously, the setting of Malleus is 17th century Western Europe, or a near analogue. That place and time provide an intriguing backdrop for playing these kinds of stories as well as providing a great aesthetic. However, this game does not aim to provide any historical details and does not expect the players to hew too close to reality. Indeed, you may opt for an invented world, or alternate history, with a similar feel and aesthetic.

The game uses the terms the Light and the Darkness when referring to the forces of good and evil. It could talk about the forces of God and the Church against the minions of the Devil, and you may choose to look at the game and the setting that way if you wish but it is probably better to think of the

Light as a supernatural force that favours humanity, and the Darkness as a supernatural force which seeks to harm humanity. The power of God need not be the only expression of the Light.

The text uses the Light and the Darkness as stand-ins to allow the game to be enjoyed in various modes without over complicating the mechanics. By default, in addition to the various branches of the Christian Church, followers of Judaism, Islam and other religions, even atheists, could be devotees of the Light in Malleus. Equally, a member of any of those groups may have fallen to the Darkness. The conflict between different religious groups is reflected in the Trust and Belief mechanics, not in the distinction between the Light and the Darkness.

Malleus does not assume any particular treatment of gender roles, sexuality or race. These may be interesting topics for your gaming group, and you should approach them in a way all players are comfortable with. However, Malleus does not make any mechanical assumptions and does nothing to support this particular aspect of play. Please approach these issues with sensitivity and enjoy the game as you like.

The Basics of Play:

Malleus is derived from and inspired by the game Apocalypse World by D. Vincent Baker, a list of other games that have inspired this game appears at the start of this document. Familiarity with those games is necessary to play Malleus in its current state - Malleus aspires to eventually be able to stand alone but substantial further work is required to achieve that goal.

Malleus, like Apocalypse World and its derivatives, is a game based around a conversation - a conversation between the players. The majority of the players will take the role of a single character, a monster hunter, who aims to fight the forces of the Darkness. One player is the GM, the GM is in charge of playing the rest of the characters in the world and making certain decisions about what happens in the course of play. Specific advice and procedures for the GM are contained in a later section of the rules.

The conversation between the GM and the other players is about what the characters say and what they do, how they react and how the world responds to them. The rules of Malleus are designed to drive that conversation into interesting directions and maintain the momentum of play.

Moves & Dice

This section explains the basic structure of play in Malleus. As noted previously, the game of Malleus takes the form of a conversation - the players say what their characters are doing and the GM responds by telling the characters how the world responds, the players then respond to what the GM has told them in a back and forth loop. So where does the game come in?

The game connects to the conversation by **moves**. A move is a mechanical procedure that is **triggered** by certain events occurring in the conversation (also called the fiction) and are used to resolve conflicts or questions - they may also result in further conflicts.

A move is triggered when what a character says or does meet the trigger condition set out in the move. A move is only triggered by a character doing or saying the thing that triggers the move, that is to say - a move can only be triggered when a player narrates something happening in the shared fiction of the game world that corresponds with the trigger condition of the **move**. Further, if what a character does or says triggers a move then the mechanics of the move must be invoked and the procedure for the move completed. Sometimes it will be reasonable for a player who inadvertently triggers a move they were not expecting to trigger to change what their character does but a player may never seek to re-narrate their action such that their character does essentially the same thing in the fiction without triggering the move.

There are two kinds of moves in Malleus, **basic moves** and **special moves**. All player characters are able to trigger basic moves from the very beginning of play. Special moves are attached to Archetypes and can only be used by characters who have access to that move via having selected it from their Archetype. Some other elements in the game world, such as monsters, obstacles and equipment may also have special moves attached to them. Those moves can be triggered by a character who meets the trigger condition when that element is present in play. The end of session move is also a special move, which triggers at the end of each session.

Very often, when a move is triggered it calls upon the player of the character to make a dice roll. A move that requires a dice roll will instruct the player to “roll +X” (where X is one of the character’s stats). When a move tells you to make a roll, roll 2d6 and add the numerical value of the stat referred to in the move.

If the total of 2d6 plus the relevant stat is 7 or higher that is considered a **hit**, any total result of 6 or less is a **miss**. Many moves describe specific outcomes of a hit of 7-9 and a hit of 10+, simply follow the instructions in the move.

Generally, a hit means you get what you want or you succeed at what you are trying to do. A result of 7-9 is usually a weak hit and you get the minimum you were seeking, and there may be some cost or complication. A 10+ is a strong hit. In general, a strong hit gets you what you want and may even give you something additional.

A result of 6 or less is not strictly a failure, it means that the GM gets to make a move and tell you what happens. On a miss you often will not get what you want, but there’s no specific rule that says you can’t. The aim of the GM making a move on a miss is to drive the story forward in an interesting way - this may not always be a bad outcome.

The GM never rolls dice, rather the GM makes moves when the players roll a miss or when the players look to the GM for what happens next. GM moves are discussed in more detail in the GM section.

Hold

Some moves grant a character **hold**, this will be phrased as “hold 1” or “hold 3”, for example. Hold is a resource that can be spent in accordance with the wording of the move that generated it. Once hold has been spent it is gone. Generally hold has to be spent during a given scene, but usually the move will provide guidance as to this. If the expiration of hold is unclear it is for the GM to decide when it expires.

Bastien, the Mystic, is speaking with Count Otto in his manse about the recent string of attacks on peasant farmers in the nearby village. Bastien's player states that he wants to study the Count carefully during the course of the conversation. This triggers the Read A Person move and the GM instructs Bastien's player to roll +Reason. Bastien's player rolls 9 on 2d6 and adds Bastien's Reason of +1 for a total result of 7 - a partial success. Bastien gets 2 hold which he can spend during the conversation to ask the player of the Count (in this case the GM).

As the conversation continues Bastien asks the Count where he was on the night of the last attack. The Count says that he was hosting a dinner for some visiting friends. Bastien declares that he will spend a hold to ask the GM if the Count is telling the truth. The hold is spent and the GM tells Bastien's players, truthfully, that yes the Count was hosting a dinner for his friends. The conversation ends shortly thereafter when Bastien's ally Duncan, the Enforcer, enters the room and brings news of a further attack. Bastien leaves with Duncan and does not spend the second hold. If Bastien returns to speak to Count later in the evening then the GM might decide that the unspent hold remains, as it is a continuation of the previous interaction, otherwise the interaction is over and the unspent hold is lost.

Blessings and Curses

Blessed and Cursed are mechanical effects that alter the normal dice rolling procedure. If a character is Blessed, they roll 3d6 +Stat and keep the highest two dice. If a character is Cursed, they roll 3d6 +Stat and keep the lowest two dice. Blessed and Cursed are mechanical terms and do not specifically represent a literal blessing or curse.

Being Blessed or Cursed from multiple sources had no additional effect. If you are both Blessed and Cursed (regardless of how many Blessings and Curses you have), you roll 2d6 as normal.

Stats:

Each player character in Malleus has a set of five **main stats** that describe the character's abilities and qualities.

The main stats are as follows: **Discipline**, **Zeal**, **Pugnacity**, **Reason** and **Esotery**.

Discipline measures the character's willpower, patience and grace. It tells us whether the character can keep calm under pressure and focus on their skill, education or training.

Zeal represents a character's passion and charisma. It tells us how assertive and persuasive a character can be, as well as how loud or flashy they are.

Pugnacity is about forcefulness and aggression. It tells us how combative a character is, and whether things will go their way in a fight.

Reason is a reflection of a character's intellect, their capacity for logical thinking and perception. It tells us how good the character is at understanding information and reading people.

Esotery gauges a character's facility for hidden knowledge and their connection to the occult and the divine. It tells us how much they know of arcane lore and their spiritual connection to the supernatural.

At character creation, the following numbers are assigned to the main stats: +2, +1, +1, 0, -1. The Archetypes provide instructions on the allocation of these numbers.

A character's main stats can never fall below -3 and never increase beyond +3.

Additional Stats

In addition to their main stats, characters also have the following stats **Faith**, **Corruption** and **Trust**. Those stats, how they are determined, and what they do are addressed in a later section.

Faith & Corruption:

Each PC has a track for recording Faith and Corruption. Faith measures your character's allegiance to good and their will to do the right thing, even when it goes against their beliefs, drives and vices. Faith increases when PCs help innocents and fight abominations. Corruption measures a character's allegiance to the Darkness and their willingness to embrace the power granted by following the left hand path. Corruption increases when PCs selfishly follow their own ends and side with the Abominations.

Each character has a Faith track of five boxes and a Corruption track of five boxes. When a move tells you to mark Faith, do as instructed. When a move tells you to mark Corruption, do as instructed and erase one marked Faith (if you have at least one to erase). When a track is filled, clear the track and take an advance.

Each character sheet contains a second track recording the characters Faith/Corruption Level. By default, characters start at Faith +1 on the track. Whenever you clear the Faith Track, advance your current Faith/Corruption Level one space to the right. Whenever you clear the Corruption Track, advance you current Faith/Corruption one space to the left.

Faith						
	-2	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3
		X	←	X		
	+3	+2	+1	+0	-1	-2
Corruption						

E.g. Nathaniel Law, Witch Hunter, has strayed from the Light. He started his career at Faith +1/Corruption +0. He has since cleared the Corruption track twice. He has taken two advances and moved his Faith/Corruption two spaces to the left and is now Faith -1/Corruption +2.

Sometimes a move will call for you to roll +Faith or +Corruption. When you are called upon to roll +Faith, the bonus to your roll is equal to your current Faith level on the Faith/Corruption track, likewise, when you are called upon to roll +Corruption, the bonus to your roll is equal to your current Corruption level on the Faith/Corruption track.

If a PCs corruption level would ever progress beyond +3, they are consumed by the Darkness and become an NPC under the control of the GM. The player of the consumed character will need to create a new character to continue playing.

The Touch of the Darkness

When you increase Corruption you risk being touched by the Darkness, and marked by it. When **your Corruption Level increases**, roll +Corruption. On a 10+, choose two, on a 7-9, choose one:

- » *You receive a minor, but visible disfigurement*
- » *You receive a major, but easily concealed disfigurement*
- » *You receive a major but temporary derangement*
- » *You receive a minor but permanent derangement.*

On a miss, you are unscathed for now.

Trust:

Just because the PCs fight against the Darkness together does not mean that they like or trust each other. They may have deeply conflicting goals, or beliefs about the nature of the Light and the Darkness. Trust is a measure of the characters abilities to get along either because their beliefs align, or despite their differences. Trust ordinarily starts at +0 and can go to +3. Trust may go as low as -3.

Each archetype provides instruction for determining starting Trust with other characters. It also states the default Trust level you have with NPCs, this number reflects your Trust in them and their Trust in you. The Trust number on your character sheet indicates how much Trust you have in a given character, and likewise their sheet will reflect how much Trust they have in yours. When you are called upon by a move to roll +Trust, your bonus is the other character's Trust in you (i.e the value recorded on their sheet). It is easier both to aid and to betray someone that trusts you.

At the end of a session you may increase your Trust in one other character by +1 who helped you in fulfilling your Drive and/or their actions reaffirmed your Belief during the session. If a character acted in a way that prevented you fulfilling your Drive, or acted in a way that undermined your Belief, take -1 Trust with them. If, at the end of a session, you have +3 Trust with any character, mark Faith as you take comfort in the bonds the Light has seen fit to help you forge (you mark Faith only once, no matter how many characters you have +3 Trust with). Likewise, if, at the end of a session, you have -3 Trust with any character, mark Corruption as you draw strength from your righteous hatred.

The Basic Moves:

Act in the Face of Evil

When you **act in the face of evil**, or **act under pressure**, roll +Discipline. On a 10+ your action is successful. On a 7-9 you flinch, stall or stumble: the GM will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or an ugly choice.

Act in the Face of Evil is a catch all move for a character doing something that tests their ability to act under pressure or tests their mettle. If there is a move that is more specific to the current situation then use the more specific move.

Consider Signs of the Supernatural

When you **consider signs of the supernatural**, roll +Esotery. On a 10+ hold 2, and on a 7-9 hold 1. One hold can be spent to ask the GM one of the following questions:

- » *What happened here?*
- » *What sort of being is involved?*
- » *What can it do?*
- » *What can hurt it?*
- » *Where did it go?*
- » *What is it going to do?*
- » *What does it want?*

In order to Consider Signs of the Supernatural, there must be some kind of evidence to consider. That evidence might be obvious, or it might need to be gleaned through Looking Around, Divining Truth or Reading a Person. This is also generally the move that is triggered if a character is trying to recall lore or information about any supernatural topic. Sometimes the available evidence will not be sufficient to allow the character to determine the answer to the possible questions. In that case, the GM should advise the player that their character is unable to discern the information from the available signs and allow a different question to be asked.

Persuade

When you try to **persuade or manipulate someone**, say what you do or say, tell them what you want and roll +Zeal.

For NPCs: On a hit the GM will tell you what they want from you. If you agree to give it to them: On a 10+, they will do what you want. On a 7–9, they must do what you want or escalate to insult, threats or violence. If you give an Abomination what it wants, mark Corruption.

For PCs: on a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- » *If they do it, they mark Faith*
- » *If they refuse, it's Acting in the Face of Evil*

What they do then is up to them.

Persuade is the move to use when a character wants to get another character to do something and tries to convince them with diplomacy, logic or lies. While it is not strictly necessary, it can be a good idea to use Read a Person before trying to Persuade someone. The answer to the question "How can I get your character to _____?" should normally give you pre-warning of what is required to Persuade them.

Threaten

When you **use threats or intimidation to get your way with an NPC**, say what you want and what will happen if you don't get it and roll +Pugnacity. On a 10+ they choose: call your bluff and take the consequences, or do as you ask. On a 7-9 they can also choose from the following:

- » *Give you something they think you want*
- » *Stand down peacefully*
- » *Tell you what you want to know*
- » *Cower or flee in fear*

Use this move if you are using threats to get what you want. If an NPC chooses to call your bluff, and take the consequences then you don't have to follow through on the threat - but if you try and intimidate them again the GM would be well within in their rights to respond that, in the fiction, they know your threats are hollow and the Threaten move won't trigger until you can prove your threats aren't empty.

Do Violence

When you **engage in violent conflict with a person, beast or monster**, roll +Pugnacity. On a hit, you inflict harm as established and choose 1:

- » *Inflict terrible harm*
- » *Perform a maneuver that benefits you or an ally*
- » *Take something from them, or keep something from them*

On a 7-9 choose one from below as well:

- » *They inflict harm on you*

» *You find yourself in a perilous position*

The first time you **Do Violence** to an Abomination each session, mark Faith. The first time you **Do Violence** to an Innocent each session, mark Corruption.

Do Violence only triggers when you enter a conflict, it doesn't trigger if you attack someone unawares or who is unable to defend themselves. If there is no possibility of the target of the violence fighting back, then just deal your harm. Previously unaware targets will probably start fighting back if they are still able.

When you take or keep something from your enemy, the "something" doesn't have to be a physical thing - it can be more abstract or conceptual. You might take their weapon or keep them from taking yours, likewise you might keep them from taking the high ground or prevent them from taking it from you. You might even take their footing or keep them from their escape route. It is up to the GM to determine the exact limits of what "something" might be but, generally, taking the enemies equilibrium is OK but taking their head, limbs or life goes beyond the spirit of the move

Divine Truth

When you **divine the truth of a situation of conflict**, roll +Reason. On a 10+ ask the GM three questions from the list below. On a 7-9 ask only one. You are Blessed when next acting on the answers.

- » *What's my best way in/way out?*
- » *Which enemy is the biggest threat?*
- » *What should I be on the lookout for?*
- » *Who's really in control here?*
- » *What here is not what it appears to be?*
- » *What enemy is most vulnerable to me?*

Divine Truth is not a "perception check". In order for it to trigger, a character must be actively looking to study the situation and there must be some kind of conflict, tension or danger. A conflict does not have to be a physical conflict -- it might be a social confrontation or a struggle against spiritual affliction. The key is that there must be something on the line. If there is no pressure, then the answers should be redundant or obvious anyway.

Look Around

When you **look around for clues or information**, roll +Reason. On a 10+ all three, on a 7-9 choose two:

- » *You find information, evidence, an item, or an object that is useful or valuable.*

- » *You uncover any present threats.*
- » *You don't put yourself in immediate peril.*

Look Around is the move that is triggered when a character wants to investigate an area or gather information. That includes going out and canvassing the locals for information and even retreating to library to consult a book or other records.

*Look around is designed to reinforce a feedback loop that sits at the heart of many thrillers. Information points to danger, danger leads to information, that information points to further danger and on and on (for a deeper discussion see *Night's Black Agents* published by Pelgrane Press, at page xx).*

For the avoidance of doubt: the fact that Looking Around produces no new clues or evidence does amount to useful information. If there is nothing else there, then there is no need to invent a clue if it doesn't make sense. Likewise, there may be no threats presents and there may be no immediate peril present - don't feel compelled to invent one if that doesn't suit how you like to play the game. If you do like to play in a heavily improvisational style then relying heavily on Look Around to establish clue and dangers can be an effective tool, but it also appropriate to have decided what clue and dangers exist in a given location as part of your prep. It is hoped that Malleus will support you in either approach.

If a character chooses to find a clue and to uncover present threats, but does put themselves in immediate peril, it is entirely appropriate to uncover a threat by coming face to face with it.

Read a Person

When you **read a person in a charged interaction**, roll +Reason. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, they hold 1 on you as well. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- » *Is your character telling the truth?*
- » *What's your character really feeling?*
- » *What does your character intend to do?*
- » *What does your character wish I'd do?*
- » *How could I get your character to _____?*
- » *What does your character worry might happen?*

This move models the fact that, short of a very talented GM, there are things about a social interaction that a character in the fiction would pick up that isn't available to a player at the table. Physical and verbal tics, tone of voice and intuition. The answers to these questions represent what your character can glean from the interaction that is conveyed by more than words.

Like Divine Truth, the situation must be charged. There must be conflict, tension or something on the line. As a guide, if you feel you need to know the answer to more than one of the available questions there is probably charged situation.

Use Sorcery

When you **use sorcery**, say what you're trying to achieve and how you do the spell. The GM may impose one or more of the following Requirements:

- » *The effect is of short duration.*
- » *The effect is weakened.*
- » *The spell requires weird materials.*
- » *The spell will take 1 minute, 30 minutes, or 1 hour.*
- » *The spell requires ritual chanting and gestures.*
- » *The spell requires you to draw arcane symbols.*
- » *You need one or two people to help cast the spell.*
- » *You need to refer to a tome of magic for the details.*
- » *Mark corruption*

Then roll +Esotery. On a 10+, the magic works without issues: choose your Effect.

On a 7-9, it works imperfectly: choose your Effect and a Vexation. The GM will choose what effect the Vexation has.

Effects:

- » *Kill a helpless, ill, or seriously wounded human and mark corruption.*
- » *The target contracts a disease of your choosing and mark corruption*
- » *Enchant a weapon. It gets +1 harm and the magic tag.*
- » *Instantly do one thing that a human could do with a few hours and the correct equipment.*
- » *Bar a place or portal to a specific person or a type of creature.*
- » *Trap a spirit or curse from the person, object, or place it inhabits.*
- » *Banish a spirit or curse from the person, object, or place it inhabits.*
- » *Summon a monster into the world and mark corruption.*

Vexations:

- » *The effect is weakened.*
- » *The effect is of short duration.*
- » *You take 1-harm ignore-armour.*
- » *The magic draws immediate, unwelcome attention.*
- » *It has a problematic side effect.*

[Move commentary]

Supplicate

When you **pray to the Light for intercession**, say what you hope for and roll +Faith. On a 10+ the GM will tell you what the Light requires of you, if you do it your prayers are answered. On a 7-9, you are Blessed on your next roll.

This move is extremely open ended, and much more vague than Use Sorcery in both its requirements and effects. The GM should be careful to weigh the requirements with the results prayed for--large effects will require a large gesture of faith. The thing that the Light requires might involve a whole new mission for the PCs, or other actions that might not be completed for multiple sessions.

The kinds of things the Light might require from the PC may also depends upon the religion or other beliefs of the character.

Show of Faith

When you **make a display of faith and give a command** to an NPC, roll +Faith. On a 10+ choose 3, on a 7-9 choose 2:

- » *You create an opportunity*
- » *You expose a weakness or flaw*
- » *They follow the command for some time*
- » *You don't place yourself in peril*

You cannot command an Abomination to harm itself, or expose itself to immediate danger. You may so command an Innocent, but if you do, mark corruption.

This move triggers when the character makes an outward show of faith, like brandishing the cross or reading from a holy text, in order to invoke the power of the Light to compel an NPC to take action.

Aid or Meddle

When you try to **aid someone** or **meddle in someone's actions**, roll +Trust. On a hit, they are Blessed (aid) or Cursed (meddle). On a 7-9, you also expose yourself to peril, retribution or cost.

If you want to Aid or Meddle, you need to do it and roll the move before they have rolled their move. You can't declare Aid after they have already rolled and failed, for instance.

Advanced Moves:

Some character advancement choices allow them to Advance a certain number of basic moves (not all basic moves can be advanced). When a basic moves is advanced, it gains an additional result on a roll of 12+. The 12+ result for each advanced basic move is set out below.

Act in the Face of Evil

On a 12+ your opposition wavers, stalls or is compromised. Tell them what it will cost them to continue their course of action, or the consequences of continuing to impede you.

Do Violence

On a 12+, your target chooses:

- » *They surrender completely.*
- » *You incapacitate them.*
- » *You deal +2 harm.*

Consider Signs of the Supernatural

On a 12+, hold 2, but spend them 1 for 1 to ask any question you would like, not just what is on the list.

Persuade

On a 12+, only if they are an NPC and if you give them what they want, they do what you ask and will see it through to the end.

Threaten

On a 12+ their only choice is to give in and do what you want.

Divine Truth

On a 12+, ask three questions, but they can be any questions you wish and do not need to be on the list.

Look Around

On a 12+, all three and you may ask anyone present a single question as if you had succeeded in **Reading a Person**.

Read a Person

On a 12+, hold 3, but spend them 1 for 1 to ask any question you would like, not just what is on the list.

Use Sorcery

On a 12+, choose an additional Effect.

Show of Faith

On a 12+, choose three, but you may command an Abomination to harm itself or expose itself to imminent danger.

End of Session Moves:

At the **end of each session** do the following:

Each player answers the following questions:

- » *Did I express my drive through play? If yes, mark Faith*
- » *Did I express my belief through play? If yes, mark Faith or Corruption as appropriate to the belief.*
- » *Did I resist giving in to my Vice? If yes, mark Faith.*
- » *Did I willingly act in accordance with my Drive to the detriment of an Innocent, or to the benefit of an Abomination? If yes, mark Corruption.*

You may increase your Trust in another character (including NPCs) by +1 if they helped you in fulfilling your drive and/or their actions reaffirmed your belief. If a character (including an NPC) acted in a way that prevented you fulfilling your drive, or acted in a way that undermined your belief, take -1 Trust with them. If you have +3 Trust with any mark Faith. If you have -3 Trust with any character mark Corruption. You may only mark Faith or Corruption once each.

Drives, Beliefs, & Vices:

Drives

Each character in Malleus has a Drive. A Drive is the thing that motivates the character to fight against the Darkness. Drives are not just a goal, Drives are desperate, flawed needs that characters pursue at any cost. It is the reason that the character is a protagonist in the game, and what pushes them towards action. A character's Drive is determined by the player of that character. A Drive should be stated as a statement of fact, followed by a clear and unambiguous goal that addresses that fact. The goal should be long-term, rather than short term (something that is likely to take many session of gameplay to fully accomplish). Once a suitable goal has been determined, write it down and add “, at any cost” to the end - a Drive is a match waiting to light a gunpowder keg.

Example drives: *My beloved has been taken captive by _____. I will find a way to free my beloved, at any cost.*

_____ has been corrupted by the Darkness. I will expose their corruption at any cost.

_____ will be our salvation from the Darkness. I will see them become the light of hope, at any cost.

Drives are important in directing the characters' decisions in play, but they are also important for other reasons. Firstly, they allow players to engage in a bit of world building. If their Drive is about freeing Versailles from the clutches of the vampires that infest the city, then now everyone knows that there are vampires in the game world, and that they have some degree of power in Versailles.

The other functions that Drives serve is that they allow players to highlight what they want the game to be about, and what they want to see in it. If a character's Drive is to prove that the Viscount is corrupt, then they should want the Viscount to be a major part of the game and for investigating his corruption to be a major feature of play. The players and the GM must understand that, and the GM must be ready to take the player's signal and work with it.

Once per session you may invoke your Drive and tell the other players how your Drive gives you the strength or will to succeed at a specific goal. If you do, you are Blessed until the end of the current scene while you pursue that goal.

If **you fulfill your Drive** immediately clear the Faith track and take an advance. You must then choose a new Drive or retire from the fight against the Darkness.

At the end of a session, any character who expressed their Drive through play may mark Faith. At the end of a session if, during the course of the session, a character willingly acted in accordance with their Drive to the detriment of an Innocent, or to the benefit of an Abomination, they mark Corruption.

Beliefs

A Belief is something that the character holds true about the shape of the world or their place in it. In particular, a Belief defines something about how a character sees the nature of the struggle between the Light and the Darkness. A Belief is the thing that helps define how they carry the fight against the Darkness (or whether they seek to redeem it), and what they take solace in when things are bleakest.

Examples: *It is by the Light's will that those in power rule.*

The Darkness is born of the impurity of men's hearts.

Only the Light can turn back the Darkness.

The so called "darkness" is a superstition; all can be explained by science!

Even the greatest evils hold a seed of redemption.

Beliefs should also be based on what the player wants to see explored in the game. The GM principles require the GM to use Beliefs to drive the characters apart, and challenging the characters' Beliefs is a GM move. Don't pick a Belief if you don't want it pointed at you like a gun.

At the end of a session, any character who expressed their Belief through play may mark Faith or Corruption, as is appropriate to their Belief.

Vices

A Vice is a character's indulgence, weakness or foible. It needn't be a traditional vice like gambling or alcohol, it might be melancholy, ignorance or aggression. A Vice is a personal failing that can be indulged. Vices are the characters' own little pocket of Darkness, which can give them strength to battle the greater Dark.

The purpose of Vices is to demonstrate that the Darkness exists everywhere, and in everyone, and that the lure of its power is ever present.

When you **indulge your Vice to your own detriment or to the detriment of an Innocent**, you may immediately clear all Light Injuries and mark Corruption. In addition, gain 1 hold which may be spent during the current session to:

- » *Bless one of your rolls*
- » *Deal +1 harm*
- » *Reduce harm suffered by 1*

Harm & Healing:

Taking Harm

Some events and moves in the game cause a character to take harm. A character that takes too much **harm** will meet their death.

Harm is measured using the **harm track**. The harm track consists of 3 rows of boxes. The first row is the **light injury** tier and has four boxes, the second is the **heavy injury** tier which has two boxes, and the third is the **critical injury** tier which has two boxes. When a character suffers harm the player should check off a number of boxes on the track equal to the harm suffered. Each time you mark a box on a new tier record the nature of the injury. If a character ever suffers more harm than the number of available boxes on the harm track they die.

Light injuries are minor injuries – cuts, bruises and sprains.

Heavy injuries are significant injuries such as bullet wounds to non-vital areas and broken bones

Critical injuries are injuries that will be fatal without treatment

Harm Ratings

Each source of harm in the game world has a **harm rating**. The harm rating tell you how much harm that thing ordinarily does:

1-harm is equivalent to punches, kicks or shallow cuts from a small knife.

2-harm is equivalent to small guns at long range, clubs and larger blades.

3-harm is equivalent to heavy melee weapons, large guns or beating by a gang. This level of harm will be fatal to many people.

4-harm is equivalent to a cannon or being run over by a horse and cart. This kind of damage will be fatal to almost any normal person.

Later in these rules harm rating will be given for various weapons. Some moves may have their own weapon ratings. When you choose to inflict terrible harm (see the **Do Violence** move at page xx), you deal +1 harm.

Harm Move

When a **PC Takes Harm**:

If the total Harm suffered was 3 or more the GM may choose one from the following:

- » The PC is momentarily inhibited and takes -1 forward.
- » The PC drops something, or loses hold of something.

If the total harm suffered was 4 or more the GM may choose one from the list below, or one or both from the list above:

- » The PC falls down injured or unconscious
- » The PC Is Cursed until the Harm is healed

Note: When considering if the Harm Move is triggered, only take account of Harm suffered after armour is deducted. If the harm is replaced with a permanent injury the Harm is not considered suffered.

Healing

Light injuries heal without special treatment, over time. A character recovers from light injuries at the rate of one box per day (indulging a Vice may also allow a character heal light injuries, see page xx). Heavy injuries require actual medical attention before they begin to recover. They recover at a rate of one box every few days. Critical injuries require medical treatment before a character begins to recover, and if treatment is not received critical injuries may worsen. Critical injury boxes recover at a rate of about one box per week.

Is it up to the GM to determine when critical injuries worsen, based upon the activities of the character. When a critical injury worsens the player must mark the next box on the injury track. If both critical injury boxes are full, and a character's critical wounds worsen, the character dies. If your character would die from the worsening of critical injuries, you may mark a Permanent Injury (see below) to prevent death, but your injuries can continue to worsen.

Harm is always erased starting with light injuries first, and continuing down the track. This means that all light injuries must have been erased before you can start erasing heavy or critical injuries and all heavy injuries must have been erased before you can start erasing critical injuries. More severe injuries linger for a longer time.

Permanent Injuries

If you would suffer harm, you may choose to ignore it and instead mark a permanent injury. You may mark each type of permanent injury only once, unless you have healed the previous injury of that type via advancement. Record the nature of the injury and record its type:

Crushed: -1 Zeal
Shattered: -1 Discipline

Broken: -1 Pugnacity

Shocked: -1 Reason

Despondent: Increase your Faith track to 6 boxes

Blighted: Reduce your Corruption track to 4 boxes

Equipment:

Weapons

Tags:

- Anchored (cue): This item is magically anchored to you, such that it returns upon command or cannot be lost.
- Area (mechanical, cue): this weapon affects an area with its fire. When used against a group, area ignores the group's size when determining harm inflicted, assuming the group is clustered together closely enough.
- Close (constraint - range): this weapon can only be used against someone within close range of you, somewhere between 2 to 10 yards.
- Close/Far (constraint - range): this weapon is considered able to affect targets within close or far range.
- Concealable (cue): this weapon is easy to keep out of sight, small enough to fit in a pocket of a jacket.
- Far (constraint - range): this weapon can only be used to target an opponent that is far off, more than 10 yards away; any closer and it's too unwieldy to bring to bear.
- Fire (cue): this weapon is fire-based. It will ignite combustibles nearby and cause serious burns on any targets it makes contact with. Supernatural creatures that are vulnerable to fire may take extra harm and/or flee when a fire weapon is used on them.
- Hand (constraint - range): this weapon can be used against someone within a yard or so of your reach, probably about the length of the weapon you're holding.
- Hand/Close (constraint - range): this weapon is considered able to affect targets within hand or close range.
- Ignores Armour (mechanical): armour is not deducted from this weapon's damage when it is used to deal harm.

- Intimate (constraint - range): this weapon can only be used up close and personal, closer than just a +hand weapon, up to the end of your arm.
- Intimate/Hand (constraint - range): this weapon is considered able to affect targets within both the intimate or hand range.
- Loud (cue): everyone nearby hears it, and can potentially identify what made the noise. It wakes up sleeping people, startles people who aren't expecting it, etc.
- Messy (cue): this weapon inflicts wounds that are severe and bloody or destroys the environment surrounding the target. These weapons are not suited to precision work.
- Piercing-X (mechanical): X is the amount of armour this weapon ignores when it deals harm.
- Reload (cue): this weapon has limited ammunition and needs to be reloaded often when used.
- Silver/cold iron/holy/magic (cue): This weapon is made of a unique material or has been blessed by someone of great faith or power. Supernatural creatures may be especially vulnerable to these weapons, granting +Piercing when used against them or inflicting +1 harm.
- Slow (cue): This weapon is heavy or unwieldy and quicker attackers may be able to act before it can strike a blow.
- Valuable (cue): This object is rare and expensive; it may be a functional weapon, but it values style over substance.
- X-harm (mechanical): X is the amount of harm this weapon deals to an opponent, before armor is applied.

Sample Weapons

Use these weapons as guidelines when giving stats to new weapons:

- Handgun (2-harm close loud reload piercing-1)
- Musket (3-harm close loud reload piercing-1)
- Dagger (1-harm intimate concealable)
- Longbow (2-harm close/far)
- Spear (2-harm hand/close)
- Backsword (2-harm hand)
- Stiletto (1-harm intimate piercing-1)
- Warhammer (2-harm hand piercing-1)

- Greatsword (3-harm hand/close slow)
- Polearm (2-harm hand/close)
- Hatchet (2-harm, hand/close)

Armour

Armour can reduce the harm caused by physical attacks. Armour has a rating, and reduces incoming harm in accordance with its rating. Most armour has a rating of 1-armour (light armour) or 2-armour (heavy armour), it is not recommended to use armour with a base rating greater than 2. Armour ratings do not stack; you take the highest rating granted by equipment or moves.

If armour would reduce incoming harm to zero, then no harm is suffered. Reducing harm to zero does not prevent attacks from having secondary effects.

Some equipment or moves grant a bonus to a character's base armour rating. Such a bonus will be written as follows: armour+x (where x is the numerical value of the bonus). Bonus armour does stack with your base armour rating.

Some weapons have an armour piercing rating, written as piercing-x (where x is the numerical value of the piercing rating). Weapons with piercing ignore armour up to the value of the piercing rating.

Tags:

- Conspicuous (cue): All armour in Malleus is Conspicuous. It is unusual to see a person walking around the streets in armour and it will certainly draw attention.
- Heavy (cue): This armour restricts mobility and increases the physical exertion required by the wearer. If armour provides 2-Armour or greater it is almost certainly heavy unless it is ensorcelled.

Sample Armour:

- Buff Coat: 1- Armour
- Cuirass: 1-Armour
- Buff Coat and Cuirass: 2-Armour (heavy)
- Munition Armour: 2-Armour (heavy)
- Buckler or Shield: Armour+1

Buying and Selling

Currency is treated in a very abstract fashion in Malleus; it is not a game about acquiring wealth or resources. It is assumed that the player characters have somewhere to live and the ability to meet the

basic costs of living, unless you choose to make that a particular issue in your game (these costs could be very substantial during the seventeenth century, but *Malleus* is not intended to be a game about seventeenth century economics). It is up to the players to determine where the characters' resources come from, be it the Church, a patron, inherited wealth or gainful employment. It is also assumed that common items, such as a new pair of boots, a simple outfit, a hot meal or a haircut are readily available and can be obtained without meaningful effort or expense in most cities and towns.

More specialised equipment, weapons, armour and horses are generally more costly and difficult to acquire. Such items should be assigned an **Availability** rating by the GM. This ranges from +3, for cheap and easily available goods, to -3 for rare or extravagant purchases. This is also true of various services that the player characters might seek to obtain.

When a character tries to **obtain goods or services**, roll +Availability. On a 10+ the goods or services are obtained without complication, and at a reasonable price. On a 7-9 choose 1:

- » *The goods or services take longer than expected to acquire.*
- » *The goods or services are more expensive than expected, you may not make further purchases this session.*
- » *You need help acquiring the goods or services, and owe someone a favour for helping you get them.*

As a guide, most goods and services should fall between about +2 and -2. An Availability of +3 should be reserved for common and cheap items that otherwise would not require a roll, but for some minor impediment. An Availability of -3 is reserved for items such as a fine warhorse, suspiciously large quantities of gunpowder or getting a Bishop in your pocket.

As a starting point for availability, most items or services can be assigned an Availability of +1 in cities or large towns, +0 in smaller towns and large villages, and -1 in more remote regions and small villages. Adjustments up or down due to regional factors, high cost, how conspicuous the transaction is and/or PC contacts, can then be made. In general, renting goods rather than buying them is a positive factor in determining availability.

At the GM's option, selling goods you already own in order to finance new spending might increase the Availability of new goods and services.

Mobs:

The basic rules and moves of Malleus assume that most interactions, and conflicts, are occurring between relatively small groups of people and that the action is taking place on an individual scale. In some cases, however, violent conflict occurs between larger groups of people or Abominations. When dealing with things on a group level, a group of individuals who are acting together are called a **Mob**.

Mob Size

A Mob is treated as a single entity, usually an NPC (but see the Superior Archetype) when they fight together. The actions of each individual member of the Mob are abstracted into collective actions.

There are four sizes of Mob: small (fewer than 10 people), medium (10-20 people), large (20-30 people), and huge (30-40). A Mob any larger than 40 people starts to enter the realm of massed battle. 40+ people against a smaller number will almost certainly overwhelm their opposition, and a conflict between two sides of that size is beyond the scope of Malleus' gameplay.

Mob Harm & Armour

A Mob has a collective harm rating and a collective armour rating. These ratings are derived from the average weapons and armour possessed by members of the Mob. Thus a Mob armed predominantly with farming tools and torches would have a 1-harm rating, whereas a better equipped mob using hand weapons, such as swords and hatchets would have a 2-harm rating. If a Mob is untrained with the weapons they are using, they deal -1 harm compared to the weapon's normal harm rating.

Similarly, a group armour rating is based on their average armour. A group of poorly equipped townsfolk likely have a 0-armour rating. Professional soldiers in good armour likely have a 2-armour rating.

When a Mob inflicts or receives harm on another person or Mob, compare the size category of the combatants (an individual is treated as one size smaller than a small Mob). For each size category that attacker exceeds the size of the defender, the attacker deals an additional harm. Likewise, for each size category the defender exceeds the size category of the attacker, reduce harm by one.

Leading a Mob

A player character can lead a Mob into battle, assuming the Mob is willing to follow their orders. If you lead a Mob into a combat with individuals treat the Mob as your weapon for the purposes of the **Do Violence** move; if you do you must also use the Mob's armour rating as your own. Any harm suffered

in combat is suffered as a group (see below). A Mob can only be used in this way if they are co-ordinated and acting together.

If a player character is leading a Mob in combat against another Mob then **Do Violence** is not used, and instead the **Lead a Mob into Combat** move is used:

When you **lead a Mob into combat against another Mob**, roll +Pugnacity. On a hit, trade harm as established. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- » *Your Mob suffers little harm (-1 harm suffered)*
- » *Your Mob inflicts terrible harm (+1 harm inflicted)*
- » *Your Mob seizes a vital position*
- » *You Mob avoids collateral damage*

When you lead a Mob, you suffer the same harm as they do, unless the Mob is doing something specific to shield you from harm.

Suffering Harm as a Mob

Regardless of the size of a Mob, it can suffer a total of 6 harm before retreating, surrendering or being slaughtered. Certain Mobs are more likely to flee or surrender before taking all 6 harm. It is for the GM to determine at what point a Mob will break. A Mob led by a player character is more likely to hold. A Mob that has suffered 6 or more harm is broken and is no longer able to fight as a group.

As a rough guide:

- 1-2 harm:** some injuries, a few minor to moderate, no fatalities
- 3-4 harm:** many injuries, several serious, possibly a handful of fatalities
- 5-6 harm:** widespread serious injuries, many fatalities

Character Creation:

Choose Archetype

Character creation begins with every player choosing an Archetype and selecting its playbook. Each player must select a different archetype. The reason for this is simply that each Archetype is themed around a relatively narrow niche. Having two players play the same Archetype means that they will be playing very similar characters, in mechanical terms, and they will tend to step on each other's toes. It is far more interesting when the interplay is between characters with very different choices and niches.

Name & Look

The next things players should do is choose a name and a look. Each playbook provides suggestions for appropriate names and looks; however, feel free to select your own if you think of something you like better.

Choose Stats

Each playbook comes with a selection of possible starting Stat combinations for that Archetype, each player should select one array of Stats, and fill in the Stats section of the playbook.

Moves

Each Archetype has access to all of the basic moves. In addition, each playbook will provide details of a number of Archetype moves for the relevant Archetype, the playbook will also tell you which moves you start with and/or how many optional Archetype moves you may select.

Equipment

Each character will start with a certain amount of equipment. The Archetype playbooks will tell you how starting gear is determined for a given Archetype. For the most part, the players will be selecting weapons, armour and equipment from a list. A playbook may ask you to describe or give some details about the equipment which you will have to come up with yourself.

Characters may also start with minor possessions and trinkets appropriate to their character. Discuss this with the GM and work out what seems appropriate.

Pick Drives, Beliefs and Vices

Next, player's must come up with their character's Drive, Belief and Vice. As a reminder:

A Drive is what the thing that motivates the character to fight against the Darkness. Drives are not just a goal, Drives are desperate, flawed needs that characters pursue at any cost.

A Belief is something that the character holds true about the shape of the world or their place in it. In particular, a belief defines something about how a character sees the nature of the need to confront the Darkness.

A Vice is a characters indulgence, challenge or foible. It needn't be gambling or alcohol, it might be melancholy, ignorance or aggression.

Examples and further commentary on choosing appropriate drives, beliefs and vices is contained in the Drives, Beliefs and Vices section at page xx.

Introductions and Trust

This next step is really two steps, but they are intimately related.

Once all of the players have selected an archetype, detailed their name and look, and chosen their stats, moves and equipment, go around the table and have each player introduce their character to the table.

Before introductions are made, the players should understand that their characters already know each other, and have some sort of history (this will be explored when trust is assigned). They will at least have worked together before, and will have reason to continue to work with each other in the fight against the Darkness.

As each character is introduced, the GM should ask a few questions about the character to fill out their backstory and place in the game world. Ask them their age, where they are from, who their friends and family are and how they came to be a warrior in the fight against Darkness (if it is not clear from their Drive).

Once the characters have been introduced, go around the table again player by player. Each Archetype playbook sets out how that Archetype assigns Trust to other characters. Each player, in turn, assigns Trust according to their Archetype. Don't forget that any character that is assigned Trust by another player is owed a Boon by that player's character.

Advancement:

Over time, characters in Malleus improve and gain new capabilities. Sometimes those changes occur as a result of something that happens in the game fiction. If an Inquisitor sacrifices their Artifact to complete a spell to banish a powerful demon back to Hell, then the artifact is destroyed, and should be removed from their sheet. Likewise, if the Rakehell's hideout is burned down, or compromised, then it is lost and they will have to find a new one.

On the other hand, gains or achievements in the fiction of the game should be reflected on the character sheet. If, through an arduous period of research and summoning, the Sorcerer manages to summon and bind a demon to their control permanently then they will need to work with the GM to devise stats for the demon and add it to their sheet.

In addition to the kinds of changes mentioned above, Malleus contains a mechanical framework to represent characters improving over time. As noted in the section on Faith and Corruption, clearing a the Faith Track or the Corruption Track earns your character an advance. You can spend an advance to mark one of the advancement choices available to your archetype and immediately gain the listed benefit.

Most of the advances are self explanatory, but they are detailed briefly below.

Stat Boost

Taking a stat boost increases the listed stat by +1. The maximum for any stat is +3. If a stat boost advancement would increase a stat beyond +3, you may not select it.

New Move

Some advancements allow you to take an additional move from your archetype. Select a move, and mark it, just like you did at character creation. Some advancements allow you to select a move from another archetype. Selecting a move from the Scholar lets you choose a workspace, and selecting a move from the Superior allows you to gain a Staff; however, you do not get the linked moves that require the Workspace or the Staff without spending an additional advancement on each of those moves. You cannot select a move that requires another feature of an Archetype, such as the Superior's **Grunt Work**, which requires a Staff, unless you have chosen the move that grants you Staff, or you have acquired a staff or something equivalent though the fiction.

Erasing a Permanent Injury

This allows you to recover from the effects of a single permanent injury and erase it from your sheet. When you take this advancement, describe to the GM what your character did to overcome the injury.

Special Features

The Scholar, the Inquisitor and the Superior gain advances that allow them to add choices to particular features or moves; their workspace, artifact and staff respectively. Tell the GM how you acquired those additional options.

Ending the Battle

This advancement includes the choice to retire your character to safety or to select a new Archetype. If you decide that your character has battled the Darkness for as long as they can, and has done what good they are able, you can decide that they will retire to safety. Now they seek a quieter life away from the eternal conflict. The character cannot be used by the GM as a threat nor can the GM put them in danger. They may still appear as an NPC if appropriate. You will need to create a new character.

Selecting a new Archetype allows you to keep your character in the game. You switch from your current Archetype to another, gaining everything that comes with starting as that Archetype. You will need to work with the GM to explain the change in your character's Archetype.

When you change your Archetype, do the following:

- Keep everything associated with your old Archetype: Your moves, your stats, your Trust and Boons, your Faith and Corruption and your equipment.
- Lose everything lost in the change of position: You've got to give up everything you lose in the fiction. For example, if the Superior gives up his Staff in order to gain the freedom of the Rakehell, then the Staff is lost.
- Gain everything belonging to your new Archetype: New moves, new equipment, new extras. Anything that you would get if you were creating a new character of that Archetype is yours - but do not alter your Trust, Boons or Faith/Corruption.

Work with the GM to clarify any ambiguities in what is gained or lost.

Advancing Moves

Each Archetype can select advancements which allow them to take advanced versions of the basic moves. When you take this advancement, select a number of advanced moves in accordance with the advancement, you now have access to the 12+ results of those moves. Note that there are 9 advanced moves but a maximum of 8 advanced move choices are available to each Archetype, so choose wisely.

Archetypes:

The Inspired

Sister DeSaile cradles her hands above the child's forehead. In the darkness of the hut, you can barely make out the boy's thrashing limbs, but the sound of his inhuman moans sends chills down your spine.

"This is hopeless," says the village elder, shaking his head. "He is lost to the spirits. We must kill him, and burn the body beyond the village walls."

"Silence," Lord Worthington commands. "You have not witnessed what I have seen. I have watched her stand atop the bulwarks, amid the arrows and the storm, and inspire old men and women to take up arms by virtue of her faith alone. I have seen her shatter stone with prayer, deflect the bullets of our enemies with nothing more than conviction, and render the impure aflame with her fervor."

"We," he spreads his hands, "will wait. And we will have faith."

You strain your eyes against the gloom. The child jerks as if he were a marionette. Outside, the wind stills, and the ravens cease their cries. The world seems to hold its breath.

Your focus is ineluctably drawn to her hands. There — as your eyes adjust to the darkness — is that a glow? Is that a spark you see? Surely not?

The boy wails, as if pierced by a blade, and the village elder cries out.

"Hear my voice, demon," Sister DeSaile breathes, her voice calm and measured, her eyes tightly closed, "and listen to the story of your doom."

Some exceptional individuals are beacons of hope in dark times: The charismatic pastor, the pure-hearted abbess, the mysterious and blessed leper. Whereas some hunters cleanse the Darkness with fire and steel, the Inspired shines a light into the gloom, and — in doing so — destroys it utterly. The Inspired is a natural leader, and is frequently the moral authority at the heart of a cadre of hunters. Other individuals are naturally drawn to them, and draw strength from them.

The Inspired may dispense wisdom, or wield their faith as a potent weapon, but she is always to be found where the Darkness is strongest, and the people most in need of her light.

The Inspired may represent a devout priest, a nun or a non-clergy visionary. Not every priest is an Inspired - indeed the Inquisitor and the Scholar are just as likely to be priests -but the Inspired is defined by their devoutness and connection to the Light.

You may choose to play as the Inspired if you want to play as a holy madman, a blessed martyr or a visionary scientist. Similarly, if you seek to be the rock around which your allies seek shelter, and against which the Darkness breaks, the Inspired may be the archetype for you.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Smooth face, weathered face, girlish face, boyish face
- Accusing eyes, haunted eyes, cold eyes, happy eyes
- Scrawny body, flabby body, thin body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Discipline

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- 1 simple weapon
 - ☐ Dagger (1-harm intimate concealable)
 - ☐ Spear (2-harm hand/close)
 - ☐ Mace (2-harm hand)
- Vestments or simple robes, at your option you may also start with light armour (1-armour)
- Holy book

TRUST

On your turn:

- The Light has revealed to you that one of the characters is destined to help you fulfill your purpose on Earth, choose who and take Trust +2 with them.
- One of the characters holds questionable beliefs and you think they will fall to Darkness, your Trust with them starts at -1.
- Take +1 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCs).

INSPIRED MOVES

Take this move:

● Visionary

When you **open your mind to the Light**, roll +Faith. On a hit the GM will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and might ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10+, the GM will give you good detail. You are Blessed when acting upon that information, mark Faith. On a 7-9, the GM will give you an impression. On a miss, mark corruption in addition to any move made by the GM.

Choose two of these:

● Unshakeable Faith

When you **Act in the Face of Evil** in order to avoid temptation or manipulation by an Abomination, you may treat any result of 6 or less as a 7-9. If you do, you must reveal your Drive to the Abomination.

● Daily Prayers

When you **Supplicate**, you may roll +Discipline instead of +Faith.

● Adjurer

When you perform a **Show of Faith**, you are Blessed.

● Bless the Corners

When you **ward a space against the Darkness**, roll +Discipline. On a hit, any Abomination outside the space may not enter it and any Abomination inside the space may not leave it. On a 10+ choose all 3. On a 7-9 choose two:

- » The ward lasts longer than a day
- » The ward does not require maintenance
- » The ward does not have a potentially problematic flaw or weakness

● Pacify

When you **speak to a human or animal for a few seconds in a gentle voice**, you can calm them down, soothing any distress, fear, anger, or other negative emotions they have (this will not make an










enemy friendly, but it prevent them from being immediately aggressive). This works even if the thing that disquieted them is still present, as long as your voice can be heard.

Warrior Priest








When you are in **combat against an enemy of your faith** (note: Abominations always count as an enemy of your faith), you may roll +Discipline instead of +Pugnacity to **Do Violence**.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

-  +1 Discipline (max +3)
-  +1 Zeal (max +3)
-  +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
-  +1 Reason (max +3)
-  +1 Esotery (max +3)
-  Choose a new Inspired move
-  Choose a new Inspired move
-  Choose a move from another Archetype
-  Choose a move from another Archetype

After 5 advances you may select:

-  +1 to any Stat (max +3)
-  +1 to any Stat (max +3)
-  Erase a permanent injury
-  Advance 4 basic moves
-  Advance 4 basic moves
-  Retire your character to safety
-  Change to a new Archetype

The Inquisitor

As he speaks, the Cardinal's jowls seem to emphasise every word. "I am afraid, my dear, what you are suggesting is impossible. The Bishop is a ward of the See, and is under the jurisdiction of canon law. As we speak, he is being escorted to Rome where, I can assure you, he will face the most beneficent justice of the Lord." He waves a bejeweled fist, and the lamplight catches the Papal seal. "I do wish you the best of luck in apprehending whomsoever is truly behind those murders."

"Come, m'lady," Captain Muller pleads, "we can do no more here." As if to emphasise his words, the Cardinal's bodyguards step forward, hands at their belts. One spits on the cobblestones, and exposes a toothless grin.

You hear movement in the buildings around, as townsfolk peer through slats and keyholes. A light rain begins to fall.

Suddenly, the witch-hunter laughs. Her red curls shaking, she holds up a hand, as if interrupting the an old friend's anecdote. "Cardinal, you will excuse me." In a lightning fast motion she draws a pistol from her brace, and shoots the toothless bodyguard in the head.

There is the hiss as the bodyguards ready their blades. "You wretch!" the Cardinal screeches, "Do you realise against whom you've drawn arms?"

The witch-hunter shrugs. "No-one is beyond justice, your Eminence. I trust St Peter will explain that to you better in person."

If conviction is strength, then the Inquisitor is the true warrior of the Light, ready to sacrifice everything in pursuit of her mission. She meets the power of the Darkness with passion and a force of personality that cannot be denied. She calls out the Darkness wherever it resides and strikes at it in its most secret places. With her words and deeds she lives to drive the Darkness into the daylight.

The Inquisitor frequently drives the action in any scenario. She will not take "no" for an answer, and will never surrender her quarry without a fight. Fellow hunters may question her methods or motives, but in a fight there are few others they would prefer by their side.

The Inquisitor can represent a sheriff, justice of the peace, magistrate or witch hunter. The Inquisitor may be driven by religious fervor, passion for justice or even revenge. Her weapons may be steel,

intelligence or force of will alone, but she is a fighter at heart, and will not suffer a minion of the Darkness to draw breath.

You may wish to play as the Inquisitor if you hope to be at the thick of life-or-death situations and tense stand-offs, or if you wish to drive the fight to the Darkness. The Inquisitor frequently allies with fellow hunters, but will always remain committed to higher principles. As such, the Inquisitor may suit players and groups who are interested in exploring the moral turpitude of dark times.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Cruel face, hawkish face, hard face, benevolent face
- Accusing eyes, grim eyes, wild eyes, keen eyes
- Lithe body, angular body, indulgent body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Zeal

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- 2 weapons of your choice
- Light armour of your choice
- Writing tools, or a witch hunter's manual

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters has helped you hunt the Darkness many time in the past. Take Trust +2 with them.
- You believe you know one of the characters has done something in the past to intentionally, or inadvertently aid the Darkness. Say what it was and mark Trust with them as 0. That character takes -1 Trust with you after they have assigned Trust.

- Take +0 Trust with all other Characters (Including NPCs).

INQUISITOR MOVES

Choose 3 of these:

☐ **My Word is Law**

When you **command an Innocent NPC of equal or lower social standing to take action**, they will follow the letter, if not the the spirit, of your command, so long as they believe you have authority over them and the means to enforce it.

☐ **Suffer Not The Witch To Live**

When you **Do Violence** to an Abomination, you may roll +Zeal.

☐ **Confessor**

When you **Read a Person**, on a result of 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2 and they do not get any hold.

☐ **Firebrand**

When you **Persuade someone with moral or ethical arguments**, you are Blessed.

☐ **Lead from the Front**

When you **suffer harm in combat against the Darkness**, choose an ally, they may roll +your Zeal when they next **Stand in the Face of its Evil** or **Do Violence** to it.

☐ **Apprentice**

You have an apprentice, assistant or acolyte: name them and describe them. If you mistreat them, they may abandon you. If you put them in danger they may be killed.

Choose 2 areas of skill for your apprentice:

- ☐ fighting
- ☐ stealing
- ☐ labouring
- ☐ torturing
- ☐ scribing
- ☐ hunting

When you you roll for an action that your apprentice could assist with using one of their skills, you are Blessed.

● Fight Fire with Fire

When you take this move, you gain an Artifact of the Darkness. Describe the Artifact, and choose 2:

» *The Artifact can be used as a weapon. The weapon is 3-harm and has the unholy and magic tags.*

» *If the Artifact is a weapon it gains the messy tag and ignores armour.*

» *The Artifact can be used as a scrying device. When you wield it while **Divining Truth** or **Considering Signs of the Supernatural** on a hit, you may ask an additional question or gain an additional hold.*

» *The Artifact is an amulet or ward. When you suffer harm, you may reduce that harm by 1. This reduction is not affected by the piercing rating of a weapon and is in addition to armour.*

» *The Artifact can mesmerise a target. When you **Persuade** someone while wielding the artifact, treat a 6 or less as a 7-9. Once they have done as you ask they will realise they were mesmerised.*

At the end of any scene in which you used the benefits of the Artifact, mark Corruption. The Artifact has the Anchored tag.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- +1 Discipline (max +3)
- +1 Zeal (max +3)
- +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- +1 Reason (max +3)
- +1 Esotery (max +3)
- Choose a new Inquisitor move
- Choose a new Inquisitor move
- Choose a move from another Archetype
- Choose a move from another Archetype
- Choose an additional feature for you

Artifact

After 5 advances you may select:

- +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- Erase a permanent injury
- Advance 4 basic moves
- Advance 4 basic moves
- Retire your character to safety
- Change to a new Archetype
- Choose an additional skill for your apprentice, or gain a new apprentice if your old one has left you

The Enforcer

The deck heaves beneath you, and the crack of lightning illuminates thrashing rigging. High above, St Elmo's fire casts a pale glow down the length of the mast. Whatever was trapped in the hold has been freed, and the spilled entrails suggest it has wasted no time sating its considerable hunger.

Captain Blackhouse draws his pistol, and motions to his men to do the same. His hands are shaking as he loads wadding into the barrel, and struggles to strike the fuse.

"Damn that professor, and damn his damned box. Damn this storm and damn my foolish pride. We'll die for three hundred dollars, and our bones will wash up with the spring swells."

Nikau wipes the sleeting rain from his brow, and pulls back his long hair. He stands tall on the deck, his bare feet spread broadly, as wind lashes his pea-coat. From his belt, he pulls a long dirk, which he secures in his fist with a length of braided cloth wrapping.

"Watch to your shipmates," he warns, his voice deep with concentration, "and keep your powder dry. It will try to get to the prow, if it can, and it will not cross running water to do so, if it can avoid it. If you find yourself with your back to it, I suggest you run. If you cannot run, I suggest you pray. Keep your blades ready, and strike hard and often."

From below the decks, you hear a piercing scream over the crashing waves.

"It is feeding," Nikau says, wrenching back a hatch, "now is our chance. We kill it before midnight, or we do not kill it at all." And with that, he falls into the darkness below.

A brute, a killer, a noble protector. The Enforcer is all of those things and more. His is the sword and the shield of the Light. Where others meet the Darkness with wits, words or faith, the Enforcer meets it head on with cold steel and grim determination.

The Enforcer solves problems practically, and will think nothing of putting himself in harm's way to protect the innocent or to punish the servants of the Darkness. His is a master of stratagem and tactic, and always seems to know how to turn the odds in a battle. Though he may not be the most graceful or esoteric, the Enforcer alone may succeed where a battalion of lesser men may fail.

The Enforcer archetype represents a soldier, mercenary, or constable. They may fight for coin, for glory or pure love of combat, but they are born warriors. You may choose to play an Enforcer who is a crack-shot with a pistol, a brutal bare-knuckle boxer or a renowned duelist. However, regardless of their weapon of choice, all Enforcers should be prepared to follow each confrontation through to its ultimate, bloody end.

You may choose to play as an Enforcer if the idea of visceral combat appeals to you, or if you want to play a grim-faced killer facing unspeakable horror with stoic determination. Although defined by combat and their physical prowess, players should be unafraid of embracing the complexity of the Enforcer, bearing in mind the psychological toll of whatever drives men to stand against the forces of Darkness and proclaim, “No further.”

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Concealed, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Brutal face, dull face, hard face, mean face
- Hard eyes, dead eyes, empty eyes, hungry eyes
- Muscular body, hard body, battered body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Pugnacity

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- 2 custom weapons of your choice.
- Armour of your choice, including a shield if you want one.
- A horse (warhorse, riding horse or pack horse).

CUSTOM WEAPONS

RANGED WEAPONS

Base (choose 1):

- ☐ Handgun (2-harm hand/close loud reload piercing-1)
- ☐ Musket (3-harm far loud reload piercing-1)
- ☐ Crossbow (2-harm close/far reload)

Options (choose 2):

- ☐ ornate (+valuable)
- ☐ antique (+valuable)
- ☐ blessed (+holy)
- ☐ silvered ammo (+silver)
- ☐ oversized (+1 harm)
- ☐ powerful (+messy)

MELEE WEAPONS

Base (choose 1):

- ☐ Polearm/Spear (2-harm hand/close)
- ☐ Hand weapon (2-harm hand)
- ☐ Great weapon (3-harm hand/close slow)

Options (Choose 2):

- ☐ ornate (+valuable)
- ☐ blessed (+ holy)
- ☐ enchanted (+magic)
- ☐ cold iron (+cold iron)
- ☐ deadly (+1 harm)
- ☐ armour piercing (+piercing-1)

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters has fought with you side-by-side in open battle, take Trust +2 with them.
- Take +0 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCS).

ENFORCER MOVES

Choose three:

☐ Bulwark

Whenever you wear armour you gain armour+1.

☐ The Face of Fear

When you **Do Violence** to a human NPC, on a result of 10+ you may choose from the following additional options:

» *Kill them outright and mark corruption*

» *Require them to answer questions as if you had rolled a 10+ to **Read a Person**.*

☐ With a Rancid Curse

When you **Threaten an NPC** you may roll +Pugnacity instead of +Zeal.

☐ Veteran

When you **Act in the Face of Evil**, and the danger you face is of a violent or frightening nature, you are Blessed.

☐ **Life is a Battlefield**

When you **Divine Truth** in combat, or in a situation that looks like it will escalate to combat, on a miss, hold 1 in addition to any other consequences.

☐ **Folk Wisdom**

When you **Consider Signs of the Supernatural**, on a hit you may gain two additional Hold and mark Corruption. One of the answers the GM gives to your questions may be incorrect, you will not be told which.

☐ **Where the Bread is Buttered**

Choose the class to which you are loyal: the Nobility or the Small Folk. Members of that class are always willing to provide you and your allies with food, shelter and treatment for your wounds. When you take actions to return the favour, you are Blessed.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- ☐ +1 Discipline (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Zeal (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Reason (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Esotery (max +3)
- ☐ Choose a new Enforcer move
- ☐ Choose a new Enforcer move
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype

After 5 advances you may select:

- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ Erase a permanent injury
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Retire your character to safety
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

The Scholar

“My God,” the Constable exclaims, “I’ve never seen such horrific injuries. It’s as if they were dolls, torn asunder by some great and capricious child.”

“Quite,” Señor L’Esquela sniffs, holding his kerchief tightly across his face.

“What could do such a thing?”

With his cane, L’Esquela prods a stray pancreas. “That,” he says, standing, “is not so simple a question. Look at these sprays,” he says, gesturing to dripping gore on the wooden ceiling. “They suggest a rupture of the artery, and from their colour I would presume a wound that was inflicted some time before dismemberment. And these,” he points to footprints in the spilled flour on the mill floor, “suggest only a single attacker.”

“A single man did this?”

Without acknowledging the interruption, L’Esquela draws from his breast pocket a pair of spectacles, and begins absently polishing them on his waistcoat, oblivious to the flour staining the lenses white.

“I’ve known a few creatures capable of inflicting similar wounds. In my voyages in the East Indies, for example, I witnessed a calf torn asunder by a great cat. I have, however, seen a confluence of these factors,” he says, gesturing at the ceiling and the spilled flour, “only once before. Tell me, Constable,” L’Esquela says, putting on his flour-stained glasses, “have you recently had a problem with bats?”

Some individuals are driven by an insatiable curiosity, and dark mysteries draw such souls like moths to open flame. It takes a great courage, and a great intelligence, to stare into the Darkness. Those blessed with such attributes may be the most potent weapons of the Light, provided they can resist the temptation of forbidden knowledge.

In order to battle the Darkness, it must be first understood. The Scholar seeks to know the true nature of the Darkness, and to defeat it with reason and wits. A little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing, and a lot of knowledge can be even more dangerous. The Scholar risks their physical safety, and their very soul, to acquire the understanding that will allow them to unravel the Darkness.

The Scholar may be a scribe, priest, lawyer or physician. Any person who is focused on learning and education, particularly mundane learning, might be a Scholar. It is important to note the Scholar can

come from any walk of life, not just the educated classes. The Scholar is defined by their intellectual curiosity and their thirst for knowledge, not by any formal qualifications or profession.

You may choose to play as the Scholar if you wish to be a trusted source of knowledge for your colleagues, and a potent warrior of the Light in your own right. The Scholar excels in social interactions, and might well be the “face” of a cadre of hunters, or its organising mind. Through their research, the Scholar often discovers new and tantalizing leads that could spark any number of hunts. But beware, some things humankind was not meant to know...

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Soft face, angular face, gaunt face, drawn face
- Inquisitive eyes, tired eyes, sharp eyes, wild eyes
- Swollen body, wasted body, slim body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Reason

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- 1 weapon for self-defence:
 - ☐ Dagger (1-harm intimate concealable)
 - ☐ Handgun (2-harm hand/close reload loud piercing-1)
 - ☐ Cudgel (2-harm hand)
- A tome or two

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters is smarter than they look, and a lively conversationalist, take Trust +2 with them

- Take +1 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCS).

SCHOLAR MOVES

Choose three of these:

● Well Read

You are fluent in any language, ancient or contemporary that you would have reasonably had the chance to study in the past. Whenever you **consult your accumulated knowledge** in relation to academic subjects, you may roll +Reason. On a hit, the GM will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject relevant to your situation. Explain how you came across this knowledge. On a 7-9 the GM will only tell you something interesting – it's up to you to make it useful.

● Investigator

When you **Consider Signs of the Supernatural**, you are Blessed.

● Expeditious Retreat

Name your escape route and roll +Reason. On a 10+ you get away without complications. On a 7-9 you can go or stay, but if you go there is a price to pay: leave something behind, or take something with you, the GM will tell you what. On a hit, if you go and abandon an Innocent to the Darkness mark Corruption. On a miss you expose yourself to peril.

● Collegiality

When you **seek aid from an organisation of learned folk**, roll +Reason. On a 10+ the aid is freely given. On a 7-9 they will do it, but you must promise them something in return. On a miss, they will still provide aid, but you will be obliged to provide them with something greater in return, meaningful assurances will be required.

● Studied Ritualist

When you roll 10+ to **Use Magic**, you may choose an additional Effect but if you do you must also choose a Vexation. You may not use this move to bless a weapon.

● Autodidact

Select one move from the Inquisitor, Sorcerer or Occultist (this includes the Occultist's **Workspace** but the **Workspace** and **Just the Thing** are separate moves).

● Orator

When you **Persuade** someone with sound thinking or rational argument, roll +Reason instead of +Zeal.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- ☐ +1 Discipline (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Zeal (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Reason (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Esotery (max +3)
- ☐ Choose a new Scholar move
- ☐ Choose a new Scholar move
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype

After 5 advances you may select:

- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ Erase a permanent injury
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Retire your character to safety
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

The Sorcerer

“Nonsense,” Constable DeWhit sniffs, “they’re common thieves, nothing more.”

Lady Schall leans forward into the pool of candlelight, and splays her porcelain-white fingers onto the table. They are, you note, conspicuously powdered.

“You ignorant fool,” she snorts, the smell of rose-oil and lavender pooling around her shuffling silk dress, “you presume the rest of the world operates on half-informed hunches, because you are incapable of imagining an alternative. I speak of facts, pried at great peril from the grasp of forces about which you have no inkling.”

The constable is clearly taken aback, “M’lady...”

“Silence! My friends and I did what you could not, and interrogated the washer-woman.”

“The washer woman died from her wounds last week,” the constable meekly begins, before he is silenced by the quick stab of a pale hand.

“It wasn’t easy, naturally,” Schall sighs, “and, as with all communions, it required blood. But sacrifices must be made. The hogswain and wither-root were harder come by, but your own evidence store was suspiciously well-stocked with reagents and totemic plants - a subject to which I shall presently return.”

A worried expression crosses her face, and she begins to rub her hands together, as if to silence fearful tremors.

“With the washer-lady, came another. At first, I suspected another lost soul had seen my candle-light, but unfortunately for my companions, bless their memories, it was something much more sinister.”

As her hands tie themselves in knots, you observe the power - so carefully and meticulously applied - rubbing loose, revealing a deep filigree of blood-red tattoos.

“No, master constable, your ‘common thieves’ seek to steal a prize far more precious to man than his coin-purse.”

They say one might know their enemy by their tools, and the Sorcerer is living proof of this aphorism. Where lesser souls shrink from the unknown, the Sorcerer embraces its potency. Is she driven by curiosity, a perverse obsession or mere lust for power? Who can say. All that matters is that the Sorcerer wields powers beyond mortal ken.

Many think of the Light and faith as synonymous. The Sorcerer knows better. The Light and the Darkness are poles on a spectrum, not a dichotomy. Each has its place, and each should be harnessed where necessary, to see that good and justice are done. Whether that good is the benefit of the Sorcerer alone is a question yet to be answered.

The Sorcerer may be a cunning woman, a hedge witch or a nobleman with an obsession with the occult. The Sorcerer need not be a sinister influence, and indeed their methods and motives may simply be misunderstood, or even the subject of prejudice. But the Darkness finds cracks in the soul, and seeks to seep in. Even the most innocent Sorcerer is vulnerable, and must remain ever vigilant. No doubt such vigilance takes a toll.

The Sorcerer seeks out the Darkness with an unnerving drive. As such, the Sorcerer is frequently the instigator of hunts. Their obsessions and powers are little-understood and greatly mistrusted, so the Sorcerer may suit players who wish to play a transgressive or an outsider. The Sorcerer and the Scholar may have very different opinions and approaches, and groups may wish to explore this interplay.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Concealed, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Tired face, aged face, young face, dirty face
- Kind eyes, smouldering eyes, sharp eyes, wild eyes
- Swollen body, wasted body, slim body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Esotery

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- 2 charms, wards or amulets (you may expend a charm, ward or amulet to be Blessed on one roll)
- 1 weapon for self-defence:
 - Dagger (1-harm intimate concealable)
 - Bow (2-harm close/far)
 - Cudgel (2-harm hand)
- A black book, or treatise on herbs and healing

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters knows your secrets and has kept them so far. Take Trust +2 with them.
- One of the other characters has accused you of being an Abomination and threatened to punish you. Take Trust -1 with them.
- Take +0 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCs).

UNTRUSTWORTHY

The Sorcerer always rolls +Trust with other characters as if their Trust in the Sorcerer is +0, unless it is lower. When a character would gain Trust with the Sorcerer, that gain is still tracked for advancement purposes, and they still owe the Sorcerer a Boon, but the modifier to rolls is unchanged.

SORCERER MOVES

Take this move:

Major Ritual

● When you **perform a dark rite or esoteric ritual** and want more than the **Use Magic** Effects, tell the GM what you want to do.

The GM may require any one or more of the following:

- » *You need to spend a lot of time (days or weeks) researching the magic ritual.*
- » *You need to experiment with the spell – there will be lots of failed casting attempts before you get it right.*
- » *You need some rare and weird ingredients and supplies.*
- » *The spell will take a long time (hours or days) to cast.*
- » *You need a lot of people (2, 3, 7, 13, or more) to help.*
- » *The spell needs to be cast at a particular place and/or time.*
- » *You need to use magic as part of the ritual, perhaps to summon a monster, communicate with something, or bar the portal you opened.*
- » *It will have a specific side-effect or danger.*

» *Mark corruption*

If you meet the requirements, then roll +Esotery. On a 10+, the magic works without issues. On a 7-9, it works imperfectly.

Choose two:

☐ **Soothsayer**

When you **open your mind to the forces beyond** (these may be the Light or the Darkness depending up the result of your roll), roll +Esotery. On a hit the GM will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and might ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10+, mark Faith. On a 7-9, mark Corruption.

☐ **Acolyte of the Darkness**

When you make a **Show of Faith**, you may roll with +Corruption instead of +Faith. You are able to use **Show of Faith** to command an Abomination to put itself in danger, or take action that will lead it to take harm, if you do you must roll +Corruption, and on a hit you take 1 Corruption.

☐ **Curse Thy Name**

When you are **Wronged by an NPC and curse their name out loud**, you are Blessed when acting against them. When you next act against them, mark Corruption and lose 1 Trust with any PC who sees your dark act.

☐ **Sorcerer**

When you **Use Sorcery** or perform a **Major Ritual**, you may treat a result of 6 or less as a 7-9. If you do, you draw the unwelcome attention of the Darkness. When you use sorcery or perform a major ritual, you may choose one of the requirements from the list, the GM may not select that as a requirement for the ritual.

☐ **A Black Dog**

You have a supernatural connection with a familiar animal. You can speak with, and understand, your familiar. Choose a type of animal:

Cat, Dog, Owl, Raven, Snake, Rat, Hawk, Stoat, _____

Choose 2 areas of skill for your familiar:

- ☐ tracking
- ☐ spying
- ☐ fighting

- ☐ searching
- ☐ deceiving
- ☐ frightening

When **you roll for an action that your familiar could assist with using one of their skills**, you are Blessed.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- ☐ +1 Discipline (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Zeal (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Reason (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Esotery (max +3)
- ☐ Choose a new Sorcerer move
- ☐ Choose a new Sorcerer move
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
- ☐ Choose a new area of skill for your familiar

After 5 advances you may select:

- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ Erase a permanent injury
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Retire your character to safety
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

The Rakehell

The carriage slows in the mud, and the crack of the driver's whip seems to throw the steeds into a frenzy — they buck and strain against the yoke. You watch as the dark thickets, that were whipping past only moments ago, begin to slow to a crawl. From disconcertingly close you hear the sound of great breaths being forced through canine lungs.

"It's no use," says the driver, "the smell is driving them wild!"

"I sympathise," shouts Black Jenny, as she draws a fresh pistol from her greatcoat, tossing a spent and smoking firearm at her feet, "but we'll all be sharing a roadside grave if they don't overcome their delicate constitutions."

"What I don't understand," Manfred says, as he reaches up from the cabin and scoops Jenny's pistol into his lap, "is how it tracked us!"

"I scarcely think that matters now!" Jenny says. She takes aim at the receding toad. "No bumps please, driver." You strain your neck, and see a flash of red fur behind. Jenny squeezes the trigger. There is a crack, and a cloud of acrid smoke. "Dammit man! I said no bumps!". Jenny reaches a gloved hand down to the cabin, expectantly. "Manfred, if you would be so kind?"

"I'm still reloading, M'Lady!"

"Buggeration!" she sighs, and stands — her heeled boots digging into the swaying wood of the perch. Reaching down, she draws a knife from the left boot, wickedly long and curved. "The Moor from whom I stole this knife once suggested it would be in my hands as the last drop of blood left by body. Let's see if the old fool meant for that to happen today."

Fighting the Darkness isn't about morality, and it doesn't matter if you do it for the right reasons. Death is still death. What matters, at least according to the Rakehell, is that you do it in style. You can kill Abominations and still be a self-serving bastard — after all, the Light doesn't care if you charge a fee or extract recompense. You only get one life, so enjoy it while you can, and fight the Darkness tooth and nail — because it will probably take you in the end.

The Rakehell may be mercenary, but she isn't without principles. She may have a code that guides her actions, or a lingering sense of obligation to *something* — but don't let that fool you: The Rakehell has

seen more than most, and lived to tell the tale. She didn't get where she is by letting sentiment win out over good business sense.

The Rakehell is a rogue, highwayman swashbuckler or pirate. They are typified by the panache, flash and flexible morals. The Rakehell could be a fallen noblewoman, a former lawman or simply an individual with nothing left to lose. No matter the background, the Rakehell has an exquisite trust in their own instincts, and other hunters sometimes have cause to curse the Rakehell for impulsive and risky acts.

You may choose to play as the Rakehell if you want to be the “loose cannon” in your group of hunters — if the idea of playing by other people's rules rubs you the wrong way. The Rakehell may defuse a situation with her wit or guile, or may be the only hunter willing to throw dust in the enemy's eyes when the chips are down.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Concealed
- Decadent face, pinched face, long face, hard face
- Angry eyes, vacant eyes, sharp eyes, seductive eyes
- Thin body, muscular body, average body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Zeal

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- Light armour, and/or a buckler if you want one
- 2 weapons of your choice
- A horse, or a hideout

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters has shared your lifestyle with you, for a time, take Trust +2 with them.
- You took something from one of the characters, and cannot give it back. Say what it was and mark Trust +0. They reduce their Trust with you by -2, once they have assigned Trust (and do not increase it as set out below).
- Take +0 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCS).
- After all other characters have assigned Trust they increase their Trust in you by +1.

RAKEHELL MOVES

Take this move:

● **Flash Harry**

When you **Do Violence**, you may roll +Zeal instead of +Pugnacity. If you do, you deal -1 Harm (minimum 1 harm) and gain +1 Pierce.

Choose two of these:

● **Among Kindred**

Choose the class to which you belong: the Nobility or the Outlaws. Members of that class are always willing to provide you and your allies with food, shelter and treatment for your wounds. When you take actions to return the favour, you are Blessed.

● **Panache**

When you **Act in the Face of Evil** in a way that draws attention to you, positive or negative, you are Blessed.

● **A Plausible Rogue**

When you **Persuade** someone using lies, subterfuge or misdirection, you are Blessed.

● **Legerdemain**

When you **Do Violence**, on a hit you may always choose to take something from the target in addition to your other choices.

● **Your Money or Your Life!**

When you **Threaten** a human to get them to give you something (tangible or intangible) using threats of immediate violence, you may mark Corruption. If you do treat a result of 6 or less as a 7-9 and they may not choose to call your bluff.

☐ **A Knife to a Fist Fight**

When you **Do Violence while otherwise unarmed** treat your fists as a small blade (1-harm intimate piercing-1).

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- ☐ +1 Discipline (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Zeal (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Reason (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Esotery (max +3)
- ☐ Choose a new Rakehell move
- ☐ Choose a new Rakehell move
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype

After 5 advances you may select:

- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ Erase a permanent injury
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Retire your character to safety
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

The Superior

“Well Whittington, what did you see?”

The silver-haired man straightens his ruff — an antique style, to be sure — and wipes perspiration from his brow. “Well, M’Lord, there is a long drop down to the quarry floor. The mine entrance is at the far end of a work-pit. I counted three men guarding the portal. Each appeared to be armed to the teeth.”

Lord Landhope reaches down, and absentmindedly rubs his withered thighs. The braces that once held them in his youth are long gone, but he still feels the dig of their leather straps in times of consternation. “Do you believe my chair can navigate the terrain?”

“Not in this darkness,” Whittington says. “We may need to carry you.”

“You cannot both carry me and fight,” Landhope warns.

From behind, Alice rests a callused hand on his shoulder, and gives a reassuring squeeze. “Don’t worry little one. Alice will carry you, through fire and flood if need be.”

“Aye,” Donal nods, “And I’ll wager we can get the drop on them if we circle around.”

Landhope casts his eyes around; the aging butler, the groundskeeper still sporting his first beard, and Alice, her face a latticework of scars. Each of them has been with him through his worst years of exile, and proven themselves a hundred times over. Now, in their eyes, he no longer sees any spark of resentment for the crippled lordling he once was. Each of them are siblings, bound by spilled blood and common cause.

“Well then,” he nods to Alice, “hand me my matchlock and carry me to the cliff-edge. If you can draw them out, I’ll do my damndest to show them why the Landhope name is still to be feared!”

Don’t seek to fight the Darkness alone, better yet — have someone else face it for you. For the Superior, fighting the Darkness doesn’t have to mean getting your hands dirty. When facing an enemy as vast and inscrutable as the Darkness, it is only right to marshall all of your resources. So long as the job gets done, the Light doesn’t care if you fight from the front or from the rear.

The Superior need not be a shrinking violet, or think himself “above” the fight. It is to be remembered that, first and foremost, the Superior is a sound tactician and a leader of men and women. Indeed, it is frequently the Superior’s judgement that is superior, not his attitude.

The Superior represents someone who is a leader or commander of others. She might be a member of the nobility, or landed gentry, with a household of staff. Alternatively she might be a mercenary captain, or an ex-soldier with a company of loyal veterans. The Superior may even be the kingpin of a criminal gang, or the matriarch of a family of street urchins.

Given their nature and resources, the Superior is often the leader of a cadre of hunters, or at least its logistical heart. The resources she draws upon, and the connections she may exploit, can open doors or opportunities that would otherwise be blocked. Players are encouraged to develop distinct roles and personalities for each of the Superiors’ followers, and the Superior may appeal to players and groups looking for rich role-playing experiences.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Pudgy face, furrowed face, strong face, haggard face
- Tired eyes, calculating eyes, piercing eyes, joyful eyes
- Strong body, gorgeous body, crippled body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Discipline

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- Armour of your choice, choose whether it is fancy or functional
- 1 weapons of your choice
- A cart, or carriage

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters has worked for you in some capacity in the past and made a good impression, take Trust +1 with them.
- One of the characters is related to a member of your Staff, name the Staff member and the nature of the relationship, take Trust +1 with them.
- Take +1 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCS).

STAFF

The Superior starts with a small (3 to 5) mob of followers, attendants and bodyguards representing their household staff, or trusted lieutenants. If you lead this group into battle, you may **Do Violence** using the mob's harm and armour (see the Mob rules at page xx for more details). You suffer harm as a group, per the mob rules. By default your staff is 3-5 people with training in various skills, not all of them combat ready (2-harm mob small undisciplined 1-armour). Then choose 2 qualities:

- ☐ Your staff is well-armed. +1 harm.
- ☐ Your staff is well-armoured. +1 armour.
- ☐ Your staff is well drilled. It loses the undisciplined tag.
- ☐ Your staff is capable of scavenging and supporting itself without you paying them directly. It gets +self-sufficient.
- ☐ Your staff will follow you to Hell itself. It gains +loyal.

And choose 1:

- ☐ Your staff are not as committed to battling the Darkness as you are. Vulnerability: corruptible.
- ☐ Your staff are primarily attached to a town, man or or permanent encampment. Vulnerability: immobile.
- ☐ You staff are disloyal or have a high turnover. Vulnerability: disloyalty
- ☐ Your staff are veterans of war or conflict. Vulnerability: battle scars.

SUPERIOR MOVES

Take both of these moves:

● Grunt Work

When you **order your staff to solve a problem for you**, roll +Discipline. On a 10+ they follow your instructions to the letter and there will be no consequences for you. On a 7-9, either things get

complicated or the blame falls upon you, your choice. On a miss their attempts to follow your orders lead to disaster.

● **Let Me Help You With That, Sir**

When you are **doing a task that a member of your staff can assist with**, you may choose to let them help you, if you do you are Blessed when undertaking that action. Your staff member suffers the results of any complications along with you, and will expect recognition for their help.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

- ☐ +1 Discipline (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Zeal (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Reason (max +3)
- ☐ +1 Esotery (max +3)
- ☐ Choose an additional quality for your Staff
- ☐ Choose a move from either the Enforcer or Scholar Archetypes
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
- ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype

After 5 advances you may select:

- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ +1 to any Stat (max +3)
- ☐ Erase a permanent injury
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Advance 4 basic moves
- ☐ Retire your character to safety
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

The Occultist

The Obliah, as it calls itself, turns to face its companion, its face a mask of concentration.

"We have," it explains, "only one last chance."

Monsieur Vatteau circles warily, sweat streaming from his brow. "God's teeth it's hot." The Obliah does not feel the rising heat from the burning hamlet. It is unperturbed by the sparks and flames. Its hands rise and fall as it seeks to calm its nerves. To commune with the Darkness again, so soon? "I must be mad," it whispers to itself.

Vatteau grunts in shock as a roof-tile explodes from the heat somewhere far above them, and burning shards of ceramic shatter on the cobblestones, mere feet from the chalk circle in which they stand. "Please, quickly, Obliah! We'll be roasted alive if you don't act soon!"

In spite of the peril, the Obliah's thoughts return, unbidden, to its life Before: Those interminable days of ignorance, when it was a simple book-keeper for a wool merchant, and its worries going no further than disputes about bolts of cloth and dye consignments.

But, it corrects itself internally, the whisper was there, even then - those days of loss and darkness, when the Obliah had been a simple man. Had he not stopped at the crossroads and heard whispers, or cupped his ear to the darkness and felt his name called, from a great distance? That voice...

Now, in this moment, its breathing slows, and it feels the loose skeins of the ley-lines beneath their feet. It begins the recitations - painfully memorised from its time in the libraries of Al-Abbas. It centres its mind, as prescribed by the Sutras, and forces breath through its lungs in rhythm with a great beating rhythm only it can hear.

Vatteau watches the strange creature, its dusty robes buffeted by the chaotic, sucking air, move its fingers in obtuse conjunctions, arms locking and sliding around one another like a marionette's.

Suddenly, there comes the scream of bending beams, and a crack like cannonshot. Vatteau instinctively leaps in front of the Obliah to protect it from the burning masonry, as the church walls collapse.

But, before the impact, before the crushing weight bears down upon them, there is a silent wrench that drives Vatteau to his knees. As he sucks back air, his body shaking with shock, he stares in disbelief: They stand upon the boundless shores of an black lake, its motionless waters reflecting with the flickering light of innumerable fireflies. No, wait, not fireflies. Are they? Surely not. Eyes?

“Oh Master,” the Obliah weeps, “you have finally found me!”

Certain obscure legends mention hidden rituals: the weapons of the enemy turned against them; Darkness twisted for the aims of the Light. One might read of them in secret tomes, divine them from the flight patterns of certain rare species of bird, or drag them up in fishermen's nets on a wet midnight somewhere off the coast where the shipwrecks are thick and the shoals are hidden. Naturally, there are risks, but the Occultist is gripped by an unquenchable thirst - seek the hidden, learn the unspoken and master the unseen.

The Occultist sees ordinary life for what it is: A charade to be maintained as necessary, and discarded when permitted. They may appear normal at first glance, or they may be outcasts who avoid society at all costs, but, regardless, they find no succour in the niceties of “civilised” life. How can they, having tasted forbidden knowledge? The search consumes them.

Even the most unlikely find themselves touched by greater powers. Given the Occultist may come from any walk of life, he or she need not be a scholar or an explorer. The Occultist may be a martial artist, devoting herself to forbidden teachings, or a hunter, obsessed with the unspeakable beast he once chanced across in the midnight jungles half a world away.

The Occultist aids their companions by unlocking hitherto unknown paths, or revealing shocking truths. They often surprise with solutions that defy logic, and challenge preconceptions. Players eager to role-play long term goals, epic descents into madness or powerful redemptive tales, may wish to consider the Occultist.

NAME

LOOK

Choose as many as apply:

- Ambiguous, Female, Male, Transgressing
- Pock-marked face, calm face, old face, sad face
- Delirious eyes, rheumy eyes, squinting eyes, baleful eyes
- Weak body, healthy body, ravaged body

STARTING STATS

Assign the following numbers to your Stats, in whatever arrangement you choose: +1, +1, +1, +0 and -1.

Then: add +1 to Esotery

EQUIPMENT

You get:

- Your workspace
- 1 weapons of your choice
- A book of alchemy or hermetic magic

TRUST

On your turn:

- One of the characters has provided material support for your work, take Trust +1 with them.
- One of the characters thinks your work is trickery, or worse, sorcery, take Trust -2 with them.
- Take +1 Trust with all other Characters (including NPCS).

WORKSPACE

The Occultist has a workspace, lab, or sanctum for their, books, scrolls, tools and supplies. When you **go to your work space to research or create something**, the GM will tell you what is required to complete the task. Choose and underline 3 features or your workspace:

two or three skilled assistants, alchemical equipment, smelting and metalworking equipment, a library of books and scrolls, a scattering of ancient relics, magical wards, surgical supplies, an apothecary, a binding circle.

OCCULTIST MOVES

Take this move:

● Just the Thing

When you go to your work space to find a ritual component, relic or tome roll +Reason. On a 10+ you find what you are looking for, or something close enough to work. On a 7-9, you have something

similar, but it has a significant flaw or price. On a miss, you don't have the thing you are after, but you have a good idea of where to find it.

Choose two of these:

Healing Touch

When you **tend someone's wounds**, roll +Esotery. On a hit, this counts as treatment for the purposes of Heavy and Critical injuries. On a 10+ heal all Light Injuries on the person's Harm track and you may not tend their wounds again until they receive further harm. On a 7-9 take +1 forward to tending the person's wounds. This move may be performed any number of times per day, but only once per person.

Hermetic Magic

When you **use sorcery**, the GM may not impose gaining corruption as a requirement, so long as you are not using magic to do harm. If you are able to read the spell from a book or scroll treat a result of 7-9 as a 10+.

Patron

You have a wealthy patron to whom you provide your services. Name and describe them. When you **Obtain Goods or Services** with the assistance of your patron, treat the goods or service as having +1 availability.

Chemical admixtures







You always carry a supply of volatile chemicals, which can be used as weapons. When used in this way treat the chemicals as a weapon with 2-harm and the close, area and concealable tags. At your option the chemicals may also have both the loud and fire tags.

Tongue of Enoch







You speak the language of the Angels. When you **Supplicate** you are Blessed.

ADVANCES

Advances available at the beginning of play:

-  +1 Discipline (max +3)
-  +1 Zeal (max +3)
-  +1 Pugnacity (max +3)
-  +1 Reason (max +3)
-  +1 Esotery (max +3)
-  Choose an additional Occultist move

After 5 advances you may select:

-  +1 to any Stat (max +3)
-  +1 to any Stat (max +3)
-  Erase a permanent injury
-  Advance 4 basic moves
-  Advance 4 basic moves
-  Retire your character to safety

- ☐ Choose an additional Occultist move
 - ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
 - ☐ Choose a move from another Archetype
 - ☐ Add two more features to your workspace
- ☐ Change to a new Archetype

Organisation Archetypes: (WIP)

Organisation Archetypes are an optional part of Malleus. They represent an organisation or bond of brotherhood between the player characters. They help to tie the PCs together and given good reasons for why they work together against the Darkness. They also provide the group of PCs with additional resources and abilities. As such, playing with an Organisation Archetype does represent a boost in overall power when compared to a group not using one - that's the power of being united by a common cause.

The Organisation Archetypes are intended to represent a specific type of group, but the names aren't meant to be understood prescriptively - if the mechanics attached to the Organisation that you think has the right name don't represent what you have in mind, use a different Organisation Archetype and re-flavour it.

Creating an Organisation

Creating your organisation is much like creating a new character. First the group should discuss the kind of a group they want to be members of and then select an appropriate Organisation Archetype.

Name

As a group, the players should come up with a name for their organisation and write it down on the Organisation Archetype sheet.

Uniting Drive

The Uniting Drive is developed and written out following the same format as a individual character Drive; however, the Uniting Drive represents the chief goal of the Organisation rather than of an individual. In play a Uniting Drive works differently than a normal Drive, and will be referenced in the Organisation Moves. At the end of a session, if the PCs as a group expressed the Organisation's Uniting Drive through play mark an Organisation Advancement Point.

Uniting Belief

The organisation Uniting Belief works in a similar way to an individual PC's Belief but, like the Uniting Drive, it represents a common belief held by members of the organisation. At the end of a session, if the PCs as a group expressed the Organisation's Uniting Belief through play mark an Organisation Advancement Point.

Connections

Connections are specific allies, with notable talents or skills that the PCs have access to as a result of their membership in the organisation. Each Organisation sheet has a list of the nature and skills of a number of potential allies. The PCs, as a group, select two of those Connections, name them, and provide some further details about who they are and where they live. The Connections have a largely narrative role, and don't have specific mechanics. For example, if one of the PCs is in need of medical treatment of their wounds then access to a Connection who is a Chirurgeon (surgeon) who lives nearby then they will be able to call about that Connection for aid. Connections are interacted with like any other NPC except they generally have reason to help the PCs without persuasion.

Group Moves

Group Moves are moves that, when selected as part of Organisation creation or advancement are accessible by every PC that is a member of the Organisation. In effect the selected Group Move is treated as if it were a Basic Move.

Individual Moves

These moves may be selected by a PC when they are able to take an advance. When being selected as an advance they are treated as a move from another Archetype. Once a given Individual Move has been chosen by once PC, it marked as selected and may not be taken by any other PC.

Advancement

The Organisation Sheet has a 6 box track called the Organisation Advancement Track. When the track is filled, erase all marks on the Track and the PCs may select an Organisation Advance.

Secret Society

The Secret Society Archetype represents a group of PCs all belonging to a single organised group that works cooperatively and with significant resources towards a shared goal. A Secret Society keeps its activities and inner-working secret from non-members but it need not be group that keeps its actual existence secret. A Secret Society might be an order within the Church, a cult, a conspiracy or a political movement. The defining features of a Secret Society are a commitment to secrecy and access to a network of hidden contacts and clandestine resources.

NAME

UNITING DRIVE

UNITING BELIEF

CONNECTIONS

Choose 2 from the list below, name them and explain their connection to the Organisation.

- ☐ _____ a high ranking Church official
- ☐ _____ a judge or magistrate
- ☐ _____ a chirurgeon (surgeon)
- ☐ _____ a ship captain
- ☐ _____ a government minister or member of court
- ☐ _____ a high ranking military official

SECRET SOCIETY GROUP MOVES

Choose one:

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

SECRET SOCIETY INDIVIDUAL MOVES

Whenever a PC who is a member of this organisation takes an Advance that allows them to choose a move from any playbook, they may choose one these moves which has not already been taken:

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

ADVANCES

- ☐ Choose an additional Secret Society Move
- ☐ Choose an additional Secret Society Move
- ☐ Choose an additional Connection
- ☐ Choose an additional Connection
- ☐ Choose an additional Connection

The GM:

Always Say

- » What the principles demand.
- » What the rules demand.
- » What your prep demands.
- » What honesty demands.

Agenda

The GM's agenda encapsulates their overarching goals in running a game of Malleus. When you run the game your job is to pursue and balance these three agendas:

- » Fill the world with monsters, real and imagined
- » Make the characters' lives thrilling and tragic
- » Play to discover the truth hidden in the Darkness

Fill the world with monsters, real and imagined

Malleus is a game about hunting monsters, that means that you need to provide the monsters that are going to be hunter. However, this agenda is not as simple as that. Malleus is also a game about faith and belief and sometimes faith and belief make people do things to each other that are as monstrous as the actions of any Abomination. Some of the monsters in Malleus are creatures of myth, legend and folklore. Some of the monsters of Malleus are the dark side of human nature that exist even here in the real world.

This agenda also has a further meaning - some beliefs, and the ever present and oppressive threat of the darkness, lead to paranoia and mistrust. As the GM it is your job to feed the fires that give rise to these monsters of the mind, these poisonous seeds that might blossom into the actions of the flesh.

Make the characters' lives thrilling and tragic

The job of the GM is *not* to plan a story for the players to act out, not is it to create a world the player's can interrogate but not truly affect. The job of the GM is create conflict, to put obstacles in the path of the characters and have the world push up against them. The GM sets the stage and puts in motion events for the players to collide with, battle against or take up arms for. The GM should give the characters opportunity for adventure and heroism, but also present them with real, hard, choices and give life to the consequences of those choices.

Play to discover the truth hidden in the Darkness

Like all Powered by the Apocalypse games, Malleus is about playing to find out what happens. This agenda, in part, embodies that idea. Don't decide on all the events that will happen. Let the world and lives of the PCs and the NPCs be shaped by the events that happen in play. Let the fiction evolve based on the consequences of the PCs choices. Aim to be surprised by where the game takes you.

In addition to that, this agenda is about playing to find out how the battle against the Darkness shapes the characters, and how the characters shape the battle. It's about finding out the truth about the world and what the Light and the Darkness really mean you and your fellow players. On the surface Malleus may appear to be a game about absolutes, about black and white, but there are infinite shades of grey to be explored in between. Or maybe the Light is the truth and the power and the way, and the Darkness is truly evil and the refuge of the weak willed and the unfaithful. Play the game and find out.

Principles

- » Make the Darkness dangerous, and seductive
- » Address yourself to the characters, not the players
- » Divide the characters by their beliefs, even when their goals align
- » Keep your moves esoteric and mysterious
- » Name everyone, cloth them in Light and/or Darkness
- » Ask provocative questions and build on the answers
- » Bloody the hands of all involved
- » Be a fan of the player characters
- » Think like a predator, even offscreen

Make the Darkness dangerous, and seductive

The power of the Darkness is naked and brutal, but it is also subtle and insidious. The darkness gets what it wants through threat and violence, but also with honeyed words and whispered promises. The Darkness should be something that the PCs want to fight against due to its vile, dangerous and abhorrent nature. It should also offer the lure of great power. Corruption offers an easier route to power and it should always be a temptation for the PCs to give into that in order to fulfill their needs, Drives and Vices. Put pressure on the PCs by giving them plenty of chances to pursue their Drive at the expense of others, or to indulge their Vices just to keep moving forward.

Address yourself to the characters, not the players

Like all Powered by the Apocalypse Games, Malleus is a fiction first game. The things that are happening in the imaginative space being shared by the players revolve on the actions and reactions of

the characters that inhabit that space. The game is driven by what the characters are doing, so always ask what the characters are doing not what the people sitting at the table are doing.

Divide the characters by their beliefs, even when their goals align

Unlike a lot of PbtA games, Malleus is a party based game. It assumes that the characters are most often pursuing a common goal, fighting the Darkness, and that they will generally be working together to accomplish that goal. However, the generation of the PC's Drives and Beliefs should reveal cracks in the cohesive facade of the group. Use the Drives and Beliefs to drive a wedge between the player characters and to make them question whether they really are working towards the same ends.

Keep your moves esoteric and mysterious

This is a long and pretentious way of saying that you shouldn't tell your players the name of the GM moves that you make, and that you shouldn't be telling the players what caused you to make those moves. Now, that doesn't mean you can do what you want, and ignore the GM Moves and their triggers - you have to play by the rules too - it just means that you shouldn't talk in game terms when you can talk in terms of the fiction.

Name everyone, clothe them in Light and/or Darkness

All of the NPCs in Malleus are still characters in the world of the game. They are still people, or monsters, with their own wants, needs and motivations. When you introduce an NPC, given them a name and think about what they want and what side of the struggle between Light and Darkness they fall on. The GM reference sheets provide a list of appropriate names, so use that or come up with something yourself - just make sure you come up with a name somehow. Most NPCs will probably be Innocents and, at least nominally, on the side of the Light. Even the average petty criminal or border reaver is probably not an Abomination, but you just never know. A good number of moves trigger only when a PC is dealing with an Abomination, and attacking an Innocent has consequences, so make sure to consider that before it becomes relevant.

Ask provocative questions and build on the answers

In Malleus all of the players get to contribute to the shared fictional world (yeah, Malleus is set in the real world but it also has monsters in it, so details are subject to change). As the GM it's not your job to come up with every little detail. If you need to know about something that happened in the past, particularly if it may have involved a PC, ask the characters what they know about those events. If a character wants to do something but it isn't clear whether they have any prior knowledge then ask how they came by that knowledge or experience. If you can, ask these questions in a leading fashion. When you have the answers, build on them. Add your own details and wrinkles and try to make the information relevant in the game at the table. A powerful use of these techniques, particularly when starting a new game or session, is to start in medias res, and ask the players how they got into trouble.

Some players are not great at, or even plain don't like, coming up with details about the world or their character's backstory. That's OK. Sharing this kind of creativity can be great fun but don't hold up the game if people aren't comfortable contributing in that manner.

Bloody the hands of all involved

Most people in the world don't actively fight against the Darkness. They may be on the side of the Light but they don't go into the places the Darkness lives and put themselves in harm's way. This isn't about cowardice, or lack of willpower. Fighting the Darkness is hard, mentally and physically, and those who do it end up scarred in body and mind - indeed, they probably were to begin with. Things don't always go well, and fighting the Darkness means making tough decisions. Sometime defeating the Darkness means doing bad and bloody deeds. As the GM throw hard choices at the player - make them choose who to save, make them choose between two evils, make them hurt good people to stop evil ones.

By default, almost all supernatural creatures in Malleus are servants of the Darkness. The benign lake spirit is as much an Abomination as a witch who has signed a pact with the Devil. They are all evil in the sight of the Light but that doesn't mean the evil that they do is equal or that the characters themselves should even perceive it as evil at all. It can be a lot of fun to see how the characters react to an Abomination who does actual good.

Likewise, most humans are Innocents in the eyes of the Light by default. That doesn't mean they are good people, that they won't commit crimes or that they can be trusted. As warriors of the Light it is supposed to be the PCs job to save Innocents, but not all Innocents should appear worth saving.

Be a fan of the player characters

When you watch the kinds of TV shows that Malleus draws inspiration from (Buffy, Supernatural, Millennium etc) you are always rooting for the characters but you don't want them to simply live a charmed life. That would be boring. You want the characters to face challenges, to confront evil and persevere through danger and fear.

As a Malleus GM you should want the same for the player characters. You want to see them confront real challenges and overcome real adversity. Sometimes they won't succeed, and sometime they will die. Or worse. That's OK. Being a fan of the characters is about giving them real opportunities to brave, smart or daring and giving them real opportunities to be stupid, spiteful and run headlong into trouble. Don't make their life too easy but, equally, don't make it hard for the sake of it. Make it hard so that when they make it through to the other side they have won a real victory and proven to be true heroes.

Think like a predator, even offscreen

In the world of Malleus no one is truly safe and everyone is pawn in the war between the Darkness and the Light. Don't introduce NPCs that you aren't willing to sacrifice. Don't invent organisation that cannot be turned to the Darkness, or back to the Light. Everyone is a target if they have something someone else wants - particularly if it is something the player characters want. If logic says an NPC should die, whether by what happens on screen or behind the scenes, then they die. If logic says they should fall to Darkness then they do. Don't play favourites and don't bend events so that what you want is what happens.

GM Moves

- » Use an Abomination, Threat, Light or Darkness move
- » Split them apart
- » Surface a conflict, ancient or contemporary
- » Imperil someone
- » Reveal an unwelcome truth or challenge their beliefs
- » Show a downside to their Drive, Belief or Vice
- » Inflict (or trade) harm
- » Turn their move back on them
- » Tell them the possible consequences and ask
- » Give signs of impending doom
- » Put someone in the grasp of the Darkness
- » Offer an opportunity, with or without cost
- » Tempt them with vice or corruption
- » Trade danger for information
- » After every move: "what do you do?"

Light Moves

- » Act in opposition to change or chaos
- » Gather in numbers to confront a threat
- » Offer a chance at salvation
- » Remind someone of their mundane obligations
- » Escalate conflict in the name of Light

Darkness Moves

- » Make an aggressive display of force
- » Threaten someone's interests or holdings
- » Tempt someone to Darkness
- » Consume resources, vulnerable or exposed
- » Offer power for a promise or pledge

Harm Move

When a **PC Takes Harm**:

If the total Harm suffered was 3 or more the GM may choose one from the following:

- » The PC is momentarily inhibited and takes -1 forward.
- » The PC drops something, or loses hold of something.

If the total harm suffered was 4 or more the GM may choose one from the list below, or one or both from the list above:

- » The PC falls down injured or unconscious
- » The PC takes -1 ongoing until the Harm is healed

Creating Hunts & Arcs:

Malleus is structured around the concept of Hunts and Arcs. Hunts and Arcs are structured and prepared in basically the same way but a Hunt represents the threats and obstacles for a single session, or maybe two to three sessions, while an Arc represents the overarching threats and obstacles for a longer collection of sessions. You can think of a Hunt as a Single episode of a TV show, while an Arc represents the looming threats of the Big Bad that recur throughout the season and that are usually resolved in the season finale.

A Hunt or Arc consists of the following: The Concept, the Lead, the Cast, the Threats, the Doom, the Doom Track and the Stakes.

Concept

The Concept is a simple descriptor of what the overall Hunt or Arc is about. Just write a brief one or two line description of the basic idea.

Lead

The Lead is the thing that brings the PCs into the Hunt or Arc. In the case of individual Hunts the Lead will come from someone requesting help, information from a source or ally or some pressing need of the PCs. Generally the Lead for an Arc should be more organic, at some point the PCs should discover information that points towards one or more of the Arc's threat and be compelled, through necessity, relevance to a Hunt or violent intervention by one of the Arc's threats.

Threats

Threats represent the antagonists and challenges of the Hunt or Arc. The things that the PCs need to struggle against, or overcome, in order to avert the Doom that the Hunt or Arc leads toward. There are a variety of different types of Threats which are described below. In general an Arc or Hunt should have at least three Threats associated with it. One of the Threats should always be the Darkness. Usually there will be a Servant threat, and at least one other type of Threat.

SERVANTS

A **Servant** (short for Servant of the Darkness) is almost always an **Abomination** or group of **Abominations**. They are the chief villain of a Hunt or Arc. When we say that a Servant is almost always an Abomination, the exception is that in some cases a Servant could be a dangerous artifact with its own malignant will.

» Brood (motivation: to breed, spread and overrun)

- » Carnifex (motivations: to torment, murder and butcher)
- » Deceiver (motivation: to sow doubt and create instability)
- » Frenzy (motivation: to run rampant and destroy)
- » Glutton (motivation: to eat, devour and consume)
- » Imperator (motivation: to to dominate, possess and control)
- » Leech (motivation: to infect, exploit and drain)
- » Mutilator (motivation: to hurt, torture and disfigure)
- » Seducer (motivation: to sway and tempt to Darkness)
- » Witch (motivation: to usurp the power of the Darkness)

Servant Moves

- » Peer from the shadows
- » Make an overt show of force
- » Make a sudden appearance
- » Threaten someone's interests or holdings
- » Tempt someone to Darkness
- » Consume resources, vulnerable or exposed
- » Offer power for a promise or pledge
- » Give orders to its Thralls
- » Seek haven
- » Make an escape
- » Use the powers of the Darkness

THRALLS

Thralls are lesser **Abominations** that are beholden to the **Servant**. They represent the Servant's agents and minions. Not all Servants have Thralls. While Thralls are generally beholden to a Servant, they could also serve a Location or the Darkness directly in certain circumstances.

- » Hunter (motivation: to kill with skill and cunning)
- » Swarm (motivation: to infest and infect)
- » Stalker (motivation: to track, observe and report)
- » Thief (motivation: to steal and sabotage)
- » Charlatan (motivation: to trick, confuse and betray)
- » Slave (motivation: to do the **Servant's** bidding)
- » Guardian (motivation: to protect a person, place or thing)
- » Beast (motivation: to terrorise and attack)

Thrall Moves

- » Act with violence

- » Attack in concert
- » Capture someone or something
- » Deliver a message or reveal a secret
- » Give chase
- » Use the powers of the Darkness
- » Follow or disobey the Servants orders
- » Make a threat or demand
- » Flee

INNOCENTS

Innocents represent normal people that are caught up in the events of a **Hunt** or an **Arc**. In general **Innocents** are not antagonists and some of them may not even really be an obstacle in and of themselves. **Innocents** such as the Faithless, the Meddler or the Storyteller may get in the way of the PCs and require them to change tack. Allies, Investigators, Victim and Witnesses might be able to provide assistance but are also likely to be endangered by the events of a **Hunt** or **Arc** - the threat they represent is that that the PCs might not be able to save them or may even end up making the **Innocents** collateral damage.

- » Ally (motivation: to provide aid and assistance to the PCs)
- » Faithless (motivation: to deny the influence of the Light and the Darkness)
- » Investigator (motivation: to looks for answers)
- » Meddler (motivation: to interfere and pursue their own ends)
- » Storyteller (motivation: to pass on rumours and tall tales)
- » Victim (motivation: to put themselves in the clutches of Darkness)
- » Witness (motivation: to provide information)

Innocent Moves

- » Put themselves in danger
- » Reveal information
- » Provide aid or assistance
- » Seek help or sanctuary
- » Meddle or interfere
- » Keep secrets
- » Try to defend themselves or others
- » Behave irrationally
- » React with horror

LOCATIONS

Locations represent important physical, or meta-physical places, in which the game takes place. Not every single location the PCs might visit during a Hunt or Arc need to be recorded as **Locations**, just the ones where the location will form a notable obstacle or serve as a backdrop for a major conflict. For certain kinds of Hunt or Arcs a **Location** might stand in for Servant of the Darkness. The Location might even have its own Thralls if its influence is strong enough.

- » Haven (motivation: to provide sanctuary to the Darkness and its children)
- » Confluence (motivation: to be at the centre of things, to bring things together)
- » Breeding Ground (motivation: to provide fertile ground for, and birth, the Darkness)
- » Labyrinth (motivation: to trap and confuse)
- » Temple (motivation: to draw worshippers)
- » Wilderness (motivation: to hide the ancient and the unknown)
- » Ossuary (motivation: to harbour the dead and restless souls)
- » Monument (motivation: to form a place of power)
- » Charnel House (motivation: to bring death and destruction to those within)

Location Moves

- » Pose a hazard, obstacle or danger
- » Hide or reveal a clue
- » Shift, change or fall to ruin
- » Present an opportunity
- » Present a Guardian
- » Take something away or use something up
- » Disgorge something
- » Provide a temptation or lure

DARKNESS

Darkness Threats what the Darkness itself, separate from the Servant, wants in the current situation. The Darkness's motivation represents what it wants people to do and feel.

- Lust (motivation: intense longing and desire for a person or living thing)
- Gluttony (motivation: overindulgence and overconsumption, selfishness)
- Avarice (motivation: desire and greed for the accumulation of power and possessions)
- Apathy (motivation: indifference to duties and obligations, avoidance of exertion)
- Wrath (motivation: uncontrolled anger, rage and hatred)
- Envy (motivation: insatiable jealousy and covetousness)
- Pride (motivation: hubris, narcissism, corrupt selfishness and the perversion of dignity)

Darkness Moves

- » Make an aggressive display of force
- » Threaten someone's interests or holdings
- » Tempt someone to Darkness
- » Consume resources, vulnerable or exposed
- » Offer power for a promise or pledge

Doom

The Doom is the terrible event that will come to pass if the PCs are unsuccessful in dealing with a Threat.

Doom Track

The Doom Track sets out what will happen if a given Hunt or Arc is building towards, and what will come to pass if the PCs do not become involved. It is essentially a series of dot points counting down to what happens if the Darkness, its Servants and Thralls, achieves their purpose. Generally events on the doom track move the situation from bad to worse as the Doom comes to fruition. The length of the Doom Track is not set, but we do not recommend using less than 4 steps, or more than 8.

There are two ways that the Doom Track advances. Firstly, it can advance through play. As events occur in the course of play the actions of the PCs or NPCs might naturally bring about an event on the track. When this happens, mark off that step on the track (even if it is out of order) as the Doom gets close. The other way the Doom Track can advance is when the GM has the opportunity to make a move. Advancing a Doom Track is a hard move. When you mark off a step on the Doom Track as a hard move the effects of the event occur in the fiction. Describe the effects that are perceptible to the PCs and ask, "What do you do?"

Stakes

Stakes are essentially questions about a given Hunt or Arc and its threats, cast, and consequences that you are interested in seeing answered through play. Stakes are things the you are playing to find out about. Some of the stakes you write out might never be answered, but they serve as a reminder of things that the Hunt or Arc are intended to be about.

When you create a Hunt or Arc write down two or three questions you are interested in seeing answered through play that relate to the Hunt or Arc. These are your Stakes.

NPCs & Abominations:

The average human NPC in Malleus doesn't need any stats. Your moves and the player's moves will determine how interactions between the player characters and NPCs work out. NPCs need a name, a description and goal or drive to shape their place in the fiction. Be sure to think about what NPCs are doing off screen too.

NPCs in Combat

If an NPC ends up in combat with the players you need to determine their harm rating, armour rating and how much harm they can sustain. Think about the equipment they do and don't have and assign appropriate harm and armour ratings. The average human will be fatally injured when they have taken 4 harm. Stronger people might be able to take 5 or 6; weaker NPCs may only be able to take 3 harm.

One of the GM moves is **Inflict (or Trade) Harm**; when you get a chance to make a move in combat, and it makes sense, the NPC can deal their harm, or trade harm, with a PC. Harm may also be dealt as a result of a 7-9 result on a PCs **Do Violence** roll.

Often it is best not to jump immediately to inflicting harm, without setting the situation up in the fiction. Set the harm up with a soft move. Tell the PC the a hellhound has noticed him enter the old cottage and is barreling down on them, fangs bared. Ask the player what they do. They might try and get out of the way (**Act in the Face of Evil**) or cow the hellhound with a command to stand down (**Show of Faith**), or something else which may or may not trigger their moves. If the player can successfully avoid the immediate threat they can take action, such as to **Do Violence**, if they do not take action or they get a 6 or less on their move then you are well within your rights to inflict harm.

The PC might simply choose to **Do Violence** in response to the threat of the hellhound - this will be a matter for your judgment as to whether they can do so without having harm inflicted first. A character with a drawn handgun or a dagger might have time to move quickly; a character with a greatsword (which has the slow tag) almost certainly will not have time to attack before the hellhound is upon them.

This is the basic rhythm of combat; a back and forth between participants responding to the results of the other's moves.

Innocents & Abominations

Some moves draw a distinction between Innocents and Abominations. An Innocent is any human NPC who does not willingly act in the aid of the Darkness. An Abomination is any monster, or any human NPC who aids or treats with the Darkness. Player characters are neither Innocents nor Abominations.

A person is still an Innocent, even if they commit crimes or sins, so long as they did not willingly do so to benefit the Darkness. A person who is unwillingly compelled to aid the Darkness through sorcery or dark powers remains an Innocent. Those who are coerced into aiding the Darkness, despite their wishes (if for example their family members were threatened) are Abominations. It is for the PCs to decide where line between willing and unwilling is finally drawn. Those who are tricked into serving the Darkness are Abominations if the average person would have known better (this is for the PCs to decide).

Abominations

Abominations are much like human NPCs, but with added complications. They act via GM moves in the same way as a regular human, but they often have unique powers and weaponry requiring their own harm rating and armour rating. In addition they may have resistance and vulnerabilities - or simply be immune to certain kinds of harm.

Abomination can sometimes be more like a puzzle than a normal combatant. Perhaps they can only be harmed by silver or holy weapons, or are vulnerable to attack only in direct sunlight. Perhaps the abomination can't be physically hurt and must be banished by a ritual which the characters will have to research and locate through play.

Abominations require a little more detail than most NPCs. In addition to harm and armour ratings, and their harm limit, Abominations may have Resistances, Vulnerabilities and Special Qualities. Abominations also have specific moves that apply only to them, and that are available to the GM when the monster is in play.

Resistance Rating

A resistance rating is similar to armour, but is not affected by piercing. It reduces incoming harm from any source to which the Abomination is resistant. Resistance is written in the following manner: Resistance-1 (all non-holy physical harm). The words in parentheses describe the types of harm to

which the resistance applies. If there is nothing in parentheses after the resistance rating then the creature is resistant to all damage to which it is not Vulnerable.

Vulnerabilities

A vulnerability is a source of harm to which an Abomination is particularly susceptible. A creature takes additional harm from sources of harm to which it is vulnerable equal to its vulnerability rating. Vulnerability ratings are written as follows: Vulnerable-2 (cold iron). The words in parentheses describe the kinds of damage to which the Abomination is vulnerable.

Special Qualities

Special qualities describe features of the Abomination that might be important in the fiction. They are a guide to how the monster will be affected by various actions in game world, and how it might respond to certain things. An Abomination with the special quality “Insubstantial” is able to move through walls and other solid material. An Abomination with the special quality “Can only be harmed in direct sunlight” will be immune to harm in other circumstances.

Abomination Moves

Most Abominations have special Abomination moves which are cues that describe the kind of actions and modes of attack an abomination might use, aside from the obvious form of attack. For example a vampire might have the moves:

- Mesmerize someone
- Drain their blood
- Turn to mist

These moves serve to provide examples of what the Abomination will do in combat beyond just attacking and should be used liberally by the GM.

Example Abominations

Hellhound	0-Armour
Fangs and Claw (3-harm)	6 Harm
<i>Hand, Messy</i>	Resistance-1 (non-holy physical damage)
Special Qualities: Teleport, shadowy hide	

Moves:

- Drag victim to Hell
- Attack from beyond the veil

Ghoul Teeth and fingernails (2-harm) <i>Hand, Messy</i> Special Qualities: Eating flesh restores lost harm	0-Armour 4 Harm
<p>Moves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast on the flesh of their prey • Tear their enemies to pieces 	
Lesser Demon Whip of flame (3-harm) <i>Hand, Close, Piercing-1, Fire</i> Special Qualities: Teleport, winged	1-Armour 6 Harm Resistance-2 (non-holy, non-magic physical damage)
<p>Moves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn with Hellfire • Dominate a victim's will • Offer a deal to save their skin 	
Restless Spirit Thrown objects (2-harm) <i>Hand, Close</i> Special Qualities: Insubstantial, cannot be harmed, exorcisable	0-Armour - Harm
<p>Moves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychic wail • Possess the vulnerable 	
Vampire Neophyte Claws and Fangs (2-harm) <i>Hand, Close, Piercing-1</i> Special Qualities: Preternatural speed and strength	0-Armour 4 Harm Resistance-1 (non-holy, non-magic physical damage) Vulnerable-2 (all damage while in direct sunlight)
<p>Moves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charm • Turn to Mist 	

True Vampire

Claws and Fangs (3-harm)

Hand, Close, Piercing-1

Special Qualities: Preternatural

speed and strength, counts as a Small

Mob

1-Armour

6 Harm

Resistance-2 (non-holy, non-magic physical damage)

Vulnerable-2 (all damage while in direct sunlight)

Moves:

- Charm
- Turn to Mist
- Fly
- Animal form