

# THE CITY H'PAKHT

## A SCENARIO FOR TRIBE 8

By Luke Walker

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### INTRODUCTION

This is a scenario for Tribe 8, a game by Dream Pod 9. It is based upon plot hooks presented in the Tribe 8 sourcebooks *Horrors of the Z'Bri* and the *Tribe 8 Companion*.

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The scenario is designed for 6 players and should last about 3 hours in length including a brief introduction to the setting and rules of Tribe 8.

If you have no experience with running Tribe 8 before, you should read over the history summary and characters beforehand. In brief, the setting is dark, religious, apocalyptic fantasy. Imagine the world of *Braveheart* set in the twisted future of *Terminator* (with fleshy, spiritual horrors rather than mechanical ones) with a twist of the *Dark Crystal*'s mysticism and design.

The expected time for each Act is roughly:

Introduction – 15 minutes

Act One – 25 minutes

Act Two – 50 minutes

Act Three – 50 minutes

Act Four - 40 minutes

The main theme in this scenario is unity and the loss of identity that may arise from it. A number of the NPCs represent this unity in an alien physical manner in that their minds are not always separate entities and are not necessarily attached to the same body. This makes identifying them difficult. To reduce the identification problem, this scenario will consistently refer to the relevant NPCs mind and not their body. The names used will be City H'Pakht, Divd, Getwn and the hive mind, for the numerous merged minds assimilated by the City H'Pakht.

The GM will be referred to as “you” and the characters as a group “the Circle.”

### Summary

The scenario begins when the characters are called by the Grand Council to form a Quest Circle. The Quest Circle is to travel to Talon Nexus and investigate the outpost's loss of contact.

The cause of the lost contact is a struggle between three groups. The City H'Pakht (a Z'Bri), the hive mind, and Divd and Getwn, a couple in true love. The City H'Pakht swapped his body with those of Divd and Getwn and fled to Talon Nexus. Divd, Getwn and the hive mind

now all occupy the City's former body and give chase struggling to gain ultimate control over the body. Upon arriving at Talon Nexus, the hive mind gains temporary control and assimilates the entire population into its body. Divd and Getwn regain control and are now desperate to find their bodies before they lose their identities in the hive mind. The hive mind wants revenge on the City and to assimilate further minds. The City wants to get away and start a fresh.

The awesome power of the thousands of minds in the hive mind cause massive ripples in the River of Dreams resulting in reflections of past events manifesting physically. These reflections also form a call to the Circle within which the players can look for the solutions to the conflict. There is no one solution for this scenario.

## Setting Up

### 1. Character Allocation

Hand out the character sheets to the players. This includes a brief history of the setting that the players should read. Answer any questions the players have arising from their character sheets. If you have access to Tribe 8 books, page references to pictures that could be shown to the players to assist in illustrating the characters have been provided in the blank upper right hand corner of each character sheet (HT = Harvest of Thorns, VS = Vimary Sourcebook, WF = Word of the Fates).

It is recommended that: *Valerie and Evangel* are given to two friends; *Seamus and Shayla* are given to the strong role-players; *Marcus* works well with those who enjoy combat or military orientated characters; *Pox* can be given to anyone but works best with someone who can make others laugh.

You should read over the character sheets. The characters all have motivations that will be influential in later scenes. Shayla, Seamus and Marcus all believe in three kinds of unity, all of which are different and flawed when taken to extremes. Seamus' tolerant outlook on the Z'Bri will be a source of tension with the other Circle members and Shayla's fanaticism will contrast this outlook. The two Joanite twins demonstrate unifying behaviour natural of twins. The Aspect of Sacrifice (taking each other's wounds on to themselves) will be alien to the players so fully describe any use of the Aspect to highlight the City's unity later in the scenario. Finally Pox is a wild card. He is the least effected by unity as he is governed by chaos. He plays an important role at the end of the scenario, which should present good roleplaying opportunities for his player.

You should also handout the Speaking Prompts to each of the players. Explain to the players that they need to read these at the start of the scenario. If during the scenario the player recognises a prompt then their character should immediately speak the line as instructed.

### 2. Rule Mechanics

All rolls involve rolling a number of dice and taking only the highest roll. An appropriate modifier (such as the most relevant attribute - ignore the 2d) is added to the result. Attribute and skill rolls have been already determined on the character sheets.

If the character does not have the relevant skill, roll two dice and take the lowest. If the result before modifiers is 1 then it's a fumble.

To determine success the roll is compared to a target which is either a difficulty number set by the Weaver (2-3 easy, 4-5 moderate, 6+ hard) or an opposed roll. Success occurs where the result is greater than or equal to the target. Where the grade of success or failure is important, as in combat and with Aspects, the amount by which the roll is over the target is

called the Margin of Success (MoS) and the amount the roll is under is called the Margin of Failure (MoF).

If no attribute or skill is provided for an NPC, improvise. Both default to 2d and simply add or subtract a modifier that in your judgement seems appropriate.

Combat Sense is used to determine initiative. Highest goes first and following turns continue to use the same order as the first. Combat is resolved as a contested roll. The character sheets detail the attack and defence rolls with modifiers already determined. Total damage equals the attacker's MoS multiplied by the weapon's damage. This total damage is then compared to the target's wound ratings to determine the type of wound caused. A total damage that exceeds the deep wound threshold results in instant death. Each type of wound causes a penalty (these are cumulative) to all rolls made by that the wounded person. When the cumulative penalty reaches the maximum stated the person dies by trauma. When fighting more than one opponent, impose a penalty of -1 per extra opponent (NB: the City H'Pakht has four attacks, each considered a separate opponent).

### *3. Synthesis*

Synthesis is Tribe 8's dream magic and is resolved in the same way as any other skill. A fumble results in the character being detached from their body and unable to perform any actions for a number of turns equal to the MoF. Synthesis comes in two forms: free form and Aspects.

Free form synthesis can achieve a wide range of results and will need liberal judgement by the Weaver. The result must be related to the character's Eminencies. For example, Fury can be used to leap across a chasm during combat but not during normal travel. If necessary ask the player to explain the relationship between what they wish their character to do and the Eminence. The player rolls their character's Synthesis rating modified by the most appropriate attribute modifier (ignore the 2d), i.e. Creativity would modify Illusion Synthesis or with the example above Fitness would be appropriate.

An Aspect is a synthesis ritual that has a specific result. Aspects are detailed on the character sheets. They do not use the Synthesis skill.

### **Background**

Heiypacht was one of the first Z'Bri to arrive in the World Before. He arrived and formed a cult around him. Heiypacht assimilated all the cult members so that their minds became one with his, though all the physical bodies remained controlled by this hive mind. The cult grew during humanity's final days until Heiypacht had assimilated the entire city.

The City H'Pakht's (as he became known) love of his city led to his downfall. After humanity was enslaved in the Camps, the other Z'Bri of his kind desired to join together to form a giant collective. The City H'Pakht refused and was punished by exile. His control over the hive mind was loosened allowing the thousands of other minds to seek revenge over him. A prisoner of his own mind the City H'Pakht fell into a torpor.

David and Gwen (Divd and Getwn) from the World Before are in true love with each other. The City H'Pakht assimilated them during humanity's fall but both possessed a strength arising from their love that allowed them to retain their identity. They both assisted in the capture of the City H'Pakht and, as Z'Bri serfs, were rewarded by the gift of a name and remembrance of past lives, despite the numerous reincarnation of their souls to come (a soul is a finite and valuable commodity to the Z'Bri).

Divd and Getwn recently made a desperate bid for freedom to escape to Tribal lands. They were chased and sought refuge unwittingly in the City H'Pakht's hiding hole. The contact of fresh strong minds awoke the City H'Pakht who seized the opportunity to transfer his mind with Divd's and Getwn's, allowing him to escape the hive mind by using the couple's bodies as a vessel.

The City H'Pakht fled south into Tribal lands to Talon Nexus. The City was chased by Divd, Getwn and the hive mind in the former hulking body of the City H'Pakht. Divd and Getwn having strong minds only freshly assimilated manage to control the former body of the City H'Pakht. However, the hive mind's desire for revenge against the City H'Pakht urges Divd and Getwn incessantly. Divd and Getwn are urgently seeking to recover their bodies before their identity and control is lost.

Divd, Getwn and the hive mind arrive at Talon Nexus. The hive mind's desire for fresh minds temporarily overwhelms Divd and Getwn. By the time Divd and Getwn regained control the entire population of Talon Nexus is assimilated.

Divd and Getwn continue to scour the tunnels hunting for their bodies. Their time is running short.

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## **ACT ONE: QUEST CIRCLE**

This Act introduces the scenario and explains the purpose of the Circle's formation. The first Scene is passive from the players' point of view. There is very little action until the second Scene to allow you to set up the Quest clearly in the players' minds. The second Scene portrays a sense of foreboding of something dark and strange awaiting the Circle.

This Act takes place in the Council Ruins, a large decrepit building from the World Before. The building is covered with Tribal banners, symbols and other displays in an attempt to hide the building's ruin and the atmosphere of a past heretical age.

The majority of the Act takes place in the sun dappled Grand Council chamber in the centre of the Council Ruins. The chamber is a large amphitheatre created from the inside of a large tower where the floors have collapsed. A large table sits at the bottom for the Grand Council. The evening sun streams in through many cracks and fissures in the tower. Noise travels upwards easily but is soon suppressed by large Tribal banners and the stone walls of the tower. The atmosphere is that of a large ruined cathedral.

There are seven Grand Councillors, one for each Tribe. Their identities generally are not important. Feel free to improvise if necessary. The Tera Sheban councillor is called Iris Medion. She is a young (28 year old) Lore Keeper. She has vast knowledge of Tribal ways and the World Before and is heavily burdened by many dark secrets.

### **Scene One – Grand Council**

The Circle is summoned before the Grand Council. The Weaver should have the players describe their characters at this point. The Circle enters into the Council chambers, which stands empty except for a number of Joanite guards. A Joanite on the upper floors sounds a large horn, which the characters know is called the Unity Horn. The Grand Councillors file in from the chambers many doors. The Horn's note continues to echo until the Council is seated at the table, obscured in shadows.

Iris stands in front of the table lit by a sunbeam. Iris looks up and speaks in a loud clear voice explaining:

1. The characters have been called to form a Quest Circle.
2. Quest Circles are formed by the Grand Council, as proxies of the Fatimas, to meet threats to tribal standards of living.
3. Upon appointment all prior obligations become secondary to the quest.

Iris uses emotive terms. She calls the Circle the “Most Beloved” and Fatimas “Sisters”. She talks of duty, the great import of their obligations and the blessing of being chosen to form a Quest Circle.

Iris then explains the following information. If the characters ask questions, allow them to and use this information for the Council’s answers. Feel free to have some of the more shadowy Councillors answer the questions if you wish to create a more conspiracy style atmosphere. Some of the characters will know the general information regarding Talon Nexus e.g. location and existence of tunnels. Pox has Discarded Lands Lore and will know even more detailed information e.g. population and the location of actual tunnels.

1. The Quest Circle has been formed to investigate the loss of contact with Talon Nexus.
2. Talon Nexus is a small trading outpost formed by two large intersecting tunnels from the World Before. A map of Talon Nexus is provided to the Circle.
3. It is a full day’s journey from the Bazaar up the Rift (a river trench formed by a collapsed tunnel from the World Before). A map of the Rift is provided to the Circle.
4. It lies close to Z’Bri and Keeper land. It lies south of the Seven Fingers, the Tribes’ northernmost Joanite defences.
5. Talon Nexus has a small population including Keepers and Fallen. It is mostly inhabited by Yagans.
6. No one has been seen leaving Talon Nexus in the last few days and anyone who has approached it has disappeared.
7. The Grand Council are sending the Quest Circle as a larger force may cause a panic. The Joanites are on alert in case the Z’Bri are planning an invasion and there are numerous patrols to pick up anyone leaving Talon Nexus. (NB: if the players continue to ask why they are sent, they are reminded that it is their Fatima’s will and they should take comfort in that).
8. The Circle will be given a boat for speedy travel up the Rift. They are to leave tomorrow morning. (NB: if they ask for more resources tell them to assume that they will have all normal items on them e.g. rope and torches).
9. The two main suspects are that the Fallen have taken control of the outpost or that the Z’Bri have managed to invade the outpost from the north through tunnels unknown to the Tribes.

## **Scene Two – Evil Portents**

When the characters have no more questions, Iris announces that the Circle should rest and prepare. She seals the Quest with the words:

“This Quest you are given,  
“In the name of the Seven Sisters,  
“In the name of the Council,  
“In the name of the Nation.”

As the echo of Iris’ proclamation dies, it is disrupted by a woman’s scream. A man enters the chamber carrying the struggling form of woman over his shoulder. He has strange clothing

including blue trousers and white shoes. The woman has a bag over her head and her hands are tied.

This should be entirely unexpected by everyone so it is a good idea to slow down the action to build tension. What follows is the re-enacted scene of Getwn's assimilation into the City H'Pakht which is a ripple in the River of Dreams caused by Divd and Getwn regaining control of the City H'Pakht's former body.

Before anyone can react, the woman slams her foot into the man's groin and he keels over with a grunt. The woman rips the bag from head and looks directly at the Circle. She runs to them, pleading with them to help her. Describe to the players the feel of her desperate hands and the stench of sweat. If the characters observe her closely, they will see she is unwell, starved and frantic.

The man picks himself up and walks towards her, pulling out a wicked looking knife. She cries that she can not die here, that she must get back to "him" who is waiting for her. The man smiles with a vicious grin and moves insubstantially through anyone in his way, grabbing the woman. He brings the knife down swiftly and she collapses with a gurgling cry. The man looks up and says softly "We are the City H'Pakht". Any player succeeding a Notice roll (diff 6) will see that with her last breathe the woman mouths the same phrase and starts to write "We are the City H'Pakht" in her own blood. The bodies fade away followed by the lingering echo of the man's final phrase.

The characters may try many things during this scene though very little will actually be effective. The chamber becomes a buzz of activity. Many of the Joanites have drawn weapons and the Councillors are swiftly led from the chamber.

Iris stays. She will say that this is another reason why this Quest is so important, though it was deemed best unmentioned. She will explain that there have been a number of reports of re-enacted scenes from the World Before. They are centred on Talon Nexus and are getting stronger. None of the visions have occurred this far south. She will say that this only adds further urgency to the existing plan, nothing more. She is not aware of the source of the re-enactments but it is believed that they are memories in the River of Dreams manifesting physically. Other visions include:

1. At midnight a street was bathed in a strange light and people enclosed in lighted carriages with no horses glided past.
2. An undulating multi-legged red and gold beast was seen dancing down a street for an appreciative audience of strange looking spectres.
3. An immense and imposing edifice appeared. From the soaring spires, bells rang out in joy as a man in red robes led a procession down the steps only to vanish on reaching the bottom.

Iris will answer any further questions as best she can but she is genuinely baffled. After all, it is the purpose of the Quest Circle to find the answers. The Act closes on the Circle sleeping that night and readying themselves for their journey.

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## **ACT TWO: THE RIFT**

This Act covers the Circle's journey from the Bazaar to Talon Nexus. The journey is fraught with danger. There are many strands that remain unresolved in this Act and are resolved in Act Three. To the Circle it seems that there is no sense to what is going on or that the reasons

lie just beyond comprehension. As a result, the Circle should start to feel disoriented and exhausted when they arrive at Talon Nexus. Scene One centres around a deadly combat. Scene Two keeps up the frantic pace as things spiral out of all control.

This Act takes place in the Rift (a map can be found in the Vimary Sourcebook). The Rift is a river trench formed from a collapsed tunnel of the World Before, a former underground subway tunnel (though no one but the Keepers will know this fact). It is open to the sky and cuts through the surrounding Discarded Lands like a scar. The Rift is deep and there are many platforms, cracks and tunnel openings (most are collapsed but still provide shelter) along its walls. The Rift provides quick river travel north from the Bazaar and it should take a day by boat to reach Talon Nexus. The Rift is infrequently patrolled by Joanites during the day and at night it is rumoured that Keepers use it as well as a number of unnamed underground inhabitants.

The Discarded Lands are barren lands to the north of Tribal Lands and the Bazaar. Its only occupants are Fallen, Squats, Keepers and Dahlian Caravans. There are many ruins of buildings from the World Before and the only vegetation is tangled scrub. Large flash fires are common.

If the Circle wish to disobey the edict of the Council and their Fatimas and to travel more slowly through the Discarded Lands then allow them to do so. The Circle should feel like they are committing a serious crime (as they almost are). If they persist, the following scenes can be easily altered to suit the Discarded Lands. The River Gek'roh is capable of travelling by land (though not under it as with the river) and can pull the Keeper through a wall of a building. A bus can replace the train in the dream sequence. The only difference is that the journey takes an extra day (though this time will be lost in the dream sequence). Also, if time permits, add in an extra event with the Circle meeting a Joanite patrol (to give weight to their disobedience) or a flash fire (to add to the danger of travelling in the Discarded Lands).

## **Scene One – River Runs Wild**

The Circle is provided with a boat called Luck's Fancy. The Fancy is a flat-bottomed barge that is designed with a high mast to catch the wind even in the depths of the Rift. There is hold large enough to stand stooped over. There is a small cabin for the captain, a tiller and a jumble of tarpaulins and crates on the deck.

The Fancy is captained by a Dahlian called Zeke. Zeke is an able captain but spends his time drinking and speaking. A consummate coward he will hide under some tarpaulins and refuse to come out until danger has passed. If forced to deal with danger, he will try to talk his way out of it, normally unsuccessfully.

The first half of the day goes past with just one event. A ghostly, silent, long metal carriage insubstantially slides past like a giant worm. Inside people can be seen staring blankly out through small holes.

The journey continues. The quiet of the Rift is unnerving (only broken by Zeke's incessant chatter) and its high walls are imposing. Ask the players to make a Notice roll. The one with highest result hears a splash from behind the boat. If Zeke is asked about this he assumes it is just debris falling from the walls into the river.

Immediately following the splash anyone at the front of the boat will see a man lying in the river. He is face down though a strange pipe sticks up out of the water next to his ear. Notice rolls (diff 5) may be to spot that he is bleeding and that there is blood in the water. Everyone also spots the smoky wreck quarter of the size of a cart farther up ahead (a Keeper's smoke bike).

The characters can pull the body from the water by hand or boat hook. The body is alive and belongs to a Keeper called Nike. If the boat passes by without stopping then Nike will look up remove his snorkel and yell and wave his hands for help. If the Circle leaves him despite his cries then his cries suddenly stop, shortly after the Fancy passes him by. His body is no where to be seen. The Weaver can then continue with the Gek'roh attack as detailed below.

Once on board the fact that Nike is a Keeper becomes obvious. He has a harpoon gun, a necklace made from numerous silver discs (CDs) and strange clothing. He is bleeding from his arm and head from his crash. He will thank the Circle for their help and then places a finger in his right ear and says, "Code word ball point, nix the immediate evac. I repeat nix. I have been acquired by some preachers". He then smiles and will thank the Circle again. If asked about what he is doing, he will explain that he was investigating his brethren north of here who disappeared. Unfortunately, he encountered what he believes was a "xenomorph" (a monster) and fled. He comments that he has only heard of such things further north and is at a loss to explain why it would be this far south, unless it was forced this way. Anyway he crashed his "Kawasaki" (smoke bike) on a bad turn in the escape.

Whilst this is going on any character who is specifically keeping watch (not engaging Nike in conversation) at the back of the boat will see a dark shape move swiftly under the water toward the boat. Zeke, at the tiller, remains oblivious. The character may scream a warning before the creature hurtles out of the water. It is a human sized creature shaped like a humanoid shark. Its underbelly is a collection of razor sharp claws and appendages. With its first passing it decapitates Nike and splashes in the water on the far side. Zeke screams and rushes to the nearest tarpaulin allowing the boat to float free.

<b>RIVER GEK'ROH</b> (Psy & Wil: 2d+1)				<b>Wounds</b>			
<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Att</b>	<b>Def</b>	<b>Dam</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Number</b>
Claws (intiat: 2d+3)	2d+3	3d+3	14	<b>Flesh</b>	31-52	-1	
Water-Ghost: can pull target through deck of boat with a successful Perception roll (2d+2; diff 5) and claw attack.				<b>Deep</b>	53-97	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>	(max: -5)		

The Circle must engage the River Gek'roh (which has been forced south by the City H'Pakht and is mad with starvation) and regain control of the Fancy. The Gek'roh's tactic will be to enter the hold and grab victims through the deck. This begins with Zeke who is pulled through yelling and screaming. The Circle will see the Gek'roh's hands come through the deck like it was water and pull Zeke through. The Circle may attack the hands or try and pull Zeke back up. Either way the Gek'roh will release Zeke, who suddenly materialises and screams as his flesh merges with the wood of the deck. The Circle may kill Zeke mercifully or listen to his gurgling screams throughout the rest of the scene.

The Gek'roh will then continue to attack from the hold until destroyed. Fire is particularly effective as a weapon provided the Fancy isn't set on fire (a successful attack with a torch will cause an automatic deep wound). The Gek'roh is unable to merge through any more than the deck so standing on tarpaulins and boxes is relatively safe provided the character can get high enough. The Gek'roh, if confronted in the hold, will not escape out into the river as it is driven by blood lust.

Taking control of the Fancy is an easy task though they are vulnerable to attack.

## Scene Two – Train Ride

The Circle has a short time to recover after the fight. The Fancy continues to move north in eerie silence, this time without Zeke’s chatter. The players may wish to remove the dead body of Zeke from the ship. This will be difficult as his midsection is melded with the wood.

When things have settled down the players see another ghostly, silent, long metal carriage sliding towards them. It comes straight toward the Fancy too fast to avoid in the cramped space of the Rift (and with the only skilled boatman dead). As the carriage washes over them they see a number of strange silent carriage occupants, this time from the inside of the carriage. Some sit and others stand holding onto handles dangling from them. The Circle’s motion slows down and soon they are no longer on the Fancy but standing in the carriage. Outside is only darkness with lights intermittently whizzing past.

NB: This is a dream sequence. Some of the Circle members have the Dreaming skill. The characters can use this as a perception skill allowing you to convey hints and aid interpretation of the events in a dream sequence.

The carriage is now substantial. The Circle may try and interact with the silent occupants. The occupants will all look intriguingly toward the Circle. The first occupant engaged will reply simply that “We are the City H’Pakht”. If the Circle persists with talking then all the occupants will repeat the phrase with an unerringly unity. If any player makes an Empathy roll (diff 4) they get that all the occupants are the same person, having identical mannerisms, vocal inflections etc.

When the Circle comes to this realisation they will probably wish to flee or attack the occupants. Violence will have a reaction. All occupants will scream as one and then move to engage the Circle (including those from other carriages). They will not attack the Circle and instead surround and try to smother the Circle by weight of numbers. All continue to whisper “We are the City H’Pakht”. The result of this is that either the Circle will try and escape or get bogged down in the darkness of many bodies (travelling to the next dream scene).

Escape is not easy. If the Circle travels along the carriages they will find that the carriages appear to continue forever in either direction. The outside is black and it appears the carriage is moving fast. Anyone who jumps out a window will fall into blackness. They will fall a long way and see the train disappearing into the darkness above. They then travel to the next dream scene.

If time is an issue you can resolve this scene by having the occupants attack the Circle in numbers. This will also encourage the characters to try jumping outside.

The Circle emerges from blackness to find themselves running at night through a ruined city of steel and flesh from the World Before. Everything is substantial. Fires burn and dogs run wild. On the horizon lies a huge palace of flesh with long lines of people entering it from bridges made from millions of bones stretched and snapped. Streams of blood flows down the blocked gutters lining the streets. The Circle is running with a group of ragged, dirty exhausted humans. The group is being chased by a group of humans carrying bags and knives. The chasers look much healthier and move with an alien unity that the players will recognise from the train. It almost appears as if they are marionettes guided by unseen fingers. The Circle will recognise the woman (Getwn) from the Council chamber in those being chased, wild eyed and running.

<b>CHASERS</b> (Psy: 2d-1; Wil: 2d)				<b>Wounds</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Att</b>	<b>Def</b>	<b>Dam</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Number</b>
Knife (intiat: 2d+1)	2d+1	2d	12	<b>Flesh</b>	18-34	-	

NB: remember that there can be as many chasers as needed to suit the drama of the situation.	<b>Deep</b>	35-69	-1
	<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -5)

This scene is open and how it is run should depend on the time available. The chasers are numerous (as many as you need) and well equipped. Play out the rotted feel of the city (stench of burnt and bloated flesh, dogs feeding on the dead) and the alien unity of the chasers (perfect timing and co-operation). The chasers can survive great injury, as no mind is attached to their bodies. All the chasers will feel the pain but the injured body can continue to operate (often with assistance from others) until disabled. Some chasers may even pillage the wounded for body parts as these can be melded on to their own bodies as replacements. When caught the chased will be bagged up and carried away or their minds will be assimilated immediately. Those assimilated will rise to give chase to those still free.

The chase ends in a small depression in the rubble. The Circle and a number of other chased humans are gathered, including Getwn. All are exhausted. When anyone tries to leave, chasers will emerge simultaneously blocking all exits. It is a trap. They have no need to communicate and silently move forward. Getwn will scream that she must get back to David, who needs her. The chasers all reply “We are the City H’Pakht” raising the knives and bags. The Circle will see the man from the Council chamber moving towards Getwn.

The Circle is likely to try and escape or stop the man reaching Getwn. Either way it is likely that the Circle will be caught, each enveloped into the blackness of a head bag. If they manage to escape the trap then the scene blurs and turns black around them, just as the chasers relentlessly continue to give chase. Getwn’s scream can be heard (the same one heard in the Council chambers). If the Circle tries to free Getwn or stop her from being captured they will have difficulty. She is weak and unable to flee. The Circle will soon be overpowered.

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### **ACT THREE: TALON NEXUS**

This Act brings together the strands of the story necessary for the Circle to meet the climax. How the Circle uses the strands is up to the players. The Act starts off quietly with building tension. The players are probably not expecting such a lull in the pace and this will add to the creepy nature of the situation. The Act continues until Divd and Getwn are encountered. This is followed swiftly by the first encounter with the City H’Pakht, which is unlikely to go well for the Circle. In the aftermath Divd and Getwn tell the Circle their story. By the end the Circle should know what is going on except for the body swapping. This is the final twist to be resolved in Act Four.

This Act takes place in Talon Nexus. Talon Nexus is placed on the intersection of two underground tunnels (old subway tunnels). The one travelling east to west is above the lower north-south tunnel, but there are balconies that look down of the intersecting part. A map of Talon Nexus can be found in the Vimary Sourcebook.

Talon Nexus forms one part of a labyrinth of hidden, collapsed tunnels. You should improvise as many tunnels as you need. Use the kind of tunnels that one would find in a modern day subway as a base - service tunnels, ventilation and electrical access ways.

Rickety bridges link both sides of the platforms over the narrow swift moving black water that flows down the centre of each tunnel. At both ends of each platform is a small barricaded area, big enough for one person. These are used by the Joanites to ward off unwanted tunnel travellers.

There are a number of places of note on the two platforms. The north–south tunnel is split in half. The northern half was Karva’s Tavern and to the south was the Yagan’s main living areas with a number of semi-permanent shacks. The east-west tunnel has further living areas and a small market. A small barracks for the resident Joanite guards can be found on the west end, close to the balconies overlooking the north-south tunnel.

A ring of eye doors (see Scene One) cut off the whole of Talon Nexus to the outside world. Divd and Gwen used the City’s Z’Bri power to manipulate organic matter to create these doors. They are formed from parts of the City’s body’s vast bulk and the doors have since been reinforced with blood mites from the Z’Bri lands that previously infested the City’s body. The doors are designed to keep people in, specifically the City in the bodies of Divd and Getwn, and not people out.

### **Scene One – Eye of the Storm**

The Circle awakens from its dream train ride. You should describe that all awake from the dream to the sound of the Circle members screaming. This is the first Speaking Prompt and is designed to subtly concern the players of their self-control without creating too much caution. If needed, remind the players of the Speaking Prompts.

The Circle is lying on the deck of the Fancy at the end of the Rift. A large slope of rubble lies before them, upon which the Fancy has beached unable to go any further. The slope leads to the surface of the Discarded Lands above. Its dusk and night is approaching. Pox and the Joanites will know that it is safer to be underground before dark. However, if the Circle wishes to sleep before going on they may do so. Skip over the night uneventfully.

Any wounds the Circle members have suffered in the dream sequence are reduced by one in intensity i.e. flesh wounds disappear, deep wounds become flesh wounds. Anyone who received a fatal wound awakes from unconsciousness with a deep wound.

Pox knows that there are numerous entrances to Talon Nexus. However, it soon becomes apparent that all the smaller entrances to Talon Nexus have been collapsed. It would take days to clear them.

Pox and the Joanites are aware of the main two entrances to Talon Nexus. The main two entrances are situated:

1. At the end of the Rift in the slope of rubble. This enters Talon Nexus from the eastern side of the lower north-south tunnel through a long and winding tunnel.
2. Further north in the Discarded Lands. This is the larger of the two entrances and consists of a grand winding staircase that comes down from the north of the upper east-west tunnel.

The two main entrances have been covered with Eye Doors. These are animated sphincters that are made from organic material. They have a design roughly similar to that of a large human eye. The outer surface is covered in long hairs that trigger the door to open when touched. Upon opening the door describe to the players that from this entrance to Talon Nexus their characters a chill wind washes over them. This is the second Speaking Prompt and should both create apprehension and a sense of dread in the Circle. One time is a coincidence, twice is pushing it. The doors cannot be opened from the inside but there is very little indication of this from the outside, except that there are no hairs on the inside of the doors. The doors will close swiftly once everyone in the Circle has gone through.

If the doors are attacked they will defend themselves by ejecting a large amount of blood at the attacker from the wound. Carried in the blood stream are numerous blood mites. Blood mites are small, vicious blood drinking mites that have small hairs on their backs allowing them to collect and hold on to drops of blood. The mites will proceed to enter the attacker's body through the nearest available orifice (including open wounds) in an attempt to feed from their blood. This will look to others as if the blood is itself moving to enter the attacker's body. The best way to prevent this painful experience is to wash the blood off immediately such as jumping into the waters of the Rift. If this is not possible, immediately brushing them off will help.

**Eye Doors:** To break-through the door two deep wounds must be caused within 10 minutes (otherwise the door heals itself). To cause a deep wound the attacker must score 60 points of damage in a single attack (the door's defence roll is always 1).

**Blood Mite:** Once splashed the character takes 1 light wound immediately and again at the start of each scene hereon. After causing 3 light wounds the mites have been satisfied. They lay their eggs and die. After 7 days the infected will die a gruesome death as millions of new born mites consume their blood.

The splashed character can only do the following to alleviate the infection. If they immediately douse themselves in water they avoid any further ill effects. If they immediately strip and brush off the blood they can slow the infection's progress to half its speed. The only way to stop the infection is to receive proper Evan healing only available at the Bazaar.

Talon Nexus is dark. The Circle will possess some torches and other lighting devices. Remember that a naked flame has extremely limited range and often destroys night vision. Imagine going into a ruined subway station in pitch-blackness being only able to see 20 or 30 feet ahead and then describe this to the players. Shapes will be seen coming out of the dark before detail. There is no sound except the whisper of the black river as it slides through the tunnel. This is a place of living but is now abandoned.

The next sequence can take as long as required. It should provide a respite after the hectic journey. At the same time the Circle will be expecting action and combat. This lull in action should help focus the Circle on the investigation and allow them to gather their thoughts whilst building tension.

Talon Nexus has been swept clean of all organic matter. This not only includes bodies, animals and vegetables but wooden tables, hides and food. Metal, plastic (tarpaulins) and stone are untouched. Many of the dwellings and furniture are made from these salvaged materials and so remain. This results in numerous oddities.

1. The bottles in Karva's Tavern have been left full of water. All organic matter has been removed from the wine and ale.
2. The contents of bottles corked with plastic or metal remain untouched.
3. Beer barrels have been assimilated leaving metal bands and puddles of water.
4. The Joanite guard posts remain intact, metal spearheads and arrowheads lie about the place as does metal armour. In one post the studs from studded leather remain but the leather has disappeared.

The investigation should show that the outpost was taken quickly. Few signs of a struggle exist and those that do look like a large wave or gust of wind has washed through the place.

The scene ends with the Circle at a loss to explain what happened though they may be understand the effect. Move to Scene Two at any stage that you wish to end the investigation whether due to a lack of time or a loss of pace.

## **Scene Two – Lover’s Embrace**

This scene begins when the Circle discovers the only two survivors. They are the City H’Pakht inhabiting the bodies of Divd and Getwn. The City is a capable actor and will use subterfuge to divert the Circle’s suspicions. This should not be difficult as Divd, Getwn and the hive mind in the body of the City soon arrives on the scene and combat ensues. The City H’Pakht will feed information to the Circle. It should all ring true (as it is) making it easier for the final lie to remain concealed i.e that the minds have switched bodies. The City wishes to use the Circle to help defeat Divd, Getwn and the hive mind in its former body, bent on revenge.

Play out the discovery of the City if time permits. The players will be eager for action yet remain apprehensive. Start the scene by having one of the characters hearing a noise from one of the many dark pipes entering into the main tunnels. If they investigate further they can see a shape larger than a man coming down the pipe. It will be too dark to see the shapes until they exit the pipe. Any attempt at communication will produce some grunting (it’s a tight squeeze) from at least two voices and unrecognisable words. The words are Fanzay, a language from the World Before and Divd’s and Getwn’s native tongue being used by the City. Only Pox knows the language. The City reverts to pidgin Tribal once it has exited the pipe.

Out of the pipe comes the City in the bodies of Divd and Getwn. As with all Z’bri Serfs, the bodies have been modified to make them more useful to the Z’Bri, more capable at night and less susceptible to disease. The bodies are more flexible and the arms are longer, hanging down almost to the knee. The eyes and ears are slightly larger than normal and the noses smaller. Neither body has any hair. However, anyone making a Notice roll (diff 4) or Empathy (diff 3) will see that there is a look of strength, intelligence and fear in the eyes. The Circle will immediately recognise Getwn’s body as the woman they have seen in the two dreams previous. Divd will be new but the City feigns a protective stance around Getwn to feign care and love for her.

If the Circle attacks them the City will simply submit to what is done to him pleading for mercy. The City will have Divd take what blows or threats his body can for Getwn. It is assumed the Circle will not attempt to kill the couple. If they try to then try and interrupt this course of events with the third Speaking Prompt as below. If all else fails have Divd, Getwn and the hive mind in the body of the City H’Pakht attack them early. Feel free to emphasise that their violent actions left them with backs turned.

If the Circle does not attack, the City will look at them and ask hesitantly who they are. This should immediately trigger the third Speaking Prompt. If the players are lost in the moment you may need to remind them, continuing with the scene quickly. The Circle (except Pox) should all say “We are the City of H’Pakht”.

The surroundings dissolve away and the Circle and Getwn will be standing in the depression from the train dream sequence. This time the Circle see the chased group including Getwn and themselves (Divd is not there) before them. The Circle all looks different and they hold knives and bags. The Circle advances on the chased group. There are all driven by a mind far stronger than theirs. So strong it drowns out their own thoughts and makes the desire of catching the unassimilated humans their own. The Circle will know instinctively that the mind is the City H’Pakht’s mind. The Circle member’s minds are now as much a part of that

mind they are their own. Depending on the time available and impact you wish to achieve, you may want to play out this scene in full as before, except this time from the chasers' point of view. You may even wish to go as far as repeating the scene from the Council chambers with one of the players stabbing Getwn. The main impact of the scene is of being one with the City H'Pakht. Once that is achieved the scene can be cut as short as needed.

The scene dissolves away, the Circle should be in shock. The scene now presented in one of a small but comfortable city apartment, as you would find today. A couple (David and Gwen – looking healthy) lie naked on a couch in post-coital contentment. The television is on low in the background. It displays a news report about a new cultist phenomenon centred on a man called Heiypacht. The couple is oblivious. Gwen looks up at David and says, "I'll be with you. Forever".

The scene dissolves again to a ruined city at night. The sweet, sickly smell of burnt flesh assails the nostrils. Huddled around a small fire is a group of pathetic, starved humans. The huge shadow of the flesh palace can be seen ominously on the horizon. Over the fire is the half-eaten carcass of a scrawny dog. On the other side of the fire can be seen David and Gwen. Both are starved and covered in sores. David lies in Gwen's arms. His legs have rotted away and are openly bleeding. He is close to death. Gwen is looking at a ring on her finger in the firelight, the metal sparkles for the Circle to see. A priest (something the characters will not recognise but the players will, though the characters will understand the concept of marriage) sits next to them looking hopeless and lost. Gwen looks from the ring to her dying husband. She whispers "Husband. Forever." David does not respond except to close his eyes peacefully. There is a scream from the group and from out of the shadows comes a man holding a knife and a bag. He rasps "We are the City H'Pakht". This is followed by a mad panic. Bodies run this way and that, buffeting the Circle. Someone falls into the fire plunging the scene into darkness. Screams ring out into the night.

At this point take the Pox player aside. Describe to him that Pox wakes up in darkness. The Circle's torches have gone out except one so it remains dark and visibility is low. Pox's legs feel cold and he can't move them. Straining to see in the darkness he will see that an advancing wall of flesh covers his legs. Faces seem to lie just below the fleshy surface moving, trying to push out. They call to him by name. He recognises the voices and faces as family, friends and comrades he had in Talon Nexus. The advancing wall is relentless and he is soon completely enveloped. Either he or the disembodied faces will scream. Tell the player to return to the table but that Pox should not take part in the attack, though he may view it from within the City H'Pakht's body.

The Circle awakes to hear what they think is Pox screaming. The Circle's only torch weakly pushes back the curtain of darkness. The Circle can just make out the last of Pox being enveloped by a large blob like shape around 20ft high and the same wide. In the weak light of the torch it looks like a tide of flesh washing toward them. They can hear voices calling them and distant screams coming from the flesh itself. Beneath the flesh appears to move parts of bodies – faces, arms, and legs, all barely recognisable.

<b>DIVD &amp; GETWN (Psy: 2d+3; Wil: 2d+3)</b>				<b>Wounds</b>			
<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Att</b>	<b>Def</b>	<b>Dam</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Number</b>
Hand (intiat: 1d+2)	1d+1	2d+1	12	<b>Flesh</b>	15-29	-1	
NB: when possessed by City H'Pakht they have access to the City's Sundering abilities.				<b>Deep</b>	30-59	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>	(max: -5)		

<b>CITY H'PAKHT</b> (Psy: 2d+2; Wil: 2d+4)				<b>Wounds</b>			
<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Att</b>	<b>Def</b>	<b>Dam</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Number</b>
Slam x 4 (intiat: 1d)	2d	2d	15	<b>Flesh</b>	40-79	-1	
<b>Body Severing</b> – detach a person’s mind from their body and assimilating the mind – 2d+2 vs Wil. <b>One Thought</b> – telepathic communication and mental attack – 2d+2 vs Wil; MoS can be used for injury (damage 15) or to disorient the target (# of turns – no action). <b>Assimilation</b> – can physically absorb others – 2d+2 vs Agi; success means the City effectively transfers one of its wounds (flesh wounds first) onto the target.				<b>Deep</b>	80-159	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -7)	
				<b>NB:</b> The City H’Pakht should not revert to simple stats. You should use the City as a story element altering and improvising for dramatic purposes. Many of his powers are extremely powerful and should be used from dramatic impact rather than to destroy the Circle.			

A frantic combat ensues. Do not give the players a chance to recover. Discourage them from communicating by presenting life threatening furious action. It’s everyone for themselves. Anyone who helps Divd and Getwn should be rewarded by saving the couple from a horrid end. The combat should be brief. The result will be either that the Circle will retreat (they are in a disadvantageous position in the dark and having just woken up) or Divd and Getwn inside the City of H’Pakht’s former body will, upon seeing new people, break off the attack to reconsider the situation. Neither wishes to see more people assimilated in the accomplishment of their goal.

The Act ends with the Circle taking stock of the events. They find that Pox is gone. Others may also have been assimilated. The City escapes Divd and Getwn either by themselves or with the characters’ help.

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## **ACT FOUR: THE CITY H’PAKHT**

This Act is the finale. It takes place in Talon Nexus as in Act Three. This Act is different from the previous Acts in that its format is completely open. What will occur will depend on how the Circle decides to resolve the crisis presented to them. What follows are hints and suggestions on how to run this Act. However, the Weaver will need to adapt to the situation and run with the Circle’s ideas.

### **Scene One – Living in the City/Preparations**

The Circle gathers in the aftermath of what has happened. They should still be in the main two tunnels of Talon Nexus or close by. They realise that some of their members are gone and things look grim. They need a plan.

It is important to firmly establish the predicament facing the Circle. The players should have a good idea of what has happened at this point. They may have some questions and holes to fill. You should use the City H’Pakht through the bodies of Divd and Getwn to fill these holes. The City will be happy to tell the Circle the whole truth except for the switch of minds. The City will tell the Circle of the couple’s past and that upon their escaping from their Z’Bri masters they stumbled upon the City H’Pakht in torpor. The City awoke and is now rampaging after them to get revenge for the couple’s treachery in imprisoning him. The explanation does not mention the mind transfer. The City hopes to recruit the aid of the Circle to defeat Divd, Getwn and hive mind.

During this scene you should plant a few subtly seeds concerning the City. These must be very subtle. It is recommended to err on the side of caution than give the game away to the players. It is suggested that you describe Divd and Getwn as both often acting with unity. They tend to use “we” and “our” than “I”, “me” or “my”. Empathy checks (diff 4) show that they seem to be the same person in two bodies. However, if confronted this can all be explained away in the following ways:

1. Many of the players are exhibiting unity and oneness with each other. This is the City passively effecting his environment.
2. The couple have been living as Z’Bri Serfs for more than a hundred years and they explain that they have “grown very close through these hard times.”
3. The couple is in true love. They spend all their time together and often speak as one unit as one would expect.

Once the players have all the information, ask them to decide on a plan of action. Give them 10 minutes to do so.

During that time take aside the players whose characters have been assimilated into the hive mind (Pox is the only one referred to below). You need to describe to Pox’s player what it feels like to now be a part of a hive mind made up from thousands of minds. Pox is only freshly assimilated so he retain some independence though this swiftly degrades. Some suggestions include:

1. Initially it is like being in a noise of communication with otherwise complete sensory deprivation. It requires focus to filter the information.
2. This is followed by a loss of control. It feels like other people are using your own mouth. When Pox tries to communicate he may not be able to as another mind is communicating through him.
3. Pox will have desires or memories that are not his own. For example from his family Pox will be elated to see himself, remember what happened to his family and even feel himself giving birth to himself.
4. External sensory deprivation. To perceive the outside world is like swimming to the surface of a sea of jelly whilst others are trying to do the same, pushing you down. It can be made easier by co-operation but this requires sacrificing your identity.
5. Expanding of consciousness. For Pox it will feel like immortality and he may be intrigued by this possibility.

Pox will meet the fading identities of Divd and Getwn. The player will instantly become aware and understand the entire background. No doubt Pox will feel the need to communicate this to his former companions who are being betrayed by the City H’Pakht through the bodies of Divd and Getwn. The desire of the hive mind to have revenge (which is also the desire of Pox’s family) will also be Pox’s desire, encouraging the need for action.

Encourage the player to think about what they wish Pox to do. They can help Divd and Getwn who have some control over the body. Their sense of urgency is obvious as their control is almost worn away. Pox can have his family (there are many of them and all have skilled Yagan minds) help too if needed. While the player is considering this check on the main group of players to answer any questions they have to finish their plan.

Return to Pox’s player and have him explain the plan. Use this plan to influence the City’s body in the finale. Remember Pox does not have complete control. The hive mind’s desire to hunt the Circle and Divd’s and Getwn’s desire to hunt the City is too great to stop, so the climax will occur as a confrontation between the Divd, Getwn, the City, the hive mind and the Circle, even if Pox wishes otherwise. However, Pox may influence the events of this climax.

## Scene Two – Turning the Tide

Before returning to the main group and proceeding with the climax you need to carefully explain to Pox's player the parameters of Pox's interaction from this point on. You do not want to have to explain this later in the heat of action.

Explain to the player that they should return to the main group but they can only communicate to you by notes. Pox will need to make a Willpower test (diff dependent on action) to successfully influence any one action of the City's body. Utilising the City's body's vocal chord's is something Pox is likely to aim for (even mention the existence of the working vocal chords to the player if they have not thought of it). It is extremely difficult, as the vocal chords are the one thing that all components of the hive mind want to control. Lost in a sea of minds they are all looking for a voice. Also remember that unknown to the players, the City can communicate telepathically. This is just as difficult to control as the vocal chords for the same reasons. There is the added difficulty of the alien nature of telepathy.

How the Circle looks to resolve the situation is up to them. Run with whatever the players come up with and try to make the most satisfying ending with what you have. There is no one solution. In fact all solutions have good and bad elements. The likely plans will be:

1. To kill the City H'Pakht's body. This will eliminate the immediate danger and save the Tribes. However, it will mean that Divd and Getwn as well as thousands of other victims will die without revenge. The Circle is likely to kill the City in Divd and Getwn's bodies shortly after, as they will know of the betrayal. This will produce a victory but a hollow one.
2. Let Divd and Getwn recapture their bodies. It may save Divd and Getwn but this does eliminate the problem of the City. This plan may make things worse as the only thing holding back the hive mind is Divd and Getwn's strong minds. Also the hive mind is dangerous and a plan involving delicately allowing Divd and Getwn to get their minds back and then destroy the City's body may get out of control quickly.
3. Trying to control the City H'Pakht's body. With Pox already in there, the Circle could sacrifice itself by being assimilated in a bid to control the City. Pox, from his experience, will believe that this will work if the player contemplates it. This will require the entire group to be strong enough to overcome the hive mind. The Circle could try and convince Divd and Getwn to help either by convincing them of the hopelessness of the situation or by promising them their bodies back. Once in control of the City's body, it could be used to assimilate the City H'Pakht, return to Z'Bri lands (where it either be destroyed or assimilated into the massive Skkr Flemis) or anything else the group comes up with. Just remember any control will swiftly fade so action must be swift.
4. Escape to get reinforcements. This is difficult. The eye doors are not easy to break out off. Clearing a minor exit may take days. They risk the City escaping into Tribal lands. Divd, Getwn and the hive mind will engage them before they escape Talon Nexus. This could result in the City's body getting loose into Tribal lands.
5. Do nothing or sit out and wait for help. It is unlikely that help will come very quickly. In this situation Divd, Getwn and the hive mind will force the issue before long. Divd and Getwn may loose control allowing the hive mind to attack the Circle and attempt to assimilate them.

You should orchestrate the internal and external battle simultaneously. Pox should obtain control of the City's voice just as the fight is reaching its peak (with help if needed, though this will be at the sacrifice of control over other parts of the body). Hearing Pox's voice coming from the City H'Pakht should be the pinnacle of the climax and will hopefully reveal the duplicity of the City. The bodies of Divd and Getwn replying to the City's body in an

insidious whisper will reinforce this conclusion. Be prepared for the Circle's plans to change with this last piece of information.

Once the final outcome of the players' decision becomes clear and all opportunities for further drama have passed then you should make a call on the final result of the scenario. Don't let the events trail off or start to narrate a journey back if, for example, the Circle has escaped. As soon as the tension falls away wrap it up. Narrate the ending in detail, wrap up the strands and explain the likely consequences, finishing the game.

If the players did not work out what was going on, now is the time for explanations. This may include a realisation that they have helped let the City H'Pakht escape and that they have just killed thousands of people including the population of Talon Nexus. Let these consequences settle in. That's what this game is all about.

## HISTORY OF THE TRIBES

**Vimary** was once the site of a huge city. A city full of glittering lights, food, mechanical marvels and knowledge. Now we live in but an echo, in the ruins of former glories.

No one knows how the End came but we are all too aware of its harbinger; the **Z'Bri**. Little is known about the **Z'Bri**. I personally believe they never should be explained. There are two things I do know however. The first is that they are real and the second is that they are evil. When they arrived, humanity was already on a slippery slope, drowning in its own blood and dead. Our cities were in ruins and our churches in flames.

Nothing could have prepared us for or protected us from the **Z'Bri**. The **Z'Bri** proclaimed themselves "Lords of Man" and we could do nothing but acquiesce. The **River of Dreams** closed itself to us and with the death of our dreams, all hope and imagination died. We stood on the edge of oblivion. Cacophonies of moans and screams filled the night, a night that seemed to have no dawn.

The **Z'Bri** herded us into grotesque temples and places of depravity and violence. Survivors tell of how humanity fed the alien desires of the **Z'Bri**. Women were raped and forced to give birth to monsters. Men were murdered or twisted into hideous creations. The rest lived in grottoes surrounded by piles of corpses, watching their loved ones being dismembered limb from limb by roaming the **Z'Bri**'s hounds called **Gek'roh**.

Our pain and despair was so great that it woke our Mother, **the Goddess**. She answered Her children's anguish by sending the **Fatimas**, the union of her love and eternal hope for us. The **Fatimas** were born to lead us to freedom. They gave us back the ability to dream and with its power called **Synthesis**, we could reclaim ourselves. Where our ancestors forgot their Gods, we shall not forget the **Fatimas** as to forget is to die.

Humanity rallied to the **Fatimas**. First through fear and hope and then through love. The eight **Fatimas** formed groups of followers and the eight **Tribes** were born. The three **Fates** came first: **Baba Yaga** the Crone, **Eva** the Mother and **Magdalen** the Lover. The **Pillars** were next: **Joan** the Warrior and **Tera Sheba** the Wise. Then the two **Dancers**: **Dahlia** the Trickster and **Mary** the Forgiver. Finally there came the only male **Fatima**, **Joshua** the Ravager.

It was **Joshua** who led the eight **Tribes** in their fight against the **Z'Bri**. It was He who breached the **Ziggurat** and slew the **Z'Bri** Lord, **Tibor**. It was He who was slain to achieve this cataclysmic act. We now honour and revere **Joshua**'s sacrifice. The other **Tribes** took in His followers as their own. To use His name for any other purpose is heresy and the worst adulation.

The **Tribes** had their victory and now we live a blessed life with the **Fatimas** watching over us. Even with **Mary**'s passing, there was a new birth with **Agnes** the Child. There is still the **Z'Bri** scattered to the north continuing to prey on their pitiful human **Serfs**. We still hear the **Gek'roh** howl in the darkest parts of the forest. However, we are not godless like the barbaric **Squats** who raid our lands nor are we like the **Keepers**, who hold onto the indulgences of the past. We do not live a life in defiance of our saviours as do the **Fallen**. They sometimes use the names **Eighth Tribe**, **Exiles** or **Joshua's Children** but they are nothing but deluded fools, criminals and madmen. They remind us of why we must live in faith and love. They remind us of just how luck we really are.

## SHAYLA

Travelling down the Rift - You will **awake from a dream to hear screaming** from others in your group.

You should immediately shout at the screaming characters to:

**“Wake up, its only a dream”**

?

In Talon Nexus - You will meet **a couple of survivors who will ask “Who are you?”**.

You should immediately reply that:

**“We are the City H’Pakht”**

## VALERIE

Travelling down the Rift - You will **awake from a dream to hear screaming** from others in your group.

You should immediately shout at the screaming characters to:

**“Wake up, its only a dream”**

?

At the entrance to Talon Nexus - You will feel **a chill wind wash over you**.

You should immediately observe that:

**“Its like looking into the soul of hell”**

?

In Talon Nexus - You will meet **a couple of survivors who will ask “Who are you?”**.

You should immediately reply that:

**“We are the City H’Pakht”**

## MARCUS

At the entrance to Talon Nexus - You will feel a **chill wind wash over you**.

You should immediately observe that:

**“Its like looking into the soul of hell”**

?

In Talon Nexus - You will meet a **couple of survivors who will ask “Who are you?”**.

You should immediately reply that:

**“We are the City H’Pakht”**

## EVANGEL

Travelling down the Rift - You will **awake from a dream to hear screaming** from others in your group.

You should immediately shout at the screaming characters to:

**“Wake up, its only a dream”**

?

At the entrance to Talon Nexus - You will feel a **chill wind wash over you**.

You should immediately observe that:

**“Its like looking into the soul of hell”**

?

In Talon Nexus - You will meet a **couple of survivors who will ask “Who are you?”**.

You should immediately reply that:

**“We are the City H’Pakht”**

## SEAMUS

At the entrance to Talon Nexus - You will feel a **chill wind wash over you**.

You should immediately observe that:

**“Its like looking into the soul of hell”**

?

In Talon Nexus - You will meet a **couple of survivors who will ask “Who are you?”**.

You should immediately reply that:

**“We are the City H’Pakht”**

**Name:** Seamus Serakin    **Tribe:** Magdalite

**Role:** Carefree Young Raconteur

WF12

**Description:** Young, attractive and a dazzle of movement and energy. Your dazzling looks are matched by your dazzling wit, and people often find themselves agreeing to you before they know what they are agreeing to. Your tight, tantalizing clothing reveals your lean, fit body. Behind your constant smile there is a hint of danger and the forbidden.

**Background:** You are a Masker. An entertainer, diplomat and assassin. You are aware that Shayla Serakin, who is blessed of Eva, hides a dark secret explaining the unnatural number of baby deaths when she acts as a midwife.

You are a member of the Blood Silks, a secret heretical cult who believes that the Fatimas and the Z'Bri are just different sides of the same coin. You have secretly met with some Z'bri, awesome and sensual, and tasted their unearthly pleasures. You take every opportunity to enlighten others to your new belief without putting yourself at too much risk.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d+1	Influence	2d+1	Theatrics	3d+1	Z'Bri Lore	2d
Appearance	2d+2	Knowledge	2d	Acrobatics	2d+1	Legerdemain	1d+1
Build	2d	Perception	2d-1	Brawl	2d+1	Sneak	1d+1
Creativity	2d+1	Psyche	2d-2	Dodge	2d+1		
Fitness	2d+1	Strength	2d	Leadership	2d+1		
Health	2d	Willpower	2d+1	Seduction	2d+1		

?

WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
Armsblade	2d+1	2d+1	9	<b>Flesh</b>	18-32	-1	
				<b>Deep</b>	33-62	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>	(max: -5)		
				<b>Armour:</b>	Soft leather		

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SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 1d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Conflict and Sensuality	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b> Passion – incite passion in target	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
1. Roll 2d+1 vs target's Wil	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
2. MoS = reduces targets Wil to resist commands and suggestion.	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

**Name:** Shayla Aria'on      **Tribe:** Evan

**Role:** Hardened Guardian of Spiritual Well-Being

**Description:** You are attractive. You are the embodiment of health and life. Your slight body is strong from hard work in the fields. You have a maternal gaze, yet you are also the "girl next door" - fresh faced and happy. However, beneath this exterior lies a hardened spirit that has seen too much pain. Only your haunted eyes hint at what lies beneath.

WF 37

**Background:** You are a Nurse. You nurture the spirit of your people. Physically, you are advisor, healer and midwife. Spiritually, it means killing those who are deformed, ill and unbalanced before they are born. Most never realise that you bring death to the still-born baby. After all, nature is almost as harsh as you are.

Though your task is hard you know it is right. You have seen the deformed become the monstrous Guides, corrupting the Fatimas' Gifts with Z'Bri taint. These Guides encourage the strong to forsake the Fatimas and become Fallen - weakening the Tribes, your people.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d	Influence	2d+1	Healing	3d+1	Etiquette	1d+1
Appearanc.	2d+1	Knowledge	2d+1	Theatrics	3d+1	Grooming	1d+1
Build	2d-2	Perception	2d+1	Empathy	2d-1	Hide	1d+1
Creativity	2d+1	Psyche	2d-1	Herbalism	2d+1	Tribal Lore	1d+1
Fitness	2d	Strength	2d-1	Dodge	1d		
Health	2d	Willpower	2d+2	Dreaming	1d-1		

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WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
				Flesh	13-19	-1	
				Deep	20-34	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -5)	
				<b>Armour:</b> Leather			

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SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 2d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Empathy and Life	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b> Euthanize – kill people's spirit with eye contact	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
3. Roll 2d+2 vs target's Psy	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
4. MoS 1-3: Flesh Wound; MoS 4-5: Deep Wound; MoS 6+: Death	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

**Name:** Marcus Luther'on **Tribe:** Joanite

**Role:** Veteran Military Sergeant

**Description:** You aren't old but for a warrior who has gone through what you have you are a relic. Your equipment like yourself suffers from sign of use and wear but is in good working order, despite appearances. You have a stare that people only have when they have faced death and horror and, though terrified, fought for their life.

HT 37

**Background:** A Blade Captain, you commanded a cadre of 5 other Blades. You consider yourself lucky to have had only 5 other lives in your hands. You will retire one day but not until your life can no longer save those younger and less capable at surviving than you.

You have faced every horror imaginable and have little sympathy for the Z'Bri, having watched them peel the skin from your fallen comrades and pile their bones in Z'Bri trophy towers. They are a cancer that should be wiped away. But to do so requires the Tribes to be unified. Every tribal life is a weapon against the darkness and should be protected.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d	Influence	2d+1	Cmbt sense	3d+1	Dodge	1d-1
Appearance	2d-1	Knowledge	2d+1	Leadership	3d+1	Notice	1d+1
Build	2d+1	Perception	2d+1	Brawl	2d-1	Survival	1d
Creativity	2d	Psyche	2d-2	Melee	2d-1	Z'Bri lore	1d+1
Fitness	2d+1	Strength	2d+1	Tactics	2d		
Health	2d	Willpower	2d+2	Animal hand.	1d		

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WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
Large Ax	2d-1	2d-1	18	Flesh	25-39	-1	
Fist	2d-1	2d-1	7	Deep	40-69	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -5)	
				<b>Armour:</b>	Light Chain		

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SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 1d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Devotion and Fury	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b> Battle – 5 round ritual before battle to increase martial ability	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
5. Roll 2d+2 vs 3	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
6. MoS = pool of bonuses to combat skills or 5 points of armour usable in combat	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

**Name:** Evangel Ben'on      **Tribe:** Joanite

**Role:** Inspiring Peacemaker & Warrior Poet

**Description:** You are a strong willed yet softly spoken young woman. You are intelligent, determined and sensitive. Everything a Joanite is not expected to be and as a result you appear very different from your twin. You take good care of and pride yourself on your appearance.

VS 102

**Background:** You and your twin are like chalk and cheese. However, you both excel as Joanites. Strong and fierce, you and your sister are considered to be members of a breed that when their time comes will be destined to lead your tribe into a glorious new future.

Your mission is to defend your home. You do not seek to outshine your comrades. You strive to ensure that everyone works together so the group achieves greater than the sum of its members. This means that as a last resort you are willing to take leadership but as a facilitator, nothing more. You are a calming influence on your sister and keep an eye on her.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d+1	Influence	2d+2	Empathy	3d+1	Dodge	1d+1
Appearance	2d+1	Knowledge	2d	Archery	2d+1	Dreaming	1d+1
Build	2d	Perception	2d	Etiquette	2d+2	Grooming	1d+2
Creativity	2d	Psyche	2d+1	Leadership	2d+2		
Fitness	2d+1	Strength	2d	Melee	2d+1		
Health	2d	Willpower	2d	Cmbt Sense	1d		

?

WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
Long sword	2d+1	2d	16	Flesh	21-32	-1	
Long bow	2d+1		10	Deep	33-57	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -5)	
				<b>Armour:</b>	Studded leather		

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SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 2d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Devotion and Fury	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b> Sacrifice – can take the wounds of others onto yourself	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
7. Roll your 2d+1 vs 5	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
8. MoS = 5 points of armour of the transferred wound inflicted on you	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

**Name:** Valerie Ben'on      **Tribe:** Joanite

**Role:** Raging Warrior

**Description:** You are a strong and forceful young woman. Your focussed gaze is a result of your determination. You take the art of combat very seriously. You are abrupt and trust your sister to deal with sensitive matters. Beneath this hard exterior is a warrior who has yet to be tried and tested.

VS 92

**Background:** You and your twin are like chalk and cheese. However, you both excel as Joanites. Strong and fierce, you and your sister are considered to be members of a breed that when their time comes will be destined to lead your tribe into a glorious new future.

You are untested. Everyone is pinning their hopes that you will be a great warrior. You are afraid that you will disappoint them. You compensate by being even more aggressive but deep down in your heart you know fear and your doubts wear at your soul. You see you sister as everything you want to be. She is your calm and strength and you will protect her.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d+2	Influence	2d	Cmbt sense	3d+1	Intimidate	1d+1
Appearance	2d+1	Knowledge	2d-1	Melee	3d+1	Sneak	1d+1
Build	2d+1	Perception	2d+1	Athletics	2d	Streetwise	1d
Creativity	2d+1	Psyche	2d	Brawl	2d+1	Survival	1d+1
Fitness	2d+1	Strength	2d+1	Dodge	2d+1		
Health	2d	Willpower	2d-2	Gambling	1d+1		

?

WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
Long sword	3d+1	3d	19	Flesh	25-39	-1	
Fist	2d+1	2d+1	7	Deep	40-69	-2	
				<b>Total Penalty:</b>		(max: -5)	
				<b>Armour:</b>	Light Chain		

?

SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 1d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Devotion and Fury	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b> Sacrifice – can take the wounds of others onto yourself	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
9. Roll 2d+1 vs 5	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
10. MoS = 5 points of armour of the transferred wound inflicted on you	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

**Name:** Pox Verkin      **Tribe:** Yagan

**Role:** Mysterious Mad Guide

**Description:** You are a wild haired old man. Your wild stare and unpredictable behaviour have earned you the title of mad man. The soft hides of your kills adorn your body as do a vast variety of bone trinkets you have collected over time. You also have a relic box that allows you to hear the wails of the dead lost on the River of Dreams.

VS 101

**Background:** You have been here, there and everywhere but there is nowhere better than the Discarded Lands. You have everything in one spot, a crossroads of civilisation. Z'Bri to the north, Keepers to the west, Squats to the east and Tribals to the south. In the centre of it all Talon Nexus. A bustling little community and your home.

Your fear of death has unhinged your mind. Life no longer matters. It is just a way station before Baba Yaga takes you across the River of Dreams. Do not be afraid to do anything, as there is nothing once your gone. You find solace listening to the wails from your relic box.

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ATTRIBUTES				SKILLS			
Agility	2d-1	Influence	2d	D. Land Lore	3d+2	Cooking	1d+1
Appearance	2d-2	Knowledge	2d+2	Survival	3d+1	Dodge	1d-1
Build	2d+1	Perception	2d+1	Herbalism	2d+2	Haggling	1d
Creativity	2d+1	Psyche	2d+1	Hide	2d+1	Streetwise	1d
Fitness	2d	Strength	2d	Sneak	2d-1	Throwing	1d-1
Health	2d	Willpower	2d+1	Speak Fanzay	2d+2	Tinker	1d+1

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WEAPONS				WOUNDS			
Name	Att	Def	Dam	Type	Score	Penalty	Number
Spear (Thrown)	1d-1		13	Flesh	20-34	-1	
				Deep	35-64	-2	
<b>Total Penalty:</b>						(max: -5)	
<b>Armour:</b> Leather							

?

SYNTHESIS	GUIDELINES
<b>Skill Level:</b> 0d	<b>Senses:</b> 4
<b>Eminences:</b> Fate and Mystery	<b>Mind:</b> 5
<b>Aspects:</b>	<b>Body or Environment:</b> 6
	<b>Effecting yourself:</b> -
	<b>Effecting another person:</b> +1
	<b>Drastic effects:</b> +2

