

MALIFAUX

CROSSROADS

Sample file





Wyrd Miniatures, LLC | wyrd-games.net

Customer Service - <http://www.wyrd-games.net/contact>

This book is printed under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Contents copyright ©2005-2018, Wyrd Miniatures, LLC. All rights reserved. This book is a work of fiction; any resemblance to organizations, places, events, or actual persons – living or dead – is purely coincidental. Copies of materials herein are intended solely for your personal, non-commercial use, only if you preserve any associated copyrights, trademarks, or other notices. Wyrd Miniatures, LLC holds exclusive rights to this work. Unauthorized duplication is prohibited. You may not distribute copies to others for a charge or other consideration without prior written consent of the owner of the materials except for review purposes only.

MALIFAUX is a trademark of Wyrd Miniatures, LLC 2005-2018. The Wyrd logo, the MALIFAUX logo and all related character names, places, and things are trademarks and copyright ©2005-2018 Wyrd Miniatures, LLC.

Printed in South Korea.

MALIFAUX 2E: Crossroads
ISBN 978-0-9905896-0-0
WYR20013

MALIFAUX SECOND EDITION



This text is protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. Contents copyright © 2005-2018, Wyrd Miniatures, LLC. All rights reserved. This book is a work of fiction; any resemblance to organizations, places, events, or actual persons - living or dead - is purely coincidental. Copies of materials herein are intended solely for your personal, non-commercial use, only if you preserve any associated copyrights, trademarks, or other notices. Wyrd Miniatures, LLC holds exclusive rights to this work. Unauthorized duplication is prohibited. You may not distribute copies to others for a charge or other consideration without prior written consent of the owner of the materials except for review purpose only.

MALIFAUX is a trademark of Wyrd Miniatures, LLC 2005-2018. The Wyrd logo, the MALIFAUX logo, the Through the Breach logo and all related character names, places, and things are trademarks and copyright © 2005-2018 Wyrd Miniatures, LLC. The Malifaux game system is patent pending, serial no. 12/821,427

CREDITS

LEAD DESIGN

Justin Gibbs

ADDITIONAL DESIGN

Matt Anderson, Aaron Darland, David Hanold, and Mack Martin

WRITING

Jonathan Boynton, Matthew Farrer, Justin Gibbs, Matthew Ritter, Mark Rodgers, Graeme Stevenson, and N. A. Wolf

ART

Aleksandar Aleksandrov, Hardy Fowler, Christophe Madura, and Bram 'Boco' Sels

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Alex Cairns & Jorge Gomez

PLAYTESTERS

Joshua Antoline
Court Barber
Nick Battey
Lee Battrick
Jens Becker
Noxweiler Berf
Duncan Bilz
Matt Birdoff
Veronique Breton
Chris Brixey
Chris Broadodus
Till Bröstel
Brian Bucher
Luke Cannon
Brian Chellgren
Liam Coupland
Timothy Craig
Mason Crawford
Aaron Darland
Joe Deheye
James Desmond
Jurje Dijkstra
James Doxey
Tyler Droppers
Jean-Lou Duchesne
Stuart Eastman
Adarian Eastman
James Emrich
Sebastian Feht
Brian Florkowski
Michael Foreman
Gary Frankowski
Trevor Fulton
Don José Miguel Gallego
Oscar Gelo
Joe Girard
Will Girard
Andrew Gnas

Christopher Gorham
Denis Graziano
Tim de Groot
Mark Gurtler
Leah Gustavson
Martin Hakenesch
Ben Halford
Mark Handford
Jeffrey Hannah
Theresa Hammah
Gabriel Hart
John Hartigan
Rick Hayes
Phillip Healy
Joel Henry
Gjalt Hooijkamp
Patrick Hoppe
Ant Hoult
Anthony Hoult
Kris Ingram
Jordan Kaase
Michael Kelmelis
Chris Kerekes
Jaimie Kirwan
Matt Koelbl
Wyatt Krause
James Kroesch
Jeff Kroesch
Jarrett Kuhn
Aidan Kuntzie
Nate Lawrenson
Michael Lechtenberger
Johnathon Lee
Thomas Lerch
Jason Lips
John Lopienski
Kasper Luiten
Mike Marshall

CREATIVE DIRECTION & MINIATURE DIRECTION

Nathan Caroland & Eric Johns

MANAGING EDITOR

Justin Gibbs

EDITING

Marcus Beyer, Ayla Budge, Mason Crawford, Jason Giroux, and David Hanold

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Mason Crawford, James Doxey, Adrian Scott, and all of our Open Beta Playtesters!

Matt Martens
Antonio Martinez
Dawn McCormack
Björn Meyer
Jon Mickleburgh
Alex Mitchell
Jonathan Mondelli
Dan Morrison
Greg Mount
Jimmy Murphy
Matt Musingo
Ian Nelson
Zach Nickle
Amy O'Riordan
Chris Orosz
Sean Overton
Josh Paulik
Patrick Paulot
Paul Plunge
Dave Powell
Adam Reeve
Jackson Remehan
Bret A. Rice
Don Roach Jr
Mark Rodgers
Julián 'Fremen' Rodriguez
Sam Rounsevell
Christian Schleich
William Schmidt
Adrian Scott
Steve Scurr
Daniel Seeley
Carl Semmelink
Shawn Slaven
Christopher Slazinski
Ian Smedley
Max Sobolik
Daniel Rojas Soerensen

Mark Spaidal
Valerie Steves
Sean Stone
Victor Szafranski
Michael Tenebrae
Liam Tennant
Oscar González Terrazo
Sebastian Theissen
Tom Theriault
Thomas Trainor
Keron Tucker
Jason Turco
Jason Tuttle
Mark Vaccaro
Klaas Van der Land
Curt Warrington
Andrew Weakland
Dominic Westerland
Jeff White
Johnny Wilson
Aaron Winkle
Shane Wojtowecz
Jim Wrench
Tom Wright
Pete Wright
Chris Wylie
Tristan Young
Michael Yungbluth
Timothy Zix

CONTENTS

CH 1: THE GUILD	4	CH 5: OUTCASTS	166
A NIGHT AT THE RACES	5	SACRIFICE	167
THE PORTRAIT	14	THE MAGISTRATE OF STRANGLEHOLD	176
GUILD STAT CARDS	24	TYRANT'S GAME	186
GUILD UPGRADES	36	OUTCAST STAT CARDS	196
CH 2: RESURRECTIONISTS	42	OUTCAST UPGRADES	212
LAST CALL AT THE GRAY LORD	43	CH 6: GREMLINS	220
RESURRECTIONIST STAT CARDS	58	THE PRICE OF PORK	221
RESURRECTIONIST UPGRADES	72	THE WONG NIGHT TO MESS WITH MANCHA ROJA	230
CH 3: ARCANISTS	78	THE SPOON IS MIGHTIER	240
THE FACE BEHIND THE LIE	79	GREMLIN STAT CARDS	250
BLURRING THE LINES	88	GREMLIN UPGRADES	264
FALLING TO FLY	98	CH 7: TEN THUNDERS	272
ARCANIST STAT CARDS	106	FAMILY BONDS	273
ARCANIST UPGRADES	122	THE BLACK SHEEP	278
CH 4: NEVERBORN	130	HEART OF THE DAWN	288
THE MOONLIGHT GALLERY	131	TEN THUNDERS STAT CARDS	296
THE HIDDEN MUSIC	140	TEN THUNDERS UPGRADES	310
NEVERBORN STAT CARDS	148		
NEVERBORN UPGRADES	160		





THE GUILD



A NIGHT AT THE RACES

BY: MATTHEW FARRER

The first Saturday night of the quarter, Open Carnival Night, and the Malifaux Hippodrome was in gaudy, excited, slightly drunken bedlam.

If you wanted to take cognac and snuff with Malifaux's rich and powerful, you wangled an invitation to the Prospero Club on the Old Spire Road. If you wanted bohemia, velvet coats and flamboyant poses, poetry and politics, coffee and absinthe, then the salons around the Star Theater would consume all the nights you had to spare. Wanted to slum it? The current venue of choice was Foxhound Mews, just outside the northern Quarantine Zone, where taverns and bawdy theaters catered to daring silvertails who wanted to boast they'd seen Malifaux's dark underbelly.

But if you wanted to flash your looks and your jewels and your finest imported party clothes, you went to the Hippodrome for the Open Carnival.

You'd make yourself gossip-fodder, of course, but wasn't that the fun? Everyone wanted to see which young cad would flirt most dashingly while he was sober and disgrace himself the worst when he got drunk, and which normally-demure society girl would come sashaying along the Red Pavilion promenade with a neckline that belonged in the Succubus Club. Who'd be calling on friends tomorrow for favors and loans after a drunken betting spree tonight? And who'd be slipping away in a discreetly-hired gyro-hansom, and who would they be slipping away with?

There was a reason people called it "Fast-and-Loose Night", archly pretending they meant the races. As if anyone was fooled.

Charles Hoffman was in the Hippodrome for the Open Carnival. He was not there to mingle, drink, or gossip. He was not even there for the races, strictly speaking. Duty called.

He stood at the rail at the front of the Red Pavilion's balcony, looking around. Directly below was the crowded public area where the regular racegoers haggled with bookies and shouted themselves hoarse whenever a race charged past. At the opposite end of the 'drome was

the Governor-General's private Blue Pavilion, curtained and closed tonight: the Viceroy didn't much care for the races, apparently. Three massive chandeliers hung from the vaulted and mirrored ceiling, lighting the whole space midday-bright. That was impressive in itself. The Hippodrome wasn't the largest building in the city, but Hoffman thought it might well be the largest enclosed space.

The *ka-chunk* of the starting gates brought a roar from the stands and Hoffman leaned forward to watch. It was a wildly eclectic pack of racing constructs: animal-analogues, arachnids, bipeds; one on so many jointed legs it seemed to be trailing an undulating silver skirt. Barely in the lead was a blocky creation like an animated sawhorse, lower legs moving in a blur and hard India-rubber feet beating an impossibly fast tattoo on the parquetry racetrack. Pacing it was an egg-shaped bipedal machine bounding on chicken-like legs, trying to crowd its rival without actually colliding.

Hoffman thought back to races at home, the horses' hooves making low, soft thunder on the turf, but here the racers came around the curve and passed his vantage point with the most unholy metallic clatter and crash Hoffman had ever heard. He winced and glanced about, but nobody else seemed to mind. Most people were shouting and cheering too much to notice.

The bounding bipedal egg lost ground around the second lap. It was well-equipped for the straights but couldn't corner without skidding and staggering. Its boxy rival was now fighting for the lead with a gaudy red-and-green arachnid. Hoffman watched this new machine and his eyes narrowed as the pack clamored and bashed its way to the post.

"*Summer Hubris!*" blared the announcer horns. "Congratulations to *Summer Hubris* for the win, *Bayou Louise* for place, *Second Marquess* for show. *Summer Hubris* for the win, constructed by Mister Magnus Campbell of Breachside Mechanical Works, conditioned by the same." Hoffman gave a small nod, to no-one in particular. "Would all racers for the Pembroke Memorial Trophy please assemble in marshalling yard one. We remind

our spectators that all wagers for the Trophy must be made five minutes before gates-down.”

Hoffman unfolded a set of miniature binoculars and sought out the winners' circle. *Summer Hubris* was the red-and-green spider, which had overtaken the over-energetic sawhorse in the last few yards. No surprise. The sawhorse wasted far too much energy with so much transmission gear that far down the legs. Inefficient and horribly accident-prone. Not a design he'd ever have entertained for his own works.

Ryle probably would have. Ryle loved to mess with things, even impractical things. He used to insist that the built product could surprise you in ways that weren't predictable on paper. And even when they didn't work, he could still smile and clap when he watched them. For Charles, engineering was a cerebral process, chilly and grinding, but for his brother it had always been an adventure and a joy. It was why their mechanics respectfully touched their cap-brims when one of Hoffman's designs came to fruition, but threw their caps in the air with a huzzah when it was Ryle's.

Hoffman became aware that he was biting his lip. Too much had happened too fast for him to be able to think about his brother with equanimity. Too much.

He sighed and re-folded the binoculars. Around him the other spectators were all holding similar miniature race-glasses, fancily ornamented and held on slender rods of brass or steel. He felt a momentary, ridiculous urge to assure the people around him that his weren't race-glasses, he wasn't here for frivolous things.

He managed to chuckle at himself for that. Earnest to the point of prissiness, as Ryle had always teased him about. Anyway, the fact that he was here on duty would be obvious to everyone soon. That was part of the point of tonight. A public example had to be made.

The binoculars went into a little case fastened to the heavy brass hoop sitting snugly over his hips, and Hoffman dropped his frock-coat back down to cover it. Every coat he owned had been tailored to hide the lines of the heavy, lumpy brace that supported his torso and legs. As he looked out over the track again his right hand stole down to his right hip and massaged the harsh edges of the frame-joint there. It was a mannerism he had grown so used to that he was unaware of it. His thumb and outside forefinger were hard with callus from it.

Race attendants in long olive-drab smocks were out on the track, setting up bright yellow wooden frames. Interesting. A hurdles event would require variations in design. Legs would need to be sprung for heavy shocks as well as motive power, and cortices would need extra proprioception capacity to judge position in the air and correct when it hit ground. Fluid valves wouldn't work for balance – or would they? Surely there was time to stay and watch one more-

“Sir?”

Or not. Ah, well.

“Yes, Demir?”

“Observations from all three races match your predictions. Our mark has no further entries for tonight, but since the objective is to move while he is still in the Carnival proper...”

“So he hasn't tried to leave yet? Come around the front, please, Demir, I dislike talking over my shoulder.”

The frame that supported Hoffman's polio-withered legs made it hard for him to twist on the spot. People always forgot, assuming he was as light on his feet as they were. Ryle had never forgotten. He had always fitted his movements in so naturally with his little brother's, with never a word said.

You're at work, Hoffman reminded himself. Grieve when you're home.

Demir stepped up to stand by him, staring out over the track. Hoffman, looking at his Lieutenant's angular profile and then past it along the Pavilion, noticed the sideways glances from the young ladies and the sour looks from the men. Demir had held a commission in the Ottoman Republican Cavalry before he had come to Malifaux, and he wore the rather plain Guild Guard Lieutenant's uniform with as much flourish as though he had just left a white charger waiting outside.

“He spent some time having his hand shaken and his back slapped in the winners' circle,” Demir said, his dark eyes staying on the track. “He is now moving into the Members' Enclosure. He has asked for champagne. Sergeant Allardeck reports his words as being 'Better open a case, you fellows, I have a lot of friends here tonight'. We are in position.”

Below them the gates crashed down and the Pembroke Memorial began. These constructs were immediately

and obviously different: heavily-sprung hindcarriages, humpbacked gyroscope mountings, raked head assemblies to carry multiple eyes for better depth perception. They cleared the first hurdle with a sound like a scrap-pile collapsing into a lumber-yard, and raced for the second.

“Very well, then.”

Hoffman willed life into his leg callipers, turned and walked into the crowd. Carnival-goers parted before his heavy, metal shod tread. His personal assistant, a sleek three-foot-high arachnid of polished brass and brushed steel, joined him at the stairs in calm defiance of Pavilion rules.

“Who's with our man tonight, then? Hindle and Sanderson, as usual?” Hoffman asked.

“And several more out in the workshops. Roustabout types. We don't have their names yet.”

“Doesn't matter, we will.”

“As you say, sir. And yes, they are guarding the stalls where Mister Campbell's constructs are waiting to be transported home.”

“I imagine they're busy. Three wins out of three races. People are bound to want to see such impressive handiwork up close.”

“Just so. These men have been discouraging such close attention in quite forceful terms.” Demir said with a glint in his eye.

“Hmm. Discouraging Guild as well?”

“We have not sent anyone in uniform to inspect the stalls, as per your instructions, sir. One of our irregular informants found a pretext to wander by the stall and now has a black eye for his trouble.”

“Write him a little extra scrip for that trouble, please, Demir. You know the amounts I prefer.”

“Certainly, sir. Shall we go to the Members' Enclosure and meet with our mark?”

“Oh, you know me, Demir. I'm far better with machines than with people.” Hoffman turned his head in time to see Demir arch an eyebrow. “I should like a closer look at these marvellous pieces of winning design. Mister Campbell will find us soon enough, if he feels we're worth interrupting his champagne for.”



The workshops filled the role of racetrack stables, more or less. Instead of hay-lined horse-stalls, water-troughs and manure-heaps, there were wide machine-shop bays surrounded by tool lockers and brightly-lit workbenches. Overhead rails carried mechanised carriages with chain-hoists or powerful magically-wound clockwork motors for exotic mechanized tools. At the far end broad doors led to the marshalling square, the Stewards' station and the track.

The whole place was alive with clinks, jangles and clangs, overlaid with a fruity serve of verbal obscenities as the mechanics and shop-hands shouted and argued. When Hoffman and the Guild Guards came down the stairs, quiet rippled out in front of them as though the workshop shed were a pool they had just splashed down into. After a moment the sounds of tools on metal resumed, and men who had been bellowing a moment before instead muttered to themselves and turned their backs to the central aisle.

Magnus Campbell had a standing reservation for the biggest and best-equipped workshop bays. It was expensive - Hoffman had requisitioned the Hippodrome's ledgers and knew exactly how expensive - but expense meant less and less to Campbell with every race meet he attended, every new list of wins he racked up. The wins, and what came from them. Guild contracts, private commissions, consultancies. Campbell would soon be able to sell his stake in Breachside and retire as a wealthy man.

Hoffman's lips tightened at that thought.

Five men blocked the entrance to Campbell's bays, unsmiling types with the beefy builds that came from hauling metal around a machine-works all day. The sort of men who'd always made Hoffman especially conscious of his emaciated legs and the ponderous gait of his walking frame.

He made himself push that thought away. Time to work.

“Help you, gentlemen?” Sanderson asked, sauntering out through his line of bruisers. He caught sight of Sergeant Allardeck. “And ladies?” He preened his red-blond beard at her and grinned.

“Not yet, thank you Mister Sanderson,” Hoffman answered smoothly. Both of Campbell's senior

accomplices were here tonight - Hindle must be in the bay somewhere. "But we may have some questions for you. Please remain where you are."

"At your service, of course, Mister Hoffman," Sanderson said cheerfully. "Just bear with us for a moment while we make sure there's nothing in there to cause you an accident while you poke around. Mister Hindle!" he shouted over his shoulder. "Is everything secured so that that nice Mister Hoffman might come in and see His Nibs' handiwork? I know we were told no admittance but I'm sure Mister C would make an exception if he knew who his guest was."

"One moment, please, Mister Sanderson, and we shall have everything stowed and out of the way," came the reply. Behind Sanderson's muscle men, Hoffman could see the three racing constructs shifting and repositioning.

He felt queasy. He had no taste for this next part of the job, none at all. He wondered how people like the Ortigas did it.

Still, nothing for it.

"Draw weapons and go in," he told Demir. "Station two Guards at each of those constructs and immobilise them. Have the mechanics down tools immediately."

The bruisers had shifted on their feet and doubled up their fists, but they were unsure. They were looking to each other, to Sanderson, and then at Demir's drawn saber and Allardeck's rapid-repeater carbine. Only Sanderson appeared unruffled.

"Now, *sir*, I think you'll find those constructs are the private property of a certain Mister Magnus Campbell, who 'appens to be a close friend of a certain Governor-General of Malifaux, if you understand my meaning, there."

"Governor-General?" Hoffman asked. "You mean the man whose signature is on the warrant that my Lieutenant is holding? Carry on, Sergeant."

"Aye, Mister Hoffman." Allardeck walked forward and looked up into the stubbled, jowly face in the center of the line of thugs. She motioned him aside with her head, her curt black ponytail flipping, and when he simply leered at her she broke his kneecap with a brisk jab of her carbine stock and stepped around his crumpling, yowling form.

Hindle was crouched under *Summer Hubris* with screwdriver in hand. He pushed himself back on his haunches as the Guard moved in, paunch wobbling in time with the clay pipe jutting out of his mouth.

"A moment," he cried out to them, "a moment, these are delicate precision instruments! Step back and let us *yipe!*" Hoffman's personal construct had darted forward and plucked the screwdriver from his fingers. Without missing a beat it began unscrewing the panel he had been locking in place.

"Stop them!" shouted Sanderson. "Don't let them into the chassis! Get in their way while we-" At that point he had the wit to catch himself, and to notice that none of his men were moving.

"These ain't spies or sightseers, boss," said one of them. "s Guild, 'icase ye didn't see 'em. Every'un knows that cripple in the braces."

"He knows perfectly well who we are," Demir said. "He thinks he can bluster out of this. Be assured that he cannot." He had drawn his pistol. "And be further assured we shall shoot dead any man who interferes with Mister Hoffman in his duties."

"Our racers are precision machinery, like m'colleague said," Sanderson told him. His hands were spread in deference to Demir's gun, but his expression was sharp and calculating. "Bespoke pieces, works of art, they are, not something off a fact'ry line. Better tell your crew to watch 'emselves, Mister, case they set off some delicate machinery they don't know how to stop."

"The threat directed at Guild officers has been noted for the record," Demir replied. "A second one will be considered overtly hostile and met with force. Consider that your final warning."

"Not me you should be warning, sir, it's them." Sanderson juttled his beard past Demir, and when the Lieutenant glanced at the Guards around the racing constructs, he made a furious gesture to Hindle. Pale with fright, the older mechanic shook a silver whistle out of his cuff.

He blew a peculiar staccato blast on it, and moments later the bay was bedlam.

Summer Hubris started up to the full extension of its legs and leapt for the center aisle. Its hanging belly-panel knocked Hoffman's construct sprawling and sent a yelling Hindle after it.

Duckworth's Comet, a low-slung bullet-headed sprinter that had won the Straight Hundred Dash earlier that night, exploded into a flat run, sending Guards flying and punching through the bay partition as though the hardwood were paper. Within heartbeats it had galloped through two more partitions and crashed shoulder-first into the stairwell doorway when it couldn't turn in time, jamming its forequarters into the doorframe. Its splayed feet began to flap and scabble against the flagstones as it worked to free itself.

The *Corsican* was Campbell's most complex creation, and the most sinister. Broad-shouldered, slate-gray, it did not flee at the signal but reared back and surveyed the humans in front of it with three bulbous aquamarine eyes. *Corsican* was a cunning racer, and now it made a tactical analysis. It sprang free of the Guards, hunched for a moment to let a salvo of pistol rounds bounced off its curved shoulder, then absently swatted a heavy steel-topped workbench aside and reached the center aisle in two strides. Sanderson ducked towards it, grabbing for its shoulder.

"Hindle!" he shouted. "Get on board! Hah, the bastards aren't fast en-" Then he stopped, looked down to see what had thumped into his chest, saw the welling hole Demir's bullet had made, and pitched over, dead. *Corsican* didn't wait: it bunched its thick hind legs and bounded for the doors.

"Can you not stop them, sir?" demanded Demir over the chaos. All around them the Guild men were tackling shouting Campbell mechanics, piling on with boots and truncheons. Many of the other crews had bolted, leaving twitching constructs in deserted bays; others had dived for the floor or taken cover behind the machines they had been tending.

"Well, no," Hoffman said mildly. "That's sort of the point." *Summer Hubris* was staggering through the trashed remains of the neighbouring bay, belly still hanging open. Behind them *Duckworth's Comet* had pried itself loose from the stairwell and now shuffled in a circle, aimed itself at the doors, and once again burst into a sprinting blur.

Hoffman looked at it, framed it in his mind. In a split-second he understood it completely, felt its weight and momentum, the friction-heat in its mechanisms,

glimpsed a distorted view of the workshop aisle through its eye...

...but he could not control it. Its essence squirted through his mental grip and left him fighting for balance. He would have staggered if not for the heavy frame around his legs planted firmly on the floor.

There was the final proof. Not that he had needed any.

With metal-on-metal squeals two chain-hoist carriages came hurtling along the overhead rail, leaving trails of sparks. They beat *Duckworth's Comet* to the doors with seconds to spare and the racer slammed into their hanging loops of chain, hard enough to wrench them halfway off their rail. Hoffman shook his head as if in rebuke and the hoists rocked back, snapping their wheels back into place. *Duckworth's Comet* swung beneath them, pawing at the air, tangling itself firmly in place.



Summer Hubris had finally got itself turned around and into the aisle. Demir and Allardeck had shot out two of its eyes and it was noticeably hobbling. It was a racer, not a war machine, but it still had the weight and power to crush a human to paste.

“Leave off, I think,” said Hoffman, but Demir and Allardeck fired off another volley. What was it they said? “Cease fire!” he shouted, and that worked. They both looked at him.

“My way won't risk ricochets,” he said. Allardeck shrugged. Hoffman pretended not to see that and glanced around the workshop again.

Everywhere his gaze fell, constructs came alive. A long-limbed hurdler unbundled itself and leapt from its dormant crouch to block the aisle, to the alarmed shouts of the three mechanics who'd been sheltering behind it. Two thick-legged biped sprinters accelerated past it and scythed *Summer Hubris*' legs out from under it like rugby players, their round iron hulls ringing like kettledrums. As the rogue construct reeled, a roustabout machine stepped from the utility bay, grappled *Summer Hubris* in a steel cable lifting-sling and settled a heavy hydraulic clamp around its front left shoulder. With a groan of rupturing metal the mounting gave out and the whole row of limbs tore loose. *Summer Hubris* crashed onto its side, twitching and sparking.

“One to go, then,” said Hoffman. With a tread like a drop-hammer he marched for the doors, passed under the ensnared *Duckworth's Comet* and out into the marshalling square.

Corsican was fast and smart, but not smart enough to know how to escape. It was blundering among herds of panicking racegoers, shattering rail fences, tearing down marquees and knocking bewildered constructs off their feet. The winners' podium where Magnus Campbell had collected his medals and ribbons had been stamped into splinters. Hoffman counted at least half a dozen human forms sprawled on the ground, injured or dead.

“Enough,” he said aloud. Out of sheer reflex he reached out with his mind, but his thoughts skated off the wet red thing cocooned in *Corsican's* chest. But still there was something, some connection through the wires, the bellows, the implants. *Corsican* felt his touch, and understood what it felt.

His eyes closed, Hoffman felt it surge toward him, feet clawing the gravel, building unstoppable speed.

Then he crashed onto his side and yelled in pain as his walking-frame dug into his flank. Demir was lying across him, breathless from the running jump he had taken to knock Hoffman out of *Corsican's* path.

“Sir! Quickly!” He tried to drag Hoffman upright but the weight of the harness balked him as *Corsican* came about for another rush. Allardeck was methodically puncturing its hip with carbine rounds but they weren't slowing it. Hoffman's eyes half-closed again. He could feel the hard shocks as slugs punched through the metal skin. Good Guild doctrine, deform the joint with bullet hits and impede its movement.

Corsican launched the charge that would trample him into red ruin. Hoffman let his eyes close all the way. He could distantly feel the pull on his shoulder as Demir tried to drag him out of the thing's path, but too slow. He heard Allardeck shooting, but *Corsican* was too heavy for carbine rounds.

That was fine. He was fine.

Hoffman reached out again. It didn't take much to give him a hold. Any mechanism. Any metal on metal. He remembered train wheels answering his thought, leaping back onto the rails they had come loose from, snapping into place and gripping. That day through the Breach. The day he had lost Ryle.

He took hold of *Corsican* as it bore down on him.

He felt the joints at its hips and knees. Good bearings, well lubricated, but the friction was there. He amplified it. The hot steel guts of its motor, moving just so. He made it move differently. He grasped the forces at play in its balance and suspension, yanked them out of alignment, set them against one another. He slammed the focusing rings around those aquamarine eyes at speeds their designers had never allowed for. He gripped the spinal drive-shaft and reversed it with a single wrenching thought, not bothering to adjust any of the mechanisms around it.

Four great strides into its charge, three strides away from Hoffman and the wild-eyed Demir, *Corsican* shrieked, juddered and tore itself apart.



Hoffman opened his eyes, and his vision was filled with gray. It took a moment before he realised that that was the Corsican's head, which had crashed to the gravel less than a foot from his face.

With a wince, he pushed himself up into a sitting position, ignoring the twangs from his crooked legs, and looked around. Everyone near the workshop doors and the marshalling square was standing still, staring at him.

"Well, then," he said to Demir, who was up on one knee with his pistol still trained on the Corsican's head. Even panting and covered in dust, the man still looked infuriatingly dashing. Hoffman suspected a few society belles' diaries would acquire florid new entries tonight.

"What in the *BLAZES* went on here?" came a shout, and Hoffman actually smiled.

Magnus Campbell stormed out of the crowd in a powder-blue evening coat and shimmering Bayou silk cravat, his face flushed from anger and alcohol.

"You there! Hoffman! And whoever you are, you in the uniform, you can be sure I'll have your bloody commission for this. I am on highly personable terms with the Governor-General himself. What d'you make of *that*, eh?"

"Well, nothing we didn't make of it when we heard it the first time," Hoffman said. He felt rather tired all of a sudden. He waved away Demir's proffered hand and gripped his leg frames with his mind. "Which of them told us that, Lieutenant, Sanderson or Hindle?"

"Sanderson, I think, sir. Before I shot him."

That won them a brief silence. Hoffman spent it pulling his braces through a series of precise movements, scowling at the pain. Left leg lift just so, right leg bend in. Shift weight to right hand and push forward, get centered, push up... Standing again, his ears ringing a little, he looked glumly at the gravel rash on his hands and up his forearms.

"Yes, well, whatever you rabble think you're doing, I'll be taking possession of my constructs now, thank you. Where's Hindle?"

"Lieutenant, could you possibly find out- but no, here is our answer."

Hindle was shuffling out of the workshop doors with two Guards at his back, something ugly and dripping cradled in his arms and a pair of leg-cuffs secured at his ankles. When he dropped the thing in the gravel a gasp went around crowd. Someone screamed.

It had once been a dog, before its limbs had been severed and the back of its head flayed and opened like a trapdoor. Most of its jaws were gone. Its ears, pitifully, were intact, but wet and limp in death. Brass fittings had been screwed over its eyes and the stumps of its legs. Its rear was caked with excrement, and the whole thing stank.

Hoffman's mouth worked in distaste. Ryle had loved dogs.

"From *Summer Hubris*, was it, Sergeant? I thought so. Clever, *clever* Mister Campbell. Creating the controller is the hardest part of constructs, isn't it, sir? Breachside Machine Works has always produced very fine components, but you were never known for your complete constructs. Not until this year. And suddenly you were making self-guiding machines for, oh, the mines, the Freikorps," he gestured with his hand, "the races. There's been talk late into the night at the Prospero Club about how you managed it. Apparently I was the best person to find out." He glanced up at the quivering Campbell, then over at Allardeck, standing under the swinging corpse of *Duckworth's Comet*. Two engineers were standing next to her, and the Comet's torso had hinged open. From the look on their faces Hoffman guessed it stank as badly as the poor creature that had been sealed into *Summer Hubris*.

"We think this one used to be a horse, sir," she called.

"Thank you, Sergeant."

He had to hand it to Campbell, the man didn't simply try to run. He whirled dramatically on the spot, flicked his hand in dismissive contempt, and made to stride off. The drama was short-circuited by the three burly Guild Guards who had quietly moved up behind him. A moment later he was spluttering in fury and dismay as he was frog-marched to where Hoffman stood.

"Using animals was sick enough, Campbell. We'd have got to you eventually for that. And from now on we'll treat animal disappearances around construct works as an automatic warning sign. But you overreached." He looked down at the hulk of *Corsican*. "We'll cut it open later. We'll do our best to find out who the poor wretch

was, if you don't see fit to tell us. But I can sense the shape. You shouldn't have used a human, Campbell.”

Demir held out the warrant, but Hoffman didn't need to see it to recite it.

“Magnus Campbell. By the authority of the Guild and the office of the Governor-General of the Colony of Malifaux, you have forfeited your freedom and citizenship of that same Colony by virtue of the crime of Amalgamation, to which other crimes will be added at the Vice-Regal pleasure. Is that enough, Demir?”

“Certainly, sir, if you insist on the formalities.”

“Another character flaw of mine. Sergeant, do your duty by Mister Campbell and his men, please. The usual.”

“Aye, Mister Hoffman.”

Hoffman looked around at the wreckage, the trashed yards, the workshop full of debris and ruined constructs, and the shocked, quiet crowd.

“Well, Demir, we had discussed making a public example of Mister Campbell and co.”

“I think we can consider ourselves successful on that score, sir.”

Hoffman's ears were no longer ringing. He touched a finger to his nose and it came away dry. Time was, a strain like killing *Corsican* would have had it bleeding freely. Perhaps Ramos had been right, and he was getting stronger.

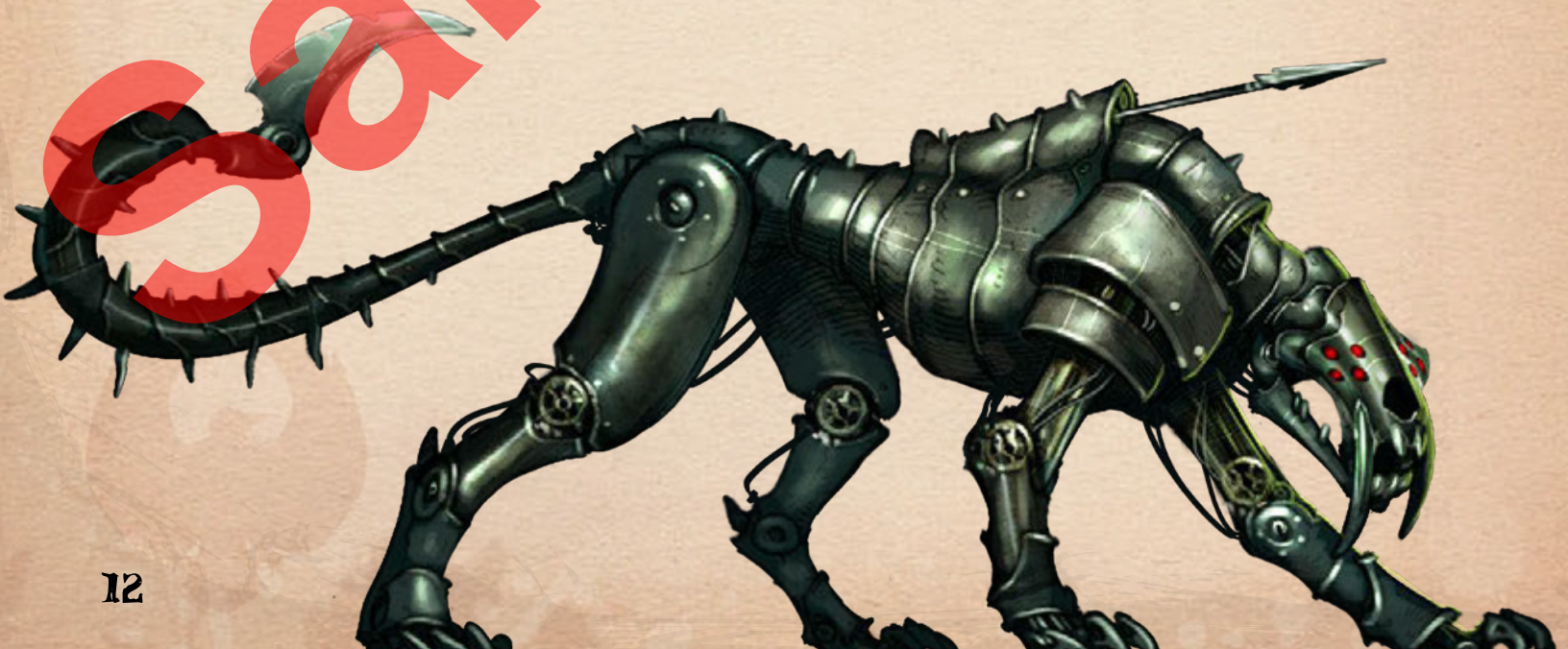
“Well,” he said, and looked around again. “I don't suppose we'll be very welcome to stay for the carriage races, will we?”

“In strictest confidence, Mister Hoffman, I think I'd rather see the evening out at Guild Headquarters with a glass of that Kentish port you keep at the back of your valet-stand.”

“It's hard to keep secrets from you, isn't it, Lieutenant?”

“Don't say that to me, sir, do me a favor and tell the promotions board.”

The two men walked away through the enclosure, the crowd parting before them and the hulk of the *Corsican* sprawled motionless at their backs.



THE RACE BEGINS

DESCRIPTION

One of these rich, race track snobs has been committing the crime of amalgamation. Time to bring him down, but best not interrupt the racegoers, at least not right away.

SET UP

Place a Hunter (Pg. 30) in the center of the table and randomly determine one player to be the Attacker and the other the Defender. The Hunter is a member of the Defender's Crew. This scenario uses the Shindig rules (M2E Core Rulebook pg. 89).

DEPLOYMENT

The Defender deploys first within 6" of the Hunter, this area is the Defender's Deployment Zone. Then the Attacker chooses a table edge and deploys within 6" of it, this is the Attacker's Deployment Zone.

SPECIAL

The Hunter placed at the start of the game may not Activate until the Shindig is over (this happens when any model deals damage to an enemy with an Attack Action, see the Shindig rules). At the end of any Turn in which the Shindig is still going on, the Hunter may push up to 6" in any direction.

VICTORY

The Attacker earns 1 VP every time one of her models ends in base contact with the Hunter using the Mingle Action. The Attacker may also earn 2 VP if the Hunter is removed from play. The Defender earns 1 VP at the end of every Turn the Hunter is still in play. Neither player may earn more than 4 VP from this scenario.

