

CONVENTION BOOK :

PROGENITORS



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PROLOGUE: RECOVERY



"Thank you for seeing me."

Thin, wiry frame, rumpled suit, grey hair at his temples: the man has seen better days. He sits down opposite me in the midst of coffeehouse chatter and makes a face. "It's not like I had much of a choice. Reid sunk those recall codes deep. I hear the call, I obey." He looks me up and down, and the milk steamer squeals in the background. "Although I was expecting a retrieval team." The grizzled old man glances around at all the college students, sizing them up as potential undercover goons.

"I'm afraid I am the retrieval team," I tell him, and when he looks surprised and a little hurt, I shrug into my overstuffed armchair. "Things have changed."

He looks me over again, as if he could pick apart my DNA and puzzle out what kind of threat I pose to him. His lips split, revealing perfect teeth. "You know I can kill you before you can blink."

I bob my head over my steaming cup. "And everyone else in here, I imagine. Cave in the windows, maybe, cut us all to ribbons? But you don't want to do that."

"What makes you say that, Doctor...?"

"Talley," I offer readily. "And should I call you Victor? Your file didn't contain many personal details,

and I only imagine you've been using a different name the last few years..." He gives me a slow nod of assent and I try to take a deep breath without it being obvious. Running at the mouth like that will just make me look nervous, and he doesn't need to know I'm terrified.

I lean a little forward as I marshal myself again. "Anyway. You don't want to kill everybody in here for two reasons. First, you're going to assume I've got myself backed up somewhere, and if you prove yourself dangerous, I'll come at you with a couple HIT Marks next time."

"I assume nothing," he says, smiling thinly. "If they sent one young doctor instead of a retrieval team, something is wrong."

I mirror his grin. "I'm not as young as I look, Victor. And then there's the other reason you won't turn this Starbucks into a bloodbath tonight: you don't want to." I nod to the manilla folder that's lying on the low table between us. Inside is a collection of photographs, a sequence of gruesome massacres spanning ten years.

He doesn't pick it up.



"You've left a broad, bloody path behind you, Victor," I tell him, "but they're never innocents, are they? Drug-running gangs, gunrunning mobsters, corrupt politicians. Never a score of undergrads bingeing on caffeine and cramming for midterms."

The man's eyes slit, as if he has taken offense at my implication that he has a moral code. "What do you want, Talley?" he grates.

I try to give him as trustworthy a smile as I can manage. "I want to help you, Victor. I want to bring you in out the cold."



"Reid told me he wanted to help me," is all he says, his eyes focused my reaction.

I purse my lips with distaste and make my pitch. "Your telekinetic abilities kick up a good deal of pattern rejection; your file says that you require regular injections of spinal fluid. I assume your activities," I say, nodding again at the manila folder full of crimson photos, "have been you harvesting on your own?"

A subtle nod from him.

"We can synthesize it for you in the lab. No need to kill for it." Without thinking, I add, "And you know what we make would be, well, better quality than anything you'd get from humans on the street."

He is quiet for a long moment. "And in return?"

"Well, we'd want you back in Damage Control," I say, and then hurry to amend myself. "But as I've said: things have changed. It's a new kind of Damage Control, not like before. Only... reputable targets. I can guarantee you that..."

"Reid gave me similar guarantees," the man interrupts, with that same mirthless smile. "Where is Reid, anyway?"

"Dead."

"You're sure of that?" he asks, and for a moment I think I might see a spark of hope in his eyes. "Your kind tends to keep backups."

I sink back into my armchair, nodding away flashes of memory. "Positive."

We sit in silence, not looking at each other, for a long while. Finally, he says, "Payroll. I need six figures."

"Low six figures," I counter, too quickly, but smile nonetheless. He's in.



When I leave the coffeehouse, Konrad is waiting for me, leaning up against the wall as if he owns the place. For all I know, he does — I learned long ago to never underestimate the financial reaches of a Syndicate agent.

He disengages himself from the brick and falls into step behind me. "Doctor Talley."

I don't turn. "Mister Rupasinghe."

"My partners were expecting a shipment from you yesterday," he presses, striding alongside me. "I hope nothing untoward has happened to your lab."

We stop at an intersection and I turn to him, trying not to let my irritation show. I don't have time for this. "Nothing has changed, I've just been busy. You'll get your drugs, Konrad."

He rolls his eyes, indicating the bystanders surrounding us. He'd rather talk about 'shipments' than 'drugs.' I make a mental note to refer to it next time as a 'giant crate of dope.' "We have a contract which stipulates a delivery schedule—" he begins.

"So we get penalized the five percent that the contract calls for," I hiss. The light changes and we all step off the curb and trundle across the street.

He hurries after me. "They're not feeling punitive, Talley. Our partners are simply concerned. And we can put that 5% to good use, like whatever you were

discussing with that gentleman in the coffeehouse."

I ignore the implied question. "I had other business, Konrad," I say, raising my volume to watch him wince. "I couldn't spend a few hours in my lab making you a giant crate of dope."

The other pedestrians give us a sidelong look as we reach the other side of the street and they all scurry away from us as quickly as possible. Konrad looks daggers at me and is about to retort when both of our phones start buzzing.

He taps his earpiece while I glance at my phone's display. We grunt in unison.

"My car's right over here," he says, and I turn my steps to follow him.



On the way, the other half of our amalgam messages us that they're kicking in the door and going in. Five minutes later, we pull up to the warehouse in question and we still haven't had an update. Their empty car is parked across the deserted, silent street. Something's wrong.

Trace DNA leads us to a back door, which hangs limply off its hinges. The trail evaporates once it crosses the threshold, though, with the staticky feedback I've come to associate with Traditionalist methods.

Konrad looks from my scrambling scanner to the door, then spears me with a look. "What are you waiting for? You're the heavy. Take point."

So we go in. I key in a code on the scanner that activates gene sequences normally hidden in the unread introns of my DNA. My skin flushes and prickles, and then the familiar tug of potential Rejection hangs off of me. Body temperature spikes three degrees, but luckily it's cool inside the warehouse.

The rear of the place is all towering shelves stocked with crates. I'm dimly aware of Konrad recording the barcodes and muttering to himself, but sounds up ahead have the bulk of my attention. Two voices demanding answers, plus a third one moaning intermittently. That last might be Chris. Which leaves Parker unaccounted for. "Doesn't add up," I subvocalize. "Two Traditionalist schmucks don't take out Parker and Chris both, not in five minutes."

I wave back at Konrad to halt, then reach up to massage my temple. There's a little pinprick of pain as the sub-dermal cyst there ruptures, and I press the

retroviral cocktail that had been trapped within it closer to my orbital cavity and soon my vision starts to swim. Suddenly the room seems to bloom into color: rich greens, glowing yellows, and hot, bright, bloody reds. The corners of the room sink into cold, dark indigo. Our comrades' dissipating heat trail lights up before me, snaking through the labyrinth of shelves.

I spot the splash of cooling green on the ground two heartbeats too late; the click of a gun's hammer sounds from high above. A kill zone. I throw myself backwards on top of Konrad, and a torrent of bullets hammer across my back. It hurts like hell, but the chitin that presently spreads out from my spine and ribs turns what feels like hollow-tipped bullets into nothing more than blunt trauma.

Don't misunderstand — blunt trauma still hurts like a fucker.

With a snarl, I leap forty feet into the air, snatch the shooter from her perch atop the shelves, and hurl her down onto the concrete floor. Konrad has his snub-nose trained on her crumpled body, but it doesn't move again.

The other two Deviants start shouting, demanding their fallen sniper report what just happened. I start leaping, shelving unit to shelving unit, towards the red blotches I can see between the crates. Two of them standing over a third strapped to a cool chair. An open space in the middle of the warehouse. A fourth form crumpled on the ground, thrown over to the side, unmoving.

I come down on one of them like a ton of bricks, slamming his head against the floor before he knows

what's happening. He struggles, frantic and desperate, and I sweep his flailing knees off the floor and smash his face into the concrete again. He stills.

A knife at my throat. "You'd better pray that he's not dead," the other one hisses in my ear. The knife sparks and hisses with some sort of bound energy; nothing I want to test against my plating.

Guided by the crackling knife, I straighten up to standing. "He'll have a headache tomorrow," I tell her. "Your friend with the gun and the duck blind, though... don't think she's going to pull through."

The deviant spits a curse and is about to harangue me when the sharp report of Konrad's gun fills the warehouse. The woman's body shudders and her balance shifts; I whirl, striking the knife out of her hand. Two more strikes and she is flat on the ground with my foot on her neck.

Konrad crosses into the empty space, gun held at the ready, and checks Parker's pulse. "Alive."

Chris, face bloody and neck reeling, nods his head towards a short stack of crates by the freight door. One of them has been crowbarred open, revealing nine identical glass globes filled with softly glowing water. "Found the stolen package."



The wife is on the couch when I get home, her pregnant dome of a belly keeping her fixed there. But she gives me a smile and motions for me to bend over and kiss her. "How was your day?"

I tuck myself in next to her, deflating against the cushions. "Today I recruited a mass murderer, cut a deal

"Healingwaters recovered from the Node your people took from us," the woman spits from under my foot. "Destined for our clinic downtown. We're only trying to help people here, can't you psychopaths see that?"

I step down on the woman's throat. "And when you're not here to administer the treatment, sweetie? What then? When they slather the salves, burn the incense, and drink the irradiated water... is it going to mend them? Or just make them more sick? The superstitious bullshit you peddle is not medicine."

She locks fierce eyes with me. "I have a right to believe in my own ways."

"Right up until your right to believe compromises the health of the people around you, sweetie. That's when I step in." With that, I cut off her windpipe; a few moments later she's unconscious. And I don't stop choking the vile Deviant; I just stare at her slack face and think about all the children she's "treated."

"Talley," Konrad says softly. I come back from that dark place, drop the charlatan, and turn to the others: Chris, now standing and rubbing his wrists; Konrad with a shoulder under Parker's arm. "Alright, let's clean this place up."

"Gladly."

with a monster, and... beat the shit out of someone I had a philosophical difference with."

She clucks understandingly. "Yeah, I noticed you didn't make it into the lab today."

"Lab?" I snort. "What's a lab?"

INTRODUCTION: TROUBLING DIAGNOSIS

The Technocracy is sick.

Look at the Union. The Dimensional Anomaly didn't just cut us off at the metaphorical head; it left infections in our body politic. The New World Order hallucinates about victory while our glorious Union fights against itself. The Syndicate scratched at the same old wounds, letting them become infected over and over again. Iteration X and the Void Engineers stumble around with severed limbs.

Yes, the Technocracy is sick. But we're here to make it better. Not just well, but better than it was.

Never before have we been in a position to be the Union's heroes. The Consensus accepts our ideas more and more. The Masses look to genetic engineering,

prosthetic technology, advancements in pharmacology, all with the same wonder they once did with space exploration. People live longer, and there's a growing outcry for them to live *healthier*.

Our interconnected world allows people to not only exchange research and theories at speeds once restricted to Enlightened scientists, but also the speed to return critiques of those ideas. This generation of Masses are becoming smarter faster than any before it — if you don't believe me, watch streaming TED talks about neurobiology, prosthesis design, DNA, experimental agriculture, and so on.

The integration between man and machine, things only possible once in science fiction and joint Progenitor-Iteration X Horizon laboratories, speeds ahead like a

bullet train. The Masses are starting to embrace neuroscience advancements. So even if you don't understand what's being said or shown to you, you can't help but feel like you're living in the future while watching them.

And you are living in the future. Our future. A better future forged by the Union. And if the Union is to remain the light keeping the darkness from the Masses, the beacon of progress, then we Progenitors need to step up. We cannot let the Union die.

But our road is not easy. We are beset upon all sides by dangerous foes. The vile Traditions undermine the health and safety of humanity over foolish, superstitious ideas like chakra, homeopathy, faith healing, ki, all that mystical garbage. When we're afraid, we want to be sold a magic pill, and fuck if the Traditions aren't good at selling their sugarcoated poison.

They aren't the worst of our problems. Marauders and Nephandi plague us still. (No doubt anti-vaccination propaganda is part of a Nephandus plot.) Other Reality Deviants still course around, viruses in the blood stream that seem to never die out. Even the Masses fight against us — there's political backlash from certain forms of genetic research, true Rejection against genetically modified foods.

So we haven't won as much as NWO would have us to believe. But we're the doctors of the Union. That makes us the doctors of the world. So scrub up — we've got intensive surgery ahead.

THEME: NEW HEROES AND OLD LINES



We Progenitors were comfortable in labs, working on the latest in clones, genetic monstrosities, and designer drugs. We enjoyed sitting in front of computers and lab equipment watching the mysteries of life reveal themselves to us. Sure, the Masses benefitted, but not because that was our mandate. No, we were a selfish and out of touch Convention.

And if we're going to be honest, we deserved to be a little selfish. The Progenitors are why the rest of the Conventions continue to live. But we clearly took it too far, becoming distant and forgetting our roots in the Hippocratic Circle.

Some of our younger scientists have broken the Progenitor stereotype of the lab tech monkeying with



DNA or neurochemistry by going out in the world. These self-proclaimed “action scientists” have taken upon themselves the job of getting the entire Consensus — not just the wealthiest nations — to buy into modern science and medicine. They go out and fight against Reality Deviants, putting their necks on the line for the rest of us. They explore parts of the world far from the comforts of vast budgets and coffee-fetching interns. They’re actively making the world a better place.



MOOD: TREATING THE FUTURE

No matter what you believe, the simple fact is we're all is working our asses off. There's no idle Progenitor resting on tenure — that's over. The old Administration's gone, and the new Shared Governance Council rewards continued results. So our new labs — space donated by our Void Engineer friends — are all a bustle with researchers and bold new experiments. And there're more of us out doing fieldwork than ever before, willingly even.

In other words: being the vanguards of humanity's health and wellbeing means shitty work hours. Resident doctors get more time off.

And we love it. We wouldn't be here if we didn't believe in a better world through chemistry.

GOING FORWARD

When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills.

—The Two Gentlemen of Verona, William Shakespeare



As with **Convention Book: N.W.O.**, this book is a love letter to **Mage: the Ascension** fans. This book is for those who love the Progenitors as the ones who hold life in their hands, who push the boundaries of biological science, and who strive for the perfection of humanity. And it's just as much for those who wanted to love them but were unsure how to make them work in a chronicle.

This book follows **Convention Book: N.W.O.**. Some of the things contained refer back to that volume: terminology, vibe of the Technocracy in the last decade, and a brewing Technocratic civil war that could happen at any moment. If you haven't read that

And they're pissing off those who remain of the old guard. It's not just a sense of youthful entitlement that's irritating — these kids are supposed to be doing real work and leaving the outside world to the Conventions designed for it. They're stepping on toes, stirring shit up, and making more enemies than friends. Hearts might be in the right place, but what they're doing is toxic to the ultimate goal: saving the Union.

Plenty point out that this division is a microcosm of the Union's friction and division. Not enough listen.

Part of treating the future is mending the Technocracy, bringing the other four houses back together. We're struggling physicians, trying every treatment we can think of to keep up with new and progressing symptoms. Some treatments are truly better for the Union. Some are placebos that are working for now. And some of those treatments would turn into poison if the rest of them were to discover what we're really doing.

But what we do, we do for their own good. Our good. Your good. Because if we fail, then humanity will be back in the dark ages, dabbling with leeches, crystals, mumbo jumbo chants, random potions — and that'll be the death of us all.

book, it shouldn't be too hard to pick up the concepts, but know it's a piece of a whole puzzle unveiling the present-day Union.

In short: the Avatar Storm (what any good Technocrat knows to call “the Dimensional Anomaly”) changed everything by severing the head of the Union. In the last decade, the Masses have become more interconnected — a massive game-changer for everyone, especially those trying to control and steer them. With all five Conventions suddenly under new leadership during a time of great change... yeah, that's going to go over *real smooth*.

What's that mean for your chronicle? How will you take these ideas and go forward? Will your Progenitors succeed in its goal to heal the Union, or will its medicine poison the Union and the world further?

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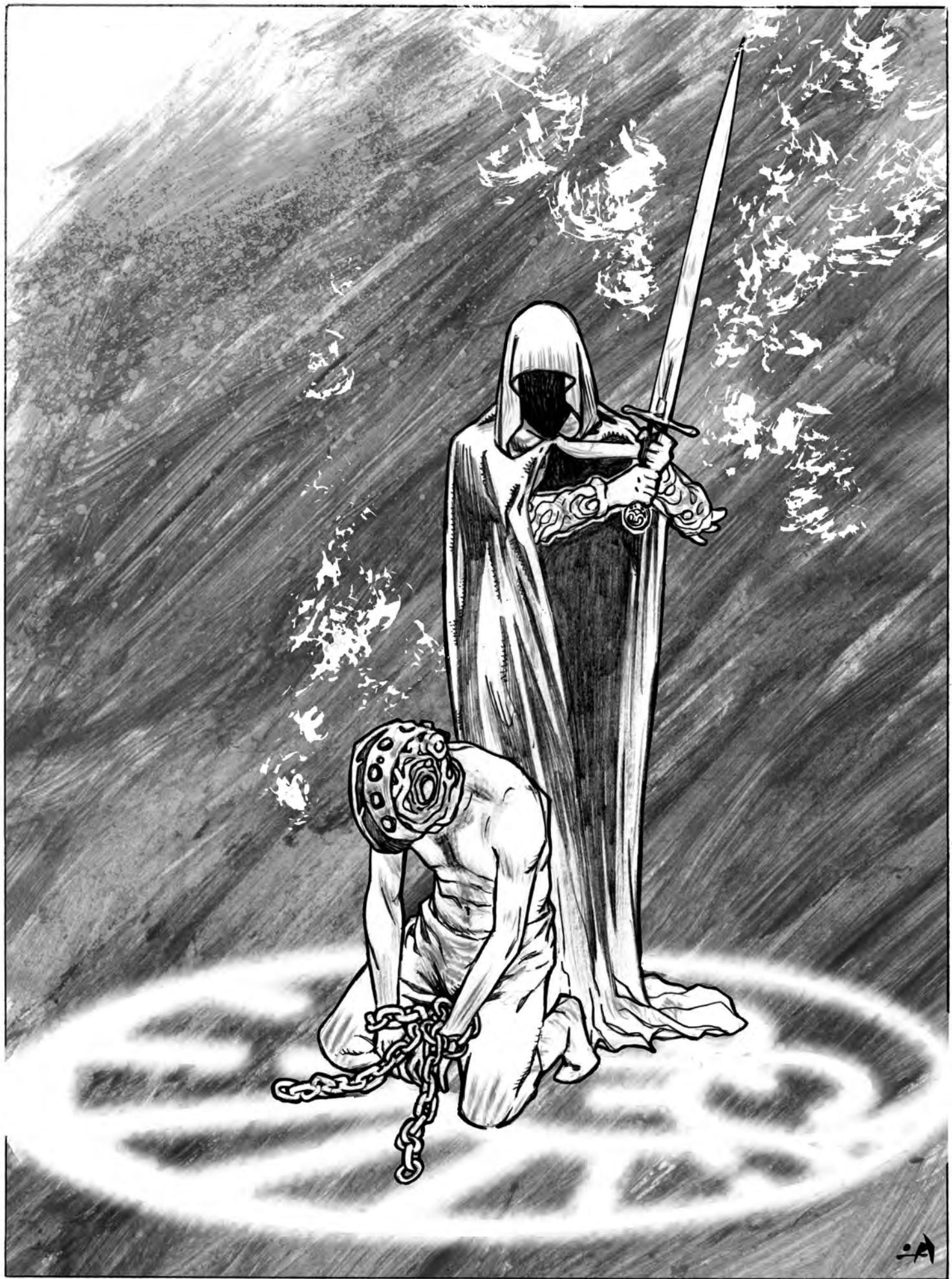
Continuing the Convention Book trend, this book is about the Progenitors as heroes – by no means perfect heroes. They honestly try. They aren't the mad scientists cackling wildly as they make horrific monsters and endless clones of foot soldiers. (Okay, there are some, but they're in the minority.)

Chapter One: Patient History will catch you up on the Progenitors' corner of the world since the Dimensional Anomaly. Their history is told from a point of view you haven't seen much of in the Technocracy: one of guilt. And you'll get to see how the Union's physicians see the other Conventions and the rest of the factions in the World of Darkness.

Chapter Two: Residency offers an understanding of the Convention, from their academic roots and structure to the individual Methodologies. That includes some you've never seen before – the low-ranking "micro-Methodologies" covering veterinary science, agriculture, ecology, and so on. You'll also get a good look at the new upstarts in the Convention: Applied Sciences.

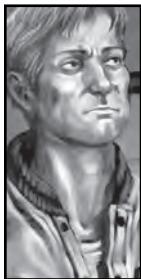
Chapter Three: Prescriptions gives players alike a host of options: Progenitor Procedures, gear, Enlightened drugs, implants and biological modifications, even having a genegineered creature in your amalgam. Storytellers aren't left out, with bits of Progenitor lore, advice on Progenitors in a mixed-troupe or as a mono-Convention troupe, and character templates.





CHAPTER ONE: PATIENT HISTORY

PROGENITORS TODAY



The last ten years hurt the Progenitors dearly, perhaps more than we have ever suffered. However, sometimes the best cure comes from the sharpest pain. We shall see.

DIAGNOSIS CRITICAL

You've heard the joke about the Progenitor who requisitioned a new lab and didn't order a door for it, right? Because he never leaves, ha ha ha. Here's another funny story: about half of the scientists in our Convention were working in off-world

laboratories when the Dimensional Anomaly hit. They don't have doors out of their labs any more, either. We don't generally find that joke funny these days.

The Dimensional Anomaly hit us hard, harder than most realize and certainly harder than we make known. The whole of the Administration was off-world. So were our brightest and most influential scientists. Our mentors, our friends, even our families are lost to us. They are all trapped; maybe dead, maybe driven mad by whatever is happening out there. Infrastructure, too — labs, gene archives, zero-G installations, entire biospheres, all of them promising new cures and new advances in

medicine — is now beyond our reach. We were cut off at the knees, and we're still stumbling around, pretending we're standing.

Which more or less describes the Union as a whole. We are fractured, starving, and bleeding out — not to mention delusional, since a large number of our colleagues have taken this as an opportunity to declare victory in the the so-called Ascension War. And with the hubris of victory comes the inevitable maneuvering for power in our brave new world. More than ten years of disarray has not recreated the Technocratic Union in the image of the modern world, no matter what NWO says. We don't have our thumbs pressing down on the Reality Deviants, we aren't secure in the halls of power, we don't have a lock on anything at all... and yet there are still those who are pointing their daggers inward, risking war within the Union.

The Progenitors has always been a support-minded, back-room Convention. We supply the rest of the Union with drugs, medical facilities, the odd sidekick, and clones. Lots and lots of clones. So while it is tempting to see our place in these shenanigans as pulling strings and subverting their leadership with Manchurian candidates and mind-bending drugs, that simply isn't the case.

(Not that our former Convention heads weren't tempted. And not that we are unable to subvert the Union's leadership if we wanted to. We're smart enough to know that would lead to disaster.)

I'd tell you that it's because we believe in the cause of the Union, that we don't believe for a second that whatever the Syndicate or NWO would build as a replacement would do as much good as what we already have, but that probably wouldn't be self-serving enough to be believed. So let's frame it this way: there are no Progenitors without the Technocratic Union. For as much as we provide the other Conventions, we are supplied with funding, with cover, with muscle and firepower that aren't easily available to us. If the Union falls, we lose.

So it falls to us to be the Union's doctors, to diagnose its diseases and to treat it as quickly and efficiently as we can. It's up to us to be the peacemakers, a position for which we are, if we're going to be honest, only marginally qualified for.

AGGRESSIVE TREATMENTS

Regardless of how rosy things might look on the surface, the stakes have never been higher for our Convention, the Union, perhaps even the world. A number of Progenitors turn to desperate measures to suit the times we live in.

APPLIED SCIENCES

If every cloud has a silver lining, the Dimensional Anomaly's is that it forced us out of the lab and into the world. Or rather, it swung a spotlight onto those of us who were already out in the world: doing fieldwork, treating diseases, even (if you can believe it) directly fighting threats to the Union. In the last ten years, though, the influence of these "field" Progenitors has markedly grown, as have their ranks.

These operatives seek out places with abnormal incidences of trouble, root out the underlying problem, and apply their science — Enlightened and mundane — to fashion a solution. Often that underlying problem turns out to be those goddamned Traditionalists, vampires, and similar Reality Disorders. But not always. With distressing frequency, field operatives find they're hunting Nephandi. Sometimes they turn out to be our own operatives gone rogue.

The old guard, burrowed deep in their labs, generally disdain these sorts of shenanigans — isn't this what HIT Marks are for? — and paid the "field kids" little mind. Then they started to see these young Turks winning influence, attention, and, worst of all, funding. The old guard sprang into bureaucratic action, loudly proclaiming their admiration for this important, difficult work, and insisting on the need for a distinct "Applied Sciences" Methodology. The intent was to marginalize these young punks' funding by putting them in the corner.

The Progenitors in the field would have been neatly filed away into irrelevance if it wasn't for the Shared Governance Council of 2008. The Council surprised everyone when they decided to demonstrate a little vision and leadership. They struck down the Applied Sciences reorganization and kept the "agitators" right where they wanted them: in the three nigh-moribund Methodologies (with a few in the smaller, cousin Methodologies). Things have been *interesting* ever since.

THE HEALTHCARE TURF WAR

No matter how careful we are, we make missteps and get drawn into inter-Convention squabbling. The greatest of these, of course, is the healthcare turf war. In brief, the New World Order has been steadily working on installing universal healthcare across the globe. These efforts give us (and the rest of the Union) unprecedented access everywhere they take root. At the same time, however, the Syndicate has worked to convert healthcare into a profit-driven industrial juggernaut. The revenues from the healthcare industry account for much of our funding. These two efforts run headlong into each other, with us caught in the middle.

In nations with universal healthcare, we have a free pass nearly everywhere and opportunities to examine and treat nearly anyone we need to. A Progenitor can always be a government doctor, ready to dispense a citizen's right to treatment.

In nations without such programs, our efforts are hampered by red tape and a crippling lack of unified infrastructure. Nearly every operation requires creating a new front for our operatives to work out of, and fear of healthcare costs constantly interfere with the Masses' willingness to cooperate with us.

Worst of all, of course, are those nations with "compromise" programs, where the Syndicate and NWO make a show of working together, resulting in programs where no one understands anything and fear runs rampant. Too many who would seek our treatments don't simply because they don't want to risk running afoul of the healthcare system. There are those in our Convention who leverage this fear for their own convenience, but many worry that this is short-term thinking, destined to burn all of us.

Tempting as it may be to carpet the world with universal healthcare, we would see heavy cuts to the funding of all our programs, both in research and operations.

Syndicate "money-grubbing" funds essential work in cancer cures, Parkinson's treatments, stroke recovery drugs, and Rejection-free organ transplants. The good that will be done bringing these methods into the Consensus is plainly worth the minor pains created by the commodification of healthcare.

STATION YEMAJA

When the Anomaly came down, not everyone was trapped on the other side of the Gauntlet. A number of experiments and exceptionally augmented individuals happened to be Earthside, engaged in operations, being presented to scientific boards, or stationed here temporarily awaiting the next mission. Many were ill-suited to Consensual Reality. Fortunately, the Void Engineers had a number of undersea locations; ad-hoc refugee camps that quickly became permanent installations.

Work continues to adapt extraterrestrial projects to undersea facilities and to extract good research. The network of labs was rechristened Station Yemaja, after the Yoruban goddess of the sea (in the Void Engineer's tradition of looking up the names of gods of people of color to prove their multicultural credentials). Despite their politics, the Void Engineers continue to be val-



able allies in creating, maintaining, and defending these undersea facilities. This last bit is more important than we assumed, as the depths are far more populated with threats than our extraterrestrial constructs ever were.

PAST CRIMES, PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

The former Administration supervised more than our own ranks of Enlightened scientists. An incredible number of Extraordinary operatives and artificial constructs, many of which were called upon as the mysterious Damage Control, were also stranded by the Anomaly. Intrusion clones throughout the world were left without orders. Not only was Administration cut off, so were its myriad tentacles, fingers, and cat's paws.

When information and contact codes for these stranded agents turns up, approaching them is a dan-

gerous but profitable enterprise. Some are grateful to return to the fold; others have decided they like the small taste of freedom they've enjoyed. Yet others have found new homes, harbored by Traditionalists or worse. The thought of our former agents in the hands of the Nephandi is the stuff of Progenitor nightmares. Very real nightmares.

PROGNOSIS: UNCERTAIN

At the end of the day, it's hard to tell how much of what we do is short-term benefit in the face of looming collapse. If we count every patient treated, every cure found, even every murderer tracked down through forensic evidence, we may do a great deal of good. However, if the Union falls to civil war, our work will have been for naught.

AN ETHICAL HISTORY OF OUR NOBLE CONVENTION

To my fellows in the Shared Governance Council:

This came across my desk last week, submitted by a young Psychopharmacopoeist from Ethical Compliance. He shared with me a bold idea: our friends in the New World Order use revisionist history techniques to change hearts and minds. Our collective is in desperate need of that.

The attached file has been composed with what he referred to as "the Pascal Method" for optimal psychological reception. I ask you all to read and comment; I hope in doing so, you will agree with me that all new Progenitor candidates read this in orientation. It may be too late for the oldest of our number, but it is not too late to heal the Convention as a whole.

At the very least, a request from Ethical Compliance cannot go ignored.

*Health & prosperity,
Dr. Arun R. Singh
Governor Elect,
FACADE Engineer*

The Technocratic Union is a body suffering from a serious illness. But its heart still beats, and the body keeps breathing. In these difficult times, the Union needs the Progenitors more than ever. The New World Order thinks we've won the war, and the public performances each Convention puts on hides pain, anger, and disease. The Union can't lie to its physician. If we're going to prevent a war within this body, we will do what we have since the beginning, because we need the Union, and the Union needs us. We're going to make this Union healthier than the last generation left it.

Considering what some of the prior generation of Progenitors was like, that may be easier than we think. There are more biological sciences represented than ever before in our Convention. The newest crops of students are some of the youngest in Progenitor history. We have a better international presence and gender representation (and no, not just male and female) as a Convention than any other generation since the formation of the Hippocratic Circle. And we get to do our job during the most technologically progressive eras of human

history. It's easy to only see the grim and desperate things we deal with. But humanity's weathered plagues, wars, famine, the destruction of entire civilizations – we're up to the task of dealing with the here and now.

You hear a lot about history and ethics in Progenitor classrooms, but it's dry. It's clinical. I was 21 when I joined the Convention. Our struggle to living up to the *best* of what we're capable of has shaped my life. Sometimes, you're going to have to shut your textbooks and listen to very hard, uncomfortable truths.

Your generation of students has to struggle with more than mastering the Enlightened practice of biologic sciences. The origin of the situation we're in is complex, and ignorance could prove deadly.

The Mess We're In

The Progenitors and its brother Conventions have been fundamentally changed by a single event. As catastrophic as a stroke, the day of the Dimensional Anomaly is the day that changed us all. We *had* an Administration that called the shots, most of it off world. By the time we regained sense to mobilize, the entire Union had effectively lost its leadership, every off-world asset, and a number of difficult to access ones on earth. We lost family, friends, colleagues, and centuries of research and progress.

We slapped ourselves full of stimulants and put ourselves through the brutal hell of combat medicine that day. We didn't get time to mourn anyone, because we were too busy saving everyone else. Once the smoke had cleared and the remaining talking heads determined the "bad weather" was permanent, we did our best to pull ourselves together.

The brain of the Union was knocked offline and wracked in agonizing spasms of activity we can only pretend to understand. It's been over a decade, and we've cobbled together a functioning brain out of what leadership was left here alive. But every time we turn a damn corner there's a new round of complications.

The top-down model of Administration is dead to us. We have a Shared Governance Council now, which means everyone gets a measure of say. It can be a little chaotic when applied on a global scale, but it's still pretty breathtaking.

The Shared Governance Council

In shared governance, there is no power pyramid. At the end of the day, it's recognized that final Convention authority rests in the hands of the Progenitors who survived the Dimensional Anomaly. Their experi-

ence and understanding of Enlightened Science is why they're put into that position. But they delegate decision-making power. Lab heads and regional chiefs possess the primary responsibility to reach the decisions for matters of their expertise. Curriculum, promotions, training, how to direct research, where and when to send personnel – that's all in their hands, their responsibility, the power to handle these decisions delegated to them by the foremost minds of the Convention. The Progenitors have implemented a governmental model where people are recognized as competent, and empowered to *do their jobs*.

The top-down model used by the Administration was abolished post-Anomaly. The single nod to prior policy was the use of any candidates for Administration as the central hub of the Shared Governance Council. These surviving scientists are the remnants of a generation now presumed dead. The core of the Council sits in the center of overlapping circles of Progenitor groups, who share the burden of decision making with the Council. Representatives are elected by their Methodology, and these elections ratified by the whole of the Shared Governance Council. This new model of governance decentralized power in the Convention, gave micro-Methodologies a voice in Convention governance, and created a wider pool of leaders. The institution of terms that vary according to Methodology size and need are a change from pre-Anomaly assumptions that tenure was forever. Even the central members of the Council can be removed, unlike the Administration, and their powers to take action without consultation of the rest of Governance is highly limited. Only in emergencies or cases of extreme need for decisive action can the central members ratify actions without a full meeting.

To destroy the leadership of the Progenitors would take the death of every person in the center of the Council, the representatives of every major and micro Methodology, the student representatives, and the handful of Enlightened Citizens who act as Advisory Council Members. Every move these representatives take is in full view of the entire Convention. This petri dish existence is taxing, emotional, and at times filled with shouting. It is also the only option the Convention sees as viable to prevent being crippled by another Anomaly-level cataclysm.

Now students can finally give input and be listened to, even if that input can't always be used. It's a step in the right direction. These days we're outnumbered by the Extraordinary Citizens serving among us, but that's the case with every other Convention. Data says there's more Extraordinary Citizens (or people with the potential to be) than Enlightened alive right now. That's a sign the Union is doing its damn job.

Much of the gulf between us and the Extraordinary Citizens has been closed since the Anomaly. They've watched some of their number become Enlightened, while others never have. They've observed us, generation after generation, for centuries. Like any good assistant, they know our weak spots. And now, they are safe enough from the Administration to tell us what they are.

Our history is full of incredible scientific feats, and equally horrifying violations of ethics.

Our Moment of Clarity

Even now, we're still paying for the sins of Progenitors past. Horrible lab experiments. Hidden black bag projects. The careless spurning of ethics and compassion. We may have had our hands tied by the church when we were the Hippocratic Circle, but it kept the majority of us practicing science with the care of the Masses in mind. Too much lab work and people can turn a little bad. Or worse.

Having what's effectively a stroke has made us reevaluate everything. Non-medical biological sciences are getting the respect they deserve. Did you know that there are Methodologies beyond the "Big Three?" Few Progenitors did, as they were rarely acknowledged by Administration – they didn't bring in the Syndicate bucks the way FASCADE, Pharmacopoeists, and Genegineers did. (To be fair, they still don't.)

But it makes sense to go beyond studying human biology and making freaky monsters. Agriculture is a backbone of civilization, and the new advances in farming and irrigation techniques may secure its safety. Veterinary science isn't solely about keeping Mr. Fluffy well. We also have a number of zoologists, and they're not solely devoted to studying cryptozoology. There are millions of naturally occurring species integral to the world's ecosystems. We're continually discovering new classes of intelligence in the world around us. Being something other than a medical

doctor or genetic researcher no longer makes you out of place in our Convention.

One of the other things that's changed is the attitude about fieldwork. What used to be barely suppressible antagonism between research in the lab and practicing science in the field is now a tense understanding. We need both. Science cannot continue without both laboratory and fieldwork working hand in hand. The dangers outside are very real. Just because it's almost impossible for us to get through the sanity-splicing rip in everything bordering Earth doesn't mean things don't come through. Our problems to face have multiplied since the Anomaly, whether it's the logistics of dropping enough medics into a hurricane or playing cat and mouse with the monsters we keep finding we created. It's the loss, though, that I think made us change.

Losing so many people off-world – and in the early days of sorting shit out Earthside – isn't a trauma you heal from. You can't put an entire Convention through therapy (though the Psychopharmacopoeists wish they had the resources to do so), but there are ways we've coped that we aren't public about. The relationship we forged with the Void Engineers in the last decade is the closest we have ever been to them. The secrets we keep from the NWO would hurt them just as much as it hurts us to keep them. We may be in a turf war over health costs with the Syndicate, but we're tougher than they think. I have faith future compromise is possible.

Iteration X is...well, it's like the new students say: "It's complicated."

We worked in concert with Iteration X; they provided the cybernetics of many Union initiatives, and we provided the biological backbone. We were of complementary disciplines and exchanged ideas. Now we share space with them, the same halls and cafeterias, but our relationship shifted. Iterators are now intensely devoted to their work, more than ever before. By losing contact with the Computer, they've

UNKNOWN ILLNESS

We Progenitors know we have a dark past. Once the religious and cultural arguments against their work had fallen out of general use, the elements that had founded the House of Olympus grew bolder. It was the laboratories studying medicine that fell to some of the greatest depravities the Convention has ever seen. After the Dimensional Anomaly, cleaning up these unethical projects has become a priority. But there are projects older than the last few decades still functioning, and there are Progenitors among those still on the Front Lines who have fallen in with the darkest forces imaginable. Nephandi Progenitors aren't an urban legend, and they watch for any exploitable opportunities to claim more of the Convention.

lost themselves. They work closely and as frequently as possible with the Void Engineers, hoping for a breakthrough. For a miracle. They have set their sights on a past they've lost and a future they may not ever see become reality. Our friends are at times only barely functional, emotionally and as a Convention. It has fallen to us to be their rock, and as time goes by, quite possibly their salvation.

We have a messy, beautiful, terrifying job ahead, in and out of the field. So we start understanding who we are now by going back to our roots.

Where We Come From

We may not be as old as motherhood, but the Progenitors roots stretch back in time. Our philosophical antecedents are global, and our ancestors were the first human beings who saw suffering and sought to alleviate it, and went beyond solving suffering to better the lives around them.

Our official beginning as a Convention is easy to pinpoint. When the Order of Reason was established in 1325, the Hippocratic Circle stood with the rest of the new Conventions in the Tower. Those Circle members claimed the Cosian Circle of ancient Greece as their intellectual parent. The few practitioners of the Cosian arts left were the men and women who stood for us at the Tower. Instead of our modern Methodologies, we had Houses. The House of Mandrake studied herbalism and agriculture. The House of Fire were some of our original field scientists, tracing and eradicating plagues. The House of Knives pioneered surgery. The Phylaxoi were our warriors, protecting the Circle during travel from bandits, warring nobles and armed Traditionalists (a role we ceded to NWO long ago).

In that era, science was feared in many places, making patrons a vital necessity. Science looked like magic to uneducated eyes, so we stood behind powerful people, many of them nobles, privileged members of the Masses. Our early lodges were secret, hidden in plain sight: universities, the early hospitals, and the courts of nobility. That's a tradition that hasn't changed; we often find the future minds of the Progenitors when they're only starting to embark on lifelong scientific journeys.

The Hippocratic Circle functioned in a time of incredible religious faith. They had strong religious and cultural feelings about how to conduct themselves as scientists and with other people. For hundreds of years that was our only foundation for our understanding of bioethics – that we shall not imitate a divine Creator. But that was not a universal sentiment. There were scientists among us who experimented on unwilling subjects

and created horrific monsters. Our unwillingness at the time to speak at length about ethical study, due to not wanting to alienate members of our delicate order into pushing that to the Traditions, ended up encouraging those radical and unethical elements.

In 1376, Doctor Hans von Rottenfeld founded the Brandenberg Krankenhaus. It was our jewel; Krankenhaus was a major accomplishment to establish, and one of the first places we'd study the dead with an eye on learning anatomy. It had a considerable number of medical students housed in its walls (and a small army to keep the students safe... from the outside world and from each other). They had to keep this a secret; the Church would have happily killed everyone in that building if they discovered people studying the dead and dissecting corpses. Because of this very real fear of persecution, there wouldn't be another Enlightened college of medicine on such a scale until the modern era.

When von Rottenfeld was assassinated in 1380 we took it badly. Distracted from science, we tracked down everyone involved with his assassination.

From 1376 to 1473, our scientific discoveries unfortunately took a secondary role in our lives as we focused on serving the Order of Reason to the best of our ability, no matter how great the cost. When the Order went to war with the Traditions, we followed. In 1448, we were field medics during the Siege of Doissetep. In 1449, the Order of Reason took heavy casualties in an armed conflict with the Traditions, and like the year before, had stood witness as their physicians in battle.

One of the few bright spots for us in that century occurred in 1474. The assembled Cosians of Brandenberg Krankenhaus finally discovered a plague cure, one that took four years of hard work. More war off-world, and a number of church-orchestrated deaths followed in the wake of that exceptional moment – but for a time, the war quieted.

For hundreds of years after, we did our best to focus on our calling. Healing the sick, birthing babies, breeding livestock, tending farms, and curing plagues. When we first started, very few laboratories to lock ourselves in even existed. We looked after the Masses in the most practical ways possible, and when called upon, did our duty for the Order. We were the medics at every major armed attack led by the Order against the Traditions. We evolved our understanding of the natural world, and did everything we could to push scientific innovations as swiftly as the Consensus would accept it. Of course, this would later on lead to other failures – something anyone reading this is well aware of.

The Renaissance was a welcome reprieve for us. We were able to come out of the shadows the Church had driven us into. Doctors were welcome in virtually every court in the world. The Order of Reason would crush petty insurrections and dangers to the Masses, and we would continue with research into life extension. That same research laid the foundation for the long lives many of the most advanced Enlightened minds of the time would experience. Only one of the Technocrats whose life we extended was lost before the Dimensional Anomaly.

Reginald Proctor, whose life we extended in 1715, took his own life in 1914. It was sudden, it shook the High Guild to its core, and ended an era. Proctor carried the calm of the 1700s with him, throughout the rest of his life. The idealism and pragmatism he espoused perished with him.

We did not know of the horrors in store for us, or how much worse they would be than losing that single patient.

The Worst Monsters of the Union

Two creeping ills began to revise their forms and become popular anew among the Masses in the 1700s. They gained a strong foothold, and impacted the Hippocratic Circle. Racism and sexism had a sort of vogue. Children look at paintings of the 1700 and 1800s and see pretty dresses. But if we peer into our records, we watch women of the Circle be demeaned by their male peers, and a potent racism against the non-European progenitors of our Circle – now called the Aesculpians – take firm root. But underneath these social issues was a much older one.

Our secretive, historic propensity for spurning ethics became a full-blown infection by the 1800s. In that respect, we are the same as our sibling Conventions, derelict of our duty for a time. Queen Victoria changed that. Whether we like it or not, the instrument of her wrath, Inspector Rathbone, helped us rise above our neglect – albeit temporarily. His Skeleton Keys were instrumental in bringing down a rogue element among us.

The Promethean Atrocities

No one likes to admit that of all the branches of the Hippocratic Circle, it was the doctors who fell the hardest from grace. Particularly in England, a mix of social and scientific pressures eroded our ethics. Before 1832, the only bodies available for dissection and study to medical schools were those executed for the most criminal of offenses. There were not enough criminals to supply the need

for hundreds of medical schools. The Resurrection Men made quite a lot of money in those days, even in America and other parts of Europe. (There was never proof the Syndicate was involved, but there was incredible revenue generated by grave robbing, the securing of graves, and the paying of thieves in turn for bodies.) The legal authorities would only be patient with these crimes for so long.

Being able to donate one's body to science was not an overnight phenomenon, but its roots are tied into that era of stealing bodies for research. The dead only acquired the right to rest peacefully because of the brazen practice of grave robbing.

In terms of our involvement, medical schools weren't the only ones reaping the rewards of emptying graves. The Promethean Atrocities, as we have come to call them, started in the early 1800s. A cross-Methodology group of Aesculpians engaged in particularly unethical and unorthodox research. Where others sought to refine life extension, they studied making life from what was currently dead. They unfortunately succeeded, creating their panoply of hideous, deformed creatures. Some of them were able to escape their makers, and periodic horrific murders would occur at their creatures' hands.

England held the concentration of this movement of mad scientists, and Rathbone was the one to bring the hammer down upon them. When they resurrected the Aesculpius Ezekiel Stewart, the resulting Paradox caused freak storms in Kent, England. Rathbone and his Skeleton Keys assisted the Aesculpians in exterminating the Enlightened who brought Ezekiel Stewart back from the dead.

It's tempting to say monsters orchestrated the Promethean Atrocities, but those scientists were respected members of the Technocracy. The destruction of their work is a shame we must still face, because similar events occurred over and over again. We must be vigilant and brave, even now. If we're not, our current purity of purpose will be left behind again, in the name of something that *pretends* to be science. Shortly after, as we sought inner and outer evolution past the Atrocities, we attempted to repair our relationship with several defectors to the Sons of Ether. Reconciliation could have led to their reintegration. The failure of the Oxford Symposium was started by an Etherite stealing the research of a Progenitor – and being exposed during the conference.

Civilian Health

None of us were prepared for The Great War. But the magnitude of casualties and pain was unmatched. World War I taught every Convention that

the Masses assembled a political machine that we judged incorrectly. Influencing culture to accept science and embarking in global trade soon seemed infinitely small compared to the task of addressing a world encompassing war machine. The assassination of ibn Yüsuf was just one painful lesson the World Wars taught us about what we were unprepared for.

Unnatural things have always occurred on the battlefield. The Great War saw them multiplying. The fog of mustard gas carried screams of dead men. The eyes of corpses lit up, and we were forced to kill them a second time.

It should have been the worst to endure. But the world didn't bounce back from the Great War. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was a cruel awakening for our agriculture experts. In the rapid rush to introduce mechanized farming practices, there wasn't an equal encouragement of sustainable crop practices. Combined with the drought, the "blizzards" of soil-filled winds were the stuff of nightmares. A diaspora was created of the farmers displaced from their barren land, and in the midst of ecological misery was the Great Depression. The world felt upside down.

We thought we knew the worst humankind could do, but World War II proved us wrong.

The speed, desperation, and scale of death are almost unspeakable. On one front, we had the Masses, embroiled in another global war. And on another, the Nephandi. No one wants to discuss it, but we partnered with the Traditions to deal with the war. Traditionalist and Technocrat alike could say they had former friends on the side of the Axis – as well as *things* that didn't even have names. Young men on the battlefield would become Enlightened, go insane, and then be dealt with by the Progenitor medics among them. It was havoc and chaos. It was the largest of any shadow war we had ever fought in human history.

We stamped out every Nephandic cult we could find, drove back every invading force from the Deep Universe, and cut down everything we encountered that was a danger to the Masses.

When it was all over, the New World Order took the lead in playing espionage games, and we had our own issues to deal with. What the NWO doesn't know about is why a number of our people that went over to the Axis never turned up again... well, they have better things to worry about.

Behind the Curtain

The Cold War introduced new variables into the life of the Convention. It was suddenly incredibly difficult to get to a number of our assets by ordinary means, scientists in many countries were often in grave danger, and we were still learning to apply the espionage we had been learning. While the Masses demonstrated in front of embassies, we smuggled everyone we could lay hands on out of their host countries. The Enlightened were our priority, but we tried to take as many scientists as we could. It got complicated quickly. Many wanted to stay, protecting extended family and students. Spouses refused to be separated, others wished to stay and fight for all forms of freedom.

In the midst of doctors playing spies and the specter of atomic annihilation, social progress spun rapidly. People fought for the rights of all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation. Women struggled for the rights to be seen as human beings with autonomy. For all the distance humanity still has to go, there were things unthinkable in the post-war era that became part of our lives now.

We stood by those who fought for the rights of the mentally ill and physically disabled in the '50s and '60s, and in some cases, we would only do so much. Let the Masses decide, we said. That era of frustration started a movement in the Convention. There were Progenitors who demanded action, involvement, doing right by the Masses. Rebels, counter-culture, unorthodox, sometimes entrepreneurial, they eschewed academic siloing and practiced their science in the field whenever possible. While that debate about responsibility raged, Roswell made things even more complicated only a few years before. That's when we

BLACK SUITS

When the Void Engineers were causing void-ship crashes and sightings of little Grey Men, the New World Order was spreading itself thin trying to cover them up. Obviously, they didn't entirely succeed. FACADE didn't have human cloning down pat back then, let alone the deft hand they've developed in the years since. In the Roswell days, it was all slapping together the building blocks of life and calling it good. Progenitors supplied the first Black Suits, but what the NWO doesn't know everything about what (or who) has been cloned since can't stay a secret forever.

started to make serious breakthroughs in the cloning program, trying to bail the New World Order out of a fire the Void Engineers created in 1947. It takes time to hone a new life form, and when we first created those Black Suits, we didn't have any. The next time you meet one of them, remember that they exist because of Muhammed ibn Yūsuf al-Mush'awidi. He's the Black Suits' Grandfather. But we're their parents.

Into The Fire

During the 1950s, things were heating up for us internally. New scientific work in DNA and genetics made our internal divisions official.

1954 saw the Mutagenetic Engineers become the Genegineers. They were already showing incredible promise. Genegineers can make life forms from scratch, and we often take that for granted. They were one of the first Methodologies among our Convention to go cross-Methodology, and reach out to other Conventions. They resisted top-down authority, and many of our resident rebels were Genegineers.

Administration hoped they'd hang themselves. As the Masses fought for social and scientific change, our debates raged on. If we had been passionate and unbeatable in our love of science, couldn't we be that way again? By the 1980's we were arguing about the ethics of animal testing and parental notification. We were enjoying the rocket like flight of the Pharmacopoeists to continued success. Pharmacopoeists, who are the heirs of the Cosians, were living up to their potential. Their partnership with the Syndicate may be unsavory to the casual eye, but who better than them to have a hand in the drug trade? An Enlightened scientist isn't going to kill users like a chemistry dropout.

In the 1990s, bioethics was starting to see pointed, widespread attention in the Masses. But we were still struggling, and an element was still present that violently opposed change, equality, and hope.

When FACADE was asked to build the HIT marks, you could have heard a penny drop. There were a number of Progenitors who questioned the decision to proceed with production. Some of the Progenitors objecting were pacifists, surely, but others looked at where the program would go and were concerned. All of them were offered a chance to apologize to the Administration, or be permanently assigned to fieldwork.

Some of the objectors to the HIT mark program apologized, and the rest left for the field. Applied Sciences aren't just called that to be cheeky. Many of the investigators and supervisors we have today were

the ones who stood up inside and outside the lab for what they felt was right. Some chose to be exiled and stand up for ethics in the field, when students were just getting their internships out of the way. Others fought for change in painful, heart-wrenching steps in the lab.

The Golden Hour

There was no more exiling the unpopular or canceling research initiatives after the Dimensional Anomaly. There was no more status quo. One of our first glimmers of an idea that something was terribly wrong came from Dr. Hugh Riley's botanical expedition in Tibet.

"Dispatch, we can't come back." Those were their last words.

There's theories that due to the unusual Prime waves in Tibet, mixed with the Anomaly opening, may have led to the expedition being lost somewhere in near-Earth space. It's been more than a decade, and if they were off-world when it hit, a number of brave men and women died. Two of them were Void Engineers.

There are stories like that in every Convention. Unusual activity, garbled transmissions, radio silence, attacks – everything went to Hell at the same time. And as much as we want to know why, it was not our job to diagnose that event. Our job was to provide medical support in the weeks after.

Ships crashed, labs went dark – it was like being inside an earthquake happening in a perfect Dyson sphere all around us. Administration was declared MIA, scores of personnel died on and off world, and we knew there was no guarantee anyone is alive out there. None at all. And if they are, there is no way to know if they were still sane.

It seemed strange at the time, but it was the Void Engineers that we grew closest to in the aftermath. Everyone knew someone on the other side, but we were the ones who lost our families. Spouses, siblings, parents, unrequited loves, children. The children of Technocrats got hit hardest (and some of them even achieved Enlightenment due to that anguish). There were so many orphans who didn't get to know why their parents were never coming home again.

People want to hope. They want everything to be okay again. There are still husbands and wives who won't let us declare their spouse deceased. They want to get back what they lost. The Void Engineers understand that, and that's why our relationship with them has grown... unorthodox. If you based it off of bond alone, we would have to consider taking their

side, if it ever came to that. Because none of the other Conventions know how damn bad it hurts.

Once the smoke cleared and the wreckage recycled, we started putting our lives back together. It was the first time in history that more than half of us were deployed into the field. Ships kept falling out of the void like sailors without a lighthouse. The people who survived those wrecks sane and physically functional are in the minority. Medics that had been Earthside but working with Void Engineers requested permanent, long-term deployment with them. It was the first policy decision we had to make without the Administration. Once we made it, we realized that we couldn't look back. Life was going to keep moving.

Operating with a sudden lack of an Administration, we had to put a new form of governance into place. After some research and discussion, that was when we decided that Shared Governance was going to be the easiest for the medical students and academics to pick up. It would still make sense to everyone who wasn't either of those two camps.

Instead of Administration telling us How Things Are, we make decisions together now. Our schools are more transparent with their students, our labs a bit less jumpy, and our conduct improved in relation to ethical behavior. In or out of the field, there is a feeling I haven't had for a long time. And I can see it in their eyes. We've changed. It isn't just the way we have conversations that's changed. What they're about, the language we use. Nothing is the same, save one common thread: we are still Progenitors.

Forward is Still Forward

We started from a desire to help humanity. The Hippocratic Circle was forged to care for the living, to give them health. We weren't trying to replace a Higher Power. Our need was to do right by our fellow men and women. Medicine, agriculture, animal husbandry, botany: those are a sampling of what sciences we honed and continue to advance.

But for too long, we lost our way and let that duty take a back seat to hubris. The Promethean Atrocities, unwilling human testing, involvement with eugenics, the near total abandonment of our principles. We drifted because we stopped going outside; we stopped looking at the world and to the people who needed us. Yes, medicine isn't black and white, and everything we do has consequences. But there's a level we stooped to that should have never been reached.

We have never been in a more appropriate place and time to change the face of our Convention. To change our heart. The Progenitors of today are younger and more diverse. They are products of this generation – one that questions, one that seeks. One that isn't dead to hope. Our students may look like children to us – and some literally are children – but they are tomorrow's heroes. Maybe even today's.

The Dimensional Anomaly rewrote the story we were telling. The path Administration had locked us on isn't even an option anymore. Under their direction, we grew numb, but that isn't how it has to be. Not anymore. The stakes have never been as high for us as they are now. Our desire to see humanity, and each other, through this, has finally been rekindled. That feeling that makes late nights in a lab or a downpour on your surgical tent in a war zone worth freezing through. That Enlightenment sharpened desire to practice science.

That's what makes missing birthdays and anniversaries some measure of bearable. It renders a lifetime of chasing cures and innovations meaningful. It may not ever erase being lonely, but we knew what we were signing up for. We need each other, and that spark. That's the light that will get us through. It's ours to cling to.

The mandate the Hippocratic Circle had to heal and do no harm is once again ours, to carry us forward. Whether or not this body we beat within proves more ill than we had guessed, we know what we're doing now.

Progenitors don't make dangerous monsters anymore. We fight them. Join us in that good fight.



constable shane gilbert

Ethical Compliance, Psychopharmacopoeist

RELATIONSHIPS



We Progenitors have changed so much in a generation, and it's most visible if you look at our relationships to the rest of the Union and the world overall.

THE OTHER CONVENTIONS

For all their flaws, the other Conventions are family. We squabble like siblings, but when threatened from the outside, we (mostly) band together. But now that we're winning the "Ascension War" – at least, from a certain perspective – the squabbling is getting more vicious. All that idiosyncratic bullshit is a symptom of the disease. And we're sick of what that's doing to us. Fuck that noise.

Healing the Union's body starts with understanding organs: the Conventions. Iteration X, New World Order, the Syndicate, and Void Engineers are all different organs, each with different functions, needs, psychologies, and afflictions. We cannot treat the diagnosis of one as a diagnosis for them all, or we will fail in our treatment.

ITERATION X

While we approach the mysteries of life from different angles, we've always been able to exchange ideas with Iteration X. They trade us mechanical and electrical innovations for biological and chemical ones. Together, we form the Great Technocratic Experiment, the marriage that begets Enlightened biotechnology. After all, if you're going to create an army of killer cyborgs, you need someone to make the "cyber" and someone to make the "organism" parts. (I joke. Sort of.)

We share space in the facilities the Void Engineers have gifted to us, so it's common to see Iterators and Progenitors in the same mess hall line. But as you'd imagine, we don't often sit together. Typical for people of such Genius who are consumed with our work, and I assure you, no group is more consumed than Iteration X.

The loss of contact with Autochthonia is as devastating a wound to their morale as it is to their resources and advancement. For the first time in any living Iterator's memory, the Computer *isn't there*. So they devote all the resources they can to building "Version 2." For the last few years, they've been productive members of the Union, but only barely. They are not as concerned with the Time Table as NWO would like, and aren't producing quite as much as the Syndicate claims to require.

THE GREATER GOOD

When the stakes are so high, we can rationalize anything for the "greater good." Without the Union, the world would plummet into chaos. And humanity is worth fighting for, so any actions can be justified, allowing us to bend ethics. Actions like drugging Iteration X, implanting failsafes in NWO and Syndicate clones, and exterminating Tradition pseudo-healers.

Our ancestors, the Hippocratic Circle, once believed in noble causes and ethics, too. Moment after moment tested them, and too often they bent ideals until they became antiquated memories. It's easy to see how each one of those moments led to the monsters we once were. So every time we bend an ethic, we need to remember what road that leads to.

"The new Computer will rectify the situation," they rationalize over and over again. And for all we know, they're right. But they're alienating the rest of the Union in pursuit of their obsession. So it falls to us to keep them from being forcefully Reorganized – there's been enough Reorganizing for one lifetime. It falls to us to be the sympathetic ear, the friend who won't sell them out for political gain (as we so easily could), and the ally who will gently suggest when they've gone too far.

They don't make this easy, though. We've more than once helped an Iterator project under scrutiny by providing hyper-stimulants and prototype Genius-enhancing drugs. And once you do that, even if you intend it to be a one-time thing, word spreads and everyone asks for a little boost. We might be saving their collective reputation in the Union, but with a couple dozen Iterators dead from overdose and complications, we're not exactly comfortable with the price.

Unfortunately, right now *they are*. And it's tough to swallow, but we cannot let a little ethical squeamishness be the reason the Union crumbles into chaos and infighting.

NEW WORLD ORDER

The New World Order is the brain of the Technocracy. There is no one better to steer the Union. Even when they're off the mark, they have a wider vision than the rest of us. And because of that, they leave the other four Conventions the room to do what they do best – nothing like a lab scientist being promoted to management to kill his research.

But this brain is very old, and has suffered dementia and paranoia for far too long. Progenitor medics, psychologists, and supply officers hear whispers in NWO halls: a Technocratic civil war is brewing. Of course, we know that it's been brewing for decades. Our history is littered with insurrection — I need only point to the Virtual Adepts to prove this point.

Things changed with the Anomaly. So far, NWO has been able to rally us together, keep us a whole Union, and those initial acts to keep us from further chaos should not be forgotten; that's NWO at its noblest and brightest. But as with any traumatic accident, the shock wears off and the real pain stings. They're back to looking at the rest of us as potential enemies and without the old, baroque alliances and dealings made in Horizon to keep all in check, we're in danger.

There's a reason we're so eager to assist NWO whenever they call, beyond *esprit de corps*. Project Pulse is a secret experiment to administer subtle, untraceable Enlightened sedatives and psychoactive agents to key members of the Order. Those who would be rational and open to peace if they were calm are given calming agents. Those who are too far gone for us to help are given psychoactives to undermine their authority. Only a few know about Project Pulse; not even everyone in the Shared Governance Council knows about this. So far, NWO's own psychologists have not shown suspicion.

Pulse is careful, but we can't keep this going on forever. We need a permanent solution, and that will take time. The clones we provide for NWO leadership have the most advanced neurotransmitters and receivers built in. (And we price the clones high enough to where NWO doesn't look to hard at what they're getting — they would certainly suspect if our rates were favorable.) The main hiccup is that FACADE can't mass-produce these clones; even if they could, only a fraction of our facilities could be trusted with such a secure project. Since it began in 2006, four clones a year have been deployed, and many target personnel are still happy with their current clones.

We play a most dangerous game. But if we pull it off, the Union will be stronger for it.

SYNDICATE

If NWO is our brain, the Syndicate is our lifeblood. Their mastery of resources, both mundane and Enlightened, has kept the other four Conventions running when we were scrambling post-Anomaly. Of all our allies, they've weathered the Anomaly the best. That's been our greatest boon, for without someone grounded as the rest of us lost our collective shit, we would have fractured.

Let me be clear: if there was no Syndicate, there would be no Union today.

But don't let that fool you into thinking they need less help than the others. This has made them alien to the rest of us. We've all lost brothers, daughters, friends, and they haven't; at least, not nearly as many. They suffer from old afflictions, ones that won't heal — like an emphysema patient who won't quit smoking. And since the Syndicate's rivalry with New World Order didn't calm in the aftermath in the Anomaly, age-old bullshit and alpha male crap has interfered with healing our Union, like a rash you keep scratching.

They're still our customers, even if they're not as happy as they were in yesteryear. Our relationship has always been barely ethical on its best day — from the illicit drug trade to control over global medical care, experimental pharmacology, dubious clone requisitions, and so on. Many younger Progenitors, notably in Applied Sciences, are outspoken against these practices, crying for a "return to ethics" and scorning Syndicate agents they come into contact with.

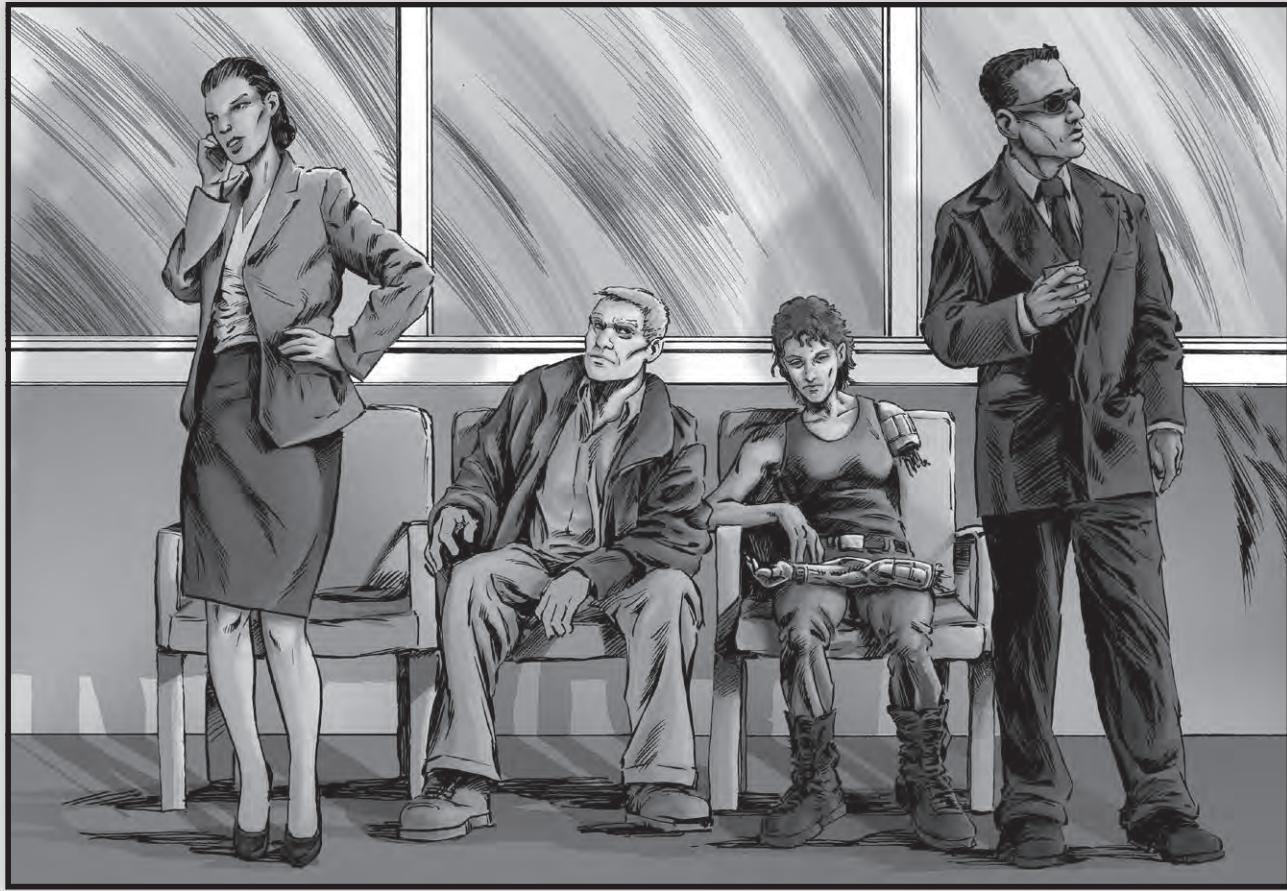
Contrary to their belief, many older members of our order sympathize. Yes, some who watch the money pour in see that as justification enough — the Technocracy is filled with ends-justify-the-means types. But even those who agree with the youth know better than to speak up. The Syndicate isn't known for... tolerance. And our survival, not just as a Convention but as a Union, involves not taking a side in the NWO-Syndicate conflict. Not if we want to quarantine it. These kids are fucking it up for the rest of us. Good intentions paving the way to ruin.

God, sometimes that could be a slogan for the entire Technocracy.

So when we smile and nod at the Syndicate as they order more questionable goods, understand why we're doing it. We do it to keep our lights running. We do it to preserve the peace in the Union. And we do it to get close enough to Syndicate facilities and key personnel to enact Project Pulse on them as well. Please don't fuck with the program.

VOID ENGINEERS

Ah, the Void Engineers, our strange, new benefactors. It's through them and their deep sea facilities that our scientists are able to continue our noble work. Thanks to them, we've been able to recover some of our old projects and case studies from beyond the Dimensional Anomaly (though that dried up in 2005). Our elders have gotten used to the contact from the Union's most eclectic member; before the Anomaly, they were distant clients and occasional shuttle pilots.



Our priorities with respect to them have changed dramatically. There are still some Genegineers who play with zero-G biomorphs, but now those are just academic exercises. We're more likely to create for them biomorphs native to deep sea and able to withstand the pressure outside of the habitat domes. FACADE works on secret projects at their request, one of the ways we show our thanks. And they frequently requisition exotic medicines from Pharmacopoeists.

Which brings us to our new relationship — a symbiotic one, like the black rhinoceros and the oxpecker. They protect us, and we keep them equipped with the latest in medicine and biochemicals for their excursions into the void. Don't let this camaraderie mislead you; we still see them as sick patients. They put up brave faces around the rest of the Union, but you need only go to the Wall in Yemaja — where they put up pictures of those the Union's lost in the Dimensional Anomaly and those ever since — to see beneath. Tears, anguish, guilt, rage. It only took rage and a sense of betrayal for the Electrodyne Engineers to leave and join the Traditions, and there's so much more seething under the surface of the Void Engineers.

That makes our symbiotic relationship crucial to the Technocracy. If they're made to feel alone, they'll become

a threat to the Union; they'd do what the Traditions never could: annihilate us. You need only look at the numbers — of the new Marauders we've encountered, nearly 4% of them are former Void Engineers (even some we've thought lost to the Anomaly). Can you imagine what would happen if an entire Technocratic Convention were consumed by insanity?

So be grateful to the Void Engineers for our survival and ability to thrive in the last decade. And be afraid of them for what they could so easily become. When you deal with them, show gratitude and not fear.

TRADITIONS

The Convention is split on how to handle Traditionalists, and in a way surprising to those in other Conventions. The old guard, notably those in distant labs and enjoying tenure, is not as concerned with them. When NWO comes knocking for an anti-Deviant weapon or other distraction from genuine research, they're annoyed, but otherwise these Reality Deviants are not a concern. Don't take this as a "live and let live" attitude as much as it's a "leave me the fuck alone so I can do real work" one.

Those in Applied Sciences are increasingly vocal about reinstating the Pogrom. These scientists deal directly with

mages and their harmful pseudo-medicine — these threats promote horrible ideas, prey on the desperate and weak-minded, and interfere with Enlightened scientific progress. The worst part is that sometimes their methods work, but only when they administer them and often with Rejection side effects, and the Masses hear these stories and buy into these cultish ideas — and that's the real harm done.

On occasion, a “mage” shows Enlightened potential, but of all the Conventions, we’re the least likely to take in a defector. And because they share space with Void Engineers — who are the most likely to take in Reality Deviant defectors — there’s sometimes a sense of hostility, as we Enlightened are not above prejudice.

AKASHIC BROTHERHOOD

The Brotherhood’s message of mystical body control and healing is dangerous not only to our agenda, but to the Masses as a whole. Fortunately for us, the Syndicate efforts to suppress these ideas as fringe have been successful in the Western world; no one co-opts like the Syndicate. Still, that leaves the actual Reality Deviants who perform horrific acts on others and call it “holistic healing.”

Akashics react to our presence with their trademark kung-fu violence and rhetoric about how we’re poisoning bodies and minds. As if. Don’t let that Buddhist Jet Li bullshit fool you, though — if your amalgam isn’t rated for combat, get the hell out of there and call for Damage Control.

CELESTIAL CHORUS

Nothing gets Progenitor doctors worked up like the mention of Choristers. If these throwbacks to the Dark Ages had their way, we’d all be praying for the sick and still using leeches and draining humours. They are the antithesis of reason, scientific progress, and everything the Union stands for. Our hatred is so strong than other Progenitors professing faith are looked at with a bit of disdain; not distrust, as they’re still a Technocratic scientists, but many of our number cannot hide our contempt at anything approaching the Celestial Chorus mindset.

CULT OF ECSTASY

Now here’s an interesting Tradition. On one hand, many of us can sympathize with them — show me a Pharmacopeist who hasn’t experimented with psychoactives, and I’ll show you one who is either lying or isn’t doing her fucking job of intimately understanding biochemistry. But like the raver kiddies and washout out stoners they are, these Deviants don’t amount to much and are a waste of potential Genius. And man, does that royally piss off old guard.

That isn’t to say they’re dangerous. These reprehensible fucks hand out all sorts of psychoactives, uppers, downers, and really weird shit like it’s all candy. Hell, to them it is, but not to the Masses they’re playing with and fucking. Few things are as heartbreaking as rolling a teenager in on a stretcher, watching her froth at the mouth, overdosing on fuck-knows-what and being unable to synthesize a counteragent because it’s some cocktail an Ecstatic invented earlier that day and decided to let someone try that night.

In the rare instance where you need to get a Cultist to cooperate with you, kidnapping and threatening the Sleepers they drag into their dens of iniquity tends to work as leverage. Just don’t, and I cannot stress this enjoy, eat or drink anything they’ve made, touched, have in their home, or even just looked at cross-eyed.

DREAMSPEAKERS

The Dreamspeakers are a strange group. Their toxic Deviant effects blend Akashic and Chorister perspectives, at least as best any sane person can understand them. They aren’t organized enough to be a critical threat, but their presences in a local situation should be handled swiftly. (Just make sure our Void Engineer friends don’t hear about that; a few have showed dismay and even filed protests when they’ve seen our scientists dispatch Dreamspeakers.)

EUTHANATOS

If there’s one Tradition that shows an ounce of promise, it’s the Euthanatos. They believe in something not entirely alien to us: that some limbs need to be cut from the body in order for the body to survive and thrive.

Unfortunately, the analogy and similarity mostly end there. Many of their ilk see every Technocrat as needing to die what they call the “Good Death,” so that we might be reborn and believe some mystical crap rather than reason. Many of them are psychopaths; kill those before they kill you. And be wary of their adeptness with Entropy effects — they’ll break down clones and bioweapons faster than you can deploy them.

Occasionally, you’ll find one open to talking, someone who want to interview you to see if you need to actually die. Choose to engage at your discretion; a new ally would be nice, but not at the cost of a genuine Enlightened mind.

HOLLOW ONES

Some of these orphans show promise, though we allow NWO to handle Processing them — few scientists and doctors have the time or patience to deal with the typical teenage angst, gothy outlook, or hipster



contrarianism. Those who aren't Technocrat material have another use. Drugging them and tagging their Pattern to track their movements can help flush out other Traditionalists over the years. Something about these kids make other Reality Deviants want to play mentor or den mother, and when they come out of the woodwork, we're ready.

ORDER OF HERETICS

We can almost respect Hermetics. *Almost.* We can trace similar roots, to people bold enough to experiment with biology, chemistry, and the natural world. The Hippocratic Circle was once in their Order before seeing the light of Reason. They decided to stop progressing a millennium ago; we moved on.

For the most part, they don't see the Masses as worth dealing with on a large scale. Their elitism has kept exposure to Hermetic concoctions to a minimum... more or less. There were a few during the Wild West era who thought it a good idea to peddle their wares — the origin of the snake-oil salesman — for money to continue their backwater experiments. But those instances were few and far-between. Typical Hermetics are just frustrated scientific failures that resort to becoming Reality Deviants,

barely worth notice unless they're a direct interference to a Progenitor project.

All said, if you encounter one, see if you can capture intact. If not, report the Hermetic to Damage Control. NWO pays a bounty on captured Hermetics, and your amalgam will receive some of that funding as a reward.

SONS OF ETHER

You know the current trend in homeopathy? You have goddamned Etherites to blame for that. As with most Reality Deviant treatments, they only work to a degree when performed by their kind. But that hasn't stopped this trend from being embraced by "health nuts" and pseudo-drug manufacturers. (The Syndicate claims to not have a hand in the mass marketing of homeopathic "medication," but I find that hard to swallow.)

They're much like Hermetics, playing with some different pretend fantasy "science." And they're dangerous; remember, they revere Victor Frankenstein and occasionally an Etherite turns a dead body (or something made from parts of various bodies) into a roving monster. Imagine the literal and cognitive infections that spring from such horror.

Idealists see the potential for Genius under their delusions. A few may be worth salvaging, but as a whole

they're filled with rot and plague — and we need to remember that proper disposing of biohazards is just good medicine.

VERBENA

Much like we share lineage with the Order of Hermes, we share one with the Verbena. Only they stopped progressing pretty much after the invention of the wheel. They're the closest thing we have to a sense of blasphemy, a dark reflection of everything that's noble and pure about us.

They're barbarians, primitives who drench themselves in blood and chant into the night. Verbena are nothing more than pure monsters that happen to be people, barely one step away from being Nephandi. There is no glimmer of Genius in what they believe and do, only the crawling chaos that would swallow the world if these vile fucks had their way. The Verbena are true evil.

If there's a saving grace, it's that their arrogance and sense of ritual keeps them from overly contaminating the Masses. So from a purely pragmatic view, they aren't the worst the Traditions have to offer. Still, the Shared Governance Council would look the other way if an Applied Sciences amalgam reported going all Contingency 5 on a hotspot upon seeing even one Verbena.

VIRTUAL ADEPTS

The Virtual Adepts are angry, and they're organized. They hit against our computer systems, work to corrupt budding Extraordinary minds, and seek to undermine everything the Union does. As a result, NWO considers them the greatest threat to the Union and Masses, so we are bombarded with requests to assist NWO efforts. To say that this is a annoying distraction from real work is an understatement.

This has led to unearthing an experiment mostly lost to the Anomaly, one alongside Iteration X to developer a nanotech virus that would burn out the minds of any Virtual Adept interfacing with the Masses' Internet. Unfortunately, Iteration X is far too focused on their obsession to lend more than token assistance, so reconstructing has been slow. The last test was somewhat successful: it burned out two captured VAs. But it also burned out two of our scientists who were working on the project. No new candidates have applied to replace them yet.

Along with that, we have teams working on vaccines and cures to nanotech viruses we know they're building. Some are meant to target us. Others are meant to change the Masses. Neither will be permitted to happen.

OTHER REALITY DEVIANTS

NEPHANDI

We have Nephandi in our ranks. Their presence has grown stronger since the Anomaly, as if they didn't suffer any loses. Bastards probably didn't. That just means we need to even the score.

You cannot rank the danger that Traditional or Technocrat Nephandi pose one over the other, for they seem to work together. They blend and fuse, a mutating and resilient cancer. Each Convention has their preferred method of handling these threats, and most of them involve heavy weapons and high explosives. Of course, that doesn't really treat the cause, just individual symptoms — chemotherapy because there's right now no cure.

If you believe younger idealists in our Convention, the Syndicate is run by a host of Nephandi. I don't buy it... but I am convinced that there's at least one Nephandus on our own Shared Governance Council. I haven't any proof. At least, not yet. And I hope to hell I'm wrong.

To the Nephandi reading this:

We know you're reading this. You are humanity's greatest sickness, its most vicious cancer. You seem to see everything, know all our plans and weaknesses. You're always one step ahead in our desperate quest to purge you.

Until now. The tables have turned — we know how to find you, track you, and hunt you down. You won't find out how by reading this book; we Progenitors are not fools. But know that we will eradicate each and every one of you.

You've preyed on the world for far too long. It's time you knew fear.

MARAUDERS

The inconvenient truth: Marauders don't just come from Tradition mages. There are rare instances where valued Technocratic Genius breaks under the strain of Rejection and refuses respite and recovery time. And if you think a Traditionalist Marauder is scary, pray you never meet one fueled by Enlightened Science.

Whether they come from our side or the enemy's, Marauders are a dangerous threat. They pose significant danger to research, property, life, and worse. Evidence shows that their presence can cause other Enlightened Citizens to go mad, and they can corrupt the minds of Extraordinary Citizens. The Marauders are no less than a psychological plague.

It may seem barbaric and contrary to the ethos of helping those suffering, but you must burn them as you would infected corpses. Do not hesitate, even when the Marauder wears the face of an old friend or loved one.

VAMPIRES (*HOMO SAPIENS MORTIS*)

We have extensive documentation on the various subtypes of vampires. *Homo sapiens mortis*, as some in our order have taken to calling them given their lore of being "undead," is a fascinating case of supernatural contagion. They are certainly the world's oldest retrovirus, albeit one not rooted in proper biological sciences and thus not yet treatable. (The similarity to this condition and Schere's Disease hasn't gone unnoticed.)

The NWO point of view on vampires is the Technocratic party line: no open hostility as long as they keep their so-called Masquerade up. We... disagree. Looking at the facts should convince any rational scientist that there is no room for leniency. Vampires feed on the Masses. Vampires are not only a contagion, but also a powerful and secret culture. They create through a bodily process a highly addictive substance, known as "vitae." They're vectors for mundane plagues. Worst, a sizeable faction does not care for operating in secret, causing as much memetic damage as biological.

Fringe bioengineers sometimes use vampiric research and even components to create weapons. Damage Control looks the other way at these projects, employing vampire-modified Enlightened operatives in their ranks. (Which also allows them to keep tabs on these experiments, should these modified humans turn.) But research into vampiric immortality is strictly forbidden – we will not succumb to the same hubris as the former House Tremere.

WEREWOLVES (CANIS MORPHAE)

What're commonly referred to as "werewolves" is a result of a hereditary and unstable disease, one that responds poorly to Technocratic Procedures. With a few exceptions, they abhor technology, progress, and everything that the Union stands for.

This affliction clearly has a mental component, as they share some delusion about us and an entity they call "the Wyrm," using that as a justification to assault us when encountered. (Others refer to another called "the Weaver" – it's unclear if this is the same entity, a different one, or some alternate form in their mythology.) Fortunately, they view many other Reality Deviant threats in the same light, and are not discriminant.

Because their condition is not contagious (as vampires are), scientists have been freer in their experiments with captured and killed werewolves. Which brings us to a very peculiar recent development: several of their kind from a tribe called Glass Walkers have approached us through a biotech research front company. Not only did they know it was a Progenitor front, but they had infiltrated middle management, entirely without us aware. They made an offer: they'll cooperate and even assist in Progenitor research of their kind if we stop hunting their kind and we share the last few decades' of werewolf research.

Hell of an intriguing offer. We'll see what comes of it – not sure what their game is yet. And hopefully the combat amalgams will heed the memo to stop werewolf-targeting missions.

UNCLASSIFIABLE

"Ghosts" are nothing more than psychological and Paradox-oriented phenomena, sometimes the result of Marauder activity. Regardless of their nature, they can cause disruptions with laboratory and field equipment, and are best handled by Void Engineer Neutralization Specialists. (Best if you don't get into long conversations with Void Engineers about their pet theories on what ghosts are; one more reason to be wary of the whole Convention going insane.)

"Mummies" are curious rumors. There is an old report of a FACADE Engineer claiming to have met one, describing it as "truly immortal" and having lived for "thousands of years." That report's certainly inspired more than a few of their Methodology to replicate beings able to withstand time, their withered bodies the result of aggressive time acceleration experiments. Assume any "mummies" you see to be escaped pet projects, and inform Damage Control.

Unlike the two entities reported above, faeries are quite real. They defy proper biology and do not quite fit under any Kingdom, though many *appear* to file under Mammalia. Genetic testing of those captured are inconclusive, because there's no genetics to speak of that we can detect. Naturally, that just means our equipment is not properly calibrated for their protean nature. While their ability to twist reality makes them a danger to the Masses, we've got bigger problems. Inform a Void Engineer or NWO strike team; they're equipped for such situations, and get back to doing real work.

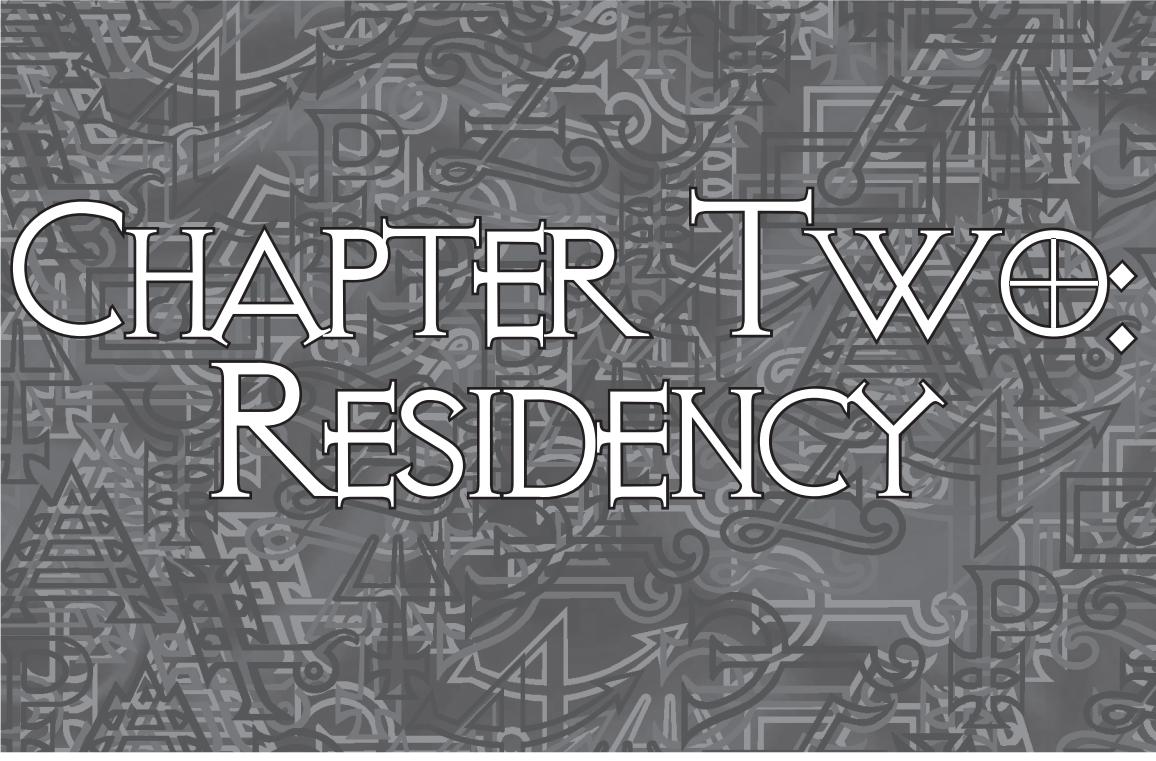
We've taken in some self-proclaimed "hunters," otherwise-Sleeper individuals with seemingly supernatural powers, in for observation and experimentation.

Genegineers initially assumed that these people were human evolutionary spikes; others in the Convention wondered if Pharmacopoeists left something in the drinking water. In the end, we cannot conclude a biological element to their abilities. A Preservationist recently offered a new analogy to explain hunters, one taken root in several key minds: the Consensus itself is creating antibodies for Reality Deviants by injecting mortals with Deviant-reactive abilities. The actions of these hunters seem to correlate with that hypothesis, but we're watchful; immune system mutations are fickle.

Should you encounter an unclassifiable Deviant, inform your superiors so they may dispatch a Damage Control team to investigate.







CHAPTER TWO: RESIDENCY

We Progenitors have been here a *long* time. Our old enemies — sickness, injury, and hunger — are only slightly older than we are. The birth of our noble order didn't happen when ancient humans first ate unknown herbs in desperation and hunger, and found those herbs dulled their pain. No, we were born when those long-dead ancestors of ours, moved by compassion, used that knowledge to ease the suffering of others. We have come a long way since that origin; we now wage war on human suffering in gleaming, sterile laboratories that our forbearers — if you will, our progenitors — would not comprehend.

Our efforts have paid astounding dividends! Every virulent disease has been addressed and cured, and we work tirelessly to protect those cures from Rejection until the Consensus accepts them. The first powered, neurologically controlled prosthetic limbs are already in the wild. Stem cell spray guns will soon consign second and third degree burns to the same fate as polio and consumption.

We're not letting our momentum go to waste. That would be criminal. Our charge is to push ever forward, blazing trails and reforming the Consensus into a safer, healthier world. To borrow from an iconic alien, we're here to make the world live long and prosper.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND TAXONOMIES



Naturally, the core of the Progenitors are Enlightened scientists, though we only make up three percent of the Convention (counting those who draw a Progenitor paycheck and work for us without knowing it). A further eleven percent falls into the Exceptional category, as able lab assistants and other roles working next to Inspired Science. They bring their prodigious talent and understanding of the physical universe to bear in positions varying authority. The rest are unEnlightened Citizens, doing necessary tasks in order to free up the greater minds (and aid in the Masses accepting Progenitor science).

The Convention can be divided up into three bands: scientists (who often call themselves “the talent” or other self-inflating terms), management, and support staff.

THE TALENT

Students are the entry level of prospective Progenitor scientists. With rare exception, they’re newly Enlightened, Extraordinary, on the cusp of achieving Genius. We typically discover them in undergraduate academic environments (though that’s partly due to our bias). In order to be considered for inclusion in a Progenitor funded program of study, a potential Student must demonstrate

SKIPPING AHEAD

Sometimes one’s path to Enlightenment isn’t conventional. There have been fourteen cases of nascent Enlightened Scientists found in the wild and brought into our Methodology since its foundation. All but one of them was utterly unaware of their own Genius, thinking that everyone possessed their insight and capabilities. The most recent member of this exclusive club is Bisrat Semhar, an Eritrean farmer. In 2008, an Agronomist field observer pursuing a rumor about miraculous crop yields discovered Semhar had developed a suite of Devices on his own. He rewrote the DNA of a strain of mosaic virus that had destroyed his neighbors’ farms. To the shock of the observer, biological computers grown by Semhar controlled the Devices. He was inducted into the Progenitors six months later, and today runs a Construct in the Sudan.

uncommon comprehension of one of our root sciences, usually biology or chemistry.

Some Students are assigned as staff to their superiors. They get into vicious contention over these positions, despite the fact that it only results in even more work being heaped upon them. The theory is only those who have what it takes to “make it” can complete a full course of study in addition to twenty-plus hours working in the lab every week, doing the boring parts nobody else wants to do. Usually this arrangement is just petty superiors flexing their immense sense of entitlement and entertaining themselves in the process. The irony is that most Progenitors don’t take this kind of service into consideration when evaluating a potential employee, and it certainly doesn’t grease the skids of the thesis review process.

After Students complete their studies and defend their theses, they graduate into the ranks of the **Research Assistants**. At first, their work in researching the investigatory paths is set by their superiors. Once they prove their ability a few times, they are rewarded with some determination over their own efforts. Fortunately, there are so many avenues of inquiry, Convention-wide, that opportunities to rise above the crowd come along frequently.

Research Assistants who haven’t yet achieved Enlightenment tend to do so at this point in their careers. Studies suggest this is due to exposure to other Enlightened personnel and the constant stimuli of advanced research. The RAs that don’t will spend their entire careers where they are. There, poor souls will live a comfortable and rewarding life, but Enlightenment is always a requirement for career advancement. (An Extraordinary RA with the chops and luck *might* get promoted, but the number of times this has happened since the Reorganization can be counted on one hand.)

The brightest and most ambitious RAs graduate into more authority and responsibility, becoming **Primary Investigators**. These brilliant minds have repeatedly proven themselves worth the increased responsibilities. PIs decide the course of research taken by the labs and RAs under their control, though they are still constrained by their field of study and the occasional meddling Research Director. Students and RAs are almost always assigned directly to a PI. In smaller labs, there’s only one PI, but in larger ones (such as Yemaja) there are as many as a half a dozen. Some PIs telemanage over RAs all over the globe.

The one thing all PIs have in common is dedication. The light of curiosity burns so brightly in them. They

possess the ability to blend their considerable intellect, ineffable Genius, and driving desire to decipher the enigmas they encounter in the course of their (genetically prolonged) careers. With their rank and experience, they are given wide leeway in directing the activities of the people under their command.

Like the majority of RAs, most PIs never leave their roles. The only way up is into management, and the idea of no longer getting their hands dirty is generally met with a response somewhere between laughter and disgust. The same fire that fueled their ascent into their fulfilling jobs also makes promotion out of the question. It's partly because of this ceiling, and its limited opportunity, that there are more PIs transferring to Applied Sciences each year.

MANAGEMENT

There's more to being a Progenitor than lab work. Laboratories are almost always part of a larger institute or foundation of scientific research. These entities are administered by the **Research Directors**. RDs are a slightly different breed of scientist. To be sure, they possess astounding knowledge regarding their chosen fields of study, but either their desire to research has cooled over the many decades of their long lives, or they have both the ability and desire to run the facilities under their command. Needless to say, most PIs just don't understand them very well.

Like the PIs under them, they guide the research efforts of the facilities and personnel at their command. They do not generally get involved in planning individual lines of research, but rather focus on the strategic level of scientific inquiry. They also make sure the junior research fellows under their tutelage are published and recognized by the Convention as a whole. Everyone benefits from this; an impressive white paper can lead to increased funding from research grants and fellowships, this attracts higher caliber Students to the facility and generally improves the lot of everyone under their employ.

This arrangement is almost always harmonious. The nitty-gritty research is left to the PIs, while running the organization that gives them the best labs in the world is left to people more suited to the task. Sometimes a bitter or jaded PI (or even RA) will make off handed remarks about who does the "real science around here." In our benighted past, these people didn't last very long. Things are different now — we actively encourage everyone to air their dissatisfaction so we can address it. (Though that doesn't stop individuals from having years-long grudges when others voice dissatisfaction about them — nature of academia.)

Councilors are the masters of the Convention, the members of the Shared Governance Council (page 19). From their distributed offices around the world, they make the high-level decisions that affect everyone. They're the interface to the rest of the Union's leadership. But, and this is key to how they work, they don't stop being Research Directors. Governance terms are not for life, so they need to keep some skin in the game, so to speak, if they're going to be relevant after their term's up.

SUPPORT STAFF

The academics aren't the only people in the Convention. Absolutely nothing would get done if that were the case; a quick visit to any university will show you that. In order to work, researchers need a large support staff. Most of these are unEnlightened personnel, with some Extraordinary and Enlightened washouts. Yes, you read that right — *Enlightened* washouts. Enlightenment doesn't automatically confer success. That comes from a combination of talent and limitless determination.

Recruiters are the talent scouts for the Convention. Their job demands the mastery of science to the same level as at least a PI. Without that knowledge they couldn't pick the wheat from the chaff.

Ever see *Amadeus*? These poor bastards are like Salieri in the flick. These guys showed enough promise to get recruited themselves, and most of them even finished their theses. But somewhere along the line, their careers died. Either the burden of Inspired Science was too much, or no one wanted them

All the propaganda about how they're better than the old Administration is, well, technically correct. They're less likely to be destroyed in a single event (at least one that doesn't also destroy the planet), so they're better from an evolutionary perspective. But between you and me, it's not all roses. There are two major factions in the Council: those that benefitted greatly from the old way of doing things, and those who are vocally disgusted by the old way. The impasses this causes makes the United States' Congress look fucking competent.

Don't tell Ethical Compliance I said that. Like he says above, voicing dissatisfaction is encouraged. Doesn't mean you won't get looked at with a microscope for doing so.

PROGENITORS AND PROCESSING

Dr. Caroline Yu, the Convention's Director of Surgery and Practice (think the Progenitor's equivalent to the U.S. Surgeon General), has led a campaign against NWO's Processing methods. She cites studies of Processing on subjects with brain anomalies, severe circulatory or respiratory problems, or were pregnant. In these cases, the Procedure killed well over half of these subjects. While she's not foolish enough to challenge the existence of Processing, she is fighting for safer methods. NWO Operations representatives state that changes to the Procedure would make it less effective. Right now, there's a political standoff; Yu is not clearing Progenitors for Processing (except in critical cases where Ethical Compliance overrules her).

in the first place. Sad, huh? They have enough brains to stay useful to the Convention, but not enough drive or charisma to be promoted. To add insult to injury, they now have to send wet-behind-the-ears grad students into the very gristmill they couldn't survive themselves. They don't all hate the job, but make no mistake, there's a lot of bitterness in their ranks. Just not so much that their judgment is tainted. Recruiters who can't cut it don't have many options left. (Most feel fortunate that they weren't immediately put to NWO Processing after failing the first time. All that advanced science in the head of a washout is an unhealthy combination.)

There's a place in the organization for Students who neither graduate nor have the prerequisites to be a Recruiter. Usually these poor wretches either crack or voluntarily give up on their studies. The ones that don't completely wig out are usually offered roles as **Technicians**, the lowest step on the ladder in the Convention. They keep the glassware in the lab clean and make sure there's always enough pens and clipboards to go around. They also take clerical and support roles in Shared Governance Council. The Convention keeps them around because, frankly, they know too much. Just cutting them loose can backfire. And there's always hope that such people will turn around and embrace their inner Genius.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The Progenitors don't induct just anyone into their ranks. A potential Student must display excellence in their given fields of study to get attention in the first place. Their typical haunts are all the places you'd expect; libraries, universities, technical schools, hospitals, hospices, and morgues.

But the search for new blood also takes them to unexpected places as well. Reports of pie in the sky "miracle cures" are taken very seriously. The ratio of actual medical breakthroughs found by lone inventors would shock most people. Deviancy Scene Investigators look into these claims, if only to expose dangerous frauds or collect information on any Reality Deviants who come sniffing around. Sometimes, though, they find a true Genius and a Recruiter is called in.

If you get on a Recruiter's radar, you've demonstrated not only expertise but also a natural affinity for our core principles. Recruits have these traits in common:

Devotion. You simply have to put in a lot of work to get anywhere. Most Students dream of a defining "Eureka!" moment, and most never get one. When they do, it's the result of weeks, months, years of slavish research and experimentation, vetted by as many hours of peer review as you can squeeze out of your colleagues. Come review time, the dedication you show is a greater credit to you than any breakthrough discovery you might have made. Management knows anyone can get lucky, and we aren't looking for just one-hit wonders.

Openness. Those who don't keep an open mind can't call themselves scientists. Shutting out ideas just because they seem foolish, don't fit convenient models, or for whatever reason, is counter to the principles of the scientific method – and, by extension, the Convention. Discoveries tend to be serendipitous. Exploration of all possible combinations of factors is the best way to carve out knowledge. (That said, this can bite you. Openness is only considered a virtue when applied to science; asking probing questions about policies and decisions leads to attention from Ethical Compliance.)

Mastery. Recruiters love candidates who consume everything they find regarding their field of study. Progenitors who maintain that mastery rise to the top. This isn't easy—research, experimentation, and fieldwork endlessly pumps data into our shared body of knowledge. Scientists who can consume the constant influx of information while simultaneously contributing to it are considered the best of the best.

Each Methodology places different value on these traits. Pharmacopoeists primarily value devotion, at least early on. They specialize in research and production of pharmaceuticals, both medicinal and recreational. Students and RAs help run production facilities for both strains, and devotion is key to keeping the manufacturing lines humming, and to insure the safety and/or purity of product. (The "or" part is a sticking point for the higher-minded among us.) Later in their careers, Pharmacopoeists shift towards openness, as the PIs and RDs focus their efforts into developing new products.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE

Even though it isn't explicitly valued by any Methodology, many Progenitors have come to embrace **compassion** as a core principle in the years since the Anomaly. In a Convention-wide poll conducted in 2010, 28% responded compassion is their main motivation when choosing assignments. The number was much higher with Applied Sciences – 77% after adjusting for statistical errors. It isn't hard to see why. Progenitors who decide on fieldwork in lieu of laboratory assignments inevitably face decisions that hurt people. Real, live people, not statistics projected from experimental data. In those harrowing moments, compassion is more than a principle; it's an irreplaceable guide. And, when things go wrong, it's a powerful solace.

FACADE Engineers primarily value mastery. Cloning is a very delicate operation. Constant vigilance and the ability to diagnose and correct errors within a matter of seconds are absolutely essential. Failure leads to entire batches of clones developing spontaneous lethal mutations (if they're lucky), or even worse, clones or ones that test as perfectly normal but have genetic flaws (if they're not). This compromises operations in the field, destroys assets, and costs lives. Parental-like devotion is also necessary, as clones can take weeks to grow, during which any of a thousand things can go wrong.

Genegineers value openness above all else. They plumb the genomes of humans (and all other living things), looking to unlock hidden potentials. This means investigating genetic sequences from tens of thousands of species, evolved over millions of years of selective adaption. A closed mind could (and has) cut off entire families of potential breakthroughs. They also develop new traits out of whole cloth, which requires openness to not just ideas on how to develop those abilities, but what their forms are in the first place. Since hundreds of millions of genetic sequences must be considered, they also need Students with an innate mastery of the subject matter.

REAL GENIUSES

Most Students come from colleges and universities. As we've said, this is a natural synergy; these places teach the foundations of science and offer a crucible for developing the proper virtues. Most of the Progenitors' culture comes from academia – a candidate steeped in that doesn't have to be broken in. They already know how to play the game.

Campuses aren't the only source of classically trained candidates. Established research facilities occasionally

produce Enlightened and Extraordinary Citizens. We always reach out to them when we find them, as allowing the Traditionalists to get their hooks into these minds is unacceptable. Lone individuals doing their own basement research for the pure love of science are also sought out, though these are the rarest candidates. More often than not, their Genius becomes corrupt and leads them to the Traditions (or worse); saving one from that fate is cause for celebration.

To the shame of many in our ranks (especially those younger), the Progenitors are active and entrenched in the world of illicit drugs. For a street kid, getting a job in a drug lab can be a blessing and a curse. The money is solid, but the security, paranoia, and constant wrangling with law enforcement sucks ass. Lab workers who show the chops are inducted as Students. Sometimes this means getting sent to the more legit research institutes for training, but more often than not the Enlightened PIs and RDs in the street labs take them to a disused basement to begin their tutelage. There's lots of crossover with the academic divisions after the Students become RAs, but very few actually land long-term work in them.

This divide leads to a lot of tension, for the clichéd reasons you'd expect; a lot of academics look down their noses at the street lab operations, huffing about "true science," and the street lab crews get all pissed off and rant about who pays all the goddamn bills. These tensions are a big part about why a lot of the post-Anomaly crowd wants to change the landscape. Some want to cut the street drug programs out, some want to more tightly integrate the divisions, and some want to completely merge them, turning the illegal drug operations into clinics and medical dispensaries. The kingpins in charge of the street labs don't tend to like any of these ideas, but a lot of their underlings are receptive to them.

A GLORIOUS CAREER IN SCIENCE

The life of a Student is fundamentally the same as her experience in college and grad school. You go to class, pay attention, take exams, write papers, and perform experiments. You're continually exposed to new ideas and tested on your mastery of them. Any student worth her salt can handle that kind of environment. The same goes for street lab Students. They've learned chemistry or biology, either in high school, community college, or by on the job training in the production labs. This is old hat for all Students, or they wouldn't be there in the first place.

Where things go off the rails is the subject matter. When you're learning at the feet of the grand masters of the universe, the curriculum gets *weird*. The fact that Inspired

Science exists and that our ridiculous enemies label it as wizardry is only the tip of the iceberg. Once you start delving into the existence and biological natures of vampires, werewolves and faeries... well, a lot of people balk at that. The majority of students get over their reticence after their first exposure to test subjects from those groups – it's kind of hard to deny werewolves exist after you've seen nine hundred pounds of hairy bipedal fury try to rip apart a titano-primum cage (which, no joke, is part of Cryptozoology 101). After that, it's just a numbed acceptance of pretty much any outlandish fact your instructors throw at you.

Once you graduate and ease into a life as an RA, you can expect a decade or two of lab assignments, or go into fieldwork. Eitherway, it's an awesome experience from many perspectives. You learn more about your field of study than you ever thought possible, you get many opportunities to expand your mind and prove your worth, and it even occasionally gets downright provocative. It's a fulfilling life of long, devoted hours in a lab (or field research Construct) pursuing knowledge, punctuated by moments of joyous elation or stark terror, just to keep things interesting. After that, you will rise to the level of your incompetence.

GOING DOWN IN FLAMES

Of course, sometimes things don't go according to plan. Every opportunity to show your strengths is also an opportunity to show you can't handle your shit. This is discounting simple mistakes, of course. It's fine if you just forgot to keep your laser optics clean in a microbial culture experiment. A more serious mistake can call for an administrative review, but these aren't really that horrible either. Unless you got someone seriously killed or blew up a multi-million dollar lab, the worst that's going to happen is a black mark in your file. Too many of those will lead to trouble, but the truth is everyone has a few.

We're talking about the more serious infractions, the really serious (and frankly, stupid) courses of action. Most

cases involve Students betraying the Union in some capacity, intentionally or not. Sometimes they crash and burn, or just can't cut it for a panoply of reasons. These unfortunates are generally handed over to the NWO for Processing, in order to remove any dangerous memories or knowledge. Those who keep it together but still don't graduate are generally allowed to stay on in some sort of support capacity. A few threaten to expose or betray us for varying ethical or personal reasons. They usually get a visit from Ethical Compliance.

Going traitor after you graduate is uncommon. A rare few defect to the Traditions, either because some pet theory of medicine isn't accepted by the Convention as a whole, and instead of embracing the nature of the Enlightened Scientific Method, they flee to the home for wayward pseudoscience. Even rarer are those who defect because they can't handle the corporate and clinical nature of the Union – they join the Verbana or others of their ilk, getting all hippie and primitive.

Students who do this kind of get a pass; after all, they're just being introduced to information that turns their worldview and identities on their ear. More often than not, they come back; we treat the situation like an Amish *rumspringa* (one that'll cost them having to scrub beakers for a few months and be watched closely for a few years). RAs and above are supposed to have their shit together, and are put on Damage Control's retrieval list.

There was a time when disagreeing with your superiors counted as a disciplinary infraction. The more curmudgeonly members of the old guard really couldn't stand that. As if sharing your own ideas with your peers was a crime! Fortunately, most of those Progenitors have met timely ends. The Dimensional Anomaly eliminated some of them. The rest mostly stopped making vexing underlings disappear after the old-boy network vanished. The Shared Governance Council today sees no benefit in that sort of environment; wasting talented professionals over dick-swinging contests is counterproductive to our cause.

METHODOLOGIES



As scientists, we naturally organize ourselves along lines of expertise and inquiry. We've never valued outside input on how to allocate our resources; non-scientists aren't qualified to give it. Other Conventions are orchestrated from the top down, with a central authority guiding all development and change. Not so with us. The Shared Governance Council dictates how we divide our energies, but always in

response to the demands of Inspired Science itself, not the whims of an oligarchic superclass. We've arranged our infrastructure to efficiently explore the most important medical discoveries of the modern era.

There are three primary Methodologies, with a smattering of smaller houses filling the niches in between. The **FACADE Engineers** dominates the field of biological replication and cloning. Without it, the Union would be a radically different and much less effective. The **Genengineers** transcends the copying of biological life,

FALLING BETWEEN THE CRACKS

Not every Progenitor's research interest fits neatly into one of the three main Methodologies. Many scientific disciplines, such as veterinary medicine, agriculture, and ecology, fall outside the larger Convention structure. The result is a smattering of smaller organizations that fill in the gaps. These groups are often referred to as "micro-Methodologies," even though structurally speaking they are full Methodologies in their own rights, just on a much smaller scale (with a smaller-than proportional funding from the Syndicate).

The Shalihotran Society is the Progenitors' veterinarian Methodology, named for the earliest known veterinarian. Shalihotrans travel to places in the world where people earn their livelihoods from animals, as sources of either food or labor. Whole economies in every socio-economic stratum would collapse without their dedicated ministrations. Their work takes them around the world, combating diseases like BSE, West Nile virus, and SARS. Some of their research into animal diseases that are potential human epidemics (such as the recent bird and swine flu scares) gets appropriated by Pharmacopoeists once those illnesses become "worth their time."

The Agronomists is comprised of Progenitors steeped in the sciences of botany and agriculture. Even by their own admission, their field of study is boring, steady, and absolutely indispensable for the Masses to continue flourishing. Its most famous member was botanist Norman Borlaug. His work developing dwarf wheat cultivars in India and Pakistan in the 1960s prevented the collapse of the food supply in South Asia, and he's credited with saving the lives of over a billion people. Following in his footsteps, the Agronomists applies Genegineer techniques to plant species, producing strains that feed people, put clothes on their backs, and improve their lives in scores of ways.

The Preservationists is our council on environmental science. It has an unenviable task—convincing humanity to clean up its own messes. Toxic pollution is the undeniable price paid for the advancements our Union created for the Industrial Era. Sadly,

the Consensus rejected the parallel technologies we developed to control and mitigate the damage. The Preservationists seeks to reverse this trend before extreme weather events and poisoned water and food supplies irrevocably damage Sleeper civilization. Its methods are a strange hybrid of NWO Mind Procedures (to find the root cause of Sleeper resistance to advanced green technologies) and Progenitor Science (to implement cost-effective alternatives that have stronger resistance to Rejection).

The Psychopharmacopoeists specializes in psychiatry and psychology. As one might guess from its name, it used to be a group within the Pharmacopoeists. In Conference of 1960, Administration voted to make them a separate Methodology (possibly influenced by NWO "advisors"), resulting in decreased funding when they were no longer core to Pharmacopoeists. Its members now serve as counselors and therapists for the Technocratic Union as a whole (though only recently have more in the other Conventions taken them up on services, notably Void Engineers and whose who've lost loved ones and don't trust talking to NWO shrinks). Unlike their NWO counterparts—who they accuse of weaponizing their science—they focus on healing the mind rather than taking it apart. Despite this animosity, they consult with Operations and the Ivory Tower, both to take courses to further their study of Mind Procedures (for better purposes) and aiding in cases of Processing hardened Reality Deviants. Psychopharmacopoeists also pride themselves on research into the mental and psychological components of Enlightenment.

There are a few oddball scientists who don't fit even in one of these Methodologies, like Enlightened geologists and paleontologists. There's so few of them that they don't even have a group identity or name. The Shared Governance Council gives them a small stipend for their research, and (gently) encourages them to find their way into a loftier position in the Convention, but that usually falls on deaf ears. Like most Progenitors in these micro-Methodologies, they have a passion for their particular niche of study, and can spend many happy years in dig sites and museum libraries.

delving deeper into the mysteries of the genome. Its scientists manipulate and dissect genetic patterns, providing enhancements to make us stronger and more effective in our work. The **Pharmacopoeists** is our response to the

demand for drugs—therapeutic, recreational, and so on. And that demand is great; medicine is an essential component of a healthy and fruitful life. Just ask anyone without access to it.

FACADE ENGINEERS

The mysterious FACADE Engineers have one purpose in the Convention: producing clones. Their mastery of this difficult science has made them indispensable. Their clones are used in multiple roles across every Convention. Further cementing their importance is the fact that they hold the keys to the immortality enjoyed by nearly every Technocratic leader. This one fact allows them access to just about any resource they need, in any amount they dictate. Further confounding and confusing their critics, they almost never abuse their authority. To do so would mean interacting with the outside world.

HISTORY

The history of the FACADE Engineers is spotty at best. What actually is documented is naturally pretty sparse. The earliest known histories suggest that they began as a secretive offshoot of one of the Egyptian Cosian Circles sometime around 300 AD. They speak of beasts and gods from the old Pharaonic religion; men with the heads of jackals, women with the heads of cats and massive raptor wings for arms, and other such monstrosities. These chimeras were the handiwork of the earliest known ancestors of this Method-

ology. Their numbers slowly grew over the centuries, with sightings of other mythical beasts from various cultures in and around the Mediterranean. Always paired with these beasts were whispers of their awful masters locked away in secure stone towers and underground crypts. The few surviving records from those lost years, compiled by the Order of Reason, hint at an unbroken chain of scholarship, passed down over very, very long generations, indicating early research into immortality.

Using those same records, the Order of Reason managed to coax most of the chimera-makers out of obscurity, binding them together into a formalized school for the first time. The Order dubbed them the Chiurgeons, and then left them to their own devices. The only caveat was that they would provide the high leadership of the Order with immortality (without divulging its secrets to anyone), in exchange for security and privacy. This forged a successful, if singular, relationship that has lasted for centuries.

The Order kept its initial promise quite well, only getting involved in internal matters when invited to. That only happened once, during the Grand Housekeeping. Absolutely nothing is known of the details, except that the name of the Methodology changed the FACADE Engineers.

Sadly, their chimaeras are mostly extinct. They don't survive Rejection well. The strengthening and unification of the Consensus over the centuries has made their survival rate practically zero. Now with Horizon effectively out of the picture, the few that remained are either dead or lost. A few similar in structure and appearance to their parent animals (or humans) do manage to cling to life today, but they are very rare.

⊕ OPERATIONS

Although they are still far from totally transparent, the FACADE Engineers has opened to scrutiny in the last decade. Since 2003, the Shared Governance Council dictates that its research institutes take on increasing numbers of new Students, instead of the previous generations' method of hand selecting their protégés. In a move that would have made their old masters recoil in horror, two of the largest FACADE facilities, located in Montreal and Lausanne, have instituted cross-Methodology open house programs. (Nevertheless, FACADE is still the smallest of the main Methodologies, and receives disproportionately larger funding.)

The most recent of these has pioneered an astounding breakthrough—the world's first universal 3D organ and tissue

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The term FACADE is, of course, an acronym. It stands for "Forced Adaption and Clone Alteration Developmental Eugenicists." That's a really cumbersome way to spell out a word that means "A false front to hide behind." Clearly, the name is intended to be mysterious and threatening. While we're on the subject, take a look at that the word "eugenics." If you're not familiar with its history, look it up. Go ahead, I'll wait.

Yeah. That word is an ugly relic of the past. It's got *baggage*. But changing it would be a mistake. If our new, progressive attitudes are to mean anything, we have to acknowledge the darkness of our recent history. The Methodology wears this name like a badge of shame for the entire Convention. And we collectively haven't yet earned the right to change it.

Not that the old guard in the FACADE Engineers agrees with that new, "softer" take on things. Another place where we're divided.

printer. With a single sample of DNA, the machine can synthesize any of fifteen organs, or two hundred types of tissue, each designed to integrate seamlessly with the donor's biosystem. Genegineer technology rapidly synthesizes the required RNA sequences, FACADE Procedures produces the output in minutes, and Pharmacopoeist medicine controls rejection. If smashing down political barriers to revolutionize medicine is something that excites you, the name of the task force is the Syorka Institute of Regenerative Medicine, and is based out of the University of Pittsburgh. They're accepting applications.

Clones created by FACADE have three classifications, based on quality, durability, and intended use. Type I clones are the least sophisticated. They are meant to infiltrate Sleeper society, either as replacements for witnesses or as clandestine assets. They are not intended to pass scientific scrutiny at all. Physically, they are perfect copies of their original patterns, but their synthetic personalities tend to unravel after a few years in the field (in the best case scenario). Also, inconsistencies in their Life Patterns make them easy to spot to anyone with Enlightenment, or the Traditional "Awakened" facsimile. They aren't limited to cloning humans – household pets make perfect spies.



Type II clones are much more stable and nearly perfect copies of their predecessors. They are reserved for Technocratic senior leadership, so that their memories and abilities are preserved. This is the vaunted immortality that the FACADE engineers offer us. The process copies both the Mind and Life Patterns of the original, allowing the beneficiary to cheat death for many decades.

What's referred to as Type III clones have recently come to light in the last ten years. The name is a misnomer; they are actually small groups of clones, three or more in number. Each clone possesses different physical specifications, such as gender, ethnicity, and physical dimensions, but each cluster has one common trait: they are controlled by the same Mind Pattern. The rumor is that the FACADE masters have developed a Mind/Life Procedure that allows them to control these small groups simultaneously, spread out over vast distances. These clusters of clones are very rarely seen, but an encounter with them is unforgettable. They act with spooky coordinated precision, each member a part of a whole, without any obvious means of communication between them. When they communicate with others, they can individually or in creepy unison. So far as anyone knows, no one outside of the Methodology has access or control over one of these gestalt hives.

CONVENTION

Like the Pharmacopoeists, the FACADE Engineers have fashioned a comfortable existence for themselves. The New World Order couldn't run its operations for more than a week without the clones provided to them. On multiple occasions, NWO Operations has needed to quickly produce large amounts of disposable Black Suits, each with the proper training already ingrained in Mind Patterns. Without FACADE-run clone banks at their disposal, they would have been reduced to mincemeat by the horrible foes they face.

And of course, there's immortality. Sure, preserving all the collective experiences and abilities of the leadership is important. But are we really to believe that underneath all the trappings of power and Enlightenment, those leaders aren't scared of death? Not

WHY NOT MAKE UNLIMITED CLONES?

New Progenitors ask when they find out about FACADE and all the threats to Consensual Reality: "Why not just keep making soldier clones?"

Tell them "Because it's expensive." And when they say "But what about the Syndicate?" you answer "Exactly."

even a little bit, even after all the years of extended life they've already had? The idea is ludicrous. A thousand year old man will still beg for his life on his deathbed. That's what the FACADE Engineers are really selling to the Union: putting off the inevitable.



GENEGINEERS

In many ways, the Genegineers have picked up the torch of biological design that FACADE dropped when they began to specialize in cloning. Instead of using Inspired Science to cobble together creatures from amputated fragments, they create whole beings from scratch at the genetic level. This goes much further than mix-n-match. With their encyclopedic understanding of genetics, they have created new traits and enhancements from scratch. Their creations suffer from Rejection much like the Frankenstein creations of the Chiurgeons did; however, instead of locking them away from sight to rot, the Genegineers instead create whole ecologies to support their creatures. Whether this is playing God or simply being responsible for your works is a common argument among other Technocrats.

HISTORY

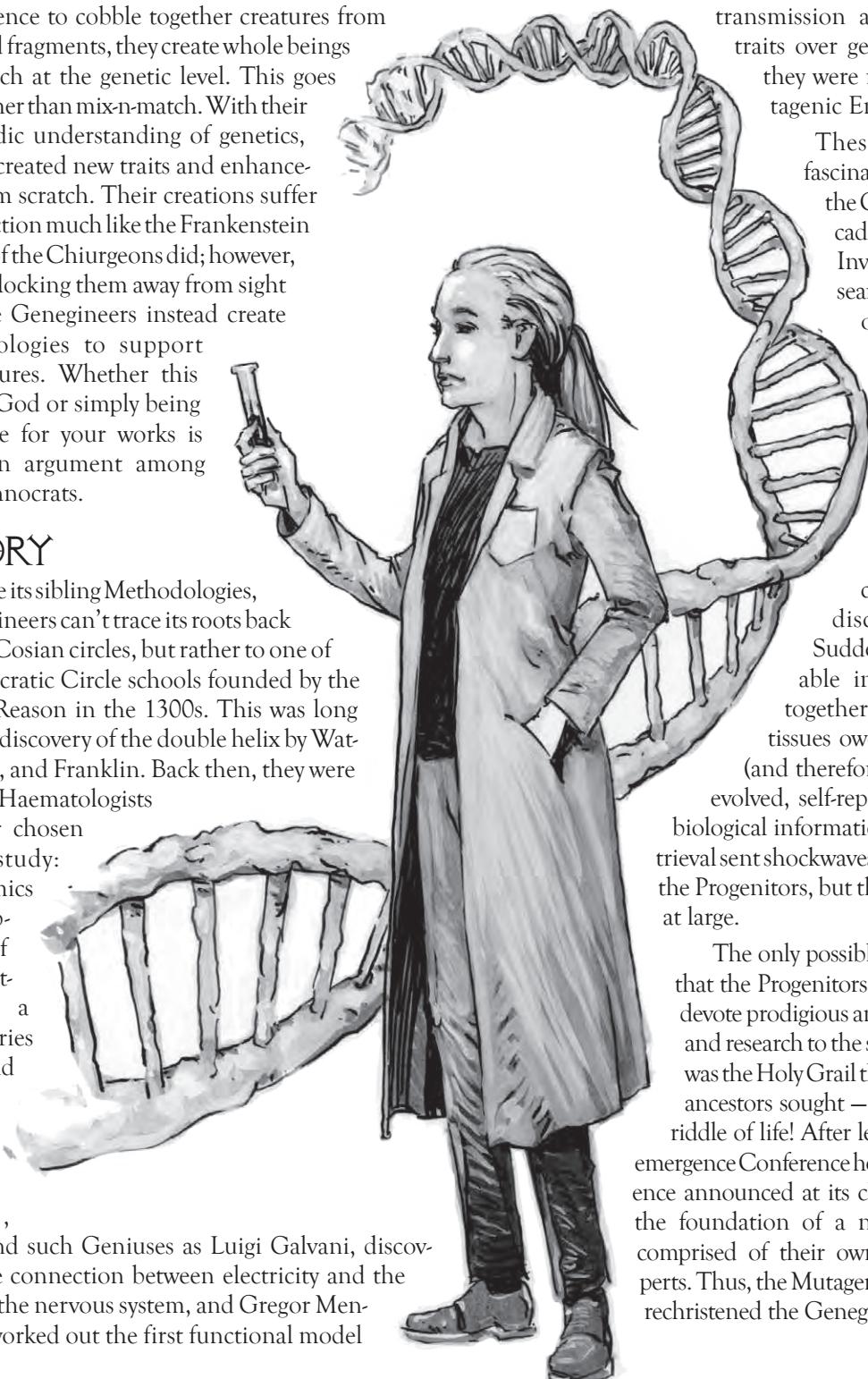
Unlike its sibling Methodologies, the Genegineers can't trace its roots back to the old Cosian circles, but rather to one of the Hippocratic Circle schools founded by the Order of Reason in the 1300s. This was long before the discovery of the double helix by Watson, Crick, and Franklin. Back then, they were called the Haematologists after their chosen field of study: the dynamics and properties of blood. Fast-forward a few centuries to the wild and wooly days of the scientific method, and we find such Geniuses as Luigi Galvani, discoverer of the connection between electricity and the actions of the nervous system, and Gregor Mendel, who worked out the first functional model

of heredity and trait inheritance. The Haematologists expanded their activities to include these new findings.

Since their interests focused on the transmission and evolution of traits over generations of life, they were renamed the Mutagenic Engineers.

These developments fascinated the whole of the Convention for decades. Many a Primary Investigator and Research Assistant stood on the shoulders of these giants, and hundreds of Students' theses cited their legendary works exhaustively. The final breakthrough came when the discovery of DNA. Suddenly, all the available information came together. That cells and tissues owed their structure (and therefore function) to an evolved, self-replicating system of biological information storage and retrieval sent shockwaves not only through the Progenitors, but the scientific world at large.

The only possible course of action that the Progenitors could take was to devote prodigious amounts of funding and research to the subject. After all, it was the Holy Grail that our pre-Cosian ancestors sought — the answer to the riddle of life! After lengthy debates, an emergence Conference held in 1954 Conference announced at its closing symposium the foundation of a new Methodology comprised of their own homegrown experts. Thus, the Mutagenic Engineers were rechristened the Genegineers.



⊕OPERATIONS

From its foundation, the charter of the Genegineers has been the complete understanding and mastery of the genetics of every species — known, unknown, and yet to be created. The completion of the Human Genome Project, while being a defining moment for the Methodology, is merely the first in a series of milestones. To date, the Methodology has cataloged the genomes of tens of thousands of species, with hundreds of thousands of more earmarked for analysis and inclusion. With the discovery of an average of a dozen or so new species every year, this job may never truly be done.

Even with all the information they have gleaned on genetics, many Genegineers readily admit that their Science is still in its infancy. Over the sixty-odd years they have been at work, they have found thousands of viable combinations of DNA to weave into their hybrid creatures, alongwith hundreds more synthetic sequences. The result is a frightening and awesome bestiary of life beyond the wildest speculations of the Chiurgeons of old. They hand over control of their more durable and frightening creations to Damage Control for use in security operations.

You can find Genegineer scientists on every continent in the world, hunting for new and exotic strains of DNA. The Methodology has invested a significant portion of their energies and funds in the tropical rainforests of South and Central America, looking to catalog the genetics of as many species as possible. (Which has lead to some of their financial support to the Biosphere Explorers amalgams.) With the development of those areas by Syndicate controlled corporations, many species have vanished into extinction already, taking their genetic secrets with them.

METH⊖D⊖LOGY

With all the knowledge they have amassed in such a short period of time, a critical examination of the Genegineers' activities reveals a startling lack of wisdom. To many other Technocrats, they seem almost reckless in

their creation of new life. The number one customer for such entities is Damage Control, by a wide margin. They really can't be used in many other roles due to Rejection. This has led to widespread criticism of the Methodology—not just among the Progenitors by across the Union—the thrust of which is questioning if the cost of making their monsters is worth it, when NWO can provide security for a much lower cost, financial and otherwise.

Another product line about which the Genegineers has been taking a lot of flak recently is genetic enhancement. Upgrades like built-in bioweapons, Enlightened senses, and performance and durability boosters were chic for the better part of the '90s, but all that has changed of late. Most of these enhancements can be replicated by Pharmacopoeist drugs at a lower price point, without invasive procedures. The drugs are also safer. When your Consensus-breaking abilities come from an alteration to your own Pattern, you become the battery for any resulting Rejection. Lab techs call field agents who still use implants (especially xenotransplants) "human bombs" behind their backs. The most damning criticism is in the statistics; the number of voluntary implant surgeries has dropped a staggering 87.4% since 1998.

Those pointed criticisms have caused the Genegineers to branch out in a different direction. Instead of making living weapons and enhancements for Front Line troops, a small but growing group within the Methodology has decided to directly help Sleepers. At first, a handful of individuals went to work in cancer wards and genetic disorder clinics. Once word got out about their altruistic work, their numbers began to swell. The Shared Governance Council gave it's approval and funded the programs officially. Of course, this consent came with a caveat from Ethical Compliance: that any damage caused to the Consensus would be considered a security breach and dealt with accordingly. Not that stern warnings will stop them; the dearth of advancement opportunities in this line of work means only those yearning to help others join up, and that sort of passion can override conventional thinking.

PHARMACOPOEISTS

The Pharmacopoeists is a house divided. One side of the Methodology is the pride of the Convention. It works tirelessly to improve the human condition by developing medicines and therapeutic compounds.

It's pioneered lifesaving drugs: penicillin, vaccines for diseases from smallpox to AIDS, and treatments for chronic and terminal conditions like heart disease and cancer. It also addresses little things that make life easier and more fulfilling, such as sexual enhancers, depilatories and hair growth stimulants, and a rainbow of metabolism accelerators.

Then there's the darker side of the house: the street labs and illicit drug distribution networks. We had the best intentions when getting into that nasty business, but that trade has always been sleazy and dangerous. We just haven't been able to keep our hands clean. Because of this contrast, this Methodology is a living illustration of the Convention's split nature.

HISTORY

Pharmacopoeists boasts an unbroken lineage stretching back to the 4th century BCE Cosian Apothecaries trained by Hippocrates, claimed as an Enlightened medical practitioner. Thanks to their early developments in longevity, individuals could continue their works for decades past a normal human lifespan. Naturally, the advanced stuff was kept away from the general population. This wasn't out of a fear of Rejection—the Consensus wasn't very strong or unified back then—but out of self-preservation. As many cultures descended into barbarism, they often labeled healers as witches. The Apothecaries fled, continuing their labors in secrecy and isolation. They splintered their numbers and efforts in the name of safety, prohibiting the exchange of information. This hindered the advancement of medical science in the early part of the second millennium, and was directly responsible for many ghastly privations of the Dark Ages.

The Renaissance brought a reversal. When the Order of Reason reunited them, forging the Hippocratic Circle, the Apothecaries charged themselves

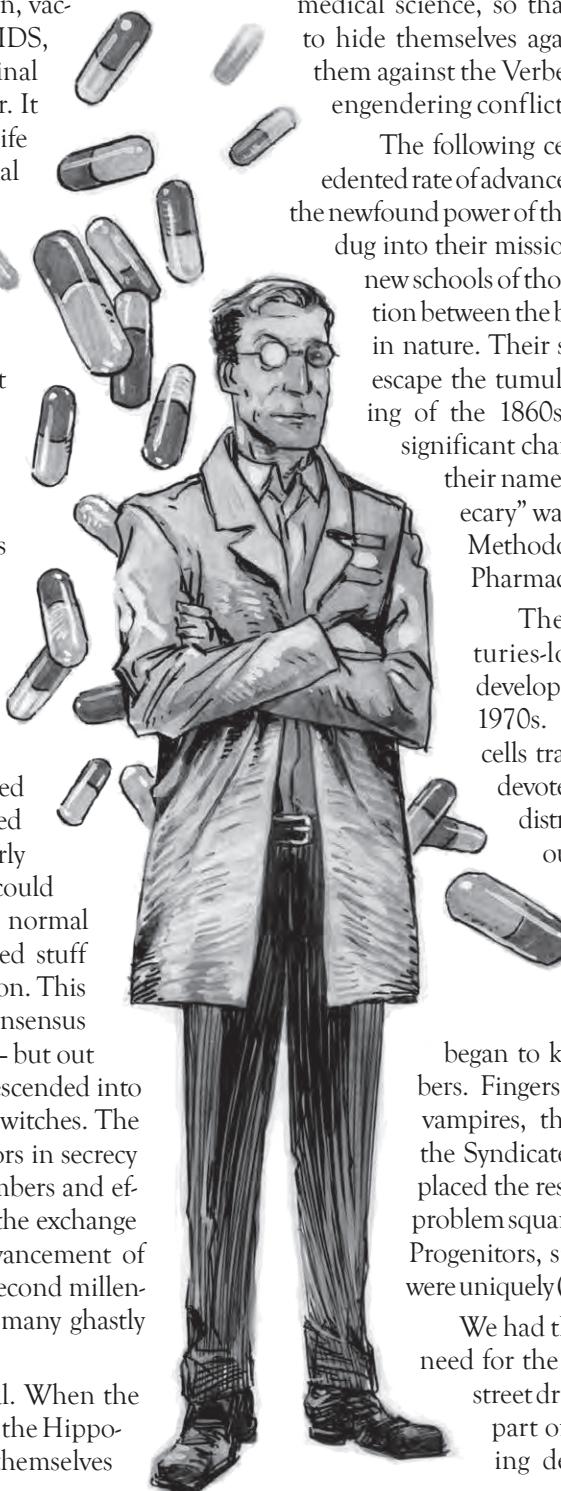
with a multi-pronged mission: to unite the remaining Cosian schools still floundering in the darkness, to combat disease by founding hospitals and universities, and to educate the masses about the foundation of medical science, so that they would never have to hide themselves again. Naturally, this pitted them against the Verbena and Celestial Chorus, engendering conflicts that still rage to this day.

The following centuries led to an unprecedented rate of advancement of life sciences. With the newfound power of their unity, the Apothecaries dug into their mission. They ushered in entire new schools of thought regarding the interaction between the body and substances found in nature. Their successes allowed them to escape the tumultuous Grand Housekeeping of the 1860s mostly unscathed. One significant change brought by this was to their name. By then, the term "apothecary" was going out of fashion; the Methodology renamed itself to the Pharmacopoeists.

The Pharmacopoeists centuries-long streak of altruistic development ended in the early 1970s. Sleeper organized crime cells transmuted into enterprises devoted to the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of dangerous and impure recreational street drugs. The trend continued unabated well into the next decade. The drugs these kingpins produced

began to kill people in record numbers. Fingers were pointed—usually at vampires, the Cultists of Ecstasy, or the Syndicate. The New World Order placed the responsibility for solving the problem squarely on the shoulders of the Progenitors, since the Pharmacopoeists were uniquely(if unfortunately) qualified.

We had the best of intentions. The need for the release and glamor these street drugs provide is an incurable part of human existence. Curb-ing demand was dismissed as



impossible, so the only recourse was to make them safer, cleaner, and with minimal side effects. That was until the Syndicate got their grubby mitts in the business. They have changed the street labs into the biggest source of income for not just the Progenitors, but *the Union as a whole*. Long-gone are the days of concern over the purity and safety of the product. The street lab organizations take their cues from their Syndicate masters, who allow the Progenitors in the field only enough authority to insure smooth daily operations. The strategic direction is solely focused on profit, and has been for decades now.

⊕ OPERATIONS

The daily operations of the Pharmacopoeists haven't changed much since the mid-1980s. On the legitimate side, they run research laboratories and pharmacological production plants on every continent (yes, *every* continent). They follow the general model used by Sleeper pharmaceutical companies. Controlling entities and research facilities are hosted in developed nations such as the United States, Switzerland, and Japan, with production plants operating in less developed countries like India, the Philippines, and Mexico. The Syndicate created this arrangement, at the behest of the pre-Anomaly Progenitor leadership. From a purely economic standpoint, it makes perfect sense. The drug formulas are controlled and maintained in the more powerful nations, while production is done in places where labor is cheap and security can behave in as extralegal a fashion as necessary.

The view from the street lab side of the house hasn't changed a lot since the '80s either. Drugs produced in the same third world shitholes still feed the millions of brass monkeys in the first. Serflike peasants manufacture product, disposable mules take it over national borders, and criminal distribution networks dole it out on street corners. It's the same model you see in movies and television, except that the roots go far deeper than even the most addled conspiracy crackpots can dream. Imagine what their reaction would be if they learned the true nature of the drug trade. The sound of their collective minds blowing would be like distant thunder.

Most people forget there's more to the Methodology than getting cured and getting high. These scientists are the foremost experts on poisons (both making and treating), amnesia cocktails, truth serums, etc. If you can imagine something that could be administered pill, injection, spray, or patch, you bet they have people on it.

Like every Methodology, the Dimensional Anomaly had expensive ramifications for the Pharmacopoeists. On the academic side, it means that all new pharmacological research and development has to take place in an environment where Rejection is a possibility. As with Earthside

laboratories across the Technocratic Union, absolute containment measures have to be maintained at all times, or research that triggers Rejection can be wiped out in an instant. The cost of these containment methods is astronomical, and only buys about a 50% success rate. This has dramatically slowed many developmental timetables.

The impact on the illegal operations is dramatic as well. The majority of research into new street drugs is done in academic-side research facilities. The street labs just don't have the gear or personnel for pure theoretical work (nor, for that matter, the desire). Their strength lies in effective mass production. Since the Anomaly, this means that every scrap of research and development for the next ten iterations of crack, heroin, and PCP are on file in labs on Earth, where Sleeper law enforcement and the Cult of Ecstasy can get to them. And before you say anything about how tight security, keep in mind that it's a lot easier to get into a locked filing cabinet than it was to get into a Horizon realm. This has caused Damage Control many a sleepless night, even after moving the most sensitive operations to undersea Constructs.

CONVENTION

A lot of Technocrats are absolutely enamored with the Pharmacopoeists. They provide essential services to all the other Conventions. NWO relies on psychoactive compounds to assist in Processing. (NWO agents technically can do it themselves without assistance, but running farms of Processing tanks is a hell of a lot easier with superdrugs at your disposal.) Vitamin deficiencies, bone loss, and radiation sickness would constantly plague the Void Engineers without a Pharmacopoeist-stocked sickbay on every vessel. Mood stabilizers and attention enhancers are widely used by Iteration X. Those hardsuits can get awfully confining when you practically live in them the way they do. And of course, the money brought in by both sides of the house keeps the Syndicate fat and happy.

Within the Convention, the Pharmacopoeists enjoy a position of prestige and fear. Prestige comes from their aforementioned cash flow. Technocratic operations cost a tremendous amount of money, and the Progenitors' are no exception. Labs and facilities are incredibly expensive, especially now that they can no longer depend on Horizon foundries for raw materials and energy. As for the fear, take a good, hard look at illegal narcotics cartels. Semi-fictional works like *The Wire* aren't far off the mark regarding what it takes to run that kind of operation. A blend of icy self-control, psychotic violence, and cunning brilliance is essential to insure consistent success under those conditions. People who possess those qualities are scary enough on their own without the notion that they're backed by the most powerful and invisible organization on the face of the Earth.

APPLIED SCIENCES

The image most Technocrats have of the Progenitors is the researcher in the laboratory, with equipment ranging from Bunsen burners to unfathomable multi-billion dollar apparatuses. This is not an unreasonable assumption to make, as well over 90% of us live up to that stereotype. But not every scientist's work is in insulated environments; some earn their stripes working in the field, seeking hands-on experience. While those who work in pure research recoil from this *quaint* idea, the men and women of Applied Sciences yearn to go out into the world and actively make it a better place.

Many in Applied Sciences amalgams refer to themselves as "action scientists" (and in the case of some Damage Control operatives, "combat scientists"). This is a key element to their mindset and identity: they aren't just NWO thugs or Iteration X units to be bossed around and deployed to places where "real work isn't happening." They see themselves as bridge between Progenitor science and the real world. To put it in the words of one *Médecins Sans Superstition* doctor (after getting a bit drunk at the 2010 Conference and overhearing some snark at the mention of his kind): "What does my badge say? It says 'Doctor.' That's not a fucking honorary title – I'm a scientist, just like you. Except I have the balls to also be something more." Shortly afterward, a brawl broke out; the action scientist was on top when the brawl was broken up, but that didn't help bridge understanding between this new group of Progenitors and their older, indoctrinated brethren.

There is a general sense of community across everyone in Applied Sciences – natural for a group who has to band together to defend against outside political pressures. But beyond that, there is a sense of culture. They celebrate scientist-heroes in fiction, from *Doc Savage* to *Star Trek* to *Atomic Robo*, even when what these figures do has nothing to do with the life sciences.

Applied Sciences isn't a Methodology (though they had to fight to not be turned into one—a classic Progenitor trick to cut someone's funding). They're more like super-amalgams; groups of groups with likeminded purposes and command hierarchy. The first of them, *Médecins Sans Superstition*, patterned themselves after Damage Control. Others have since formed. They're made up from members of various Methodologies (often pariahs, outcasts, or undesirables from the perspective of Research Directors), which means they still have access to political, financial, and tangible resources, even if begrudgingly so. That said, the attitude toward Applied Sciences is slowly turning

around as some are making themselves worthwhile to those cynical RDs.

DEVIANCY SCENE INVESTIGATORS

Progenitor Science has many applications in the world of criminal investigation. Naturally, our Devices operate on a stratospheric level compared to anything in the Sleeper world, but the basic idea of what they do is the same as their mundane counterparts. The work of Deviancy Scene Investigators is invaluable to the security divisions of the Union, in particular the Operations Methodology of the NWO. They also work hand in hand with Damage Control. Otherwise, they wouldn't know where point their guns. Because of their extensive work with DNA sampling and identification, most DSIs are Genegineers with some FACADE Engineers in the mix.

These Enlightened forensic teams frequently embed in Sleeper law enforcement. It lends an air of legitimacy to their operations. Badges can open doors without resorting to methods that risk Rejection. It also affords the investigators a first-hand look at candidates for induction into the Union.

The Sleeper credentials they carry are little more than a useful fiction in service to their real job – using Enlightened Science to investigate threats to the Consensus. After Operations pacifies the scene of a Reality Deviance event, Progenitor investigators go to work, bringing every tool at their disposal to bear in discovering crucial evidence. DNA samplers, time/motion splatter analysis, holographic reconstruction, whatever it takes. They're so good at what they do that the Progenitors loans their expertise out to every other Convention, making them the go-team for investigating events that confound everyone else.

Their expertise, equipment, and razor-keen minds make them the natural choice for procuring supernatural test subjects. Need to neutralize a werewolf? DSIs have silver nitrate power-soakers and genetically tailored narcotic mists that can drop a raging beast in its tracks. Vampires are a little trickier, but accelerated coagulant darts and aerodynamic wooden stake bomblets even the odds. They have specialized gear for just about every form of Reality Deviant out there, and the guts (and brains) to do the job.

MÉDECINS SANS SUPERSTITION

One of the first groups of Progenitors to formalize fieldwork is a group mostly comprised of Pharmacopoe-

ists called *Médecins Sans Superstition* (Doctors Without Superstition). Its self-made mission is to practice medicine so-called “hot spots” — places in dire need of trained medical personnel. This means inner city hospitals in ghettos and barrios around the world, remote places that haven’t seen doctors in years, or field clinics in war-torn nations. There, its members do as their Cosian predecessors did: heal the sick, tend to the wounded, and ease the dying out of this world. It’s hard work, full of heartbreaking loss. As one of their doctors said, “You savor every tiny victory as it comes, because they’re so fleeting. But at the end of the day, when you have spent it helping people instead of playing it safe in a lab, it makes it all worthwhile.”

Of course, being Progenitors, their plans have multiple layers. In addition to medical practice, these doctor-scientists also push to strengthen the acceptance of modern medicine and science in general. Many of the people they come into contact with have dangerously low levels of Consensus buy-in. Low education rates, no normalized experience with technology, and economies crippled by war or poverty (or both) create an air of desperation, which Reality Deviants easily exploit. Traditionalists recruit acolytes and spread their dangerous ideas, opening the door for Marauders and Nephandi. Supernatural predators hunt with impunity.

The *Médecins Sans Superstition* doctors are frequently the only hope these communities have against Deviant threats. They must be ready to defend their charges at a moment’s notice, without any backup. Because they travel alone or in small groups, they take as much combat training as they can from Black Suits, and carry weapons fabricated in Iteration X foundries. What they lack in numbers, they make up in resilience.

BIOSPHERE EXPLORERS

The Biosphere Explorers studies the astounding diversity of life on Earth. Nature has an endless capacity to solve problems in elegant and useful ways. The Biosphere Explorers’ drive to discover these secrets takes them out of the lab and into the furthest corners of Earth. Every new species it discovers presents multiple opportunities to learn how to improve health and quality of life for humanity. It’s established permanent research Constructs in the rainforests of South America and Southeast Asia, desert ecologies in Africa and China, the ice fields on both polar caps, and deep sea heat vents — just to name the more extreme environments.

The Pharmacopoeists views these ecologies as vast reserves of untapped chemical potential. The sheer volume of species competing for resources over the last 40 million years has evolved a startling and exciting panoply of chemi-

cal defenses, some of which have effects similar to synthetic Enlightened compounds, but with a game-changing resistance to Rejection. The medical and research applications of these exotic chemistries has kept the Pharmacopoeists busy for decades. The same seemingly inexhaustible array of species is relevant to Genegineer interests; they’ve cataloged hundreds of thousands of species of insect alone, each with unique and exciting genetic traits.

This has been an unexpected boon. The Genegineers and Pharmacopoeists offer bounties on relevant new discoveries. Two things come from that: finances to continue missions and respect from those who used to look down on them. The Biosphere Explorers are earning their keep, to where some RDs suggest that young, antsy Scientists join them for a few months.

These Explorers work in near isolation. Their Constructs are very small, usually only able to host five people at a time (ten for short periods of time, before supplies — sometimes including oxygen — run low). There simply isn’t room for the usual security personnel lab Progenitors request when going into the field. While they usually don’t have to face as many Reality Deviants as others in Applied Sciences, their work threatens in ways no other Progenitor faces. (Though, when they encounter something too hot for them, they aren’t stupid; they call Damage Control for an extraction.) When they’re not out in the far corners of the world, they’re at home taking training from Void Engineer marines and explorers in survival and combat.

Every Biosphere Explorer has at least one harrowing story about narrowly escaping death: submarines cracking from deep water pressure, evading hungry sharks or polar bears, even discovering lost tombs full of Deviant horrors. They’ve seen it all. Listening to their tales over drinks can be a humbling and exciting experience.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Damage Control, the oldest of Applied Sciences (since before that was even a term), has the unenviable task of ensuring the security of the entire Convention. Their order stems from the Phylaxoi during the Order of Reason, the warriors who protected the healers. Its mission is to defend the physical and operational security of our Constructs and personnel. It’s our internal security force, internal investigation division, and wetwork group. This near unilateral power — one of the last legacies of the Pre-Anomaly Administration — inspires compliance and fear alike.

Unlike the rest of the us, who use titles like Scientist and Research Director, Damage Control’s titles remind you of who they are: Constable, Chief Inspector, etc. Don’t let that mislead; each one is a Progenitor in her own right (if they’re human; some officers are genegeneered

creatures or other entities). Many carry doctorates to go along with their Inspired weaponry.

They do the dirty work so that you and I can sleep well in our beds. Most of that work involves hunting down escaped chimerical experiments and rogue Progenitors (especially Nephandi), providing security for remote facilities and disaster-prone experiments, and so on. If there are reports of Sleepers spotting Progenitor tech, they investigate before Rejection becomes critical. Constables also go after Traditionalists sporting pseudo-medicine with great prejudice, and another other such reported occurrences. Keeping such ideas from poisoning the Masses as a whole falls very much under their idea of "damage control."

Part of keeping the Convention secure is not letting the rest of the Union know the extent to which Damage Control is necessary. When DC agents are in the field, they'll sometimes integrate into mixed-Convention amalgams under cover. Other times, they'll co-opt a Sleeper organization as a front (more than one FBI field office has become a temporary Damage Control front). Most such agents cover up their tracks after an operation is done, to keep NWO or the Syndicate in the dark.

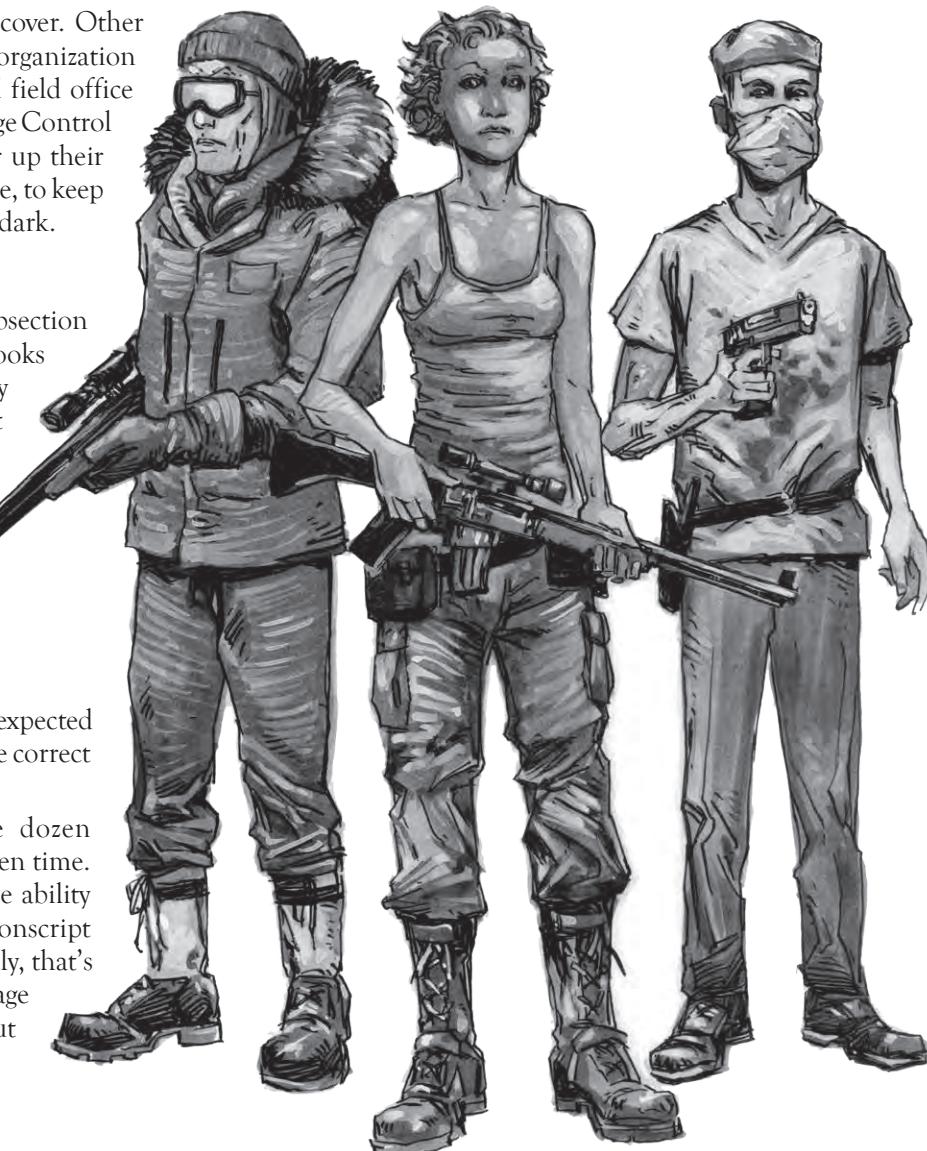
E^HTICAL C^OMPLIANCE

Ethical Compliance is a subsection of Damage Control, who only looks into Convention activities. They are the Progenitor's thought police, and they don't make any attempt to hide that fact. A visit from Ethical Compliance causes all but the stupidest or most oblivious Progenitor to stop whatever they're doing. And *usually* it just takes one unexpected appointment with EC to course correct a scientist's behavior.

There are two to three dozen dedicated EC agents at any given time. However, they have the unique ability within the Convention to conscript anyone into a task force. Usually, that's a matter of assigning some Damage Control wetwork constables, but

others in Applied Sciences have become useful—notably Deviancy Scene Investigators. And when hunting down a rogue Progenitor, experts into the target's field of inquiry are using to have on hand... as are friends and colleagues, to gain insight into a target's mind.

Contrary to the beliefs that many have about them, most Damage Control agents regret executing a fellow Progenitor. They have a code of conduct and do not take liquidation lightly. It's just that, at the end of the day, they'll do what's necessary for the health of the Convention and Union. DC believes in amputating a finger before infection spreads to the arm, and amputating the arm before it spreads to the heart. (One of the former head honchos of our order, Dr. Charles Reid, was sanctioned for this reason. Reid is the cautionary tale for any Councilor who considers stepping out of line.)





CHAPTER THREE: PRESCRIPTIONS

SCIENTISTS OF NOTE



DR. AJANI DURAND, PHARMIACOPOEISTS/ DAMAGE CONTROL, 1982-PRESENT

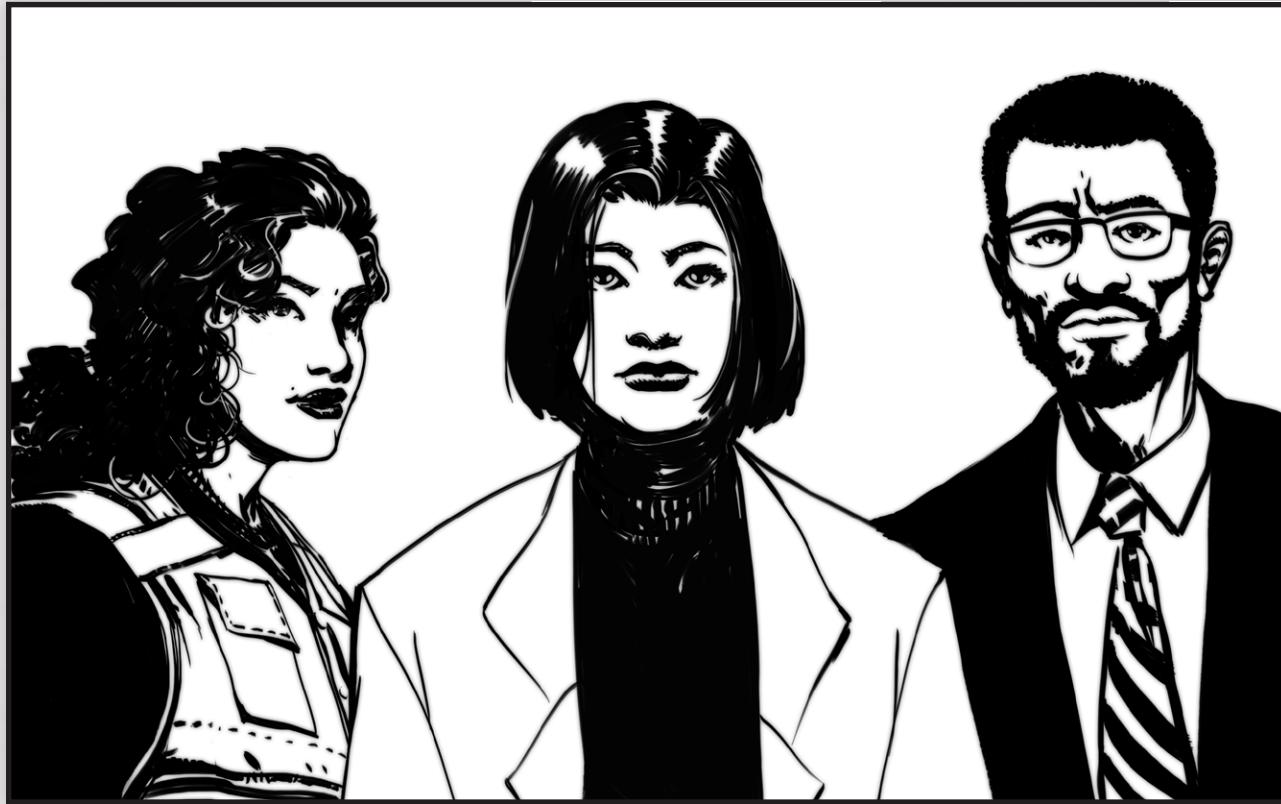
Doctor Ajani Durand felt the call to medical science at an early age. As a second-generation Technocrat, she was raised with one foot on Earth, and the other in the far-flung Progenitor off-world laboratories.

Durand was orphaned as a teenager—both her parents were working in a Deep Universe laboratory when the Dimensional Anomaly hit. Luckily, Ajani was planetside, attending university in France.

Suddenly recalled by the Union to act as another trained pair of hands in the harsh fallout left by the

Anomaly, Durand firmly made her case that she was needed not at school, but in the field helping impacted labs on the Front Lines become operational again. The travel and risk Ajani experienced put her in regular contact with Damage Control, as compromised laboratories and dangerous unsupervised constructs were discovered in greater number than before Anomaly.

Her life split between risky missions to far flung labs on Earth pushed her into an increasingly stubborn refusal to return to lab work, declaring to her superiors that her training in pharmacology was best put to use in the world, and not in the lab. After meeting Damage Control Constable Nathan Durand during an assignment to rescue laboratory research from the wreckage of a Progenitor installation in Southern France, the two became nearly inseparable.



With a long term plan in mind for life after graduation, Ajani began crafting a manual of “Safety and Security” Procedures to test for field use with home personnel, basing the defense Procedures on her current vein of pharmacology research at Institut Pasteur on the pharmacology of pain. Approval for the tests was debated for three years, during which Ajani grudgingly finished her internship. Though approval of her proposed experimental program has come with tight restrictions and a test pool made only of a small number of personnel in France, some of her research has been expanded on by the Convention, with a branch exploring her theorems for weaponizing her findings for use in the field to counter enemies originally – or resembling – something with a human central nervous system.

The Hindu-French husband and wife team have sparked conversation inside and outside the Progenitors, as the two action-oriented scientists make their case for increasing safety and security training for all members of the Progenitors. The Durands have argued repeatedly to any lab director who will agree to see them that the Golden Hour of the Union may be running out, and it is up to the whole of the Progenitor Convention to brave the worst dangers imaginable to keep the Union alive.

CASSIDY PERRY, FAÇADE ENGINEERS, 1999-PRESENT

Cassidy Perry's early life held few hopes and smaller dreams. As a crown ward of the Canadian government, she had been removed from her home, bullied over her mixed race, and well aware of her uncertain future.

Science became her safe haven, an escape from the world and her peers, peppering her teachers daily with numerous and rapidly advanced questions. Hungry for knowledge and out reading her own school in a manner of months, her pattern of unusual reading activity and rapid pace had her flagged by the Union as a person of interest.

Due to her age, FACADE reached an agreement: the only way they could offer her entry into the Convention was via the Howser Project (an under-the-radar program to rapidly accelerate the physiological growth of very young Enlightened minds). If she refused, they'd walk away.

When she turned twelve, they took the offer to Cassidy. When presented with her options – remain a crown ward and endure the many physical and financial hardships to come, or accept the unusual offer of the FACADE Engineers – Cassidy sided with FACADE. Issued a UID and told she no longer needed her name, the teenager agreed to leave her old life behind.

Putting their plan into play, Cassidy's extraction from her old life was conducted by a FACADE amalgam, with help from a single outside source: the Void Engineers. Their assistance was a necessity; Void Engineers had helped the Progenitors restore access to deep-sea laboratories, including the lab Cassidy Perry was bound for. The Void Engineers orchestrated additional assistance on their trip from the surface to the bottom of the ocean.

Once there, the process to take Cassidy from conspicuous child to full grown adult began. Cassidy was taken from a short, malnourished teen to a healthy adult woman of twenty in a matter of months. Then she received her new identity as Cassidy Perry — whatever name and identity Cassidy had before the Union was buried, hidden to all outside the Howser Project. In a decision that mirrored many of the Technocrats that came before her, she has resolutely turned her back on her old life, making no moves to contact any prior foster families or friends.

As one of the stable and functional Progenitors produced by the Howser Project, Cassidy lives and works inside an intensely stressful panopticon of an environment inside the Union. While valued among her fellow Progenitors and other Howser Fellows, she spends every day aware that her research into botanical cloning and gene manipulation comes under closer scrutiny than that of her peers. As one of the few successful products of the project, the road ahead of the young Progenitor is still a rocky one.

NOAH KALYAN, GENEGINEERS, 1970-PRESENT

One of the premier surviving Bioethicists from before the Dimensional Anomaly, Noah Kalyan endured and survived his life before the Progenitors as a medical student during the South African apartheid. In a period where black students still were heavily restricted from entry into higher education, Noah pushed on to make a life for himself as a doctor. Failure was too horrific and terrifying to contemplate. Noah's specialty in genetics is the study of heritable congenital defects. The unseen inherited flaws in the human body are often waiting in deadly silence.

Having watched his father, also a doctor, despair over the losses of his patients' children, Noah's choice of field was made out of a desire to alleviate widespread suffering, from patient to caregivers. The consequences of ethical ignorance in the medical community fueled his

drive to pursue bioethics. Black South Africans' treatment by white doctors was monstrous; the unethical human experimentation was its own medical apartheid. Black medical personnel worked brutal hours in facilities that possessed only the most basic medical resources. What Kalyan's medical school lacked in practical — or nearly any — bioethics training was made up for by begging, borrowing and stealing access to every text and person he could find to impart the desperately needed and elusive component of his education.

When the world hailed apartheid as ended in the 1990s, a degree of unprecedented mobility was created for the Progenitors. During apartheid, it was difficult for Progenitors to move with ease inside the country; personnel who weren't white faced impossible barriers when dealing with the larger scientific community, and those who were distrusted by a majority of the population. Progenitor resources present in the country were funneled as frequently as possible into the underserved communities by back channels — dangerous work for both the Progenitors and anyone found in possession of medical equipment apartheid had fought to keep from their communities. When the cultural-medical wall fell, a wave of new Progenitor personnel in South Africa were the ones to come across Kalyan, slowly absorbing the man into the Convention a step at a time.

Noah was one of the first on scene when the Progenitors faced the local destruction left by the Dimensional Anomaly. He went to work coordinating rescue of scientific personnel and data from the wreckage landing in the rural areas of South Africa. Those early, desperate days were a bonding experience between local Progenitors and Void Engineers, sharing a mutual heartbreak at the devastation they bore witness to. These cross-Convention and cross-Methodology efforts have made Noah a supporter of in-house cooperation among the Progenitors. He's also urged that the partnership with the Void Engineers continue. In Deep Horizon as well as the far-flung corners of the earth, both Conventions held considerable numbers of personnel and data. With each other's help, they may yet save them.

Noah walks a dangerous path as one of the leaders of the Progenitors in South Africa. With the recent advent of Shared Governance in the Progenitors, Noah no longer has an Administration behind him to fear. But a determined bioethicist at the wheel in South Africa has driven some of the worst black bag projects of the era underground. Beneath the halls of his struggling and ethics-minded community of Progenitors lurk terrifying and deadly secrets Noah has only begun to discover.

RUMORS AND LORE



RESEARCH EXPEDITION 215

The twelve-person expedition, headed by Pharmacopeist Hugh Riley went into the mountains of Tibet to conduct a botanical study in the rural and difficult to access area. Riley had built a theory that the plants in the remote areas may have been influenced by Prime energy based on the evidence of an unusual, long standing energy pattern in Tibet.

His team included Laura Casca and Peter Flynn, both on loan from the Void Engineers' Earth Frontier Division, specifically the EFD's Inaccessible High Elevation Exploration Teams. Though it wasn't expected to be a walk in the park, Riley's expedition met with difficulties far beyond their expectations. Thomas Skelton, the only member of the expedition responsible for its security, died in the first week of mountain climbing due to an equipment malfunction. Unable to take his body with them, they wrapped him in a decay-resistant body bag and placed him in a deep outcropping. The locator beacon placed with his body malfunctioned within days; by that time the expedition covered a considerable portion of inhospitable terrain, encountering a scant number of religious pilgrims. The freak weather encountered by the expedition triggered urgent messages to return as soon as possible. The beacon with the body of Skelton was dead, and the expedition vanished off the patchy satellite feed. Whether the messages reached the expedition is unknown. A garbled message from Riley was received days after the directive to return, of which only a few words were decipherable.

"Dispatch, we can't come back."

Twenty-four hours after the transmission, the Dimensional Anomaly happened. Even in the post-Anomaly era, the topography of Tibet's energy is still relatively unknown, making it a mountainous Bermuda Triangle. No rescue expeditions by the Progenitors were authorized. The deployment or status of any rescue operations by the Void Engineers is a mystery.

Refusing to classify the remaining eleven expedition members as dead, both the Progenitors and Void Engineers have listed the personnel of Research Expedition 215 as "Current Location: Unknown". There are rumors that an expedition beacon recently reactivated in Tibet.

GRAFT CHIMERA 467

Combining personnel from Genegineers and FASCADE, Dr. Martin Chase's cross-Methodology lab was a botanical house of horrors, disguised as a boring Earth-side sample processing and analysis laboratory (though one completely off the Agronomists' radar). Producing a host of sentient plants, toxic hybrids, and botanical security measures, the lab was decommissioned for a decade after a lab accident resulted in Chase's death. The Primary Investigator was found dead in a pond on laboratory grounds, used for the observation of larger water samples. Before the Pre-Anomaly decommission, someone with laboratory access destroyed as much as they could of the organic and written material on the premises.

The lab was reactivated in 2010 for organic field sample processing, and the remaining sensitive records of the laboratory surfaced. They chronicle the bizarre focus of Chase's private research — all of it reckless, unethical, and highly unorthodox. The sort of hell that justifies Ethical Compliance.

"Graft Chimera 467" is one of his personal projects. The new species combines human DNA and that from multiple plant families, making them the only known, presumably developed beyond seed-stage plant/human hybrid created by the Convention on Earth.

The scientists analyzing these unsanctioned laboratory experiments have issued a curt notice to their sister laboratories: 467 is an invasive species. Allowed to develop unchecked, 467 has a statistical likelihood of creating a thriving and difficult to eliminate monoculture. In the wild, 467 would spread outside its original geographic area and choke out or interbreed with other plants... and quite possibly humans as well. The consequences of such unstable enlightened botanical material are not yet fully understood. If the fragmented records left behind are to be believed, Graft Chimera 467 may use Primal Energy in a process similar to photosynthesis. A Prime-influenced evolution could make 467 even harder to kill.

Very little data on this remains, but their potential for destruction and damage to the Consensus is being taken with utmost seriousness. The whereabouts of any surviving organic material from the project, or any living 467 Chimaeras, is unknown. The eradication of 467 organisms will become a Convention priority if proof surfaces of their survival.

THE PROMETHEAN SOCIETY

Since the days of the Hippocratic Circle, Progenitors have dealt with those of their own attempting to cheat death. In the earliest years of the Circle, resurrection was perceived as going against the Divine, a blasphemous act against Heaven. The study of resurrection and the dead were done largely in secret.

By the time Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein*, a new crop of resurrection-obsessed Progenitors gathered in England. Like members of the Circle's unsanctioned House of Olympus, these Progenitors would be forced to practice in secret. Even in 1818, the religious and cultural repulsion at such study lingered, driving such activity underground. These scientists each saw themselves as a modern, scientific Prometheus, creating life as the Titan. They were the intellectual heirs to the renegade Cosians who had come before them.

A select number of their experiments succeeded. Inspector Rathbone's Skeleton Keys exterminated these unnatural creatures whenever encountered. Fearing discovery, the rogue scientists kept relocating their laboratories. As Rathbone assumed these events to be the work of Traditionalists, the Society spent much of its time one step ahead, barely, of those attempting to locate and unmask them. One captured Promethean likened the hunt to "feeling the breath of bloodhounds on the back of my neck."

As the Grand Housekeeping occurred in 1897, the danger represented by the Society grew. They had set their sights higher than brief resurrections of animals and chimera. And they succeeded in resurrecting one of their own, Dr. Ezekiel Stewart. The Rejection was catastrophic — the manor house where Stewart was destroyed, and Her Majesty's Reformation crushed the Society shortly after. With the renegades dead, their research destroyed, the Union was more than happy to bury the matter in the Archives.

Recently, it's come to Ethical Compliance's attention that an organlegging operation discovered by Progenitors in the field is ran by a man using the name E. Stewart, raising the specter of the possibility that once again, the Society has risen to the occasion.

THE LOCKWOOD HIVE

Friendly, intelligent, and outspoken, FACADE Engineer Aaron Lockwood was on a steady career

track as a competent and dedicated cloning specialist until log in discrepancies involving his ID were found during a spot laboratory audit. Lockewood spent hours in the cloning facilities in Utah while not scheduled for a shift. Being less competent at scrubbing his login use than at cloning, Lockewood was initially flagged during the audit on concerns of overwork. The rise in Technocrats working themselves to exhaustion being no secret, his lab's Primary Investigator was first concerned that he'd been logging extra hours in an attempt to lighten the load for his colleagues. Lockewood's disappearance during the investigation raised additional flags, but no one was prepared for the data found in Lockewood's home.

Hastily destroyed written records, combined with laboratory equipment cobbled together with Lockewood's understanding of hypertech, created a picture of grim and paranoid personal research into cloning. The few remaining records were incomprehensible and nauseating for investigators to peruse. Lockewood's methods, fragmented as they were, seemed to fly in the face of Enlightened understanding about cloning. His writing indicated a man suffering from troubling delusions of persecution and conspiracy. Investigators pieced together his fear of a non-specific antagonist group that knew he was aware of their involvement in the death of his colleague and fellow student Deborah Parker. Parker, killed in traffic accident six months before Lockewood came under scrutiny, had been a close personal friend of the troubled Progenitor.

Attempts to locate and subdue Lockewood for questioning resulted in deadly consequences for the Technocrats charged with bringing him in. When two simultaneous incidents involving Lockewood, both resulting in the death of field operatives were examined, a diagnosis was reached. Lockewood, who had previously tested as unable to understand or access Correspondence, was not using a simple co-location Correspondence Procedure: he had cloned himself.

Further encounters confirmed fears that his clones are in fact networked, operating in tandem. These clones are developed using an unstable application of his Enlightened Science — with mental patterns and signatures far too similar to Marauders for comfort. The Lockwood Hive has killed several Progenitors. Each clone is considered as dangerous as its creator, and on Damage Control's top ten list.

PROGENITOR FRONTS



Wherever science touches the living world, chances are you'll find a Progenitor somewhere nearby. Our scientists can be found in government consulting, academia, hospitals, even forensics teams.

For the most part, these fronts are composed of unEnlightened technicians and employees. Enlightened personnel can be found at or near the top of the heap, and use their positions to (among other things)

disseminate knowledge and cutting-edge techniques to the Masses. Rarely, an entire team of Progenitors will take up residence in a front, usually to tackle a particularly pernicious problem that requires multiple Enlightened minds.

ACADEMIA

The undisputed home turf of the Progenitors, the life science departments of academia form the backbone of the Convention's efforts, especially after losing contact with off-world labs. At least one Progenitor is stationed at every university with a reputable program in biology, botany, chemistry, ecology, genetics, immunology, neuroscience, or zoology.

Educational institutions offer ready supply of materials, including drugs, medical equipment, hospitals, and offices; networks of expertise and support, from doctors to psychologists to burly orderlies; and malleable work force in the form of undergraduates hungry for course credit. In addition to all this, positions within academia can be leveraged to reach the public sector. Reputable credentials from a respected institution allow Progenitors to serve as science correspondents for the media and technical advisors to government panels and individual politicians.

Then there's what some call "fast-tracking research." The process is simple: a lab director demonstrates some corner of Enlightened Science, then turns the project over to unEnlightened scientists to replicate and "work out the kinks." When they hit an obstacle that seems to imply the Procedure is impossible, the director returns to show them that the advanced Procedure can in fact work. This leads to redoubled efforts and, if all goes well, new technology introduced to the Consensus (though it can take years of iteration for this to hold for any given idea).

DEEP GREEN THINKING

While the think tank Deep Green Thinking is technically a part of the Ethnobiology department of

the University of Chicago, most of its work is done abroad. Deep Green scientists tour the back roads of Africa, visiting villages that have minimal contact with the modern world. Their goal is to assist the disenfranchised in "bootstrapping" themselves to a better standard of living through the use of new crops, managed nutrition, and preventative healthcare techniques. The think tank also employs a number of advisors and lobbyists at home who work to direct government aid to projects highlighted by the teams in the field.

The underlying theory behind Deep Green Thinking is that isolated villages can use today's cutting edge technology to leapfrog over the infrastructure demands that kept them out of yesterday's "modern world." The massive water reclamation plants built in the twentieth century, for instance, are irrelevant in a world with personal drinking straws with in-built water filters. The founders of Deep Green hoped to apply similar solutions to the developing world's problems.

Theory met with reality in a brutal confrontation. Deep Green teams quickly found themselves set against rank corruption at every level: police demanding bribes, first-world ambassadors playing favorites for their political sponsors, rebel paramilitary groups commandeering their supplies, even black ops teams sent (they believe) by the multinational corporations interested in the water rights of the people Deep Green sought to help. All of which is not to mention the Reality Deviants defending their personal fiefdoms and attacking Technocrats simply on principle.

The future of Deep Green Thinking is uncertain. The project leader, Doctor Miranda Rogers, is intent on digging in her heels and proceeding with the project as planned, damn the obstacles. The scientists on the ground, however, are increasingly discovering misgivings with their mission. Rogers has joined one the roving teams to prove that it can be done.

BIOTECH FIRMS

Long accustomed to doing their work in the cloistered labs of academia, the recent boom of biotech firms actually has the Progenitors scrambling to monitor, let alone manipulate, what is happening on the Consensus' forefront of their own industry.

Agricultural biotech companies breed new strains of crops, new fertilizers to benefit them, and custom-designed pesticides that kill everything else. Medical firms concentrate on pushing the bounds of human longevity and potential, slaying disease and even

slowing the body's natural decay. Other firms deal in biofuels, growing building material, even designing a longer lasting rose blossom.

Progenitors working within the biotech industry often work in the labs, directing research and fast-tracking new developments. But they can also be found in these companies' leadership or working as consultants or liaisons from Progenitor front companies. Their goals are to keep abreast of what is happening, occasionally guide research away from dangerous pitfalls, and encourage lines of inquiry that supplement what is coming out of other Progenitor-controlled labs.

SANMONDO: A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COMPANY

Often considered the Progenitor's flagship effort to maintain the integrity of the Technocratic Union, the biotech giant SanMondo had humble beginnings as a producer of pesticides. Dedicated work by Doctor Edgar Kingley, however, "tuned" the pesticides to attack anything but a given crop; this led to a massive increase in crop yield.

The new pesticide also increased SanMondo's stock value. The Syndicate stepped in to help manage the company's finances, leading to a series of ruthless acquisitions and mergers. As SanMondo's stature grew, New World Order operatives insinuated themselves into the company to manage its image and its relationship with governmental regulatory bodies. Inter-Convention work enabled SanMondo to begin patenting DNA sequences, which allowed greater control over the resulting crops, pesticides, and other products.

Today, SanMondo generates an incredible amount of revenue while providing cheap food for the world. It consults on legislation in many different countries and sends experts to politicians and other influential figures to serve as technical advisors. The corporation is quickly becoming a pillar of the global economy and beacon of international cooperation. Within the confines of SanMondo, the Progenitors have successfully encouraged the New World Order and the Syndicate to cooperate peacefully and productively. If this model can be applied elsewhere — and nothing goes wrong at SanMondo — the future looks bright for the Union and the world.

HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

While some consider the Progenitor fronts in health care somewhat pedestrian affairs, those who choose them do so out of a certain calling. A hospital position means working directly on the front lines against disease and injury, facing blood and death on a daily basis.

It also means confronting the fallout of the darker corners of the world, where the Consensus is not as established. The emergency room often sees a stream of victims of Reality Terrorist attacks, escaped and malnourished blood slaves, even the occasional reanimated body unaware that it's dead. Interviewing patients about the "alternative medicine" they've sought out, from whom and from where, yields leads on Traditionalists operating on the Masses with their signature dangerous methods. Whether the Progenitor follows up these leads herself or tips off someone else depends on the individual Scientist.

While there are opportunities for research, unless the hospital administration is under Technocratic control, such studies must be conducted clandestinely. Drug tests, experimental organ grafts, even recovery regimens can be quietly introduced to the Masses through these channels. Assuming the patient walks away healthy, few questions are asked.

HEALTH BOMB! MOBILE CLINIC

This massive bus sports a colorful swirl of paint that reads "Health Bomb!" in something approximating street art-style lettering. Inside are two examination rooms, one that doubles as a fully functional operating theater or somewhat cramped living quarters for three. The bus travels from one inner city neighborhood to the next seeing to the health needs of the impoverished and underserved.

That is, however, only the Health Bomb! amalgam's cover. The three Progenitors and their HIT Mark that compose Health Bomb! are Damage Control operatives. The bus allows these Scientists to roll unremarked into hot zones of Reality Deviant activity, set up shop, and pursue their targets.

Target areas often host communities suspicious of outsiders due to economic disparity and political neglect. By approaching bearing gifts, the amalgam finds it much easier to question locals in the pursuit of their quarry. Additionally, patients examined in the Health Bomb! can serve as carriers for custom-tailored pathogens or DNA-seeking microbes, unknowingly spreading the amalgam's search field.

Some Methodologies would like to use the amalgam to distribute Enlightened medicine to gain Consensus acceptance, but the manager of Health Bomb!, Dr. Morris Burrows-Wright, refuses on ethical grounds. His team wouldn't remain around long enough to verify any such treatments' success.

Once the amalgam eliminates its targets, the Health Bomb! bus moves on to another target area.

FORENSICS TEAMS

For the Progenitor who wants to fight crime, there is the field of forensics. Crime scene investigators, medical examiners, and toxicologists all rely on the life sciences to uncover clues to put away bad guys, and even elitists who normally disdain fieldwork find this hard to disparage. (While this is a common front for Deviancy Scene Investigators, they aren't the only Progenitors who entrench here.)

Those same skills can be called upon for inter-Convention work. Progenitor forensic analysts can lead teams from evidence to culprit in ways that are subtle and efficient. Not to mention, Enlightened forensics does much more than its mundane counterparts – tag DNA by blood sample, perform biometrical analysis of footprints for holographic reconstruction, and reset any legs broken while chasing down the culprit. In fact, the Convention gets more requests for forensic analysts each year as the rest of the Union embraces the “smarter, not harder” ethic of the post-Anomaly era.

CLARK COUNTY FORENSICS DEPARTMENT

Strange murders are rife in and around Las Vegas for a variety of reasons, many of them supernatural. The Technocracy keeps a lid on the Deviant community's worst mistakes by seeding DSI scientists among the first responders to crime scenes. They gather evidence, track down who's responsible, then turn over a plausible suspect that the Masses can accept as a murderer. The alternative would be allowing mortal law enforcement to storm the local vampire lair, which would not end well.

Thanks to a few subtle and well-placed Mind Procedures, the CCFD crime scene investigators enjoy unparalleled privileges that other forensics teams can only envy. They visit crime scenes armed. They question witnesses. They even make arrests. Such privileges are necessary for their cover-up work: more than once, they've had to dispatch a rampaging ghoul mad for blood while on the job.

The amalgam has only one remaining founding member, Investigator Nick Sanders. After seeing perhaps too much action, he has begun to agitate for a shift to the team's function. Instead of covering up offenses to the Consensus, he advocates eliminating them. This brings him into frequent conflict with his new superior, Lead Investigator Deb Rush. For her part, Rush simply wants to demonstrate some leadership and get reassigned to a less violent position.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

Theories as to the nature of ecological damage are varied within the Technocratic Union. Rabid optimists identify pollution as a throwback to the Masses' unwillingness to believe in clean technology – a gut-level disbelief in anything that offers something for nothing. The theory then continues to claim that once global Empowerment is attained, environmental fallout will become a thing of the past. Others compare pollution to thermodynamic entropy, stating that no process can control all its particulars; everything produces some sort of mess.

Whatever their position, a number of Progenitors became interested in the industry of environmental remediation, which seeks to repair ecological damage. (The Preservationists welcome these scientists.) Many of the techniques involved rely on tailored fungi and microbes, and all the work rests atop the current understanding of ecology. In many ways, it's ideal work for Progenitor skill sets. And when something unspeakable from the Deep Universe runs amok and the subsequent slaying sprays ichor all over downtown Detroit, telling the locals that the splatter came from an industrial explosion is better than the truth.

WHISTLER INDUSTRIAL SANITATION

Headquartered in Brussels, this environmental remediation firm employs twelve teams who operate widely across Europe and North Africa. One of these teams is staffed by Enlightened scientists and Extraordinary assistants; the company's dispatcher, Wanda Goossens, is an intrusion clone. The Enlightened team are assigned the hardest jobs – those otherwise deemed impossible – as well as those with the most potential to gain influence and favors in the political and industrial worlds.

However, the highest priority jobs come from the Union itself. When the Union needs to construct a new facility and they want it kept quiet, they call Whistler. The Enlightened team consults with the architects and construction foremen, producing a facility that has almost no environmental impact. All the better to keep it free from the undesired attention from the more ecologically minded denizens of the supernatural world. Too many facilities have been uncovered by tracing the footprint they leave; after Whistler does its work, that becomes nearly impossible.

PROGENITOR AMALGAM



For a different spin on your Mage chronicle, consider a game in which all (or most) of the player characters are Progenitors. The Convention as a whole tends toward insularity, its members preferring to work with like-minded doctors and scientists rather than outside elements with foreign priorities and values.

The key to a Progenitor chronicle is a premise where all the characters are doctors or otherwise associated with life sciences. There is no shortage of television shows with this exact premise: teams of doctors, bound to a common purpose, can approach a given situation from many different angles depending on their specialties, relationships, and individual histories. That purpose may be altruistic (like spreading the benefits of modern medicine to the world) or self-serving (like rounding up escaped Progenitor projects).

Differentiating the characters begins with their areas of specialty, with different characters claiming the roles of surgeon, genetic engineer, drug producer, field medic, forensic analyst, and so on. Use this as a springboard for further development though, rather than a fait accompli checkbox. Does the surgeon approach problems hands-on? Does the resident Pharmacopoeist rely on his drugs to mask crippling self-confidence? Does the forensic analyst refuse to trust her intuition or take leaps of faith, insisting instead that the data will yield the answers she needs?

Progenitor hierarchies are relatively flat, usually with a single Scientist heading up the amalgam. This position may be based on seniority, but is just as likely elected by the other members; whatever its basis, it's never absolute. Mutiny among the rest of the amalgam or word from the Shared Governance Council can upset the power dynamic overnight. Chat briefly with the group to figure what the leadership style of the lead Scientist is like, how the others respond to that, and (perhaps most importantly) what the PCs expect from the amalgam's leadership given its own history.

Corruption seems to find Progenitors easily, whether it's spearheaded by Nephandi infiltrators, introduced by Syndicate offers, or based on home-grown hubris from a doctor's own Enlightened abilities over life and death. It's all too easy to turn a Progenitor into a grinning mad scientist, happy to ignore all scruples and ethics in pursuit of her research or simple power. While this can be an intriguing element to an ongoing chronicle,

the Storyteller should take care that this is not the only compelling plot arc available.

A Progenitor-only amalgam will see its fair share of antagonists drawn from the Council of Traditions, from the ranks of the supernatural, and from the weird and strange corners of the World of Darkness. Its most pernicious antagonists, though, will come from the Union itself: agents from other Conventions with agendas that do not square with the Progenitors' vision for the future. The worst part of these antagonists is that they can't simply be beaten down and erased... most of the time. The player characters will need to balance when to work with their fellow Technocrats, when to work behind their backs, and when to play their colleagues off each other. It's a dangerous game, but there may be no other way to mend the fissures in the Union and present a united front to the outside world.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

An amalgam entirely composed of Progenitors, Quality Assurance plays a dangerous game with high stakes: they are purging rogue agents from sensitive positions within and without the Union, and doing so secretly — because no one can know that the agents ever existed.

Quality Assurance has two covers: to the Masses, QA is a human resources consulting firm which performs office visits to conduct physicals, administer flu shots, and otherwise perform preventative care to keep company healthcare costs down. The other Conventions, however, know that QA uses this cover to service, communicate with, and equip the Technocracy's moles in otherwise unEnlightened organizations. And yet, this is not the full truth, either. The amalgam's highest priority is identifying and neutralizing Progenitor infiltrators and spies from the pre-Anomaly era. These agents are embedded in sensitive positions in government, business... and even the other Conventions.

QA's goal is to clean up the excesses of their predecessors before any of the targets finds out that they've been compromised. If the other Conventions discovered the extent of the Progenitors' past crimes, the resulting rift could threaten the cohesion of the entire Union.

HISTORY

Seven years ago, an NWO strike against a Traditionalist stronghold went sideways, resulting in hundreds of deaths. The culprit was a rogue HIT Mark who disregarded orders and set off a massive



arcane explosion. Blame fell on Iteration X, but the Shared Governance Council knew the truth: the “malfunctioning” HIT Mark had been loaded with subconscious triggers at cloning, intended for use as a Progenitor spy. She broke mission protocol because she acted under garbled and outdated contact codes, mistaking an Order of Hermes mage for its handler from the Administration.

The Council quickly recruited trusted Scientists, all from within the Convention, to a “housecleaning” amalgam dedicated to tracking down lost and stranded Progenitor agents before they could do any more damage... or worse, reveal the existence of a massive network of spies within the Union.

Two of their first recruits were forensic geneticist Imelda Siqueira, a third-generation Technocrat, and the world-weary hunter Esau Grosvenor, a reluctant recruit to the Union. Siqueira’s unwavering dedication to the cause and by-the-book procedures serve as a stark contrast to Grosvenor’s sometimes schismatic individualism and his tendency to “improvise.” The leadership of QA seems to be a revolving door alternating detached back-office managers and ambitious on-the-ground reformers, but Siqueira and Grosvenor have been constant fixtures of the team.

After putting six years of work into Quality Assurance, both Siqueira and Grosvenor both have collected a wide array of favors and allies throughout the Union. Despite their orders to keep the old Progenitor sins under wraps, this has not always been feasible, and now Siqueira and Grosvenor stand in the center of a web of contacts and informants. Grosvenor knows that it would be all too easy to mistake their network of innocent quid-pro-quo dealings as a full-fledged conspiracy. Unfortunately, he can’t seem to convince Siqueira how vulnerable they’ve become simply by doing their jobs. She can’t conceive of the Union turning on its own, especially when they’ve been doing such good work!

PRACTICES

Quality Assurance begins with the barest clues on the existence or location of a rogue agent. They visit crime scenes and last known locations, gathering evidence and forensic data. Interviews with neighbors or witnesses collect more. QA has learned from experience that they must tread carefully, as the agents are often paranoid and liable to run if they realize they’ve been discovered.

When they locate the target, the amalgam decides whether to “remediate or repudiate.” A remediation

brings the target in out of the cold, convincing them to come back into the employ of the Progenitors. Inducements may include luxuries and payroll, but also include the protection of the Union and access to its Enlightened Science. If a remediation is not deemed feasible, however, the amalgam pursues repudiation: eliminating the target and erasing their tracks behind them. It's not strange for Technocratic operatives to go missing, and QA is adept at framing Traditionalists and Nephandi for their own wetwork.

By this point, QA has captured or neutralized most of the low-hanging fruit: the monsters hiding in the deep woods and the intrusion clones burrowed into the periphery of the Union. The holdouts are those agents now sheltered by other will-workers and those deeply embedded within the ranks of the Technocracy. Both class of target offer their own brand of difficulties, and the consequences for missteps are disastrous.

USING QUALITY ASSURANCE

The QA team is the distillation of the current plight of the Progenitors: enmeshed in a web of politics and treachery not especially of their making, they are nevertheless required to act decisively and in secret to fix the previous generation's mistakes. None of this falls into their primary areas of expertise, but if they want to forge a brighter tomorrow, they must first deal with the sins of yesterday.

The Quality Assurance amalgam can form the core of a chronicle, with players taking up the roles of Siqueira and Grosvenor and others on the team (or as their replacements after a remediation gone wrong). Alternately, QA can show up at the Technocratic player characters' Construct, ostensibly to see to the Citizens' health needs but in reality there to weasel out a heretofore-unknown spy.

Tradition-minded Mage chronicles might take in refugees from the Progenitors' experiments only to find QA snooping around on their heels. You might set the player characters on the trail of a monstrous aberration controlled by local Nephandi. When they meet QA hot on the same trail, do they confront them, expose them, or cooperate with them?

IMELDA SIQUEIRA, QA FORENSIC ANALYST

Groomed for science from a young age, Siqueira's parents were both members of the Technocratic Union: her mother was a Scientist and her father an Extraordinary lab technician. She was raised in a series of extraterrestrial colonies, moving whenever her mother's assignment changed. On rare occasion, her family traveled to Brazil to visit her grandmother.

At 13 years old, Siqueira's Enlightenment was induced... maybe. The event occurred during her mother's experiment intended to induce Enlightenment; the results were never reliably duplicated. She then spent the next four years in accelerated studies and was deployed to Earth at age 18. College was a cover story as she worked in the labs shadowing the Human Genome Project.

Siqueira lost contact with her parents when the Dimensional Anomaly cut off their Deep Universe colony; she's since convinced herself that they must be dead. It was the only way to proceed with her life, rather than pine for their return. She poured herself into her work, explicating and elaborating on the human genome.

So it was somewhat appropriate that Quality Assurance approached her because they required her DNA. One of her mother's old projects had gone rogue, terrorizing the Argentine pampas. Siqueira keyed off the DNA she shared with her mother to convince the beast that she was its creator, and peacefully brought it into Union custody. After that assignment, Siqueira stayed on with the amalgam and has served as its forensics analyst since.

Image: Lost somewhere in her thirties, Siqueira is a plump Brazilian woman with a permanently hurried air about her. Her long black hair is pulled back into a single ponytail. She favors simple, solid-color shirts and trim slacks, over which she throws a quilted silver jacket with a high collar. When on the job, she carries a "suitcase lab" for gathering and processing evidence and a high-resolution camera often swings from her neck.

Roleplaying Hints: You're kind of a grunt doing scutwork, but it's important scut work, and you're part of something much bigger than yourself. Your job is to track down incredibly dangerous experiments gone awry and keep them contained so they don't hurt anybody, and it's hard to argue with the value in that. So you hurry and you do your best, hoping against hope that you find the answers before the answers find you.

Methodology: Genegineers

Eidolon: Questing

Nature: Crusader

Demeanor: Investigator

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 2

Abilities: Awareness 2, Expression 3, Leadership 2; Firearms 2, Research 4, Technology 3; Computer 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 2, Science 5

Backgrounds: Destiny 1, Genius 2, Library 4

Enlightenment: 3

Inspired Sciences: Correspondence 2, Life 3, Mind 1

Willpower: 8

Primal Energy: 2

Paradox: 0

ESAU GROSVENOR, QA HUNTER

During 1996, They visit, Esau Grosvenor spontaneously gained Enlightenment. While his expanded senses were certainly useful, Grosvenor merely thought he had stumbled onto some “new tricks” and nothing more. He continued his lifelong love affair with the most remote corners of the natural world for some years afterwards, slowly growing in understanding of how things worked. Old textbooks on biology, zoology, physics, and anatomy served to educate him on what to call things, so when he finally met the Technocracy two years later he spoke the language well enough to be recruited.

The fateful meeting occurred on the Mongolian steppes, across which Grosvenor was motorcycling and in the middle of which a team of Progenitors was field-testing a new species of canine companion. The animals mistook Grosvenor for their prey, but their confusion didn’t last long. The FACADE team found him surrounded by three of the beasts, their necks all snapped cleanly. Grosvenor was heating up a can of beans.

The Progenitors took Grosvenor in, marveling at his native Enlightenment while rushing him to be indoctrinated, conditioned, and recruited. He took a liking to the world of possibilities the Technocrats told him about and signed up without hesitation.

Never one to be a rising star, Grosvenor kicked around as an odd member of various amalgams for twenty or so years. It was only when the Dimensional Anomaly crushed Horizon that he gained an appreciation for the existential scale of the Technocratic Union’s activities. He was offered a place on QA from an old friend, and took the job to “make sure the cubs don’t muck things up.”

Image: Esau is a weather-beaten man saying goodbye to his forties, with burnished skin and dark eyes. His hair is cropped short, but unevenly; there is no mistaking him for a soldier. He typically wears a many-pocketed hunting vest and heavy canvas pants. The belt that cinches at his waist bears a wicked-looking hunting knife and the holster for a gleaming handgun designed by Iteration X technicians. Esau smiles readily and erratically, as if he finds humor in things no one else can see.

Roleplaying Hints: You’ve been around the world, you’ve waded through every biome on the planet, and you’ve hunted just about everything on four legs, two wings, or any number of pseudopods. As far as you can tell, things continue to get screwier the longer you live. Now you’re tasked with hunting down your colleagues’ old tools, except the tools are people, and you’d really rather not shoot them on account of them being people. Unfortunately, the decision is rarely yours to make.

Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Eidolon: Primordial

Nature: Caretaker

Demeanor: Quester

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Streetwise 1; Drive 1, Firearms 4, Melee 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5; Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 1

Backgrounds: Device 3, Genius 3, Hypercram 2

Enlightenment: 2

Inspired Sciences: Correspondence 2, Entropy 2, Forces 1, Life 1

Willpower: 6

Primal Energy: 3

Paradox: 0

PROGENITORS IN MIXED AMALGAMS



Leaving the lab and playing with others is not the typical Progenitor’s cup of tea, but the Convention has more atypical, adventurous members than ever before. This entails a more active role in cross-Convention amalgams the Union creates to pursue specific targets and defuse immediate situations. These doctors and scientists can serve a variety of roles in these teams.

ANALYST

Whether they come from a general background in forensics or are called in for a needed specialty, Progenitors often get cast in the role of researching and dispensing information. Crime scene investigators appraise disparate evidence to give the amalgam a good idea of who they’re up against. Specialists in specific breeds of Reality Deviants outline the abilities, social structures, and habits of their quarry. Progenitors with a certain moral ambiguity are very capable interrogators, and not only

in controlled circumstances with the source strapped to a chair. Out in public, witnesses trying to hide information are often betrayed by escalating heartbeats or other biometric telltales.

FACE

Having power over life and death in one's hands tends to accumulate favors from grateful former patients. Additionally, the healthcare industry is rooted in a robust web of social connections with local government, academia, and social outreach projects. Progenitors who have been around the block can become valuable networkers — calling in favors for access, tracking down information, and pulling the rest of the amalgam out of hot water without causing a scene.

HEAVY

Similarly, Progenitors without a strong attachment to their own DNA can become quasi-human wrecking machines, through modifying and upgrading their own bodies. Some of those modifications are blatant: the bulging muscles and disconcertingly abnormal skeletal structure may send Citizens screaming, but that also aids in intimidation bids. Many of these Progenitors can only maintain their rough-and-tumble forms for limited amounts of time before fatigue and Rejection set in. They appear perfectly normal the rest of the time, until they "hulk out" again.

INFILTRATOR

More than a few Progenitors don't have just one face: they use their Enlightened Science to shift their appearance and mien to suit their circumstances. Additionally, a little tree frog DNA or chameleon gene sequences can send a Progenitor operative scrambling up walls and blending into the scenery. It may not be the kind of work they expected to be doing as an Enlightened Scientist, but these Progenitors have a particular flair for breaking and entering, hustling unsuspecting citizens, and otherwise getting into and out of places where they're not supposed to be.

LEAD

Many Progenitor-led amalgams have a high mission success rate. A Progenitor amalgam head can keep tabs on his team members' stress levels, provide drugs to regulate adrenaline and synaptic response times, and carefully ration the augmentations the amalgam gets to reduce side-effects and Pattern Rejection. A background in the life sciences can be surprisingly useful in heading up an amalgam. Understanding the dynamics of a wolf pack provides incredible insights to running a team of Technocrats.

SECONDARY ROLES

Regardless of a Scientist's role in a mixed amalgam, she's often expected to act as a medic or researcher. That's the trouble with stereotypes, though they're not the only Convention to suffer from that. Iteration X operatives are expected to be mechanics and electricians, NWO agents are asked to clear up parking tickets, and Syndicate personnel are treated like walking ATMs. (Void Engineer stereotypes are more about psychosis than role.)

You can decide whether you want to embrace these stereotypes or play against them. There are a lot of juicy roleplaying opportunities in both directions, especially as a chronicle grows and develops.

MEDIC

The Progenitors' facility and training in Inspired Life Science makes them obvious choices for team medics, but their work often requires more than just patching up their teammates. Some medics become the amalgam's de facto mother hen, seeing to the team's emotional needs as well as their physical traumas. Other medics offer courses of drugs or other therapies that boost the abilities of the amalgam; these Procedures always require careful monitoring, on site and in person.

MIXED AGENDAS

It's no secret that the various Conventions of the Technocratic Union have similar but not identical goals. The Union works by focusing on the common ground and often turning a blind eye to individual projects that pursue the more idiosyncratic goals of its members. This mostly works to keep the peace, but there are always minor disagreements, frequent clandestine obstruction, and occasional flare-ups of real antagonism. Mixed amalgams often find themselves in the center of these conflicts.

This is especially true for Progenitors. The number of rogue Progenitor projects loose in the world has never been disclosed to the rest of the Union; the Shared Governance Council believes that any such disclosure would destroy the Convention's reputation, and has issued a general call to quietly clean up the problems. When a mixed amalgam stumbles onto the trail of a rogue project, its resident Progenitor must walk a thin, sharp line of working with the amalgam while keeping them in the dark about sensitive aspects of their mission.

THE PROGENITOR'S HIPPOCRATIC OATH

The original Hippocratic Oath has been modified many times across the centuries; many Progenitors swear the following version when they are inducted into the Convention. Others swear slightly different versions, or none at all.

I SOLEMNLY PLEDGE TO CONSECRATE MY LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY;
I WILL GIVE TO MY TEACHERS THE RESPECT AND OBEDIENCE THAT IS THEIR DUE;
I WILL PRACTICE MY PROFESSION WITH CONSCIENCE, DIGNITY, AND DUTY;
I WILL RESPECT THE SECRETS CONFIDED IN ME, EVEN AFTER DEATH;
I WILL MAINTAIN THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE AND THE DIGNITY OF MY PATIENT;
I WILL MAINTAIN THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR THE CONSENSUS
AND AVOID VULGARITY AND REJECTION;
I WILL DO NO HARM.

Ever since they cast themselves as the healers of the Union, Progenitors have increasingly found it necessary to work in the shadows. More than once, a Progenitor has seen fit to aid an amalgam-mate in resolving and covering up their indiscretions so that the rest of the amalgam never discovers a terrible secret. At other times, Scientists have worked to arrange circumstances to promote the stability and well being of their amalgams. Allowing a colleague to claim credit for the Progenitor's own victory can increase the inter-reliance and trust of the whole amalgam. This is no different, they argue, than arranging a comfortable recovery room filled with supportive family members guilted into visiting a recuperating patient.

Some combat scientists integrate into mixed amalgams in order to utilize other Conventions' resources in tracking and eliminating threats. These scientists act

covertly, and use the time not spent shooting at Reality Deviants to perform their cover: drug manufacturer, medic, surgeon – whatever the rest of their amalgams believe they are. Some even openly work as hitters in these amalgams, but still keep their mission's true nature to themselves.

Even mundane considerations can lead to complications in the amalgam. Many Progenitors have taken the Hippocratic Oath and try to adhere to its precepts, but its insistence on patient confidentiality can lead to Scientists keeping secrets from amalgam-mates. Its slogan of "do no harm" and its admonishment to never withhold necessary treatment can lead to friction with other Technocrats who support the Pogrom. When faced with a critically wounded Traditionalist, does the Hippocratic scientist treat them or finish them?

GEAR



Gear is an everyday part of a Progenitor's life. The biological sciences require expansive technologies, and we spare no expense in giving scientists the tools they need to succeed.

NANOPATCH

**Enlightenment 1, 1 Prime Energy,
1 Background Point**

Nanopatches are small, quick-use devices for emergency first aid. They're about the size of a nicotine patch. When applied, they

generate a flush of nanobots to the applied area. They only generate a small amount of artificial tissue, but what they lack in power they make up for in speed, deploying their full load within seconds. For this reason, many field teams request at least one patch.

When applied to a wound, a Nanopatch immediately heals one health level. With a Willpower point from the subject, a Nanopatch instead heals one aggravated level.

Nanopatches come in the common patch variety and in spray can form. Each patch or can accounts for one use. Each Background dot conveys two doses.

NANOVACCINE

Enlightenment 1, 1 Prime Energy, 1 Background Point

Nanovaccines are standard Progenitor field gear. While field scientists are routinely vaccinated against all known illnesses, this protects against the unknown. When exposed to strange pathogens, a quick injection sends targeted nanobots to face the infection head-on.

Nanovaccines administered will immediately attack any disease that hasn't progressed to irreversible lethality, curing within hours. After that scene, any new diseases encountered require new treatments, as the nanobots have already configured themselves. However, they will continue to project against the diseased they've configured themselves for the next few hours.

ANTI-GERASONE

Enlightenment 2, 2 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

This device prevents physical aging. It works like a complex can-shaped water filtration system; many scientists have them attached to their home showerheads. To gain the full effects, it must be used daily. If properly used, the character does not age a day. Any lapse in use will rapidly return a character to their true age; they advance one year for every day without treatment. A user won't age past her true age.

QUANTUM MONITOR

Enlightenment 2, 2 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

The Progenitors install some scientists with Quantum Monitors. These are internal nano-networks that track vital signs and hormone levels. Unlike the classic radio monitors from a few years ago, these take advantage of quantum computing to transmit data instantly to Progenitor systems. Radio waves and microwave radiation will not block the signal. Scientists subject to Nanotech Integration (page 74) typically receive a Quantum Monitor, so lab scientists can manage their investment.

BIOLOGICAL DISLOCATOR

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

A biological dislocator cleanly removes limbs while not severing arterial and nervous connections. This mechanical cutting device is a handheld, water-powered cutting tool, attached to a five-gallon drum of water, affixed to a compressor. It cuts like a surgical saw, but without the mess. Using a built-in combination Life/Time effect, an amputated limb still maintains blood flow and all other vitals. The doctor can operate on the severed limb, without the patient risking infection or bleeding out.

One point of its Prime Energy will keep the limb safe for one hour. Usually, this is more than enough

time for a surgeon to properly re-affix the limb and use proper Life Procedures to mend the limb to the body. Warning: do not attempt this on a head. For that, visit a high-grade Progenitor medical facility.

If used against an unwilling target, it's a four die weapon, but can only be used at very close range. However, it's unwieldy; suffer a +2 difficulty when using it in combat (unless the target is fully restrained).

BIO-PRINTER

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

This device crafts synthetic human tissue in minutes. While it can make generic parts or even stylized, unique pieces of flesh, typically it fabricates precise replicas generated from scans kept on-file with the Convention. It requires a massive energy investment; each point of Prime Energy used can print one health level's worth of tissue. The tissue must still be applied to the subject. But the sterile tissue prevents infection and guarantees that wounds will not scar.

The current model is a cube, about two feet in each direction, weighing about forty pounds and looking like a complex microwave oven. The device creates the tissue – once complete, just open the door to remove the wet, fresh part. The whole process takes about ten minutes.

For one fewer Background dot, you can requisition last year's model. Last year's model is closer to a conversion van in size and weight, and takes an hour to use successfully.

NON-PUNCTURING INJECTOR

Enlightenment 3, 3 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

Sleeper medical science is currently testing medicine delivery through air pressure, which doesn't break the skin the way a hypodermic needle does. The Progenitors have taken the idea a step further. With a Dimensional Science effect, this hand-held injector can target someone within eyeshot, and put a drug into his system. Just point and pull the trigger. Each shot requires a point of the injector's Prime Energy to power, and a Dexterity + Energy Weapons roll to aim the device. The roll is not required on willing subjects.

MEDI-BOT

Enlightenment 4, 10 Prime Energy, 4 Background Points

A Medi-Bot is a small, disk-shaped robot, about six inches high and 18 inches in diameter. It sports four metallic limbs, each with a series of fine manipulators and various medical tools. The bot can conduct most major surgeries, administer anesthetics, and stabilize patients. It's made for quick, effective tasks, not long-term treatment. A Medi-Bot can save the lives of an entire team

of field scientists in a pinch. By Iteration X standards, it looks downright archaic, but it serves its purpose well.

A Medi-Bot works with an effective Intelligence 4 and Medicine 4. It moves rapidly, treating multiple patients

simultaneously by spending one point of Prime Energy per patient treated. This cost must be paid every hour for each such patient. (Zero points for one patient, two points for two, three points for three, etc.)

BODY MODIFICATIONS



Many Progenitors believe that bodily modification is the purest expression of the Convention's ideals. While most adherents to Convention thinking would argue in favor of advanced cures for widespread illnesses or efforts to extend human lifespan, that doesn't keep bodily modification from receiving overwhelming R&D funding. After all, a cure for cancer's nice; an eyeball with built-in night vision makes a far sexier recruitment tool.

Most modifications fall within four categories: adaptive prosthesis, biomods, sensory alterations, and xenotransplants. Adaptive prosthetics are synthetic additions to the body that may be swapped out to suit the scientist's situational needs. Biomods are subtle genetic alterations that significantly alter one aspect of the scientist's physical capabilities. Xenotransplants are parts of supernatural creatures grafted into or onto a scientist for their preternatural abilities. Each has its own unique advantages and disadvantages. We've provided examples for each, but be creative — Progenitor scientists are always testing something new. Use the existing examples as guidelines.

As you might expect, many of these modifications are vulgar. Excessive vulgarity will get you a polite chitchat with an Ethical Compliance officer. At least, the first meeting or two will be polite.

ADAPTIVE PROSTHETICS

With Enlightened enhancements in prosthesis, sometimes it's more efficient to graft some silicon and plastic than to regrow a lost limb. (Some Iterators laugh, telling us they're glad we've "caught up." But we know we're taking the idea in a different — and honestly better — direction.) The Progenitors have taken this a step further, with prosthesis designed for modular hot swapping. It takes seconds to swap out a functional human-like arm for a powerful pincer, and vice versa.

The Background cost for adaptive prosthetics reflect the actual prosthetics; the surgery and fixtures are all part of the package. If you wish to purchase multiple

prosthetics, each is reflected by its own Background. Unless otherwise noted, a prosthetic purchased through this Background has six soak dice, four OK health levels, and one Demolished health level independent of its host. Additional Background dots spent add one OK level and two soak dice each.

HOT SWAPPING

The main benefit of adaptive prosthesis is the ability to hot swap devices to suit a particular need. Removing an active device takes one full turn. If another device is at ready, it can be installed over another full turn to attach and power up. During these two turns, you may not take advantage of either device's advantages.

By making a Dexterity + Fast Draw roll and spending a point of Prime Energy, you can swap devices as a reflexive action. (The Prime Energy is needed to power the device immediately.)

REPLACEMENT PARTS

The basic Background cost purchases not both the appropriate mod and a normal, near-human prosthetic (when replacing a body part rather than adding a new one). These are for normal use, when needed to pass in Sleeper society or use normal limb function.

GENERAL PROSTHETIC TOOLS

Enlightenment 2, 4 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

Prosthetics may be specialized in a single task. Such prosthetics eschew aesthetic concerns — they look highly bionic, with an obvious tool at the end. If attempting a task the tool was developed for, that task receives a -1 difficulty. All other tasks suffer a +1 penalty.

HOLODOUT COMPARTMENT

Enlightenment 2, 4 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

A holdout compartment is a small cavity buried within a limb. As well as not affecting limb usage, it uses a Dimensional Science/Life/Matter effect to mask the contents. Without Enlightened techniques (or "magic") to contest the effect, anything within the compartment appears to all scans as part of the scientist's organic matter.

TELESCOPING LIMB

Enlightenment 2, 4 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

Telescoping limbs are fitted with hoses, pulleys, valves, pistons, and all manner of devices to dramatically extend reach or height. The device takes a full turn to extend, but can instead be extended or retracted reflexively with a point of its Prime Energy. Fully extended arms add up to ten feet of reach, and legs up to six feet in height. These limbs otherwise work identically to their mundane equivalents. Since the limb is synthetic, the scientist can use her hands even in otherwise hostile environments, such as in noxious fumes or vacuum.

While strong and accurate, telescoping limbs are not made for high-stress situations. When using weapons or attacking opponents while one's extended, it imposes a +2 difficulty.

QUAD-LEG SYSTEM

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

These leg modifications are split into four heavy metal, highly segmented legs. Each leg ends in an array of fully-articulated claws. Sometimes they're masked as insect parts, but generally scientists simply opt for the default chrome. They can be hidden under loose-fitting pants.

Functionally, they keep the scientist stable. They can grip onto most any surface, and have an effective Strength 10 against any attempt to lift or destabilize the scientist. While they don't change the scientist's top speed, they eliminate all environmental penalties to running and allows her to climb at walking speed with both hands free. All jumping heights and distances are doubled, doubled again with the expenditure of a Prime Energy.

PERFORMANCE BLADE

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

Performance blades replace both legs. They're carbon fiber and aluminum oxynitride blades with a curve not unlike an upturned question mark. Similar models can be found available to the Masses, helping disabled runners achieve high speeds. The Progenitors took the concept to a whole new level with the performance blades. Each point of Prime Energy spent allows a burst of speed equal to the scientist's full running speed. The first burst in a turn is safe. Beyond that, the human parts that connect to the blades cannot handle the strain; each additional burst in a given turn causes the scientist one lethal damage.

PINCER TOOL

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

A pincer tool is a two-foot pair of metal jaws, made to hold something still. Typically, they're designed as

arm modifications, but some exist as leg replacements to brace a scientist to hostile moving objects. The jaw grasps with an effective Strength 5. In any Strength challenge where grip is essential, the mod's Prime Energy may be spent for automatic successes, one per.

BIOMODS

Biomods are organically-developed bodily modifications. Usually they're vat-grown for a generic user and grafted onto later. Sometimes, they're grown directly on the scientist's body. Once fused to a body, they have full function. They're rarely as directly impressive as adaptive prosthetics or xenotransplants, but are often safer. They're generally used to repair damaged or nonfunctional body parts; their outside functionality is currently limited.

INSTALLING BIOMODS

Biomods are not quite as convenient as adaptive prosthetics, but they're far safer than xenotransplants. The surgery causes lethal wounds equal to the Background cost, and puts the scientist out of commission for that number of days. Removing a biomod *safely* requires the same process and time as installing it in the first place. Unless otherwise noted, a biomod uses the scientist's traits.

FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Enlightenment 2, 4 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

While the Convention possesses quicker methods for disguising its scientists, facial reconstruction offers a foolproof method for changing appearances. This mod requires a small genetic sample from a target. Once grown, the mod perfectly replicates the target's appearance. While it does not replicate mannerisms, it gives a +2 difficulty to any attempts to detect the disguise, and a -3 difficulty to any rolls to hide the scientist's true identity.

Most big advantage to this over Sleeper surgeries is that your new face has a plasticity that, when triggered, will allow an Enlightened surgeon to quickly reconstruct your face again. In short, it only takes a two-hour outpatient appointment in a Progenitor-run facility to change your face back or to something new.

BONE SPURS

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

These common modifications take the form of exposed, sharp pieces of bone, never more than an inch or so in length. Most of these modifications are designed with muscular controls, so they can be retracted or extended at will. Used offensively, they're 1 lethal weapons. Defensively, you may roll against attackers in physical contact each turn, with a dice pool equal to the scientist's Stamina + Survival, and damaging as a 1 lethal weapon. Addition-

ally, they may reduce difficulties of certain actions by -1, depending on their location (for example, hand spurs may aid with climbing or holding onto a moving vehicle).

SENSORY BIOMODS

Sensory modifications are specialized biomods, and involve more Progenitor resources than typical ones. First, the target organs and nerve clusters must be grown, using the recipient scientist's DNA to negate any tissue rejection. While being grown, they're tailored for function. Once ready, the recipient undergoes cranial surgery to remove the standard human organs, replacing them and grafting the new nerves into the brain.

All in all, it puts a scientist out of commission for between one to two months, while the brain heals and acclimates to the new data.

These modifications can be turned on or off at will, by pressing against an implanted nerve cluster on the neck behind the jaw (either right or left side, chosen by the scientist) and thinking consciously about the switch. If multiple sense or modifications are taken, they're all linked to the same on/off switch — no switching just part of them. (Some poor sods are forced to take on these modifications, particularly sense recorders. In those cases an off switch is rarely installed.)

SENSE AMPLIFIERS

Enlightenment 1, 2 Prime Energy, 1 Background Point

Sense amplifiers do exactly as advertised; they heighten sensory feedback to the brain. This sharpens sight, smell, hearing, and in some cases touch. They give a -1 difficulty to relevant Perception rolls. However, when active, any bright flashes and other major stimuli can overload the amplifiers, which will blind, deafen, or otherwise debilitate for a full minute. A difficulty 8 Stamina roll prevents the temporary overload.

One Background purchase can cover a single sense, all senses, or any combination thereof.

SENSE RECORDERS

Enlightenment 1, 2 Prime Energy, 1 Background Point

Sense recorders replace sense organs in the scientist. Generally, this means eyes and the inner ear. Some rarer modifications replace taste buds, olfactory receptors, and (in at least one case) tactile nerves and sensory receptors in the skin. These modifications don't significantly change the input, but they do record and submit the sensory data experienced.

While practical in information gathering, some scientists opt to take these modifications for more personal

reasons. One known scientist was losing his husband to a deadly cancer, so he used touch recorders so he could remember the last time they made love.

One Background purchase can cover a single sense, all senses, or any combination thereof. These modifications are often installed simultaneously with amplifiers.

DISTANCE VISION

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

A hit with Damage Control snipers, distance vision is an eyeball modification that gives the ability to zoom vision, sometimes through solid objects. Without obstructions, a scientist can see a mile away as if it were right in front of her. In addition to the basic applications, it cuts any range penalties with firearms and energy weapons in half.

By spending a point of Prime Energy, she can see through solid objects for a single turn. The device uses multiple sensors in numerous directions, along with subtle radar, and a computational predictive algorithm to show the agent what's likely to be on the other side of a given obstruction.

INFRAVISION RECEPORS

Enlightenment 2, 4 Prime Energy, 2 Background Points

By spending a point of the implant's Prime Energy, the scientist can activate the receptors for the scene. Her vision shifts to detect heat signatures, instead of light. When dealing with living subjects, darkness does not bear into the ability to see. As well, any rolls to perceive something hiding in the dark are made at -3 difficulty. When detecting things hidden supernaturally, the device's Enlightenment rating adds to the dice pool. However, things that operate at room temperature, such as vampires, impose a +3 difficulty penalty since they blend with their surroundings.

XENOTRANSPLANTS

Xenotransplants are a newer series of experiments in Progenitor labs, and have attracted no small amount of controversy in the past decade. They're implanted organs and body parts, taken directly from the bodies of Reality Deviants. Field scientists abduct various creatures, then lab techs put them into stasis, later removing the parts in order to install them into their scientists. The techs keep careful, continual track the results of these dangerous implants once out in the field.

Unless otherwise noted, a xenotransplant uses the scientist's traits.

XENOBIOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The human body was not made to handle the rigor of supernatural body parts. Any given scientist can safely keep

combined Background dots of xenotransplants equal to twice her Stamina dots. Each dot above that limit causes a persistent level of lethal damage to the scientist. She cannot heal this damage as long as the xenotransplant remains installed. For example, a character with Stamina 3 can handle 6 dots' worth of xenotransplants without issue. However, if she purchases Troll Skin (5) and Deviant's Heart (5), she's exceeded that limit by 4. She then keeps a persistent four lethal damage that cannot be healed as long as the implants remain in her body.

If the character's Stamina increases or decreases for whatever reason, the body's tolerance for xenotransplants immediately shifts in kind.

IMPLANT REJECTION

These implants require regular maintenance to prevent complete Rejection. After a week without treatment, the implant bursts out of the body, causing three aggravated damage, and potentially other complications in the process. If a werewolf's heart bursts out of the body, a few levels of damage will be the least of the scientist's concerns. Many of the xenotransplants listed below offer additional concerns for implant Rejection.

If the implants are used among unEnlightened witnesses, the anti-Rejection treatments run their course much quicker. A small group witnessing for several minutes may require you to do another treatment within a few hours. Showing off your chitin at Mardi Gras will mean you'll need another treatment within minutes.

INSTALLING AND REMOVING XENOTRANSPLANTS

Xenotransplants don't want to be part of their hosts. They're notoriously difficult to install. The surgery causes aggravated wounds equal to the Background cost, and puts the scientist out of commission for that number of weeks. Removing a xenotransplant safely requires the same process and time as installing it in the first place.

CHITIN

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

By reflexively spending a point of Prime Energy from the transplant, one source of lethal damage instead causes bashing damage. This must be spent on each such attack.

Implant Rejection: If Rejected, the exposed flesh remains raw and brittle for some time. So long as any aggravated damage remains from Rejection, the affected area has no soak dice.

PREDATOR'S PHEROMONES

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

These glands fit in the scientist's neck. They project pheromones into the air, cutting down a subject's resistances, making them pliable and docile. By spending one point of Prime Energy, it increases the difficulty of any roll to resist the scientist's Social actions by 3.

Implant Rejection: In addition to the normal effects of implant Rejection, Rejected pheromone glands cause the scientist intense overcompensation and overconfidence issues in social situations. Until all implant damage is healed, any failures in these situations count as botches.

SHIFTER'S SKIN

Enlightenment 3, 6 Prime Energy, 3 Background Points

With a skin transplant from a shapeshifter, the scientist can change her appearance at will. When taking this augmentation, determine what skin was replaced. At any time, spend a point of Prime Energy from the device to change appearance in that part of the body. These changes last for the scene, unless shifted back.

Implant Rejection: If Rejected, the exposed flesh remains raw and brittle for some time. So long as any aggravated damage remains from Rejection, the affected area has no soak dice.

PREHENSILE TAIL

Enlightenment 4, 8 Prime Energy, 4 Background Points

This rare augmentation comes from a half-man, half-alligator hybrid. It's a thin, muscular tail, usually gray or green. It's quite articulated, able to manage limited manipulation. It acts with an effective Strength 5, and can make a grappling attack each turn. Because the human brain isn't wired for multitasking with a tail, it acts with a +2 difficulty if used at the same time as other actions.

Implant Rejection: Losing a tail causes a massive disruption in balance. Until all damage is healed from Rejection, the scientist botches any time she'd fail an action where balance is crucial.

UNDEAD STRENGTH

Enlightenment 4, 8 Prime Energy, 4 Background Points

With a vampire's arm muscles, the scientist is capable of remarkable feats of strength. Unfortunately, a vampire's muscles need human blood for fuel. The scientist may spend up to three of the augmentation's Prime Energy, and the same number of health levels, in order to gain that number of automatic successes on all Strength actions for the rest of the scene.

Implant Rejection: The limbs with lost muscles are rendered useless until all aggravated damage from Rejection heals.

DEVIANT'S HEART

Enlightenment 5, 10 Prime Energy, 5 Background Points

This mod only recently saw success in the field. It's the heart of a werewolf, installed in place of the scientist's. It beats with intensity and ferocity, making the scientist faster, stronger, and more resilient. Its Prime Energy may be spent reflexively for three basic effects:

- Take an additional action. This action must be spent to cause harm someone.
- Add a success to any Strength-based action, including damage rolls.
- Regenerate two bashing or one lethal damage.

In a given turn, a scientist can use a number of Prime Energy equal to her Genius or Dexterity, whichever is less.

Unfortunately, the deviant's heart brings with it a blood-boiling rage. Any turn she taps the heart's Prime Energy, she must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). If she fails, she flies into a rage and will attempt to kill anything in sight, friend or foe. In this rage, all her Physical Attributes increase by one. To take a lucid action for a turn requires a point of Willpower. This rage lasts until the heart is emptied of its Prime Energy or

the scientist goes unconscious. (If the rage ends due to the heart being emptied, the scientist falls unconscious.)

Implant Rejection: Not having a function heart is, well, a problem. Every minute the implant is Rejected causes an aggravated wound (on top of the normal implant Rejection damage).

TROLLHIDE

Enlightenment 5, 10 Prime Energy, 5 Background Points

The skin of a troll (a species of humanoid faerie) acts as effective, regenerating armor. It only rarely covers the entirety of a scientist's skin, due to the strange, inhuman colors and textures. Affected parts have 4 points of armor, which stacks with any other forms of worn armor. As well, the skin regenerates one bashing health level per turn, or a lethal health level every hour. One of its Prime Energy can be spent to regenerate a lethal health level instead of a bashing level in a given turn. Attacking uncovered parts can be done at +2 difficulty, if the attacker knows to avoid the Trollhide. This augmentation is obvious to those that see an uncovered patch.

Implant Rejection: If Rejected, the exposed flesh remains raw and brittle for some time. The affected area has no soak dice, so long as any aggravated damage remains from Rejection.

PROCEDURES



While gear is very common in the Convention, certain Procedures make the rounds in Progenitor training. These Procedures are well-kept secrets, tricks, and tools of the trade. Unlike Progenitor gear, which anyone with an Enlightened Science background can be trained to do, these Procedures require specialized knowledge to use in the field. Because of that, the devices these Procedures use are rarely given to anyone outside of the Convention.

BIOMETRIC HОLОGRAPHIC RECREATION (•• LIFE, •• TIME)

A common tool in Deviancy Scene Investigation, this investigative Procedure allows a scientist to recreate a scene in entirety, through holographic technology. It takes a half an hour of thorough investigation and technological scanning, and then the scientist can project a holographic replica of the scene. This replica is exact, down to the specks of dust. It allows for safe investigation, and a preservation of sensitive events.

DRUG ENHANCEMENT

(•• LIFE, •• MATTER, • PRIME)

This common Procedure allows a scientist to enhance mundane drugs without heightening the side effects. See the example drugs in *Mage: The Ascension*. Drug Enhancement doubles all beneficial effects of a drug, without affecting the negatives.

ACCELERATED AGING (••• LIFE, ••• TIME)

With a modern synthetic concoction, Progenitors can accelerate age in a subject. Each use of Accelerated Aging ages the target five years. Without regular, weekly maintenance, the effects of Accelerated Aging fade after a month's time due to slow Rejection.

ADAPTIVE CHEMISTRY (••• MATTER, •• PRIME)

When dealing with pharmaceuticals, your stock stops being useful the moment you don't have the right chemical for the job. This Procedure shifts trace chemical signatures, effectively turning one drug into another.

Typically, this is used in the field in order to have the right drug for the job. Some Progenitors have used it on hostiles, shifting their medications to deadly concoctions. Rogue scientists have used it to cover their tracks, changing trace poisons in a victim's body into other chemicals.

AGRIVELOPMENT (••• LIFE, ••• MATTER)

This Procedure, pioneered by the Agronomists, renovates topsoil, fertilizing and causing rapid vegetation growth over an area. With Agrivelpment in effect, every day's time sees a full month of plant growth. This allows the Convention to move into damaged or desolate areas and quickly prepare infrastructure for continued life. The Procedure can affect a number of acres up to the total success on the roll.

While it can turn a desert into farmland, the seeds must come from somewhere, or it'll just be a patch of fertile dirt. It also won't change destructive weather; if one builds a farm in the Arctic, they'd better be prepared to build the right facilities to protect the plant life.

DESTRUCTIVE GENEGINEERING (••• ENTROPY, ••• LIFE)

With advances in genome mapping, a scientist can rapidly manipulate a target's genetic makeup. This doesn't allow for complex mutations (something Genegineers are still working out), it does emulate genetic disorders such as albinism and hemophilia. After the first day, each day a victim can make a Difficulty 7 Stamina roll. Success means the body rejects the mutation. To simplify, increase the difficulties of any actions that may be impaired by the mutation by 2. For example, a character given albinism suffers the difficulty penalty when in full daylight, or a character with hemophilia suffers the penalties on any rolls that would stop them from bleeding.

MANUFACTURE ENLIGHTENED DRUGS (••• LIFE, ••• MATTER, ••• PRIME)

This Procedure allows for the creation of Enlightened drugs. The creation of such a drug requires five points of Prime Energy for each dose, which is transferred to the drug's user. See below for some of the drugs that can be crafted.

ENLIGHTENED DRUGS

With the Manufacture Enlightened Drugs Procedure, scientists can craft drugs that specifically affect Enlightened senses, and deliver Prime Energy on a moment's notice. They work similarly to mundane nootropic drugs, only infused with Prime Energy and targeted to the Enlightened Eidolon. Here are some common examples.

BREAKTHROUGH

Breakthrough is a drug commonly infused into energy drinks. There are currently three varieties: Clarity, Boost, and Snap. They're orange, purple, and green flavored, respectively. (Not orange, grape, and apple. They taste orange, purple, and green.) Each type focuses on one Mental Attribute: Clarity for Perception, Boost for Intelligence, and Snap for Wits. They raise the target Attribute by one for four hours.

Side Effects: Breakthrough causes a drinker to doubt himself when not under its effects. After all, the drink makes you smarter, wittier, and more able to notice your surroundings. After its effects end, a character cannot spend Willpower on Mental actions until she's achieved a Dramatic Success without Willpower.

COGNITION

Cognition is a classic drug with the Progenitors. It commonly comes in a vaporizer-style inhaler. Use of

Cognition decreases the difficulties of all Enlightened Science by one for the day. Cognition works similarly to amphetamine stimulants, which intensify the mind's ability to focus, but shut out periphery attention.

Side Effects: Cognition is highly addictive. A difficulty 7 Willpower roll will resist addiction after use. A failed roll means the scientist craves more. Each day without a dose of Cognition raises the difficulty of all Enlightened Science by one, to a maximum of 10. After one week, the symptoms become violent, and the character loses a health level per day. Traditional addiction therapy will help coax them off the drug after two full weeks.

TWEAK

Tweak is a form of adrenergic drug, one that not only heightens the user's nerves, but also enhances their Enlightenment briefly. Instead of invigorating the body, it pushes the Enlightened Eidolon to extremes. For the rest of the scene, the character may take an Enlightened Procedure as a reflexive action each turn. Each such Procedure causes one health level of aggravated damage, since one's Genius isn't meant for such stress.

Side Effects: In addition to the injury caused by use, Tweak exhausts its user. After the scene, the character's dice pools are all halved until she gets a full day's rest.

NERVOUS CONTROL (••• FORCES, ••• LIFE)

While the brain is a complex organ, is ultimately (to use an Iteration X analogy) just a network of circuits that send messages throughout the body. With a controlled electronic pulse, an Enlightened scientist may compel the brain, and thus the body, to action.

If not successfully countered, this Procedure can cause any one of three effects:

- **Repeat action:** The subject undertakes one simple, physical action repeatedly. This raises the difficulty of any relevant physical actions by two. The subject may spend a point of Willpower point to stop the action for a turn.
- **Dulled sensation:** The subject feels no pain. Ignore any wound penalties, but increase the difficulty of any actions relating to the sense of touch by two. (This includes actions like running on uneven terrain or defending in melee.)
- **Intense pain:** The body is wracked with pain. The character suffers as if taking three health levels' worth of damage.

NANOTECH INTEGRATION

(•••• LIFE, •• MATTER, •••• PRIME)

Nanotech integration is an advancement of an earlier effort between Iteration X and us. It's since evolved, becoming far more efficient. The recipient is loaded with nanobots that expel toxins from the body, regulate vital functions, destroy aberrant cells, and regenerate tissue at alarming rates. While massive and immediate trauma can still kill the host, nanotech integration offers remarkable effects that guarantee survival in all but the most extreme situations.

The Procedure's recipient gains three dots of Stamina, and regenerates one health level every turn. Mundane drugs, diseases, and poisons will not affect her, even if desired (and has been used to detox a number of Void Engineer substance abusers). She does not age. The procedure requires massive resources. Currently, field scientists sign up for a waiting list that currently accommodates enough subjects to take at least two years. A character with Entropy, Life, or Matter 5 may destroy the nanobots without otherwise hurting the recipient. Otherwise, the nanobots are nigh impossible to remove without highly restricted access to Progenitor computer systems.

PRIMAL INFUSION (•• LIFE, •• PRIME)

This Procedure requires a battery of drug infusions over the course of three to six months. The drugs gradually work down the body's resistances in very specific ways, until the body becomes a conduit for Prime Energy. Once complete, the body absorbs Prime Energy from the

world around it. While this is hardly a good thing for the body, it turns the recipient into a generator for that essence. Ethical considerations aside, the raw amount of Prime Energy this Procedure generates over time can fuel downright miraculous effects.

Once the effect's taken hold, the target generates one point of Prime Energy per week. She can hold a number of prime energy equal to her Stamina. Each such point causes her one health level of damage, which cannot be healed as long as the point is held. The energy also weakens her immunities, increasing the difficulty of any rolls to resist disease by two.

PRIMAL NET

(•• LIFE, •• MATTER, •• PRIME)

Many hospitals maintain Progenitor hardware networks, designed to harvest small amounts of Prime Energy from those trapped in persistent vegetative states or in long-term intensive care. In these hospitals, IV units connect to the network, which feeds into a Primal battery. It slightly reduces recovery rates for coma patients, while fueling advancements that could save millions. Enterprising Progenitors have developed herds of the incapable, using Primal Infusion to create the energy, and Primal Net to harvest it.

STOP-GAP RESURRECTION

(•••• LIFE, •••• MIND)

Briefly, this Procedure brings the dead back to life. This Procedure isn't a full resurrection, nor is it meant to be a replacement for more complex sciences. It resurrects quickly, but temporarily. It lasts one minute per invested success, and cannot be used a second time on a given target. At the end of the duration, the target dies once more. Most scientists use this Procedure to provide a reliable, if temporary, eyewitness.

TRAUMA TRANSMISSION

(•• CORRESPONDENCE, ••• LIFE,

[•• DIMENSIONAL SCIENCE], [•• PRIME])

Referred to in black humor as "Rip the Clone Body," this Procedure keys off the shared DNA clones have in order to transmit wounds experienced by a target to all his extant clones. When possible, Damage Control and Ethical Compliance use this to clean up escaped messes remotely by thawing a clone and throwing it into a crematory furnace. (Smart, paranoid scientists keep their cloning tanks hidden away.)

Adding Prime makes the damage aggravated. Adding Dimensional Science is required for damaging any off-planet clones — and the reason so many Ethical Compliance officers have training in Dimensional Science. That isn't used often anymore, but in rare cases of liquidating high-ranking officials, Ethical Compliance takes no chances with the potential for surviving off-world clones. Just in case.

GENEGINEERED CREATURES



Genegineering has been a waxing and waning fad since Shelley penned *The Modern Prometheus*. Typically, the waning coincides with terrible disasters, such as the atrocious “Zsgraak, Devourer of His Enemies’ Bowels.” These mistakes tend to leave a trail of bodies, and Damage Control shuts down those guilty operations. As each lab closes, a group of clever Genegineers swim through red tape, edit documents, and do whatever it takes to start anew. This usually takes a few years, but it guarantees those starting the new labs are only the most dedicated and persistent workers.

The past two years have seen a dramatic upswing in genegineering efforts. This is partly due to an immense push to recruit young biologists specializing in cloning and genetic studies – fields where there are currently more advancement opportunities. The labs aren’t what they’ve been in the past, but scientific advances make up for space and funding.

Genegineered creatures (also called “biomorphs”) are not only risky from a control standpoint; they’re

a tremendous investment of time and money to maintain safely. Even successful genegineered creatures are short-lived, as their genetics aren’t entirely stable. Some field agents are issued genegineered creatures for experiments and data gathering. In these cases, the Convention frowns on frivolous risks. Any agent using a modified creature for a suicide mission has to answer to higher-ups.

Each type of creature has multiple background costs listed. Those are for the game traits following the cost, if an agent is assigned care of a creature. (For use as a player character, see below.)

GENEGINEERED CREATURES AND REJECTION

Genegineered creatures are clearly vulgar creations. Instead of factoring Rejection each scene, assume a creature has a persistent Rejection rating equal to twice its background or merit cost. At the end of any scene with Sleeper witnesses, a genegineered creature suffers backlash. Usually, this reflects as damage, as the creature’s body literally disintegrates into primordial ooze.

PLAYING GENEGINEERED CHARACTERS

“Can I play a Genegineered Creature?” It’s an obvious question. That’s up to the Storyteller and the group – they can add an interesting angle to play, but they move away from the human element inherent to a Mage chronicle. If you choose to play a genegineered creature, that costs 2 or more Merits. Create it as a normal character, and gain the listed traits. Consider balancing out the cost with massive Flaws, such as Mayfly’s Curse. Note that by default, genegineered characters are not possessed of Enlightened Eidolons.

Subject to certain Procedures, they may attain Enlightenment, but this should be a rare exception to the rule.

The advantages listed here will differ from some of the forms in the section; that’s to keep your character near the level of other starting Technocrats. You may choose any animal breed listed under a type of creature. For example, if you choose to play a cephalomorph, your character may be an octopus or nautilus, or if you’re playing a cetaceomorph, your character might be a narwhal or a dolphin.

Creature	Merit Cost	Advantages
Cephalomorph	2	Cloud Ink, Cromatophores, Regeneration, Speed, Tentacles, Thick Skin
Cetaceomorph	3	Echolocation, Empathy, Hyperintelligence
Dracromorph	4	Armor, Field of Vision, Jaws, Mass, Scent, Speed
Sauromorph	3	Armor, Regeneration, Silence, Tribe-Minded



CEPHALOMORPHS

Cephalomorphs blend human intelligence into the body of a large cephalopod, usually a nautilus or octopus. The end result is somewhere between 200 lbs. and one ton, depending on the breed. Rogue Genegineers have created sea creatures reaching upwards of 100 feet in length, weighing multiple tons. Cephalomorphs sport

eight limbs (or sometimes more), and hundreds of eyes for a full range of vision. They cannot speak, but can write if taught or communicate through other installed methods.

Cephalomorphs maintain phenomenally high results in intelligence tests — a blessing and a curse. Lately, the Internet's been abuzz with stories about giant cephalopods. The stories include more and more suspicious signs each time. Some included wounds on



whales that could have only come from massive coral weapons wielded with intent. Forcefully drowned sharks in one region raised attention. Explorers have hunted for larger and larger specimens with each finding, and with each odd circumstance. This led the Convention to shut down most cephalomorph research labs.

On the other hand, cephalomorphs have made great strides toward understanding the depths of the oceans and

the strange biologies therein. Each cephalomorph-led Biosphere Explorer expedition uncovers dozens of new species, far outstripping modern human undersea exploration. Some Void Engineer teams have applied to join cephalomorph undersea teams (though their reasons for that aren't entirely clear). While the crossover to alien biology is questionable, every bit of information helps in the field. Intelligent cephalomorphs are often capable research scientists in their own right, and can maneuver where most Progenitors wouldn't dare tread.

CEPHALOMORPH ADVANTAGES

All cephalomorphs have the following advantages.

Cromatophores – A cephalomorph's skin contains cromatophores, specialized cells that help camouflage. Any rolls to detect the creature are made at +2 difficulty.

Ink Cloud – A cephalomorph can spray a jet of ink that blankets an area equal to the Cephalomorph's volume. This ink blocks all senses. Due to Genegineers modifications, the ink interferes Enlightened and "magical" senses as well. Any roll to sense through the ink cloud, mundane or magical, suffers a +3 difficulty.

Regeneration – A cephalomorph regenerates one health level per hour. They regenerate lost limbs after one week.

Speed – In the water, a cephalomorph moves up to 40 miles per hour. Cephalomorphs cannot normally move on land; they can however pull and drag themselves the length of their tentacles in a given turn, but it requires their full action.

Tentacles – A cephalomorph may attack multiple targets without splitting dice pools. Alternately, it can dedicate multiple tentacles to a single opponent, each adding one die to its pool. Attacks against the tentacles may sever the appendages, but the damage does not affect the body's health levels.

Thick Skin – A cephalomorph is difficult to hurt when in the water, gaining two dice to soak.

AVERAGE CEPHALOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 3)

This cephalomorph is up to ten feet long, in the 200 lbs. range. A nautilus breed cephalomorph has, along with the standard abilities, two additional dice to soak. An octopod cephalomorph can squeeze through a space less than two inches in diameter.

In addition to the listed Abilities, give them two more dots to reflect the creature's training. Often, they receive training in Awareness, Computer, Investigation, Research, and Technology. Small cephalomorphs are sometimes trained in Stealth and Demolitions, for placing charges inconspicuously.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Intimidation 2, Melee 1, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Linguistics 1

Attacks: Tentacles, Dexterity + Brawl from crushing; Beak, 3 dice

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK (x3), -1 (x2), -3 (x2), -5, Incapacitated

MONSTROUS CEPHALOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 5)

This massive cephalopod is over thirty feet long, and weighs over one ton. It's too large for conventional lab space, and need to be kept in open waters (naturally under close scrutiny). Nautilus cephalomorphs of this size have six additional soak dice. Such octopod cephalomorphs have two additional soak dice and can squeeze through any space one foot or smaller.

Not only larger, they're much more intelligent than smaller breeds. Add four dots of Abilities to reflect the creature's training. Common training includes Awareness, Computer, Hypertech, Investigation, Research, and Technology. While too large to practice Demolitions, monstrous cephalomorphs can manipulate massive undersea Hypertech installations with ease.

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Linguistics 1

Attacks: Tentacles, Dexterity + Brawl from crushing; Beak, 8 dice

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK (x8), -1 (x4), -3 (x4), -5 (x2), Incapacitated

CETACEOMORPH

The cetaceomorph is an uplifted dolphin, whale, or porpoise — a popular construct in the past decade. Classical Genegineers consider it a fad, though it's showing no sign of slowing. While most genegineered creatures are created for their unique bodies and physical capabilities, cetaceomorphs are created for their potential for brilliance. Genegineers selectively breed cetaceomorphs into much greater degrees of intelligence. Successful cetaceomorphs generally work in their home laboratories or are farmed out to handle other tasks. We've even loaned an uplifted dolphin to Iteration X for its memory experimentation laboratories.

Most cetaceomorphs are modified to emulate human speech, or are provided computers to com-

municate with. Cetaceomorphs learn independently and rapidly. Left to their own devices and an Internet connection, they'll master numerous languages, develop complex mathematical concepts, and solve cyphers that stump Sleeper code crackers. The running joke is that cetaceomorphs are designed to render the Syndicate irrelevant; one lab teased that merely one of its uplifts could single-handedly outperform every major predictive model on Wall Street. (By the way, that joke cost them their funding. Learn from them; most Syndicate agents don't have a sense of humor.)

Cetaceomorphs are both clever and versatile. While they can be playful at times, they are always calculating, and often downright predatory. With human (or greater than human) intelligence, they can commit to complex plots and launch detailed plans. The Shared Governance Council keeps a close eye on cetaceomorph development, for fear of the day they choose to revolt.

CETACEOMORPH ABILITIES

All cetaceomorphs have the following abilities.

Echolocation – A cetaceomorph uses sonar in order to sense its environments. This means it can pursue prey at rapid speeds in complete darkness.

Empathy – A cetaceomorph has an intuitive understanding of behavior and interactions. Lying to one is always made at +2 difficulty. All beings suffer this penalty, even other cetaceomorphs.

Hyperintelligence – A cetaceomorph calculates at daunting speeds, with alarming efficiency. Any Mental rolls involving math or logic are made at -2 difficulty.

BASIC CETACEOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 3)

The standard cetaceomorph often works as a lab assistant or in another similar academic position. They make for talkative partners. Cetaceomorphs are generally constrained to aquatic life. However, most possess waterproof computer systems with advanced satellite networking. Some field teams use uplifted orcas and dolphins for their networking and informational support. Because of their advanced training and intelligence, add six dots in Abilities to a standard cetaceomorph to reflect its scientific and technical education.

Their breed determines their general size. Larger breeds tend to be more physically competent, but are generally identical from an intellectual standpoint.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Linguistics 3

Attacks: Bite, Dexterity + Brawl

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

ADVANCED CETACEOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 5)

An advanced cetaceomorph boasts intelligence beyond human capabilities. While they're very capable, they're also typically stubborn. After all, why should they work for inferior beings? Mistreating an advanced cetaceomorph could have terrible consequences; an agent looking to utilize one's skills should consider friendship or bribery. Add nine dots in Abilities to a standard cetaceomorph to reflect its advanced education.

Their breed determines their general size. Larger breeds, such as whales, will have a higher Strength, Stamina, and more health levels.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 7, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Linguistics 3

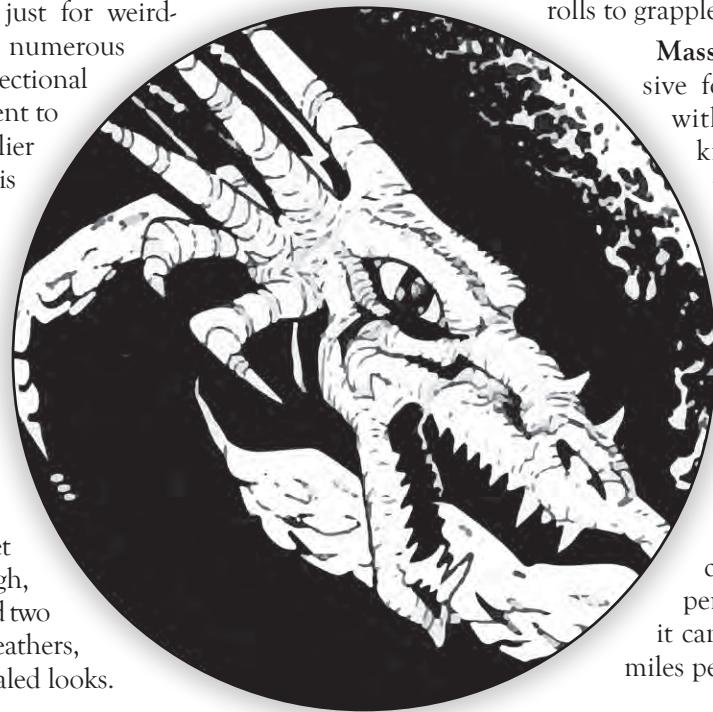
Attacks: Bite, Dexterity + Brawl

Willpower: 9

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

DRACOMORPHS

Dracomorphs are the rarest of genengineering projects. Dracomorphs come from dinosaur genetic material, but are heavily modified for various tasks, vanity, intelligence, and often just for weirdness's sake. Most have numerous eyes, to support multi-directional vision — while not inherent to their source breeds, earlier Genengineers developed this particular modification and it stuck with later breeders. Most have enhanced bone structures, offering tougher bodies, or more flexible forms. Most breeds have four or more legs. Larger varieties tend toward eight to ten legs for stability. They range from ten feet in length, about man-high, upwards of thirty feet, and two stories tall. Most have feathers, but some adopt older, scaled looks.



Their popularity spiked around 1993, with the release of the film *Jurassic Park*, though not for why new students think. We've been tinkering with dracomorphs for a long time, but only when the movie came out did the begin building a resistance to immediate and explosive Rejection.

While dracomorphs are bred for intelligence, they've never accomplished more than lesser primates. Every attempt to infuse a human brain into a dracomorph results in complete failure and permanent damage to the brain and body. (At least, that's what the reports say.) Because of this, dracomorphs are wildly impractical. They're efficient killing machines for their size, but due to their size and obvious appearance, they can't be used anywhere there might be witnesses. And due to their very telling claws, they draw immense scrutiny even in the wild.

For these and many other reasons, dracomorph projects are highly restricted.

DRACOMORPH ABILITIES

All dracomorphs have the following advantages.

Armor — A dracomorph's flesh is tough, and their bones are made to take punishment. Add two dice to soak rolls.

Field of Vision — A dracomorph is equipped with additional eyes and sense organs, so that it can perceive a full 360-degree range and can't be effectively blinded.

Jaws — Dracomorphs come from the most deadly predators in history. A dracomorph's jaws act as four die weapons. As well, they add four dice to any rolls to grapple when using its jaws.

Mass — A dracomorph is massive for its size. Any attacks with a tail or ramming will knock a victim back five feet for every point of damage caused before soaking.

Scent — Their enhanced sense of smell allows them to track a scent up to a mile away at Wits + Alertness roll, difficulty 6.

Speed — In short bursts, a dracomorph can sprint up to 80 miles per hour. At long distances, it can maintain a speed of 30 miles per hour.

COMMON DRACOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 4)

This breed comes from deinonychus stock and stands about human height. They're bred for base obedience, but cannot follow complex orders. They're hunters that can use simple tools, nothing more.

Due to their resemblance to fictitious velociraptors (the real ones being around half a meter tall and not nearly as smart as people believe), Genengineers would joke about that: "Oh my god, it can open doors!" At least, they did before they discovered that dracomorphs understood the concept of condescension and sarcasm.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Attacks: Claw or Bite, Dexterity + Brawl, two attacks per turn at full dice pool; Tail, Dexterity + Brawl, free against any rear opponent; Charge, Dexterity + Brawl + 2, takes entire dice pool

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

LEGENDARY DRACOMORPH (BACKGROUND COST 6)

This enormous dracomorph comes from tyrannosaurus stock. It towers upwards of thirty feet, and has teeth the size of swords. It's somewhat cleverer than its smaller cousins – good with ambushes (if they can find something large enough to hide behind) and it'll run if the tide turns the other way. They need massive space to survive, nothing short of a football field will keep it safely. This provides its own complexities since the loss of deep space facilities.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Attacks: Claw or Bite, Dexterity + Brawl, two attacks per turn at full dice pool; Tail, Dexterity + Brawl, free against any rear opponent; Charge, Dexterity + Brawl + 2, takes entire dice pool

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK(x8), -1(x6), -3(x6), -5(x3), Incapacitated

SAUROMORPHS

Sauromorphs are human-sized, bipedal lizards – a long-standing tradition in genengineering. They're the most popular genengineered creature, and also the one

responsible for the most Progenitor deaths. Their intelligence is barely human. They can communicate in short, simple sentences. They understand if/then relationships. They understand object permanence. They can use simple tools and weapons. They can comprehend two-step directions, and will work for food.

Sauromorphs lives are rather short, with the longest-lived barely top five years. However, they breed correspondingly quickly. At this point, they're a complex race with numerous subdivisions. Larger habitats have bred ancestral tribes over the past three decades. They form family and tribal bonds. When gathered in large numbers, sauromorphs seem more capable of grasping complex concepts.

SAUROMORPH ABILITIES

All sauromorphs have the following abilities.

Armor – A sauromorph has tough, leathery scales, providing two dice to soak rolls.

Cold-Blooded – A sauromorph is cold-blooded, and capable of remaining completely still for long periods. It gains four extra dice in any attempt to hide or go unseen. Cold-blooded creatures must regulate their body heat with external sources as the body goes into semi-hibernation. After a day without a heat source, halve all dice pools. This penalty does not go away until a full day in the heat.

Regeneration – A sauromorph regenerates one health level per turn, and recovers lost limbs after a full week of recuperation.

Tribe-Minded – A sauromorph is mentally dull when acting alone. But when acting in groups of five or more, they all gain an effective dot of Intelligence. More frightening, they gain an additional dot of Intelligence when acting in groups of twenty or more.

SAUROMORPH ROLE (BACKGROUND COST 3)

Standard sauromorphs are followers, and not particularly great ones at that. They'll do as told, but react poorly to mistreatment. They're very animalistic, and have a tendency toward impulsive violence due to their weak genetics and short lifespans.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Melee 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Attacks: Claw or Bite, Dexterity + Brawl; Tail, Dexterity + Brawl, or by weapon, Dexterity + Melee

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

SAUROMORPH CHIEFTAIN (BACKGROUND COST 5)

Advanced sauromorphs take chieftain roles, and a few are even utilized in fieldwork (typically in wetwork amalgams like Damage Control). They're capable of full communication, and are only barely less intelligent than average humans. The Convention tries to keep them away from sauromorph groups, because they become ruthlessly intelligent leaders. (However, they're clever enough to downplay their intelligence around humans with guns if they see they don't have the advantage.)

They count as two sauromorphs for the purposes of the Tribe-Minded ability. This makes a group of chieftains

dangerous, the only saving grace is that they're territorial enough to fight amongst each other before posing a significant organized threat.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Attacks: Claw or Bite, Dexterity + Brawl; Tail, Dexterity + Brawl, or by weapon, Dexterity + Melee

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated



FIELD DOCTOR

"Fuck you and your 'war for reality.' You're on the front lines, putting people in my med bay for your war. You don't have to deal with reality, you just have to pull the trigger. This bleeding patient is reality. This quarantine is reality. This flesh-eating bacteria that could wipe out this whole city, that's reality. Now, get over here and apply pressure to this guy's leg. If we stop the spread of infection, we can talk about your silly war."

You went to college to save the world. You were ready to throw your life away. You were ready for long hours. You knew you'd never be the type to settle down and raise a family. You had purpose. Your sister had Parkinson's. You swore you'd be the end of that disease. You swore that you would make a world where nobody suffered from it again.

Your dedication led to success. While you didn't find a cure or a prevention, you revolutionized treatments. You developed numerous procedures a decade ahead of modern science. You never got credit on paper, but that didn't stop you. You did well enough in your first five years that the Progenitors grabbed you right out of your residency. You fought it briefly, until you realized the truth of medical politics: it was completely out of your hands. Your protests turned to apprehensive curiosity when you found you'd be providing research on genetic anomalies. During your first briefing, you'd heard the names of diseases you couldn't dream of. The supervising physician spoke a mile a minute, and you felt like an ignorant child. But it was all the same genes. Only... different. It all followed the same rules, just in ways you'd never imagined. Those combinations could not be human genotypes.

Then you saw the field. You saw the monsters. You saw the mistakes. You saw everything the Convention tried (and failed) to hide. It was your job to minimize losses, and to guarantee those problems were not repeated. In many cases, it was your job to give those mistakes the only mercy they'd ever know.

At first, you didn't ask questions. You knew you weren't ready for the answers. Then you demanded them. You needed to know to what ends you were collecting data. You knew you were brilliant, but not that brilliant. You were single-handedly revolutionizing medicine in ways you only knew from science fiction a decade ago. You hit every wall, until eventually you found the cracks. You learned about the genengineering projects. You heard how long they've been enacted. You learned that the plans are currently plotted out for fifty years.

You swore to yourself you'd end it. You swore that you would make a world where nobody suffered from it again.



PROGENITORS

NAME:
PLAYER:
CHRONICLE:

NATURE: Visionary
EIDOLON: Questing
DEIMEANOR: Perfectionist

DIVISION:
CONCEPT:
AMALGAM:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength	● OOO
Dexterity	● OO
Stamina	●●●OO

SOCIAL

Charisma	●● O
Manipulation	●● O
Appearance	●● OO

MENTAL

Perception	●●●OO
Intelligence	●●●●O
Wits	●●●●O

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness	●●OOO
Athletics	OOO
Awareness	OOO
Brawl	O O
Dodge	OOOOO
Expression	●●OOO
Intimidation	OOO
Leadership	●●OOO
Streetwise	OOOOO
Subterfuge	● OOO

SKILLS

Drive	OOOO
Energy Weapons	OOO
Etiquette	●OOOO
Firearms	OOO
Hypertech	● OO
Melee	OOOOO
Research	●● O
Stealth	OOOOO
Survival	OOO
Technology	● OOO

KNOWLEDGES

Academics	●● OO
Computer	● OOO
Enigmas	OOOO
Finance	OOOO
Investigation	OOO
Law	●OOOO
Linguistics	OOO
Medicine	●●●●O
Politics	●OOOO
Science	●● OO

SPHERES

Correspondence	OOO
Dimensional Science	OOOOO
Entropy	OOOOO

Forces	O OO
Life	●●●OO
Matter	OOO

Mind	● OOO
Prime	● OOO
Time	●OOOO

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

Devices	●●●●
Influence (Medical)	●●●
Resources	●●●OO
	OOO
	OOOOO
	OOOOO

ENLIGHTENMENT

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

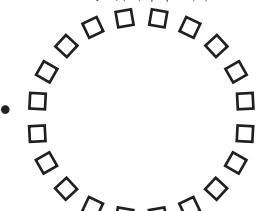
HEALTH

Bruised	-0
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Mauled	-2
Crippled	-5
Incapacitated	

WILLPOWER

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

PRIMAL ENERGY



OTHER TRAITS

	OOOOO

REJECTION

Dynamic	OOOOO
Entropic	OOOOO
Static	OOOOO

EXPERIENCE

ENTERPRISING GENEGINEER

"Thomas Dolby said, 'she blinded me with science.' Me? I make people see with science. I'm not talking about replacing lost corneas. That shit's child's play. I'm not an inheritor of Rufus's legacy. I'm an inheritor of fucking Frankenstein."

Okay, that sounded kind of silly. I probably spend a little too much time in the lab. I don't get a lot of visitors. As it turns out, I'm too busy discovering the next stage of humanity. Sorry."

Do you know how most kids have a story about being disgusted by the class exercise where they dissect a frog? You don't have that story. You were the weird kid, bouncing in your seat at the front of the class. Your teacher told you to settle down. You told him that he'd rue the day. He thought you were joking.

He had never been so wrong.

You graduated high school at fifteen. You had your undergrad in Biology by seventeen. Your only friends were a collection of exotic pets that rivaled the city zoo. You procured some of them through less-than-ethical means, which resulted in a criminal record barring you from government work. You pushed through the rest of your education, coming out of your doctorate barely able to legally drink.

Did we mention that during this time, you'd spliced and forked a few species in ways current geneticists couldn't dream of? Defiantly, you mentioned these experiments during your dissertation. The professors questioned you, so you delivered evidence. They summarily kicked you out of school. Days later, you received a letter of apology, and a full acceptance of your dissertation. Then, a Union talent scout came to your home, curious about your creations. She signed you on the spot.

Now, you're King of the Lab. You bark orders, you stomp around, and you make new life. You're like a god. Only, a god that's constrained to a musky white room with a lack of funding and an overabundance of sarcasm in the janitorial staff.



PROGENITORS

NAME:
PLAYER:
CHRONICLE:

NATURE: Architect
EIDOLON: Questing
DEUTIEANOR: Architect

DIVISION:
CONCEPT:
AMALGAM:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength	●●○○○
Dexterity	●● ○○
Stamina	●● ○○

SOCIAL

Charisma	● ○
Manipulation	●●●○○
Appearance	●●●○○

MENTAL

Perception	●●●○○
Intelligence	●●●●○
Wits	●●● ○

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness	●●●○○
Athletics	○○○
Awareness	●●●○○
Brawl	○ ○
Dodge	○○○○○
Expression	○○○
Intimidation	○○○
Leadership	○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●●●○○

SKILLS

Drive	○○○○
Energy Weapons	○○○
Etiquette	○○○○
Firearms	○○○
Hypertech	●●●○○
Melee	○○○○○
Research	○
Stealth	○○○○○
Survival	○○○
Technology	●●○○○

KNOWLEDGES

Academics	●● ○○
Computer	●●○○○
Enigmas	○○○○
Finance	○○○○
Investigation	●●○○○
Law	○○○○
Linguistics	○○○
Medicine	●●●○○
Politics	○○○○
Science	Sci-fi ●●●○○

SPHERES

Correspondence	●●○○○
Dimensional Science	○○○○○
Entropy	○○○○○

Forces	○ ○○
Life	●● ○○
Matter	○○○

Mind	○○○
Prime	●●○○○
Time	○○○○○

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

Advanced	●●●●●
Cetaceomorph	
Devices	●●○○○
Resources	●● ○○
	○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

ENLIGHTENMENT

●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

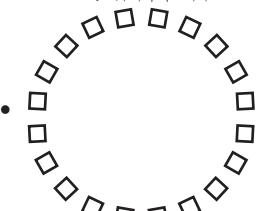
HEALTH

Bruised	-0	□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

OTHER TRAITS

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

PRIMAL ENERGY



REJECTION

Dynamic	○○○○○
Entropic	○○○○○
Static	○○○○○

EXPERIENCE

--

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

"You know as well as I do that I signed up for lab work. I wanted to do paperwork. I wanted job security. I wanted to play solitaire on my office computer while interns did all the real work. I did not sign up to investigate the stuff of 1980s Saturday morning cartoons in filthy sewers. I'm not saying I won't do it. I just want to register my disapproval."

You wanted to be boring. You wanted nothing more than to do the picket fences, the 2.4 children, the doting puppy, and the husband that uses too many puns and watches the game on Sunday. You wanted to work from 9-5. You wanted to complain when you had to stay until 6. You wanted two weeks of vacation, and to complain in the break room that you deserve three. You tried very hard for that, and you failed miserably.

When you took the position as a research associate for your alma mater, you thought you had that ideal. Your eyes glowed with the possibility of tenure. You did your time proudly, managing a workload for a renowned professor of paleontology. You were even cited in some of her papers.

You didn't think twice when she asked you to go out on a dig; clearly she would need information quicker than she could get with the spotty satellite internet in the kinds of places that still had dinosaur bones in their dirt. You made some cracks about your fear of malaria, but you told yourself it was like a vacation.

You gave a noncommittal protest when she asked you to traipse through some cave network with her team. You said it'd be smarter if you stuck above ground, in the communications tent. Just in case, you said. She wasn't having it. While on the excursion, the team stumbled upon a tribe of large reptiles that appeared to be speaking with one another. The professor wasn't shocked, neither was the rest of the team.

When you got back, you asked questions until you were blue in the face. You met with a debriefing agent. (What kind of university has debriefing agents?) They tried convincing you that you didn't see what you did. You weren't having it.

Weeks later, you received a reassignment, a promotion, and plane tickets for training in the Amazon basin. The university gave you little choice, and said they needed "someone with your skills." Whatever that means. You had to buy a whole new wardrobe and invest in sunblock. Most importantly, you had to give up on your dreams of normalcy.



CONVENTION BOOK:

PROGENITORS

NAME:
PLAYER:
CHRONICLE:

NATURE: Conformist
EIDØLØN: Pattern
DEITIEANOR: Conformist

DI^VISION: CO^NCEPT: AMALGAM:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength _____ ●●○○○
Dexterity _____ ●● ○○
Stamina _____ ●●●○○

SOCIAL

Charisma _____  O
Manipulation _____  O
Appearance _____  O

MENTAL

Perception _____ ● ● ● ○
Intelligence _____ ● ● ● ○
Wits _____ ● ● ● ○

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness	●	OOO
Athletics	●	OOO
Awareness		OOO
Brawl		O O
Dodge		OOOOO
Expression	●●	OOO
Intimidation		OOO
Leadership		OOO
Streetwise		OOOOO
Subterfuge	●	OOO

SKILLS

Drive _____	● OOOO
Energy Weapons _____	OOO
Etiquette _____	● OOOO
Firearms _____	OOO
Hypertech _____	● OO
Melee _____	OOOOO
Research _____	● ● ● ○
Stealth _____	OOOOO
Survival _____	OOO
Technology _____	● ● OOO

KNOWLEDGES

Academics	● ● ● ○○
Computer	● ● ○○○
Enigmas	● ○○○○
Finance	● ○○○○
Investigation	● ○○○
Law	○○○○
Linguistics	● ● ○○○
Medicine	● ○
Politics	○○○○
Science	● ● ○○

SPHERES

Correspondence _____ OOO
Dimensional Science _____ OOOOO
Entropy _____ OOOOO

Forces _____ O OO
Life _____ ●● OO
Matter _____ ●●OOO

Mind _____ ●●○○○
Prime _____ ○ ○○○
Time _____ ○○○○○

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

<u>Devices</u>	●
<u>Influence</u>	●
<u>(Academia)</u>	○○○
<u>Library</u>	●●●○○
<u>Resources</u>	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

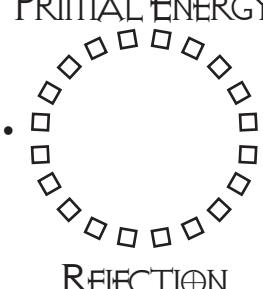
ENLIGHTENMENT

HEALTH

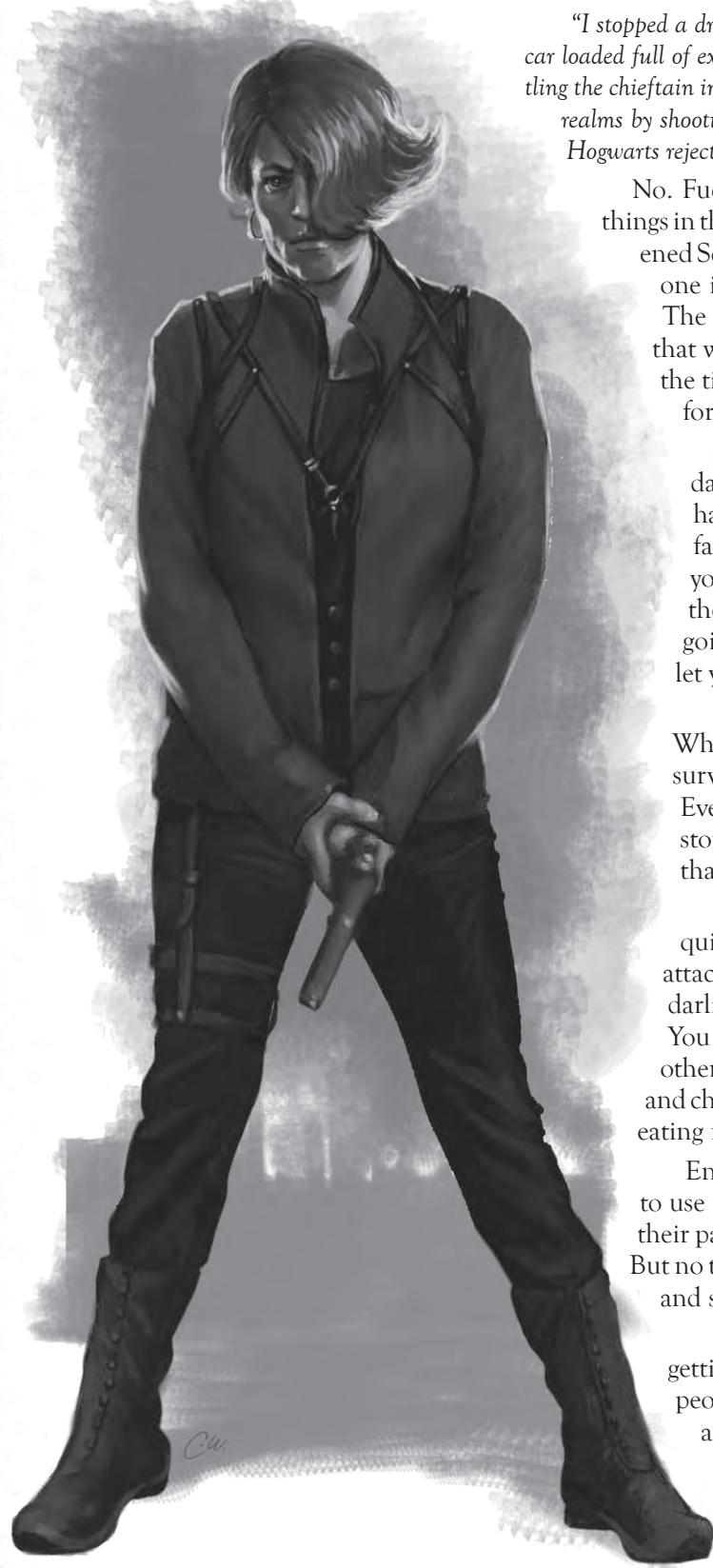
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Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

OTHER TRAITS

OTHER TRAITS



DAMAGE CONTROL OPERATIVE



"I stopped a dracromorph rampage by ramming the slimy bastard with a car loaded full of explosives. I ended the 1998 sauromorph uprising by wrestling the chieftain into submission. I played my part in defending the Horizon realms by shooting an arch wizard in the face. Do you think a bunch of Hogwarts rejects are going to stop me?"

No. Fucking. Nonsense. You're in possession of the two things in this world most capable of solving problems: Enlightened Science and your fists. You have two master's degrees: one in organic chemistry and the other in kicking ass. The difference between you and others field agents is that when you get an assignment, you're on-location by the time the others are done filled out their requisition forms.

You're growing long in your years, but nobody dares tell you this. No matter what the issue, you have a story about something bigger, something more fantastic. Every single story ends in the same way: you win. Typically, there's a bit of tragedy to pepper the tale. An agent or two or thirty die. But if you're going to make the world an omelet, it'd damned well let you crack some of its eggs.

Did you do all those things? Does it really matter? What matters is, you're on the job, right now, and you've survived all this time. You have a reputation to uphold. Every young field agent's heard your name. When you stop by the lab to pick up your requisitions, the joke is that you don't study Forces, you study Excessive Forces.

Why do you do it? Because you don't want to die quietly. Your grandfather died fighting off a crocodile attack. That made him the talk of the town, and the darling of your entire family. He set a pretty high bar. You intend to blow it out of the water. Besides, what other line of work has you chased by dinosaurs one day, and chopping off then regrowing limbs infected with flesh eating nanoparticles the next?

Enlightened Science is just another tool. You've learned to use their tablet computers and their gene splicers and their particle propulsion cannons and their yadda, yadda. But no tool replaces good, old fashioned hard work, blood, and sweat.

Every mission could be your last. Deep down, you're getting tired. You're hoping for that glorious end. Some people end with a bang. You want to end with a bang, a splat, a boom, a thud, a crack, and a whoosh. Not necessarily in that order.

PROGENITORS

NAME:
PLAYER:
CHRONICLE:

NATURE: Gallant
EIDOLON: Questing
DEIMEANOR: Bravo

DIVISION:
CONCEPT:
AMALGAM:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength	● ● ○○
Dexterity	● ● ○○
Stamina	● ● ○○

SOCIAL

Charisma	● ● ○○
Manipulation	● ● ○
Appearance	● ● ○○

MENTAL

Perception	●● ○○
Intelligence	●● ○
Wits	●● ○

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness	●●●○○
Athletics	●●●○○
Awareness	○○○
Brawl	●●●●○
Dodge	○○○○○
Expression	○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○
Leadership	● ○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○

SKILLS

Drive	●○○○○
Energy Weapons	●●○○○
Etiquette	○○○○○
Firearms	●●○○○
Hypertech	● ○○○
Melee	○○○○○
Research	○○○○○
Stealth	○○○○○
Survival	●●○○○
Technology	○○○○○

KNOWLEDGES

Academics	○○○○○
Computer	○○○○○
Enigmas	●○○○○
Finance	○○○○○
Investigation	●●○○○
Law	○○○○○
Linguistics	● ○○○○
Medicine	● ○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

SPHERES

Correspondence	○○○
Dimensional Science	○○○○○
Entropy	○○○○○

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

Devices	●●●
Eidolon	●●●●●
Fame	●●○○○
Resources	● ○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

ENLIGHTENMENT

●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

WILLPOWER

●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

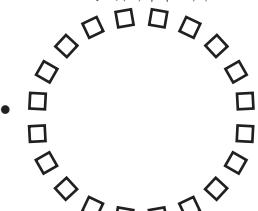
HEALTH

Bruised	-0	□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

OTHER TRAITS

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

PRIMAL ENERGY



REJECTION

Dynamic	○○○○○
Entropic	○○○○○
Static	○○○○○

EXPERIENCE

EPILOGUE: SUTURES



"Okay, this is the hard part," I say, turning to face Victor before opening the cargo elevator. "This part requires trust."

He lifts an eyebrow. "You think you haven't already asked for enough of my trust?"

I shake my head. "No. This is the part where I trust you." I nod toward the closed door. "When we go in there, you're my old friend. You weren't out in the cold. You just moved into the area, and you want to help out."

Victor is quiet for a moment, studying me. I reassure myself that he can't read minds, but he guesses the truth, anyway. "They don't know," he says. "Your amalgam-

mates... they don't know exactly how many former Progenitor 'experiments' broke off their leashes."

"They do not. But we still require their trust, and so... we don't mention it to them. As far as they're concerned, you're a Genegineer who's antsy to get some fieldwork." I reach down and roll the big door up, revealing the elevator cage behind it, and head inside.

Victor follows after me. "This plan can't possibly go wrong."

"Tell me about it," I grouse, and pull the cage closed.

As the elevator creaks and moves, he raises an eyebrow. "Wait, since when do we 'get antsy for fieldwork'?"

I can't help but laugh a little.



When I open the elevator door again, we are three floors down.

Our base of operations is a maze of white cubicle panels, windows, and venetian blinds. It sprawls across the entire floor, with offices tucked in corners, a machine shop and a chemistry lab hugging the wall, and long teak conference table down the middle that, if truth be told, hosts Chinese food boxes more often than meetings. Motor pool takes up a third of the floor on the opposite side, with access to the freight elevator.

I wave at all of these with terse explanations for Victor, lingering a little on the people occupying the offices. "Parker is our resident Operative, ranks somewhere in the middle of NWO's fifty shades of suits. Rupasinghe is Disbursements with a little headhunting on the side. But don't worry about him in combat; he's a former Enforcer. Chris is our... well, sort of our mascot, I suppose. Poor lost little Pan-Dimensional Corpsman. The pregnant one over there is my wife, Leela. She runs our lab."

"So she's who I talk to about my supply?" He's quiet on that query.

I nod. "And this is my office," waving him towards the couch that faces my desk. There's a folder resting on my chair marked confidential, and I sweep it open. As I scan the contents, I keep talking. "The amalgam is rooting out... well, we think we're rooting out a Nephandus of considerable power. We were dispatched two years ago to investigate some anomalous disease vectors, but after the first round of digging we discovered that was the tip of the iceberg..." I stop myself and look up from the folder. "Do you... care about the whys and wherefores?"

Victor slides his head back and forth in a slow shake. "Not particularly. Bad people. Tied up with a lot of other

bad people and a smattering of good people, lost or trapped or just naive. That about sum it up?"

I lean against my desk, appraising him again. "You're going to be a challenge."

His eyebrows lift. "Me?"

"You don't ask questions," I tell him. "You do as you're told. That's a dangerous temptation for somebody in my position, with desperate stakes and finite resources."

"Sorry if I make things difficult," he says without emotion. "I'm just here for a paycheck."

I actually snort at that before I can stop myself.

"Is something funny?"

I consider the man for a long moment. "I'm sure this facade you've got built up is very comfortable and very safe, Victor. But you're not here for a paycheck. Hell, you're not even here for spinal fluid."

He watches me with dead eyes. "I'm not?"

"No," I tell him. "You're like me: you want to make the world a better place."

He doesn't react at all at first. Then he lifts one finger to his lips. "Shhh."

"So I know I talked about you working for Damage Control," I say, shifting gears. My hand falls to the desk to rest on the confidential folder. "I was hoping that you'd be a little flexible and do some work outside of the whole hunter-killer shtick."

Victor sets his cup aside. The look on his face could go in the dictionary next to the entry for weary resignation. He folds his hands together. "What is it you'd like me to do?"

I flash him a smile. "Nothing much. Just plant some evidence."



Rupasinghe steps into my office twitching like a live wire. Still jumpy two days after shooting at people and they say Progenitors are the back office types. "Talley," he begins before I've even looked up. "Doctor, we really must deliver that shipment."

"Shipment?" Victor speaks up, and the Syndicate man turns to regard him with suspicion, and then a dawning look of recognition.

"Drugs," I clarify. "I make 'em, the Syndicate sells 'em. Which funds your salary. Is that a problem?"

Victor sniffs slightly. "Never was in the past."

I give him a short smile and then look up at my office invader. "Mister Rupasinghe, this is Victor. He'll be doing some heavy lifting for us. We go way back."

The moneyman turns on a heel and offers his hand, a practiced motion. "Pleasure to make your acquaintance, Victor. I assume your association with Doctor Talley is professional?"

"As professional as this line of work gets," the psychic responds soberly. His eyes flick up and down Rupasinghe.

"Did you want to see my C.V.?" His voice is a naked challenge, and the Syndicate man's spine straightens at it.

I clear my throat and stand. "Konrad, I cooked up a batch last night; it should be finished crystallization. I'll go check on it and let you two get acquainted."

Rupasinghe barely looks up as he squares his shoulders on Victor. "I don't think that will be necessary, Victor. I trust Doctor Talley's judgment. So you're in the know, that's great."

Victor leans forward in his seat. "I've seen a man turned inside-out, laughing the entire time, before his bones skewered the necks of the men trying to restrain him. Marauder. I've seen werewolves track and hunt their prey—our guys—through the Canadian Rockies. Didn't end well. I've seen century-old vampire nests, a miniature world inside a computer, even what I'm told was a faerie bolt-hole once. Burned all of 'em to the ground. I've seen half a Deep Universe ship breach the Gauntlet and crash land in the Brazilian rain forest."

As I'm leaving, Rupasinghe quiets slightly. "Have you, now?"

I keep the narcotics lab nearby, and it's all windows between it and my office, so I can watch the two of them as the conversation progresses. I make my hands look busy, which earns an odd look from Leela. I direct her attention towards my office. "Valkyrie?" she asks and I nod; we both watch quietly.

Rupasinghe shifts forward, questioning Victor. At first he plays it off as curiosity, probably still trying to win the dick-waving contest. But as Victor answers more questions in his deadpan manner, the other man grows more and more intent. Finally he stands and hits the intercom on my desk phone.

His voice comes over the speakers in the ceiling. "Parker, can I see you in Talley's office?"

The NWO agent responds grudgingly, ghosting up to my door and giving the Syndicate man a look that's half-glare, half-acknowledgment. "Yeah?"

Rupasinghe gestures from Parker to Victor and back. I can almost read his lips. "Tell Parker what you just told me."

And it happens again. At first Parker is standoffish, disinterested, playing defensively. Then he goes white as a sheet. He steps forward, asks a question. Before Victor can finish answering, Parker demands another answer. They scramble for a pen and paper scavenged from my desk, and the two of them, Rupasinghe and Parker, are hastily scribbling notes as Victor speaks.

When he stops talking, Rupasinghe sets a hand on Parker's shoulder.

Parker does not flinch.

They thank Victor and hurry to their respective offices, gathering their coats and shrugging them on. Rupasinghe has one finger resting on his earpiece as he talks to empty air, arranging airline tickets.

I raise my eyebrows at Parker, who pauses at the door to the lab just long enough to breathe: "A lead on Scott."

I do my best to act surprised, swallow, and nod to the elevator. "Well what are you waiting for, go."

When I get back to Victor, he is scowling softly at the closing elevator door. "I gather you want me to ask questions, so here goes. What the hell was that all about?"

"You told them about the crash?"

"I told them what you told me to say," he answers. "Not that it was much. Half a ship crashed in the Brazilian backwoods. IFF transponder scrambled. Traditionalists swarming all over it, moving glass tubes the size of couches across the rain forest. Heavy fire so we couldn't get close at first, and once we cracked that nut three days later, they didn't have the tech any longer. Tubes were found, smashed to bits, outside a little town called Envira."

I sit behind my desk and pull up the exterior cameras, swinging the monitor around so that Victor can see, too. Rupasinghe and Parker rush out the front door and onto the curb. Rupasinghe waves frantically for a cab, which flashes its lights and starts pulling over. Parker stares at the ground, looking downright lost, and when Rupasinghe turns back, they embrace, clutching each other desperately.

Victor's eyebrow lifts minutely. "So now I'm even more confused."

"Parker's last assignment was the morale officer on an expedition to Saturn," I explain. "The Valkyrie. It was supposed to be a long voyage — years — so the crew took their families along, including Parker's son, Scott. And then the Anomaly came down. The kids got stuffed in stasis tubes while the crew tried to bring the ship home. They were partly successful. The half of the Valkyrie that didn't come home fifteen years ago has been missing on the other side of the Anomaly ever since. Or rather, right up until a month ago."

"So Scott Parker..."

"...is at an orphanage in Elvira," I nod. "Hasn't aged a day."

"And Rupasinghe?"

I turn off the display, since the taxi cab has long since disappeared from view. "He has the less happy story. His family didn't make it." Victor's craggy face tenses, and he tips his head to the side. Questions come hard for him. "Why the charade?" I ask for him. "Historically

speaking, Parker and Rupasinghe have not got along very well. Differing backgrounds, different agendas, different motives. Now they'll have something in common. Parker has a reason to trust Konrad. Inter-Convention rift mended, at least locally."



"Parker and Rupasinghe should recover the boy in a few hours and be back on the morning flight," I report to the six faces on the screen. "I don't know if we'll be operations-ready tomorrow, though. It depends on how much time Parker wants with Scott, and you'll forgive me if I tell you that won't be getting curtailed."

Most of the heads bob in agreement. One of them, Councilor Grant, goes so far as to smile. "Good work, Doctor Talley. I knew you were the right scientist for the job. I think this concludes your report?"

"It does, sir." I give the camera a curt nod, and the faces of the Governance Council start winking out.

Councilor Grant's face remains. "Doctor Talley –"

I give my old comrade a smile. "Everyone else is off the call, Darius. You can just call me Mary Beth."

"I get stuck in formal cant sometimes," he shrugs, grinning like he's got a secret. "Listen. There's a lab available in Yemaja."

I can't do anything but blink. "Excuse me?"

"If you don't mind working on the ocean floor," he says with a slow chuckle. "We have a vacancy and we'd like to fill it with you. It was being used for mollusk research, but you can reconfigure it for whatever project you'd like

"Damn, Talley," says Victor. "You take this healer thing seriously."

My soft eyes look out the window, and then shift to staring into Victor's. For the first time, he looks away.

to pursue. We can assign you assistants, or if you have any names, we can track them down. I assume one of those names would be Leela," he adds with a smirk.

I exhale slowly. "You can't be offering me a blank check with no strings."

"As close as this world can get," he replies, still smiling. "You've made some big wins out on the front lines. And you've done good research in the past. We'd like to reward your service in such a way as to get more research out of you."

"I... appreciate the offer," I stammer. My heart is trying to leap up into my throat, but at the same time my arms feel leaden.

He gives me a slow nod. "But you're going to say no."

"Yes," I say, surprising myself. "I mean yes, you're right; no, I can't take the position. Getting back to pure research sounds marvelous, believe me. But there's... there's too much to do out here."

He sniffs and rubs his nose. "You're not the first scientist we've offered the spot to," he says. "You kids get a little fieldwork in you, you can't let it go."

I give him a warm smile and tip my head towards the offices behind me. "I've gotta go. Duty calls."

PROGENITORS

N^{AME}:
P^{LAYER}:
C^{HRONICLE}:

N^ATURE:
E^ID^ØL^ØN:
D^ELT^{HE}AN^OR:

D^IV^IS^ION:
C^ON^CE^PT:
A^MALG^AM:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength_____ ● OOOOO
Dexterity_____ ● OOOOO
Stamina_____ ● OOOOO

SOCIAL

Charisma_____ ● OOOOO
Manipulation_____ ● OOOOO
Appearance_____ ● OOOOO

MENTAL

Perception_____ ● OOOOO
Intelligence_____ ● OOOOO
Wits_____ ● OOOOO

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness_____ OOOOO
Athletics_____ OOOOO
Awareness_____ OOOOO
Brawl_____ OOOOO
Dodge_____ OOOOO
Expression_____ OOOOO
Intimidation_____ OOOOO
Leadership_____ OOOOO
Streetwise_____ OOOOO
Subterfuge_____ OOOOO

SKILLS

Drive_____ OOOOO
Energy Weapons_____ OOOOO
Etiquette_____ OOOOO
Firearms_____ OOOOO
Hypertech_____ OOOOO
Melee_____ OOOOO
Research_____ OOOOO
Stealth_____ OOOOO
Survival_____ OOOOO
Technology_____ OOOOO

KNOWLEDGES

Academics_____ OOOOO
Computer_____ OOOOO
Enigmas_____ OOOOO
Finance_____ OOOOO
Investigation_____ OOOOO
Law_____ OOOOO
Linguistics_____ OOOOO
Medicine_____ OOOOO
Politics_____ OOOOO
Science_____ OOOOO

SPHERES

Correspondence_____ OOOOO
Dimensional Science_____ OOOOO
Entropy_____ OOOOO

Forces_____ OOOOO
Life_____ OOOOO
Matter_____ OOOOO

Mind_____ OOOOO
Prime_____ OOOOO
Time_____ OOOOO

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO

ENLIGHTENMENT

● O O O O O O O O O O
● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

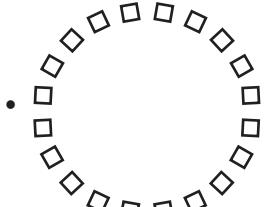
HEALTH

Bruised	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

WILLPOWER

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

PRIMAL ENERGY



OTHER TRAITS

OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO

REJECTION

DYNAMIC_____ OOOOO
ENTROPIC_____ OOOOO
STATIC_____ OOOOO

EXPERIENCE

CONVENTION BOOK **PROGENITORS**

MERITS & FLAWS

PROCEDURES

PREFERRED EFFECTS

ROTES

DEVICES

СОМВАТ

ARMOR:

PROGENITORS

EXPANDED BACKGROUND:

ALLIES

BACKUP

CONSTRUCT

COMPANION

ENHANCEMENTS

INFLUENCE

LABORATORY

LIBRARY

MENTOR

NODE(S)

PATRON

RESOURCES

SECRET WEAPONS

SPIES

POSSESSIONS

GEAR (CARRIED)

EQUIPMENT (OWNED)

FOCI

STYLE

PROGENITORS

HISTORY

EMPOWERMENT

GOALS/DESTINY

SEEKINGS:

QUIETS:

DESCRIPTION

Age:

Apparent Age:

Date of Birth:

Age of Empowerment:

Hair:

Eyes:

Race

Appearance/Nature of Eidolon:

Nationality:

Height:

Weight:

Common Resonance:

Sex:

VISUALS

AMALGAM CHART

CHARACTER SKETCH

CONVENTION BOOK :

PROGENITORS

Heart of the Union

The Progenitors hid far more depth than anyone, Tradition or Technocrat, realized. Too long considered by others — and even themselves — as lab monkeys and cloistered researchers, their protective cocoon of isolation was ripped away by the Dimensional Anomaly. Forced by cataclysmic events, the Progenitors are injecting themselves back into a sick world.

The Union's surgeons and chemists have made their diagnosis, and it scares them: the Technocracy's diseased and about to tear itself apart. Traditions keep peddling snake oil treatments to a populace yearning for an easy fix. And there are worse things out there, cancers on the world. So the Progenitors must take the only sensible action: arm up and prep the OR.

A World Infected

The Masses are gobbling up the ideas behind biotechnology, medical advancements, cloning, and neurochemistry — nearly everything from the Convention's bag of tricks. But the world is still full of scared people looking for magic pills to make all their problems go away. The members of the Technocracy are no different. But now the Progenitors are in the mix, frantic trauma surgeons elbow-deep in unwilling patients. **Convention Book: Progenitors** updates Mage: the Ascension with 21st century medicine, biotech, and desperate idealism.

