Wyrd Miniatures

Malifaux

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Twisting Fates

Malifaux

1 Malifaux: A Character-Driven Skirmish Game Set in the World of Malifaux
2 Malifaux: Rising Powers
3 Malifaux: Twisting Fates

Malifaux: Rules Manual

Wyrd Miniatures, LLC

malifaux.com
wyrd-games.net

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Wyrd Miniatures Presents
Malifaux
2
Twisting Fates

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Wyrd Miniatures would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication in completing this latest book. We owe a special thanks to the creativity of the writers for excelling in their efforts. Game developers, artists, sculptors, painters, playtesters - we appreciate everything you've done for us. And to our families and all those whose personal friendship and support has helped us through some stressful times, you have our heartfelt love and gratitude for just being who you are and helping in all the little ways.

Table of Contents

4 Designer's Note
6 Map of Malifaux City

8 Like Falling Snow
16 At Death's Door
22 The Coming Storm
29 Revelations
36 Bearing the Burden

41 Avatars
42 Manifest
46 The Guild Avatars
58 Resurrectionist Avatars
72 Arcanist Avatars
85 Neverborn Avatars
98 Outcast Avatars

110 Balancing the Books
117 Lucid Dreaming
123 Cold Hearted
131 Tangling the Threads of Fate
139 The Writing on the Wall

147 The Guild
148 Puzzle Box

164 Resurrectionists
165 Deadline

182 Arcanists
183 The Mountains Straight Reply

202 Neverborn
203 A Great Adventure

223 Outcasts
224 World in Chaos

242 Because I Could Not Stop For Death
250 The Bigger They Are
256 From the Red Egg Rises the Bird of Paradise
263 Fade to Black
270 Martial Law
274 Revelation of the Beast Within

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Designer's Note

Something Big This way Comes

Still A Character-Based Skirmish Game, but Now, Even Shirmishier (and bigger)

As anyone involved in the first few go-rounds of Malifaux playtesting could tell you, there were a lot of ideas come and go. By now, you know all about the Fate Deck, and Cheating Fate, and the Duel mechanic. One concept we liked but couldn't squeeze into that first release was the Avatars (they're big). We always knew it had to come, it was part of the story line and already part of the game, we just didn't know how to squeeze it into that first book.

Now, the world of Malifaux has reached a place where we think it's time to introduce the Avatars to you. (I'm sure those first alpha testers are happy that they finally get to talk about Avatars, 2.5 years later.) Not to mention, you might find them to be a great way to up-the-ante and make games more challenging.

Avatars are new (and big) manifestations of Malifaux Masters. Their stories, rules, and stats expand what it means to be a Master. There's more strategy, more ways to win (and lose!), and more choices for players during the game. Basically, it's just some new fun added to your Malifaux.

I think you'll also really enjoy the story. We think the people, the history, and the world of Malifaux are amazing and interesting, and we wanted to put the effort into detailing that for everyone. So we've taken time to give you the stories of some of the characters that have only been on the periphery in the first two books. And we've also provided a lot more information on what happens to those making their lives in this world. It should provide you with a great background for your Encounters, let you know what it feels like to live and grow there, so you can join in the experiences.

We also have a lot of rad new artwork. But there's more! Each faction also gets a collection of new Minions to play with, including the introduction of Effigies - (not big) physical embodiments of Malifaux's power.

We know everyone's been waiting to find out what happened to Justice. Alive? Dead? Undead? Well, a building did fall on her. What did you expect? ... So get reading, and you'll see whether she made it out, became one of Seamus' risen beauties, or maybe, if in her death, her powers changed her into some sort of hybrid creature. Nightmares aside, I hope you enjoy watching the characters evolve (and get bigger) as much as I do.

Eric Johns

Eric Johns
Game Designer

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Twisting Fates

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1
The Breach
2
To Ridley Station
To Fortune Falls
3
4
NCZ
Slums
5
Industrial Zone
Downtown
8
6
7
9
NCZ
10
Howling Slums
The Burns
12
13
14
Quarantine Zone
16
15
Southern Slums
17
N
W
E
S
19
Badlands
To Edgeport Station

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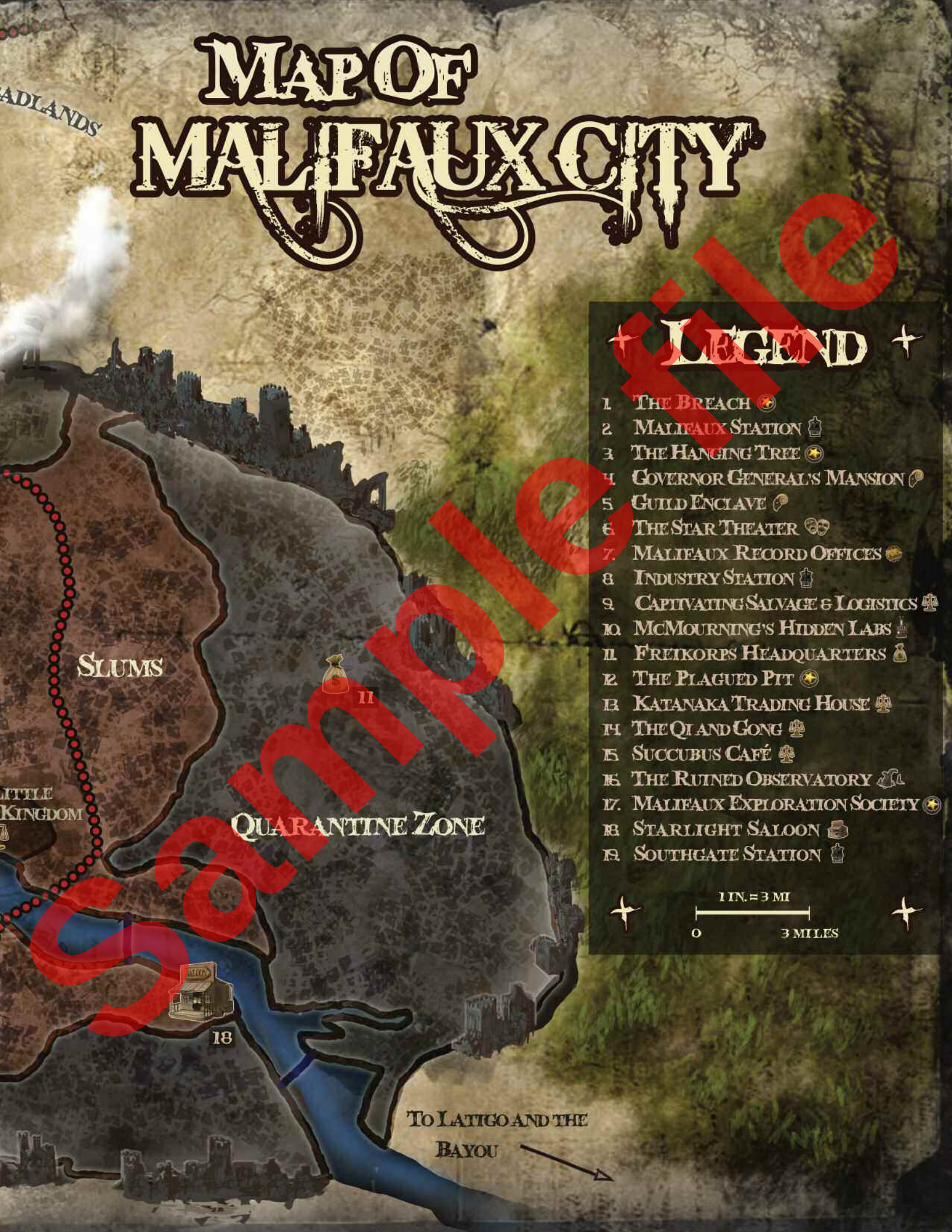
Map Of
Malifaux City
Badlands
Slums
Little Kingdom
Quarantine Zone
11
18
To Latigo and the Bayou
Legend
1. The Breach
2. Malifaux Station
3. The Hanging Tree
4. Governor General's Mansion
5. Guild Enclave
6. The Star Theater
7. Malifaux Record Offices
8. Industry Station
9. Captivating Salvage & Logistics
10. McMourning's Hidden Labs
11. Freikorps Headquarters
12. The Plagued Pit
13. Katanaka Trading House
14. The Qi and Gong
15. Succubus Café
16. The Ruined Observatory
17. Malifaux Exploration Society
18. Starlight Saloon
19. Southgate Station
1 in. = 3 mi
0
3 miles

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Like Falling Snow

September 20, 114 PF

The Event

The voices lingered in Hoffman's head, scattering every thought he desperately tried to follow. The energy of the mysterious wave dissipated gradually, but his breathing grew shallow and quick to match the quickening of his heart. Panic replaced the tingling in his fingers as the last of the magic from the Event left him.

The last time he had felt anything that closely matched this powerful bombardment of energy was on the train when he and his brother had come through to Malifaux.

Ryle's smile filled him with hope. It always had. Big and strong, Ryle had everything Hoffman wished he could have for himself. Coupled with an athletic prowess few could match, Ryle had a social ease, which made him friends with every man he met. Hoffman studied his brother with awe as he could shift his mannerisms and colloquialisms with unconscious alacrity. Perhaps not the most naturally handsome man in London, he nevertheless was the envy of most men when he could walk into any pub or society ball and, without intent, soon find himself in the midst of the most sought after women in the city. Everyone envied Ryle's style and embrace of life; Hoffman was no exception. However, so many people thought his jealousy must run deep. It did not. Hoffman revered his older brother and followed him everywhere. He looked upon him with unadulterated respect and love and would never have wished him less. Ryle was almost unaware of his good fortune and stood at the apex of humility. In fact, he was driven most to protect his younger brother, even at the cost of his own position, and Hoffman knew that, in many ways, he owed his life to Ryle.

Hoffman shook off the reverie of his brother as he once was, chastising himself for allowing the thoughts to lull him with happier times, distracting him from his current struggle. He pulled himself over, and his mind reeled. His eyes remained heavy, and even when he managed to force them open, he had trouble focusing his vision. A coughing spasm wracked him as he fought to push himself upright. Smoke and ash from the nearby burning observatory dusted his shoulders like snow.

Once, when they were young, Hoffman watched Ryle and some of the other boys playing rugby in the back of their parents' expansive country estate. It was late fall, and the boys' breath came visibly in clouds about their faces as they ran in the brisk air. All of them ignored the cold as they wore their uniforms cut just above the knees. They'd slap and rub their bare skin to warm it between plays, and even though their skin was pink and sore, they played on. Hoffman watched from the comfort of an upper room, his chin resting on both palms as he sat in his wheelchair parked before the window, wiping the condensation from the window with his handkerchief.

Ryle looked up to see his younger brother watching them, laughing and playfully chiding one another as they debated the imaginary lines forming the field's boundary between each play. They could never agree upon the lines, and playful shoves led to wrestling matches between sides that looked, for all intent, exactly like the rugby plays they debated over. They laughed and clapped one another on the backs.

When Hoffman rubbed his window clean again, he could not see Ryle down amongst the others. Though they shoved and writhed about in manly play, Ryle was always quickly identifiable. Thick flakes of snow began to fall, enveloping the players in a sheet of soft white.

A hand fell upon his shoulder, causing him to jump. "Sorry, chap!" Ryle said with a laugh. Hoffman smiled; he hadn't noticed Ryle come into the house and enter the study. "No need for you to hide in here alone. We could use a referee." He motioned to the boys, knocking into one another again amidst the thickly falling snow. His hand squeezed Hoffman's shoulder.

Hoffman jumped as the desiccated arm of the dead reached out from the debris near his face, grabbing him at the shoulder as sickly gray ash fell. He screamed out and batted the bony fingers clutching at his neck and frantically pulled himself away, dragging his limp legs through dust and rubble. Scrambling back against a block of upturned flagstone, he shielded his face from attack by the undead. He whimpered and shook, finally peering over his forearm after several long moments without the expected assault. He rubbed his eyes

Sample file

quickly, unable to focus, preparing to fight one of the unholy risen. His hands curled into rather ineffectual fists, and his teeth chattered as his fear mounted. The hand reaching for him was, truly, that of a dead man, its face just visible from the edge of the rubble. But it showed no sign of reanimation as its mouth was agape and its dry eyes had shrunken within its deep sockets. Even the position of its body demonstrated no real indication that it was intentionally reaching for him.

The anxiety and adrenaline got the best of him, and his sobbing turned to a weak nervous laugh as, despite himself, he was overcome by fear. He drew himself against a large group of upturned cobblestone protruding from what was part of the street. It had been broken free long ago, though. He pulled himself to it and slapped each side of his face as smartly as he could given his exhausted state. "Pull yourself together, Old Boy," he said aloud, rubbing his eyes once more. His hands tingled, and a thin arc of pale violet electricity crackled faintly down his arm and across his chest.

The blue lightning arced from passenger to passenger as Ryle flailed on the floorboards of the train that ill-fated day they rode through the Breach. Everyone sat frozen in time, unmoving as the thick bands of electricity buzzed and popped, moving from person to person, coursing through their chests and out their skulls as the bolts sought another person.

Hoffman wasn't locked in time like the others, but reaching his hand toward his brother took terrifyingly long moments. Ryle, though, flailed in acceleration as the lightning arced from every passenger to strike him.

When the great tendril of electricity rose up and struck him like a whip crack, he bucked and howled, contorting off the wooden bench and around the floor, much like Ryle had been, though less severely. Still, the pain was intense, and he howled, unable to control his spasming limbs.

Shaking off his stupor, his eyes darted from one nearby object to another, sure that an insurmountable adversary moved amidst the thick ash and settling dust. He soon discovered that there were a substantial number of dead bodies in various stages of decomposition surrounding him, but none seemed to move or attract his attention. He found a small wrench in his back pocket and used it as a weapon to club what might have been the smallest Malifaux rat in the City. It was small even by Earthside standards. He did not hesitate to kill it. The plague still ravaged and the creature could kill him without realizing it, he justified. In reality, he felt so weak and ineffectual and needed a moment of control to right himself.

As the ash from the exploded building created a softening of the early morning light and sound, muffling everything, his sense of isolation and seclusion was heightened. The bodies of the dead lay strewn beneath rubble and debris, and some had merely collapsed in a heap. The bodies represented the full range of decomposition as a testament to their reanimation and control of a Resurrectionist master. In equal number were the fresh remains of youthful gang members and other innocent townspeople that had come to wage battle, fervently following the command of a strange and sinister man Hoffman had only heard of through rumor. None of the bodies seemed to move in that unholy state of reanimation, but Hoffman could not shake the anxious twitching of his blurry eyes as every small movement near him caught his attention, only to be disturbed by some other imagined adversary in his peripheral vision.

He could hear no voices of the machinery around him now. It was the first time since his arrival in Malifaux less than a month earlier. Only having a vague awareness of his full potential over the manipulation of machines, he didn't understand the meaning of this sudden loss of ability. He tried again, attempting to reach into the odd space of a construct's alien psyche, speaking in strange images and whispers.

Movement before him jerked his vision toward the same dark-fleshed corpse that he had imagined reached out to him. Blinking rapidly to clear the fog, he saw it unmoving, its eyes having rolled up into its skull, mouth agape and long fingers pointing. Another crackle of purple electricity arced from the braces he bore on either leg and danced around his torso and up his throat.

The blue lightning in the car subsided as the train ground to a halt, digging through the gray dirt beside the track. Screams of passengers replaced the electrical crackling and popping, and Ryle's screaming died along with the energy that wracked him, but the sound of Ryle's horrified plight echoed within his mind as he slipped into the dark fog. He fought the drowning sensation of sleep, struggling to come to the surface of consciousness to call for someone to help his brother.

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"You did this!" he heard a woman shriek. "Arcanist!" His eyes opened briefly and with great effort he sought her, framing her features with the blur of his sinking mind. She cowered, pointing with mouth agape at the two men that had entered the car, standing just beyond him and his brother. She was filled with fear and anger. "Arcanists!" she screamed again in accusation. One of them ended her life with a crack of his pistol, momentarily silencing the others.

He couldn't hold on any longer and succumbed to the weight of sleep that bore down upon him, watching as the villains reached for him as his eyes involuntarily closed.

He jerked when the crashing weight of a Peacekeeper construct cracked the mortar between the cobblestones beside him, the ripples of the tremor rippling through his torso and rattling his teeth. He cried out as he looked upon the face of Ramos above him, lost in the broken vision of his mind and replaced by the image of the Arcanist he blamed for the attack upon him and the train. "Arcanist!" Hoffman howled, still confused about what was real.

Ramos reached down to him with his right arm and grabbed hold of the writhing violet tendril of electricity. He pulled it from Hoffman's throat, and it hissed and crackled as it flailed. It burned, and Ramos' leather glove melted away along with the thick canvas of his overcoat, exposing the thin pistons and spinning gears of a mechanical arm. He unleashed his own electrical fire through that exposed limb, and the pale electricity evaporated in a small thunderous clap.

Hoffman's perception cleared, and his fear eased as the Arcanist terrorist from the train morphed into the familiar face and voice of his friend Dr. Ramos, who answered the accusation of "Arcanist" still hanging in the air.

"Yes," Ramos said. "But we are not what you think us to be. Come."

"What?" Hoffman asked. The purple energy no longer crackled around him, and he could think clearer, but he still doubted his perception, and Ramos' statement made no sense to him.

"Come," Ramos said, reaching out with his mechanical arm to help Hoffman stand. "We will speak, but this is not the place for it." Faint morning light penetrated the ashy haze, and the brass cylinders of Ramos' arm gleamed. Hoffman's hand stretched, but as he saw the oiled hydraulic shaft and silently spinning servos, now exposed from the cloth and leather that had been burned away by the lightning, he withdrew his hand in a snap.

"You're an Arcanist," he said, now fully aware of whom he addressed.

"Yes. But we are not what you think we are."

It made striking sense, and Hoffman reeled from the truth and the ridiculous clarity of his deception. The machines of his laboratory and throughout the mines were so clearly beyond mere mechanical science. The lumbering behemoth Steamborg, Hank, a human and machine abomination followed every small command from Ramos without pause or question. That was no coincidence he worked in the mines. And his own brother, Ryle...turned into a monstrosity. Hoffman had ignored the clear truth, obvious, now, out of desperation for it to not be so. Ramos was not just an Arcanist, but an abomination, himself, of grafting technology and twisted magics. One of the same abominations that Hoffman was charged to find and apprehend. Of course, the Charter was far more specific in addressing the abuses of grafting technology, and articulated prosthetics were common enough and well within the rights of anyone. Hoffman made a leap in blame and hatred.

Still lying on the broken street, his legs limp before him, he said gravely, "Viktor Ramos. You are under arrest for crimes against the natural order."

"Do not be a fool," he interrupted, growing quickly irritated.

"You are charged with illegal grafting according to Guild Charter 425, sub-section Two, and conspiring against Guild order in organizing the terrorist group—"

"I'm warning you, Hoffman," Ramos said with terrifying authority. "We are not what you have been made to believe. But I will not have you undo what I have begun. What I've accomplished." Hoffman had not noticed their presence before, but two great constructs stood ominously behind Ramos. One was a humanoid giant known as a Guardian, its excessively large sword resting upon its massive iron shoulder. It was one of the earliest constructs designed and built, largely under the

Sample file

supervision of Ramos, and it stood beside his most recent construct design, the Giant Arachnid that stood higher than a man's waist and was easily as long as a man was tall. Ramos made no movement nor word of command, but the two stepped forward toward him. "Every construct in Malifaux heard your call when that wave hit," Ramos said. "Even I, enveloped in that same powerful inundation of aether," his mechanical hand clutched into a fist before his face. "Even I could hear your plea above all the screaming voices in my head. So powerful. So much potential. But I cannot bear to lose what we have fought so hard to accomplish."

Hoffman had nowhere to go and wouldn't be able to get there even if he had. The small wrench in his hand might as well have been a feather against the two constructs coming for him.

He could not describe his ability to perceive the metal and machinery around him with his mind. It was very different from holding something in his hands and much more like an emotional response. He felt comforted by the presence of machinery. Reaching out with his mind, he found his Hunter construct behind him, standing a silent watch. He knew it was inoperable, twisted with ancient metal of fences and sewer grates from around him as the purple aether of the Event had infused him with unbridled power. It now stood motionless as a deformed and abstract statue, looking only vaguely like the feline Hunter it had once been, now standing bipedally and more massive than ever. He could sense no sign of its once quick-processing logic engine.

Far above him, however, he felt a Watcher construct, and he latched onto it with his mind, calling it to him. Another Watcher circled the debris of the Observatory, obeying its last command, and he summoned that one to him as well. Neither would help against Ramos, a Guardian, and a Giant Arachnid, but when they were close to him, he could use their processing power to think more clearly, himself.

Ramos' constructs stepped forward, moving toward Hoffman, blocking any possible escape.

Ramos would win. He was an Arcanist operating right in the middle of the Guild. He was responsible for the mines, the most important reason anyone was in the godforsaken place to begin with. And he was responsible for Ryle.

Hoffman's fear was replaced with hate and anger at the betrayal and lies. He yelled, just a single syllable of his mounting rage, and his mind beat against the simple logic engine of the Guardian just in front of Ramos. It took a final step forward, its footfall reverberating through the ground as its vast weight struck. Ramos realized too late that he had underestimated Hoffman, and he jumped back as the great sword clattered to the ground and its armored hand snatched at its former master, no longer in control of it. He realized his loss and made no effort to reclaim it from Hoffman, instead focusing upon the large arachnid scampering forward a step and then back, confused as Hoffman pressed his will against it, too. Where Hoffman's power manifested more subconsciously, Ramos had to weave his commands on the current of aether that coursed around all things. Hoffman did possess great power, he had no doubt, but his manipulation of those invisible forces of magic were certainly substantial as well.

Ramos struggled to control the arachnid, but the Guardian's hand wrapped around his torso and squeezed, disrupting his focus. The circular saw blade mounted flat against its abdomen came free from its safety locks and spun, cutting through the air. The Guardian lifted him, pulling him closer. Ramos commanded the arachnid to remain stationary, and it obeyed him, but Hoffman fought for control over its weapon and it pivoted on its hinged accordion arm, spinning now vertically as the arm extended toward Ramos.

Ramos rarely felt fear and never succumbed to panic. But he was accustomed to control and authority in all of his dealings. Coming here to rescue Hoffman, he did not expect to so quickly lose control to the seemingly helpless man. The arachnid's blade drew closer, and he felt fear. He stilled his emotions and focused, drawing the aether into a controllable weapon. Blue electricity formed around his neck, and he channeled it into a blast that would ignite the construct's internal mechanism, frying it in a great electrical fire. But at Hoffman's mental command, the metal plates in the circular port hole in its chest popped open, exposing a facetted amber crystal. It burst into a rapidly flashing strobe of brilliant yellow light, blinding Ramos just as he released the electricity. The tendrils of energy snaked down his arm, but he lost control of it, and it popped out of existence with little more than the spark of static electricity.

The blade drew closer. Ramos grabbed the Guardian's wrist with his own mechanical hand and pressurized the

Sample file

pistons of his arm to squeeze, crushing the armature of the Guardian's arm, attempting to break free of it. The metal of its wrist buckled and bent, and he crushed it so that gears clanged against one another and the pneumatic seals ruptured, releasing a blast of steam shooting from the side. Still, it did not release him. He twisted desperately but ineffectually to block the circular saw and could barely reach his mechanical right arm around to block the blade, and it bounced aside in a shower of sparks as the tempered blade cut through the softer brass casing of his fist.

He would have died at the hands of his own constructs if not for Ryle. The towering hulk lumbered out of the shadows and fell upon the large spidery construct, his own hydraulic fist several times more powerful and formidable than Ramos'. It left the rounded head of the construct dented with a deep depression. The great hand grabbed hold of the twirling blade, and the teeth dug through his armored palm, but he twisted sharply and the blade snapped, half of it flying into the leg of the Guardian with a clang.

Hoffman, having finally managed to struggle to an awkward stand, recoiled at the vaguely recognizable features that were once so enviable. Now, hulking and more monstrous than human, the damaged flesh stretched over bone and muscle wouldn't heal against the wires, metal bolts, and tubes of copper and brass. Where Dr. Ramos had integrated the mechanical components "to save" Ryle, the flesh adjoining it withered into a sickly pallid gray. Around his upper chest, the skin appeared like drying leather stretched taut, exposing ribs and his collar bone as it shriveled and died. Metal plates were screwed into his flesh at different places, and the surrounding flesh was a beaten purple that darkened into gray. Ryle lifted his massive bulk from the large arachnid, sparks and steam issuing from beneath the damaged plate above its cracked logic engine. If Hoffman could have somehow overlooked the decay of Ryle's body, the severity of the grotesque visage before him made him recoil in horror. Much of the initial trauma through the Breach had been to Ryle's brain, and large portions of his skull had been cut away, now replaced by iron and brass. A large gauge where his right ear had been now marked the steam pressure within that drove the pistons and mechanical organs throughout his body. Numerous tubes protruded from the back of his head to attach at various points to organs and appendages, allowing him to function now in a parody of humanity. What revolted Hoffman most was, oddly, the *remaining* flesh of his lower jaw. With his throat torn away and replaced with flexible tubing, his jaw rested agape and thick foam drained from each side of his mouth. The surrounding flesh was connected at every side by metal, and it was drawn tight in desiccation, fully exposing Ryle's yellowing teeth and ashen gums.

Hoffman staggered away from his brother. Unable to look upon him, he held up his palm toward Ryle to block the sight. Pressing his mind against machines was an ability growing more and more familiar to him, and he commanded the shambling construct to disengage. He thought of the lab where he had spied Ryle spending most of his time, standing motionless in place for days on end, and he silently commanded his brother to return there. Ryle did not comply.

The Gatling gun, heavy enough to require two men to carry but held by Ryle in just one hand, clattered on the rubble, and he lumbered toward Hoffman who struggled to step away. The brothers were a sad mirror of stiff scuffling, each walking with effort.

"Stop!" Hoffman commanded aloud, pressing his will once more against the artificial logic engine integrated into the brain of his brother. Ryle walked on, his arms outstretched toward Hoffman, the gears and servos clicking as his great fist uncurled, the metal talons reaching for him.

Hoffman took one final awkward step back, pulling the strap of his leg brace desperately with his thin hand, and screamed as Ryle's hands fell upon him. He turned away from his brother, eyes clenched shut, awaiting his attack.

"Brother," he felt the push of a machine against his mind. He saw snowflakes, thick and heavy, falling in the dim light of the moon, struggling to penetrate the cold precipitation.

"Ryle?" he called desperately into the depths of that dark night. The silhouette of a man walked just beyond the edge of his perception. "Ryle!" In the snowfall of his waking dream, Hoffman needed no braces to help him stand, and no paralysis kept him from running toward the dim shape of his brother. Yet as he ran, the snow fell thicker, and the light of the moon waned until the ghostly outline of his brother was enveloped by the snow and darkness. "Ryle!" he screamed again, and his voice echoed into the night of his dream. He fell to his knees, feeling the cold against his ankles and shins. His eyes were clenched tightly as tears rolled down each cheek.

Sample file

The wind blew wet against his face, and he heard the whisper, "You can help me, brother."

He opened his eyes and the dream was gone. He was on his knees as ash continued to fall from the burning observatory beyond Ramos, still held aloft by the Guardian. Ryle had released his grip on him, allowing him to fall to his knees on the broken paving stones in the Quarantine Zone, and walked away.

Hoffman regarded Ramos and the two understood the conflict was abruptly over. "Where's he going?"

Ramos said, "Back to my lab, I'd guess."

"Why – why doesn't he stay here – with me?"

"He's ashamed."

The realization struck Hoffman. "He feels? He still feels?"

"Yes. Though vaguely." Ramos finally freed himself from the grip of the Guardian and straightened his overcoat, dusting himself as he stepped toward Hoffman. "And less every day. He cannot bear for you to see him."

"I think I saw him. In my mind."

"I can keep him alive, of course. But his humanity, his spirit, I fear those are beyond me. You, though, you may be the one able to help him."

"Yes. That is what he said to me. How can I do that?"

Ramos pulled him to his feet and helped him stabilize his balance. "I'm unsure. But I can assist you in figuring it out. You may be strong, but I'm not without my uses, also." No one had ever used "strong" to describe Hoffman, and he was filled with determination. "Come," Ramos said. "Let's return to the lab."

"No," Hoffman said. "Justice and the Judge are in there." He hitched a thumb to the burning remains of the once massive observatory.

"They're dead," Ramos said flatly.

Hoffman nearly protested but caught himself. "Likely," he agreed. "I concur. But that section there," he said with a point, "is mostly brick, little timber. It's near the front foyer where she attacked the risen throng. She may be there. If only her body. We must try."

Ramos considered the area, smoking timbers and debris piled high. He held his mechanical hand before his face, the heat of the fire and the breeze of the wind dead upon the metal as the fringe of his coat smoldered near his shoulder. He was exposed, and if more Guild operatives came for the rescue operation, there would be little excuse he could offer. Cold, calculating, circumstances rarely worked beyond his planned control.

"You are right, Hoffman," he said. "We must try. Send in the Watchers. Help me salvage some of the remains of your statue here," he said, pointing to the twisted remains of the Hunter, "and the large arachnid."

"What are you doing?"

"Making some helpers. More eyes. A lot of legs to help navigate the rough terrain." Within minutes of tearing apart the larger constructs, Ramos had a small oblong ball of wires, thin gears, and joined rods. With a twist of its torso he brought the small arachnid to life, its single eye glowing blue as the makeshift logic engine lit within its hastily crafted body. Ramos gave it a simple edict and basic set of command parameters, and it scurried away across the debris, unhindered by the wreckage.

Working together, the two quickly made a small army of arachnids released upon the smoking observatory.

It took little time for Hoffman to understand that Justice would not be found no matter how many mechanical arachnids they made. They were efficient in their task, scurrying about the building's wreckage, unimpeded as if it were open ground. When they detected any sign of a body, they could scuttle down through the narrowest gap between brick and timber. The Guardian, though a first generation construct with a crushed forearm, still proved equally invaluable as it excavated the debris with speed and ease. The futility was not in their inability to find the bodies – it was in the vast number of bodies they continued to find in the rubble. They found hundreds of corpses nearly everywhere they dug, all in various stages of decomposition. The darker, more dry and leathery flesh were clear to the two scientists as the broken remains of undead, risen to obey a Resurrectionist powerful enough to reanimate a great throng of the unholy creatures. They called it "resurrection" which infuriated Hoffman and most

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