

WILD HUNT



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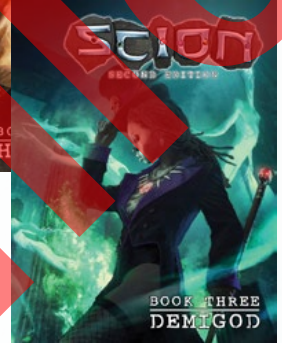
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INTRODUCTION

Inej looked at her strange crew, barefoot and shivering in their soot-stained prison uniforms, their features limned by the golden light of the dome, softened by the mist that hung in the air.

What bound them together? Greed? Desperation? Was it just the knowledge that if one or all of them disappeared tonight, no one would come looking? Inej's mother and father might still shed tears for the daughter they'd lost, but if Inej died tonight, there would be no one to grieve for the girl she was now. She had no family, no parents or siblings, only people to fight beside. Maybe that was something to be grateful for, too.

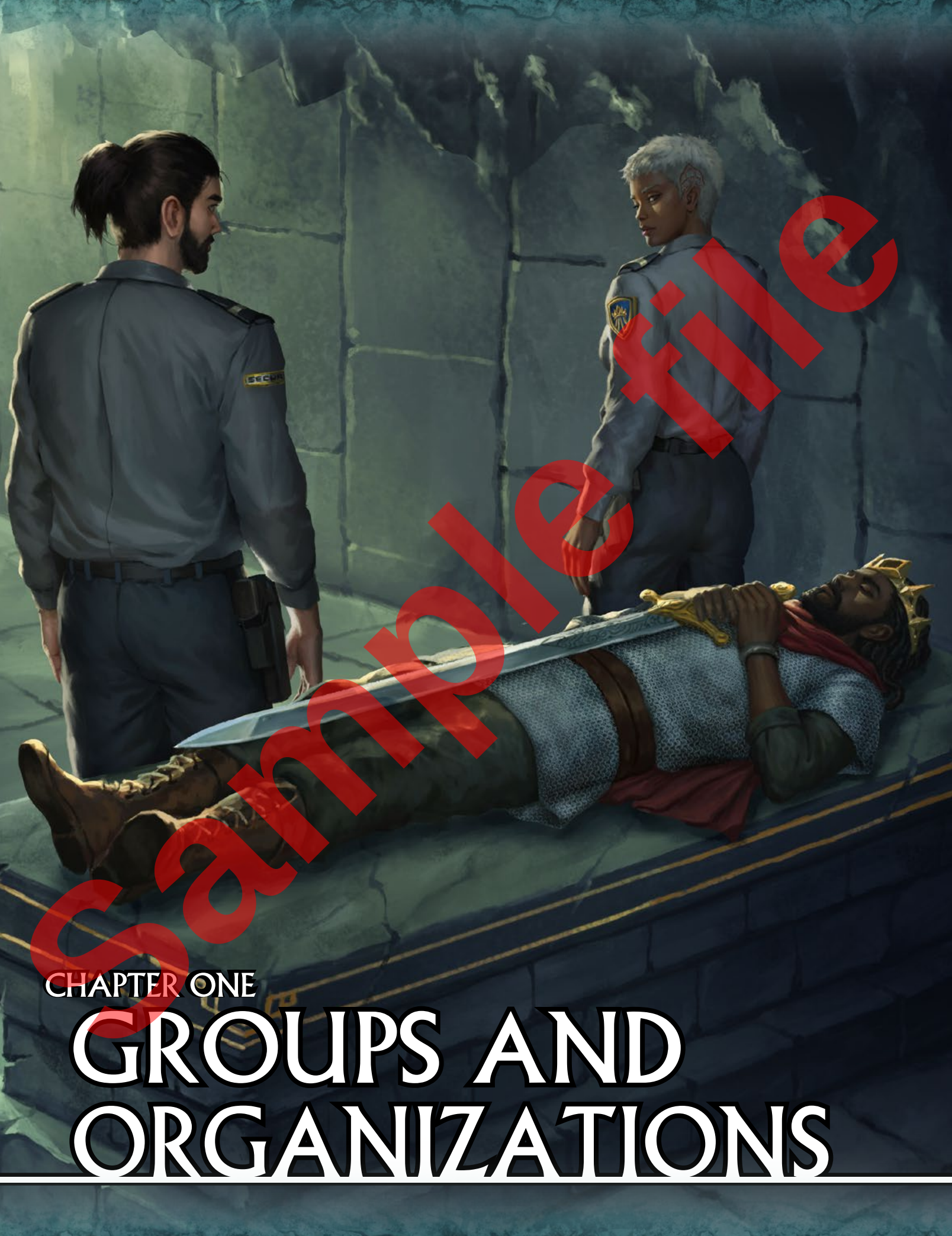
— Leigh Bardugo, *Six of Crows*

A high, clear horn sounds over lonely moors, and the wary bustle inside and check their locks. Troops drill endlessly on an ancient island, honing their skills for the glory of their fellows in arms. Deep beneath a mountain, a king slumbers, unaware of the guards ensuring they remain undisturbed until the hour of their people's greatest need. In secret laboratories, the elite pore over ancient tomes, seeking the key to immortality. Meanwhile, agents of the Spider-god weave intricate webs to ensnare the wicked.

Wild Hunt is a companion to the main series of **Scion** books. It presents optional groups for the Scions to join or test their mettle against, includes new Traits and Powers attuned to those groups, and offers Storyguiding advice for running games that involve them. Everything in this book is optional; none of it is "official" Scion canon. You can take bits and pieces that fit your table and change aspects as you desire.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

- **Chapter One: Organizations** introduces five organizations Scions might befriend, join, or find themselves at odds with. These include the Wild Hunt, the Immortals, the Kingsguard, The Alchemical Union of Remarkable and Unchallengeable Masters (AURUM), and the Spiderweb's Strands. Each write-up contains an overview of the organization, its manifestations around the world, notable figures, its relationships with the pantheons, and what making an ally or an enemy of the group might look like.
- **Chapter Two: Traits and Powers** takes a look at optional Fatebinding rules for Scions who entangle their Fates with an organization's, Birthrights useful for the groups' members, and new Paths and Knacks befitting them.
- **Chapter Three: Storyguiding** offers advice on tuning your story to the different Myth Levels, plus Storyguiding advice, plot hooks, and sample antagonists to use at your table.



CHAPTER ONE

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Hunt while you can. The weather may change tomorrow.
— Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald, *The Price of the Stars*

Throughout The World's many histories, Gods have involved themselves in mortal affairs. Sometimes it's for the mortals' own protection; sometimes it's for the Gods' veneration and ego-stroking. These groups formed in response to local needs and global threats, and they have endured for hundreds or even thousands of years. Some retain their original forms and purposes, while others have changed with the times and in response to new leaders. Some, like the Wild Hunt, consist of disparate groups with similar aims. Others, like the Anauša, are a single organization.

So, what do you do when divine ichor courses through your veins and that legendary artifact demands hefting? When your group of boon companions are just a DM away, all of them itching for grand adventure?

You join a cause. Or you find one to stand against.

THE WILD HUNT

Hoofbeats shake the ground. A hunting horn's call splits the air. Hounds bay as they catch a scent. A desperate man flees into the night; his sins have caught up to him, and no amount of money or well-armed bodyguards he could throw at the problem would make it go away. The prey runs, heart in throat, scrambling for shelter that won't hide him, and seeking escape that, ultimately, eludes him.

The Wild Hunt rides.

A group of supernatural hunters in raucous pursuit of their prey, the Wild Hunt rides to restore order, running down those whose egregious acts have harmed others or wrought environmental havoc. It presages ominous, momentous events — natural disasters, war, famine, and even death. It pursues the wicked, those who've angered the Gods or taunted Fate, and those unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Most mortals who look upon the Hunt run like terrified prey, but even witnessing its passing threatens to bind the observer to the Hunt. Some are abducted by its members and forced to join. A few survive, while others undergo strange transformations into ghosts or faeries. Some brave Scions ride in the Hunt's tumultuous company, seeking vengeance, righting wrongs, or simply looking for a chaotic and bloody good time.

Not all Hunts are dangerous and deadly. Some are kinder affairs, their riders carrying blessings and good fortune to those who've proven themselves worthy. They bring the promise of bountiful crops and imminent prosperity, and the towns they visit soon fill with the sound of laughing children.

Historically, the Hunt has appeared throughout The World, often at the behest of a pantheon's hunting deities or Gods of warfare. Other times, those who deal in death or fate wind the Hunters' horn. Still others come when Gods of hearth and harvest call, the horn they bear one of plenty rather than ruin.

Each Wild Hunt has a leader — a famous hunter or culture hero, a God of the hunt or fertility, or a Scion of such a deity. This leader chooses the prey, monitors events in the region that might necessitate calling a Hunt, and directs their riders in the chase. Their call begins and ends the Hunt, and they act as the final arbiter of the quarry's fate.

MANIFESTATIONS

Different manifestations of the Hunt occur throughout The World; its appearance, participants, and leaders often conform to the culture and predominant pantheon of a given area. In lands where the Tuatha Dé Danann and Nemetondevos are prominent, the Hunt takes its cue from faerie — antlered riders, white horses fitted with golden barding, and exquisitely-wrought swords. In Greece, they hunt on foot, following Artemis' lead. In Scandinavia, Odin rides out of Valhalla, two wolves and two ravens flanking him, and an army of Valkyries thundering on his heels.

In some parts of The World hoofbeats echo across a moor or a city's empty streets. The eerie howl of a pack of hunting dogs splits the air in these places, while in others hawks cry as they track their prey. In Ulaanbaatar, the sound of peeling rubber invokes a spectral horse's whinny when Hunters ride their Darkhan Windhorses past the Blue Sky Tower. The size of the Hunt varies depending on its needs and the enormity of the task at hand. Some Hunts consist of hundreds — or, on rare occasions, even thousands — of riders. Others comprise only a few select Hunters chasing down their prey through the tunnels of the New York City subway system.

Sometimes the only warning a target has that the Hunt has caught their scent is the sense of being watched, the prickling at the back of the neck, and the sensation that if they turned around (and they shouldn't, they really shouldn't) they'll never be the same again.

Though Wild Hunts ride around The World, there's no overarching organization that connects them. The purposes, composition, and leaders of each Hunt are deeply intertwined with that region's needs, culture, and legendary figures. Where, in many places, hearing the hunting dogs baying is a signal to stay inside, in some lands the barking is a joyous cacophony, heralding the arrival of Gods coming to bestow blessings upon their followers. Still, Scions who

ride with one Hunt are often welcome to join another, as they understand the degree of exertion and intense feeling of purpose required to catch their quarry.

THE UNSEELIE HOST

This tumultuous, wild, breathless, reckless Hunt clatters across the moors, picking up lost souls it encounters as it storms throughout the countryside. The most iconic version of the Wild hunt, its riders are often denizens of faerie and their companions. At its head ride faerie queens, the horned god Cernunnos, and other celebrities from faerie and Tír na nÓg.

Local wisdom states that those who hear the hounds barking would do well to stay inside and bar their doors. These hunters are often troublemakers and tricksters, demanding impossible tasks of those they sweep up along the way. People in its path are transformed, forced to run as one of the Horned God's hounds or serve as a courtier's steed. Some say the Hunt is headed to hell, some say it's headed to faerie. People who ride with this Hunt, if they return at all, may age decades in a single night or otherwise be significantly changed.

Some of their rides take the form of felonious pub crawls, where hunters break into a village's undefended homes and steal the residents' beer. Tengri Divine Followers often ride with the Unseelie Host, as they can be reckless in their pursuit of glory.

THE HOUNDS OF ANNWN

This Hunt rides at the behest of Gwyn ap Nudd, gathering up the souls of the dead and ushering them to the Underworld. Though they're often confused with their Unseelie colleagues, the Hounds' duty is a sacred one. Branches of this Hunt exist around The World, though their members work with the Gods and Underworld of the pantheon that's prominent in their local area.

The souls the Hounds chase are almost all reluctant to relinquish their holds on life, tenuous as those connections are. Most of these remnants flee from the Hunt — if they encounter and frighten mortals along the way, it's rarely out of malice.

Other souls actively wreak havoc, refusing to go into the Underworld without a fight. They intentionally terrify their victims and destroy whatever they can get their spectral hands on. Some are capable of possession and carry out their rage in stolen bodies. When it comes to these souls, the Hunters are also doing a service to humanity, restoring the natural order.

Sometimes, this Hunt takes a darker turn. Erlik Khan and his cults aren't just doing soul cleanup, but are also actively trying to steal unwitting mortals' souls and bring them to Tamu. Such actions can even bring different branches of the Hunt into conflict with one another. Woe to the mortal whose soul becomes the prize.

OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS

Some storied Hunters appear not only in other organizations in this book, but in other Scion titles as well. If King Arthur's leading the Wild Hunt, does that mean the Kingsguard have failed in their duties? Not at all. Remember Scion's overarching statement: All myths are true. If both groups appear in your story, there might be multiple manifestations of Arthur, or a person who's simply taken on the title. They could even be a Scion of Arthur himself.

THE OSKOREI

Originally said to be led by Odin and the Valkyries, this Wild Hunt rides to punish sinners. While they're not above chasing your garden-variety thieves, most of this group's prey commit crimes The World's judicial systems lack the power — or the wherewithal — to correct. Once, they pursued greedy Englishmen who hunted on Sundays rather than attending Church. Today their targets are bigger: executives who flout environmental regulations, corrupt politicians, powerful people who wave around wads of cash to make problems go away, and the people who stuff their pockets with that money.

The Hunt's prey is sometimes transformed into a hart, sometimes simply left as their own two-legged self. Whether it's better to be fleet of foot or have thumbs is entirely a matter of opinion. Each pursuit follows its own obscure rules, depending on the riders. Some prey are punished if they hold their ground and stand up to the Hunt. Others who offer to help the Hunt receive some kind of reward for their services — a prize that is also most likely cursed.

This Hunt and its leaders vary widely. Count Ebernburg was a German noble whose lifetime of sins earned him eternal death and a place at the head of the Hunt. Artemis and her Scions sometimes lead the Hunt in Theoi lands. The Marutagana, a group of young storm deities, gather when Indra or his Scions put out the call. In Texas, the Hunt takes the form of the famed Ghost Riders, who endlessly chase a herd of red-eyed cattle across the sky at Stampede Mesa.

Not only is this group charged with punishing sinners, but they're also heralds of war, climate change, and plague. Bearing such heavy tidings can take its toll, and while many riders celebrate the good they do for The World, its members often rotate out for a while before returning to the field.

FRAU GAUDEN'S RIDERS

Not all manifestations of the Wild Hunt are engines of chaos or harbingers of doom. Several hunting parties throughout The World take it upon themselves to bestow blessings upon those in their territories. They step in when all seems lost, turning fallow fields fertile or pulling mortals out of danger. Where their counterparts in the Oskorei make The World better by ridding it of sinners, these

Hunters improve it by aiding those in need and rewarding people who show compassion.

Led by deities of hearth, home, craft, fertility, and family such as Demeter and Xochiquetzal, Frau Gauden's Riders lead a procession across the night sky, riding over communities in need. Fields under their path grow abundant the next year, and would-be parents clasp hands beneath their starry trail, hoping to be blessed with children. Anything and anyone in the Riders' vicinity benefits from their blessings. Sheep in this region grow soft, fluffy coats. Yarn nerds The World over pay handsomely for skeins of their wool.

While the other Hunts are notorious for killing their prey or driving souls into various hells, these riders can even thwart death itself. In Devá lands, the Ásvins are twin horse gods known for rescuing mortals and bringing them back to life.

GOALS

Each manifestation of the Hunt has its own goals. They're protectors, defenders, harbingers, and judges. They're divine benefactors or a group of Otherworldly friends out for the ultimate bar crawl. While there's no single overarching objective that all Hunts aspire to, the common denominator among them is the camaraderie that comes with being part of a Hunt. When the Hunt rides, it rides as one.

They appear as heralds of climate change and related disasters — corporate neglect and corner-cutting that leads to accidents and environmental catastrophes. They appear in places where conflict and unrest happen, and where Demigods and Titanspawn square off in epic battle.

In many ways, the Wild Hunt is a supernatural tornado warning system, giving people the opportunity to flee, to be aware of the disaster that is looming just over that next hill. In the last few years, the Hunt has been appearing more and more, as extreme weather events become the norm rather than the exception.

At a battle, the Hunt is there to bear witness and to warn bystanders that they *will* die if they linger. The Oskorei sometimes send a scout ahead, warning mortals to stay home, lock their doors, and stay there until the dust settles. That can be a challenge for modern Hunts when hostilities spill over into population centers.

NOTABLE FIGURES

Following are a few figures who've ridden with various Wild Hunts, and stat blocks for generic hunter types for use in your game.

HUNTER

Riders with the Wild Hunt are clever trackers. They know all the shortcuts in the territory they patrol, using them to beat their quarry to his destination. They've scouted the hiding places he'll inevitably hole up in and mapped out every alley worth ducking into. If those places have back doors or bulkheads, or if a restaurant's kitchen opens onto them, it won't be long until Hunters burst through. The thrill of the chase invigorates them — a clever target is always the most

interesting, but a prolonged Hunt isn't always ideal. There's a huge difference when your quarry is a CEO in for a night of pants-shitting terror versus a soul looking to sow as much chaos as it can before it gets sent back to the Underworld.

Hunters who act as harbingers may not be participating in a chase, but their procession is no less awesome to observe. They ride with the intent to warn, to be heard and understood, to be heeded, to witness. Their ride comes in stages, their warning growing louder and louder until their targets can no longer ignore it. Those who hear the first distant rumble of hoofbeats act early — they try to divert disaster's course, or they get the hell out of its way. Others wait until they see the riders' dust on the horizon, or the revving engines shakes their glassware in their cabinets. Some don't heed the warning until they can see the steam from the horses' nostrils, or the exhaust from the motorcycles' tailpipes. When they get out doesn't matter, as long as they grab their go-bag and get out of the trouble zone. Every life saved, early or late, is worth it.

When it comes to their duties, Hunters may be raucous and rowdy or grim and laser-focused. The Hunters' strength lies in their numbers: A Band seeking the hunters' help gains a pack of allies who already know how to work together. A Band who crosses them is at the mercy of the same.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: Armor Piercing, Dread Gaze, Honor Bound, Tough as Nails

Flairs: Here I Come, Immobilize, Second Wind, Shadow Step

Drive: To capture my quarry; To reward the worthy; To bring warning or bear witness to those in my domain.

Primary Pool: 9 (Combat, Ride, Tracking)

Secondary Pool: 7 (Alertness, Survival)

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

LEADER OF THE HUNT

At the head of the Hunt rides a formidable figure. Their horse stands several hands taller than the other riders'; the rumble of their bike's engine sends a thrill of fear through bystanders' chests. Often, they're crowned in some way: a rack of antlers sweeping back from their temples, a sleek helmet declaring them leader of this pack, even the High King's golden circlet. For some, their aura of command is crown enough.

While Gods like Odin, Cernunnos, and Gwyn ap Nudd do lead the Hunt, many of its commanders have been mortals who were hunted themselves. The Hunt is their eternal punishment, or their self-imposed attempt to atone for their sins. Others view leading the Hunt as their sacred duty and a way of protecting the mortals under their care.