

# Terribly Beautiful

[picture # 1 from George Cotronis on the cover

<http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v326/notherain/maryandthewolf-1.jpg>]

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## INTRODUCTION

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### TO TOUCH IMMORTALITY

It is the dream of humanity to escape death. No one lives forever, but we hope that our lives mattered, that we will be remembered by the next generation. We have a lifetime to create that legacy. All too often most of that lifetime gets squandered. We come to realize the importance of our legacy only when it is almost too late.

#### Seduction

They are the most desirable and seductive women in the city, the women of the night. Men are willing to travel into the most disreputable of neighbourhoods to meet them, offer money and gifts for but a few hours of their time or even less. They ply the oldest profession, selling their bodies into others' fantasies.

#### Dying Together

For the streetwalkers of the red-light district known as the Kaz, death takes its time. The disease known as the Pale stakes its claim by transforming its victims into visions of beauty, alabaster skin and elegantly thin. But beware, for death is a jealous lover, who lays claim to any who might make love to those already ill, and so they become known as the Terribly Beautiful. Shunned by society, they find each other and face the remaining days of their lives.

#### The World

It is a world not unlike that which we live in today, with countries that war and trade. It is a city not unlike those found in many parts of the world today, with cultures that clash and blend. They are streets not unlike those that we walk in our cities every day, filled with people who have dreams both pursued and dashed.

The city sits on the water, industry and docks to the east, a thin strip of old docks leading to luxury shorefront property to the west, a downtown of skyscrapers and suburbs beyond. Nestled between them all, surrounded by stone walls, is a neighbourhood, the oldest in the city. It is called the Kaz.

#### The Kaz

“Ruined buildings, ruined lives...”

Once the beautiful, prideful, majestic centre of the city, the neighbourhood called the Kaz has been brought low by age. Grassy expanses were covered over by scabs of concrete, cheap apartments grow where flowers once bloomed, and treetops that once wove gracefully around estates now snarl with traffic. Only a few of the buildings remain, protected by heritage laws, but impossibly expensive to maintain. They have fallen, one by one, to the ravages of time, becoming urban legend, the source of stories of ghosts, secrets and other mysteries that refuse to die.

For all the things that have changed, it is debauchery that remains a part of the Kaz. In times past a carelessly parted blind would reveal the parties of the rich, sumptuous, opulent attire carefully put on and carelessly thrown off. Today the sliver of light through a night window reveals attire as

carelessly thrown aside as ever. The Kaz has become a red-light district, a neighbourhood where prostitution is tolerated.

Around all this are the walls. Once they stood to protect the rich from would-be invaders. Indeed, they still do protect the rich, but now they do so by protecting the rich outside from having to see what the crowning glory of the city has become.

## WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game is a way for people to tell a story together. In *Terribly Beautiful*, this is done by having one person take control of the world and most of the people in it, and by everyone else having control of one character each. The story is communicated by simply telling the story, relating it by voice. It does not require any acting or costumes.

There is more than just telling a story to roleplaying games, though. Sometimes there will come points in the story where people want it to go different directions. Sometimes there will be times when the story needs some tension. Sometimes people just need a little help shaping the story and keeping that shape consistent. It is at these times that the game part of the roleplaying game come into use.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO PLAY

Two to six friends, including yourself, a deck of tarot cards (or playing cards, see the optional rules with the Instructions for Play), a character made for each person but one (the players), some story ideas for the remaining person (the gamemaster) to use.

To ease language usage in the rules, players are referred to by the female pronoun and the gamemaster by the male. Men or women should not feel restricted to either part in playing the game.

## GLOSSARY

Host: someone who is possessed by a demon or angel

John: someone who hires prostitutes

(the) Kaz: the neighbourhood in which the game takes place, a red-light district

(the) Pale: a sexually transmitted disease that turns its victims into the epitome of beauty before killing them

Lady-of-the-Night: a female prostitute

Red-light District: a neighbourhood in which open prostitution is either legal or tolerated

Simply Beautiful: a term of affection for prostitutes who are not infected

Streetname: a nickname

Streetwalker: a prostitute

Terribly Beautiful: a prostitute who has been infected with the Pale

(the) Trade: those involved in prostitution or its promotion

## BEING TERRIBLY BEAUTIFUL

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Being one of the Terribly Beautiful is more than just a label or a disease, it is being part of a group that hides and protects its own, that accepts and celebrates its separation from society. They have their own ways, born of necessity.

### Protection

Anyone revealed to society as being Terribly Beautiful is open to oppression and abuse by society. As such, no Terribly Beautiful should ever “out” another. This raises, though, whether the society of the Terribly Beautiful should be revealed. Some see no harm in it, but others believe it, its structure and traditions should be kept secret as well.

Streetnames are another part of this tradition. Everyone chooses or is given a streetname when they become part of the Terribly Beautiful, so that others may refer to them without giving away identities. A few of the Terribly Beautiful, like Baba Yaga and Medusa have chosen to break this anonymity for themselves, allowing their streetnames to be publicly known, then living by those names.

### Taboo

Sex is the destroyer. It is the act that took away the profession and the life of the Terribly Beautiful. Society fears the Terribly Beautiful because of the death that sex with them could bring. For these reasons, most Terribly Beautiful can no longer stomach the idea of sex. It has become taboo. The grey area is the question of whether or not it is okay for the Terribly Beautiful to sleep with each other. What is the threat of death to someone who is already dying?

### Gossip

A simple conversation is rarely so simple. Gossip is the glue that holds the Terribly Beautiful together. With little else from which to derive power, knowledge is a valuable thing. For that reason, whoever reveals the juiciest secrets is held in the highest regard, which can lead to some competition. There is, however, always a balance to be found between keeping trust and revealing secrets.

### Punishment

Those who are found to be in violation of the traditions are excommunicated. No one may speak with them, or even acknowledge their existence. This is a horrible thing for a Terribly Beautiful, for that circle of friends is often the last.

Of particular note are those who ignore the taboo on sex, who still carry on their work as prostitutes despite knowing that of their illness. They embrace the image of monstrosity that society places upon them. As a result, they are excommunicated from the rest of the Terribly Beautiful. Medusa is one such individual.

### The Simply Beautiful

Prostitution, including both pimps and the prostitutes, are collectively referred to as the trade. Sometimes the phrase, “simply beautiful,” is affectionately used to refer to prostitutes who aren’t infected with the Pale.

While the Terribly Beautiful are the lowest of humanity as far as the rest of society may see, other prostitutes sometimes develop a reverence, much like martyr worship, for the Terribly

Beautiful. Many of the Terribly Beautiful are not above taking advantage of this to glean information, for a prostitute not yet pushed to desperation sees less value in idle gossip.

## THE PALE

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“Everyone dies, but that doesn’t make death the great equalizer. Sometimes you can buy yourself a stay of execution, but not everyone can afford the price.”

The Pale is the common name for a sexually-transmitted viral disease that has been slowly eating its way through the populace. While science searches for treatments and cures, superstition surrounds the disease just as hatred becomes a jail for those suspected of carrying it.

### Transmission

The Pale is fairly difficult to transmit from person to person. Only sexual contact or blood mixing will do it. As a result, both prostitutes and intravenous drug users are most at risk.

### Symptoms

There is a period of incubation, where the symptoms of the Pale don’t exhibit themselves. It varies greatly from person to person, but generally lasts a few months. This is why the Pale has spread so far, the infected don’t realize that they’re carrying the disease, and pass it onto others in the meantime. There are tests to detect the Pale, even in its early stages.

The first symptoms to show is a suppression of appetite. Following that are bouts of exhaustion. The person seems fine for a while, and then just collapses. This is followed by the pale skin and increasing thinness as the body and the disease eats first fat then muscle until little more than skin and bones are left. It takes months for the Pale to run its course once the symptoms appear.

In its final stage the disease transforms, turns necrotic, producing black spots that spread across the skin as it eats all flesh. Madness results as the brain decays. It only takes a few hours to a couple of days the disease does enough damage to kill what’s left of its host, and it doesn’t stop even there, continuing to eat until the flesh is dust over bones. It is a truly horrifying thing to watch, and if another person’s open wounds contact a infected skin in this stage, the disease may transfer. The new host immediately begins this stage.

### Treatment

There is no cure for the Pale, but there is treatment. A cocktail of drugs can alleviate some of the symptoms of the Pale and grant a longer life. The drugs also protect unborn children from contracting the Pale if drugs are taken over the entire pregnancy. Little can be done for those in the final stage of the disease, save whatever is possible to limit their pain.

Legally, treatment for the Pale must be administered within a hospital. Patients are not allowed to inject themselves. It can cost hundreds of dollars a day, only a fraction of which actually pays for the drugs. Nonetheless, the drugs are expensive. On the black market they range from ten to forty dollars per dose, depending on how much they have been cut with other substances or if some of the medications are missing from the cocktail.

There are rumours that there is a deliberate avoidance of research that might lead to a cure,

that the treatment makes too much money to be worth finding one. Unfortunately, the drugs are very expensive, beyond the means of many who need them, particularly those who are most likely to spread the disease.

### False Hopes

Where science does not provide, the market will. The Pale creates desperation, and desperation is just another word for opportunity to some. Many street drugs alleviate the draining affects of the Pale to some degree, but there is often a cost and a risk. Proper medications are sometimes available in part, having lesser effect than the full cocktail, and sometimes cut with other, more dangerous substances.

There are also those who turn to spirituality or faith to seek a cure. They seem to find some small solace in it, something that seems to be genuinely beneficial, but it is all too often oversold as a cure.

## UPTOWN SOCIETY

Because prostitutes and intravenous drug users are most vulnerable, the Pale is considered to be a “dirty” disease, a curse afflicting mostly those who are engaged in undesirable activities. No matter what the real reason for infection, being infected is enough to result in ostracization from proper society. Those known to be infected have, on occasion, been turned away from some hospitals and private clinics.

### Faux-Terrible

Meanwhile, society is engaged in a grand hypocrisy. More and more actors and fashion models of both genders are sporting the thin, gaunt, pale look. They are the faux-terrible, with a penchant for opulent, gothic fashion. If starving themselves and makeup isn’t enough to achieve the look, then arsenic wafers are taken, a little bit of poison creating much the same effect.

## CREATING A CHARACTER

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Making a character is like building a mask for the mind to wear. It is the creation of a fictional personality to assume within the fictional world created by the story. The characters are women of the Terribly Beautiful, former prostitutes now dying from the disease known as the Pale. Before they die, they hope to build a legacy, something to leave behind in the world.

Character creation has several steps, and they are presented here in an order that seems most useful, but they may be done in any order. Any cards drawn in a step should be reshuffled back into the deck after used or discarded. The character should be written out on the bottom half of a piece of paper folded top-to-bottom. This way, the top of the paper can conceal what is written on the sheet. The character name, streetname and player name should be written on the back of the top half of the sheet so it is obvious whose sheet it is, even when folded.

## A LEGACY TO LEAVE

“We can cheat death, if only a little.”

Choose what sort of legacy the character is trying to achieve before she dies. Choose a legacy that will prove difficult.

1. Fame: She wants the whole world to remember her fondly, to be a star that shines even beyond death.
2. Infamy: She wants the whole world to remember her, but let suffer for what they put her through.
3. Mother: She wants to pass on all her dreams and her wisdom to one other, in the hopes that that person need not live the same life.
4. Reputation: She wants to be treasured by those few that matter most to her, those who live around her, be they the people of the Kaz or just the Terribly Beautiful.
5. Monument: She wants to make a physical object that will last long after she is gone. Whatever it is, it's hard to make, involving many steps to create or hard to obtain materials.
6. Other: She has something else in mind, a legacy that is all her own.

Creating that legacy will not be easy, but the obstacles to be faced are not completely unpredictable. Each player draws a number of cards according to the chart below and uses all but two of them to inspire obstacles. These are just the obstacles that the character knows about. The gamemaster may introduce more during the story.

# of players	# of cards
1	9
2	7
3	6
4	5
5	4

The type of obstacle to be overcome depends upon the suit, and players may talk with each other to develop ideas. If a player has a good idea of her own, the GM should allow it, regardless of the cards.

Cups: an enemy or overly needy dependent

Pentacles: a lack of money or property

Swords: lack of knowledge or confidence

Wands: prejudice or other societal oppression

## YOUR SECRET, RUMOUR & LIE

Each player draws five cards from the major arcana deck then look up their meanings on the following table. Three of the cards are used to inspire a secret, a rumour and a lie about the character. Either interpretation can be chosen, but only three cards are used. The other two cards are discarded.

0/0 (Fool) opportunism / risk without forethought  
 1 / I (Magician) power over self / power over others  
 2 / II (High Priestess) bringing opposites together / reason over the heart  
 3 / III (Empress) nurturing and protective / over-protective  
 4 / IV (Emperor) righteousness / ambition  
 5 / V (Hierophant) reputation / conformity  
 6 / VI (Lovers) relationships / mistrust  
 7 / VII (Chariot) persistence / wandering attention  
 8 / VIII (Strength) tenaciousness / stubbornness  
 9 / IX (Hermit) wisdom / isolation  
 10 / X (Wheel of Fortune) good fortune / misfortune  
 11 / XI (Justice) fair judgement / corrupt authority  
 12 / XII (Hanged Man) sacrifice / self-seeking  
 13 / XIII (Death) hope for change / pain  
 14 / XIV (Temperance) moderation / being timid  
 15 / XV (Devil) servitude / self-loathing  
 16 / XVI (Tower) rebuilding / destruction  
 17 / XVII (Star) hope / overlooked opportunity  
 18 / XVIII (Moon) illusion / madness  
 19 / XIX (Sun) happiness / over-indulgence  
 20 / XX (Judgement) self-reflection / self-deceit  
 21 / XXI (World) discovery / pride

Of course, if the player already has something in mind, and the gamemaster thinks it's okay, then that should be used instead of relying on the cards.

## A MORE PERSONAL PRACTICE

Pick one aspect of the Terribly Beautiful subculture: protection, taboo, gossip or punishment. What is the character's interpretation of that practice? Does the character adhere to it tightly, reinterpret it somehow or violate it?

## WHAT YOU KNOW

Deal the player a hand of seven cards to represent the knowledge the character gained before she became one of the Terribly Beautiful. For each numbered card the character gains a rumour and a secret is gained for each face card. If it helps, the suits of the minor arcana may be used to inspire ideas, but they don't have to be followed if other ideas arise.

1. Cups: emotions
2. Pentacles: materialism
3. Swords: forcefulness
4. Wands: spirituality



## Secrets

Players may design their own secrets, or they can get the gamemaster to help design them.

- someone's embarrassing/criminal secret
- a hidden past
- where to find something special (e.g. medication, uncut drugs)
- the location of someplace safe or otherwise special
- a rare bit of history
- something else (run it by the gamemaster)

## Rumours

Rumours are not decided at character creation, but their number is recorded. During play, when the character encounters something that the player wishes a bit more information on than the gamemaster might have, a rumour may be spent to gain that information, representing what the character has heard through gossip.

## A Lie

The character knows one additional bit of information about someone, but knows it to be untrue.

## NAMES & APPEARANCE

It is normal for those in the trade to have a streetname, something they tell their johns. Part of becoming one of the Terribly Beautiful is getting a new streetname to use when speaking with others of the Terribly Beautiful. It is part of the traditions, a way to talk about fellow Terribly Beautiful in public without giving away their identity. Of course, these names aren't generally used to speak directly to someone unless it is in private, so that no one else can make the connection.

It isn't necessary to describe every detail of a character's appearance, only note a couple of notable features. A good guide is to have one detail describe the character herself, and another to describe the character's fashion sense.

## EXHAUSTION

The character begins with a maximum exhaustion of 8 points. The character's exhaustion duration starts at 6 minutes.

## INTRODUCTIONS AND EXTRAS

Once all the characters have been made, it is time to turn to the other players and introduce them to one another. They are roommates, people who share an apartment, paid for out of the pittance provided by social assistance, lowly jobs or minor criminal opportunities.

Because many tarot decks are done up with roman numerals, it can be handy to record on the character sheet what the numbers from 1 to 10 look like in the roman system. Use the chart for the major arcana above for reference if you don't know them by heart.

Example:

Leslie is making her character in preparation for the game. She looks over the legacies and decides that she would like to be famous, known by everyone, even beyond the Kaz. Perhaps her character could be a great singer, a voice to be recorded and remembered by future generations.

As there are two other players (not counting the gamemaster), she pulls 6 cards, getting 3 cups, a pentacle, a sword and a wand. The pentacle she chooses to be her wardrobe, since she can't afford clothes that are considered presentable in most of society. One of the cups represents an ex-boyfriend who keeps bothering her, trying to get back together, hoping her talent will net him a fortune. The sword represents a lack of confidence in herself, an unwillingness to face the public. Finally, the wand represents how the public will likely react to her having the Pale.

Leslie then pulls five random major arcana to use for a secret, rumour and a lie. They are: Wheel of Fortune, World, Hierophant, Star, and High Priestess. Looking over their possible interpretations, she decides that the Star could represent the rumour that her singing is good enough to be a professional. The World could represent her lie, that she's too proud to take advice on her singing skills. Her secret is a little harder to figure out, but Leslie decides that she'll use the Hierophant, hiding that she is one of the Terribly Beautiful, only presenting her voice and avoiding public exposure.

Next up is tradition. Leslie thinks that the second tradition, never revealing the identities of the Terribly Beautiful, is pretty central to her character. Perhaps her character could take it even further, never revealing the identities, even to other Terribly Beautiful, leaving people to introduce themselves.

Leslie then draws seven random minor arcana, getting five rumours and two secrets. She jots down the number 5 for rumours and then starts thinking about secrets. For the first one she decides that she knows a celebrity that tries to hide his identity when he comes to the Kaz. Her second secret is a place from which her voice can echo beautifully over the Kaz, but where she is hard to find. As for a lie, her character knows of a local gang member who has people convinced that he's a psycho, but who is really just acting. She shows these to the gamemaster, who notes them so he can make up supporting characters to go with them.

All characters start with a maximum exhaustion of 9, so that gets recorded and Leslie starts thinking about names. Petra is a pretty name, so she takes that, and decides to take a Turkish surname to go with it. Most of them are quite the mouthful, so she settles on Saban, becoming Petra Saban, which is written on the top of the back of the character sheet. As for a street name, the sirens from the Greek myth seem to fit her, and so she chooses one of their names, Peisinoe and also notes it on the back of the character sheet.

Finally, Leslie introduces her character to the rest of the players.

## HOW TO PLAY

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### Setup

Gather all the people and things mentioned in the introduction section of the game. Separate the major arcana and shuffle them as one pile. Shuffle the minor arcana as a separate and deal each person a hand of 7 cards, plus a second hand for the gamemaster, called the "devil's hand". These hands are kept through the entire session for use in any challenges that might arise.

## Taking Turns

The process of taking turns is often referred to in the rules. Taking turns can start with anyone and go in any order, but everyone involved should get a chance to take their turn before anyone gets their next turn. If this gets too complex, then just go clockwise from person to person. Challenges are the exception to this, for outcome has a turn order determined by the cards. Once everyone has had a chance at a turn, that is called a round.

## Telling the Story

Each player is generally responsible for his or her character, and the gamemaster is responsible for the rest of the fictional world in which the characters exist. Normally the gamemaster and players can all just take turns describing what happens in the story, and as long as the story seems reasonable to everyone, then it's okay. There are, however, some situations where the story may call for greater tension to be introduced. That's when challenges are used.

## Challenges

Challenges are resolved through a little card game. It starts by everyone involved taking turns to either bid or call. A bid means the person describes his or her character's action and also chooses a card to put face down into his or her bid pile.

Calling can only be done by someone with at least one card in his or her bid pile. The person calling does not play a card, but all people flip their bid cards face up. Each person adds up his or her numbered cards (aces to 10/X) and calls out the total. If two or more people tie, they should each draw a major arcana card to break the tie.

The person who had the highest total wins. He or she begins by describing the character's action and one detail about the outcome. After that, the turns go in descending order. Each player may, on his or her turn, play a bid face card (page, knight, queen or king) to add a detail to the outcome. These details may affect any other character, even those handled by the gamemaster, but cannot control them.

Once everyone has had a chance at a turn, the winner may choose to extend it another round by playing a face card and adding a detail just as everyone else has with their face cards. It may go as many rounds as the winner has face cards to extend it.

Once the winner does not or cannot extend it another round, all cards that were bid are shuffled together into a collective pile along with any undealt cards (including used ones). Each player then gets dealt back up to their hand of seven cards. The major arcana need only be reshuffled if they're getting down to the last few cards.

Every challenge should end with either some resolution or a chance to people to leave the situation or give up. If people aren't satisfied, then a new challenge may be started.

## Example of Play:

Player 1 is controlling Sarah, Player 2 is controlling Julie, and their characters are trying to obtain a building permit to restore an old building. The bureaucrat, who doesn't want to help them, is controlled by the gamemaster (GM). They begin a challenge to resolve the situation.

GM: He just looks at you, straight in the eyes, arms crossed and says, "Look, you're not a contractor. I'm not going to give you a permit." (bids a 3)

Player 1: Sarah pushes forwards the blueprint, "That doesn't matter, as long as we're adhering to code." (bids a 7)

Player 2: “And we wouldn’t be here unless we wanted to do it right.” (bids a face)

GM: “What would a coupla’ women know about doing construction right?” (bids an 8)

Player 1: Sarah has had enough. “Why don’t you take a look at the blueprint and tell us?” (bids a 9)

Player 2: Julie is looking right pissed about now, too. She grabs the blueprints and shoves them physically into his chest. “Just do your job, damnit!” (bids another face)

GM: “A bit of a temper. I like that. Okay” He starts looking over the blueprints, occasionally glancing up to eye you both up and down. (bids a face)

Player 1: Sarah just stares him down, tight lipped and tapping her finger impatiently on the counter. (bids a face)

GM: “Well, perhaps I could overlook a thing or two, if maybe we could make this job a little more fun?”

Player 2: “Forget that. Maybe you can just do your job, or else the city can hear the soundtrack to go with the security video.” I call.

All players reveal their bids. The GM has bid 11 plus a face card. Player 1 has 15 plus a face card, and Player 2 bid only two face cards. Because she has the highest, Player 1 goes first, the GM goes second, and Player 2 goes last.

Player 1: Sarah points in the direction of the standard security camera covering every government service desk, which should make him rather nervous. (GM records 1 exhaustion point to the bureaucrat)

GM (plays her face card): He spits his words at Julie, “You know, it’s just visual, and I’m the one with the good reputation around here, so do you really think your word will be better than mine?” (Player 2 records a point)

Player 2 (plays a face card): “But they got a good look at us trying to get you to look at the blueprint, and you resisting.” (GM nods and records another point)

Player 1 (plays her face card to continue another round): “And do you really think they’ll bother, or will they just want to cover their own asses and avoid the scandal?” (GM records another point)

GM: I bid no more face cards, so I have to pass.

Player 2: (plays her second face card): Julie just covers herself up, looking as uncomfortable for the camera as possible, just to drive the point home. (GM records another point from the intimidation).

Player 1: I’m out of face cards, so that’s it. Shuffle the used cards with the undealt and deal us back up to seven.

GM: His eyes drop to the blueprints, obviously thinking more than studying, then he slaps the paper down on the counter, and starts bringing out the paperwork. “Alright, you can go ahead with your work, and next time, try to come back on someone else’s shift here.”

## Insight

Sometimes knowing a secret or lie can provide some insight. If a character takes an action that relates to a secret or lie, the player may choose one card from her hand, and exchange it for a random card from the hand of whoever the secret or lie is about. Each secret or lie may only be used once per session.

## Example:

Finch is a street thug that loves to brag. Right now he’s bragging about some guy he supposedly killed last week, but Sarah knows that it didn’t happen. She saw Finch’s victim just yesterday, badly beaten but very much alive, and leaving from the Kaz. She knows the game Finch is playing, so she looks to the others in the group and very obviously rolls her eyes. She gives the gamemaster

(who is controlling Finch) her 2, and randomly draws a face card from the gamemaster's hand.

### Exhaustion

Every character begins with 8 exhaustion points (healthy people have 9). Challenges can drain a character. Each outcome detail that affects a character detrimentally, even emotionally so, costs one exhaustion point. Any time a character runs out of those points, she collapses from exhaustion as the Pale leaves her drained. The character is then effectively out of it, unable to engage in challenges for a number of minutes (time passing for the players, not the characters) equal to the character's exhaustion duration.

## DRUGS & MEDICATIONS

Drugs and medications can hurt or help, and they often do both. All drugs have a strength, from mild (marijuana, strength 1) to strong (ice, strength 5), and that strength can vary a bit depending on whether or not the drugs are cut.

### Stimulants

The character regains as many exhaustion points as the strength of the drug (even beyond the maximum), but loses one point less than twice the drug's strength once it wears off.

### Depressants

Puts the character out of action for a number of scenes equal to the drug's strength, regaining that many exhaustion point, but doesn't risk failing health. This can only take the character to her maximum exhaustion points minus one.

If nothing important is happening, then the story may just skip over the intervening scenes.

### Hallucinogens

Instead of choosing which card to bid during a challenge, select one randomly. It is still put into the pile face down, and the person whose hand it is from may look at it. How many times this may happen during a challenge depends on how powerful the drugs are.

### Medication

Medication for the Pale is supposed to be taken daily via injection. It is actually a cocktail of drugs which combine to fight off the symptoms of the disease. It creates the effects of a strength 1 version all of the above types of drugs. Street versions of the medication may only have some of the drugs, and so only create one or two of the effects, but they won't hold the Pale at bay as easily.

For every side effect of the medication, the chance of failing health is reduced by one card. The first gets rid of page, the second knight and the third queen. The other advantage of medication is that the character can't overdose, provided only one dose is taken per day.

### The Price of Addiction

Eventually, if a character continues to take drugs, they will take their toll on the character's health. Every time the character does drugs greater than strength 1, draw an undealt card. If the card is an ace, the character overdoses.

An overdose knocks the character out for a number of scenes like a depressant, but doesn't

recover exhaustion points. It then acts like a hallucinogen for the same duration. The character also fails health automatically.

## THE PALE

### A Good Night's Rest

A good sleep will bring a character back up to full exhaustion points, but sleep plagued by nightmares, interrupted, or just a short nap will recover only two points.

### Failing Health

When a character collapses from exhaustion, a card is drawn from the player's hand. If it is a face card, lower the character's maximum exhaustion points by 1 and add 3 minutes to the character's exhaustion duration. The Pale may only cause failing health once per session, though other effects, like injury, may cause it to happen more often.

### The Final Stage

If a character's maximum exhaustion reaches 1 (for any reason), the character's disease enters its final stage. The final stage is marked by the disease turning necrotic, rapidly eating away at the character's flesh, creating hallucinations, madness, and growing blackening of the skin. The character will collapse and truly begin to die after the next challenge (whether it costs exhaustion or not), or if the character collapses from exhaustion for any reason. If none of that occurs, then the character will still die after a day or so, but it will simply be narrated out between player and gamemaster.

## OPTIONAL: PLAYING CARDS

If no one has a deck of tarot cards, it is possible to play Terribly Beautiful with regular playing cards. Set aside any jokers that may be in the deck before play. Any use of major arcana for creating characters will have to be done through choice instead. As for breaking ties in challenges, just go clockwise around, starting from with the gamemaster.

If you are a player of Terribly Beautiful, please read no further. The rest of the book is for the gamemaster to use and for you to discover through the story. All will be revealed in time.

## BEING THE GAMEMASTER

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Terribly Beautiful is like a danse macabre with its sensibilities turned on its head, where death may be bribed to hold off for just a little longer. The game explores many unpleasant things, but running it should not be unpleasant for the gamemaster.

Being the gamemaster in Terribly Beautiful is not completely different from being a player. Certainly, the gamemaster's responsibilities are different. He must describe the world and control of all the people in it. Still it is a game for the gamemaster as much as it is for the players. It might be easiest to think of the world as the gamemaster's character. Even more precisely, it is the neighbourhood, the Kaz itself, that reflects the gamemaster's point of view.

## BUILDING LEGACIES

The first path that characters may follow is to build their legacies, to create something that will outlive them. The player should have already provided a few ideas for obstacles that the character must face, and once they are overcome, the legacy is complete to the character's satisfaction.

That doesn't mean that there cannot be other obstacles. The gamemaster should introduce at least one unforeseen obstacle for every character. This will likely result in more than one being dealt with each session.

Obstacles relating to legacies are usually simply difficulties to be overcome, a straight line towards a goal, and most of the time, that's what they should be. The complication arises when the achievement of that goal may result in problems for others. Then the question becomes, what is someone willing to do to reach their goals? That becomes a question of identity. If a character is willing to do anything, then the goal itself should be corrupted.

## PAINFUL LESSONS

When a character pursues their goal too hard, or is having great difficulty overcoming the obstacles that are set in their path, there is another path to be taken, the path of self-acceptance. Before play starts, the gamemaster should choose one of the following lessons upon which to focus the game (or make up a new one, should one come to mind):

1. The Choice: humanity is not something that can be taken, but something that can only be given up
2. One Thing Left: when it seems there is nothing left to lose, self-identity is the one thing that remains
3. Mortality: what are legacies but the final denial and fear of the inevitability of death? learn to reject them and find peace
4. Community is What We Make It: being apart from society can mean being a part of something else, but what that something is, can only be what you make of it

### Encouragement

Don't expect that characters will stumble onto this path on their own. Look to see if there is someone, a supporting character, to whom the character looks for advice, approval or support. That is

the character who should hint (or outright tell, if need be) at the other path. For example, Baba Yaga is a natural choice for this role, but some characters might not fit with her. A rebellious or destructive character might even go so far as to find Medusa more appealing.

### Teaching With Pain

These are painful lessons to learn. Their importance is reinforced through obstacles and opponents to be overcome, and also through loss and suffering. Players will find their characters going on a downwards spiral towards nothingness. They will have to learn not to despair, to find hope where they can. Without challenge it has no value.

Terribly Beautiful is not a pleasant story, it is horrific and terrifying. It is about people dying in degrees, both physically and spiritually. Learn to play this, to emphasize it in the description used in telling the story.

### Creating Fear

Terror is the fear that something bad will happen and there is nothing you can do to stop it. Horror is the visceral reaction people have to the violation of the body, be it their own or merely witnessed. Horror can be that thing that terror threatens. Terror can be the fear that something horrific may happen again. In that way, terror and horror feed into one another.

Set the mood, focus on the details, the ambiance and the pacing, rather than on the action. It is through these things that fear is created. It is through fear that characters may be guided towards a different path.

### Injury and Death

Fights aren't usually about killing people, they're about declaring dominance and maintaining ego. Someone who collapses from a fight (loses all their exhaustion points) will face a failing health check, even they are not sick with the pale, representing the possibility for permanent injury.

For death to occur from violence, either it requires some manner of deadly weapon (a knife or gun) or some effort. The opponent must be collapsed from exhaustion. The victor must declare that he or she is seeking to kill. The chosen victim will then be killed if nothing is done to stop the killer.

Death is not usually something that happens quickly. People bleed out over minutes or even hours. Painful infections can spread over days before the end comes. If a character is dying, then exhaustion points will not recover, even though consciousness may come and go. Death, even when it does occur, should almost never be quick.

### Demons & Angels

Don't be fooled into thinking that angels are good and demons are bad. Angels are the tougher of the two to be possessed by, for they ask for sacrifice, even sacrifice of things that might help achieve a legacy. An angel thinks nothing of its host, only of its goal.

Demons and angels both pose difficult choices for characters, but, from the point of view of telling a story, they are more than just villains. They make manifest the emotional struggles that occur within characters. Because of this, they should be carefully crafted to fit with the characters.

There is another effect created by demons in particular. Most people in the Kaz have something likeable about them, but anyone can become a villain if they act selfishly and with disregard for others. Even Stray, the big, friendly dog of the Kaz, can become quite the monster if driven to it by a demon inside. This can shatter relationships and create mistrust. Not only that, but there is always the question, are they doing this because the demon tells them, or is the demon just giving



excuses to do what they really wanted to? Will they revert to their old selves when the demon is gone, or will they keep behaving in the ways of self-gratification? Demons and angels don't control people, they just provide secrets and suggestions.

## OTHER ADVICE

### On Tracking Money

It's a niggling detail, but one that shall undoubtedly come up. For most things it isn't necessary to track how much money a character has, but there will be times when cash is tight, or a little bit of cash could matter. In these cases, pull a card from the major arcana and multiply by 10 dollars. That's how much money the character has for the adventure. In those cases, count everything, even the change, and make sure it all matters, that the character has to make choices about what to buy and what to do without.

### Obstacles

Sometimes a character may try to overcome something that isn't another person. Obstacles don't take actions, but they can still take several steps to resolve in a challenge. Sometimes the obstacle can be declared too hard, bid a card, and the character needs to come up with a way to try again. For example, a character is trying to kick open a door, playing a card. The gamemaster could say it's firmly bolted and strong, playing a card in opposition. The character then takes a running charge at the door, bidding a second card. If the character charges, then the gamemaster needs to decide whether that is enough (calling) or if the character really needs to get some tools out to knock down the door (playing another card).

## MORE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAY

### Talismans & Faith

In a world with demons and angels, the spiritual is not without its power. If a character holds to a ritual or believes in a talisman, even when it does not do anything, it may develop a power for them. Once per session a talisman or ritual may prevent the loss of an exhaustion point.

This can lead to delaying death by the Pale, however little it may help, for if those who reach exhaustion less often may keep their health a little longer.

### The Devil's Hand

At the beginning of the session, seven cards were set aside as a hand that no one was using. This is called the devil's hand. It is used by the gamemaster when there are two non-player factions in a challenge situation. The gamemaster's regular hand of cards is used to bid for one faction, and the other is bid for using the devil's hand.

### Insight

The gamemaster may use insight just like players can. It can be done through supporting characters but not directly through demons or angels. Demons and angels use the same mechanic when revealing secrets and lies instead.

## Groups of Supporting Characters

Sometimes you will control a group of people, be they mobs, gangs, crowds, cats or whatever. It is easiest to just treat these groups as one person, using only one hand of cards, but getting the equivalent of one free face card in addition to whatever cards were bid. You may assign the a number of “exhaustion points” to represent their dedication to whatever their chosen task is, and have them scatter once they reach their limit. This is usually half their number if organized or much less if they are just a mob.

## THE LONG STORY

Terribly Beautiful is likely to run five or more sessions, and so some planning ahead should be done to keep the game alive over that time.

## Players Creating Characters

As players create their characters, they may need assistance choosing or creating their secrets and rumours. Secrets and rumours designed at character creation do not have to relate to anyone in the section on supporting characters. Instead, you should offer to create a supporting character to come up with any tidbit of knowledge that the player might think of. You may give secrets and rumours from the supporting character section if you wish.

## More on Secrets

A secret or rumour usually has one detail, but it doesn't have to stay that way. Extra details can be added, but they aren't considered extra secrets. By breaking up a secret into several parts and having the characters follow it, it can create a mystery.

## Between Life's Excitements

Each gathering of all the players is called a session and it is usually dominated by one opportunity or calamity that sparks what is called the adventure. If possible, try to end each session with the adventure more or less concluded. The Pale does not advance overly quickly, and it is likely that days, weeks, or even months pass between those few times when life provides opportunity or calamity.

## When Does It End?

Terribly Beautiful will be played over several sessions, but when should the story be brought to an end? There are a couple of options:

1. When all characters have either built their legacies or died.
2. When the characters come to the realization that it is about humanity, not immortality, and perform some act that demonstrates this.

When a character dies, the gamemaster should decide how close to the end of the story the game is. If it's just about to end, then it might be better to have that player step aside from playing, but if there is some significant play time, then a new character may be created.

If a character manages to create her legacy, it may seem that the story is over for the character, but the lack of a legacy puts more emphasis on the humanity of the character, especially if the

character ends up helping the others with their legacies.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. An Old Acquaintance: A former john of one of the characters meets up with the characters and wants to get reacquainted.
2. Hunting the Hunted: One of the predatory johns (Piotr or Jack) is on the prowl. Can the players reveal him as a monster and put a stop to his activities?
3. Unwanted Secrets: A secret is discovered, but it is about someone who is cared about. What to do with it or do about it?
4. Looking for Victims: Someone possessed by a demon has come to the Kaz to look for someone to give it to. Possession by a demon may be a curse, but it is a curse that provides opportunity.
5. Martyrdom: Someone possessed by an angel makes their sacrifice by saving one of the characters, and the angel picks a new host. Living with an angel is not as much of a blessing as one might think.
6. Contraband Shipment: A lot of smuggling goes through the old docks beneath the Kaz. Perhaps this time it's drugs, medication, immigrants, or something else entirely. Whatever it is, the Kaz will be more lively for a bit because of it.
7. Crackdown: the police are looking to make a good show for law & order, and the Kaz is the place for it. For the next while they'll be looking for drug dealers and other criminals to bust, and journalists will be looking for a show.

## SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

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Supporting characters are controlled by the gamemaster and brought into the story as needed. Alternately, the gamemaster may choose to randomly bring in a character (such as who might be walking down the street one day) by drawing a card from the major arcana deck. The number / roman numeral and character name is listed below. Not all characters are on the list, as certain characters do not regularly wander the streets of the Kaz.

### Random Street Encounters

The Kaz is a busy place, but it's not uncommon to see a familiar face amongst the crowds. Every now and then the gamemaster may draw a card from the major arcana deck and look on the table below to see who is there to meet.

0/0 (Fool) Stray

1 / I (Magician) Eternity

2 / II (High Priestess) Tia

3 / III (Empress) Alicia Shine

4 / IV (Emperor) Saffron

5 / V (Hierophant) Lilith Dark

6 / VI (Lovers) a cat

7 / VII (Chariot) Todor

8 / VIII (Strength) Maisarah Khartoon  
9 / IX (Hermit) Arnold Wink  
10 / X (Wheel of Fortune) Nabo  
11 / XI (Justice) Navjot Singh May  
12 / XII (Hanged Man) Tapin  
13 / XIII (Death) Medea/Medusa  
14 / XIV (Temperance) Baba Yaga  
15 / XV (Devil) Matthew Hurst  
16 / XVI (Tower) Dusty Hines  
17 / XVII (Star) Kim  
18 / XVIII (Moon) Mohinder Ramesh  
19 / XIX (Sun) Dr. Leigh O'Biern  
20 / XX (Judgement) Father Wright  
21 / XXI (World) Clayton Smart

## THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

### 0. Stray

Every community has a wandering animal or two, a pet that decided it was better to switch homes every night. Stray is such a creature, but he is a far larger dog than what normally attempts it.

Stray adopts people for a day, following them around, hoping for scraps. The people of the Kaz consider it a spectator sport when Stray picks a tourist for this treatment. Stray's scarred body and ragged fur makes him an intimidating sight, and his sheer persistence, along with the locals' tendency to allow him to wander into stores, restaurants and even sometimes onto buses, means that Stray is always nearby. It only ever lasts a day. When a new day dawns, Stray forgets his old master and seeks out a new one.

Stray is a person just like any other, with his own desires for attention, leadership, and food, and that means he is also vulnerable to possession by demons, who can manipulate him like any other person. Nonetheless, he is just a stray dog, trying to get through the day like everyone else in the Kaz.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

### 1. Eternity

She once had another name on the streets, but Eternity is what everyone knows her as now. She gained her new name by being that one-in-a-million, a carrier. She is unaffected by the Pale, though she may still infect others.

Dressed in dreadlocks and punk clothing, Eternity is part of the Terribly Beautiful and also not. She follows the traditions to their tightest interpretation, but she does not feel them, and she does not seek to build a legacy. Instead, she is afraid, afraid that violence or accident will cut short her miracle. Eternity has one more thing to lose than any of the Terribly Beautiful, a long life.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Lie: Being unaffected by the disease has given her new hope for life

### 2. Tiamat (Tia)

Tiamat is pregnant, and, from the size she's grown to, there will be more than one. Tiamat has

used every chance she has to get the medication needed to protect her unborn children from the Pale that infects her, but until they're born, she won't know if missed injections will leave them born dying. With only a month or so to go, Tiamat is at her wits end, anxious beyond what she can stand, fearing that tomorrow she might not be able to afford the next shot.

Exhaustion: 5 Duration: 15

Lie: She has gets her medication by prescription

### 3. Alicia Shine

The Bean There cafe sits on the corner of . It is a bit messy, walls adorned with work by local artists, couches at one end and nice glass-topped tables surrounded by cheap chairs. A very beautiful young woman acts as waitress and barista. Her makeup carefully creates the look of the faux-terrible.

Alicia is not one of the faux-terrible, for she really has the Pale, contracted through a dirty needle. At the end of the workday, all she wants to do is fall off her feet, but in order to become a model, she knows she must go out. She turned to drugs for the energy to do that.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: her use of drugs

Lie: she is one of the faux-terrible

### 4. Jimmy Fly (Saffron)

For a good time, just look for the man in the yellow smoking jacket. Jimmy Fly is what he calls himself, and Saffron is what everybody else calls him. The nickname comes from his wearing buddhist prayer beads, instead of the gold necklaces that would complete his image. It stuck, and as much as "Jimmy Fly" didn't fall in love with the nickname, he grinned and bore it.

Jimmy Fly's girls work the clubs, particularly the Lair, a darkwave and technopop club where booths provide semi-private spots where the action can happen and the bouncers can conveniently forget to check. He doesn't like his girls taking johns to hotels, in part because he can't keep an eye on them, and in part because quick jobs make for more money.

If the club is slow, then Jimmy isn't above taking one of his girls for a little fun, sharing some weed for their trouble.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: Jimmy's girls aren't the only ones that are quick. He only needs a couple of minutes to get off.

Lie: Jimmy is actually a buddhist monk (or once was), which is why they call him saffron

[George Cotronis picture #2 <http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v326/northerain/6stock-1.jpg>]

### 5. Lilith Dark

Lilith Dark isn't a streetname, she actually changed her legal name to match her image. Her shop, Under the Cover of Dark, is an occult shop, selling mostly books, but also a lot of random trinkets taken from every religion. She professes to believe in it all, and she does believe in most of it, overlooking those elements that contradict one another. She does brisk business in charms to protect from demons and angels, incense that is supposed to boost the immune system, and books on meditation, chakras and health.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Rumour: Lilith isn't quite as smart as she used to be, probably caused by drugs

Lie: Lilith is a satanist

## 6. A Cat

They're everywhere in the Kaz, or at least everywhere that Stray, the dog, isn't. Cats are forever looking for attention from passers-by and staying in different homes each night.

One cat is a cute thing, but when many of them gather, the power of a cacodemon may emerge (see the section on demons & angels).

Exhaustion: 4 Duration: 6 (special case)

Rumour: cats know all the hidden places in the city; one cat is cute, many cats are spooky

Secret: the cats are haunted by demons

## 7. Todor

There isn't a single cab company in the city that doesn't operate in the Kaz to some degree. Todor works for Chessley Cabs, and his vehicle is built to take the beating that a night of drunken customers can deal. There's bulletproof glass on the front windows and between the front and back seats. There's even a panic button he can kick to tell the cab company he's in trouble.

Like many taxi drivers, Todor is an immigrant. He is a medical doctor, but his degree isn't accepted by the government until he goes through years of processing, paperwork, testing and upgrade courses. The process for bringing in his wife looks like it will take twice as long.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Rumour: Todor is actually a doctor

## 8. Maisarah Khartoon

Ten pounds of crazy in an eight pound box, Maisarah will wander into a bar brawl just to take a drink before it gets spilled. Decked out in a white suit, white wingtip shoes, white porkpie hat, white tie and black shirt with plaid suspenders, and a pimped-out low-rider bicycle painted cherry red, she stands out in almost any crowd in the Kaz. She runs with a gang near the seaboard wall called the Raum who engage in a mixture of protection rackets and prostitution. It's her job in the gang to push any new female recruits to turn tricks to give the gang money.

Unlike many pimps, if somebody roughs up one of her girls, Maisarah goes berserk. The john had better be able to get out of the Kaz fast, because Maisarah can run down a taxi before it gets up to speed and has been known to go through car windows to get at someone, wrench in hand.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Rumour: Maisarah protects her girls

Lie: Maisarah will kill people for crossing her or anyone in her gang

## 9. Arnold Wink

Front clerk at the West Wind Motel, where rooms can be had for an hourly rate, though it isn't listed anywhere on the official ledgers. Arnold has seen it all, or rather, has heard it all through the cheap construction of the motel's walls and floors. He is largely beyond caring now, for often it's his job to clean up afterwards, and it's not a job he enjoys.

To pass the time he reads novels, lots of novels. They used to pile up behind the desk until his boss threatened to sell them all off. Arnold thought this was a great idea, and so now he sells them for a buck apiece. Not only that, but because he has read them all, he can often suggest books to people after asking them a few questions about what they might like.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

#### 10. Nabokov (Nabo)

So many start young, not innocent, but still naive. Nabo is such a girl, and though innocent she may not be, she plays the role oh so well. It never stops, not even when dealing with others that know she isn't, and eventually it grates on everyone's sensibilities. Still, there is a brightness in her eyes and her constant friendly chatter that inspire forgiveness.

Nabo's lively eyes are the result of her absolute sense of indestructibility. She seems to have the luck of the devil, and nothing has hurt her too much thus far, but others in the Kaz watch her, holding their breath, waiting for something horrible to happen.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

#### 11. Navjot Singh May

The Kaz has its own satellite police station, staffed twenty-four hours a day. Despite that, there is only one police officer who lives in the Kaz. Navjot Singh is a beat cop now, but his past saw him as a detective. He went undercover to investigate narcotics, and a lot of people say he went dirty fast. He only barely survived being found out by arranging some very fast arrests. Once back with the regular force, he was a wreck, and it wasn't long before he was busted back down to the beat. It's not like there's a worse neighbourhood in the city to ship him to.

Navjot Singh doesn't care about that. The Kaz is his home, and while many on the streets don't trust him for what he did in the past, he's still one of them, a local, and not an outsider like the other cops. The Kaz protects its own against the rest, and Navjot Singh protects the Kaz.

Exhaustion: 8 Duration: 6

Rumour: he used to be an undercover detective investigating narcotics

Secret: he still uses hallucinogens, and knows about demons and angels

#### 12. Tapin

Tapin was never into other men, but they were into him and he was into their wallets, so it was all okay as far as he was concerned. At least, it was until he became infected with the Pale. The Pale changed everything for him. While he could no longer sleep with his former patrons, he gazed upon the Terribly Beautiful and knew he had new patrons.

What he didn't expect was the rage. Though thin to the point of emaciation, the Terribly Beautiful held a strength borne of pure emotion, and Tapin found himself the target of that. The first time he left covered in bruises and scratches, nursing a broken wrist and barely able to walk. Now he is reconsidering his position.

Exhaustion: 7 Duration: 9

Rumour: he was never homosexual, despite catering only to men while in the trade

Lie: he regularly breaks the tradition of "no sex" upheld by the Terribly Beautiful

[George Cotronis picture #3 <http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v326/northerain/midiacopy-1.jpg>]

#### 13. Medusa (Medea)

There were few on the streets of the Kaz more beautiful than Medea. She knew her own beauty and built upon it with poise and culture. The pale has made her more perfect than ever, and she draws stares just walking down the street. One of those stares did more than linger, and she was taken. When that man discovered that he, too, had become infected, he tried to have Medea charged. The court case was slanderous for both, and though the charges were eventually dropped, Medea had

suffered greatly at the hands of the other prisoners and her jailors.

If are allowed to be nothing but a monster, then a monster you may as well be. Medea once again began walking the streets, taking only the most vain of clients. Her search for revenge got her excommunicated from the Terribly Beautiful, but she didn't care when they began to call her Medusa instead of Medea. She had her legacy of death to build.

She reads men well. To those absorbed in vanity and wealth she is Medea, looking for a hero to rescue her. To those seeking danger, she introduces herself as Medusa, offering to turn them to "stone."

Exhaustion: 5 Duration: 15

Rumour - Medusa violates only the one tradition of the Terribly Beautiful, and adheres to the others

#### 14. Baba Yaga

Most nicknames are given by the street, but Baba Yaga was given hers by the media. She ran a hostel, but it lost its business when it was revealed that some of the women were prostitutes there and rumours spread like wildfire when Baba Yaga was revealed to have the Pale herself. She was labeled, first a madam, and then some journalist came up with the name Baba Yaga for her scarred face and it stuck. Now she is closing the final stages of the Pale, getting ready to die.

Like Medea, Baba Yaga embraced a bit of what society made her out to be, taking in prostitutes, giving them beds. She became a heroine in the Kaz, and established the traditions of the Terribly Beautiful. Those traditions are her legacy, and she teaches them to the younger infected. She also grants the new Terribly Beautiful their new names, pulling names from the books on ancient mythologies that line her walls.

Exhaustion: 2 Duration: 24

Secret: Injecting drugs is how she gained the Pale

Rumour: Baba Yaga's face is scarred because of vitriolage, an act of throwing acid in someone's face to spite them

Lie: Baba Yaga is a madam

#### 15. Matthew Hurst

Matthew spends more time in the Kaz than he ever wanted to. As a paramedic it is his job to pick up the pieces of whatever tragedy has occurred and cart them off to the hospital. He has gone through partner after partner in his ambulance, but only he has stuck with it.

There's something mad about Matthew that just won't let him say the words, "dead on arrival," something grim that makes him joke about his own name and about how he drove a hearse once, but never again. A lot of people think he means he lost a patient once, but he actually used to drive a hearse from a funeral home. Any way it's taken, it gives him the determination to keep coming back every night.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Rumour: he once worked for a funeral home

Lie: he's looking to replace someone special he couldn't save

#### 16. Dusty Hines

Dusty wants nothing more than to step through one of the gates at the edge of the Kaz and never turn back. Like most people in the Kaz he knows that it's going to take a lot of money to do that, and that's why he turned to dealing drugs. Dusty sells hard drugs, not weed or bootleg tobacco, and that means he has to pay off the local gang. What they don't know is that he sometimes gets his



hands on medication for the Pale, and he doesn't cut them in when he sells that.

Dusty has a regular job, too, working for minimum wage in a music shop named Grooved. He has a passion for vinyl and punk bands, but his real collection are his record players, of which he has dozens.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: he can sometimes get medication for the Pale from Mohinder for special clients

Rumour: he cuts his drugs sometimes, but not all the time, and he has to cut the local gang in

Lie: he tries the drugs to see if they're good or not

#### 17. Kim

Kim gave up trying to get the locals to properly pronounce his Korean first name. He runs a corner variety store, selling junk food, magazines, cigarettes and condoms. The condoms he keeps behind the counter, not because he wants to limit their use, but because they used to be the most stolen item in the store.

Kim keeps a pot of soup behind the counter, simmering away. The smell drives people to buy more junk food, and he'll sometimes give a bowl of it to any friend who drops by to chat.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

#### 18. Mohinder Ramesh

Mohinder is the highest paid person in the entirety of the Kaz, which isn't saying much, but he would be considered very well off anywhere else, too. As the pharmacist, it is his job to ensure that medications are properly dispensed, and secured at all other times. The pharmacy was built inside a former bank, converting its safe into a drug storage room that can be securely locked at night.

As a result of being so well paid, Mohinder also pays a lot of income tax, and he complains about it incessantly. To make a little bit of money on the side, tax free, he has been known to sell the occasional bit of drugs onto the black market, forging prescription slips, shorting customers or using other scams.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: he sells drugs to the black market

Rumour: he sometimes shorts people on their prescription

Lie: he's into the drugs himself, and that's why he sometimes miscounts prescriptions

#### 19. Doctor Leigh O'Biern

When Dr. O'Biern decided to take over the Gabriel Health Clinic, he thought that he might do some good for a community desperately in need. Instead, he found himself doing mostly paperwork and fundraising. The clinic doesn't get much funding, and so he goes to both government and private agencies, knocking on their doors, asking for money to pay for rent, to replace worn equipment and used supplies, and to pay staff.

The clinic runs a needle exchange, disposing of old needles and giving out new ones for free, no questions asked. This, along with free condoms, is part of an effort to stop the spread of the Pale. It's also the most controversial activity engaged in by the clinic, and sometimes money is lost as a result, but Dr. O'Biern refuses to give up on the program.

One thing Dr. O'Biern has given up on is keeping drugs in the clinic. After one too many break-ins (the last pulled an entire safe out of the building), he now lets the pharmacy take that role.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Lie: there are drug "samples" provided by the drug companies that are kept in the clinic

## 20. Father Wright (Father Father)

Father Wright is the local priest who fulfills his duty to the community by running a soup kitchen on Thursday nights with the help of some volunteers. He accepted this parish only grudgingly, wanting instead to have some suburban church where the parishioners are more respectable. His sermons are often little more poorly aimed rants, treating everyone in the Kaz as if they all committed every conceivable sin. This rapidly earned him the enmity of the local populace until one day he did something that won him at least partial redemption.

While Father Wright may look down upon the people in the community around him, he takes his vows seriously, particularly his vow of secrecy regarding confessions. One day the police came to him, demanding to know what one of the prostitutes that frequented his church might have confessed to. Father Wright refused to answer and it earned him a beating and then a night in jail. When word got around, Father Wright became known affectionately as Father Father.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: he had slept with the prostitute he protected

Rumour: he sometimes takes a prostitute into his side of the confessional

## 21. Clayton Smart

Clayton didn't set out to be a sensationalist reporter, but his newspaper editor gives him deadlines and word counts, and Clayton needs to fill them as quickly as possible or else he'll find himself out of a job. That means there's no time for real investigative reporting. To make matters worse, any human interest stories he writes are just forgotten the next day. It's only his salacious work that gets noticed or remembered.

Clayton was the one who came up with the nicknames for Baba Yaga and the Terribly Beautiful, both of which other media outlets grabbed onto. He is rather proud that they stuck, since that helped his career a fair bit. He was even able to do a bit of television work, but the producers don't like showing the ruined Kaz too much, so back to uptown they went, leaving Clayton behind. While Clayton may live beyond the walls he spends more and more time in the Kaz, trying to be a part of his community. Unfortunately, his reputation has been wrecked.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: he is a married man, but his wife hates his obsession with the Kaz

Rumour: he's here all the time, but he's really an uptowner, not part of the local community

## OTHER SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

### Piotr Raskov (Vladimir)

Piotr Raskov is a man with a waxed moustache, a waxy complexion and the poise of a blackguard and a scoundrel. Piotr became infected with the Pale as a result of his indiscretions. He knew that the official treatment was no cure, and so he cast about for something, anything, that might be an actual cure, and he had enough money that offers of cures came. Doctor Fieldman was one of those offers.

Because of her position outside of the medical field, she was unable to acquire the blood supplies she needed, and so Darius stepped in. Now he prowls downtown for those he can seduce, people who might not be missed by the authorities, and hands them over to Dr. Fieldman.

Secret: he has the Pale and keeps it at bay with a treatment involving blood transfusions, he kidnaps

people for Dr. Fieldman to use in her research and treatments

Exhaustion: 6 Duration: 12

Rumour: he has a huge mansion uptown, and likes to take prostitutes of either gender back there

Lie: he keeps a harem of women in the mansion where he lives

Doctor Eleanor Fieldman

Doctor Fieldman offers a treatment that medical science wants nothing to do with. She still has her license to practice, but that is more because she has had no interest in publishing or promoting her work, preferring instead to act as a doctor for the few rich clients, like Piotr Raskov, that she has.

While Piotr knows she is conducting her experiments illegally, and is supplying her with people to do it with, even he does not realize that she kills her victims in the process. Dr. Fieldman is happy to let Piotr believe that she pays the people for their assistance and lets them go home.

Her treatment doesn't really work, but it does seem to. It eliminates some of the paleness of the skin, at least temporarily.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: she is engaged in illegal experiments, and killing people to do it

Rumour: she has developed a treatment that makes patients look healthy again

Lie: she has developed a better treatment for the Pale

Jack

There is a badly constructed rhyme on the street that goes, "Jack is a john, who calls himself George, but should be called Tom." The rhyme refers to jack the ripper, the slang for a prostitute's client (john), and two prison slang names designating people who are okay (George) and not okay (Tom). Actually, he doesn't call himself George anymore. He changes what name he gives in the hopes of avoiding being recognized, along with changing clothes, his beard and his hair. This is all because Jack has the Pale, but cannot give up his habit of hiring prostitutes. He has created many of the Terribly Beautiful, and there are many who would like to take revenge upon him, but he always seems to disappear for a few weeks or months before showing up again and targeting a new street-walker.

Exhaustion: 4 Duration: 18

Secret: his real name is Hank Jones

Lie: he can be identified by a purple mark on his left shoulderblade

## CREATING SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

There are several elements to a good character. It is often best to leave names to last. It is often easiest to start with what the character does for a living. Is the character from the Kaz, or from uptown. Is he or she part of the trade, one of the Terribly Beautiful, a john, an animal or a

Most characters should have a quirk, an unusual but not too important habit. They should usually also have something about them that makes them more humane and also a flaw, usually hidden. Each character also needs a secret, rumour, or lie, possibly multiple.

At this point a little physical description, including fashion, might be useful. Finally pick a name, which can be anything (a phone book may be helpful), and maybe a nickname, which should reflect what the character is like.

## Dopplegangers

There is one type of supporting character that must be designed by the gamemaster, called the doppleganger. A doppleganger is someone that looks a bit like one of the player characters, has had a similar life, but made one very important choice differently. The choice should be one that was made during play, and the doppleganger should provide the opportunity to reflect.

## WHAT LURKS

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“Every city and every heart has their shadows.”

Even as it crumbles, the once majestic Kaz is creating a legacy of its own, sustaining its history of passion and debauchery by opening doors onto other worlds even as its own walls fall. Through those doors emerge the spirits, bodiless demons and angels who lurk unseen around those they choose to guide, their hosts, whispering suggestions and secrets. For their part, the hosts mutter back to the demons and angels, a conversation in which only one side can be heard by others.

Demons work their plans by encouraging selfishness at the expense of others. Angels promote self-sacrifice and martyrdom to the benefit of the world around. Neither presents easy choices.

## Cacodemons & Choirs

Choirs (angels) and cacodemons (demons) are special, lesser spiritual beings. Individually they are all but silent, but when they gather, they form a powerful whole that can work together towards a goal. The cats of the Kaz are an example of a cacodemon. Individually, the cats are just cats, but when they gather, they form the Wyld Hunt, driven by their demons to behave so.

## The Power of Whispers

Demons angels grant the greatest power to those they possess by telling secrets, but their whispers may build in influence, too. Every time a character does what a demon or angel asks, it's influence grows by 1. Influence may be used when whispering, allowing the demon or angel to trade a card to their host, much like using a secret. Each influence may be used only once per session.

## Transference of Possession

“What does it take to be rid of you?” he cried.

“Blood,” came the whisper.

Demons and angels do not simply go away, not even once their plan is complete. If a host wishes to rid themselves of an angel or demon, then he or she must commit an act of submission. For demons this is an abusive act, and for angels this is an act of martyrdom, both of which must involve another person and the spilling of blood. The demon or angel may then move on to another who is present through the inspiration that the act brings.

While demons outnumber angels normally, it is because of this pattern of transfers that the Kaz has an even greater imbalance. Abuse tends to occur from the powerful to the weak, and sacrifice from the weak to the powerful.

Death is the other way to rid the world of the possession, as the demons and angels take shreds of the soul back to their respective realms.

[George Cotronis picture #4 <http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v326/notherain/asas-1.jpg>]

### Bad Trips

Anyone under the influence of hallucinogens may receive clues that tell of the presence of demons and angels. These could be a different set of eyes behind someone's face (like they're wearing a mask of their own face), or the sound of somebody whispering (though words cannot be made out.). Hallucinations do not give the ability to tell demons from angels.

When a choir or cacodemon gathers, this changes. They can smell the hallucinogens and whisper through the hallucinations so that the drug-influenced individual may be taken into the mob. If the person hallucinating does participate, then one of the demons may transfer to that person.

### Using Demons & Angels

The most common use of a demon or angel is to encourage a player to talk more about the emotional struggle the character is going through. The best way to have this happen is to have a demon or angel possess a character that has failed to overcome some obstacle, offering secrets that could help, or pushing the character to try a new direction.

A demon or angel may also be a legend, an urban legend that is passed from generation to generation. Such a demon or angel is more useful to explore a character that has begun to explore her own humanity.

### Muttering

A character need only mutter for a demon or angel to hear. The player should indicate this is what is being done by cupping her hand beside her mouth as if whispering into someone's ear. The gamemaster should inform the players of how to do this when it arises in the story.

## DESIGNING DEMONS & ANGELS

### Timeless Struggle

Draw 4 major arcana and interpret them with the help of the list from character creation. Choose one of the cards to inspire the personality of the angel or demon, what it tries to transform the character into. Another card is chosen to inspire the tragedy, that which it seeks to destroy. The remaining 2 cards are discarded.

### Secrets & Lies

Demons & Angels know secrets and lies from the people they've possessed before, and also of people their former hosts met. Draw 7 minor arcana. Aces are history (like rumours, but only relating to the distant past), other number cards are secrets and face cards are lies. The character must bargain to gain access to all of these. Like with character creation, the suits may be used to help inspire ideas.

### Influence

Influence always starts at 0 with each new host.

Example:

The GM, Phil, decides that a demon will feature in the next session, so he pulls 5 major arcana, getting the Hanged Man, Justice, Hierophant, Tower and Fool. The character he has plans on possessing has been dealing a lot with social status issues, having trouble fitting in with richer crowds. With that in mind, Phil finds the Hierophant an obvious choice, revolving, as it does, around conformity, meaning the character will have to dress properly, even if she has to steal the clothes. The Fool seems another obvious choice, with its meaning of risk without forethought, perhaps crashing an exclusive party. Finally, the inverted meaning of Justice, corrupt authority, seems to suggest that the character might try to gain position within a social group by driving someone else out through ridicule or other means.

For the demon's knowledge, Phil draws 7 minor arcana, getting 3 numbered cards, 3 face cards, and an ace. He notes the ace as 1 history to be used when needed during play. Two of the face cards are swords, indicating something aggressive. Phil decides they represent a couple of streetracers, ultra-competitive, but they don't actually know anything about mechanics. One of number cards is a pentacle, so Phil makes that the identity of the mechanic that one of the above streetracers uses to tune his car. There are two wands, one face, one numbered, so Phil figures it might represent sisters, one a good girl, and the other pretending to be, but going out with the streetracers at night. The final card is a numbered cup, which Phil decides is a mother's fear that her boy might come home with the wrong sort of girl, which is hidden behind her scolding him for playing with his fast car.

## EXAMPLE DEMONS & ANGELS

### The Cats (cacodemon)

Cats are not known for being sociable to one another, but sometimes they do gather. A collection of cats in downright sinister, especially those in the Kaz, for many of the cats are host to a cacodemon that emerges only when they are together. When that happens, they recreate the Wyld Hunt. One of them elects to be the hunted and begins running, while the others give chase, tearing apart the hunted once the catch is made. To get rid of the cocademon, the host must play the hunted and either escape or survive.

Cats know secrets, too. Though they pay little attention to the affairs of humanity, they know all the hidden places in the city. To gain a demon from a cat is to gain access to an interesting collection of secrets.

[George Cotronis picture #5 <http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v326/northerain/drowning.jpg>]

### The Oracle (angel)

She lives behind a door down an alleyway off an alleyway, in a building that was expanded until it turned into a labyrinth of hallways. She is the veiled prophet, the one who knows more than anyone should. No one knows for sure if she is really one of the Terribly Beautiful, but she seems to follow the traditions. Lifting the veil would make it apparent that she isn't, but it would not reveal her true affliction. It would take hallucinogens to reveal the truth, and none have been so disrespectful as to enter her presence under their influence.

The Oracle is host to innumerable demons. Her head is a cacophony of voices that would

overwhelm anyone else. When no one is around, she removes her veil and treads out into the night. She is part of the trade, a prostitute, who seeks out johns that are tormented by demons, taking those demons into herself. She does this because of the voice of her angel, that guides her to become a sin-eater, taking the sins of others unto herself.

Exhaustion: 9 Duration: 3

Secret: the oracle is a sin-eater who calls herself Mascha

Rumour: the oracle lives within the most labyrinthine part of the Kaz

## CONCLUSION

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The hardest lesson of all is to accept people for both their virtues and their flaws. *Terribly Beautiful* puts the players in a difficult situation, with characters that may be difficult to relate to, but empathy may bridge that gap, and if players can come to see something human within their characters, then perhaps they may also come to see the humanity within others beyond the game.

*Terribly Beautiful* was made for the *2008 Game Chef: Artists First!* game design contest. It was based upon the artwork created by George Cotronis, also made for that contest.