



SHADOWRUN®



DEALERS OF DEATH



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DOWN THE BARREL

Harbinger tightened the straps on his form-fitting body armor before slipping into the plain blue coveralls emblazoned with the SureClean logo. Closing the van's door behind him, he walked the last few blocks to the target location. As he approached the guard at the main entrance, he clumsily dug out his ID badge and handed it over, cloaking himself in an air of casual boredom despite the anxiety he felt. If this guard looked too closely at his toolkit, he might just identify the disguised rifle components. Or worse, find the ammunition. That seemed unlikely, but sometimes people got lucky.

"Cyclops, this had better work," Harbinger subvocalized as the guard inspected his toolbox. "This will be over really quick if this guard gets too suspicious."

"It will be fine. Have I ever let you down before?" the decker said with a laugh.

"Recently," Harbinger reminded him. "We're not going to be able to go back to Atlanta again any time soon."

"Aw, come on. How long are you going to hold that against me? How was I supposed to know they were after our target, too? Trust me, I learned my lesson. Business before pleasure."

Harbinger rolled his eyes. Thankfully, the guard seemed oblivious to the secret exchange. He also seemed bored and probably wasn't faking it. He barely glanced at the "tools," then closed the case, latched it, and handed it back to Harbinger before scanning his ID badge.

"You're all clear, Mr. Reynolds. Thanks for your patience."

Harbinger flashed his best smile, glanced at the guard's badge, and shook his head. "No problem. I get paid by the hour! Thanks for the overtime, Roy." He gave the guard a mock salute. Having copied the janitor's keys a few days before, the main door opened without a problem.

"I'm inside. Are you in position, Cyclops?" he subvocalized over comms as he got his bearings.

"I'm right where I'm supposed to be," the decker formerly known as RootKit responded. "Admiring the view, too. Can you believe the hotties out here tonight?"

"And you wonder why you keep getting into trouble," Harbinger replied. The decker had been cursed with good looks, high libido, and low (if any) inhibitions.

"Mm, so many fine choices here. What do you think of shirtless here? Sending you a pic."

"Will you focus, please? We have a job to complete." Harbinger chastised as he hit the elevator button to the top floor. He spared a glance at the photo of a topless beefcake that popped up in his AR feed and had to admit Cyclops had good taste. He then sighed in resignation. "Just don't get distracted and forget what we're here to do. We can't afford another Atlanta."

The elevator opened on the top floor, and Harbinger located the roof access hatch. He unlocked the maintenance door, climbed the ladder, and opened the padlock that held the hatch closed.

The summer breeze hit him immediately as he stepped onto the roof. The air was a little cooler and a lot less hazy above the street, which was nice. He walked over to the HVAC units, opened his toolbox, retrieved a screwdriver, and popped open the access panel. Then he reached inside and made a show of rummaging around for a few seconds to give the cameras something boring to look at.

"Got what you need?"

"You are now monotonously plugging away like a cog in the corporate machine," Cyclops said, having replaced the camera feed with a steady loop of Harbinger's best impression of a janitor at work.

"How's St. Louis look from up there?"

With the cameras hacked, Harbinger was now free to act. He retrieved the longer and somewhat unusual cleaning tools and arrayed each item out methodically, tracking each part as he assembled the barrel for the real tool of his trade. Then he retrieved the firearm's receiver, ammunition, and scope from the smuggling compartments in his legs. As he finished assembling the sniper rifle, Harbinger took a moment to savor the view and the warm summer breeze. The arch stood illuminated, and the Mississippi was alight with countless boats.



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"It's a shame we won't be able to stick around to enjoy the festival."

"True. But this job pays well enough to make up for it. I did my due diligence but couldn't find an apparent reason someone would pay us to geek him. Any ideas?"

"Not my business. And rather not know, truthfully. Someone needs an obstacle removed, and we remove it. That's our business." Harbinger finished assembling his weapon, his hands working from muscle memory, and checked his sights. "Any sign of the target?"

"Your timing is impeccable. He just stepped out of the hotel."

"Wow, you're actually paying attention? I half expected you to be hitting on the locals."

"Who says I'm not? Nobody expects a himbo like me to be a ruthless killer. Perfect camouflage. Look alive. Target is approaching the kill zone. Time to get paid."

Harbinger shouldered his weapon and peered down the scope. His smartlink locked in, feeding targeting data to his cybereyes. Wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity, distance. Additional data from Cyclops also provided wind information at the target elevation, civilian locations, target movement rate, and lanes of airborne drone traffic. All those elements factored in as he took aim. But the bodyguards were doing their jobs too well, obscuring his shot. He waited, knowing his moment would come but also that it would be extremely brief. This was going to be a much harder shot than he'd been expecting. But then his moment came, just as the target was about to get into the car waiting for him. It was a sliver of a gap, lasting a fraction of a second. But for Harbinger, that was enough.

Just as one of the bodyguards reached out to guide the target to the car, the target's head and part of the guard's hand shattered in a spray of gore and bone. Chaos erupted on the street, with the spray of blood splashing passersby and the guard staring at his missing digits in shock while the others searched for the shooter. The festive air was shattered by the screams of panicking people. Harbinger dropped to the rooftop and crawled quickly to the open panel. It only took him a few seconds to disassemble the rifle. He wrapped the parts in the coveralls and lobbed them into the guts of the HVAC system.

"Getting out?" Harbinger asked.

"Already fleeing with the mob. Broom and Dustpan are scrubbing evidence from the Matrix. You just need to get out of there before someone notices that the camera has been hacked. Meet me at the rendezvous."

"Be there shortly," Harbinger said as cyberwings deployed from his back. He leapt from the roof, gliding to a nearby construction site before dropping to ground level and slipping away into the shadows.

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NINETY-NINE WAYS TO DIE

POSTED BY: BALLADEER

- I know many of you have had some negative interactions with Balladeer in the past. Many of us make a decent living keeping people alive, and Balladeer's area of expertise runs contrary to that. Some of you may have failed a job because Balladeer is good. Whether you're willing to take network or not, understanding assassins can help you avoid falling into their traps. Balladeer agreed to share a high-level overview of his profession, to give us some perspective. Know that I've taken precautions against anyone using this post as a means to track him down. Don't frag around, because you'll find out.
- Glitch

Many of you will know me from my time on JackPoint or Shadowland, but a few of

you will have worked against me in the field. The fact that I'm still here to post this little favor to Glitch should tell everyone how those confrontations ended. In case it isn't abundantly clear, I'm a professional. The fact that I've been doing this as long as I have and still breathing should tell you I'm good at what I do.

I will preface everything that follows with this: most people who enter this profession aren't going to make it. There's always blowback from ending people's lives. The people that become our targets are typically popular in their own circle, whether that circle is a half dozen people or the division of a corporation. Those close to a target tend to take offense to what we do. On top of that, there is a mental toll. Many people come into this profession full of anger and apathy, but I can tell you this: just because you hate people doesn't mean removing some drek stain from society personally will be any easier on your soul.



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- So, are we supposed to feel sorry for Balladeer with all this “killing weighs on the soul” talk? I know I certainly don’t. If he finds the weight of death so heavy, then maybe he shouldn’t have been murdering for money for a decade.
- OrkCEO
- The point is not to seek sympathy. My conscience is clear. But I have seen many colleagues fall under that weight. They saw the faces of the people they killed when they closed their eyes and watched the aftermath of their handiwork on the news, only to see the faces of crying children, grieving widows, and communities shattered. Those who get into this line of work hoping to play God quickly learn that they are no God, but the Devil instead, and can’t reconcile it. Many fall prey to their own tools before those retributions catch up to them.
- Balladeer

Let’s face it: death is just another part of life. Shadowrunners put their lives on the line every time they take a job. While much of the death is incidental to the work, sometimes death itself is the job. There has been a business surrounding the removal of people for personal gain for most of recorded history. For such an old profession, there has naturally been no shortage of ways developed to see the deed accomplished. If popular media has shaped your impression of what an assassin looks like, you’ll likely picture a well-dressed gunslinger, or an ex-military sniper dressed in a full ghillie suit. While those types of assassins certainly exist, they are by no means the full extent of the dealers of death out there.

I constantly train and learn in order to excel in several methods of assassination. This allows for flexibility, adaptability and most importantly unpredictability. Which in turn makes it difficult for law enforcement and security opponents to counter. I also receive plenty of criticism from my colleagues as I’m often called a jack of all trades, master of none. Others find one style works insanely well for them, and they stick with it. It may give you a recognized MO, but if you are truly as good as you claim, you can still slip through the cracks.

I’ve divided assassins into five broad categories. Of course, some killers don’t fit into these curated categories, but overall, these will cover the majority. When describing how assassins

choose their targets, I won’t reinvent the wheel. The *Smooth Operations* download already covered this in good detail. I’ll simply link key terms Fianchetto used back in that download.

LONE WOLVES

This is what most people think of when they think of an assassin. A lone gunman taking out his target from a kilometer out, the criminal skulking in the shadows, ready to plunge a knife between some innocent slob’s ribs. I’d be lying if I said that these types don’t exist. Consider the Tricks of the Trade section of *Smooth Operations* (pp. 48-79): you’ll probably find someone out there who uses any of the tricks there. Lone operatives have been used to great effect for centuries, from the Japanese shinobi to special forces to modern legends like Teachdaire.

These highly trained individuals pursue a personal agenda with potent motivation driving them forward. For many modern assassins, this motivation is as basic as cash, but there are still idealists out there who fight for king, country, faith, and even a desire to inspire change. History is filled with examples of individuals who felt that the world could be improved by the appropriate use of force.

- Which of these motivations drives you to be a serial murderer, Balladeer?
- Kia
- Cash, mostly. I have a talent, and it would be a shame to let it go to waste. I’m not about to mention what other motivations I may have. Understanding an assassin’s motivations makes them predictable.
- Balladeer

Probably the most widely known collective of assassins in the shadows is Chimera. This group has never numbered more than a dozen. These people work alone and take on million-nuyen contracts, often taking months to see a hit completed. CFD decimated their ranks, but Chimera still exists. Don’t think for a moment that having to put down a few of their own dogs will cause this group to unravel.

- Wait, how do you know Chimera cleaned their own house? Does this mean that Balladeer is a member of Chimera?
- Fianchetto



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- Hardly. I chalk it up to an educated guess. Toward the end of the whole CFD debacle, several John and Jane Does whose faces were not on any database wound up dead. While there were no names, their faces brought up all sorts of red flags with Interpol and other agencies. When word gets out that a world-class assassin order has headcases in their ranks and then a bunch of wanted, unknown assassins turn up dead in ways that ensured the brain was destroyed, it's not a huge stretch.
- Sunshine
- Chimera has had a bit of an optics problem recently with the whole Disian Shadow War. It turns out when the greater community brands a metaplanar monstrosity with the same name as you, it's bad for business. Some within Chimera (the organization) have made it a point to work pro bono in order to get rid of chimera (the creatures). Infringing on the brand name, I guess.
- Plan 9
- There are some within the Chimera organization that have pushed for renaming their organization. Between CFD and the Disians, there may be too much negative press around the old moniker.
- Plan 10

The trappings of this style of assassin are varied, but there are some commonalities. What they lack in manpower they make up for in preparedness. They work hard to leave nothing to chance. If there are elements they can't control, they'll find a new way rather than risk failure. With most jobs, you only get one shot. If you are looking to hire a lone wolf assassin, either provide extensive details, or be prepared to wait. Even when you give them a complete dossier, an assassin worth the amount they charge will double-check your intel. They need to cover their ass or risk blowback.

Working alone has some perks and some drawbacks. You have the freedom to operate as you wish and leave a small footprint unless you are careless. And you never need to worry about someone on your own team betraying you. But if things go wrong, you've got no one watching your back or covering your escape. And with fewer eyes on the mission, things are much more likely to go wrong. Even for those of you at the top of your game, no assassin does what they do in a total vacuum. Those who prefer working alone still rely on a strong network of contacts.

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH

One of the most common reasons people get into this line of work is through indoctrination into an ideology. For some, it's in service to a nation. For others, it's their "this or that" supreme being. An even smaller subset has a personal ideal or code of honor they feel compelled to uphold. Regardless of what they've put their faith in, these killers are often zealots for their cause who believe in it strongly enough to put those who oppose it in the ground. They tend to be more motivated than those of us who are doing it for money and are unlikely to give up if the first attempt fails. Unlike most other assassins, these individuals don't seem to bat an eye at sacrificing their own lives to get the job done.

What makes these some of the most dangerous assassins out there is their unshakeable faith in their cause. They genuinely believe deep down that what they're doing is right.

- Pains me to say this, but Balladeer's not wrong here. While handling a protection detail in Morocco, my team managed to locate the assassin who was set to kill my charge. The man I was hired to protect was a corporate exec working on some urban redevelopment project. Not a religious man, nor had he made many waves in the corporate landscape. After two near misses, the company assigned us to his security detail. And when we learned of a new attempt, my team went to intercept. When confronted and ordered to stand down, the assassin went on a religious rant and activated his own area cortex bomb. When the contract was over, we investigated the assassin. Turns out he was a part of some cult that saw the area our client was looking to develop as sacred ground. Sacred enough to die for. That piece of land is now a mall, so I'm guessing the assassination campaign failed.
- OrkCEO

These organizations work in similar ways to lone wolves in the field, but they typically have a larger entity backing them up. While some may have connections directly back to those they protect, others are far too nefarious to associate with and will financially establish themselves through private donors. Many of these orders also want you to know that it was their God, president, CEO, or whoever that orchestrated your demise and tend to prefer up-



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close-and-personal forms of death. Every job may be the assassin's last, and they're at peace with the idea that they will have served their purpose if they fail to elude the fallout.

They tend to prefer The Belarusian Fire Drill, The Vampire's Invitation, and The Honey-pot (pp. 48-79, *Smooth Operations*) as ploys to get close to the target so they can stick the knife in. If they do opt to pick them off at range, there will usually be some sort of signature to send the message. They've got the same sorts of flaws as the lone wolves, operating alone in the field, but they have a more extensive network they rely on to get information and more bolt holes to potentially employ in order to lay low. The main advantage lone wolves have that most faith-driven assassins don't is the freedom to choose their contracts. Lone wolves can avoid taking contracts that they feel might be beyond their current skill or are simply a trap, while faith killers are almost always given their orders from someone higher up the food chain (a religious leader, the government, a division head, etc.). Someone who kills by an ideal will often obey someone closer to the top of the pyramid, even if they know the contract is likely to result in their death. They either believe that their organization's goals are worth dying for or that their efforts will be rewarded in the afterlife.

INCUBI/SUCCUBI

Whole organizations have arisen that train people in the arts of seduction, charisma, and deception. Many of these organizations are almost as old as recorded history. Some utilized the practice of being microdosed with poisons to develop an immunity to their chosen weapon.

Some legendary examples tell stories of elite entertainers who supplemented their refined arts training in music, poetry and conversation with covert instruction in anatomy, poisons and close-quarters combat. Concealed blades or poisoned needles might be hidden in their hairpins, instruments or garments. According to legend, they chose the moment of greatest trust to strike, leaving their target undone just as the final note fades.

Modern assassin schools use a blend of education and indoctrination. They use tried-and-true techniques, psychological tricks, and leverage modern cultural touchstones

to become the perfect match for their target. A graduate from one of these schools might style themselves like a model for the runway for one job, a shy office worker for the next, then cosplay their next target's favorite nerdy trid show character. It's all about matching their type and giving the target what they want to see. The main play here is the Honey-pot, but other tactics like The Vampire's Invitation, Vamping, and Gold Bricks (pp. 48-79, *Smooth Operations*) are also quite viable under this style of attack. It all falls under the umbrella of "How'd I get it so good?" right before darkness falls.

WE ARE LEGION

Some groups try to field as many assassins as possible, so their target is bound to fall into the net of one of their members. This method relies on quantity over quality when it comes to membership, which makes training new operatives to be a fast and cheap process. Even if caught, low-level minions won't know enough to be able to betray the organization.

Perhaps the most infamous of these sorts of organizations might be the Black Hand out of Serbia. The group was hundreds strong at its peak, operating in smaller cells to avoid getting caught. These cells demonstrate the problems caused by a lack of coordinated communication and. Anyone even passingly familiar with history knows what happened to Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Yeah, that was them. A deeper cut would be the Sacred Band of Thebes in ancient Greece. When the Spartans controlled southern Greece, an army of 150 men rose up to overthrow their Spartan oppressors, working in micro-cells of two operatives each. According to legend, these pairs were romantic partners who would fight all the more furiously alongside their lover. The decentralized nature of the resistance made wiping them all out nearly impossible.

It is likely noteworthy to the astute among you that these historical examples did not exactly end well for the organizations of old. Despite their efforts, when faced with a larger, more organized threat, they were ill-equipped to deal with what followed. However, the Awakening has changed the playing field. If you believe the rumors from a decade ago about a group of ritual sorcery deaths at the



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hands of the (boringly named) Group X, you no longer need to be close to the mark, provided you can acquire a ritual sample.

- ▶ Saw a story out of Atlanta a couple months ago regarding a strange case that sounds like it fits the bill. There were some kidnappings and murders, bad types of stuff. The Star caught the guy responsible, but they bungled the case, and he walked. A month later, he was performing as a stand-up comic (I'm sure it was a riveting set) and had a massive panic attack on stage. He apparently saw everyone in the audience replaced by his victims, all pointed at him accusingly. He ran out the back door and right into a knife ... about twenty times or so. The Star made a show of investigating and confirmed traces of magic. It's interesting that the assassins resorted to such mundane methods for the actual kill.
- ▶ Sunshine

As previously mentioned, skill level here can vary widely but tends to lean into the quantity-over-quality approach. This variance in skill often hinges on how many members

a group employs. When you have strength in numbers, each member doesn't need to be an elite assassin. Smaller cell sizes depend upon a greater level of competence from each member. There is typically a mix of tactics involved in this sort of attack. They'll often use the Belarusian Fire Drill to get people in the positions they need to be, a mix of phishing and tech support to acquire information on their target's routines so that they understand where they'll be and how they'll behave and then either Vamping (appearing as someone who can help them escape) or a Melon Drop (to deliver the final blow) to finally drop the target. While this might feel overly complex, each step is executed by the one organizing the effort, with the individual players only really being aware of their own role.

THE RETALIATOR

This last type is the most dangerous out there: the kind of assassin that decides in a moment of passion that another must die. This



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group consists of parents who cannot get over the wrongful death of a child, grieving spouses who lost their partner to a random act of violence, and the religious zealot whose faith was brutally challenged and has nothing left to lose. These people have left rational thought in the rearview mirror, and all that remains is “the mission.” This unpredictability is why this group is so dangerous: it could be anyone who simply had a really bad day.

This sort of killer has been immortalized in fiction for generations, sometimes portrayed as the unhinged villain and other times as the sympathetic every-man; often the truth is somewhere in the middle. Some are dealing with real tragedy and have exhausted the societally accepted methods for pursuing justice. Others act out of unhealthy attachment. Rather than working through those issues, they decided that forcibly removing those who offended them would rebalance the scales.

There is no easy way to outline the tactics used. No singular MO or skill set required for this sort of killer. Some will walk straight into a Kong-Walmart and put a bullet in a man’s brain in full view of the public and cameras if it sees their target destroyed. Rather than trying to anticipate what this type of killer might do, understanding where they might begin is more relevant to our line of work. When you take on a contract that involves killing another metahuman, look at those who surround them. If someone is always there at every turn, and they even find ways to inject themselves into the target’s life when they’re not supposed

to be there, then they are likely a variable you’re going to be mindful of. I’m not advocating scrubbing them out as well (wiping out additional targets is never the answer, as it generates more questions). But being mindful of that person’s activities prevents complications during the actual job. In addition, while many assassins like to close the book on a job the moment the target’s death is confirmed, it is worth that additional piece of mind to periodically look back on that loose end to ensure they haven’t become a problem. People with a vendetta will be more dogged in their search for clues than most investigators. To them, nothing else matters. If one of these people has picked up even the remotest whiff of your scent, they can pop up again at the worst possible moment. My preference is to throw out false trails or assign a patsy in the worst case. For the fiercest of vengeance assassins, death is truly the only thing that will stop them.

While you might encounter these assassins on the job, I won’t assume anyone here is among them. But it’s worth pointing out that some of these people have contacts and cred to hire someone else to do it for them. If you’re hired by such an employer, make sure to set up multiple layers of insurance. They tend to be unpredictable, and don’t give a frag about their reputation in the biz. In my experience, many of them either try to stiff you or treat you as a loose end they need to eliminate. Amateur Johnsons are the worst, and these people are the worst among even those.



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GAME INFORMATION

An assassin is only as good as their tools. Anyone with a gun can kill a person, but the right piece of specialized kit can elevate someone to the point where they might actually manage to avoid purchasing agricultural real estate. Whether it's a particular weapon, spell, or a mindset, every professional needs their tools.

POSITIVE QUALITIES

COOL UNDER PRESSURE

You're a tough nut to crack; even under fire, you tend to keep your cool.

Cost: 4 Karma/level (max level 4)

Game Effect: You gain one extra die per level on Composure tests and tests to resist

intimidation. This does not apply on tests to resist spells or critter powers that cause fear.

DEVELOPED IMMUNITY

Through conditioning or a quirk of genetics, you are completely immune to one toxin or pathogen.

Cost: 15 Karma

Game Effect: You are completely immune to one toxin or pathogen that must be defined when taking this quality. Pathogen immunity may only be taken at character creation. This quality may not provide immunity to HM-HVV, CFD, and most other awakened pathogens and nanotechnology. You may only purchase toxin immunity after character creation if you go through the potentially lethal process of developing that immunity (see below).

DEVELOPING IMMUNITY

For assassins who favor or primarily use poisons, developing an immunity to such is critical to avoid inadvertently becoming a victim of them. Even for those who prefer other methods, exposure to toxins can be an occupational hazard. Perhaps you've domesticated a deathrattle or managed to slot off a rival who dips their blades in black mamba venom. If you wish to develop immunity to a toxin, there is a process that must be carefully followed.

The immunity threshold for any poison is half the power of the specified toxin (round up). To gain Immunity, you will require a number of doses equal to the toxin's immunity threshold. If you lack the Biotech skill, you'd better have a trustworthy and competent contact who can prepare the micro-doses for you in the proper amounts. Once you begin this painstaking process, you must complete the entire regimen with no interruptions. The precise timing and dosage amounts vary from one toxin to another.

To begin the process, take the first micro-dose. Preparing the micro-doses requires a Biotech skill test using the toxin's immunity threshold as the test's threshold. If this test fails, you suffer the full effects of a dose from that toxin and the purchased supplies are wasted. You may hire an appropriate contact to prepare the doses for you, as long as the toxin's immunity threshold does not exceed their Connection rating. This usually costs Connection rating x 100 nuyen.

Assuming the micro-doses are prepared correctly, you take a number of physical and stun boxes of damage equal to the immunity threshold which cannot be healed normally. This damage kicks in 1d6 minutes after taking the first dose and persists across each game session. Remove one of these damage boxes from each condition monitor (Physical and Stun) at the end of each session. Once the last box of damage is gone, you may acquire the Developed Immunity quality for 15 Karma (not doubled). If you wish to abort this process, you may take a dose of antivenin. This heals all of the special damage boxes but spoils the effort to develop immunity. You can try again, but you'll have to get a new batch of micro-doses and start all over again.

Example: Aishu wants to develop immunity to deathrattle venom which has power 6 and immunity threshold 3. She's got a solid Biotech skill (with a dice pool of 12), so she prepares the micro-doses with a Biotech (3) test and succeeds (she just buys the hits to avoid any chance of failure since she has enough dice). The effects apply immediately, and she begins the next session with three boxes of Physical and Stun damage filled. At the end of that session, she removes one of those boxes from her Physical and Stun condition monitors. In the next session she begins with those two boxes filled, but she's already a bit more functional. Assuming she sticks to the plan, she'll only have one more session left to go (with only one damage box in each condition monitor). At the end of the third session, the last of the damage is removed. Aishu spends 15 Karma, and she'll never have to worry about deathrattle venom again.



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FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

When serving a higher purpose, you can push your way through hardship to see the job done. Working against those same principles undermines your sense of self, however.

Cost: 6 Karma

Game Effect: Work with the gamemaster to define a clear ideal or guiding principle. As long as you are acting directly in service to your ideal or principle, ignore one die of wound penalties (-1D6 becomes no penalty, -2D6 becomes -1D6 etc.). However, if you act in opposition to your guiding principle, make a Willpower + Charisma (3) test. If the actions are dramatically opposed to your ideals, the GM may increase the threshold. You may not gain or spend Edge on the Composure test. If you fail the Composure test, you lose all of your current available Edge and can't gain or spend Edge until you take an action that aligns with your ideals.

There is considerable potential for disagreements between players and GMs over what constitutes an action that is in opposition. While this is ultimately up to the GM's discretion, the player's agency and intentions should be the primary consideration.

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

COLD DETACHMENT

Whether by training, natural inclination, or Essence loss, you have developed a certain cold detachment from your fellow metahumans. As a result, you find little value in attempting to empathize with them.

Bonus: 8 Karma

Game Effect: You may not gain or spend Edge on Influence (Etiquette) and Influence (Negotiation) tests. Whenever you make a Judge Intentions test, the subject or target of your test gains a point of Edge (PCs do not gain Edge from this).

QUALITY PATHS

QUALITY PATH: PART OF THE FAMILY

You have been trained as a killer, part of an elite secret society. They controlled how you were raised and continue to play a significant role in the jobs you take. Your tenure within a particular society may open doors but can also bring with it unwanted complications.

PART OF THE FAMILY:

INITIATE

You are still a member-in-training and only trusted with need-to-know details. You are not tasked with full contracts yet but instead aid in setting up for the work of more seasoned members of the order. While these tasks may feel menial, this is a chance to prove that you have what it takes to be a member.

You are expected to carry on tasks on behalf of the organization, usually in assistance to a senior operative that is carrying out a mission. These are usually not dangerous, but rather represent onerous, tiring, and only mildly hazardous tasks: delivering goods to a specific location for a specific time, creating an online rumor, sending a spirit to disrupt a gathering, or even directly intervening with a target.

Bonus: 5 Karma

Game Effect:

Whenever you have available time in between your runs, you are expected to be available to help other more senior agents of the order. Any time you have downtime available, you must choose whether to take on these tasks or refuse them. Every time you take on a task, it leaves you distracted and exhausted. You begin the next session with 1d6 fewer available points of Edge in your pool.

Keep track of how many times you choose to take on these tasks. Once you have taken on the tasks a number of times equal to the order's Connection rating, you are eligible to move to the next step (see Part of the Family: Graduate, below).

However, you must also keep track of how many times you choose to refuse to take on the required tasks. If you refuse a number of times equal to the order's Connection rating,



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gain the Part of the Family: Deserted quality (see below) which makes you a target instead of a member.

PART OF THE FAMILY:

GRADUATE

After proving yourself to the organization, the society has seen fit to promote you to the role of graduate. At this stage, you are permitted to take on low-level contracts and are more closely involved in the organization's agenda. The resources of the order are at your disposal.

Cost: 7 Karma

Game Effect: You gain a group contact that reflects the organization (max Loyalty 3) which gives you access to the group's armory as well as training facilities. You can usually borrow gear with an Availability no greater than the organization's Connection rating, though you are expected to return any borrowed gear in good working order or replace it. You are always considered to have access to instruction when improving your skills. And you can purchase ammunition, drugs, and toxins from the organization at a discount (Loyalty x 5% off, max Availability = Connection rating).

PART OF THE FAMILY:

OPERATIVE

You've proven yourself to be a loyal and competent member of the school and are elevated to full membership. No more schlepping soykaf for other assassins: you get to order the initiates around now!

Cost: 8 Karma

Game Effect: In order to take this quality, you must improve your Loyalty rating with the organization to 3 and take on a special job

which requires assassinating a target. If you wish to play this out with your GM and fellow players, your GM will run a difficult mission for you that requires some wetwork. If your group would rather not play this out, resolve the mission during downtime. In this case you may not spend any Karma on character advancement during that downtime period. You will begin the next session with zero available Edge (though you may gain Edge during the session as normal) and your Physical condition monitor filled up halfway with damage that can't be recovered with the Heal spell, first aid, or a medkit (we'll assume it was worse, and you already did what you could). This represents the effort and hardship you faced carrying out the assassination. Additionally, your personal Heat goes up by 2d6.

Once you have acquired this quality, your group contact no longer has a Loyalty rating limitation. In addition to the training and gear resources of the order, you are granted access to safehouses and the order's extended network of contacts. Provided you are in an area where the organization has a safehouse (GM's discretion), you have access to a safehouse when needed. These safehouses are generally secure, well-hidden, stocked with food, ammunition, medical supplies, and spare weapons. There's no hard limit on how long you can stay there, but don't abuse this for free rent unless you want to get on the bad side of your colleagues (who are all members of an order of assassins).

As long as you are able to make contact, you can acquire fake SIDs and licenses at a Loyalty x 5% discount and on short notice: less than one hour for rating 3 or less, 24 hours for ratings 4-6, one week for rating 7+.

Additionally, you can call an initiate once per session. The newbie will perform any tasks

IDEAS FOR CREATING AN ASSASSINS' SCHOOL

There are two parts to designing an assassin school.

First, define the size and scale of the group using the group contact rules in the *Sixth World Companion* (pp. 175-176). Second, develop the organization's backstory and lore. How long has the group existed? Why were they formed? Who are their allies, rivals, and enemies? Most groups were created to fulfill a specific purpose such as eliminating a faction's enemies or to clear a path for their faith to gain dominance. The organization likely takes contracts outside of this mandate to pay the bills, but this core will never be violated. Assassin organizations require secrecy, so how does this organization keep its secrets? Do they have a legitimate front for their facilities, or exist in the world's underbelly, outside of the perception of most? Serving an organization like this is a great way to generate plot hooks for the team to undertake. If you make the school as detailed as you can, your story will be richer for it.



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you ask of them (within reason), but if they are killed or severely harmed while carrying out your orders your Loyalty rating with the group is immediately reduced to 2 and you may not call another initiate until you pay a 10,000 nuyen penalty.

PART OF THE FAMILY:

RETIRED

With a lucrative career behind them, you managed to negotiate your release from your obligation from the order and now are free to carry on with your life. In order to maintain this status, you must never reveal information about the organization.

Bonus: 4 Karma

Game Effect: You left the organization on good terms, having sworn an oath of secrecy. Maintain the group contact, though your Loyalty rating can no longer be increased. You also lose access to the gear and services that are available to an active member of the order (including discounts). You may use the group contact as a resource, but reciprocity is expected (you pay full price and can't just borrow gear anymore). If you ever break your vow of secrecy, this quality is replaced with Part of the Family: Deserted.

PART OF THE FAMILY:

DESERTED

Whether by shirking your duty, breaking a vow or the strictures of the organization, you are now branded an enemy of the organization.

Game Effect: You have been marked as a danger to the organization. Deserted replaces all other qualities in this quality path. Not only do you lose access to your group contact and all related benefits, but the organization also most likely intends to see you dead. You must take either the Bounty or Hunted II Quality (pp. 136-137, *Sixth World Companion*) and gain 5 Heat immediately.

LIFE MODULES

ASSASSIN/HITMAN

You worked as a killer for hire. Whether it was for a higher purpose, personal vendettas or a grisly way to make ends meet, you have a few kills under your belt. Your skills expanded and your soul grew a little colder as a result.

- **Choose one:** +1 to any Mental Attribute
- **Choose one:** +1 to any Physical Attribute
- **Choose one:** +1 to Edge, Con, Athletics, Stealth or Outdoors
- **Choose one:** One weapon Specialization from Athletics, Close Combat or Firearms
- **Resources:** +25,000 nuyen
- **Contact Points:** 2
- **Contact Types:** Corporate, Criminal, Street
- **Knowledge Skill (choose one):** [Area] Knowledge, Forensics, Security Systems, Small Unit Tactics, or a level in any language.

TRAINING CAMP

In your younger years, you were trained to be an operative by an organization. Whether it was as a soldier of fortune, specialized assassin or deep cover spy, the lessons you learned have stuck ever since.

- **Choose one:** +1 to any Body, Agility or Strength
- **Choose one:** +1 to any Willpower, Charisma or Intuition
- **Choose one:** +2 to Firearms, Close Combat or Con
- **Choose one:** +1 to Firearms, Close Combat or Con
- **Knowledge Skill (choose up to two):** Academic Knowledge Skills, Security Knowledge Skills, Seduction, or a level in any language.



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EVENT:

HIGH PROFILE HIT WENT WRONG

You'd been tasked with taking out an influential target, but unforeseen complications caused the job to go sideways and there was significant blowback. You've had to adapt quickly in order to stay alive.

- **Choose one:** +1 to any Attribute
- **Choose one:** +1 to three different Skills
- **Contact Points:** 4
- **Knowledge Skill (choose two):** Border Laws, Disguise Techniques, Police Procedures, Safehouses, Smuggling Routes, or a level in any language.

You gain one of Bounty or Hunted II negative Qualities to reflect that there are those that are still hunting you down for your misdeeds. You may also take a positive quality that reflects how you managed to stay one step ahead of your foes.

EVENT:

BRUSH WITH DEATH

You really managed to piss someone off, chummer. Someone took a crack at you and the assassination attempt was very nearly successful. If it weren't for the quick reactions of a friend, you wouldn't be standing here today. You've got some scars that will never let you forget.

- **Choose one:** +1 to any Body, Strength or Willpower
- **Choose one:** +1 to Edge
- **Resources:** +50,000 nuyen to be spent on augmentations you acquired because of the attempt on your life
- **Contact Points:** 4

You gain one quality, positive or negative, that arose from your brush with your own mortality.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Sometimes, all a character needs is one particular piece of equipment to set them apart. Here are a few specialized tools that may be the last piece one might need to see a job completed. Some of these might be hard to find but knowing these are out there can hopefully prevent death by ignorance.

CERAMIC/PLASTEEL KNIFE

Lightweight and nonmetallic, these knives have long been favored by divers, who don't want their knives corroding from use in salt-water. More recently, these knives have also become a favorite of assassins and mercenaries who need a weapon that can pass undetected through an MAD. Manufactured knives are almost universally made of ceramic, but needy weaponsmiths have crafted knives from plasteel in a pinch.

CERAMIC OR PLASTEEL KNIFE

TYPE	DV	ATTACK RATINGS	AVAIL	COST
Blade	3P	7/1*/-/-/-	2	100¥

Standard Bonus: Weapon is invisible to MAD scanners. *The second AR is for when the weapon is thrown. Max range is 20m.

MORTIMER OF LONDON WEAPON CANES

As part of their personal protection series, Mortimer of London invites you to enter high society with confidence with their line of weapon canes: the Belgrade Sword Cane and the Trafalgar Gun Cane. Touted as "lethal additions to your evening attire," these are typically weapons of last resort. All the same, in the hands of someone who knows what they're doing, this can be the most straightforward way to bring a weapon into a high society function where a mark is hiding out.

Standard Bonus (Belgrade): The Belgrade provides +2 to Social Rating as an accessory. Even when the sword is drawn, the scabbard also functions as a sturdy club that can be used in a pinch. The release mechanism is concealed in the cane's grip and any Perception test to no-



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tice the concealed weapon has a threshold of 4.

Standard Bonus (Trafalgar): The Trafalgar cane provides +2 to Social Rating as an accessory. The trigger mechanism is concealed in the cane's grip and any Perception test to notice the concealed weapon has a threshold of 4.

MORTIMER OF LONDON WEAPON CANES

NAME	TYPE	DV	ATTACK RATINGS	AVAIL	COST
Belgrade Sword Cane	Blade	3P	9/-/-/-/-	1B	450¥
Sword Cane Scabbard	Club	2S	6/-/-/-/-	N/A	N/A
Trafalgar Gun Cane	Rifle	SS/5P	10/9/-/-/-	1B	750¥

TIFFANI ELEGANCE DART BRACELET

Yet another product for people who don't feel truly safe unless they are armed in some manner. The original product was created by the designer Tiffani, but recently others have taken a crack at the market. Most are shoddy knockoffs, though with the recent resurgence of Narcoject, they have come up with their own version of this concealed weapon.

Standard Bonus: The Tiffani Elegance adds +2 to Social Rating when worn as an accessory and has a Concealability Threshold of 3 that cannot be modified.

TIFFANI ELEGANCE DART BRACELET

TYPE	MODE	DV	ATTACK RATINGS	AMMO	AVAIL	COST
Light Pistol	SS	3P	9/7/-/-/-	1 barrel	6L	1,000¥



TIFFANI BRINGS ELEGANCE TO PERSONAL DEFENSE

TIFFANI STINGER DART BRACELET

Meant to be less-than-lethal, the stinger utilizes Narcoject darts instead of standard ammunition. This version has been gaining popularity among undercover and plainclothes officers as well as security and intelligence agents.

Standard Bonus: The Stinger has a Concealability Threshold of 3 and cannot be modified.

TIFFANI STINGER DART BRACELET

TYPE	MODE	DV	ATTACK RATINGS	AMMO	AVAIL	COST
Dart Pistol	SS	As drug	10/6/-/-/-	1 barrel	4L	400¥ + drug

CERAMIC/PLASTEEL COMPONENTS

There are several aftermarket methods to machine replacement firearm parts from ceramic or plasteel and the updating of a gun with these is a popular practice in mercenary circles. By removing the metal components, the guns get to be much harder to detect when passing through metal detectors.

Note: The addition of Ceramic/Plasteel parts increases the Concealability of the weapon from MAD scanners. Every Rating of the Components reduces the dice the scanner gets by 1. Since this modification is designed to remove metallic components, weapons with this modification are not compatible with electronic modifications, as that would defeat the purpose.

CERAMIC/PLASTEEL COMPONENTS

RATING	AVAIL	COST
1-6	6L	Rating x Weapon Cost

MYSTIC TRICKS

Magic has become a popular tool among assassin orders, as it adds a certain degree of personal flair and unexpectedness to the business. There is no shortage of new interpretations of magic to make things more interesting, but here is a small number of the new ideas out there.



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ADEPT POWERS

ADEPT ACCIDENT

Cost: 0.5 PP

Activation: Minor Action

With a touch, an adept can disrupt the regular flow of mana in a person and cause accidents to occur, similar to the critter power of Accident. After successfully contacting a target, within (Magic) minutes of the contact, the adept can roll Magic + Willpower vs. the target's Reaction + Intuition. If the adept has net hits, the target suffers an immediate Glitch. If there are 4 or more net hits, the target suffers a Critical Glitch with catastrophic results. The adept must resist Drain equal to their hits (not net hits) using Body + Willpower.

ARCHER'S FOCUS

Cost: 0.5 PP

Activation: Passive

The character has enhanced their mastery of projectiles and can now channel their focus into each shot they take for greater effect. When they use a minor action to Take Aim with a projectile weapon, add the Magic attribute to the bow's Attack Rating. This benefit can only be applied once for each attack.

PRECISE THROW

Cost: 0.25 PP per level

Activation: Passive

The adept can throw objects further and with greater accuracy and precision than they realistically should. For every level of this power, increase their AR by 1. On thrown weapons with scatter, add the number of levels as net hits for determining scatter reduction.

SPELLS

CONCEAL SCENT

It's like invisibility for body odor! This spell conceals any source of scent coming from the target, whether this is from poor hygiene, tailored pheromones or chemical objects. This is handy for hunters who don't want prey picking up their scent, or for fooling olfactory sensors, as this works on both natural and artificial

senses. Note that most chem-sniffers designed to detect toxins, propellant (gunpowder), and explosives are unable to detect substances covered by this spell.

CONCEAL SCENT

TYPE	RANGE	DV	DURATION	DRAIN
Illusion	LOS	P	S	4

REPTILE BLOOD

This subtle spell subtly modifies the target's metabolism to make them appear cold-blooded and match their body temperature to the current ambient temperature. This effectively makes the target invisible to thermal and infrared sensors for a short time. If other senses are also at play a Stealth test might still be necessary, in which case the target gains a point of Edge that must be used on the Stealth test or is lost. The magic causes an immediate effect that begins to fade over time, unlike an invisibility spell which must be sustained. The effect lasts for one minute per net hit and can only be detected in the moment the spell is cast. Once in place, the only trace left behind is the astral signature, and it is advisable that you take a moment to clear that up so there are no traces at all.

REPTILE BLOOD

TYPE	RANGE	DV	DURATION	DRAIN
Health	Touch	P	Special (1 minute/net hit)	4

GADGETS AND GIZMOS

Sometimes having that ace in the hole can give a runner the edge they need.

MITSUHAMA AKIYAMA

This mil-spec drone has been around for a decade now but is still not very common in the shadows. MCT only makes a handful of these things every year, and when they do manufacture one, they have a deployment in mind. The Akiyama is the size and silhouette of a human child (around 1m tall), but that's where



DEALERS OF DEATH

MITSUHAMA AKIYAMA

SIZE	HAND	ACC	SPD INT	TOP SPD	BOD	ARM	PIL	SENS	SEAT	AVAIL	COST
Medium Anthro	2	10	15	30	4	6	3	3	—	91	225,500¥

Standard Upgrades: Chameleon coating II, enhanced gecko tips (unique proprietary design), integrated cyberarm (2)

the similarity ends. Covered in Ruthenium and gecko tips, this thing is an infiltration drone that can wield metahuman weapons. Its arms are effectively equivalent to cyberarms with Strength 4 and 8 Capacity for cyberarm mods. The enhanced gecko grips allow it to climb with no reduction in speed, and their proprietary design allows them to function even on wet surfaces.

TOXIC TOOLS

One of the most common tools for removing a meddlesome target from this mortal coil for all of recorded history would be poisons. Whether it is a slow drip that degrades a person's health over months or something so violently toxic that they keel over in mere moments, poisons can be the great equalizer. A scrawny human can lay low an enormous troll with the right application of toxins. Here is a small list of the poisons that are out there that may give you the edge you need. All these toxins can be difficult to get, unless you have the right connections to acquire them. If the GM deems it appropriate, these can be more readily accessible from a relevant assassin contact, or someone who might realistically have access to the animals in question (parazoologist or toxicologist, for example).

PLANT-DERIVED TOXINS

There are a series of compounds that can raise hell on the metahuman anatomy that are derived from plant sources. These can be extracted and distilled to create poisons that can be used against people for a variety of effects. Many of these poisons can make a target sick with little chance of anything worse unless they have an allergy. Cultivating these poisons can be done using Biotech + Logic with access to hydroponics or a greenhouse, though the process takes time to cultivate (weeks for belladonna or months to years for plants like wolfsbane). Growing plants like poison ivy can be harvested

for their oils to create skin irritants, while other common plants like daffodils can be distilled down to cause stomach irritants.

ACONITE

- **Vector:** Ingestion, Injection
- **Speed:** 1 Combat Round
- **Duration:** 1 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 6
- **Effect:** Poisoned (1), Physical Damage, Nauseated

Aconite is a compound derived from the wolfsbane plant and others in its genus of plants. This alkaloid substance acts as a paralytic of nerve and muscle tissue. This can cause lethargy and nausea and, in high enough doses, can cause the heart to fall into arrhythmia. While micro doses can stop symptoms of asthma, neuralgia, or lower the heart rate, the dosage must be highly monitored. A shapeshifted metahuman or shifter exposed to aconite must make a Willpower + Magic test with a threshold equal to the Power or be forced back to their native form until the toxin is no longer in their system.

ATROPINE

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** Immediate
- **Duration:** 2 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 8
- **Effect:** Poisoned (2), Physical Damage, Confused 2

Atropine is an extract from the plants of the deadly nightshade family, or belladonna. The flowers and berries of this plant are quite sweet and easy to hide in pastries, though are not as potent in this form. When provided in a concentrated dose, it causes the heart rate



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to drop, which can cause disorientation and confusion. A heavy dose can trigger seizures, hallucinations, and heart attacks. Some med-kits may carry micro-doses of atropine, as the effect from a small dose can help offset the effects of other poisons, like those found in poisonous mushrooms and some nerve agents.

MYOTOXINS

Myotoxins are a type of natural toxin found in the venom of many snakes worldwide. These compounds attack the skeletomuscular system, disintegrating tissue and preventing potential prey from getting far. The damage these toxins do is often localized and destructive, causing painful nerve damage or even liquifying muscle tissue. This can even cause necrotic damage at the point of injection. Should an assassin wish to raise their own snakes for harvesting venom, use the rules in *Wild Life* (pp. 177-179, *Wild Life*) to tame and train the critter.

BLACK MAMBA VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** Immediate
- **Duration:** 4 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 9
- **Effect:** Poisoned (4), Physical Damage, Confused 3

Black Mamba is a species of snake from sub-Saharan Africa with one of the most lethal mundane venoms. The blend of toxins in mamba venom makes the venom exceptionally fast-acting and reactive. Due to it dilating arte-

rial walls and attacking cardiovascular muscle tissue, it can kill a metahuman in as little as twenty minutes. Because of its extreme potency, it's become an extremely valuable commodity on the black and gray markets. Demand has also caused a notable decrease in black mamba populations, making it increasingly difficult and expensive to procure.

DEATHRATTLE VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** 1 Combat Round
- **Duration:** 3 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 7
- **Effect:** Poisoned (3), Physical Damage, Dazed

Deathrattles are an Awakened cousin of the American rattlesnake. The venom causes rapid-onset necrosis at the point of entry, designed to cripple and pre-digest prey, but can spread throughout the body and liquify muscle tissue if not treated with anti-venom. While not the most powerful venom out there, the harvesting of the venom by Pueblo shamans makes it more readily available than others.

DOG ASP VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** 1 minute
- **Duration:** 4 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 8
- **Effect:** Poisoned (4), Physical Damage





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Dog Asps are an Awakened variant of the European Asp native to Western European mountains. Named for its strange ability to emit a sound like a barking dog, the venom of these snakes is one of the most potent necrotic venoms in the world. The venom immediately begins to rot tissue at the injection site and spreads rapidly, inflicting widespread devastation to all skin and muscles around it. Most chance encounters with the Dog Asp where a person was envenomed typically loses whatever limb was bitten.

AWAKENED TOXINS

There are a few new nasty tricks out there in the world because of the Awakening. Some intrepid bastards have found ways of risking life and limb to collect these painful ways to die for use in the corporate wasteland. Here is a small sample of the most interesting finds from the Awakened fauna out there.

NAGA VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** Immediate
- **Duration:** (Magic) Combat Rounds
- **Power:** (Magic)
- **Effect:** Poisoned (Magic), Physical Damage

Naga Venom has a sizable black market associated with it, as Naga have learned that the venom is quite valued in the shadows. While the venom can be traced back to the individual in nations where Naga are registered citizens, SIN-less Naga can fetch a decent price selling their venom to would-be assassins. The strength of the venom is tied to how potent the Magic attribute of the donor is, so powerful Naga sorcerers can demand a high premium for their poison.

NOVA SCORPION VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** 1 hour
- **Duration:** 4 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 12
- **Effect:** Poisoned (4), Physical Damage, Dazed

The Nova Scorpion is an Awakened variant of the Indian Red Scorpion and is perhaps one

of the most known new creatures of the Awakening. These scorpions are a meter long and are known as strike-and-wait hunters. The venom has been distilled to make the sold version nastier on initial infliction, but the antivenin is just as effective against the strengthened version. The slower onset of this venom is one of the sought-after features of this nasty compound.

VOID WASP VENOM

- **Vector:** Injection
- **Speed:** 1 Combat Round
- **Duration:** 6 Combat Rounds
- **Power:** 10
- **Effect:** Poisoned (6), Physical Damage, Dazed, Hazed. In addition to losing the ability to astrally project, the target becomes magically inert, rendering them unable to cast or even have magic applied to them. The application of epinephrine can reduce the Poisoned status by 4.

Void Wasps are a nasty little evolution from the Az-Am War that has turned the jungles of the northern Amazon into a treacherous landscape, especially for the Awakened in society. These little buggers, with their armored hives and the ability to erase the manasphere, have drawn the attention of assassins who struggle against mages. Some brave souls have taken the time to extract the venom of these things. The toxin is not only extremely painful and disorienting but has the added side effect of disrupting mana flow through the target, making the casting magic or the use of health spells almost impossible. There is no antivenom for this, but the usual treatment of epinephrine can help flush the toxin from their system. Even if the venom is flushed, the mana disruption lingers for the full duration.

TABLE OF POISONS

TOXIN	AVAIL	COST
Aconite	6I	200¥
Atropine	6I	150¥
Black Mamba	8I	2000¥
Deathrattle	6I	400¥
Dog Asp	8I	350¥
Naga Venom	(Magic)I	Magic*100¥
Nova Scorpion Venom	7I	600¥
Void Wasp Venom	8I	1200¥