



LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

A string of disappearances in a mountain town are marked with paw prints seared into solid rock. SAVE has seen this omen before, and knows it is only a matter of time before people start dying horribly.

Important Traits: Prescient Dream is useful for uncovering some of the more esoteric information associated with this case. Blessing is suggested for dealing with the Huntsman's Special Weakness, and Sphere of Protection can be useful to deal with the yell hounds. At least one character should have training in the Research skill, preferably with a specialization in Folklore; alternately, Investigation, with a focus in Antiquities/Relics. Backgrounds in law enforcement could also come in handy for dealing with the sheriff's department. An Information Source in antiquities or folklore can also be helpful. At least one character should be skilled in some form of combat.

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Major Menace: The Huntsman, a unique and powerful creature of vengeance and twisted justice.

Minor Menace: Yell Hounds, human beings changed into creatures via the Fleshcrawl discipline.

SETUP

Located about 80 miles north of Kalispell, Stone Hill nestles in a valley on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Though fewer than five thousand people call this city home, Stone Hill serves as the business and educational hub for the county, with most of the local schools' students bussed in from surrounding rural communities. Its buildings maintain facades reminiscent of frontier boomtown architecture, and many of the buildings have certification as Protected Landmarks from the local historical society.

West of Stone Hill is Stone Lake, a deep lake carved from the mountains by long-retreated glaciers. Thick virgin forest bounds the lake on two sides. With plentiful game and fish, and remote, picturesque settings, Stone Lake attracts hunters, anglers, hikers, boaters, campers and vacationers in all seasons. Locals are used to tourists and travelers wandering in and out of their town, and tend to be friendly and approachable.

BAD BLOOD BREWING

Jakob Dreger was never the town's favorite son. A bully as a teenager, he grew into a spiteful lech before military service sent him overseas to Afghanistan. While there, he served in a unit with Thomas Noone, who died in combat. When he returned to Stone Hill, Dreger took over his family's business, the Dreger Salvage Yard, on the edge of town.

Sean Noone, Thomas's son, became obsessed with his father's death, and after months of research, discovered from military records that his father had been covering for Dreger when he was killed by sniper fire by insurgents. Sean confronted Dreger several times, which culminated in a physical altercation and a restraining order.

Sean swore that Dreger would pay, and in the fall of 2013, began organizing nighttime raids on Dreger's business, stealing expensive materials and vital tools from the yard, and spray-painting insults and slurs on Dreger's walls. Dreger reported each of these thefts to the local law enforcement. Sheriff Daisy Ratherford investigated each instance, but could never find sufficient evidence to accuse Sean, let alone arrest and convict him. She left the case file open, and advised Dreger to get dogs for nighttime security.

Dreger acquired three Dobermans, each bred for aggression and trained as guard dogs, just before Christmas in 2013. With snow heavy on the ground, and three vicious dogs patrolling the yard, Sean stopped his raids to avoid getting caught, and spent the winter formulating a new plan.

In February of 2014, Sean started vandalizing Dreger's property again, using meat laced with sedatives to incapacitate the dogs. Dreger reported this to the sheriff's office, and Ratherford investigated, hoping that testing the meat might give them a solid link. The results came back as a generic prescription sedative, commonly available and prescribed. Ratherford noted that Sean's girlfriend's mother, Sondra Bergman, had a prescription for the medication, but then again, so did half the town. She was once again forced to let the case go cold, with no solid evidence to advance her investigation.

Dreger did not take this well. Drunk and belligerent, he confronted Ratherford on April 9, 2014, and

his abusive language resulted in Ratherford locking him in the drunk tank overnight to dry out. After his release the following morning, Dreger returned to his junkyard to find his dogs dead, sections of his fence missing, and his home ransacked. Dreger didn't report this to Ratherford at all; he buried his dogs and decided to take care of matters himself. He tampered with the brakes and safety systems of Sean's car, disguising it as mechanical failure.

On the night of April 19, 2014, Sean was driving home from visiting his girlfriend, Ellie Bergman, and lost control of his car. His vehicle slid over an embankment of the road, rolled down the steep slope, and rammed straight into a tree. His airbags did not deploy. An early-morning hunter found him hours later, drawn to the wreck by the shine of headlights through the trees. Sean was still alive, but barely. Rescue services hauled him from the wreck and rushed him to the hospital, but Sean died en route and was declared dead on arrival in the emergency room.

Ratherford opened an investigation into the accident, suspecting Dreger's involvement. The investigation took weeks, and included careful forensic recovery, crime scene reconstruction, opinions from crash-analysis experts, and dozens of interviews with local citizens. Everything pointed to mechanical failure and poor vehicle maintenance, including dozens of anecdotal accounts of Sean's reckless driving and maintenance records from Sean's preferred garage. Additionally, the autopsy report estimated Sean's perimortem blood alcohol levels as well above the legal limit. Though she still had suspicions, Ratherford concluded that the accident was caused by driver intoxication and mechanical failure, and closed the case.

Ellie, Sean's girlfriend, did not take this well. Convinced of Dreger's involvement, she confronted him. Ellie's mother, concerned for the mental health of her daughter, consulted her pastor, Reverend Evan Beaumont. With his counsel, she decided to send Ellie to stay with her grandmother in Portland, in the hopes that time away would help Ellie begin to process and accept Sean's death.

Ellie's grandmother, an elderly German woman, tried to comfort Ellie with folk stories of ghosts and other fey creatures who punished the wicked. This did not have the intended effect on Ellie, who spent her time in Portland researching fairy tales and occult rituals via the internet library. By the time she returned to Stone Hill, she did so with the intention of summoning a vengeful spirit to mete out justice on Dreger, Beaumont, Ratherford, and others she felt were responsible for Sean's death.

Under the cover of night, she went to the site of Sean's crash and using a ritual she cobbled together from a variety of sources, called out for supernatural assistance in avenging Sean. The Huntsman answered Ellie's call, and she fell completely to its mercy.

THE HUNT BEGINS

Using the Fleshcrawl Evil Way discipline, the Huntsman transformed Ellie into the first of his yell hounds, and the focal point for his purpose in Stone Hill. Ellie's drive for vengeance became magnified after her transformation, and she immediately led the Huntsman to the second of his victims: Reverend Evan Beaumont. Though she believed him to be complicit in the cover-up, Beaumont committed no crime. The Huntsman instead also took him as a yell hound.

Ellie's mother, Sondra, reported her missing the next afternoon, and Sheriff Ratherford opened an investigation into her disappearance. Later that same day, Rev. Beaumont's housekeeper, Agnes Duquesne, reported her employer missing as well.

Ratherford decided to treat the two cases as linked, and began to investigate them. While driving from one location to another, the yell hounds attacked her, driving her towards the Huntsman. Again, despite Ellie's belief, Ratherford was innocent of covering up the murder, and the Huntsman changed her into his third yell hound.

At this point, Aileen Deveaux, the widow of a SAVE envoy from Buffalo, contacts the Society. She mentions the paw prints burned into the concrete of the road, and asks SAVE to send a team to investigate.

Meanwhile, though, the hunt continues. Still focusing on Ellie Bergman's desire to avenge Sean Noone, the Huntsman broadens its campaign to the last people to see Sean alive. In these people, it finds the guilt it seeks. Freddy Mills, the coroner, made a mistake on Sean's autopsy by stating that he was very drunk while driving home; since this "crime" effectively closed the case, the Huntsman seeks him out first. Daryl Richards, one of the volunteer firefighters who arrived on the scene, had let an elderly woman die in a house fire some months back. Ezra Merkel, the hunter who found Sean's body, shot a fellow hunter years ago and buried him in the woods. Jan Kaplan, the nurse who rode with Sean in the ambulance, had a habit of administering lethal levels of drugs to elderly and terminal patients. All of these people become victims of the Huntsman, forced to confess their sins and then torn apart by the yell hounds, unless SAVE intervenes.

The final victim of the Huntsman is Jakob Dreger himself. The yell hounds kill him and then revert to their human forms and wander dazed into the woods. The only exception is Ellie, who when she changes back to her true form, dies, happy to have avenged Sean's murder.

THE TIMELINE

Summer, 1999: Thomas Noone dies while covering for Jakob Dreger in Afghanistan, leaving behind a wife and young son. Later injured in combat and discharged for medical reasons, Dreger returns home to take over the family business, the Dreger Salvage Yard, in Stone Hill.

Fall, 2013: Sean Noone begins vandalizing Dreger Salvage, stealing expensive items and equipment, and spray-painting hateful messages on Dreger's house and shed. Dreger complains repeatedly to the Sheriff's office, and Daisy Ratherford investigates, but can find no evidence pointing to a specific suspect.

Winter, 2013: Dreger acquires dogs for nighttime security. Sean stops vandalizing the salvage yard to think up a new plan.

February, 2014: The vandalism resumes. Dreger now suspects Sean and his girlfriend, Ellie Bergman, of committing the crimes. Ellie is innocent, and Sean uses her as an alibi. Rutherford uncovers no evidence pointing to Sean or Ellie, and has to let the case go cold again.

March, 2014: Tension continues to escalate. Sean begins drugging Dreger's dogs.

April 9, 2014: After a night in the drunk tank, Dreger returns home to discover his dogs are dead, and show signs of drug overdose. Dreger does not report this, merely buries his dogs and bides his time.

April 19, 2014: Dreger finds an opportunity to tamper with the brake lines and the airbag deployment system of Sean's car, using his mechanical aptitude to conceal his sabotage as wear-and-tear damage. On his way home from Ellie's later that night, Sean crashes his car into the woods after taking a turn too fast.

April 20, 2014: Ezra Merkel (57), a local early-morning hunter, finds Sean's car in the woods. Sean is still alive, but barely. Volunteer firefighters, including Daryl Richards (34), arrive and cut him free. The on-call community nurse, Jan Kaplan (47), rides with the firefighters, and tries to keep Sean alive. Emergency transport from the clinic arrives thirty minutes later. Sean dies en route to the Kalispell hospital. These people later become targets of the Huntsman.

April 21, 2014: Sheriff Ratherford opens an investigation into the death of Sean Noone.

April 23, 2014: New and inexperienced coroner Freddy Mills (23), performs an autopsy on Sean. He detects a blood alcohol content level well above the legal limit. He estimates Sean's BAC to be much higher at the time of the crash, failing to consider microbial processes creating ethanol in Sean's body post-mortem.

April 27, 2014: Sean is buried in his family plot, next to his father. The Reverend Evan Beaumont oversees the ceremony. Afterward, he approaches Ellie to offer grief counseling to come to terms with the accident. Ellie suspects Beaumont of knowing the truth.

May 12, 2014: Sheriff Ratherford still suspects that Dreger had a hand in Sean's death, but cannot prove it. With the evidence she has at hand, she is forced to conclude Sean drove recklessly and drunk, and poor maintenance contributed to brake and airbag failures. She closes the case.

May 15, 2014: Ellie physically attacks Jakob Dreger, blaming him for Sean's death. Dreger files for a restraining order. Sondra Bergman sends Ellie to Portland to stay with her grandmother.

July 25, 2014: Ellie returns to Stone Hill. That night, she summons the Huntsman, and becomes his first yell hound. Rev. Beaumont becomes his second yell hound later that night.

July 26, 2014: Sondra Bergman reports her daughter missing. Agnes Duquesne reports the Reverend missing. Sheriff Ratherford begins investigating.

July 27, 2014: Ratherford is taken by the Huntsman, becoming the third yell hound. Deputy Avi Mendel (34) finds her car abandoned on the highway, with the door ajar and the hazard lights on.

July 28, 2014: Aileen Deveaux (48), a member of the Historical Society and the widow of a former SAVE envoy, forwards a link to the local paper's article about the disappearances to SAVE. Her email also makes mention of the paw prints burned into the asphalt and rocks.

START OF SCENARIO FOR CHARACTERS

July 30, 2014: First death. Freddy Mills is found in the coroner's office, his throat torn out. A copy of Sean's autopsy report is found on his desk, with a bloody handprint on it and the words "I was wrong" written in blood on the back.

July 31, 2014: Second death. Ezra Merkel is killed by the hounds on the shore of Stone Lake. In his pocket are blood-splattered hastily drawn map to the deep-forest location of a ten-year-old grave, where he had buried a hunter he had accidentally killed.

August 1, 2014: Unsuccessful attack. Jan Kaplan is attacked by three huge dogs late at night after visiting Agnes Duquesne at the vicarage to administer medication. She runs into the cemetery beside the church, and noticing the hounds do not follow, she stays there, huddled against a tombstone all night.

August 2, 2014: Third death. Trying again, the hounds successfully catch Jan Kaplan just after sunset on her own property. Partial dog tracks are visible on the walkway and hard-packed gravel driveway. Written on the wall of her house in her own blood is a list of names of former elderly and infirm clients who died in her care. Beside the names is "I KILLED THEM IN MERCY," also in Jan's handwriting.

August 3, 2014: Fourth death. Daryl Richards is found by an early-morning jogger near the dog park. Richards had been under investigation for the suspicious death of an elderly woman in a house fire six weeks prior. He has been torn apart by dogs, but no tracks are found immediately around the body. Prior to his death, he scratched the words “I DID IT” into the dirt near his body, forced by the Huntsman’s Evil Way to confess his culpability.

August 4, 2014: Final deaths. Jakob Dreger dies messily in his junkyard after being forced by the Huntsman to confess his murder of Sean Noone, scratched in bloody mud. When he is found, Ellie Bergman’s body is found with him, unmarked and smiling.

August 5, 2014: Ratherford and Beaumont are found wandering in the woods, dazed and with no memory of their time under the control of the Huntsman.

THE CASE

SAVE provides the envoys with quick transportation to Stone Hill, accommodations, and an expense account. The Society recognizes that the Huntsman is a dangerous foe, and moreover, going by past experience, the envoys only have a short time to find and destroy it before it completes its bloody mission and disappears.

The most logical place for the envoys to begin is with Aileen Deveaux, who can provide a lot of required background information. From there, the envoys have several paths available to them, from researching the Huntsman and associated folklore, interviewing locals attached to the case, and narrowing down the list of potential victims.

INITIAL INTERVIEW – AILEEN DEVEAUX

Aileen is friendly towards SAVE envoys and will help them in whatever way she can, as long as she is not put in direct danger. The loss of her wife, Lisa Lavoie, has affected her deeply, however, and if she discovers that any of the characters were directly or indirectly responsible for the death of another envoy, she becomes distant and cool towards them, incurring a -10 to any T#s to interactions. **Note:** If any of the players wish to take Aileen as an Information Source (not a bad idea, given her academic background and personal history with SAVE), she costs 2DP (see p. 56 of *Chill*).

The clues below are the ones that Aileen can provide directly, with an Interview check. She can also help the envoys perform Research, which grants the player making the Research Check a +20 to her T#.

AILEEN DEVEAUX – INTERVIEW

- *Vital:* The girl who disappeared, Ellie Bergman, recently lost her boyfriend Sean Noone in a car accident. Apparently he was driving drunk and his car left the road and hit a tree.
- *Interest:* Ellie Bergman disappeared the same day she came back from Portland, where she spent time to recover from Sean’s death.
- *Esoteric:* Rumor has it that Ellie blamed a local mechanic named Jakob Dreger for Sean’s death. Jakob Dreger and Sean Noone have a history of bad blood, dating back to Dreger’s service with Thomas Noone. Aileen suspects Reverend Beaumont may have some skill in the Art.

THE HUNTSMAN – RESEARCH

Aileen is best suited to help the characters research the Huntsman, but the envoys don’t necessarily have to accept her help.

- *False lead:* The Huntsman is a demon from Hell, and cannot harm anyone carrying a cross or a crucifix. The people it changes into yell hounds are doomed, and cannot be recovered.
- *Vital:* The Huntsman kills only those who have escaped punishment for their crimes and sins. Certain rites and rituals can ward against, or appease the Huntsman, such as offering bread or salt. It changes people into monsters called “yell hounds” using the Fleshcrawl discipline.
- *Interest:* The Huntsman is an entity that appears in many cultures, and is considered either a spirit of vengeance or a dispenser of justice. It is bound by certain rules, however, such as hospitality — it cannot hurt someone who offers it both bread *and* salt.
- *Esoteric:* The Huntsman doesn’t strike at random, but according to a plan. That plan seems to be determined by the specific people it changes into yell hounds, so curing or killing those people would alter its targets.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

Sondra Bergman — Interview: Note: Sondra is distraught over the disappearance of her daughter, and has trouble paying attention to questions the first time they're asked. If the player is using straight Interview, or an inappropriate specialization like Interrogation to talk with her, apply a -20 to the player's T#. Use of a specialization like Empathy or Counselor does not incur this penalty.

- *Vital:* Ellie became very upset after her boyfriend, Sean, died, and she spent a lot of time at the site of the accident. Ellie blamed Jakob Dreger for Sean's death; Sondra is aware there was bad blood between them but isn't sure why. Sondra sent her to stay with her grandmother (Sondra's husband's mother) in Portland to recover.
- *Interest:* Ellie acted strangely the day she came home, but told her mother she was going to Sean's accident site to say goodbye.
- *Esoteric:* Ellie's grandmother is more than a little enamored with folklore and fairy tales from the Old Country, and Ellie ordered books on the subject from online distributors while she was in Portland.

Deputy Avi Mendel — Interview: Deputy Mendel is overworked and clearly in over his head, following the disappearance of Sheriff Ratherford. He responds better to law enforcement personnel than to civilians asking him questions, especially if they can provide a little guidance or advice to him.

- *Vital:* The sheriff's office has been getting reports of wild dog sightings around the more secluded areas of town, such as the dog park and the woods north of town.
- *Interest:* Ratherford believed all of the odd occurrences in recent history were connected somehow.
- *Esoteric:* Ratherford believed that Dreger was responsible for the death of Sean Noone, but couldn't find a shred of evidence to prove it.

Agnes Duquesne — Interview: Agnes is in her 50s and has been Reverend Beaumont's assistant for the last ten years. She is horrified by the idea that something may have happened to him and wants to help in any way she can.

- *Vital:* Reverend Beaumont oversaw Sean Noone's funeral, and offered Ellie counseling.

He was also critical in Sondra Bergman's decision to send Ellie to Portland.

- *Interest:* Beaumont offered Ellie counseling following Sean's funeral, but Ellie declined. Agnes thinks this is a terrible shame, since Ellie clearly needed the help.
- *Esoteric:* Beaumont is a Godly man, with deep faith and endless compassion. He's well-liked and well-trusted by most of the town's residents, even the non-religious folks. Talking with him seems to lead to clarity of action.

Jakob Dreger — Interview: Belligerent and asinine at the best of times, Dreger's not inclined to speak to anyone, and all interactions with him suffer a -10 to the T#.

- *Vital:* Jakob believes that Sean Noone vandalized his shop and stole parts and money, but that the Sheriff was too lazy to do her job properly. He claims (truthfully) to have no knowledge of Ellie Bergman's whereabouts; "I thought she moved to Portland or something?"
- *Interest:* Jakob used to have guard dogs, but no longer does and refuses to say what happened to them. If pressed, he says they didn't work out, and seems upset and sad.
- *Esoteric:* Jakob's veneer slips and he says that Sean Noone got exactly what was coming to him, and if the Sheriff had her head out of her ass, Sean would still be alive. He refuses to elaborate, and falls back on claiming the sheriff is incompetent.

Researching Jakob, rather than interviewing him, yields the following:

- *Vital:* Jakob runs the salvage yard and has plenty of experience as a mechanic and junkyard owner. He received a medical discharge from the Army after being wounded in Afghanistan.
- *Interest:* Jakob served alongside Thomas Noone, Sean's father. Apparently Sean blamed Jakob for his father's death, as Jakob was convinced that Sean was behind the vandalism and theft from his shop on multiple occasions. Jakob has a restraining order against Ellie Bergman, filed after she physically attacked him about a month after Sean's death.
- *Esoteric:* Jakob purchased three trained Dobermans from a breeder and trainer in winter of 2013. The vet has not seen them in months.

SITES OF INTEREST

Revered Beaumont's Disappearance — Investigation: Beaumont disappeared outside his home, early in the morning of July 26. *Vital:* Paw prints are burned into the driveway. *Interest:* The Reverend's clothes are found shredded and discarded around the side of his house. *Esoteric:* The center of each paw print has whorls very similar to human fingerprints (but unidentifiable).

Sheriff Ratherford's Disappearance — Investigation: *Vital:* The paw prints are only visible on stone or asphalt, even when the paw was on grass or dirt at the same time. No blood is found at the scene. *Interest:* While there are signs of a chase, there are no signs of a struggle. Ratherford's weapon was either not discharged, or the brass casings were picked up. *Esoteric:* Two distinct sets of paw prints are present at the scene.

Sean Noone's Accident — Investigation/Research/Interview: Different clues are available depending on how the envoys approach the investigation; use your best judgment. *Vital:* Sean's car went off the road on a clear night with no adverse driving conditions. The brakes failed and the airbags did not deploy due to mechanical failure. The autopsy says that Sean's blood alcohol content was well over the legal limit when he died. *Interest:* Though the coroner's report officially notes Sean's high postmortem blood alcohol content and estimated perimortem BAC, Ellie Bergman's testimony elsewhere in the case documents swears that Sean may have had a few drinks on occasion, but never drove drunk. The report fails to consider microbial processes postmortem which would make his BAC appear higher; adjusting for that, Sean was under the legal limit when he crashed. *Esoteric:* Part of the vehicle analysis notes potential tool marks on the airbag and brake systems, but ultimately dismisses them normal wear-and-tear or damage caused by the undercarriage scraping the bank during the accident.

THE VICTIMS

FREDDY MILLS

- *Vital:* Mills is the coroner for the town, but has only been in the position a few months. His report on Sean Noone was rushed. Mills' body is found sitting in his chair at his office, his throat torn out by a large animal, probably a dog. He also sustained a bite on his arm. A copy of Sean Noone's autopsy report is on his desk in front of him, with a bloody handprint (Mills) on one side and "I WAS WRONG" written in blood (also Mills) on the other. Paw prints are visible on the sidewalk leading up to the door, but not inside the office.
- *Interest:* Though his report officially notes Sean's high postmortem blood alcohol content and estimated perimortem BAC, the report fails to consider microbial processes postmortem that would make his BAC appear higher. Adjusting for that, Sean was under the legal limit when he crashed. Mills' office is in disarray, as though he tried to escape and was pushed or herded back to his desk.
- *Esoteric:* Blood spatter indicates that Mills was bitten on the left arm at his desk, and his fingers on his right hand were bloody; he used the bite as the blood source to write the note. Three distinct sets of paw prints are visible on the sidewalk outside the office.

EZRA MERKEL

- *Vital:* Merkel was found dead on the shores of Stone Lake. He sustained multiple animal bites to his arms and legs, and bled to death. No tracks are evident except for his.
- *Interest:* Merkel found the body of Sean Noone, but had no involvement in the matter after calling the police. A map found in his pocket indicates a site deep in the woods (if the envoys insist that Deputy Mendel follow up, the body of a hunter with a single rifle shot to his chest is found in a grave at this site. The body has been there for a decade, and went missing during hunting season in 2004).
- *Esoteric:* Merkel's home contains a great deal of hunting paraphernalia, including a rifle left to rust in his shed. The caliber matches that of the bullet extracted from the dead hunter.

JAN KAPLAN (AFTER THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK)

- *Vital:* Three dogs came out of nowhere when she left Agnes Duquesne's house, giant and black and hostile.
- *Interest:* She feels like they were herding her more than attacking her.
- *Esoteric:* Until she got to the cemetery, there was a voice in her head, urging her to confess to something she did. Kaplan is cagey on the details. (Coaxing the "something" out of her — her euthanasia of terminal clients — is nearly impossible, and requires a separate check with a -20 to the T#.)

JAN KAPLAN (DEATH SITE)

- *Vital:* Dog prints burned into the sidewalk and driveway of Kaplan's home. A partial list of her clients is written on the outer wall of the house in blood (Kaplan's). All of the clients are dead. The words "I KILLED THEM IN MERCY" are written next to the names.
- *Interest:* Three sets of dog prints. Kaplan was on duty the night Sean died and rode with him in the ambulance.
- *Esoteric:* Kaplan kept a scrapbook of clip-pings about her "clients," complete with obituaries.

DARYL RICHARDS

- *Vital:* Richards' body is found near the dog park, with multiple bites on his body. Many paw prints in the area, but none of them match the previous sites. Richards was on duty the night of Sean's death, and was involved in the rescue operations in extracting Sean from the mangled car.
- *Interest:* Richards has a reputation for laziness and cutting corners, which is why he was under investigation for that house fire.
- *Esoteric:* Richards almost certainly would have been found culpable for the old lady's death, and most of the firehouse thinks it's long overdue. He scratched the words "I COULD HAVE SAVED HER" in the dirt near his body, but foot traffic has nearly obliterated it.

CONFRONTING THE UNKNOWN

When not actively hunting, the Huntsman remains in the vicinity of Sean's accident site, where he was summoned. The Huntsman tends to stay cloaked until his hounds have harried a victim towards him. He prefers to use terror tactics to demoralize and frighten his victims using Unknown Light and Terrorize before using Confession to force them to admit their gravest sins.

The yell hounds are territorial and hostile. The hounds spend their days in a den dug out of a hollow oak tree trunk not far from the crash site, emerging at night to hunt their next victim. If the envoys discover the yell hound den while the hounds are hunting, their scent at the den makes them the hounds' immediate target. During the day, they respond to interlopers aggressively, attacking immediately with the intent to kill.

The Huntsman prefers to escape from direct confrontation, letting his hounds deal with enemies. If he cannot escape, he relies on Influence, Confession, and Appear Dead (Self) to sow confusion and trick attackers into believing he's been dispatched. He attacks only as a last resort, normally when confronted with blessed iron. He wields an axe, which he uses with deadly efficiency.

THE HUNTSMAN

The Huntsman has had many names from many cultures over the centuries. Woden, Cain, Gabriel, Theodoric, Valdemar, Gwyn ap Nudd, and Lucifer are a few of his most notable. Most commonly, he is known as Herne the Hanged, who punishes sinners by tearing them apart with his harrier hounds.

SAVE has not determined for certain what kind of creature the Huntsman is; it is considered a unique being under the Garret system. Some stories have him as a devil ridden out of hell to torment the wicked. Others say he is a harbinger of war or an omen of catastrophe. Most commonly, he is the restless, vengeful spirit of a woodsman or hunter, hanged from an oak tree for crimes he did not commit.

Whatever his origins, the Huntsman is a force to be reckoned with, seeking out victims according to standards that change with every encounter and choosing to either kill them by or claim them for his pack at random. Only one thing remains consistent, if circumstantial: when investigated fully, every deceased victim has committed at least one major moral crime.

THE HUNTSMAN

EWS: 115
(Legendary)

REF: 80

STA: 75

Injury: Superficial, Minor -10, Serious -20, Major -30, Critical -50, Lethal

Disciplines: Appear Dead (Self), Chill, Confession, Eyes of Minion, Fleshcrawl, Hunter's Mark, Influence, Terrorize, Unknown Light

Aspects: Bane (morality/innocence), Cloaked, Discipline Master (Fleshcrawl), Flight, Master, Reincarnate, Special Weakness (bread and salt), Special Weakness (blessed iron), Telltale (eerie chill), Unkillable, Unliving

Bane: (morality/innocence). The Huntsman cannot harm anyone who has not committed an immoral act. While his criteria for "morality" is mysterious and unpredictable, unrepentant murder is always an immoral act. Fleshcrawl is specifically excepted from this Bane.

Special Weakness: (bread and salt) In many European cultures, bread and salt is considered an important ritual when hosting guests, or moving into a new house. Whether this is born of folklore, or the folklore adapted itself from the Huntsman, the creature is unable to harm anyone who carries both bread and salt, and offers it to him in a sign of respect. This safe passage lasts until a night and a day have passed. A victim the Huntsman has targeted with Hunter's Mark can attempt to convince the Huntsman to remove the effects of the Discipline with this ritual and with an appropriate communications check.

Special Weakness: (blessed iron) The Huntsman may only be killed with a weapon of blessed iron. Historically, this has been accomplished by Christian priests, but a pagan drawing on the power of her belief in Gaia, a devout Hindu praying to Shakti, a Muslim calling upon Allah, or a Shinto devotee asking the *kami* for assistance have as much effect. It is the personal importance, not necessarily the religion or symbols used, that charges the metal. A SAVE envoy with Blessing who uses the Discipline on herself or an ally holding the weapon also blesses the iron.

YELL HOUNDS

EWS: 80
(Notable)

REF: 70

STA: 55

Injury: Superficial, Minor -10, Serious -20, Major -30, Critical -50, Lethal

Disciplines: Change Temperature, Hunter's Mark, Quiet

Aspects: Bane (consecrated ground), Deadly Attack (Serious), Minion, Special Weakness (personal affects), Supernatural Speed, Unfeeling

Bane: (consecrated ground) Yell hounds cannot enter any ground that has been sanctified, dedicated, or designated as sacred or holy. This includes churchyards, cemeteries, pagan groves, mosques, shrines, sanctuaries, and other such locations.

Special Weakness: (personal affects) Yell hounds are unable to attack anyone carrying an item of personal importance from their human lives.

Yell hounds are enormous and black, resembling mastiffs in general build. None but the most observant of witnesses can tell these spectral hounds are shape-shifted humans, but careful study (and a PCN check with a -20 to the T#) reveals that a yell hound's eyes remain human, and the whorls of their paw prints, burned into rock and asphalt and concrete, are larger versions of human fingerprints.

Yell hounds caught in a Sphere of Protection or under Mental Shield revert to their human forms for the duration of the effect. They are naked and dirty, and have no memory of their time spent shapeshifted. When the discipline ends, the victim reverts to yell hound form. Using Disrupt on a yell hound doesn't allow it to return to human form (there isn't time), but does all the victim to cry out a single sentence, often some variation on "Help me!"

NPCS

AILEEN DEVEAUX

STA: 40

WPR: 60

REF: 40

Specializations: Folklore (E90), Antiquities/Relics (B65), Occult (B70)

Drive: I want to get to the truth

DEPUTY AVI MENDEL

STA: 60

WPR: 60

REF: 50

Specializations: Firearms (E90), Investigation (B75), Interview (B70)

Drive: I don't want to be the sheriff

RUNNING LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

The Huntsman is a creature inexperienced envoys will have trouble facing. He is unique, and SAVE's records are incomplete regarding his capabilities. Characters that have shady or criminal pasts for which they have not atoned are in mortal danger.

The most important thing to remember is that the Huntsman is driven by vengeance, but it's tempered with his version of justice. The NPCs he kills have all committed moral or ethical crimes. Dreger killed Sean Noone. Kaplan killed several of her terminal patients. Richards let an old woman die in a house fire. Mills' mistake allowed for Dreger to get away with murder. Merkel covered up his accidental crime instead of taking responsibility. In contrast, the three victims who are transformed into hounds instead were guilty of no crime by the Huntsman's standards and two of them will be released at the end of his mission.

The Huntsman rarely attacks anyone himself, leaving that task to his hounds. He should be presented as a looming figure in the background, an oppressive presence watching through the eyes of his hounds, or the voice in the back of a person's head, urging them to confess their gravest sins.

The envoys might kill one or more of the yell hounds instead of trapping them or reversing the curse. That leaves the envoys with dead bodies to deal with, in addition to the trauma of having killed someone! The yell hounds are human beings, and that information should be made available to the envoys at the earliest possibility, so they understand the ramifications of this course of action. Should a yell hound die, the Huntsman is likely to take whichever envoy struck the killing blow as a new yell hound.

Once Ellie's vengeance is satisfied, she becomes the Huntsman's final victim. When she dies, she resumes her human body. Typically, the Huntsman releases his remaining hounds from their servitude at this point, but if the envoys have managed to kill Ellie, it derails the linear chain of events (since the Huntsman is using her vengeance as a focus), and the Huntsman will shift to Reverend Beaumont's (and then Sheriff Ratherford's) knowledge of criminals and sinners to establish a new list of victims.



More...

ENVOY ACTIVATION NOTICE

tags: **Inbox****SAVE****S SAVE Buffalo**

(July 28, 2014, 02:37)

to: <Recipient List Blocked>

For immediate investigation by the most experienced envoys available.

Early this morning, SAVE received an email from Aileen Deveaux, widow of Lisa Lavoie, a Buffalo envoy killed in the line of duty five years ago. The email, sent to her former counselor at our Angwin facility, reads:

Hi Sylvia,

I know I've been out of contact for too long, and I'm sorry that I'm re-establishing it under these circumstances, but your address is the only one I still have. All of Lisa's old contacts just bounce and I'm not sure who else I could send this to. I know you'll get it to the appropriate people.

I moved to Stone Hill, Montana after I left Angwin and took your advice: I got a job with the Historical Society and settled into a new life. For the most part, things have been quiet, despite the size of the town. Then, back in April, a kid died in a car accident. Two days ago, his girlfriend disappeared, and so did the Reverend. Yesterday, it was the sheriff.

This isn't a town where this happens, Sylvia. If people disappear, it's because they went too close to the old mines, or because they ignored trail markers in the woods. I'm including a link to the Sentinel's article about the disappearances, but it doesn't really say much. It certainly doesn't mention the huge paw prints burned onto the stones and rocks around the crime scenes. That's one of the things Lisa told me to always watch out for, one of the things she said always report.

Thanks, Sylvia. I'll get in touch with you once this trouble is over. Please let whoever you forward this to know that I'm happy to help your envoys whatever way I can.

*Best,
Aileen*

According to SAVE files, paw prints burned onto stone are caused by one specific type of creature: yell hounds. Where yell hounds are found, one can also find the Huntsman. The Huntsman is a unique, powerful creature of the Unknown, driven by vengeance and a twisted form of justice. Wherever he is found, lives are destroyed and people die. Available archives are unclear as to how (or if) this creature can be destroyed, but research is still ongoing.

Travel to Stone Hill (~5000) and find a way to disable or banish the Huntsman as soon as possible. Discern everything possible about his motivations. While he clearly chooses his victims, we have not been able to discern a pattern to his choices, and any of the town's residents may be an intended target. Begin with Aileen Deveaux. Travel, lodging and equipment will be swiftly arranged as soon as the envoy team is finalized.

Please forward all your reports to SAVE Helena, and mark them URGENT.

Good luck,

-Sylvia Franz, SAVE Buffalo



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