



# TOGETHER UNTIL DEATH

## Author (1994 Edition)

Andreas Marklund

## Authors (2022 Edition)

Petter Nallo

Gabriel Pellizzaro

## Editor

Jacqueline Bryk

## Art

Anton Semenov

Olga Kolesnikova

Olof Nilsson

Marcin Tomalak

## Layout

Gabriel Pellizzaro

## Special Thanks

Mark Laita and Soft White Underbelly



Characters, locations and incidents are portrayed from the metaphorical viewpoint of the *KULT: Divinity Lost* setting.

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# TOGETHER UNTO DEATH

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TOGETHER UNTO DEATH IS A SCENARIO DESIGNED FOR TWO players and one gamemaster. It is set in New York City in 2022, and explores the false lives of two Enwildened Gods who have forgotten their past. Both have been caught in an endless cycle of violence that repeats itself throughout all of their reincarnations.

# THE TALE OF SIN AND THEA

A long time ago, in the timeless past before Elysium, a brother and sister, Sin and Thea, were born to the Enwilded Gods of Gaia. Their father was Authar, the Lord of the Wooden Throne, one of the highest and most honored beings known to their realm. Their mother was Amerah, the Many-Eyed, an oracle and prophet. They lived deep within Gaia, far from mankind and Metropolis.

Sin and Thea grew to adulthood in the boundless wilderness. They were as beautiful and majestic as they were savage; they hunted their prey and ate the flesh raw and steaming, drank amber sap from gnarled trees to gain wisdom, and swam in obsidian lakes among the blood-red water lilies. They kept worshipers, servants, and pets who joined their hunts and excesses. Together they appeased Gaia's spirit and filled Authar's realm with carnal beauty.

When the moons passed overhead, the tides shifted, and the rivers changed their flow, Sin and Thea brought gifts and sacrifices to the throne of Authar. There, beneath his roots, they let the earth drink deeply from their sacrifices as they sang the divine songs of creation, memory, and desire to bestow his realm with power. They were bound to each other unto death.

When the Demiurge entrapped mankind and created the prison of Elysium, carved out of Gaia herself, Time & Space shifted. Now there was a new strange melody, a mysterious lure, whispers and dreams coming from beyond the veils of the Illusion. Sin, Thea, and their followers heard this and could not help but be bewitched by the mysteries that existed beyond the veil. Afraid that they might also get trapped in the devious and unnatural creation, Authar and Amerah forbade their children to go there. However, the Children of Gaia are curious by nature. After all, how can a hunter resist the scent of a prey, or a moth resist the lure of the flame?

Sin was especially frustrated with his father, who he felt had ruled for too long. For him, leaving Authar's kingdom would be an act of defiance. He convinced his sister and others to join him on this, and they crept closer to the mysterious and elusive veil. One by one, they were pulled into the prison of Elysium. There, the Illusion fettered them and soon they would forget not only their divine origin, but also each other. They were bound by the circle of life and death, and took human forms to become part of the masses. Removed from their kingdom, the sacred rituals could not be properly upheld, and the realm of Authar crumbled. His followers and worshipers were taken by (or fled into) the deep wilderness of Gaia. Sensing the impending doom, and watching her husband's descent into melancholy over his children's betrayal, Amerah left in secret to retrieve Sin and Thea, foolishly convinced she could resist the lure of Elysium. Not only did she fail to Awaken her childrens' sleeping minds, she fell prey to the traps of the Illusion herself, never to return home.

Authar remained alone in his deteriorating realm. Everything was lost to him – the power and the glory, the beauty of his kingdom, his wife and family, his servants and devotees. He brooded in his loneliness, and his brooding hardened his heart. All that remained of this once-glorious god was hate, implacable and unreasoning.

His madness twisted so that he viewed everyone as treacherous deserters, cowards, and fugitives. He was now a tragic figure fettered to an overgrown throne while Gaia ate into him. Authar now hungered for revenge. All those that had deserted him were to be severely punished: the ones that did not listen, the ones that let his realm fall, the ones that aided the escapes, and the ones that silently watched it happen. After all, once in a dim past, he was the greatest hunter. He wanted to hunt again.

He used what power still remained in him and reached out with his dreams. His court was deep in the grip of the Illusion and he could only sense their slumbering minds, but he found Thea, who still subconsciously longed for her father and his woods. He stepped into her dreams, showing himself to Thea. She did not recognize him, yet she sensed his rage and tried to flee. Authar hunted her down in that dream realm of misty forests. In his fury, he sank his teeth into her neck, forcing himself upon her. She became his gate into Elysium. In that spasmodic nightmare, she gave birth to a dream incarnate of Authar that allowed him to claw himself into Elysium. This violation of the natural order of Authar's kingdom – a daughter giving birth to the father – cursed their bloodline and kin.

Moving among mortals in Elysium, Authar pursued the former followers of his court. He terrorized them completely, ripping their false lives apart while reminding them of their treachery. Still physically present in Gaia, Authar could keep his memories, but in truth he also succumbed to the pleasures of Elysium. With his mind away from his throne, he grew weaker, in danger of fading into oblivion unless he could return to his ravaged kingdom.

Once again, he needed the help of another to break through the barriers between the worlds. He found and killed his son, Sin. The Father murdering his heir and offspring symbolically ended both his reign and bloodline. The terror of this act, and the dying light in his son's eyes, allowed Authar to tear himself away from the Illusion at last.

Authar slumbered until his strength was finally restored, and he turned his eye towards Elysium once more. His offspring and servants were reborn in their prison. Again, he hunted Thea, forcing her to spew forth his incarnate. He again slew his son's incarnation at the time, and again he returned to Gaia. And so on, for centuries upon centuries this has repeated itself.

## The Current Cycle

The two player characters are the present incarnations of Sin (Santiago) and Thea (Wynter). It has been more than ten years since last Thea unknowingly dreamt her father into Elysium. Authoral prowls the world hunting the reincarnations of his court and wreaking havoc on their lives, often through cruel games of cat and mouse. Some of the victims reawakened during the hunt, and prostrated themselves in submission. The ones that he found fitting to spare are now part of his pack.

While seeking his vengeance, Authoral lost track of time. As such, his incarnate sinks deeper into the glittering trap of Elysium. He needs to finish the cycle, murder whoever else he can before ending his son's life, and get back to his physical form in Gaia. So, the final act begins. He is closing in on Sin and those closest to him. He has found where they dwell: New York. What a marvelous place for a hunt.

In this incarnation, Sin goes by the name Santiago and runs a small gang of thugs like a petty king. He could have been great, but his passions, desires, and temper have again and again foiled his plans. Still, he commands great respect and is a natural leader due to his quick wits and physical prowess. However, that changed some weeks ago. When Authoral got closer to the siblings, his mind started to merge with those of his children. Santiago started to suffer terrible nightmares. He became erratic, feeble even, and his followers lost all respect for him. A new leader finally ousted him, and Sin now lives in his car in humiliation and shame.

Thea was reborn as Wynter, a young, housing-insecure artist who struggles with both her childhood trauma and the opiate addiction she acquired to soothe that trauma. Now she feels her father's presence and remembers that vivid nightmare that she had more than ten years ago. New York City, once friendly and familiar, seems alien and visibly changes around her. Wynter sees dark and strange oak trees sprouting in the oddest places, and hears the sad whispers of their falling leaves. The drugs can't keep any of this away. She resides in an abandoned loft apartment with several stray cats and an unshakeable feeling that the end, whatever that is, is near.

But the two siblings are not the only prey in the hunt. Mattheus, a soul reincarnated from Gaia and the siblings' mutual friend, also senses Authoral getting closer. In fact, he is the next victim. Mattheus dreams of his own death, and the deaths of countless others, at the hands of the hunter-king. He finally realized that there is a way to end this cycle: Sin and Thea are the key to it all.

## The Player Characters

The present incarnations of Sin and Thea are not related, but move in the same circles – this has been the case ever since they were trapped in the Illusion. They are unaware of their true origin but have much in common. Neither of them have any memories of their childhoods, yet they both dream of deep forests and a beautiful, threatening wilderness. Lately they suffer harrowing nightmares of being alone, stalked through the empty streets of a cold, dark cityscape by a frenzied killer, whom they can only see as a dark silhouette. When they've met, they've bonded instantly, one of these friendships where you feel like you've known each other for a long time after only five minutes.

Hand the character sheets to your players and let them pick. If needed, you can expand what's written in the character sheets with the information presented here in the introduction text. Work out any necessary details as you see fit.

### EXPANDING THE CHARACTERS

By the end of this scenario you will find a couple of handouts. Among them are one Advantage and one Disadvantage for each of the player characters. However, if you wish to run a longer campaign, we suggest that you pick those pre-select ones and build the characters on top of that. Thea's sheet can be built using *The Doll* Archetype with **Object of Desire** and **Drug Addiction** as Disadvantages. Sin's sheet can be built using *The Criminal* Archetype with **Mental Compulsion** (Protect Your Honor) and **Bad Reputation** as Disadvantages.

## THEMES

**Addiction:** Many of the characters in this story struggle with addiction. Thea tries to flee into heroin, fentanyl and sleeping pills. Sin always hunts after prestige, recognition and women. Authoral is addicted to his vengeance. All main characters are addicted to the lure of Elysium, which keeps them trapped as sure as any chemical. As a gamemaster, highlight how people are high, beg for attention, stare at their phones, or in other ways seem obsessed with escaping their present circumstances via their addiction.

**Hierarchy:** This is also a tale about hierarchy: the position one holds in their friend group, in society, on the streets, and in the primal wilderness of Gaia. It is the (perceived or not) hierarchy of different subcultures, genders, and social classes. As a game-master, show the player characters the hierarchies around them. Portray NPCs as scrabbling to get on the top of the heap, fearing being pushed out and not fitting in. Highlight the moments where the PCs enter a situation and find themselves uplifted, watched, courted, or humiliated. Make it clear who rules what.

**Forgiveness:** All characters in this story have done horrible things. They have hurt, used, manipulated, and even murdered others. Can they receive forgiveness? Can they forgive themselves? Or will the cycle of violence and abuse continue until its violent climax? You can build this by exploring the PCs' past, especially through people they hurt and used, or people that used and hurt them. Nothing is black and white. No one is completely wicked or innocent. Everyone has their own cross to carry, and the guilt (or lack of thereof) plagues their daily lives.

# GAMEMASTER TIPS

**Surreal and dreamlike worlds:** Even if the player characters are in one of the biggest cities in the world, everything feels strangely distant. The population acts like sleepwalkers who barely notice the characters. The characters' dreams and visions blend with the Illusion. Much of it may be due to the drugs in their systems, insomnia and nightmares, but some experiences are ultimately unexplainable.

**Smells and instincts:** Describe things with smells. Hint at the characters' primal instincts. Tie them to their animalistic side. Like predators, they are drawn to darkness, catch the slightest sounds, easily focus on sources of light, and feel a deep sense of exposure when unable to hide. It might be due to drug-induced psychosis, or because they have accepted their true selves.

**Visions of Gaia:** During the course of the game, player characters' memories and visions of Gaia will get more and more vivid. At a certain point, the Realm begins to melt into the world around them. They see a giant tree on the horizon, hiding behind the skyscrapers, the houses overtaken by roots and vines, and soon they are swallowed by an urban wilderness. Highlight sites where Gaia invades Elysium: cracks in the asphalt, urban decay, sickness, or unrelenting weather. To them, these moments might be tiny blessings that give them an odd sense of peace, or warning signs of Aufbar's presence.

## The Scenario's Structure

Together Unto Death uses Central and Side scenes. The main storyline is presented throughout the Central Scenes, and besides the starting and ending scenes, these can be played in whatever order that makes sense in the story. They have clear hooks: for example, the PCs cannot reach Leslie without talking to the Gray Man first. However, as the gamemaster, you are free to improvise new hooks to the scenes.

Side Scenes are there to bring color to the game outside of the main plot. They feature the PCs' daily lives, individual problems, opportunities, and more. If you want to play this scenario in a single evening, you might want to keep only what is important to the main storyline.

There are multiple possible endings to the story, and they will vary wildly depending on the relationships between PCs and NPCs. Make sure to read through everything before you plan how to run this, so you can add the scenes that most align with your preferences.

The *italicized* text seen throughout this document is meant to be read aloud to players. Do so at your choice.

## THE 1994 EDITION

Unto Death, or In Doloris as it was called in Swedish, was published in 1994 as a part of the KULT gamemaster's screen together with the scenarios Gallery of Souls and Et In Arcadia Ego.

My first encounter with Kult was when I read about it in the swedish RPG magazine Sinkadus. Just the small information made me intrigued. Me and my friends even called the company to learn more about the game and they said it would be a mix between Twin Peaks and Indiana Jones. Some sort of adventure and mystery game. Well, luckily it turned out far more interesting than that.

Even though I found it hard to gamemaster KULT, (I actually preferred to read about the world and the setting), I had an urge to write for it and got in contact with the company that published the game. The result was a series of RPG convention scenarios and Unto Death. My inspirations for Unto Death were Neil Gaiman's Sandman, Greek myths and Naked Lunch (both the book and the movie) by William S. Burroughs. I wanted to do something with gods that dwelled amongst mankind and fill it with an atmosphere of decay and doom. I did see it somewhat as a Greek drama in a modern setting. It is nice to see it be brought back to life in this new edition so that it can find a new audience.

Andreas Marklund, 2022

## THE 2022 EDITION

Unto Death was a scenario for KULT that was very different from those that had been previously released. Not only was the story focused on two non-human characters, it also held the classic theme of "Death Is Only The Beginning" at its very center by weaving an unique tale of death and rebirth.

We felt that the scenario had an interesting concept, but as a "convention adventure", it was too short and linear. It was also heavily inspired by Greek and Norse mythology, with satyrs and even Odin making an appearance, which doesn't really rhyme well with the fourth edition of KULT.

Aside from a few changes, you can still play through the scenario as it was originally written by focusing entirely on the Central Scenes and one or two Side Scenes. Nonetheless, the 2022 edition expanded its background to explore more deeply the Enwilted Gods of Gaia and the lure of Elysium. Several parts of the scenario were made less linear compared to its original iteration, allowing for both short and long games. Now with a sandbox approach, there is a lot more room to explore the PC's divine past and their present lives as outcasts on the streets of New York.

Together Unto Death presents a different take on a classic urban setting (NYC) and shines a spotlight on Gaia's overpowering presence. This time, however, it is not a physical forest to get lost into. Instead, it is brought forth by the protagonists' psyches.

Petter Nallo and Gabriel Pellizzaro, 2022

# STARTING THE SCENARIO

The scenario begins as Mattheus contacts Sin and Thea. Mattheus, like them, has his origin in Gaia, and through the years he has been reincarnated close to the siblings as a closely loyal follower. In this incarnation he is a poet and musician that has lived his life on the streets. His kind and sensitive heart has led him to be manipulated and abused, and to handle it he fled into addiction. Mattheus runs in the same circles as Sin and Thea, and introduced (or reunited) them a few years ago.

## A FORGOTTEN FRIEND

For the past few days Mattheus has been on the run from Authar, who has selected him as the next victim. Drowning in fear, drugs, and delirium, Mattheus remembers parts of their shared past and understands the curse they all are trapped in. In his visions, he has seen, and felt, himself be killed again and again through Time & Space. Maniacally, he has scribbled down his visions, dreams, thoughts, and memories on pieces of paper to try to put an order to his frazzled mind. He has learned his true name, Talakas, and the true names of "Santiago" and "Wynter". He realized that they are the key to breaking this endless cycle of violence: they are the only ones capable of ending Authar's madness. Mattheus, however, doesn't remember why they are hunted or who Authar even is. His only real lead is a vague memory of a green-eyed woman: Sin and Thea's true mother. He has seen her in New York City and hopes that if he could reunite them, the truth would be completely unveiled. He can feel Authar breathing down his neck, so he decides to log in one last time on his social media accounts and reach out to his friends before completely vanishing from the internet.

On a rainy afternoon, Sin and Thea both receive the same message from Mattheus. If they somehow try to reply to him, they get left on read. Mattheus has completely logged off and distanced himself from the internet and his phone.

The text reads:

*"You are in great danger. I know about your dreams and visions. Meet me tonight at 11:30 at the Loeb Boathouse in Central Park. Come alone and I will tell you more."*

## MEETING IN CENTRAL PARK

*"Central Park. New York City. 15th November 2022.*

*It has been a cold autumn plagued by relentless storms. Flooded subway stations, leaking buildings, and deaths by exposure dominate the news. It seems like nature is clawing at the city, trying to tear it down. The scientists say it's the effects of global warming, the doomsday preachers shout that we are at the end of times. Regardless of who's right, these last weeks have indeed been dark and foreboding. The cold and wet seeps everywhere. Portable heaters have all sold out, people gather at cafés, warming their hands on cups of hot coffee, or turn to the bottle.*

*The autumn storms have withheld their anger at least for tonight. In fact, it is eerily silent. A light drizzle falls from the dark clouds. Fog envelopes the city and creates ghostly halos around the street lights. It is as if nature itself holds its breath, waiting for something.*

*Unknown to each other, you both received a text message that called you here. It was from Mattheus, a friend of yours, and a poet and musician who has lived a hard life on the streets. Despite the hardships, he has always been loyal even during the darkest times. The message reads:*

*"You are in great danger. I know about your dreams and visions. Meet me tonight at 11:30 at the Loeb Boathouse in Central Park. Come alone and I will tell you more."*

*You probably tried to call or text back but you did not get any response. He seems to have gone completely offline. With all that has been going on lately, you could not stay away from this. Even more so because it is Mattheus. Perhaps he has some answers. So you both entered the park from different directions and now walk along the pathways toward the boathouse.*

*The Park is all but empty. There are some odd late-night wanderers hurrying along the walkways with their umbrellas or hoodies up. The trees are almost completely bare, and the fallen leaves plaster the asphalt. Here, in the park, the ground smells of raw earth. Scents of iron, musky mulch, and decaying life seep up from the wet soil. In the distance, above the trees, the skyline of the city shines magnificently, yet it feels like a far-off world. The further you wander into the park, the more the city sounds recede."*

## Introduce the Characters

After reading the introduction, it's time to learn more about the characters. They both enter the park from different directions. As they walk, ask questions to further expand who and where they are. Below are some examples, but feel free to improvise your own questions as well.

- ◊ How are you dressed tonight?
- ◊ What are you feeling?
- ◊ You have been having visions and nightmares. How do you cope with it?
- ◊ Are you sober or clean? If so, for how long?
- ◊ Who is Mattheus to you? How has he helped you?
- ◊ When did you last see Mattheus?

On the next page you will find two sample prompts to help your players get into character. Under the section *The City Breathes*, there is a collection of visions you can use to enhance the world around the characters, too. Many of these give a hint of their personalities, pasts, and true ties to Gaia.

## THEA (WYNTER)

❖ "Mizzy, one of the stray cats you take care of, runs out from the shadows between the trees. Mizzy meows and strokes herself against your legs. You have a feeling that Mizzy has been on the lookout for you." At some point, the cat will be startled by something in the shadows and will run away.

❖ "You see a leaf plastered to the asphalt. It is bigger than the other leaves that normally grow in the park, but you cannot see where it could possibly have come from. It has started to decay and you can see its small veins and intricate details.

You feel it dying."

## SIN (SANTIAGO)

❖ "You have an unnerving feeling of being watched as you walk along this path. Something or someone is observing you. You are so sure of it." Allow the player to **Observe a Situation** if she wishes to. Use the Move to reveal that he is somehow being watched by the trees. The branches, twigs, even the leaves, seem to judge him silently. There is no imminent danger, but the trees in Central park appear to be holding their breaths.

❖ "Your phone rings. It's your ex, Nichelle." If the PC picks up the phone, he notices there is loud music and chatter around her. She is most likely riding in the car with his old gang. She starts the conversation with a tender and warm tone, first wanting to check on him. "How are you, baby? I'm worried." She will at some point reveal she needs money (approximately 4000 USD). She has a ton of bills to pay and his baby is on the way. If Sin denies her money, she will become aggressive and threatening. "Risher will get you!"

# AT THE LOEB BOATHOUSE

The Loeb Boathouse is a one-storey building dedicated primarily to boat rental, but also features a restaurant with a panoramic view over the lake. It closes at 9pm and is, at this hour, dark and silent. Sin and Thea meet a few minutes before Mattheus arrives. Since they know each other, and know that both know Mattheus, they have the time to exchange some words. This is a good time to build on their sense of friendship, even though they haven't spoken much to each other. Introduce Mattheus whenever it feels fitting.

## Meeting Mattheus

"A person appears out of the shadows. He stumbles, then regains his footing. When the streetlight falls over him, you finally recognize Mattheus. He is nothing more than skin and bones. His clothes are soaked as if he has been standing out in the rain, and his eyes have a feverish and manic stare. He looks absolutely paranoid."

Mattheus is feverish, sleep-deprived, and deeply speedballled — high on a mix of uppers and downers. Most of what he says won't make much sense in the beginning. He is afraid, but ultimately excited about what he has discovered. He brought the PCs to Central Park to try to make them remember, as this is the closest he can get them to an actual forest. The wilderness should nudge their sleeping minds closer to awakening. These are the following things he seeks to convey and he jumps between the subjects, making it hard to follow him:

**Everyone is in danger:** There is someone after him, who seeks to murder him. The same man – he thinks it's a man – is after the PCs as well. He's avoiding all internet and cell phone use to prevent his stalker from tracking him. He desperately wants to know why they are hunted. He first thought he owed someone money, but this is completely different.

**He feels Author's presence:** "Can't you feel his presence? How he turns his eyes on you?! He's in our minds!" Mattheus himself says he has strange dreams and horrible visions. He swears it's not the drugs, but his dilated pupils tell another story.

**His memories are clear:** He remembers things that make no sense. A primal forest, different lives, a tree with massive roots. He points at the trees in the park. "See! See. Don't you remember? This is where we grew up. Not in the city, here!"

**The Green Eyed Woman:** "I saw her. Here, in New York. I did not know who she was at the time. But now I understand. Now I know. We need to find her. You need to find her." The PCs probably know some women with green eyes, but Mattheus gets irritated "No, no, it is not her. Only one is the solution."

**The Murders:** There has been a series of murders these last months, particularly brutal ones. He pulls out printed copies of the New York Globe. They reek of cigarettes and are filled with coffee stains, doodles, and notes. The Globe goes into salacious details about several horrifying murders, all committed in the same fashion. These pages can be found later in the scenario and as the handouts in the end.

**This has happened before:** He tries to convince them that this has happened before. That they have been hunted and killed again, and again, and again. "Don't you remember what happened in the city near the desert? That time he got us when we were together. Don't you remember?"

## Reading The Leaves

Mattheus has two red leaves in the pockets of his wet coat, which he proceeds to pick up and show the siblings. "See, this is how I know he's close!" The leaves look like blood-red oak leaves, and should the PCs stare at them like Mattheus asks them to, they find themselves tumbling into a powerful vision.

### VISION: TANGIER ROOFTOP 1934

"The sky is azure blue. The city with the white limestone buildings spreads out around you. It is old, ancient. The sea glimmers in the sunlight. There are steamships in the harbor. A warm wind blows from the inland desert.

There is a smell of sweet tobacco.

And there is the smell of blood.

You are there, the three of you, on the flat ceiling. A torn canopy flaps in the wind. A bronze bowl has been knocked over, the fresh peaches have rolled out over the roof.

Something is there with you. A shape, a shadow. A man whose presence blocks out the sun.

Wynter, you cannot move. All you feel is pain. Your arms and legs are broken in many places. It was the man who did it, and he did it with ease. You are thrown aside like a ragdoll and can do nothing but watch in terror.

Santiago, you try to crawl away from that shape. Your intestines are hanging out of your stomach, leaving a bloody trail on the white limestone. He, that shadow, ripped them out of you, and he forced you to look into his eyes while he did it. But you see a black revolver just some feet away and you crawl towards it, tears running down your face. You need to reach it, to either shoot him or yourself.

Mattheus is there as well. But he looks different: a teenage arab boy in white linen clothing, shaking in terror. In fact, you all look different.

The shadow towers over Mattheus, who begs in Arabic: "Forgive us, forgive us!"

A heavy foot pushes his head down on the limestone. The dark man halts for a few seconds, contemplating the prayer. He looks you in the eyes, Wynter. Then he puts his full weight on Mattheus's head. The sudden explosion of bone, brain, blood, and flesh sprays everywhere.

The revolver is just out of reach, Santiago, but you feel how the shadow fixes his attention on you. Then there is a scream. A veiled woman comes running up one of the narrow stairs onto the ceiling. She stumbles in horror at what she sees.

You feel you know this woman... and it feels you have always known her. Ever since the dawn of time.

She rips off her veil and the shadowy gestalt halts. She stands between the man and Santiago. She raises a curved knife. It reflects the sunlight, which shines painfully bright. You can see her eyes. You have seen these eyes so many times. Dark green, like the surface of a still forest pond. She is your mother.

The shadow figure roars in anger of her defiance. The roar is filled with hatred and sadness, hiding its sobs and whimpers under monstrous growls. Red leaves dance around the shadow, appearing to come out of him as if he was a rift into some strange existence. She stumbles backwards for a second and he immediately grabs her. He lifts her up over his head, and, with a wet sound and a gurgling scream, he tears her apart. His dark shape is showered in her blood, you see dark roots creep out and burrow into the ceiling and walls.

The limestone cracks and cold wind spills out, revealing a dark forest realm hidden behind it.

The shadow throws the two halves of your mother's body aside, and a guttural voice shakes your bones, more ancient than the world itself. "Sin, Thea. You have defied me. You have betrayed me."

Santiago, you realize that Sin is your true name. It is what you always have been called. And Wynter, Thea is the name that has followed you through many lives.

You both hear the limestone crack beneath you and black, gnarled roots, tough as iron slither up and ram themselves into your flesh as the shadow falls over you. Sin, you feel the shadow gripping your head and you stare into its face. You scream, scream and scream as he enters you, ripping your body asunder. Even after death, your corpse continues to scream in terror.

You scream so loud it wakes the two of you up."

## After The Vision

Santiago (Sin) and Wynter (Thea) return from the vision. They have collapsed on the wet ground and shiver in the cold. They must have been out of it for an hour, maybe more. Mattheus lies next to them unconscious.

After the vision, each PC gets +1 in **Relation** with each other and to Mattheus. Even if the vision wasn't true, at least they have shared something strange, horrific and extraordinary.

They won't be able to awaken Mattheus. He is in a bad state from stress, drugs, and exhaustion. Remind the players that neither of them have the money to pay for proper medical attention, but it isn't ultimately necessary. All they can (and need to) do is take Mattheus somewhere where he can rest properly and have something to eat and drink after he wakes up. This could be Santiago's car, Wynter's loft, or something else the players come up with.

## ΨΗΛΥΩΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΕΧΤ

Meeting Mattheus starts the scenario, but after that the storyline is entirely yours to weave together. The next logical step is to prompt Thea into visiting *The Elysian Fields* to meet the *Gray Man*, but before that there is a lot that could happen. A few nights could pass before they experience yet another vision or have a chance to investigate the previous murders or the red leaves. Maybe they have a chance to initiate a side story with *Dethrone the King* or remember the nightmare of one of the murders. You may also have some NPC appearances, like roleplaying *Kisha*'s death before the PCs go to the *Elysian Fields*.

The possibilities are endless, and, if needed, you should plan ahead and/or get accustomed with all the paths to have an easier time when improvising.



*Manhattan*

# CENTRAL SCENES

The scenes presented here make up the entire main plot. Although they don't have to follow a particular order, they are presented in such a way that creates a linear structure to the story. As the gamemaster, it is your job to decide when and how these scenes are triggered, as well as controlling the game's pacing as you desire either by using Side Scenes (page 20) or not.

Make sure to go through all the Central and Side scenes when planning for the game, as well as the endings and NPC write ups.

## DEATH OF MATTHEUS

**Hook:** None.

**Main Objective:** Show the characters that the threat is real, and deliver an emotional punch. Make them feel exposed and that there is nowhere to hide.

Authar has stalked Mattheus for some time and, like a feral beast, he plays with his prey. At one point or another when Mattheus is away from the player characters, Authar strikes.

Both siblings receive a powerful vision that something is wrong with their friend. They see images of Mattheus' surroundings, hear his labored breathing as he is running, feel his panic, sense that something is right behind him. Then, there's only pain and desperate screaming. This vision should force the PCs to *Keep it Together* as they realize the threat Mattheus warned them about is real.

If they seek out the scene of the murder, they find Mattheus's body ripped apart. Limbs have been torn off, his entrails have been pulled out, and half his face (including one eye) has been eaten away. The red leaves lie around him, scattered by a gust of wind.

The gruesome sight allows them to try to *See Through the Illusion*. There, they notice Mattheus' blood forms a strange pattern that Sin has seen in his dreams. Sin feels in his very soul that he is next. Thea may also recognize signs of Authar's incarnate in the scene: she sees a dark forest around her, trees with blood red leaves, trunks that leak a thick sap, and it is as horrifying as it is familiar. If you have played through *Authar's Incarnate is Born*, this is a good chance to make the connection.

## THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

**Hook:** Thea's knowledge of the bar.

**Main Objective:** Lead the characters to the Gray Man.

The Elysian Fields is a dive bar located in a basement somewhere along 42nd street; its address and phone number are closely guarded by the outcasts who frequent its doors. Thea sort of remembers it, and can get there with directions. She visited it during one of her highs, following some other people there. It was there she met the Gray Man – see Wynter's character sheet for more.

The bar was frequented by a death magician, Geoffrey Sutherland, who ten years ago disappeared after successfully summoning an incarnation of Thaumiel. A strong aura of distorted astral tension forever plagues the bar, pushing it close to the Borderlands of Inferno. It has become a lighthouse in the middle of a dead black sea, and ghosts, undead, lost gods, and Children of the Night flock to the bar hoping to find safety in numbers. It is particularly popular among Geoffrey's old victims, who are now phantoms or other living dead. Some runaway Purgatides and the occasional Bête Noire add to the social spot's action and flavor. Of course, down a deep elevator shaft behind the bar, Geoffrey himself burns in his own private purgatory. If you listen closely, you can hear his long cries and his futile prayers for mercy through the solid blast of stoner doom metal.

Seen from its exterior, the bar is nothing but a rusted metal door wedged between an X-rated cinema and a liquor store. Atop the door "The Elysian Fields" is spray painted in elaborate letters. Most people just walk past.

Behind the door, a damp concrete staircase descends to a dimly-lit basement. Heavy, unpleasant fumes of indistinct origins, tinted with sweat and beer, mix in an eye-stinging fog of burning tobacco. The bar is well attended by a rather peculiar crowd, seated at small, round tables, at booths or in filthy beanbags, drinking beer, chatting, or merely staring at their phones. It is not uncommon to see guests snorting cocaine, smoking meth or black tar heroin, or going to the filthy restroom stalls to dumpster dive. Most guests seem human, albeit uncommonly pale with deeply set eyes. Some minor irregularities, such as blood-spattered clothes, open wounds, or even oddly-angled limbs might be seen by more observant characters.

The characters are aware of a great many eyes turning in their direction as they enter. A perceptive person would find that, however discreetly, the whole crowd is watching the visitors with suspicion. A character of some intuition will instantly know that they don't belong here.

Try to create an atmosphere of growing hostility to the characters: make them feel defenseless, exposed, fearing that the other guests might suddenly attack them and tear them to pieces without provocation. Some of the regular customers could even be making veiled threats, either because they envy and hate all things living, because they want a fresh body to possess and ruin, or simply because they are crass and ill-tempered.

The bartender is a stocky man in his fifties with a large swollen bruise on his head. He's a slow talker who frequently slurs his speech, and his eyes stare vacantly. The quite impressive drink list (dozens of types of beer and many premium liquors) offers items at about 50% below average price. The bartender can also make a long list of cocktails the PCs have never encountered before, as well as several familiar ones.

By asking the bartender, the characters may learn that the Gray Man is indeed a regular who sits alone and drinks beer at the left corner table. He normally arrives just before midnight and leaves close to dawn.

## Scenes in the Fields

Below are suggested scenes of what can happen in the bar.

### KISHA, THE OD'D GIRL

About six months ago Thea met Kisha, a young teenage runaway on the streets of New York. She always got herself into trouble. Thea tried to be around to help and guide her. Thea was also with her when the girl died — she overdosed on opioids inside a subway tunnel where they had spent the night. Thea dragged her to the exit and called an ambulance, but when they arrived Kisha was already dead.

Now Kisha is sitting here at the bar, in a beanbag, high as a kite and scrolling through TikTok videos on her phone. Kisha will be happy to see Thea and have no recollection of her death. She is one of the living dead, and she cannot physically leave the bar without the aid of magic (not that Thea would know any rituals to help achieve that). She says "Hey, let me pay you back" and gives Thea a small pack of a strange-smelling heroin. "It's called Black Kisses. It's A-mazing."

At this point, if you still have Holds for Thea's Drug Addict Disadvantage, you could use them to instill the urge to use. If not, this is a good moment to trigger the Move. At your discretion, Thea might need to Keep It Together to avoid losing control and locking herself in a bathroom stall. This might be enough to derail the scene and trigger another nightmare where Authar creeps closer to the siblings. By the very nature of phantoms, Kisha disappears once Thea looks away, and reappears in a different beanbag later that night.

### THE MASOCHIST REVENANT

A mean-looking, heavily scarred man sizes up Sin. He downs his beer and then starts throwing insults: "What kind of trash do they let in here? Are you scared of me boy?" And then he starts pushing Sin. He is clearly looking for a fight; others in the Elysian Fields chuckle uncomfortably. That's just Dyson.

He lives in the borderlands of Death and he does anything to feel anything. When the alcohol does not bite, pain is the next best thing. He provokes Sin and tries to start a fight. He's not really interested in protecting himself, instead taking the punches that come flying — he can take an inhuman number of them before going down. The more Sin beats him, the more he smiles. If you haven't explored the consequences of violence in *Dethrone the King*, this might be a good opportunity to do so.

## THE GRAY MAN

**Hook:** The Elysian Fields, Thea's last encounter with him.

**Main Objective:** Reveal as much information as you need at any given time. Try to focus on leading the PCs to Leslie Moulder and Amerah so the story can continue.

Sometimes during the night, the Gray Man appears. No one sees him enter. He's just there. It's hard to see him clearly in the dim, smoky light of the room, but his bearing still manages to be overpowering, almost majestic. He is tall and slim, dressed in coarse gray clothes under a greatcoat. His skin is almost ebony black. His hair is steel gray and combed back. One of his eyes is hidden behind a thick, milk-white membrane.

The Gray Man is an Azadaevae, one of the Children of the Underworld (KDL, p287). He wanders the labyrinths of Elysium on an endless mission to help his dying race by gathering knowledge and forging alliances. He has, throughout history, encountered the siblings and their mother a number of times. He feels sympathy for the three of them and hopes they will be able to break the destructive cycle. Secretly, he hopes he may claim a big boon from them if the cycle is broken. At the same time, he does not have much hope that they will succeed, especially because they have failed at all other occasions.

He has also made a number of deals with a Madness Magician named Leslie Moulder, a ruthless and powerful woman who he knows is interested in stealing the power of Authar's family. He has traded some information about their curse and knows that if he directs the siblings to her, and she manages to enslave them and Authar, he will have a favor to claim from her. He doesn't feel like wasting the current incarnations of this troublesome family, so he plays both sides. There's no way to lose this time around.

If Sin, Thea, or both approach him, he calmly gestures for them to sit. He speaks in a strange accent that is hard to place.

**Who are you?**: "Unlike you, I shall remain nameless for all eternity. My birth name yields nothing but pain anymore, so I don't bother remembering it."

[GM Note: knowing the True Name of an Azadaevae would grant complete power over them. The Gray Man would never reveal neither this, nor his True Name.]

**Who are we/I?**: "You are Thea (and Sin). You and your kin are not from this world. But you have all forgotten your home. You have lived many lives in this prison. Your father is Authar, the one that seeks to destroy you. Your mother, Amerah, has forgotten her past. Just like you."

**Our home**: "Your home is in the deep wilderness beyond the walls of this prison. It is almost impossible to reach."

**How do you know who we are?**: "I have lived a long time and I see things differently. I see the soul of the being. You see the flesh. We have actually met and spoken on a number of occasions. But, to you, those were different times and different lives. I doubt you would remember. The café in Paris right before the revolution, the bazaar in Tangier close to the second world war. Different times, different places, different bodies. Same souls."

**The Hunt:** "The hunt has begun. It started almost a decade ago. But now the hunter is near. He is here, in the city, and he has his pack with him. It is not a hunt for sport. It is a hunt fueled by hatred and vengeance. It all ties back to a betrayal in ages past. I have yet to discover what you did to provoke his anger."

**The Hunter/Your Father:** "The hunter is Authar, your father. He has taken a human form. His current incarnation is unknown to me."

**The Hunter's Pack:** "He seeks out those that have betrayed him. Most of them he murders to still his hate. Some of them, those that grovel and beg, may return to his side. They may join the hunt."

**Your Mother:** "Amerah is your mother, but she has a human name now. A name I do not know. She lives within this city. Throughout her numerous incarnations, her eyes have remained deep green. She has a sister that lives somewhere between the worlds. Her name is Delirium. Authar will try to kill your mother first. But he may fail – he still loves her, somewhere in that rotten heart of his."

**Who is Delirium?**: "She is your mother's sister and was banished from your realm long before you came here. Now she dwells between the worlds. I don't know the path that leads to her. Regardless, she will only listen to Amerah."

**How to stop Authar/the Hunter?**: "You cannot kill him. You have tried before. Many times. Last time we met, in Tangier, you spoke with your aunt Delirium. There was a plan to break the cycle. Clearly it failed. However, there is an occultist named Leslie Moulder that might be of help."

**Who is Leslie Moulder?**: "She is a magician who lives here, in New York City, in Greenwich Village to be precise. She has her own reasons to stop your father. I have had some dealings with her, but don't know if she can be trusted. Clearly she sees some greater gain in helping you."

**Why are you telling us this/helping us?**: "I sympathize with your pain. What good does it bring to this world to be caught in such a destructive cycle?"

## MISS LESLIE MOULDER

**Hooks:** The Gray Man talks about Leslie Moulder. If they don't seek her out on their own, she can summon them with Dream magic. She may even structure the dreams to implant false memories in the siblings, making them believe she's the only one who can truly help.

**Main objective:** Reveal the information in A Dark Birth. If this fails, consider revealing the same through a nightmare or by exploring Authar's Incarnate is Born again through a different lens. As Leslie Moulder is key to one of the endings (See *Leslie's Trap*), you should consider making it clear that she is truly able to help them, so the Ending captures all possibilities.

Leslie is one of the oldest of the Greenwich Village magicians. She is a master of Madness but also dabbles in Dreams. She learned, from her own observations about Sin and Thea's curse. She would love to enslave a powerful being such as Authar to her service, so she has kept her eyes and ears open for new information. She has also dealt with the Gray Man a number of times, and knows the hour to finally capture Authar draws near.

Her residence, 44 Carnaby Street, is an old five-storey brownstone building with a cracked and sooty exterior. She has dedicated part of her large apartment to a temple and a magical laboratory. Officially, she runs a psychiatry practice, catering to well-paying clients who make up the neurotic elite of New York City, while secretly performing morbid and macabre experiments on anonymous victims from the slums. According to the tenant's list, Leslie Moulder, Doctor of Psychiatry, lives and works on the fourth floor. An oppressively small elevator or a creaky wooden staircase will take the characters to the upper apartments from the lobby floor.

Next to a plain wooden door is a brass plaque with Leslie Moulder's name and profession in ornate lettering. The siblings may suddenly feel a wave of discomfort upon ringing the doorbell with no apparent cause. After approximately half a minute, a man dressed in a dark blue velvet suit opens the door. His wavy hair is cut in a bob, his face is powdered white, and he wears a pair of white silken gloves. This is a creature from beyond Madness, an alucinade which Leslie has bound to her will. He asks if the characters have an appointment with Dr. Moulder. If they haven't, but still insist upon meeting her, they either are welcomed to come in and sit down while he announces them to the Mistress, or are forced to schedule a meeting. As the gamemaster, you can control the game's pacing by pushing this meeting a few hours or days ahead to make room for other scenes to happen.

## The Waiting Room

The large waiting room which they enter is sparsely decorated with bizarre objets d'art, but it is nonetheless perfectly respectable. Music by Vivaldi plays over hidden speakers, a bit too loudly. Burgundy wallpaper sets off several beautiful paintings of plump, naked women. On one wall is a heavy gray steel door, securely locked. The peculiar doorman leaves the waiting room through a wooden door in the opposite wall. Near the entrance stands a tall coat stand, carved from dark wood in a very unusual design. Long knotted spikes extend out of the lavishly decorated pole. The strange ornamentation resembles a tangled crowd of naked people frantically trying to climb the top of the pole, where a beautiful woman stands holding a disfigured child in her thin arms. At the far end of the room is a burgundy leather set of couches and a glass coffee-table; the tabletop is covered with magazines and a large bowl of fruit. While waiting, the siblings might hear a few unnerving noises barely penetrating through the strains of Vivaldi: hisses, scrapes, sounds of clinking glass and running feet, and – very distant and muffled – screams of pain.

The characters are dangerously close to a temple of Madness, and should they focus on the noises, they may find themselves sinking into half-formed memories. It's a good opportunity for the GM to reveal or reinforce information about themselves or the scenario. For example, they're reminded of the nightmares, The City Breathes is triggered again, the drugs kick in at full effect, they glimpse Mattheus's Death, or something similar.

## Meeting Leslie

In approximately ten minutes, the butler returns, saying that Miss Leslie is ready to see them. He guides the characters through a long hallway of dark oak doors.

The sibling who has the lowest **Stability** will catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the Veil in the hall. One of the doors stands wide open. Within the chamber beyond the door sits a naked man bound with leather straps to a heavy oak chair; his bruised, thin body jerks in spasms, and his head lolls on his chest. The man raises his head revealing a swollen and bruised face covered with festering wounds. He parts his cut lips with a pained expression, feebly hissing a barely articulate stream of profanities. Then the door suddenly slams shut. None of this is seen or heard by anyone else. In fact, everyone continues walking as normal, the viewer only pausing momentarily.

Leslie's office is at the far end of the hall. It is a large room, pleasant and light, with gray leather furniture, a beautiful yucca tree, a cocktail cabinet, and tall bookshelves containing psychiatry textbooks. On the walls hang numbered prints by Salvador Dali. Leslie is sitting behind her desk as the characters enter, the desktop glinting brightly with the faded light pouring in through the windows (or the overhead lights, depending upon the time of day). She is dressed in a dark blue pants suit. She has a thin, pale face, and her fair hair is tied into a tight bun on the top of her head.

She should give the characters a very nice first impression — rising to shake hands with them and inviting them to sit, offering refreshments. But behind the smiling countenance she is actively digging into their minds to get at their darkest secrets. She finds the reincarnations of the siblings a fascinating subject. Leslie instinctively knows the PC's Disadvantages to an intimate detail and will use this knowledge to lead them to make a pact with her. Unless the meeting is short or is interrupted, she will manage to dig up the dark memory of how Author was born into the world.

## A DARK BIRTH

*"I now understand how your father came into this world from the great beyond. It was through you."*

She gestures at Thea.

*"You see, he is trapped far beyond this realm — but it was your dreams. Yes, he found you in your dreams. It must have been a decade ago, at least."*

Thea can feel how Leslie rummages through her mind. This expresses itself as a chilly sensation of moving around and building pressure inside her skull. If Thea runs or tries to push her away mentally, the pressure will ease. Leslie will say that it is important for her to know how it happened if the siblings really want help against him. In truth, the Magician is mostly curious to know Author's powers.

If Thea allows her to dig deeper, the memory spills out. The vision is so strong that every character that is in the room partakes in it. It does not affect them as traumatically and deeply as it affects Thea.

*"The bark of the trees is dark and wet. The stems are thick, like gigantic pillars. They disappear upwards, upwards into majestic crowns with blood red leaves. There are massive slithering roots, lush ferns, and boulders that have been toppled over, now sleeping under thick green moss. Everything is as wet, as after a summer rain. The soil smells of iron and life. A thin mist hangs in the air."*

*"The woods are filled with shadows, but there is a silver light that shines beyond the trees. The light falls upon your face, gently touching you. The shadows won't hurt you, they move away when you touch them."*

*"You are a child, perhaps ten, and your bare feet sink deep into the moss as you climb the boulders, balance on the roots, and playfully make your way closer and closer towards the light. You stop to stare into a dark pond where water lilies float sleepily on the surface, and small purple fish swim back and forth. When you touch the surface, the fish come and say hello, touching your curved claws and fingertips with their small mouths."*

*"Then there is a reflection. A shadow. It falls over you, it falls over the pond and the purple fish dash away and hide on the murky bottom. You feel cold. The shadow is heavy. You turn around and see a giant man blocking the light. He comes closer and the shadow presses you down on the wet ground. You can sense anger and madness radiating out from him. He reaches down to grab you, but then a touch of the light spills over you and the spell is broken. You get up on your feet and run."*

*"You run so fast. Jump over the roots, between the ferns. As you run, you beg to wake up. For yes, this is a dream. A nightmare. A horror that you have in your sleep. But you don't wake up, and the forest is angry. A great wind now sweeps in over the trees and red leaves swirl down around you. You hear the breathing of that giant man. One jump over a boulder, but you don't land. His great hand has gotten hold of your hair. He pushes you into the moss. Presses you down with his weight. You can smell his feral breath. His teeth. They bite your neck. They sink in. Deep."*

...

*"You wake up in the bedroom of your foster home, screaming. The same child but without your claws, without your feral strength. Weak, human, dressed in a washed-out Winnie the Pooh T-Shirt. You are in pain. You pull away the covers and see in horror how dark roots crawl out of your mouth and down your chest. There is blood, and you hear his breath. Your body spasms. You have never felt that kind of pain before. Your back bends backwards and it is as if you would snap in half. Something leaves your body with your scream and the roots tearing themselves from your throat. You hear a wet thud along with your sobs, and something scuttles under the bed. When you run to the bathroom to vomit, you hear a window shatter behind you."*

*"When your foster parents throw open the door and turn on the lights, they find you surrounded by blood and red leaves. The room is filled with red leaves."*

The scene ends and Thea is back in her chair in Leslie's office. Thea needs to roll to **Keep it Together** with a -2 penalty.

Regardless of Thea's reaction, Leslie seems pleased with the results. She will even offer Thea a box of scented tissues to dry any tears. If Thea fails to **Keep it Together**, Leslie offers her a benzo — which will absolutely trigger Thea's addiction issues if she's attempting to remain sober.

## The Pact

Leslie Moulder tells the siblings that she knows that they are special — they are prisoners in the Illusion, and they should be freed elsewhere. She also knows that they've been hunted across centuries.

She hopes that they can work together to capture and enslave the one that hunts them. This would break the cycle of the hunt and free them to live their ordinary lives.

To do this, she needs blood from both them and their mother. She does not know where their mother is, but will tell them to trust their instincts. Now that they start to remember, they should be able to sense their familial bond. Hopefully, they will be able to find their and then bring her to Leslie — or at least get some blood from her.

If the characters agree to trust her, she draws blood from them with a clean syringe with their consent. She offers all the necessary equipment to safely draw blood from their mother.

Because the characters don't have money, they might ask to stay in Leslie's place. She will not allow that. Instead, she offers to pay for them to stay somewhere else. If the siblings are in trouble, she will do her best to help them from afar with Madness magic.

[GM Note: You don't have to tell players they have this at their disposal, but you can treat Leslie's help as the Watchers (KDL, p120) Advantage.]

## RETURN WITH THE MOTHER

When (and if) the siblings return with their blood and/or Mother, Leslie is visibly delighted. With their help, she prepares a ritual to trap Authar. This immediately triggers **Leslie's Trap**, which is one of the endings. If that's the case, you have some wiggle room to keep playing the game as there is no predefined timeframe for the ritual to be ready. Regardless, know that once the magician begins to prepare the ritual, it shouldn't take long for the PCs to be contacted.

# A FADING GODDESS

**Hooks:** Whenever fitting after talking to the Gray Man and/or Leslie Moulder. The PCs can be led to their mother by their instincts, or by seeing a vision of the attack on Elaine's family.

**Main objective:** Tie the PCs to their pasts even more. Reveal that Milan Benkic is helping Amerah.

Elaine Thompson (Amerah's current incarnation in Elysium) is an art gallery owner and antiquarian. She is married to Dwayne Thompson, a rich investment banker, and they have two children: a son, Martin, and a daughter, Ivy. Their home is a luxurious penthouse floor of a skyscraper overlooking Central Park. These last months, Elaine has started to remember more and more about her old life. She knows

that she has two other children (Sin and Thea) here in New York City, as well as a sister somewhere else.

She reached out to a man, Milan Benkic, who was an envoy and servant to her banished sister Delirium. She believes Milan will be able to help her find her sister.

Sensing Authar drawing near and fearing for her new family, she managed to convince her husband to take a much-needed vacation to Italy with the kids. She promises to follow as soon as she's finished some business. Dwayne, Martin, and Ivy had their suitcases packed and ready in the hallway. They were just having a farewell dinner with Elaine when Authar found them.

He butchered Dwayne at the dinner table. Elaine tried to get between Authar and the children but he pushed her back and then ripped them apart in front of her. The sheer terror caused her to freeze.

Authar put his blood-soaked hand around her small throat. He stared into her green eyes and started to squeeze. He was unable to finish her, however. Not even Authar knows why. It could've been a mix of mercy, affection, and anguish that stopped him. Or it could've been that he saw Amerah's true form, which reminded him of his love. Knowing that his children may seek to find their mother, and that her banished sister Delirium might try to contact her, he has left two servants as lookouts.

Elaine now dreads Authar's return. Her mind is in shambles, and she is unable to compose herself without the help of others. She hasn't put herself in any situations where she feels vulnerable, such as showering, cooking, cleaning, or anything else really. She cannot help but stay vigilant at all times.



## THE VISION

Here is the vision the player experiences when they see Authar through their mother's eyes. It will affect both characters at the same time regardless of where they are.

*"There is a taste of iron in your mouth. It feels like you are about to lose your balance. The world around you grows dark. A cold grip clenches around your heart. When your eyesight returns, you are someplace else. You are high up in some luxury apartment with a panorama view of Central Park. You sit at a dinner table. You are paralyzed with fear and can't breathe. You sense HIS presence."*

Your two children Martin and Ivy are eating their food and are looking at their phones, unaware of the threat. But your husband Dwayne, who sits opposite you, gives you a worried look. "Is everything all right?". His voice is slow, drawn out. Everything moves in slow motion.

A shadow falls over the table. Red leaves slowly swirl through the air in a hypnotic dance. You try to stand up. You try to scream. Scream to Dwayne and Ivy and Martin to run. You see how Ivy looks up, sees one of the leaves and smiles in wonder.

Then there is a sound of flesh ripping a spine being pulled out, and Dwayne's body dangles like a puppet in Authar's grip. Now the screams start and his shadow swallows up everything."

The vision ends here and both characters must **Keep it Together**.

## The Slaughterhouse

After they are made aware of their true mother, the siblings feel a faint bond reforming between them and Amerah. Ideally, this happens when they talk to the Gray Man or Leslie, but it is up to you as the gamemaster to introduce the mother when you deem fitting.

When she is attacked, her fear and sorrow resonates so strongly it causes ripples in the Illusion that eventually reach the characters. It doesn't matter where they are, they will have a powerful vision of the attack and may even catch a glimpse or two about the deaths (see above). If you have not killed Mattheus thus far and the siblings keep close to him, it might be a good opportunity to have the man argue against any action. Since Authar's whereabouts are unknown and the only thing the siblings know is that their mother is in danger, Mattheus will make a point of not seeking Authar out. In fact, he may go the opposite direction to avoid encountering his killer. The characters feel when they get close to their mother, almost as if it is a sixth sense. They will see a powerful vision when she is attacked that will direct them to the right part of the town. When they are close to her, they are drawn to where she dwells.

No one will answer the door if the characters knock on it, but it's unlocked and the characters can push it open.

The apartment is a luxurious penthouse filled with all the modernities you could wish for. Clearly this is a place where no expenses have been spared. Flat screen TVs, the newest game consoles, a stainless steel kitchen, Russian marble, panorama view of Central Park, exotic birds in cages and an aquarium with colorful fish that takes up a whole wall. There are photos of the family on the walls as well as an oil painting made by a contemporary artist named Elaine. What stands out is a large number of statues standing on pedestals throughout the apartment. The classical artworks show beautiful men and women. Some are naked, while others are garbed in long, sweeping robes; some are armed with bows or swords, while others carry books or flowers. There are also a lot of books about Greek and Roman culture and religion.

As soon as the siblings enter the kitchen area they stumble upon a brutal murder scene. The bodies of a grown man and two children have been mercilessly ripped apart. Blood covers over the walls, along with red leaves stuck in odd places. The brutality of this act forces anyone that enters to **Keep it Together** to avoid freezing, retching, or otherwise acting on their most traumatized impulses.



## Finding Amerah

Mochi, the family's white ragdoll cat, hid under a sofa. When the siblings enter the apartment, it approaches Thea. It meows and wants to show her something. Mochi leads Thea to a pedestal in the far end of the apartment. Behind it, the siblings find Amerah.

Authar's terror has driven her temporarily mad. The characters find her kneeling behind a pillar with her green eyes open wide in fear. She holds a curved mirror shard tight to her chest and awaits Authar's return. She is smeared in blood, half naked, heavily bruised, and cold. When meeting her lost children again, she simply starts weeping. Sin and Thea feel a sharp pang in their chests when they meet her. Just like Amerah, they instinctively know they are strongly connected in a way that transcends life itself.

Amerah follows anybody who leads her by the hand but takes no initiative. After a couple of hours in the characters' company (or less, if they are particularly kind), she no longer requires physical connection and follows the siblings by choice.

Before they leave the apartment, Amerah will run to a corner and pick up a phone. She clutches it to her chest and will not let go. It has no battery, but once charged, the siblings may find a conversation with Milan Benkic.

Control the pacing (and direction) of the game by making room for the PCs to take care of Amerah, ease her back into reality, calm her, and even take her to Leslie. This is a crucial point in the story that leads to key scenes that might end the scenario.

## Unseen stalkers

Author has his two top servants, Kalate (Valérien Baptiste) and Lycian (Nancy Winger) watching Amerah's apartment around the clock. These two were once playmates to Sin and Thea, but they have since been bent to Author's will. Their primary objective is to kill Milan, Amerah's tie to her sister. When they find somebody new snooping around the fallen goddess's place, they latch on to the characters to learn their motives.

At your discretion, there is the option to reveal their presence by asking players to roll to **Investigate** or **Observe a Situation**. At any point during the game, you can have the stalkers make an appearance to heighten the danger and remind the player characters that their time is running short. They will not kill Amerah, Sin, and Thea. These are Author's prey. Everyone else is a potential victim: The Gray Man, Leslie, Milan, Mattheus, and the siblings' friends.

### Hooks for the Attacks

- ◊ As soon as they are out of the Halls of Delirium.
- ◊ When they're hanging out with Mattheus.
- ◊ When they give Leslie Moulder their blood, or right before the ritual.
- ◊ During Side Scenes their Relations.
- ◊ Stopping Sin from committing suicide.
- ◊ Stopping Sin from murdering Author.
- ◊ When they meet The Gray Man one last time.

# MILAN BENKIC

**Hooks:** Amerah, the siblings' Mother.

**Main objective:** Reveal information about Delirium and how to reach her.

Milan Benkic is a servant of Delirium, the banished sister of Amerah. His bond with Delirium has turned him into a Child of the Night. He is a messenger that wanders between Elysium and the Borderlands. Milan Benkic is known in the underground scene as the lead singer of Dr. Misanthropy, a stoner metal group of some repute. Asking around at the right night clubs or bars, the characters learn that Milan has been making himself scarce. Nobody they meet has seen him at all for the past week.

The characters are eventually referred to an East Side dive, the Rue Morgue, where members of Dr. Misanthropy are known to be regulars. This information can be gained by talking to the right people at the right spots, through contacts, or by scanning their online profiles and finding numerous photos at the location. If the players come up with some other brilliant method of investigation, that works as well.

## Club Rue Morgue

Rue Morgue occupies the ground floor and basement of a tall decaying stone house, standing far down an empty street of a less-than-pleasant neighborhood. At night, both floors are usually jam-packed with drugged-out young people in black clothes. At a small downstairs stage, the music of celebrated local artists blasts the delirious crowd. On this day, however, there are only a few guests upstairs, while the local talent, such as Dr. Misanthropy, rehearses in the basement.

Asking their way around the club, the characters are introduced to a member of Milan's band, a pale youth of ghostlike thinness, wearing a Joy Division T-shirt and a pair of impossibly tight black leather pants. Sipping a whiskey-laced coffee, he deals suspiciously with the characters at first, growing almost hostile when they ask for Milan. But unless they say something incredibly stupid (e.g., something about being repo men, creditors, etc.), he will then tell them to wait, and disappear.

Until he comes back, the characters are free to wander and engage with the setting. They might struggle with their addictions and visions, talk about what's going on, and even begin to trace a plan of action if not already doing so.

In a couple of minutes, he returns for the characters and leads them down to the basement and behind the tiny stage. Moving past storerooms and dressing rooms, they finally arrive in a small, feebly-lit dressing room. There they face the back of a thin, black-garbed man with a shaved and tattooed head, watching them in a tall dressing mirror.

This is, of course, Milan. He impatiently ushers the characters' guide away and closes the door. Then, turning and facing them, he carefully examines Sin and Thea, paying almost no attention to anyone else that might be with them. "So, you've come at last," he says, looking hard at Sin and Thea. "All right. I'm in a hell of a spot right now, but I probably owe you a couple of answers. Shoot – but make it quick!" Milan knows practically everything about Sin and Thea: their true origins, and most of their previous incarnations as well.

Author's presence in the city has given Milan a terrible scare. He feels exposed and will hurry as much as he can to conclude the talk. He keeps his answers short, and constantly turns an anxious eye on the closed dressing room door.

As the gamemaster, your main objective with Milan is to bring Delirium into the story. This information might be as sealed tight or open as you wish it to be. By the end of the scene, however, Milan will either offer to bring the characters to meet her or describe how to get there. He will make it a point to demand that the PCs put absolute, infinite trust in him.

**Who is Delirium:** She is Amerah's sister and part of a New York City which does not fit into any of the existing city maps. She lives in a decadent shadow-land between the worlds. Milan has his theories that it is born of the drug-induced psychosis, the trauma of poverty, and the internal torment of big city existence.

**How to reach Delirium:** Milan will take them to Delirium if they prove Amerah is safe from Author. He is also willing to aid them in the process of securing a place for Amerah before taking them to Delirium if they don't want to bring her.

# INTO THE BORDERLANDS

**Hook:** Milan knows how to get to Delirium. If Milan can't be used, you can let Leslie, or the Gray Man, help the PCs. They might also learn about this place by interrogating Author's servants.

**Main objective:** The characters meet Delirium after a powerful journey through the Borderlands. You might want to save some of "The City Breathes" moments for this.

The Borderlands is a realm between the worlds, where the Illusion still holds some power but is also at its weakest. Here, all of the dimensions blend together without warning. It is dark, nightmarish, bewildering, and awe-inspiring.

Milan waits until dark before he takes the characters into the New York back streets, past the trash can fires warming the hordes of the houseless. Sometimes the characters will have to hide, as motley gangs of noisy youths cross their paths. The night is never silent: there is always a shout, a gunshot, or a wailing siren to be heard. The streets grow smaller and more desolate the farther the characters travel. Their world is veiled by a thin mist of foul-smelling vapors emanating from the sewers. The deep shadows of the ill-lit streets take on a life of their own, which is always in a hurried scuffle. The yellow light of a tall lamp-post suddenly exposes a pale girl in a black bra and a pink pair of satin tights. Her naked arms are freckled by infected wounds; if the characters speak to her, she simply stares back through a pair of black vacant eyes. They have several similar encounters, most of them with people who take no note of the characters. The few exceptions hold out a trembling hand, wheezing "Candyman?"

The mists thicken around the characters, who are suddenly afflicted with a slight case of aphasia. They have some trouble remembering even the most common words. Milan is changing. His face grows haggardly thin and his body looks broken and bent. His thick drawling voice would suggest that he is under the effect of a strong narcotic; he seems to be lost in a promised land of his own. Milan constantly loses words, repeating himself, getting confused and starting over again. He tells the PCs to stick to him no matter what.

## Playing through the Nightmare

Spend as much time as you need to in the Borderlands, and use whatever tools you have to make it a powerful, scary, and sublime journey. You may always refer to the corebook for inspiration: *The Touch of Gaia* (KDL, p332) will bring the scenario closer to the intended "Gaian" themes, but you could also bring the events from *The Wonders of Metropolis* (KDL, 296) without actually exploring Metropolis (this would require that the most characteristic events are to be left out). *In The Borderlands of Madness* (KDL, p243) may offer great insight of what the journey may feel like, and *The Soul's Attempted Escape* (KDL, p244) could certainly shed a light on how to explore how the character's Disadvantages in this area (if you happen to be playing with any).

Remember that you also have GM Moves at your disposal. Pay special attention to the ones present in *The Illusion Tears* (KDL, p247), as they ring true to Delirium's themes of Madness and a dream-like reality.

**Hooks:** If the characters are accompanied by Mattheus, but not Amerah and Milan, this might be a good place to have Mattheus killed by Author in a sudden, menacing sweep — a great show of force just before he disappears into the night.

**Make it your own:** Explore the nightmarish Borderlands as you see fit. Let your imagination fly and describe situations according to the *Horror Contract* (KDL, p160). Delve into your own fears as well as the players'. It doesn't have to be extremely elaborate (especially if you're playing an one-shot). Instead, focus on having cool moments where PCs may assume some control over the narrative. Re-ask the questions from A Forgotten Friend and see how the characters have changed, too.

**Use the Side Scenes:** This is a good time trigger *I Have Died Before*, to inject a prompt or two from *The City Breathes*, and explore *My True Self* a bit further, too.

When you're finished with Into the Borderlands, move on to the Halls of Delirium.

## The Halls of Delirium

Delving through the maze of narrow alleys, the PCs finally descend a slippery stairway to a basement. This opens up to a new labyrinth of close corridors clad in a strange dark red moss. The halls are perfumed by a strong smell of burning incense and a hint of human perspiration. Twisted, vines hang in front of the openings like ghostly drapes. Milan leads them onward through the narrow halls.

Finally, Milan comes to stop at a curtain made of thick vines and tells the characters to wait outside. He urges them not to provoke or test the woman. After what seems to be an eternity, he returns saying that Miss Delirium will receive them now. Then he ushers them inside.



## THE BANISHED SISTER

A small black wrought-iron lamp diffuses a faint yellow light inside the chamber, which is empty except for a sea of red moss that covers the floor and walls. The middle of the floor rises up like some old burial mound and on top of it sits a sweaty mountain of pale, shiny corpulence: Delirium.

The pores of her skin produce a strange, golden, sap that trickles down her naked body. Two nude, muscled men lick it as soon as it reaches her feet in utter worship. Both men's faces, strikingly handsome, express ecstasy. Two large bloodshot eyes are squeezed into the upper creases of Delirium's face over a thin beak-like nose and a pair of full black lips, and her long, unkempt red hair falls far down her shoulders. Now and then, she slowly exhales a misty cloud of purple smoke.

"So, a visit from the family. Come in, come in".

She gives a gesture with a heavy arm and the two naked men crawl out of the room like obedient dogs.

"You don't remember me, do you? I am your aunt. Amerah's beloved sister. The one you banished so long ago. I was bitter then. But looking at how things are now, I would say I still came out on top".

It might not seem like it, but Delirium is actually happy to see her family. If Amerah is with the characters, Delirium opens her arms and the two embrace.

Delirium will not help them fight their father directly but she can tell them more about their past and the reason for the curse that haunts them. She can also give some alternatives...

### About her past...

"Once we were gods of the great wilderness, in times before this world even existed. Your father was Authar, the lord of the Wooden Throne, one of the highest, most honored beings. Your mother was Amerah, the Many-Eyed, an oracle and prophet. And I was Dimerah, the priestess of the golden sap.

Don't you remember the deep forests where we lived in bliss? We hunted our prey, and ate the flesh raw and steaming. We swam in obsidian lakes among the blood-red water lilies. We made Authar's realm a kingdom of carnal beauty. I still remember how the earth drank greedily the blood of your sacrifices, and your divine songs of creation. Your father was the throne, but you were his children, you kept the realm alive."

She chuckles.

"You left him. You could not resist the lure of this world. This prison. Here, you lost your memories and became trapped in the cycle of death and rebirth. And with you gone, your father's kingdom crumbled. Your mother came after you, but suffered the same fate. Authar, well, he is not the forgiving kind. So he still sits there on his overgrown throne, sadness and hatred brooding in his heart. When he enters your dreams, Thea, he takes a new form. He hunts down all the members of the court that abandoned him and, one by one, he slays them. At last, finally he slays you, Sin. Then he returns to his throne and there he stays until the cycle repeats itself. Again and again, until the end of time."

### Why she isn't hunted...

"You drove me from the realm, but I did see the cunningness of the prison. I hid in the barrier between the worlds. I changed into what I needed to be. I am still the priestess of the golden sap, even though my form is different. I still keep my memories. I am still Dimerah, or Delirium as they call me here."

### Stopping the cycle...

She thinks for a while. Looks at her sister and the characters, then finally says: "As I see it there are three routes for you to take."

**"The Way of Patricide.** You may try to defeat him. Murder him. That will force his soul back to his throne. Your life will go on, and perhaps you won't see him again in this incarnation. But this is not a way to break the cycle. Just skip a step. Just know that all of the times you've tried, you have never managed to actually kill him. Such is his power over you that you are bound to be his victims."

**"The Way of Suicide.** The key for Authar to return to his throne is your suffering and death, Sin. Your murder is his last act of vengeance, the last thing before the cycle resets. He rides your terror back to the wild woods to grow strong again. But, who knows? If you kill yourself, perhaps that would break the cycle and trap him here to diminish in forgetfulness just like you."

**"The Way of Acceptance.** Maybe reuniting the family would ease his heart. Perhaps you can plead for his love. Show your submission, your regret, crawl for him. Maybe that would break the cycle. His hatred burns hot. So you should prepare a sacrifice for him like you did in the old days, in the forest glade where you cut up animals and let the blood gush over his roots. But are you ready to go back? To embrace your nature once more? Or are you all too comfortable in this prison of yours? I wonder what you think of yourselves, now that you know what you are."

Delirium will do her best to answer whatever other questions the characters might have about the curse, Amerah, herself, the Borderlands, and Authar.

## LEAVING THE HALLS OF DELIRIUM

Before dismissing the characters, Delirium wishes them good luck and, just before they leave, she says "Remember, children. Patricide, Suicide, or Acceptance." Once out of the Halls, they find themselves back on the streets in Elysium.

By the end of the trip, Milan suggests that they have enough information to sit down and plan. They may do so at his apartment, which happens to be comfortably within five minutes walking distance.

From this point on, let the siblings discuss what to do next. If they haven't decided to go back to Leslie, it might be good to remind them that the option is still on the table. Walk them through the discussion and remind them of the implications of each Way. Refer to *Paths to the End* for more information.



# SIDE SCENES

The scenes presented here can happen at any time during the story. Use these scenes to adjust tension levels, explore the characters' past and present, drive the siblings to the right spots, and control the game's pacing. Improvise and add your own scenes where you see fit. Although the PCs can (and perhaps should) be present at each other's individual scenes, many of these were written with a specific focus on one of the characters.

## SIN'S SCENES

### The Sacrificial Nightmare

Sin has had the same nightmare every night for the past month:

"*You are in a forest glade. The night is deep and the shadows are filled with horrors, just out of sight. Several moons overhead bathe the clearing in a pale, fluorescent light. Everything is absolutely silent, as if nature itself is holding its breath. You stand next to a great slab of white stone, upon which is the body of a man. You bend over him and use a sharp obsidian blade to carve complex patterns into the man's cold flesh. His blood flows over the white stone and runs down the sides, disappearing into the dark grass and black soil.*

*You work the blade up the dead body, carving the pattern from the soft abdomen past the chest, and encircling the neck. You cut up the solar plexus, push your hand into the cold flesh to remove the liver and heart, and place them on the white stone on either side of the head. Subconsciously, you know this sacrifice is for your father. You take the blade to cut out his eyes as a sacrifice to your mother. You look at the face you have so dreadfully mutilated: staring back at you from the stone slab is your own face, contorted in fear and agony."*

Sin knows this pattern by heart by this point, and it could be used later if he wants to make a sacrifice to please Author and seek his forgiveness.

### Vision: The Shadow of the Father

Author's shadow falls over Sin, either in a nightmare or waning vision. This scene is to show Sin's weakness, a side of himself that he hates. He'll have to deal with a panic attack and be reminded that he is no longer the king of the street.

"*A shadow falls over you. It feels like cold lead. Fear seeps into you as it presses you into the ground. An unspeakable terror makes it impossible to think. You just want to crawl away, to beg for mercy. You can't stop the tears and you hate yourself for being so weak, so pathetic. You will die and you cannot even do it with dignity. The shadow comes closer. The weight of it is so crushingly heavy that you can only barely gasp for air. There is a snarling sound, a sigh of disappointment from the shadow just before it disappears. You can breathe again. You feel that you are warm and wet. Urine soaks your pants, streaming down into your shoes.*"

### Sin's Past Cruelty

This scene is meant to show Sin's similarities to Author and the consequences of his violent past. It also shows the hierarchies of the street and how quickly they shift. In the flashback, Sin assaults and humiliates Dashawn, a former member of his gang, and ruins a whole family. Now he encounters Dashawn again. Put Dashawn in a far better position than Sin right now. Perhaps he climbed back up in the hierarchy as the boss of his own gang, or straightened up and now lives a normal life.

"*You recognize the man as Dashawn. He was once part of your gang. But he backtalked you, called you a liar and a rat. You closed in on him at a street corner where he was hanging out with his friends. You saw the terror in his eyes when you crossed the road. You gave him a murderous gaze so intimidating that he had to lower his eyes. He knew what was coming. The price to pay for challenging you. Instead of taking it as a man, he turned and ran.*

*You chased him along the alleys. You felt so strong. So potent. Tireless. The city was your jungle and you were at the top of the food chain. His fear filled you with murderous ecstasy. You could catch up to him whenever you wanted but you didn't want this to end too soon. You howled and laughed as he stumbled. Dashawn was so clumsy and weak.*

*The fool ran home to the small apartment that he shared with his sister and mother. He started to rummage around in the closet for his gun when you kicked in the door. He was shaking so badly when he tried to put in the mag. You took your time cornering him. Knocked the gun away, then beat him up in front of his screaming family. He pissed himself in fear. As a final act of humiliation, to mark your territory, you pulled his sister into the bathroom and forced yourself on her.*

*You did not need to kill him. Everyone on the street would know what happened that night.*

*Now you meet his eyes again..."*

### Dethrone the King

Goya, a guy in the gang that Sin felt was his brother, calls and asks to meet up. He claims that he has dirt on the gang's new leader, Risher — the usurper who put "Santiago" on the streets. In truth, Goya has been forced by Risher to prove his loyalty. Goya must kill his friend to continue working under Risher. Goya tells "Santiago" that Risher will be alone and unprotected at a local dealing spot. When Sin arrives, he finds Goya instead. Goya nervously twirls a loaded 9mm.

# THEA'S SCENES

## AUTHAR'S INCARNATE IS BORN

Use this scene to tempt Sin with taking his old life back — a possible return to his former glory as king of the pack. This scene also shows that he is nothing but a sacrificial lamb for a new, stronger, leader.

Killing Goya has great potential to warp the Illusion around Sin. As such, you should consider moving along to *My True Self* depending on where the plot stands. If Goya's death happens early in the game, you may play with the emotions associated with the assassination (guilt, sadness, rage, ...) until an appropriate moment for a profound change appears naturally.

### Help from Robert 'Bob' Burge

Sin has ties to Bob, a corrupt NYC Police Detective within the Vice Squad. Bob is far from ambitious and his main driving force in life is hookers, blow, and gambling. He has a long list of disciplinary incidents on his record, and if it weren't for colleagues covering for him, he would have been fired a long time ago. Bob can grant access to the APB for Authar's previous murders, some details on who was murdered, and the crime scenes. Bob doesn't know Authar is the perpetrator, but he knows better than to keep asking questions. Unless the PCs actively engage with him in this matter (which is not really advisable), he will relay the info, get the money, and move on. Other than that, he can also make sure that people are not charged with minor offenses if he's asked within a few hours of the incident. This promptly frees whoever's in custody.

Bob will only meet Sin undercover or away from prying eyes, such as parking his car in a dark alleyway or meeting in a strange empty place (bar, underground club, etc). He is a big man, unshaven, and surrounded by strong body odor that the heavy cologne and cigarette smoke can't cover up. Sin knows his typical "friendly fee" is around \$1,000 to 2,000 depending on how much he has to work and how dangerous it is if he gets exposed. He can be persuaded to give a discount, or that he will get the double amount at their next meeting. Bob does not know that Sin has been toppled from his throne unless Dethrone the King has been played through and the PCs end up causing a fuss, at which point the circumstances change greatly.

If Thea is at the meeting and Sin doesn't have the money or fails to negotiate a better deal, Bob will propose that Thea pays for the information with "a date".

You can use Bob to reveal information about parts of the scenario in the Illusion as you wish. See *Investigating the Previous Murders* for more information. *The Police Investigation* features easy, ready-to-go information that Bob may provide. These can also be found on the handouts section by the end of the scenario.

The red leaves, as well as her father's presence, triggers memories or reveals forgotten nightmares from Thea's childhood. This is fully explored in the central scene *A Dark Birth* (page 13).

Inject these as quick glimpses for Thea, especially when she is under the influence of heavy drugs. Unless you deem necessary, Thea has no indication of what happened before these scenes, nor what happens after. She simply wakes up or snaps out of it.

- ◊ "It is nighttime and you're in one of your many foster homes. After a while, they all blur together. You lie silently in your bed. The window is broken, covered with shrink wrap. It is winter outside and the air is so, so cold. The freezing gusts of wind that sneak through the patch job send red leaves dancing across the room. You are in pain, but you fasten your gaze on them. Focus on their invisible dance. Trying to breathe."
- ◊ "You see a dark pond filled with beautiful water lilies. Just beneath the surface there are strange, purple fishes darting back and forth. You reach down with your hand to touch the water. Your fingers. They end in curved claws."
- ◊ "There is a thing. A slimy, pulsating, blob that is covered in blood. It oozes black smoke and is strangely translucent, as if it is not part of this reality. With a slimy sound the outer membrane breaks open and you see something that could be skin — but it looks like an old tree's bark, full of holes where tiny bugs and larvae house their eggs. There is a cry like that of an infant."
- ◊ "You hold a nest of branches and leaves. Snuggle and shush it as if it was a baby. One of the branches has a thorn that stings you."

### VISION: SPROUTING FREEDOM

Authar's realm grows up around Thea. This is a vivid vision that captures Thea's subconscious longing for Gaia. It is meant to show her that life in the city has never suited her, and probably never will. This vision could happen under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, or just after an intimate scene where she ends up resting and daydreaming.

"Laying down, you feel your hair crawling out of your scalp, transforming into serpentine thin vines. You stand still as your roots grow into the walls and floor, seeking nutrients beyond the concrete structure of this building. Here, you are nothing but a dying tree incapable of blossoming. If only you would leave this place, this city, these people. They don't care about you, and you don't care about them either. They don't get you, what you are, what you can be. A muffled bang splits the peace of the scene. Gradually, sirens and construction sounds intrude on your consciousness. It hurts. Your eyes are open now, your head is heavy, and you feel tired."

It is possible that Thea is changed by this experience, triggering *My True Self* as a result. Allow roleplay to inform if this happens.

## Primal Savagery

Thea loses control and, for a moment, her divine aspects are revealed. It could be when she is attacked, provoked, surrounded by enemies on the street, arrested by the police, or jumped by Authar's servants. It does not need to activate against Authar himself, though it could.

*"You are suddenly filled with a feral fury. You feel fast, strong, and full of a joyful urge to dominate and kill. You lash out against your prey. The smell of fear just intensifies your hunger."*

This is a great way for Thea to get away from trouble or defeat dangerous opposition, as well giving a clear indication that she is not of this world. Allow Thea's player to roll on the *My True Self* table. After the scene ends, the change lingers on for as long is dramatically appropriate.

## Rell, the Drug Dealer

Rell, Thea's former drug dealer, rolls through the area in an old muscle car accompanied by his bodyguards. He keeps his eyes out for Thea, who owes him over \$500. If he spots her, he will call her to come and sit in his car to talk business. He may appear anywhere in the story when you want to put Thea in a bad spot and provoke her (or Sin).

He wants to have the money from her in one way or the other. If she can't pay, he'll "offer" to pimp her out to "help" her pay him back. He has a new girl, Amber, who works for him. She's just turned nineteen. He will threaten Thea, but all violence will be directed at Amber, as he wants to prove his point.

If faced with violence, or credibly threatened by Sin or the cops, Rell and his crew scatter to the winds.

## A John Named John

Thea has done whatever she needed to sustain her drug habit, including a few years of high-priced sex work. One of her former regulars was a man named John. This scene is meant to show the difference in social hierarchy when she sees him and he pretends not to recognize her. It should take place in the wealthier parts of town, especially when they are looking for Amerah's apartment.

*"You see John, a man who was one of your better regulars when you charged per fuck. He is dressed in an expensive suit, dark coat, and a beautiful Rolex watch. His haircut probably costs more than your monthly food bill. He sees you, and for a moment he recognizes you. Then he looks through you as if you aren't there. Clearly you are not part of his world. John lives in a polite society. You're disposable."*

## The Cat Mother

Thea has a special connection with cats. They naturally trust her and she can almost communicate with them like people.

◆ *A Moment of Comfort:* In a moment when she is down or lost, an orange stray cat, Smudge, approaches Thea and purrs gently. Then another, and another, and another, and many more. She may regain 2 **Stability** from this scene by spending time with the cats.

◆ *Cat's Guidance:* A skinny old calico cat named Lucky seeks Thea out. The cat meows and wants to show her something. She will lead Thea through the streets of the city. The final destination is up to you. It could be finding Sin, Amerah, the Elysian Fields, or anything else you wish to bring attention to.

# INVESTIGATING THE PREVIOUS MURDERS

If the PCs go through Mattheus' printed newspaper articles and notes, they find that they mention three different murderers. They met Mattheus in the park on the 15th of November, meaning that the last murder was two weeks ago.

- ◆ *The Joshua Bailey Murder:* Thursday the 29th of September 2022. Joshua Bailey, 37, murdered in Mott Haven, the Bronx.
- ◆ *The Winger Family Murder:* Monday the 17th of October 2022. The Winger family were murdered in their home on the Lower East Side. The mother of the family, Nancy Winger, 42, is believed to be kidnapped.
- ◆ *The Michael Vincent Murder:* Tuesday the 1st of November 2022. Michael Vincent, 29, was murdered close to the Brooklyn bridge.

The more the PCs read up on the murders, the more they will find details that correspond to disturbing visions they had around that time. They may start to piece together that their visions happened just as the murders took place. You could, for example, let the players trigger **Investigate** and follow the leads from there.

Below is further information they may dig up. There is nothing in the papers themselves that will push the story along, but they may find details, visions and hints about Authar, his modus operandi, and that others have sworn fealty to him. Primarily, this scene creates an atmosphere: a sense of dread. When the PCs have the vision of Mattheus' death or the attack on Amerah's mortal family, they know that these things are real. When they stand face to face with Authar, they will know what he is capable of.

## The Newspaper Articles

The newspaper's articles are from the New York Globe, a fictional local newspaper. The PCs may find other sources of information easily on the internet, through other articles, and police tv shows.

### *The Joshua Bailey Murder*

*The New York Globe, Thursday the 29th of September, 2022.*

*Police are looking for witnesses regarding a gruesome murder in Mott Haven this Thursday.*

*Police discovered the body of Joshua Bailey, 37, on the floor of his home on St Ann's Avenue around 2:15 a.m. They were initially called to the scene for a suspected domestic incident.*

*The District Attorney's Office confirmed that Joshua Bailey had been murdered in an especially savage way. There were no other human victims but the three dogs that lived in the apartment were dismembered by unknown methods.*

Neighbors told our reporter that Joshua Bailey was a solitary man who was known for peculiar behavior. He was, however, friendly and stayed out of trouble.

"Has this neighborhood not had enough crime and sadness?" resident Juan Lopez commented.

The lead inspector told our reporter that they are looking for a tall, caucasian male who jumped from the apartment window three stories up and disappeared into the night. "He must have been covered in blood from head to toe. If anyone saw anything, or may know where the suspected murderer went, please contact the police."

### **The Winger Family Murder**

The New York Globe, Tuesday the 18th of October, 2022.

A father (Mason), his son (Thomas), and disabled step-daughter (Felicity) of the Winger family were found savagely murdered in their home at 51A Greene St on Monday night. The mother of the family, Nancy Winger, is missing, believed to have been kidnapped. The victims were discovered by a close friend to the family, said sources close to police.

"I'm devastated that something like this can happen here. This is the good part of town. How are we supposed to feel safe now?" says a neighbor to the NY Globe, declining to share his name.

A police spokeswoman at the scene called the incident "sadistic" and "barbaric" in nature. She added that while no suspect has been taken into custody in connection with the homicides, there was no immediate risk to the public. "This is clearly an isolated incident."

The police are searching for the mother of the family, Nancy Winger, 42, who they suspect was abducted. As of now, they have no motives or witnesses. The murders are supposed to have happened sometime around 11pm.

### **The Michael Vincent Murder**

The New York Globe, Tuesday the 1st of November, 2022.

A brutal assault took place early Wednesday morning on New Dock St, close to Brooklyn Bridge. The victim, war veteran Michael Vincent, 29, was chased and attacked by one or more unknown assailants.

Police arrived at the scene and scared off the attackers. Vincent was rushed to Elmhurst Hospital, but couldn't be saved. According to the witnesses, he had suffered severe physical trauma.

The violence is believed to be gang-related.

## **Visions of the Murders**

Below are visions that the player characters experienced during the murders. You could also let them relive these visions in their sleep, when they are high on drugs, when they study police reports, read the articles, or visit the (now clean) crime scenes.

### **JOSHUA BAILEY**

"The walls of your apartment are spattered with blood. You hold the bat in your hands. You want to fight, but you are just so scared. You stand shaking in the corner. Tears streaming down your face. You soiled yourself. Your dogs, your beloved dogs, are mostly dead. That thing, that shadow, just ripped them apart. That shadow that stands before you, like a void of black nothingness. Your dog, Porter, is still alive and whimpering. Its legs are broken, yet it still seeks to protect you and it snaps open its jaws. The man, that thing, puts his foot on Porter's rib cage, then applies pressure and crushes it. You scream and rush at him, swinging your bat clumsily and ineffectively. He just throws you aside. You ask him why he is doing this. He puts his hands around your head, and a cruel and dark voice comes out of his mouth: "You should know."

He then gouges out your eyes and pushes his fingers into your brain."

### **WINGER FAMILY**

"Blood sprays across your face. You stumble backward and drop your laptop. Your husband's throat is a dark hole. Now he gurgles on the floor at your feet.

A live shadow is in your home. A terrible, dark, shadow.

"Lycian" the shadow says. And you remember who you were. You throw yourself at his feet. You show submission. The air is so filled with fear that you can't breathe. "I will kill your younglings. Then you will follow me," the shadow says, and walks towards the room where the children are sleeping.

You are thankful. So thankful to be spared. Still, you weep for your children. In desperation, and comfort, you start to lick your husband's blood from the floor. You feel how you swell up. How you start to become your old self."

### **MICHAEL VINCENT**

"Your feet thump against the wet asphalt. They are after you. The Brooklyn Bridge towers up ahead, shrouded in gray clouds in the first hours of the morning. You are out of breath. Your heart is beating so fast. You haven't been this scared before. A barbed wire fence is in your way. You start climbing it. Searing pain spreads across your body. Something is rammed into your back. You are

pulled down on the wet asphalt. A shadow towers over you. There is something about him. You know who he is. He raises his hand, and you notice his fingers end in long claws. He rams them into your stomach and rips out your steaming entrails. You scream and beg. His mouth is open wide, a jagged maw you have a moment to witness before he starts eating your intestines.

Your sight darkens. Police lights paint the scene in red and blue.

Gunshots.

You wake up. You are in an ambulance. "Just be still," someone says. The lights fade. Swirling red leaves float through the darkness."

## The Police Investigation

The police know more about the murders than the media do, and they are searching for the murderer. They have tied the murders together by gathering fingerprints from the crime scenes. They haven't matched them to anyone living. They have decided not to go public with this information. Revealing to the media that they are tracking a serial killer will cause needless panic, and might scare the perpetrator away.

The most logical way the players could get hold of this information is from Sin's contact *Robert 'Bob' Burge* (page 21). Alternatively, Leslie can use her contacts to provide the reports for them. The reports are presented with bullet points that convey the main information.

### Police Report on the Joshua Bailey Murder

**Victim:** Joshua Bailey, 37. Taxi driver.

**Location:** 215 St Ann's Ave, Mott Haven, The Bronx, NY.

**Time of death:** Around 02:15 a.m. Thursday the 29th of September 2022.

**Cause of death:** Crushed skull, severe bodily trauma. Eyes gouged out.

- ◆ Intruder broke open the front door with tremendous force.
- ◆ The victim had three dogs that had been killed with sadistic cruelty.
- ◆ No sign of a murder weapon.
- ◆ The perpetrator jumped out of the window onto the parking lot three floors below.
- ◆ A witness on the street described him as a tall, white, male with long hair and beard. Despite being described as covered in blood, he disappeared into the night leaving no trail behind.
- ◆ Fingerprints match those on the Winger and Vincent crime scenes.

### Police Report on the Winger Family Murder

**Murder Victims:** Mason Winger 48 (Bank manager), Thomas Winger 12 (Student), Felicity Winger 8 (Student).

**Kidnapping Victim:** Nancy Winger, 42. (Boutique owner).

**Location:** 51 Greene St, Manhattan, NY.

**Time of death:** Around 11 p.m. Monday the 17th of October 2022

**Cause of death:** Extreme bodily trauma with ripped throats. Dismemberment and extreme blood loss.

- ◆ Fingerprints match those on the Bailey and Vincent crime scenes.

- ◆ Some of the spilled blood seems to have been removed by the Murderer (soaked up, or in other ways drained) since it is missing from the crime scene.
- ◆ A grainy picture of a security camera shows a tall muscular man with long hair and beard entering the building at 10:54 p.m.
- ◆ The same man leaves the building at 11:47 p.m. together with Nancy Winger who walks obediently behind him. She is believed to have been abducted.

### Police Report on the Michael Vincent Murder

**Victim:** Michael Vincent, 29. (Homeless veteran).

**Location:** 3-99 New Dock St, Brooklyn, NY.

**Time of death:** Pronounced dead at 05:45 a.m. Tuesday the 1st of November 2022 at Elmhurst Hospital.

**Cause of death:** Extreme blood loss and bodily trauma, intestines had been pulled out of the body.

- ◆ The victim was chased along the east river industrial area towards the Brooklyn Bridge.
- ◆ At 5:26am, an anonymous call alerted 911 regarding a possible assault.
- ◆ A squad car was sent to New Dock St. It arrived on the scene at 5:31am.
- ◆ The police officers interrupted the assault, and shots were fired. The perpetrator, a tall, long-haired man, fled the scene.
- ◆ Another person at the scene, a blond middle-aged woman, disappeared before she could be questioned.
- ◆ One pair of fingerprints match those of the Winger and Bailey crime scenes.
- ◆ Another pair of fingerprints found at the scene matches those of the believed to be Nancy Winger.

## APB on the Murderer

**All-Points Bulletin (APB):** a bulletin broadcast to alert officers over a wide area that someone or something is being actively sought in connection with a crime. These have the general descriptions of what the officers should be on the lookout for.

- ◆ Forensic evidence has tied the same perpetrator to the Winger, Vincent and Bailey crime scenes.
- ◆ Description from a witness, police reports, and grainy security camera footage describe a tall, muscular man close to his 50s. He is white, has long dark gray hair, and a beard. He has an unkempt appearance and a distinct smell.
- ◆ He is considered armed and extremely dangerous.
- ◆ The murderer is believed to have kidnapped Nancy Winger and may hold her hostage.
- ◆ The suspect was spotted in Central Park twice

# OTHER SCENES

## I Have Died Before

The character connects with one of their past deaths when the Illusion malfunctions. It could be because their sleep reaches through Time & Space, finding the dreams of a past incarnation, or investigating the red leaves. They may also be under heavy drugs and decide to follow their visions: whispers, red leaves, and smells of fresh animal blood. Alternatively, Mattheus might urge them to meet a psychic who specializes in “regression”, a technique that reveals who they were in past lives.

When the siblings connect with their past lives in meaningful ways, draw one to three cards from the KULT Tarot to explore who they were and how they died. When improvising, relay information about their background through the visions as you see fit.

## INVESTIGATING THE RED LEAVES

If the PCs try to investigate the red leaves Mattheus showed them, no botanist can identify them. The same goes for encyclopedias and internet research. It looks like an oak leaf, but has the wrong color and texture. The Illusion shrouds any other characters from the vision the PCs had, as well as the leaves' true nature. If studied in a laboratory, the leaves appear to be normal oak leaves.

## Losing Assets

The PC is forced to choose between paying for something important and keeping an asset. This can happen, for example, when they have to pay to enter a club, buy drugs, or even when they meet Bob.

Santiago could be forced to choose between filling his car with gas or getting two clips of ammo for his gun. Thea does have animals to feed, but she might lose access to her loft, which is basically the safest spot they have to rest properly.

To completely deny them an asset would be a Hard Move (*Take Their Stuff*), but you could introduce this problem multiple times throughout the scenario with softer GM Moves, such as Give the Possible Consequences and Ask (“Unless you find a way to pay for it, your mobile plan will be terminated later tonight.”) and Offer an Opportunity, with a Price (“This should be enough for Bob, but this is the same amount you need to buy a handgun to protect yourself.”)

## Scoring

When the characters need to score drugs, remind them that it is easier to reach out to friends. Some will get them money, others will get them the drugs. Here are four encounters that can be played out throughout the game.

- ◆ *Gusto:* The characters travel to an illegal punk rave happening in the basement of a condemned building. Hell could break loose at any moment if the cops arrive. The structure is unsafe and threatening to fall. Sin knows a man named Gusto that sells uppers for a reasonable price. Gusto, however, is fighting over territory against another man in the same area, and asks if “Santiago” will help him scare the other dealer away.
- ◆ *Jenna:* A girl “Wynter” used to be super close with before another (jealous) girl got in the picture. Thea and Jenna see each other as nothing but sisters, and Jenna is generally open to hanging out with Thea as long as her girlfriend doesn’t know about it. Once together, Stella, the girlfriend, will arrive at the scene just as the drugs are starting to hit. She interprets the situation as Jenna cheating on her. Stella will argue, scream, and threaten to kill herself on the spot.
- ◆ *Tommy:* A friend that used to work with “Santiago”. Tommy used to sell Sin’s drugs, but ever since he has found God and a good relationship, the drug dealing business fell off completely. He is now fully sober and planning a marriage. Sin knows which buttons to push to get Tommy to buy something for them.
- ◆ *Larry:* One of Thea’s best paying customers. He’s a lonely man in his mid-forties looking for company. He paid Thea good money to snuggle, kiss, let him worship her feet, and listen to his funny office stories. Thea knows he is interested in using drugs, but only with loving company that would take care of him should something bad happen during the trip.

# THE CITY BREATHES

New York is its own kind of wilderness. Below are several prompts that can either be turned into scenes or used throughout the setting to portray the broken machinery of the Illusion. These sights can be triggered due to stress, insomnia/broken sleep, drug use, or similar.

At your discretion, these can be tied to Moves such as *See Through the Illusion* and *Keep It Together*. You should also consider using them in moments of high tension — for example, when the characters have to *Act Under Pressure*, *Engage in Violence*, or *Keep it Together*.

You may also use them as GM Moves in a variety of ways. Maybe the phenomena *Separates Them* or *Puts Someone in a Bad Spot*. Maybe it could be a warning: *Announce Off-Screen Problems* or *Announce Future Problems*. Hard Moves such as *Decrease Stability* and *Deal Harm* could also be employed here, especially if the PCs have been neglecting to care for their bodies (not eating, showering, sleeping, over indulging in drug use, etc).

If nothing else, these prompts can be something that happens to the player characters in a dream just before they wake up. Consequently, these are the only things they may remember from the nightmare. In a shorter game, this puts them to good use without pulling attention away from the main storyline.

- ❖ The cables behind electronic devices seem to form a web pattern. Briefly, a passing shadow mimics the presence of a big spider resting atop the web.
- ❖ You hear a thumping sound just beneath the soil that follows the rhythm of your steps. You suddenly stop, and the largest beat yet shakes the soil up a few steps ahead of you, where it ends up scaring some pigeons. They fly away in fear.
- ❖ A stray dog joins you in your misery. You both cry together.
- ❖ The electricity running within the walls is dizzying. Its constant buzz mercilessly hammers your eardrums, overpowering all other sounds and causing an unbearable headache.
- ❖ You see seedlings sprouting up the sink drain. Beautiful and small multicolored petals blossom and die in a matter of seconds. The tiny vines continue crawling upwards, clogging the pipes.
- ❖ The years-old wall-to-wall graffiti of a cheetah carrying the live head of a cop somehow still smells of fresh blood. You cannot help but wonder if it tastes as sweet as it smells.
- ❖ The unmade bed looks like a nest about to be attacked by a predator. A cat barely four months old sleeps in it. You see the shadow of an owl fly past it in the blink of an eye, clawing the poor baby and taking it away. You flash back to reality. The cat sleeps soundly.
- ❖ In silent darkness, you slide your fingers up your body. It is muscular and warm to the touch. Multiple scars hide beneath its fur. You think how wonderful it would be to finger yourself to orgasm, right now.
- ❖ The city has too many sounds and images. Everywhere you look there is someone screaming, a flashing camera, bright digital outdoors, honking, smog. The streets become ever more narrow, with their buildings bending over to shower you with light.
- ❖ You read people's faces as that of animals: some are graceful cats, others are scared mice. Pointy noses remind you of mosquitoes, badly aligned teeth remind you of dogs. You're easily caught up in this. It is funny to think of them as animals.
- ❖ Dizzying web-like cracks in the asphalt remind you of the weird patterns you constantly dream of. Its lines appear to spell your name.
- ❖ Way up on a skyscraper, a man threatens to jump. People scream for him to not do it, some are desperately calling for help, many already have their phones up and are filming everything. When he does jump, you see that he opens up his wings and flies away. Yet, you still hear a heavy, wet thud on the pavement. Someone wails in horror.
- ❖ A single large red oak leaf drifts past you. It has a faint smell of bitter incense.
- ❖ You wake up to a swarm of unseasonable mosquitoes resting peacefully on your chest and belly. They have grown fat with your blood. Some have a faint shimmer inside of them. When scared away, they form patterns in the air while flying. You itch like crazy.

# MY TRUE SELF

As Author gets closer and more memories resurface, the siblings also start to change. They regain access to old abilities from their godly pasts. Some scenes above have suggestions of when to introduce these changes, but you can also craft new scenes. Allow it to be a struggle between their human and feral sides. Here are some suggestions of how to handle it within the system:

**Keep It Together:** When the character confronts their nature, for example by questioning their humanity or true origin, they might have to Keep It Together. On a full success, they keep their feral natures subdued. On a partial success (10-14), they pick a Condition that best reflects their struggle, but also gain an Ability. On a failure, their true nature will be revealed in all of its dark glory. They gain an Ability but the GM makes a Hard Move as the revelation traumatizes them.

**See Through The Illusion:** The realization of their past may force a character to See Through The Illusion. On a success, they can see and understand their nature, gaining one Ability from the list below. On a partial success, they develop an Ability, but it is fleeting and doesn't really change their bodies. On a failure, they know something is wrong but cannot sense why. Alternatively, they see (and benefit from) the change but the Illusion sets in quickly after as they convince themselves it can't be real.

## Abilities

It is the player's job to keep track of the Abilities they have unlocked. None of these Abilities have Moves attached to them, but they should apply bonuses to rolls where they put the character at a clear advantage. If you want to keep it more or less balanced, don't allow for more than +2 in bonuses even if multiple characteristics would apply. When introducing these Abilities, you can either ask the players how the Ability alters their mind and body, or describe it yourself to your liking.

These are but shallow, Illusion-affected expressions of the siblings' true forms and powers. As long as they continue to deny their origins and remain human, they may never experience the true extent of their power. This is a starting point, not the end-all be-all list of an Enwilted God's capabilities. If the chosen ending for this scenario is *The Way of Acceptance*, players are free to describe their characters' true appearances however they like. Let your imagination go wild. Use these as a guide, not as a limit.

## GAMEMASTER INTERVENTION

As a Soft Move, you may announce that an Ability will disappear (this could be seconds, minutes, or days). The characters are capable of feeling their bodies weakening and may even notice the exact moment the changes revert back to something human. As a Hard Move, take it from them completely at once. You may always "Offer an Opportunity, With or Without Price" for the PCs to trigger "My True Self" again.

When they develop an Ability, either choose for them or ask for a sum of 2d10 to randomize how the character develops their powers.

**2. Predator Aura:** Others instinctively know you shouldn't be messed with.

**3. Beast-lord:** Nearby animals become enthralled by you and follow your command.

**4. Bloodhound:** You become hyper-aware of the smell of blood. You can also easily follow a person's scent, even in scenes where it would be unlikely to sense a clear trail.

**5. Protection:** Your skin hardens to the touch and your body hair grows into patches of heavy fur that protects you from harm.

**6. Corrosive Secretions:** Your tears, spit, and sweat are corrosive to inorganic material.

**7. Memory Eater:** If you consume the flesh and blood of a human victim, you gain access to some of their memories and skills.

**8. Shadow:** Eerily similar to your hunter, you may become a black mass that is easily missed when standing still in darker areas.

**9. Claws:** You have claws capable of easily tearing flesh apart [Treat your claws as an Edged Weapon, KDL p138].

**10. Numb:** Fire, pain, electricity, cold, or something similar, hurts you less. It may still kill you under extreme circumstances.

**11. Distorted Flesh:** You are capable of squeezing your body through extremely thin spaces, as well as expand/shrink your limbs and torso a few centimeters.

**12. Stink:** You may breathe out a sickening stench that causes eyes to water and humans to suffer overwhelming nausea.

**13. Snake Tongue:** You have a thin, sharp, and long forked tongue. You can use it as a dagger in close combat [Treat your tongue as an Edged Weapon, KDL p138].

**14. Wallcrawler:** You may attach yourself to walls like a spider. Crawl up a building or hang upside down in the ceiling.

**15. Regenerative flesh:** **Serious Wounds** heal in hours, **Critical Wounds** in a day.

**16. Supernatural Strength:** You are capable of sudden feats of supernatural strength [Treat your unarmed attacks as Crushing Weapons, KDL p138].

**18. Sharp Senses:** One of your senses is uncontrollably heightened. This is reflected in your appearance. Sight comes with peridot-green eyes, hearing comes with pointed bat ears, and so on.

**19. Fangs:** You have long, sharp canines [Treat your fangs as an Edged Weapon, KDL p138].

**20. Lightning Fast:** You are capable of sudden feats of supernatural agility.

# PATHS TO THE END

This scenario is open-ended. Will the characters try to escape Authar? Will they follow Leslie's idea and create a trap for their father? Will Sin kill himself and trap Authar in Elysium with them? Will they manage to defeat Authar against all odds? Or, just maybe, can they reconcile with their father, be forgiven, and return to Gaia?

## LESLIE'S TRAP

**Hooks:** Leslie Moulder's magic ritual.

**Main objective:** Present the dreamworld and have them experience the terrifying presence of Authar in all of its dark glory... one last time.

Leslie Moulder has long desired to enslave a powerful creature of Gaia, and now she finally has a golden chance to do so. To prepare her trap, she needs blood from Sin, Thea, and Amerah.

Leslie needs some time to mix the blood and perform the magic ritual, which means the PCs will be waiting a bit. At this time, you may want to have Authar kill Milan (and possibly Mattheus, if he's still alive at this point, which is unlikely). When appropriate, Leslie contacts the siblings and brings them back to her clinic.

The Magician has created a powerful concoction with the Enwilded Gods' blood, a vial of black liquid so sweet that Authar cannot help but follow the scent. The plan is to get them all inside a dreamworld of Leslie's creation, a mirrored version of the dream where Thea first encountered Authar. Once inside, Leslie puts all her effort into spreading the scent throughout Limbo, until Authar steps into their dreams. He will then be caught by a trap, which she doesn't explain in detail, since it relies on violence and the sibling's suffering.

Leslie prepared a special room for this: cozy piles of blankets and pillows for the dreamers lie still atop fluffy rugs on the wooden floor. The light is dim, and quiet meditation music plays together with forest ambient sounds. Sin and Thea are instructed to cleanse their minds of anything irrelevant to Authar, Amerah, and their true origins. As they meditate for half an hour, Leslie will poke their arms to inject the black blood into their bodies. The mixture hits them similar to heroin: a warm embrace as everything starts to darken and fade. All sounds are lost to the ear-shattering pounding of their hearts. Slowly, they are eased into a sensation of floating.

Their heartbeats grow fainter, and a thick haze sets around them. It echoes their thoughts through whispers for everyone to hear, shaping them according to Leslie's wishes.

*"You drift downwards until your bare feet touch mossy stones. You are in a vast forest obscured by shadows. The moonlight can barely reach through the giant trees. These trees have large dark and wet trunks, and their crowns tower far above your head, piercing the night sky with large blood red leaves and gnarly branches. Massive roots crawl everywhere, holding earth with a firm grip. A thin mist hangs in the air, blurring your sight with a white barrier."*

*Then, you notice heavy, thick iron collars around your and Sin's necks. They are attached to long chains that disappear deep into a pond a few steps away from you. In the still water's reflection, you see Leslie holding the chains with a stern face. A third chain can be seen tied to Amerah. She looks just like you remember: majestic and beautiful. Her slender body is draped in white veils. Her long, raven hair floats around her as if she is submerged in water. Her deep green eyes are still red from crying. She is trembling.*

*"Authar is coming," she whispers in a faltering voice."*

The characters cannot break the chains, and even if the pond seems to lead back to Leslie, they only find a muddy bottom when diving into it. Soon, the trees creak and groan as a continuous gust of wind blows through the forest. Red leaves swirl down as Authar's shadow steps out of the darkness. He is impossibly tall in this dreamworld, and stares at Sin and Thea with burning hatred. His guttural voice scares nearby animals away:

*"And so, my children, the day of reckoning has come."*

He descends upon Thea first, with teeth and claws ready for killing.

Fighting Authar is extremely difficult, but not impossible. He is almost unstoppable and will use the chains to drag the siblings close to him. In front of Amerah, he will terrorize his children, tear into their flesh, and eat them in triumph.

As soon as he tastes their blood, Leslie's trap activates: he tastes a mix of their blood and her powerful concoction, a venom that will briefly subdue his powers. Multiple chains lash out from the pond and fetter Authar. The forest withers and dies around them. The trees, leaves, ferns, and everything beyond, dissolves into a fine dust as the dream disintegrates. The last thing the characters hear are their father's mad screams: a panicked animal trapped with no means of escaping.

# THE WAY OF PATRICIDE

Before the dream ends, those who survived the fight will have a chance to embrace each other and say their last words as the dream dissolves. This tender moment is cut by Leslie's worried voice saying "I think we're losing them."

The scene turns to black and the PCs feel their disintegrating bodies losing all sense of touch. Soon, there's nothing but a wild mix of images as their consciousness latches onto whatever memories it can to avoid being annihilated along with the dreamworld.

Ask the players which moments in the story have stuck with them the most, and what emotion best captures them. Remind them of everything that has happened. Then, if you wish, move on to the epilogue.

## Turning Against Leslie

The magician has set this up so Authar can be trapped. She doesn't want anyone to die here, neither Authar nor the characters. However, as Authar is caught by the shackles, it might be that the siblings realize they can finish this once and for all, as the *Way of Patricide* suggests.

If they dive for the coup de grâce, Leslie will prevent them by shifting the dreamworld and pulling their chains back into the pond.

The siblings are at a clear disadvantage against Leslie, but may fight her by triggering *See Through the Illusion* to pierce her deceptions and *Keep it Together* to avoid her restraints.

If they succeed, and Authar is shackled, they will have a clear shot against him.

## Epilogue: Awakening to a New Reality

The PCs return to reality after several weeks have passed. They have been admitted to a psychiatric clinic, the Edgewater Mental Hospital, on the other side of the country. Leslie Moulder arranged for everything and is paying all expenses. Leslie sees it as a chance for Wynter to get clean and Santiago to deal with his anger issues. If they behave and follow the procedure, they will be released soon, but their memories of the scenario's events will feel distant and dreamlike. They have no more nightmares, visions, and no feral powers. The machinery of the illusion slowly claims them. Amerah has also been admitted to Edgewater. She is referred to as Jane Doe due to lack of identification. The Illusion is incapable of shattering the unnatural bond they share, and as such they continue to harbor feelings of closeness and trust to each other. As it always has been, they can never truly remember where they have seen each other before, or why they enjoy each other's company so much.

**Hooks:** The PCs try to murder their father.

**Main objective:** Present the ultimate challenge of defeating Authar in combat. Remind them what is at stake and that they cannot be sure if they will have another chance like this.

The characters may try to kill Authar using whatever means available. They will encounter a god much weakened, but he is still extremely dangerous — especially if he has his small pack with him.

Reality shifts as Authar approaches them. A strong wind starts to blow and red leaves swirl through the air. He lashes out against the target that poses the most threat first, disarm and dismember them. He will try to save Sin for last. If he kills them, their mangled bodies will be discovered, but their souls will be reborn after a short stay in the Black Cells so that the cycle can continue.

If they manage to kill him, he looks at them in shock. His body crumples, and all that remains is a pile of dried, red leaves that will soon be scattered by the wind.

However, even if they won and can go on with their lives, this is a temporary solution at best. Murder is too much a part of Authar's nature for it to successfully destroy him. When he dies, his body starts regenerating on his throne in Gaia. At some point in the future, he will find his daughter through her dreams again, and is born to this world to carry on his gospel of revenge and hatred. But for Sin and Thea's current incarnations, the threat is over.

The nightmare and the visions have ended — but they lose the powers their father's presence granted them. Allow each player to tell an epilogue about their character. What happened to them? What were their fates? Will they ever get what they want?

[GM Note: if the players decide to continue with these characters, Sin has a natural affinity for Passion magic, while Thea can learn Dream magic much more easily.]



# THE WAY OF SUICIDE

**Hooks:** Trying to break the cycle by Sin committing suicide.

**Main objective:** Walk Sin through intense questioning. Allow Sin to ponder if sacrificing himself to save his mother and sister will be worth it. Remind him of everything he's going to leave behind: the troubles and joys, the challenges and prizes, the good and the bad. Allow his final moments to linger.

By committing suicide, Sin will strengthen the Illusion's grip around his father so much he will not be able to return to Gaia. In time, Authar's true body will be devoid of power: unreachable, untouchable, meaningless. If Sin dies before Authar gets to him, there will be no way to complete the cycle. There is no anguish, fear, and anxiety to ride back to Gaia.

The suicide must, of course, be entirely voluntary. It is the conscious self-sacrifice which destroys Authar. The God will be perplexed by this deed, as this has never happened before. He will wander aimlessly into the wild trying to find his way home, but without help he will inevitably forget his origin and become yet another soul trapped in the Illusions. Without his presence, his wooden throne and kingdom will be overtaken by the vicious, regenerative nature of Gaia.

Before you end the game, let Thea's player tell an epilogue about what happens to her. What path does she take in life? Will she get clean? Do the memories fade away? How normal can "normal life" ever be after this?

# THE WAY OF ACCEPTANCE

**Hooks:** Trying to break the cycle by reconciling with their father.

**Main objective:** Let the players beg for their father's forgiveness, break the cycle, and return to their primal forms. Present them the consequences of accepting their true nature.

This is the most powerful of the three Ways. Authar cannot comprehend love, his very core was formed around death, authority, and the hunt. He is powerless against the force of love. By utilizing memories of their early fond familial ties, Sin and Thea may force their father beyond the realms of existence and end the cycle of violence.

How to adapt this to a role-playing context will be a judgment call for the Gamemaster. "Love" makes for tricky – or quite skilled – role-playing. Should, for instance, the characters join hands and start sharing memories from their dreams about the woods, Authar will back off in terror. They might start singing songs that they know in their souls, celebrating the glory of Authar and Amerah. If Amerah is present, she will join in the songs and all other manifestations of family affection. The main idea behind this is that there is no way to fail. It is their intentions that count the most, and as long as they genuinely accept their true nature, whatever tactics the siblings employ will undoubtedly touch Authar.

The one thing that is absolutely required is a sacrifice in the name of their father – the one key to his heart. It must be powerful enough to make the monster accept his children back. Sin knows the ritual instinctively. He has lived it again and again in his dreams. It does not have to be a human, but it does have to be some type of beast that he carves up in offering. By carving the sacred patterns and shedding the beast's blood with his whole family gathered around him, Sin brings the memories of their Gaian lives into the Illusion.

When the siblings do this, the boundaries between the worlds weaken and they will be transported into the depths of Gaia. They stand in a clearing with their victim on a sacrificial stone. Its body will be twisted and monstrous, a wicked sacrifice for their father.

Authar is driven into tears by their display of submission and affection. He approaches his children and embraces them, allowing their emotions to break the Illusion and reveal their true forms, terrible and beautiful. Now the woods are majestic around them and the noise of Elysium is just a distant murmur. Authar will allow them to journey back into Elysium if they so wish. If that's the case, Amerah will stay with Authar and together they will fade away, becoming one with Gaia.

If Sin and Thea stay in Gaia, they have a lot of work to do before Authar's kingdom and power can be fully restored. Regardless, allow the players to tell epilogues exploring their new powers and lives.

# APPENDIX: NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

## AUTHAR

Authar is a once-powerful god from the depths of Gaia. When he was abandoned by his children and followers, he lost his realm. Now, he stalks his former court in Elysium and kills them again and again across the centuries. He is as hateful as he is hurt by the betrayal of his family. As of now, he is a monster of pure ill will, but the hunt could be brought to an end if his children follow the Path of Acceptance.

The Illusion makes him appear as a tall and powerful man in his 50s. He has long, unkempt hair and a dark gray beard. You can sense that he is a man that dwells in the shadows and in the wilderness. There is a feral smell about him: dried blood, campfire and sweat. He has a deeply uneasy aura that prevents people from looking too closely at him, and stands at over 2 meters. But he is the shadows of the forests, and the shadows hide him so he walks unseen.

**Roleplaying Authar in his true form:** Drop your voice's pitch and speak sternly. Stare intensely at the players, sometimes grinning. Avoid blinking as much as you can.

**Home:** Gaia.

**Creature Type:** Lord of the Wooden Throne, father of Sin and Thea, Enwilted God.

### Abilities

**Sharp Senses:** Authar's senses are heightened, able to pick up the most minute sight, sound, and scent, including an intuitive sense that detects if something seems 'off'.

**Tough:** All Harm from edged and crushing weapons is decreased by -1.

**Veteran:** Authar cannot be influenced or intimidated by threats of violence.

**Apex Predator:** Authar radiates an aura of fear and all that he deems a prey suffer -2 on all rolls to attack or defend themselves in combat against him.

**Combat [5], Influence [-], Magic [3]**

### Combat [Powerful]

- ◊ Make an attack out of nowhere, striking first.
- ◊ Hold someone with an iron grip.
- ◊ Easily dismember an opponent.
- ◊ Tear through an obstacle.
- ◊ Attack several targets at once.

### Magic [Novice]

- ◊ Invade someone's dreams.
- ◊ Destroy man-made objects and weapons.
- ◊ Shadow presence.

### Attacks

Authar's attacks are swift and brutal. He is strong and may easily rip an opponent's limbs, throw them across the room, or slash their throats. His fingers end in curved claws. He tears through man-made obstacles as if they're cardboard, running and attacking with incredible speed. Authar can easily handle multiple opponents in combat, usually holding someone with an iron grip while trading blows against someone else. He has enough strength to drag an opponent around while clawing at another. His kills are glorious and gory, always destroying opponents by ripping them apart and showering the room with blood.

**Unarmed:** Claw [3] [Distance: arm]; Quick slashes [2] [Distance: arm, can target up to two opponents within Distance with a single attack]; Claws at the throat [0/2] [Distance: arm, Authar is in control of the target; victims who fail to **Act Under Pressure** to break free take **2 Harm**]; Disembowel [Critical Wound] [Only if Authar is in control of the target]; Grab, lift, throw [2] [Distance: room, the victim is lifted into the air and then thrown aside]. Bite [Serious Wound] [Distance: arm, Authar bites an ear, fingers, or a huge chunk of flesh off of an opponent].

**Shadowplay:** Lay Over Shadow [-] [Distance: room/field, Authar's shadowy presence is extended over the victim forcing her to **Keep it Together** to not be paralyzed]; Warp & Merge [-] [Distance: arm, Authar's body merges with the darkness, making it even harder to land attacks on him. Momentarily, all Harm against him is at -2 and he can easily slip away in the darkness]; Surprise Attack [2] [Distance: arm, Authar dashes out of the shadows tackling opponents and mauling their faces with multiple blows].

### Wounds & Harm Moves

#### Wounds: ○○○○○○○○○○ ☣

- ◊ Authar smirks through the pain, displaying his monstrous fangs and licking the blood off his lips.
- ◊ He growls in pain. The shadows expand towards him, swallowing everything on their paths. PCs have to **Keep it Together** to not freeze in fear.
- ◊ He bleeds profusely.
- ◊ Authar momentarily frenzies, and Quick slashes against all around him.
- ◊ His wounds become infected. Seedlings sprout from the dark viscous blood that stream down his body.
- ◊ The Illusion is torn briefly, triggering the decay of Authar's immediate surroundings. Concrete becomes frail, vines sprout through the windows, the sky goes black, walls threaten to fall.
- ◊ The attack tears through a limb, making it unusable. PCs have +1 Ongoing to fight Authar.
- ◊ Authar dies with an inhuman screech that can be heard in a wide radius across Gaia, Limbo, and Elysium. From his open mouth, black vines coil out and then he dries up until he resembles an old tree.

# AUTHAR'S PACK

These beings were part of Authar's court. They used to play with Sin and Thea when they were young; hunting together in the untamed wilderness of Gaia, collecting colorful insects and weird flowers, and playing inside the dry carcasses of long dead titans. They have slept in each other's arms, killed creatures in one united sweep, and danced together to the songs of creation. They joined the siblings' venture into Elysium and were also trapped by the Illusion. When Authar came to exact his vengeance upon them, they remembered their true nature and groveled at his feet. He took them with him as his pack.

## Kalate (Valérien Baptiste)

A black man with freckles and tiny scars scattered across his face. His massive dreadlocks are tightly pulled together atop his head, revealing dark tribal tattoos that flow from his scalp and neck onto the back of his torso. He was working as a surf instructor in Haiti when Authar came for him. He remembered his lord immediately and, as many times before, he joined Authar in the hunt.

He wears baggy clothing, with bracelets and necklaces dangling about as he moves. When the Illusion tears, his body is revealed to look similar to a tree. His arms are withered and branch-like, his skin is all broken and hard to the touch, and his dreadlocks turn into thick black serpentine vines that latch onto whatever he is attacking with a powerful grip.

**Roleplaying Kalate:** Push out your head, fixing a cold, hard stare on the players. Keep an imagined firearm in your hand.

**Home:** Gaia.]

**Creature Type:** A creature from Gaia serving Authar.

### Abilities

**Hardened Bark:** Attacks that don't burn or chop his body have their Harm decreased by -1.

**Dreadful Vines:** Strong snake-like vines sprout out of his head. They latch onto whatever he is grappling [enemies are at -2 to **Avoid Harm** while in close combat].

**Combat [3], Influence [1], Magic [1]**

### Combat [Considerable]

- ◊ Take multiple blows without flinching or feeling pain.
- ◊ Throws himself against an opponent to grapple them.
- ◊ Uses a vine to strangle someone.

### Influence [Weak]

- ◊ Track someone down for Authar.

### Magic [Weak]

- ◊ Whisper a warning that reaches Authar's ears anywhere he might be.

### Attacks

Kalate will use a handgun to shoot at the characters. Once he runs out of bullets or the Illusion is broken (whichever happens

first), he will jump into close combat where he most shines.

**Handgun:** Double tap [2] [Distance: room, fires two shots against a single target]; Shot to the arm/leg [Serious Wound] [Distance: room, the victim loses movement of a limb].

**Unarmed:** Punch & Kick [1] [Distance: arm]; Grapple [0] [Distance: arm, victim must **Act Under Pressure** to get free].

**Vines:** Strangulation [2] [Distance: arm, victim must be in a grapple with Kalate; PCs have to break free or fall unconscious.]; Swing wildly [1] [Distance: arm, vines flail recklessly around Kalate, PCs in close proximity have -1 to **Avoid Harm**].

### Wounds & Harm Moves

**Wounds:** ○○○○○ ☠

- ◊ The tree bark is smashed, his flesh looks like fresh wood.
- ◊ He revels in the thrill of the hunt, discharging adrenaline. He growls and screams in excitement.
- ◊ He bleeds gluey sap that attaches itself to the characters and the environment. PCs caught in it have -1 ongoing in all rolls that require mobility.
- ◊ Die. The vines dangle dead from the top of his head. Some turn against him, strangling Kalate for he has put them in danger.

## Lycian (Nancy Winger)

In the Illusion, her name was Nancy Winger. She watched her family murdered by Authar and remembered what she was. She crawled in front of him and begged for forgiveness. She is now part of his pack. There is an APB out for her, and she is filed as a missing person.

She looks like a middle-class housewife in her 40s, but her clothes are dirty, her hair is a mess, and she is strangely swollen. Her feral nature is bleeding through the Veil, and rustling bisses pour from her mouth. She is crooked and walks with snapping movements in-between the limps and angry growls. Beyond the Illusion, her true form is a swollen and spongy leech-like humanoid creature that feeds on blood.

**Roleplaying Lycian:** Change positions with sudden movements. Lean over the table, raising and lowering your body in uncontrollable jerks.

**Home:** Gaia.

**Creature Type:** A hunter from Gaia serving Authar.

### Abilities

**Blood Drinker:** Heals one to three wounds whenever she drinks the blood of her enemies.

**Slippery:** Her body is made of bloody, soft flesh. Attempts to grapple her suffer -2 penalty.

**Combat [3], Influence [1], Magic [1]**

### Combat [Considerable]

- ◊ Slip away from someone's grip.
- ◊ Project blood directly onto the enemy's face.
- ◊ Use her blood to force others to slip and fall.

# ΑΜΕΡΑΗ

## Influence [Weak]

- ◆ Track someone down for Authar.

## Magic [Weak]

- ◆ Absorb a small object into her body.

## Attacks

Lycian is a vicious hunter who prefers to fight barehanded, clawing and biting. She will grab people and put her mouth towards their throat to drink their blood.

**Unarmed:** **Punch, kick, and claw** [1] [Distance: arm]; **Dive Attack** [1] [Distance: room, jumps at the victim knocking them over]; **Grapple** [0] [Distance: arm, victim must *Act Under Pressure* to get free].

**Fangs:** **Bite** [3] [Distance: arm, victim must be in a grapple with her. Victim is at a -1 to *Avoid Harm* against the bite. If failed, she will tear through flesh and cause profuse bleeding]; **Drink Blood** [0] [Distance: arm, victim must be bleeding or have exposed wounds. She heals one to three wounds by drinking the victim's blood].

## Wounds & Harm Moves

### Wounds: OOOOO ☠

- ◆ The projectiles shot against her are pushed out of her body. Any wounds suffered are slowly healed.
- ◆ Bleeds profusely, splashing blood everywhere she touches.
- ◆ Briefly screams in agony before using an exposed bone of hers to stab an enemy: **Cut up** [2] [Distance: arm].
- ◆ Dies. Dissolves into a pool of blood.

# ΜΑΤΘΕΟΣ

Little is known about Mattheus other than he has always been a cool dude that makes art — mainly poetry and music. He has always been a good friend to the PCs, but there have always been weird rumors of his death, even when he's alive and well. At the start of the game, he is unhinged and drowning in Madness. As the time passes, he may be more recollected and helpful.

**Roleplaying Mattheus:** Look scared, stumble through your words, refuse to elaborate further. In reality, you don't know how to make sense of what you have experienced.

**Combat:** Mattheus is weakened and cannot do much to defend himself other than run and scream.

Amerah is the mother of the player characters. In this incarnation, she was Elaine Thompson. When Authar attacked and murdered her family, she froze and could do nothing in response. She is weakened, shocked, and pale. "Elaine" barely speaks and remembers close to nothing about this incarnation's past. She senses the bond between her and the PCs, which is more than enough to harbor feelings of safety and trust among each other.

**Roleplaying Amerah:** Look away from the PC's eyes in shame. Cry whenever the PCs take care of and reassure her. Offer whatever gentleness you can.

# ΛΕΣΛΙ ΜΟΥΛΔΕΡ

Leslie is a Magician who mastered Madness, but chose to branch out into Dream magic. She is still learning, but certainly knows her ways around Limbo and the lore of Elysium Gods. She is capable of creating (and destroying) simple dreamworlds based on the memories of others. Within these worlds, she fishes for repressed memories as a way to build her knowledge about the divine capabilities humankind possesses. By putting her subjects into a deep state of hypnosis (or using drugs to enhance their dreaming stages), she is able to exert full control over minor creatures and humans that happen to be inside of these worlds. For most people, these experiences are nothing but vivid daydreams caused by an expert psychiatrist and hypnotist.

**Roleplaying Leslie:** Seek to create rapport by changing ever so slightly to mimic the PCs' gestures and feelings. Talk firm yet tenderly, and never dismiss someone's pain. You want to be liked and trusted — it is easier to control the dreams of someone who looks up to you.

**Combat:** Right now Leslie is completely focused on Dream magic, and she has not shed a single drop of energy to train for combative encounters. Authar's trap is a peculiar spell she has dreamed of over and over, but that is as far as she goes in that respect. If she senses that someone will harm her, she puts up wards to prevent them from ever reaching her. These wards are a mix of Madness and Dream, and cause horrifying nightmares that only cease when the attacker gives up.

# ΜΙΛΑΝ ΒΕΝΚΙΚ

Milan was once a close friend to Amerah and Authar. Although he was trapped in the Illusion, he learned of his true nature early into his enslavement. Each subsequent incarnation has become similarly aware at an early age. This is one of the reasons he has managed to stay one step ahead of his hunter over the millennia, successfully avoiding him for most of the incarnations' lifetimes.

**Roleplaying Milan:** Look sleepy. Relax your eyes, talk slowly and with some swagger, and be clumsy to reflect the presence of narcotics in his body. Milan can be charming, but he is scared too. Act as if you've heard a weird noise somewhere and make a point of seeing sign of Authar's presence everywhere.

**Combat:** Milan's current incarnation is focused on making music and using drugs, which render him fairly non-confrontational. He knows how to throw punches, but would rather not fight.

# HANDOUTS

## **Article: The Joshua Bailey Murder**

**The New York Globe, Thursday the 29th of September, 2022.**

Police are looking for witnesses regarding a gruesome murder in Mott Haven this Thursday.

Police discovered the body of Joshua Bailey, 37, on the floor of his home on St Ann's Avenue around 2:15 a.m. They were initially called to the scene for a suspected domestic incident.

The District Attorney's Office confirmed that Joshua Bailey had been murdered in an especially savage way. There were no other human victims but the three dogs that lived in the apartment were dismembered by unknown methods.

Neighbors told our reporter that Joshua Bailey was a solitary man who was known for peculiar behavior. He was, however, friendly and stayed out of trouble.

"Has this neighborhood not had enough crime and sadness?" resident Juan Lopez commented.

The lead inspector told our reporter that they are looking for a tall, caucasian male who jumped from the apartment window three stories up and disappeared into the night. "He must have been covered in blood from head to toe. If anyone saw anything, or may know where the suspected murderer went, please contact the police."

## **Article: The Winger Family Murder**

**The New York Globe, Tuesday the 18th of October, 2022.**

A father (Mason), his son (Thomas), and disabled step-daughter (Felicity) of the Winger family were found savagely murdered in their home at 51A Greene St on Monday night. The mother of the family, Nancy Winger, is missing, believed to have been kidnapped. The victims were discovered by a close friend to the family, said sources close to police.

"I'm devastated that something like this can happen here. This is the good part of town. How are we supposed to feel safe now?" says a neighbor to the NY Globe, declining to share his name.

A police spokeswoman at the scene called the incident "sadistic" and "barbaric" in nature. She added that while no suspect has been taken into custody in connection with the homicides, there was no immediate risk to the public. "This is clearly an isolated incident."

The police are searching for the mother of the family, Nancy Winger, 42, who they suspect was abducted. As of now, they have no motives or witnesses. The murders are supposed to have happened sometime around 11pm.

## **Article: The Michael Vincent Murder**

**The New York Globe, Tuesday the 1st of November, 2022.**

A brutal assault took place early Wednesday morning on New Dock St, close to Brooklyn Bridge. The victim, war veteran Michael Vincent, 29, was chased and attacked by one or more unknown assailants.

Police arrived at the scene and scared off the attackers. Vincent was rushed to Elmhurst Hospital, but couldn't be saved. According to the witnesses, he had suffered severe physical trauma.

The violence is believed to be gang-related.

## **Police Report: Joshua Bailey**

**Victim:** Joshua Bailey, 37. Taxi driver.

**Location:** 215 St Ann's Ave, Mott Haven, The Bronx, NY.

**Time of death:** Around 02:15 a.m. Thursday the 29th of September 2022.

**Cause of death:** Crushed skull, severe bodily trauma. Eyes gouged out.

- [1] Intruder broke open the front door with tremendous force.
- [2] The victims had three dogs that had been killed with sadistic cruelty.
- [3] No sign of a murder weapon.
- [4] The perpetrator jumped out of the window onto the parking lot three floors below.
- [5] A witness on the street described him as a tall, white, male with long hair and beard. Despite being described as covered in blood, he disappeared into the night leaving no trail behind.
- [6] Fingerprints match those on the Winger and Vincent crime scenes.

## **Police Report: Winger Family**

**Murder Victims:** Mason Winger 48 (Bank manager), Thomas Winger 12 (Student), Felicity Winger 8 (Student).

**Kidnapping Victim:** Nancy Winger, 42. (Boutique owner).

**Location:** 51 Greene St, Manhattan. NY.

**Time of death:** Around 11 p.m. Monday the 17th of October 2022

**Cause of death:** Extreme bodily trauma with ripped throats. Dismemberment and extreme blood loss.

- [1] Fingerprints match those on the Bailey and Vincent crime scenes.
- [2] Some of the spilled blood seems to have been removed by the Murderer (soaked up, or in other ways drained) since it is missing from the crime scene.
- [3] A grainy picture of a security camera shows a tall muscular man with long hair and beard entering the building at 10.54 p.m.
- [4] The same man leaves the building at 11.47 p.m. together with Nancy Winger who walks obediently behind him. She is believed to have been abducted.

## **Police Report: Michael Vincent**

**Victim:** Michael Vincent, 29. (Homeless veteran).

**Location:** 3-99 New Dock St, Brooklyn, NY.

**Time of death:** Pronounced dead at 05:45 a.m. Tuesday the 1st of November 2022 at Elmhurst Hospital.

**Cause of death:** Extreme blood loss and bodily trauma, intestines had been pulled out of the body.

- [1] The victim was chased along the east river industrial area towards the Brooklyn Bridge.
- [2] At 5:26am, an anonymous call alerted 911 regarding a possible assault.
- [3] A squad car was sent to New Dock St. It arrived on the scene at 5:31am.
- [4] The police officers interrupted the assault, and shots were fired. The perpetrator, a tall, long-haired man, fled the scene.
- [5] Another person at the scene, a blond middle-aged woman, disappeared before she could be questioned.
- [6] One pair of fingerprints match those of the Winger and Bailey crime scenes.
- [7] Another pair of fingerprints found at the scene matches those of the believed to be Nancy Winger.

## **APB: The Murderer**

- [1] Forensic evidence has tied the same perpetrator to the Winger, Vincent and Bailey crime scenes.
- [2] Description from a witness, police reports, and grainy security camera footage describe a tall, muscular man close to his 50s. He is white, has long dark gray hair, and a beard. He has an unkempt appearance and a distinct smell.
- [3] He is considered armed and extremely dangerous.
- [4] The murderer is believed to have kidnapped Nancy Winger and may hold her hostage.
- [5] The suspect was spotted in Central Park twice

# ΨΥΤΕΡ (THEΛ)

## • Drug Addict

You are addicted to all sorts of drugs, especially opioids. *In the first game session and whenever you have been using, or have the opportunity to use, roll +0:*

(15+) You are in control of the urge, for now.

(10-14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(-9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM may spend Hold to make a Move for your addiction. For example, you cannot resist using the drug, run out of drugs, become indebted to a dangerous person, put yourself in danger while under the influence of drugs, or ruin something important to you – like a relationship – while under the influence.

## • Body Awareness

Your body and mind are as one. Whenever you perform acrobatic or agile feats, **roll +Perception**:

(15+) Choose one option.

(10-14) Choose one option, but you expose yourself to danger or incur a cost.

(-9) Choose one option, but something goes very wrong. The GM makes a Move.

### Options:

- ◊ Escape bindings or restraints.
- ◊ Get past an obstacle (creature or object).
- ◊ Get into or make it through a space you normally wouldn't be able to.

# ΣΑΝΤΙΔΟ (ΣΙΝ)

## • Mental Compulsion: Protect Your Honor

You cannot bear the idea of being belittled, taken advantage of, disrespected, or challenged without consequence. You must defend it and demand respect, whatever it takes. *In situations where your honor is challenged, roll +0:*

(15+) You control your compulsions and can focus on other things.

(10-14) You become distracted and take -1 ongoing to all rolls until you have removed yourself from the situation or succumbed to your compulsion, taking any actions it demands of you.

(-9) You become completely obsessed with your compulsion.

If you focus on anything else, reduce **Stability (-2)**.

## • Rage

When in combat, you may awaken your inner rage. Lose **Stability (-1)** and mark 1 Rage. Every time you get a wound and every time you defeat a foe, increase Rage (+1). Rage lasts until the end of the combat.

During combat, you may spend 1 Rage to choose 1 Edge:

- ◊ *Brutal assault:* take +1 Harm to your attack.
- ◊ *Ignore the pain:* take +2 to **Endure Injury**.
- ◊ *Lost in frenzy:* shake off and ignore psychological or supernatural influence.

# WEAPONS

## Unarmed

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ◊ Punch, kick, and tear [1]
- ◊ Lock [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]
- ◊ Shift [0] [you create distance between yourself and the target through a throw, body check, or push]
- ◊ Disarm [0] [you remove an object your opponent held in their hand]
- ◊ Excessive force [2] [focus entirely on killing your target, disregarding your own safety]

## Edged Weapons

**Examples:** knife, stiletto, dagger.

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ◊ Cut, slice, and stab [2]
- ◊ Edge at the throat [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]

## Crushing Weapons

**Examples:** baseball bat, hammer, crowbar.

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ◊ Pummel, maul, and crush [2]
- ◊ Knock down [1] [the target falls to the ground]
- ◊ Knock out [1] [target is knocked out; PCs must successfully **Endure Injury** to avoid getting *knocked out*]

## Handgun

**Distance:** arm/room

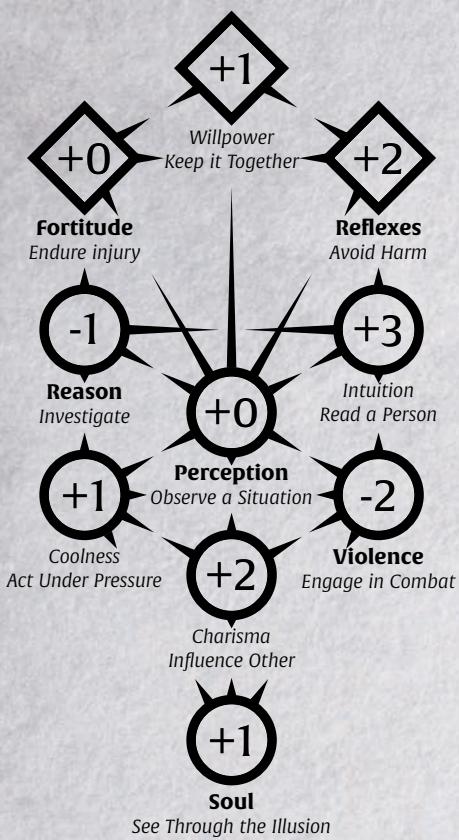
**Attacks:**

- ◊ Combat shooting [2] [-1 Ammo]
- ◊ Overkill [3] [-2 Ammo]
- ◊ Multiple targets [2] [hit up to one additional target] [-3 Ammo]

**Ammo:** OOOO

# WYNTER

## • Attributes



## • Who Am I?

You are Wynter, a young woman without a family who moved between countless foster homes and schools. As a young teen you ran away for the last time and have since then lived among sex workers, addicts, punks, and other New Yorkers on society's periphery.

You had dreams of being an artist, but your drug addiction got the best of you. You stumble through life jumping from one abusive relationship to the next, selling your body to afford new drugs, and feeling guilty for not being able to keep it together. Recently, you managed to break up with your ex-boyfriend who made money off of you, and found a loft where you can sleep for a cheap price.

Here you have your true friends, a whole clowder of stray cats that keeps you company. You still have trouble paying the rent, and your addiction often robs you of the little scraps you have left. Yet, you always find a way to feed the animals.

You don't have many prospects in life. You tried to get clean again and again, but you always fall back into your old habits. Your likely destiny is to die of an overdose like many of your friends — yet you cannot help but dream of escaping the city. You want to flee into nature, see vast forests, swim with the fish, and climb impossibly tall mountains. These are nothing but dreams, however.

## • The Visions

You are, slowly but surely, losing your grip on reality. It might be the drugs... or not. Sometimes it happens in the middle of the day, other times you have terrible nightmares. Your dreams of escaping into the wilderness are plaguing you. You see sewers overflowing with dark water, red leaves drifting in the air when no tree is nearby, and muffled squeals in the dark. Often you taste blood in your mouth. You feel you're being watched.

You use drugs to stifle these visions, and you use the visions to excuse the drugs. This vicious cycle has to end somehow, but life is just too unbearable to sober up right now.

## • Wounds

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Serious Wounds (-1 ongoing) | Stabilized   |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/> |

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Critical Wound (-1 ongoing) | Stabilized               |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## • The Elysian Fields

About a year ago you visited a hidden bar called The Elysian Fields. Your memories of it are vague, but you still know generally where the bar is located. It is a run down place where junkies and weirdos feel at home, you among them. You ended up in conversation with a gray-clad older man. He told you that soon your life would change irrevocably — but you don't remember how. You should go see him again sometime now that you've started losing your grip. He was probably as high as you, but for some reason those words have etched themselves into your mind.

## • Stability

|            |                                    |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Composed   |                                    |
| Uneasy     | <b>Moderate stress:</b>            |
| Unfocused  | -1 to Disadvantage rolls           |
| Shaken     | <b>Serious stress:</b>             |
| Distressed | -1 <i>Keep it Together</i>         |
| Neurotic   | -2 to Disadvantage rolls           |
| Anxious    | <b>Critical stress:</b>            |
| Irrational | -2 <i>Keep it Together</i>         |
| Unhinged   | -3 to Disadvantage rolls           |
|            | +1 <i>See Through the Illusion</i> |
| Broken     | The GM makes a Move                |

## • Relations

**Santiago [1]:** He has always been in your social circles and you sort of see him as a big brother. He helped you with one of your exes who tried to press you for money. He had a violent upbringing and can never say no to earning money, pulling women (though he never tried it with you), or increasing his reputation. He was the head of a small gang last time you heard, and you know that attitude and respect is important to him.

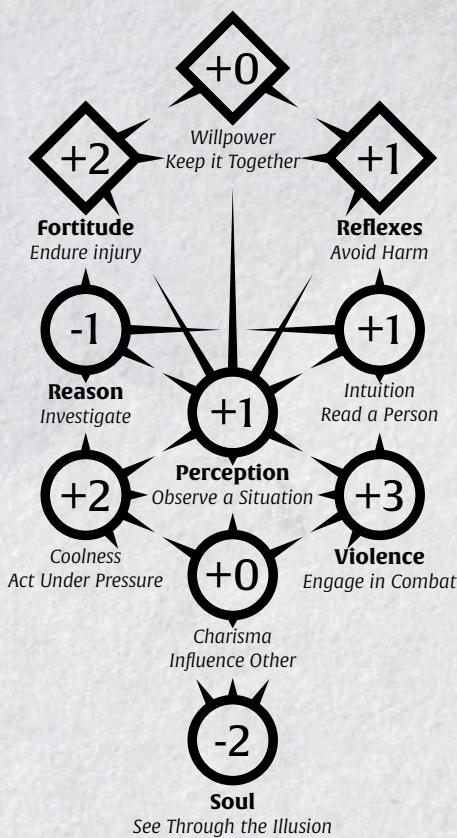
**Matthewus [0]:** A friend from the street. He often gave you a place to stay, but was far too kind and easy to manipulate. You used him to get money, and you got him hooked on fentanyl. You have not seen, or been able to contact, him for a few weeks now, and rumors are that he is dead from an overdose. You wish you could undo what was done. He did not deserve that.

**Rell [0]:** Your ex-boyfriend, former drug dealer, and pimp that you still owe some money. He is a fixer that can get you most things. For an asshole, he is quite decent.

**Clowder of Cats [1]:** The cats give you warmth and comfort..

# SANTIAGO

## • Attributes



## • Who Am I?

You are Santiago, a young man who grew up on the streets. The city is your home and your concrete jungle. You led a life of crime and did some time in prison, but you know the nature of the game and how to stay on top of the food chain. You got power by claiming it, not by asking. You did not back down, you demanded respect, and punished those that did not abide by your rules. Everyone on the streets knew your name. It was enough to inspire fear in the hearts of others. You were the leader of the Bridge Park Projects gang, also known as BPP. You despise weakness, and the members that could not cut it were pushed out and humiliated.

You lived like a king with women at your feet and men willing to die for you. You bathed in hard cash, wore disgustingly expensive watches, got massages for the stress on your neck from piles of gold chains, drove nice cars, and demanded that others refer to you as "sir". Then everything came toppling down when the nightmares began. It was all too quick: you saw things that shouldn't be there and dreamt of sickenly situations. It wasn't long before paranoia hit you like a tidal wave. You felt watched, hunted, followed.

You had a terrible meltdown at the height of your power. While meeting your crew, you saw something so wicked your mind refuses to acknowledge it. The one thing you are able to remember is a shadowy presence suddenly falling over you. You begged, cried, and even pissed yourself in front of everyone. Risher, the second in charge, talked about it with the crew and decided to kick you out. You were too out of it to lead them.

You lost everything in a matter of weeks. Money, status, friends, they all fled. Now you live in a car, subjected to an emotion you haven't felt in years: helplessness. You thought about putting a gun to your head and ending it, but you're not a coward. You are a fighter. So you grit your teeth and fight through. You hope to carve back a place in the gang again, if only the visions would stop.

## • Wounds

Serious Wounds (-1 ongoing)

Stabilized

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Critical Wound (-1 ongoing)

Stabilized

- 

## • The Visions

You have this fucked up nightmare again and again where you are cutting into a body in some deep forest — except that it's your own body. Then there are the visions of a shadow falling over you, just like the moment you lost everything. Sometimes you hear screams and taste blood in your mouth. You just know that you're being hunted — but by what?

## • Stability

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Composed             |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy               | <b>Moderate stress:</b>            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfocused | -1 to Disadvantage rolls           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaken               | <b>Serious stress:</b>             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distressed           | -1 <b>Keep it Together</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic             | -2 to Disadvantage rolls           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious              | <b>Critical stress:</b>            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational           | -2 <b>Keep it Together</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged             | -3 to Disadvantage rolls           |
|   | +1 <b>See Through the Illusion</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broken               | The GM makes a Move                |

## • Relations

**Wynter [1]:** She runs in your circles, and you've always liked her. You've never tried to pick her up — she feels too much like a little sister. She's had several older boyfriends that have treated her like shit. You helped her rough one of them up. The street has treated her harshly, and you've heard that she is heavily addicted to an assortment of drugs. Too bad. She could have been someone.

**Mattheus [0]:** A friend from your youth, you grew up on the streets together. He was always loyal to you, but gang life did not suit his artistic, sensitive side. Over the last couple of years, he got hooked on heavy drugs and is nothing more than a thin, shivering junkie. Before losing your throne, you were forced to push him away to maintain face.

**Robert 'Bob' Burge [0]:** A low-ranking police detective, too fond of hookers, blow and gambling to be able to climb the ranks. He accepts bribes to leak information and make material evidence disappear.

**Nichelle [0]:** Your ex. She is pregnant. The kid is probably yours, but you can't be sure. She doesn't want anything to do with you, other than hounding you for money.

**Goya [1]:** One of your most loyal men. He kept close to you even after Risher took over the gang and helped you with money, contacts, and rumors. You know for a fact he would take a bullet for you.