

In war, there are no unwounded soldiers.
- Jose Narosky

RUINS OF WAR

An adventure for the World of Darkness
using the Storytelling Adventure System

Written by Ben Counter Developed by Eddy Webb Based on material by Will Hindmarch
Edited by Genevieve Podleski Layout by Jessica Mullins Art: Sam Araya, Tomasz Jedruszek,
Brian Leblanc, Ken Meyer Jr., Juan Serrano, Cyril Van Der Haegen, Cathy Wilkens, James Stowe,
Andy Brase, Efrém Palacios, James Cole, Costas Harritas, Jim Pavelec

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

MENTAL	●●○○○
PHYSICAL	●●●●○
SOCIAL	●○○○○

WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING, INC.
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STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

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STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

SCENES
II

MENTAL
PHYSICAL
SOCIAL

●●○○○
●●●○○
●○○○○

XP LEVEL
0-34



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Beneath the deserts of Iraq, among the ruins of the ancient Babylonian civilization, lie secrets. The ancient servants of a dead god stir again. Forgotten magic waits to be claimed. Evil spirits yearn for souls to consume. At the heart of it all is a terrible hunger – for power, for servitude, but most of all for blood.

A squad of soldiers escorting an archaeologist is thrown into the maw of these ancient secrets, and its men must fend for themselves against an ancient horror beyond their understanding. But survival is not enough, for deep in the ruins of Ur the very tools of their salvation could cost them their souls.

Introduction

Ruins of Ur is a story kit that helps a Storyteller to run a World of Darkness story crammed with violence, gore and horror. The player characters in this story are soldiers sent on a seemingly routine mission that pitches them into a deadly struggle with an ancient horror waking from beneath the earth. Should they survive, they may uncover hints about an ancient empire that was ruled not by mortal tyrants, but by supernatural beings whose legacy has not faded from the world.

ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the **free SAS Guide**, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

Here are some of the features available in **Ruins of Ur**:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in blue will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It can also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flow-chart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.



This kit can be run as a standalone story (and perhaps spark the beginning of a new chronicle). Alternatively, it can be run as part of an existing chronicle. This latter option will require some adapting of the story and its set-up, and suggestions are given in the introduction and throughout the story's scenes about how this might be done.

The tropes of this story include action, the military, visceral horror, ancient secrets and internal conflict. It has a lot in common with your average horror movie: it places its characters in an isolated setting from which they cannot readily escape and pits them against an overarching horror that is ostensibly far more powerful than them. It provides plenty of opportunities for set-piece shocks and messy deaths, and has potential for conflict not just with internal horrors, but between the main characters. The story also has a tension-ratcheting countdown. The atmosphere of **Ruins of Ur** was inspired by action horror movies like *Dog Soldiers*, *Aliens* or *Predator* and by survival horror videogames like the *Resident Evil* or the *F.E.A.R.* series. **Ruins of Ur** is all about shock, desperate combat and setting your M16 to full-auto so you can spray like a weak-bladdered tomcat at anything that moves.



Mood: Ancient, Dark, and Hostile

The story's mood is primarily conveyed through the setting: the Temple of Sin. This is an ancient ruin, and its age is an important part of the story's mood. Great age imparts gravity to the story, a sort of grandeur that only the weight of centuries can bring. It brings about questions, too: Who built all this? What kind of people existed back then? How can anything still be alive down here?

It should also be noted that like many classic horror stories, **Ruins of Ur** is very dark – literally. The Temple of Sin has barely any lighting, and the characters will be forced to bring their own light sources. Fears gather a hundred times more profoundly in the dark, and monsters loom twice as large.

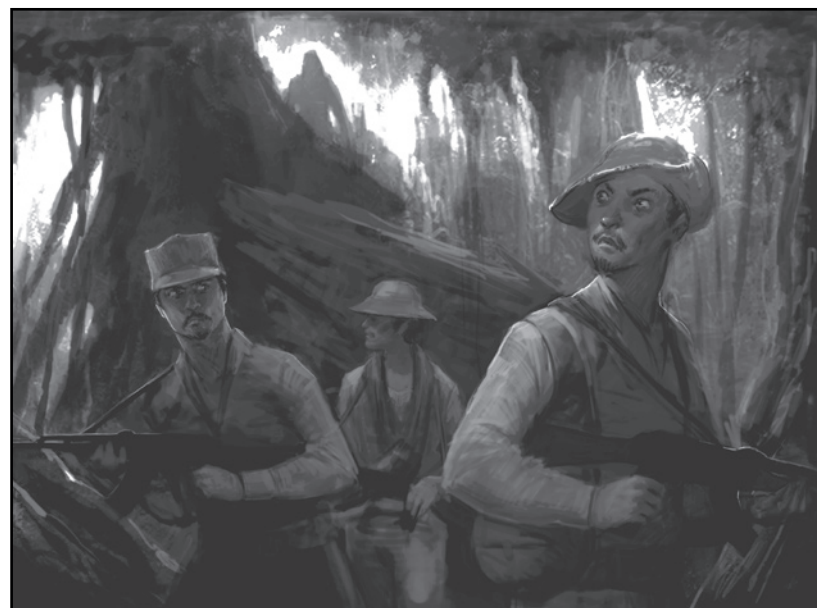
The story takes place in hostile territory. Characters should be very aware that they are on a mission and that, regardless of the supernatural foes they might encounter, there are plenty of good old mortal foes around who would kill them just as fast as any undead bloodsucker.

Background

Ancient Times

Between 1800 and 1600 BC in Mesopotamia (corresponding roughly to modern-day Iraq), an empire thrived, centered on the city of Babylon. This empire was ruled by Marduk, a king who believed he was a god (and he was, in fact, a supernatural creature). He gathered around him other supernaturals to enforce his rule and expand his empire, and a golden age of evil and predation grew in Babylon. One of the cities brought under Marduk's rule was Ur, a city ancient even then, and sacred to the moon-god Sin. Sin was a giant figure, impossibly handsome and blazing with moonlight, but Marduk was not awed by him, for Marduk saw himself as more than Sin's equal. Sin was impressed by Marduk's fierce presence and ruthlessness in the pursuit of power, and Sin and his priests became allies of Marduk. The huge Temple of Sin just outside Ur became the religious heart of the empire and Sin's worshippers were outnumbered only by Marduk's own. Among the priests of Sin was a magnificent and terrifying creature called Bashanipal.

Marduk's reign could not last forever. Some time after 1600BC, Marduk fell and Hittites from the north invaded and pulled the Babylonian Empire apart. Some saw this coming, among them Bashanipal, who chose to enter a near-death slumber until the world was an easier place for a bloodsucking fiend of the night.



Theme: Mystery, Desperation and Violence

Ruins of Ur begins with mystery and its revelation. At the outset, the player characters have little or no idea what they have let themselves in for. As the story continues they uncover more about their location, the ancient Temple of Sin, and the creature that wants to consume them. This theme of revelation runs throughout the story, and uncovering information about their surroundings is key to the characters' survival. Setting up mystery, and paying it off with revelation, is the story's main dramatic device.

In **Ruins of Ur**, the primary conflict between the characters and their undead enemy will almost certainly be resolved through violence, and lots of it. The story works best in a military context because then the characters have a good reason to be toting the kind of weaponry they'll need. The inevitable escalation of violence is another major part of the story and forms a great part of the story's structure.

Finally, a theme more internal to the characters is desperation, or how far they will go to survive. The most potent weapons for use against Bashanipal exact a horrible toll on the humanity of those using them. For instance, the Lyre of Ishtar is mind-warping to use, and the power gained from the temple's sacrificial pit requires the extremely horrible death of a living human. The question of just how far the characters will go to survive Bashanipal's predations provides a counterpoint to the threat of Bashanipal himself.

Unfortunately for Bashanipal and the retainers who were interred with him in the catacombs adjoining the Temple of Sin, that time never came.

Until now.

Modern Day

The Babylonian Empire and Ur became footnotes in history books until a series of excavations in the late nineteenth century hinted at the size and sophistication of the empire's cities. Much later, in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq by coalition forces and the fall of Iraq's government, archaeologists had new and unobstructed access to these tempting sites. Miranda Steele took the opportunity to excavate a promising site outside the ruins of Ur, where her research suggested she could find a site of great religious importance. She brought with her three assistants — Stellan, Drake and Jenks — and beneath the sand of southern Iraq they found the Temple of Sin. And Bashanipal found them.

In his slumber, Bashanipal reached out with his mind. Drake and Jenks knew that something was wrong, but they continued with their work because of the apparent importance of the site. Stellan went insane, murdered Jenks, and was killed trying to acquire a weapon which he believed could destroy the evil they had uncovered. Drake walled himself up in one of the small side-tombs to escape the madness. Steele herself heard the voice of Bashanipal and was fascinated instead of being repelled. Here was a being possessing knowledge of a forgotten age; a golden age (in Bashanipal's memory) of freedom and enlightenment. She lost her mind, and became devoted to waking Bashanipal and receiving his wisdom.

Steele left the dig site, determined to return with the sacrifices Bashanipal required to complete his awakening. She went to the US military, who were searching for ways to better understand the mindset of the insurgents currently targeting their troops. Steele explained to them the theory of Archaeological Intelligence (ARCHINT) which might help shed some light on the cultural forces at work in Iraq. She asked for the military's help in gaining access to the site near Ur, explaining that its treasures would allegedly help illustrate the "philosophical and religious roots of the insurgency." The military warily agreed and sent a squad of soldiers to escort Steele to the dig site, unaware that she has already excavated much of it or that she intends to hand her escort of soldiers over to Bashanipal as a welcome gift.



The poor schmucks assigned to escort Miranda Steele have no idea what's about to go down in the ruins of Ur. Those poor bastards are the player characters.

ARCHEOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE

Military intelligence typically comes from one of a group of recognized sources, such as Human Intelligence (HUMINT) from observers and informers, and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) from intercepting enemy communications. Archaeological Intelligence is intel gleaned from the study of history and ancient sites. ARCHINT is theoretical and fictional, but in the World of Darkness it is an occasionally valuable resource. Military forces in the World of Darkness need intel not just on enemy plans and forces, but on the weird shit that keeps on happening to their soldiers (going mad, becoming possessed, being turned inside out, getting exsanguinated, and so on). The US military, in particular the Army, believes that ARCHINT may be worth pursuing and is contemplating deploying ARCHINT-gathering assets in Iraq to see if the violence in the country is fueled by some cultural force that can only be properly understood in a historical context.



Treatment

The story proper begins as the characters and Miranda Steele approach the dig site by helicopter. Their pilot, Lt. Deborah Church, guides them down to land when gunfire erupts. Insurgents, temporarily occupying the ruins, assume the characters are there to kill them and stage an ambush. In the gunfight that follows, the helicopter is damaged beyond repair and Lt. Church is severely wounded. The characters' orders afterwards are to stay put, continue with their mission and wait for extraction (which will be a while coming as insurgents are mounting a major push into the area).

Miranda leads the characters into the entrance chamber of the site, where a huge carved stone door adorned with six seals looms. The first seal shatters and Steele ecstatically announces to Bashanipal that she has brought him a meal to sate the hunger of three and a half thousand years. Bashanipal stirs behind the tomb door and (no matter what happens to Miranda in the ensuing scene) the characters are left with a situation on their hands. They are trapped in the ruins, and soon something horrible is going to wake up and try to eat them.

The characters have the opportunity to explore the ruins. Beneath the ground is a series of smaller tombs and the Temple of Sin itself. Exploring these, the characters will probably disturb a nest of ravenous vampires and fall afoul of the same Babylonian spirit that claimed the life of Stellan. They can also uncover some hints about the history of Marduk's empire, along with the unfortunate fates of Steele's assistants on the first dig (and discover a half-mad Drake still walled up in his hiding place). Most importantly, they have the chance to arm themselves with three powerful secrets in the temple: the Lyre of Ishtar, an artifact weapon imbued with the power of Babylon's old gods; the services of the spirit, who can be bound to the characters' will with a ritual that was translated by one of the assistants; and the supernatural powers granted by the sacrificial pit beneath the temple, although this requires the sacrifice of a living human to be granted. During this time the seals will break until only one remains barring the door to Bashanipal's tomb.

When the final seal breaks, Bashanipal is unleashed. He is a tremendously powerful creature, and even with their modern-day weaponry, the characters have a tough time surviving the encounter with him. Only by arming themselves with the secrets of the Temple of Sin do they have a chance to take him down. Finally, with Bashanipal or the characters dead, the chopper arrives to rescue the survivors. How many passengers – or corpses – the chopper takes away from Ur depends on how smart the characters fight when Bashanipal comes for them.

A Chapter in Your Chronicle

The set-up above assumes that the players are running characters who are soldiers in the US military. This is easy enough to deal with if you are running such a group of characters in your chronicle, or if you are running a one-off game for which characters can be created specifically. Military characters can be created easily enough using the **World of Darkness Rulebook** on its own. However, Storytellers and players will find the **World of Darkness: Dogs of War** sourcebook very useful in this regard, along with **World of Darkness: Armory** if they want to really go all out. However, if **Ruins of Ur** takes place during a different kind of chronicle besides a military one, then it may need a different set-up to get the characters to Ur. Some suggestions are:

- The characters are after a particular occult or otherwise important artifact (perhaps the Lyre of Ishtar). Miranda Steele learns of their search and contacts them, claiming to have located the artifact in the ruins of Ur. All they have to do is hire a chopper and a pilot from a mercenary company (common enough in the war-torn parts of the World of Darkness) and Steele will lead them right to it.
- The characters are members of a private military organization, or perhaps just mercenaries or down-at-heel adventurers looking for a quick buck. Miranda Steele needs people to accompany her to the dig site and she's paying well, and she's already got the transport sorted out. It sounds like a good way to make some fast cash, and with a minimum of risk.
- If the characters have a criminal bent, they learn of some cache of gold, art or other valuables recently unearthed at an archaeological dig. They high-tail it over to Iraq to loot the place, pausing only to accept the services of an eager (and quite hot) archaeologist who can act as a guide in return for a cut of the goodies.
- The characters have a powerful patron who wants something from Ur. It doesn't really matter what it is (again, the Lyre of Ishtar is a possibility). He sends his underlings to meet up with Miranda Steele, also in his employ, and escort her to the site to retrieve the desired item.

Miranda Steele, Driven Archaeologist

Quotes: “Don’t flatter yourself.”

“Leave the thinking to the experts.”

“Just imagine what we have forgotten... what remains to be found if we only knew where to look.”

Virtue: Faith. Miranda firmly believes that there is something larger out there, and Bashanipal has given that to her.

Vice: Pride. She believes that she is better than everyone around her.

Background: Miranda Steele was always much smarter than the people around her – her classmates, her family, even her teachers. When she went to college to study the ancient world she happily let them all drift away, satisfied that she was all the company she would ever need. She made a damn good scholar and an even better archaeologist out in the field, with a meticulous mind driven by a fascination with fallen civilizations. This fascination became reverence as she saw in the world around her all the ills that the ancients had conquered. Was there any society more just than the Athens of antiquity? Was there any empire as grand and eternal as Rome at its height? Steele came to wonder if she had been born a few thousand years too late, and her growing obsession with the secrets of the ancient world left her open for enthrallment by something ancient and evil.

Description: Steele is a dark-haired, tall American woman in her thirties, plenty attractive enough if one can look past the practicality and academic nature she wears like a shield. She wears the sturdiest, most unflattering clothes she can and keeps her hair pulled back in a ponytail. Her eyes are pin-sharp and blue, and underneath the coveralls and walking boots she’s a very athletic woman.



RUINS OF UR AND VAMPIRE: THE REQUIEM

Ruins of Ur is a story that needs only the **World of Darkness Rulebook** to play. However, it also ties in with **Vampire: The Requiem**, because Bashanipal and his cohorts are vampires (the characters need not come to this conclusion, but players familiar with the World of Darkness probably will). The Babylonian Empire was a vampiric state ruled by the abomination that was Marduk, although very little direct evidence of this survives. If your chronicle uses the background from **Vampire: The Requiem**, then the discoveries made at Ur could help clue characters in to the existence of vampires, and perhaps even let the chronicle segue into a **Vampire** game. If the characters bring news of vampires to the military – or even become vampires themselves, perhaps after an offer by Bashanipal to spare their lives in return for serving him – then the chronicle could spin off into a whole new and horrifying direction. Finally, with some alteration to the final scenes, **Ruins of Ur** could serve as a group prelude to a **Vampire** chronicle.

Another option is to run **Ruins of Ur** as an interlude in an ongoing **Vampire** chronicle, to introduce the idea of Marduk’s empire and the possibility of Babylonian vampires that still exist. The players are given military characters to play through **Ruins of Ur**, and when it’s finished they go back to their vampire characters who get caught up in the consequences of the story. Maybe an elder or prince gets wind of the soldiers’ experience in Iraq and gives the players’ coterie the task of uncovering more evidence of Marduk’s empire, or the Lyre of Ishtar finds its way into the **Vampire** chronicle after being uncovered during **Ruins of Ur**.

Storyteller Hints: Steele isn't much of a people person, prone to being short with others and having little time for the unintelligent (which is pretty much anyone less clever than her). She is, however, passionate about her work, and if given the opportunity to talk about sifting history from unpromising rubble or discovering some people or place previously unknown, her eyes light up and she can talk for hours. Miranda should be played as cold and a little sarcastic, especially if one of the characters tries to make a move on her. Miranda is cunningly insane, and is good at hiding it. She will stop at almost nothing to wake Bashanipal and share in his wisdom. It is her duty as a scholar and a follower of truth that Marduk's glorious empire be realized again on earth. She is not willing to throw her life away, but if push comes to shove, she will die to see Bashanipal walk this earth again.

Roger Drake. Traumatized Postgraduate

Quotes: "Oh God... oh dear God he's in my head again..."

"I should've stayed in Cambridge."

[Pathetic whimper]

Virtue: Prudence. He's careful to sit back and think through things, partially because he's prudent...

Vice: Sloth. ... and partially because he's lazy.

Background: Drake is an English postgraduate student who was high enough in his class to have the chance to get his hands dirty at a real archaeological dig. Bored with the hard, dull work of scraping bits of pottery and Roman coins out of drizzly fields in England, he gladly followed Steele to Iraq to uncover the secrets of Ur (and hopefully let others do the heavy lifting for him).

Description: Drake is normally a well-spoken, slightly posh English man in his twenties, who has a sense of humor and a likable nature. None of that is visible now, though, as he has been driven mad by the whispered voice of Bashanipal and the deaths of his fellow assistants,



Jenks and Stellan. He has walled himself up in a side tomb and, though he is a valuable source of information, no one's getting anything out of him until he can be calmed down.

Storyteller Hints: Drake is paranoid and untrusting. He mumbles fearfully about how he should have known that nothing good could come of the dig, that the whole temple is out to get them, and that the characters' guns aren't going to do any good against whatever's waiting for them. He is completely certain that they are all going to die, and voices this opinion at every opportunity. In times of peril he will curl up in the darkest corner he can find.

Lt. Deborah Church. Gung-Ho Chopper Pilot

Quotes: "This is Charlie Bravo Four coming in on your position, weapons are hot."

"Happiness is a cold landing zone."

"Yeegah!"

Virtue: Justice. Church believes that the good guys will win and the bad guys will lose in the end.

Vice: Lust. She loves the rush of flying, and of getting into (and out of) fights.

Background: A born tomboy, Church has wanted to fly since she was old enough to wear dungarees and climb trees. Now she's got the chance, and she loves it. It's dangerous, of course, but everything worth doing has its risks. She likes the camaraderie of the military. Sure, the guys can sometimes be jerks about having a woman around, but she gets to fly a bad-ass Black Hawk which makes up for pretty much anything.

Description: Church is a cheery Virginian with a round face, a blond ponytail and a wide, easy smile. She looks completely at home in a jumpsuit and flight helmet. She looks pretty good in a dress with her hair down, too, but it's been a long time since anyone saw her like that.

Storyteller Hints: Church's role in the story is to discourage the characters from running off into the desert. Maybe it's a cheap trick





to throw a damsel in distress into the mix, but Church's presence means it's not just the characters' own lives on the line. Church is too badly wounded to be moved (if she is, she will die), but while she's conscious she puts on as brave a face as she can. Her survival is in the characters' hands. If they leave her behind, she'll die. If they stick it out and survive, she'll join them on the chopper heading back to base.

If the characters are mercenaries or adventurers rather than soldiers, then Church stays much the same, except that she is a career pilot who has more than a little adrenaline junkie about her – she still loves flying, but she also loves the danger and thrills of a war zone.

Quotes: *"Into what manner of world have I awoken, that the halls of Sin may defiled by such worthless creatures?"*

"Were it not for my hunger I would cast you aside like the dregs you are!"

"Praise you, Sin, for delivering me blood!"

Virtue: Faith. His life is given over to Sin in all things.

Vice: Pride. Bashanipal is the chosen of Sin, and his wrath is divinely inspired.

Background: Bashanipal was an advisor to Marduk himself, a powerful man in Babylon. He acted as a liaison between Marduk and the priests of Sin, and oversaw the rebuilding of Sin's enormous temple at Ur. Bashanipal was a cruel and arrogant creature, but also a highly cultured and intelligent one who saw many of Ur's greatest works of art and architecture created to glorify Marduk's reign.

That, of course, was more than three and a half thousand years ago. Bashanipal has been in a dream-haunted sleep since then. Upon waking, he is a frenzied, blood-hungry subhuman monster,

Bashanipal, Priest of Sin



a nuclear-strength killing machine who wants nothing but blood. The cunning that served him in his prime allowed him to telepathically manipulate Steele after her research assistants proved too small-minded to be of use. Unfortunately for him, waking strips him of that intelligence and leaves him little more than a supernatural predator.

Description: Bashanipal is nearly eight feet tall. He wears heavy crimson robes woven with silver and gold thread. On his head is a conical headdress plated in gold, with silver symbols representing the three phases of the moon: full, crescent and new (the new moon is a silver ring). Bashanipal's face is hideous: a brutal, swollen mask of dead gray flesh with eyes that burn with red fire and fangs pronounced enough to be obvious when he speaks. Bashanipal has a long beard, elaborately braided with silver rings. His fingers are far too long to be human, and as gnarled as the branches of an ancient tree. Bashanipal moves with speed and grace alien to his size and ugliness. His voice is like the rumblings of an earthquake and an overpowering sickly-sweet aroma of incense and decay surrounds him. He was buried with many grave goods, including a magnificent curved bronze sword, which he wields when faced with his prey.

Storyteller Hints: Bashanipal was once a powerful creature, and the arrogance has not left him. In his rage, he will bellow that the characters are insects, mere vermin, fit only to slake his thirst (thanks to his telepathic contact with Steele, he speaks strongly accented English). He will also berate them for violating the sacred halls of the Moon God, both psychically while the characters are exploring the ruins, and in person once he rises from his ancient slumber. He should come across as more than just a monster – he is a monster who was once effectively a prince of Ur, whose indignation is almost as powerful as his hunger. Should Bashanipal feed on the characters and leave Ur, the world will have one more deadly, cunning and ambitious killer stalking its nights.

Note that Bashanipal is a vampire, and Storytellers who own **Vampire: The Requiem** can use the rules in that book to determine the effects of Bashanipal's Disciplines and other abilities. A full **Vampire: The Requiem** character sheet follows for Bashanipal. For other Storytellers, Bashanipal's most useful abilities are summarized below.

The Night Court. Ravenous Nocturnal Predators

Quote: [Sound of a rough tongue licking dead, dry lips]

Virtue: Faith. They believe completely in Sin and in Bashanipal.

Vice: Gluttony. They are hungry for blood, for life and for battle.

Background: These bloodsucking fiends were once Bashanipal's courtiers and members of the priesthood of Sin. They were undoubtedly once human, but accepted the state of undeath so they could better serve their god and continue their devotion to him well past a human lifespan. They were walled up in the temple along with Bashanipal when Marduk's empire fell, believing that one day they would awaken and rebuild the church of Sin. Now, like Bashanipal, they have slumbered for millennia and are very hungry and very pissed off at the intrusion.

Description: The Night Court are wizened, almost skeletal creatures, with parched grayish skin stretched over their bones. Their faces are crushed and batlike, an appearance accentuated by the flaps of skin between their arms and their bodies. They are filthy with grave earth and smell of dust and age, like a mold-infested library. They shriek and gibber madly. They are emphatically inhuman and evil. They do not speak English, and wouldn't bother in any case. One vampire carries a sacrificial dagger and skulks in the shadows, the second is a fierce warrior-priest carrying a bronze axe and the third is a feral creature who grows terrible claws of black stone to tear his prey apart.

Storyteller Hints: The Night Court want to suck blood and kill the characters, partly out of malice and partly to keep their hiding place secret. In unlife they possessed a variety of personalities and supernatural abilities. That variety still exists in their capabilities, but they are now of the same mind: kill humans, drink their blood



and forget everything else. The Night Court have awoken just before the story begins, so they are ready for the characters. They know that Bashanipal is about to wake up, but they're not worried about making sure he has something to eat when he wakes. They just want to keep the ruins safe from intruders until Bashanipal can lead them to a new feeding ground.

For Storytellers who have access to **Vampire: The Requiem**, character sheets for the three vampires of the Night Court are provided. For other Storytellers, the vampires' abilities are summarized below. Each vampire has a different power and weapon, but otherwise they are identical.

Insurgent Fighters. Soldiers of Islam

Quote: (In Arabic) "It is the Americans! To arms, for Allah!"

Virtue: Faith. They believe firmly in their cause.

Vice: Wrath. They are extremely angry, and will fight for their cause.

Background: These troopers are members of one of the countless insurgent, militia and terrorist groups hoping to kick the West out of Iraq and carve out their own little piece of the country in the aftermath. Individually, they are motivated by discontent with their country, hatred of the Westerners who have imposed their way on their world, religious fervor (many believe that the invasion of Iraq was a campaign by a Christian force to destroy Islam) and a simple desire to be on the right side when everything goes to hell. Not all of them are Iraqi – some have come from neighboring countries to help ensure that what happened to Iraq does not happen to their homelands.

Description: These rag-tag soldiers have no uniform, instead wearing a mishmash of old fatigues and street clothes. A couple wear scarves around their mouths or heads to ward off sand and insects. They are all young Arab men, and they carry AK-47s.



Storyteller Hints: These men are poorly trained and armed, and their motivation has suffered a great deal since they camped out in the ruins of Ur, mainly because of the unholy dreams they have been having and the cruel voices whispered on the wind. In spite of this, they will fight hard when the Americans show up (even if the characters aren't Americans, the insurgents will assume they are), although if they're obviously out-gunned, the survivors will try to flee into the desert.

Scorn, Babylonian Spirit Puppeteer

Quotes: "You are my child now."

"No! Put me back, goat-rutter! Dog-filthy son of a thousand whores! Put me baaack!"

"Your friends are not your friends. See? They plot against you even now...."

Virtue: Fortitude. Scorn is very, very good at surviving.

Vice: Lust. He enjoys inspiring suffering, and many other sins of the flesh.

Background: Creatures like Scorn were the reason the Babylonians were so big on exorcism. He is a spirit who delights in mayhem and suffering, and inflicts it by possessing victims at the most inopportune moments. Scorn is compelled to do what he does, but that doesn't mean he can't enjoy it. He was bound by Bashanipal into a chest that held the Lyre of Ishtar, so that Scorn could take over and hopefully kill anyone who tried to take the Lyre.

Description: Scorn normally lurks invisibly at the back of a would-be victim's mind, but if forced out of a host he appears as a diminutive horned creature with a lower half composed of smoke and shadows, tiny glinting eyes and slender hands with long black fingernails. He smells of burning pitch and spices. Scorn has inhabited the mind of an English speaker recently and can speak English (and swears with particular inventiveness).

Storyteller Hints: Scorn is a petty and argumentative little bastard who, if he cannot inflict suffering by killing people, uses threats, mockery and



curses instead. If bound into the characters' service he will do what they tell him, but will be vocally indignant about it. He will take every opportunity to exploit vagueness or misinterpretation in the commands given to him.

Scorn uses the rules for ghosts on pp. 208-216 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. While in the Temple of Sin, Scorn can manifest and speak without having to spend Essence or make any rolls.

Quotes: [Gravelly roar]

Description: The stone lions guarding the temple of Ur are magical constructs, enchanted statues given the task of mauling those who do not belong in the presence of Sin. They are magnificent works of art in the own right and are significantly bigger than real lions. They are somewhat stylized, with braided beards instead of manes, and their mouths are

sculpted into permanent snarls. When they move, it is with a slow majesty that suddenly turns to blurring speed when they pounce.

Storyteller Hints: The stone lions are simple combatants created to savage intruders, and have no personalities of their own. They are also very stupid, and canny characters should be able to lead them into traps, trick them into charging over a drop, attach sticky bombs to them without them noticing and so on.



Stone Lions

Scenes

The scenes in **Ruins of Ur** follow a simple course towards the end of the story. The story begins at "Going Down," and then moves into "The Maw." The bulk of the story is then taken up with the scenes concerning the exploration of the Temple of Sin. These scenes can be played out in any order and the characters may not get to all of them. The passage of time is marked by the breaking of the seals on the door of Bashanipal's tomb. When the last seal breaks, move on to "Oh Shit, We're All Going To Die" (the story's climax) and then on to the Aftermath section.



The exploration scenes need a little further explanation. They each describe a location in the Temple of Sin, along with what can be found there, Storyteller characters the player characters might encounter and the possible results of meddling with the supernatural elements they find. It is possible that not all of these elements will be played out the first time the characters visit a location, and they will probably return to some places more than once. For instance, they might find the sacrificial pit in “The Mouth of Sin” and not realize its significance until they recover the information on the sacrificial ritual in the scene “The Promenade of Kings.” Then they might return to the pit, so they can throw some poor soul down there and be granted Sin’s blessing.

The map provided with this document shows where the various locations are, but a Storyteller is free to modify this as the story demands. In particular, characters who are fleeing in terror might end up in a random scene, or a scene that they have not yet witnessed. The Temple of Sin is a confusing place with plenty of side passages and collapsed sections, and getting lost is a real possibility. The first scenes (“Going Down” and “The Maw”) and the final scene (“Oh Shit, We’re All Going To Die”) are written to run chronologically in a more traditional manner. Finally, note that the story takes place at night, with dawn breaking after the story’s final scene, so the characters cannot evade their vampiric opponents just by going outside.

The Tomb Seals

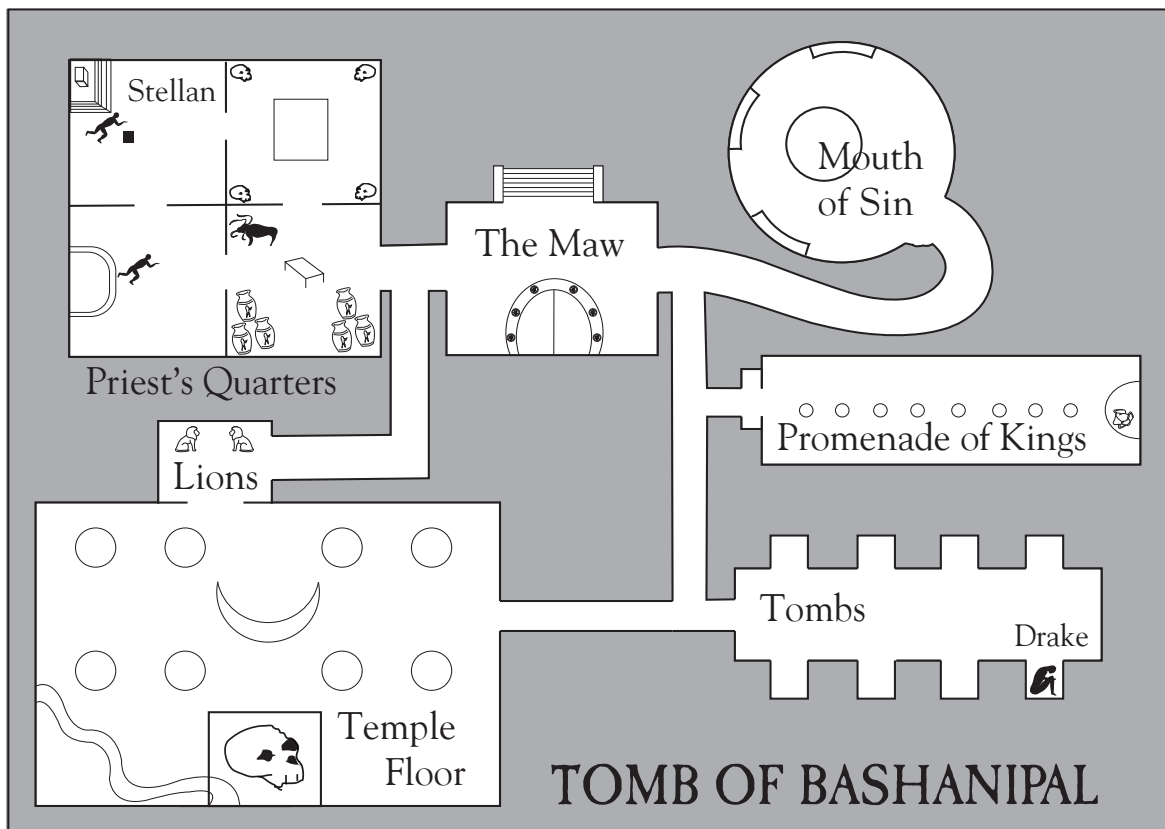
Bashanipal’s tomb door is surrounded by six stone seals. The breaking of these seals marks the passing of time in the story, the countdown to the climax and the growth of tension. The first seal shatters during “The Maw.” After this, it is up to the Storyteller to decide when the subsequent seals shatter. It is recommended that the Storyteller not make this a time-based decision, as he might become bogged down in measuring minutes and hours. Instead, it is easier and more dramatic to have a seal shatter after each significant event. One could shatter, for instance, after the characters finish their

fight with the vampires in the “Promenade of Kings,” after a ritual is completed, or after finding Drake and getting as much information as they can out of him. The purpose of the breaking seals is to remind the players of the impending threat of Bashanipal and to keep the tension rising. The breaking of a seal can also be used to spur the characters into action if they aren’t doing anything interesting, but this should be something of a last resort.

When a seal shatters, the sound can be heard ringing all through the Temple of Sin. The sound is distinctive, and since the characters have already heard it in “The Maw,” it should be obvious to them what is happening. If the Storyteller wishes, it can be accompanied by one character hearing the voice of Bashanipal whispering in their mind. Simple creepy phrases like “I hunger...” or “I can smell the purity of your flesh...” work best for this, since Bashanipal has been slumbering for a very long time and his full faculties have yet to return.

Ruins of Ur

Scenes



GOING DOWN



PROMENADE OF KINGS

PRIEST'S QUARTERS

DRAKE

BONES OF SIN

MOUTH OF SIN

STONE LIONS

SUFFERING SCORN

OH SHIT,
WE'RE ALL
GOING TO DIE

AFTERMATH



SCREW THIS,
I'M GETTING
OUT OF HERE

Going Down

MENTAL – PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL –

Overview

This is the opening scene and throws the characters into the story with a jolt. While approaching the dig site by helicopter, they are shot down by gunfire and have to take down the local insurgents before they can continue. Their pilot, Church, is badly wounded. Communications with base tell them they need to stay in the ruins, complete their mission and wait for exfiltration.

Description

This is an intense scene, rapid-fire and chaotic. Gunfights are never neat or simple, and this scene should be a vivid slice of violence to start things off. The helicopter crash should be spectacular and frightening – play up shards of rotor blades spinning through the air, sparks flying, fuel spurting from ruptured lines and the scream of torn metal.

Night has fallen. The helicopter swoops in low along the plains of southern Iraq. The area is desolate, with a few burned-out vehicles (some of them rusted relics from the first Gulf War) telling the grim tale of the country's recent history. The ruins of Ur come into sight: a series of exploratory trenches, black slashes in the earth and a couple of large dark holes in the ground shored up with timber. Heaps of spoil lie all around.

“Vehicle,” says Church. “You guys expecting a welcome down there?”

Then the gunfire starts.

The helicopter is hit right away as bullets streak up past it. The vehicle in the ruins is a technical (a battered pickup truck with a light machine gun mounted on the bed), and while the vehicle is broken down the gun still works. An insurgent has hit the bull's-eye with the machine gun. Church jerks in her seat, gasps in pain, and the helicopter swings out of control.

“I’m hit...” She regains her composure for a moment. “Losing power... we’re going down, boys...”



The helicopter hits the ground hard, throwing the characters around inside. It's a damn good landing given the circumstances and the characters are unscathed – by the crash, at least. They now have to deal with the insurgents intent on pouring fire in their direction.

The insurgents are panicking. They are yelling in Arabic (if a character happens to understand it, they are shouting things like “Kill them! Kill them!” and “Quick! Before more of them show up!”). There are four insurgents in total: one on the technical, two taking cover behind a pile of rubble and another in the cover of the timbers shoring up the entrance to the ruins. They aren't stupid and will stay in cover, but after a good burst of fire in their direction they will try to move position before their cover disintegrates. The insurgent on the technical is the most dangerous because of his machine gun, but in the darkness he's more intent on making sure the helicopter is out of commission and will fire at it for a couple of turns before the characters get his attention.



If two of the insurgents are killed or captured, the others will run into the desert. If the characters let them run or lose them in the darkness, the insurgents won't be back. They leave behind a makeshift camp with a burned-out campfire, a couple of simple tents, a few bottles of water and some bedding. In a large tin over the fire is a stew which, while it's not that appetizing, is still warm and edible. The camp also has a spare AK-47 and two clips of ammunition. The player characters are presumably armed already, but Steele might take it for herself. The technical's light machine gun still works, but probably only has about half a belt of ammunition left and it's been welded to the pickup. The vehicle itself is completely shot: its engine has been stripped out and it has no wheels, so the characters aren't going to be using it to escape any time soon. As for the holes, one was a shallow attempt to reach the ruins, and the other is the entrance into the Tomb of Sin. Steele will lead the characters through the entrance at the end of this scene.

Church was wounded in the first burst of gunfire. She has been shot in the thigh and stomach, and the bullet to her abdomen has caused internal bleeding and come very close to severing her spine. She can crawl out of the helicopter on her own if the characters don't help her out, but after that she is helpless and immobile. She is conscious for a few minutes, after which she passes in and out of consciousness. The radio in the helicopter still works. Assuming the characters are military, they can contact the base they flew from. If they are not military, they can reach the mercenary company they work for or, if they are on their own, the company from which the helicopter was hired (they'll want their pilot back, so they will still fly in to rescue the characters when the story is concluded). Whoever is on the radio, they will want an account of what happened from the characters along with their location and any injuries. They inform the characters that they must continue their mission and then wait for rescue, after doing whatever they can for Church. A major push has just been reported in the area between the ruins and the base, so a chopper might be a while in coming. The characters are absolutely not to leave the area of the ruins – if attacked, they are to hold position until they can be rescued. The characters will probably want to know how long that is going to take, but the rescue mission has no ETA at that time.

Storyteller Goals

The goal of this scene is primarily to place the characters in an isolated location they can't readily leave. They are without transport or a pilot, surrounded by desert and hostile forces. The secondary goal is to start the story with a bang. The helicopter crash and subsequent gunfight form an action sequence that should help set the tone for the story. It also gives the characters a chance to get some soldiering done. Should the scene play out a bit more cerebrally, it might also be a chance to explore some of the issues about the story's background, especially if the characters can get a dialog going with one of the insurgents about why they are fighting and what they think about the West (and the characters themselves). It is important that in this scene, Church is wounded and Steele is unhurt, and that the helicopter can't be made to fly again.

Character Goals

To survive. Nothing focuses the mind like incoming fire. Also, for more gung-ho characters, to kick some ass. If the characters behave this way, it can be a striking contrast to have a wounded insurgent survive, at least long enough to remind the characters that "the enemy" is ultimately made up of human beings, too.

Actions

Combat is the obvious focus of this scene, but the characters can also attend to some other important matters after or during the gunfight. They might try to fix the helicopter or the technical, in which case the Storyteller should let them know the vehicles are both beyond repair. Interrogating a prisoner and helping Church are the most relevant actions they can take once the gunfight has ended.

Interrogating a Prisoner

Dice Pool: Wits + Intimidation vs. Stamina + Resolve

Action: Extended and contested. 4 successes are required, and each roll takes about 1 hour.

Violent or cruel interrogation will make the prisoner a mortal enemy of the characters, even more so than he probably already is. If characters show reason, the prisoner is more likely to side with them when the really strange stuff starts happening (although he's still likely to run off into the desert if he gets the chance).



Hindrances: Badly wounded prisoner (-1)

Help: (For characters) Previous brutality (+1), prisoner is sole survivor (+1); (for prisoner) Religious fervor (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The prisoner doesn't talk, and never will.

Failure: The character gets nothing out of the prisoner, but may try interrogation again after some time has passed or some new circumstance emerges.

Success: The character learns something the prisoner knows (one item per success):

- The insurgents are camping here for the night. They are part of a major but fairly disorganized push into the region intended to force coalition forces to withdraw. The insurgents are part of a small band of fighters who came to the area hoping to fight and have not yet become affiliated with any particular terrorist or militia organization.
- The prisoner doesn't know what's through the entrance of the ruins. None of the insurgents have been down there.
- The prisoner has heard voices on the wind and had nightmares. The voices are mocking and threaten to kill or eat him. He has a powerful and unreasoning hatred of the place, and was looking forward to leaving in the morning.

Exceptional Success: The character learns everything the prisoner knows.

Helping Church

Dice Pool: Dexterity or Intelligence + Medicine

Action: Extended. 4 successes are required to make Church comfortable, and 6 will allow her to stay conscious throughout the story. Each roll takes about 20 minutes.

Church is badly wounded and will not get better without surgery and a long convalescence. Characters can learn of her condition and make her more comfortable. This is a good opportunity to emphasize Church's good nature as she will try to put a brave face on everything, although she cannot hide the pain she is in.

Hindrances: Under fire (-2)

Help: Trauma kit (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Church is rendered unconscious for the remainder of the story.

Failure: Church is in a bad way, but the character doesn't know any more. Church is unconscious for most of the story.

Success: The character stems some of Church's internal bleeding. Church has internal and spinal injuries. She cannot be moved and she needs to be operated on. She's stable for now but eventually her organs will start to fail. She is conscious about half the time during the story.

Exceptional Success: As with "Success," but Church is a lot more comfortable and she stays conscious (or sleeps) for the whole story.

Consequences

This scene is followed by "The Maw". After the characters have recovered from the gunfight, Steele insists that they accompany her into the ruins.

The Maw

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL .. SOCIAL ..

Overview

The characters enter the ruins and come face to face with the imposing door of Bashanipal's tomb. Steele reveals her treachery and exhorts Bashanipal to awake and consume the feast she has brought for him (referring to the characters). The first seal on the door shatters.

Description

Through the larger entrance hole in the ruins is a huge shadowy chamber beneath the earth. It is made of sand-colored brick and is about two stories high, lit by a couple of jury-rigged electric lanterns standing on the floor. The floor is stone, covered in dust and sand. There is a smell of earth and age, with a slight hint of decay. The walls are inset with carved stone friezes of robed and crowned figures. The chamber is dominated by the massive round doorway on the opposite wall. Six round stone seals are mounted on the frame, each covered in cuneiform writing. The door itself is stone and is carved with an imposing image of a robed man on a throne, with a scepter in one hand and a sword in the other. He wears a conical headdress and has a long plaited beard. To each side, the ruin continues into the dark.

"Isn't it wonderful?" says Steele, her eyes lighting up. "Imagine all the things like this that must be hidden beneath this country. All the wonders that we'll never see again. Think about who is buried here, his power, the wonders he saw..." Steele throws her arms into the air and yells at the top of her voice. "Bashanipal! Lord of Ur! Chosen of Sin! Here is the feast I have promised you! Awake, Bashanipal, and show me the wonders of Babylon!"

The first seal on the door shatters into hundreds of stone shards. The sound is like a thunderclap. The ground shudders, and a voice replies. The voice isn't a sound, but a rumble in the characters' heads:

"I shall wake. I shall feed."

It should be clear by now that something is terribly wrong with this mission. What happens next is up to the characters, but they probably want to know what the hell is going on and why Steele has really brought them there. If they attack Steele or attempt to restrain her,



she fights back (especially if she has the spare AK from the insurgent camp) or flees. The characters may well decide to kill her, in which case let them, but remember that executing someone like this will cause a Humanity roll for all but the most psychotic characters. If the characters aren't sure what to do next, a good way of spurring them to action is to have them hear Drake shouting or banging on the wall of his hiding place. Once they find him and get some hints about what can be found elsewhere in the ruin, they have good reason to stay there and see what they can find before Bashanipal awakes.

Storyteller Goals

Set up the situation that the characters have to deal with during the course of the story – namely that Bashanipal is going to wake up and the characters will have to fight him. Also, to introduce the story's major character moment, with Steele's dramatic revelation that she has brought the characters there for her master Bashanipal to eat.

Character Goals

To find out what the hell is going on. Steele is one resource for this, and the Maw's sculptures are another.

Actions

It may be that the characters decide to flee the ruins and take their chances in the desert, in which case move on to the scene "Screw This, I'm Getting Out Of Here." Otherwise, their options include examining the friezes and cuneiform writing, interrogating Steele, trying to break down the door to get a look at what's inside and kill it before it kills them, and having a look around the rest of the ruins.

Interrogating Steele

Dice Pool: Wits + Intimidation vs. Stamina + Resolve

Action: Extended & contested. 4 successes are required and each roll takes an hour.

Steele will probably be an enemy of a characters whether they're brutal with her or not (but remember that torturing someone will almost certainly force Morality rolls). She knows relatively little about the Temple of Sin itself (her assistants explored elsewhere, while Steele focused exclusively on Bashanipal's tomb) but her information could be useful.

Hindrances: Failure while interrogating insurgent (-1)

Help: (For characters) Previous brutality (+1), success at interrogating insurgent (+1); (for Steele) An insane conviction that keeps her from speaking too much of her "master" (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Steele laughs at the character, spits in his face and won't talk again except to taunt the characters about their impending demise.

Failure: Steele won't talk. Another character can try, though.

Success: Steele divulges some information (one per success):

- Steele is who she claims to be – an archaeologist, specializing in the ancient Near East and Mesopotamia.
- She lied about this site. It has already been excavated by Steele and her assistants (along with some local labor who have by now long since fled the site). Steele returned here with the characters to feed them to Bashanipal.
- Bashanipal was a nobleman and high priest of the moon god Sin. He is not dead, but slumbering behind the door of his tomb. He is a being of magnificent power and knowledge, and Steele will learn from him all the wonders of ancient Babylon long since forgotten by the rest of the world. She will become enlightened beyond the understanding of any other mortal. Bashanipal has told Steele telepathically that he will not harm her when she sets him free.
- This ruin is the Temple of Sin. Sin was the god of the moon in ancient Mesopotamia, and Ur was his sacred city. Sin was the father of Ishtar the star goddess and Shamash the sun god, and was a powerful, benevolent and merciful deity. The Temple itself is huge and largely unexplored. It was built during the time of Marduk, a legendary god-king of Babylon who was easily the most powerful man in the Near East during his reign.
- Her assistants on the previous dig were Jenks, Stellan and Drake. Steele doesn't know what became of them and she doesn't particularly care. They've probably run for it by now and if they're still around, then Bashanipal will eat them, too.

Exceptional Success: Steele spills everything she knows.

Examining the Chamber

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Academics

Action: Extended. Making sense of the chamber requires 5 successes and each roll takes twenty minutes. 7 successes (or an exceptional success) are required to learn about the Lyre of Ishtar.

The chamber's friezes, which depict scenes from Bashanipal's life, can impart some information about Bashanipal and the temple itself. The cuneiform writing, on the other hand, cannot be deciphered unless one of the characters happens to read Akkadian or they can get Steele to translate for them.

Hindrances: Worn by the ages (-1), faltering light (-1)

Help: Exceptional success interrogating Steele (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character examines a frieze a little too vigorously and it falls from the wall, shattering on the floor. Attempts by other characters cannot yield an exceptional success.

Failure: It's just a bunch of bearded guys waving their hands around.

Success: You make progress examining the chamber.

Exceptional Success: You make great progress, and learn about the Lyre of Ishtar.

Upon gaining 5 successes, the examination of the friezes reveals a simplified life story of Bashanipal. He is depicted as a young man without a beard, apparently one of many priests. Then a kingly or godlike figure, significantly taller than any other figures in the scene, singles him out for some honor. This king wears a bestial mask and looks very unusual compared to the other figures which are in profile. After this Bashanipal is depicted as robed and bearded, and later crowned, and the symbol of a moon in one of its phases (full, crescent, new) is always over his head. He oversees rituals including an apparent sacrifice where naked women are thrown into a pit, and an exorcism where a spirit is shown fleeing from a prostrate man.

A prayer is written in cuneiform on each of the seals. Each prayer describes one element of Bashanipal's majesty – his wisdom, his wrath, his loyalty to Marduk, his physical power, his regal presence and his devotion to Sin. The first seal is destroyed. Other inscriptions on the friezes show the god-king figure is named Marduk and the lyre (if the characters have deciphered that part) is sacred to Ishtar.

7 successes (or an exceptional success) allows the character to make sense of another sequence. A lyre is brought to the temple and examined (this is the Lyre of Ishtar). It is shown hovering over a number of corpses. Bashanipal then presides over a ceremony where the lyre is locked away in a box which is then branded with the symbol of a crescent moon.

The Door

The door to Bashanipal's tomb is magically sealed to prevent tomb robbers from disturbing his slumber. It is impervious even to modern weaponry (including grenades and explosives). A character who strikes the door in an attempt to break it will be thrown back across the room in a burst of eldritch energy. This inflicts 3 levels of bashing damage to the offending character.

Consequences

The characters now have the opportunity to explore the ruins as they wish. If they wander off at random, it is up to the Storyteller which exploration scene he wishes to run next. If Steele is still alive, she will try to escape and do whatever she can to hinder the characters in any confrontation with Bashanipal. If the characters continue to trust her, or if they interrogate her and fail to get the truth from her, she may lead them to the Night Court (see "Promenade of Kings").

The Promenade of Kings

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL –

Overview

The characters enter a dramatically-decorated gallery covered in friezes of past kings of Ur. The far end of the gallery has a ceiling-high sculpted diagram describing a ritual of exorcism that was uncovered by Jenks. Before the characters can explore this area (where they can find Jenks' translation of the ritual), they will have to contend with the vampires of the Night Court, a group of skeletal, starving, subhuman creatures overcome with bloodlust.

Description

This poorly-lit area is a long, wide corridor with a row of columns running down the center. It is made of sandy-colored brick and at regular intervals down the walls are sculptures of past kings of Ur. These kings are depicted robed and crowned and almost all are bearded. Their crowns are the flat cylinders typical of Babylonian nobility, and they all carry scepters. The columns are covered in cuneiform. At the far end is a large circular diagram, covered in symbols. Only a couple of electric lanterns are rigged up here, one towards each end of the corridor.

The darkness will hamper many characters' actions, typically imposing a -1 or -2 penalty to anything that requires sight (including shooting) unless they have another source of light. The characters' opponents here have no problem with the dark.

The Night Court vampires are roosting here. They hang, batlike, from the ceiling, where their ankles were chained when the temple was sealed after Bashanipal's entombing. The chains and shackles have long since rusted away, and the Night Court have become accustomed to clinging to the Promenade's ceiling while they wait for prey. These vampires were awoken by the first dig, becoming aware of the intrusion after Jenks had completed his work on the ritual diagram. With their withered forms and leathery skin they resemble mummified corpses hanging from the ceiling like obscene decorations. When the characters approach them (or, if the Storyteller wants to stage an ambush, once some characters have gone past them), the Night Court unfurl themselves, drop to the floor and attack in a flurry of snarling fangs and filthy claws.

The Night Court attack is a moment of shocking, visceral horror. It should be nasty and up close. The Night Court possess both superhuman physical capabilities and some bizarre supernatural vampiric powers, which they will use to their full extent in trying to kill the characters. The characters, luckily, have modern weaponry to even things up. This scene assumes that the Night Court consists of three roosting vampires, but Storytellers should up this by one or two more if the characters are unusually numerous or well-equipped, or if they have armed themselves specifically for hunting vampires. Characters who enter the Promenade of the Kings en masse will probably fight the Night Court in this location, but the combat could spread throughout the temple. This is a good way to get the players into other parts of the temple, especially if individual characters find themselves running blindly into the dark pursued by a bloodsucking fiend and blunder into one of the other temple locations.

If the characters end up defeating their opponents, they have free run of the Promenade of Kings. The ritual inscription at the far end is the most interesting feature here, though they might also wish to examine the royal inscriptions and roll of priests. Steele can help them with this – she can confirm that there is nothing strange about them, except that Bashanipal's name is the last on the roll of priests. If nothing else, the rolls of kings and priests can illustrate just how ancient the city of Ur was even during Marduk's reign. One of the kings of Ur – the last – is depicted as a tiny robed figure sitting dwarfed by another figure, that of Marduk, who is depicted as a god with a stylized bestial face.

The Ritual

The ritual diagram is a large circle covering the end wall of the promenade, criss-crossed with lines of dense cuneiform and peppered with symbols quite unlike anything in the cuneiform alphabet. The circle is surrounded by carvings of strange creatures, deformed faces surrounded by formless swirling bodies. In each corner of the wall is the symbol of a skull. At the foot of the wall lies a leather satchel containing pens and a pad of paper, some archeologist's tools (a small hammer, a set of brushes, a sieve for sifting through material, a trowel and other bits and pieces), a translation of the ritual on a piece of lined paper torn from the pad, and a small notebook in which Jenks wrote down his thoughts.



Jenks' Diary

Jenks' diary describes arriving at the site and directing several dozen Iraqi laborers to start the exploratory trenches. After about a week the entrance chamber has been opened up and it is clear that much of the structure is intact, including the main temple chamber of the Temple of Sin (although this has been partly disturbed by underground flooding). During the course of the dig Steele stops assisting with the uncovering of sculptures and cuneiform, and spends more and more time in the entrance chamber. Stellan becomes morose and makes dark jokes all the time. The last entry is as follows:

Was down here for eight hours with that bloody ritual. Got the whole thing worked out now, just need to type it up. Steele didn't lift a finger. What the hell is she doing in there all day? Haven't spoken to Stellan, either. Steele's sent away the natives. How are we supposed to open up this whole place by ourselves? Haven't even begun on the temple floor or the pit. Spoke to Drake. He wants to leave. Don't think he's slept. I want to leave too. Next supply truck I'm gone. If there is a next one.

Night. Just spotted mounts for something on the promenade ceiling. Prisoners manacled there? This place gets worse and worse.

Storyteller Goals

Run an exciting and horrific action sequence, and introduce the idea of vampiric opposition. Feed the characters some information about the sacrificial ritual, which can be used later to aid in the fight against Bashanipal.

Character Goals

Survive the Night Court, and acquire some information about the temple and its capabilities that might help them against Bashanipal.

Actions

The main activity in the Promenade of Kings is fighting the Night Court. They might also check out the friezes or attempt to examine the corpses of the things that attacked them in an attempt to find out what they actually are.

Examining the Night Court

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine or Occult

Action: Extended. 4 successes are required and each roll takes about 20 minutes.

Hindrances: Horribly mangled corpses (-1)

Help: Previous experience with vampires (+1), medical equipment (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character has no idea what they're dealing with. They look like withered human corpses.

Failure: They're not your typical mummified corpses, but apart from that the character is at a loss.

Success: These creatures are not human. They appear to have been mummified for a very long time, but even a mummified body shouldn't have lasted down here for three and a half thousand years. They have no circulation and their lungs are useless, and yet they were very much animated. These are either supernatural in origin or a new species. Their thirst for blood and apparent living dead state suggest the former.

Exceptional Success: As success, except the character realizes that these things conform to many aspects of common vampire legend.

Consequences

The aftermath of the fight with the Night Court is a good time for one of the tomb seals to break. The characters may continue exploring, in which case another exploration scene can follow.

The Priests' Quarters

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL –

SOCIAL –

Overview

In the Priests' Quarters can be found the casket in which the Lyre of Ishtar was sealed, the Lyre itself (a very useful artifact in defeating Bashanipal) and the corpse of the unfortunate Stellan who was killed trying to retrieve the Lyre. Also present is Scorn, a Babylonian spirit who guards the Lyre and who killed Stellan. Characters have the opportunity to acquire the Lyre, find out more about what happened on Steele's original dig, and encounter Scorn.

Description

This area is made up of four large interconnecting chambers. It was originally the place where the Priests of Sin lived and prepared for their daily rituals. There are no lights down here, and characters exploring will have to bring their own light sources. Most soldiers will have a torch or a flare, but the pitch dark will still make a lot of actions more difficult. Most notably, the smell in the Priests' Quarters is awful. This is thanks to the corpse of Stellan, which has been bloating and putrefying down here for several days. Characters with experience of dead bodies will be able to identify this stench as that of a decaying corpse.

This area is made up of four interconnecting chambers, mostly intact. The smell here is overwhelmingly awful. The first chamber is full of ceramic jars and among them are artifacts turned dull with time but otherwise in good condition. A waist-high statue of creature resembling a bull with a mane of tentacles glints gold in the darkness, and on a low stone table lie a scepter and a mace likewise made of gold.

The second chamber is dominated by a large stone basin set against one wall. On the floor in a pool of dried blood is a body, its chest and stomach torn open. It has begun to swell and blacken with decay and is clearly the source of the horrible stench down here. On the wall hang three large plates beaten from gold and inscribed with intricate images.

The third chamber houses a large slab, like a mortuary slab or surgical table. Reddish marks around holes at the head and foot of the table suggest rust, as if something metallic was once mounted there. In the corners of the room are piles of what seems at first to be garbage but is in fact human bones – ribs, femurs, finger bones and sections of skull, all yellowing and turning to dust.

The fourth chamber is the most spectacular by far. Its walls are decorated with inlaid panels of colored stone, forming a complex pattern that seems to shift and squirm beneath the eye. On the walls are hung nine masks, eight of them wrought from gold and one from glinting obsidian. Steps in one corner lead up to a plinth on which sits a casket carved of dark purple stone, slightly smaller than a coffin.

Stellan's notebook, well-stained with gore and putrescence, lies next to his body where it was thrown clear by Scorn's messy exit from his stomach. Much of its writing is illegible but the following rants can be made out in Stellan's cramped, intense hand:

THEY ARE ALL COSMIC BEINGS of the same universe. Only I can see it. The voice that speaks to us is the cosmos! It is everything! The whole of it must be destroyed to free us. It is the only way. I cannot tell any others because they will not believe me. Jenks did not believe, and I had to kill him. I saw what the cosmos had done to him! All must perish before we all go the same way. The whole world and everything else is against us. Death is my only master now. The Priests' Quarters are my only solace. Here is the HOLY POWER that will save us. The Lyre of Ishtar did not appear to me by accident. It is here! I know where it is! Sealed in its casket by the EVIL ONES who are the secret lords of our universe! Once I have it I will bring death to them! Only I know. I am a soldier of the universe. I am a child of the holy light. With the Lyre I will be all-powerful. The one who whispers will be the first to die. Everyone and everything else will follow. It is the only way! I am a child of the universe!

In the stone casket is the Lyre of Ishtar. The lid is heavy and requires two men to lift. The Lyre is a masterfully crafted instrument, similar in appearance to a miniature harp. Its frame is made of wood, plated with gold and inlaid with turquoise stone. The emblem of an eight-pointed star wrought in gold on its frame suggests a connection with Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of the stars. Intricately carved figures of dancing maidens adorn it, and tiny inscriptions spell out a prayer to Ishtar beseeching the goddess to bring joy and prosperity through the music of the heavens. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Lyre is the fact that it is completely intact and can still be played. The Lyre is not a mundane treasure but a magical artifact imbued with great power by Ishtar's priests. These priests formed part of a secret opposition to Marduk and Sin, and forged the Lyre for use as a weapon against their alliance, which explains Bashanipal's decision to lock it away in the temple where it could not be used, except perhaps by him.



The casket also contains Scorn, who provides the greatest threat to the characters in the Priest's Quarters. Scorn is an evil spirit given the task of guarding the Lyre of Ishtar. When Stellan tried to open the casket, Scorn leaped out and possessed him. However, Stellan's advanced state of madness made him useless for possession, so Scorn simply killed him, bursting out through the unfortunate archaeologist's chest and stomach before returning to the casket. Should the characters open the casket, Scorn will again spring into action, but when faced with multiple intruders he will be far more subtle than he was with Stellan. He will, instead, inhabit a character quietly (either the first to look into the casket, or simply a random onlooker), sitting in the back of the character's mind until he has the opportunity to take over at the most inconvenient moment. Good times for Scorn to attempt to take over the inhabited character include the fight with the Night Court, the enactment of the exorcism or sacrificial rituals (especially if Scorn gets the chance to throw someone into the Mouth of Sin) or the showdown with Bashanipal. When Scorn strikes, refer to the scene "Suffering Scorn" for more information on running the possession.

Storyteller Goals

Add to the mystery of the Temple of Sin and parcel out some information on the story's background. Give the characters an opportunity to learn about and acquire one of the temple's most powerful secrets, the Lyre of Ishtar. Set up the possibility of an encounter with Scorn later on.

Character Goals

Explore. Doing this can yield information on what happened to Stellan and Steele's other assistants, suggest how useful the Lyre of Ishtar might be, and bring the Lyre itself into the characters' hands.

Actions

Studying the grave goods and decorations of the Priests' Quarters yields little information, although a cursory examination of the grave goods suggests their great value as well as the impossibility fencing them normally. Examining Stellan's corpse and trying to play the Lyre of Ishtar are the most obvious actions that might take place here.

Examining Stellan's Corpse

Dice Pool: Dexterity or Intelligence + Medicine or Investigation

Action: Extended. 4 successes are required and each roll takes about 20 minutes.

Hindrances: Darkness (-1)

Help: Medical equipment (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character punctures Stellan's colon and inhales a lungful of the most appalling stench possible. The character must make a Stamina + Composure roll or become nauseated for an hour, suffering -1 to tests involving physical activity.

Failure: The character acquires no information on how the guy died except that it was gory and violent. He's definitely dead, though.

Success: The victim has been dead for several days and was killed by something exploding out of his chest and stomach. The character is very unlikely to have previously encountered an injury anything like this.

Exceptional Success: As "Success." The character also makes note of tooth or claw marks on the *inside* of the body's ribcage.

Playing the Lyre

Dice Pool: Presence or Dexterity + Expression

Action: Instant.

The Lyre of Ishtar is a functioning musical instrument. Any character can play it, but those familiar with music are more likely to tap into its magical qualities. The Lyre of Ishtar, when played with skill, plays the music of heavens and the stars themselves. This music has the ability to unravel anything unnatural or not of this earth – that is, any supernatural creatures. This includes the vampires of the Night Court, Scorn and Bashanipal himself. The Lyre is therefore a supremely useful tool for the characters. If the characters are supernatural themselves, however, it becomes something of a suicide weapon. The Lyre of Ishtar is extremely valuable as an object of artistic and archaeological significance. As a magical artifact, it is priceless. Powerful students of the occult would kill to have it. The Lyre has one massive drawback: its magic is powerful enough to warp a human mind. At the end of a scene in which it is played, the character who played it must make a degeneration roll on 3 dice. If this roll fails, the character's Morality drops as if he had committed a sin. This loss may prompt derangement as per normal Morality loss. The Lyre does not do its work for free, and it takes a little piece of the player's soul in return for its music.

Hindrances: Loud noise (such as combat) (-1)

Help: Previous experience on a lyre or similar stringed instrument (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The awful discordant note that issues from the Lyre knocks the character off his feet. The character take 3 bashing damage, but may make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to reduce this by 1 for each success. The character must still roll for degeneration at the end of the scene as described above.

Failure: The Lyre's music is stilted and atonal, and has no effect. The echoes of heaven's music are barely audible. The character may still suffer degeneration at the end of the scene, as described above.

Success: The Lyre lets forth a great burst of harmonious music, streaming down from the heavens. Dozens of stars shine and their light plays around the scene. Each supernatural creature within earshot

(including Bashanipal and members of the Night Court) takes a level of aggravated damage for each success, with no reductions for armor or Defense.

Exceptional Success: The glorious crescendo of music is accompanied by an image of Ishtar herself, a beautiful, regal woman composed of stars. She sings in harmony with the Lyre's music and a great shaft of starlight falls down upon the scene. Damage is inflicted on supernatural creatures as per "Success," but mortal creatures are also healed of 1 level of lethal damage per success.

Consequences

The acquisition of the Lyre of Ishtar is a powerful boon for characters destined to face Bashanipal. When the characters come into possession of the Lyre, the breaking of a tomb seal may help to underline its importance.



Drake

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL –

SOCIAL ••••

Overview

The characters find Drake, the only surviving archaeological assistant, and try to quiz him about the Temple of Sin and the fate of Steele's first expedition. Drake himself is a challenge, since he is too badly traumatized to be of much use in his present state.

Description

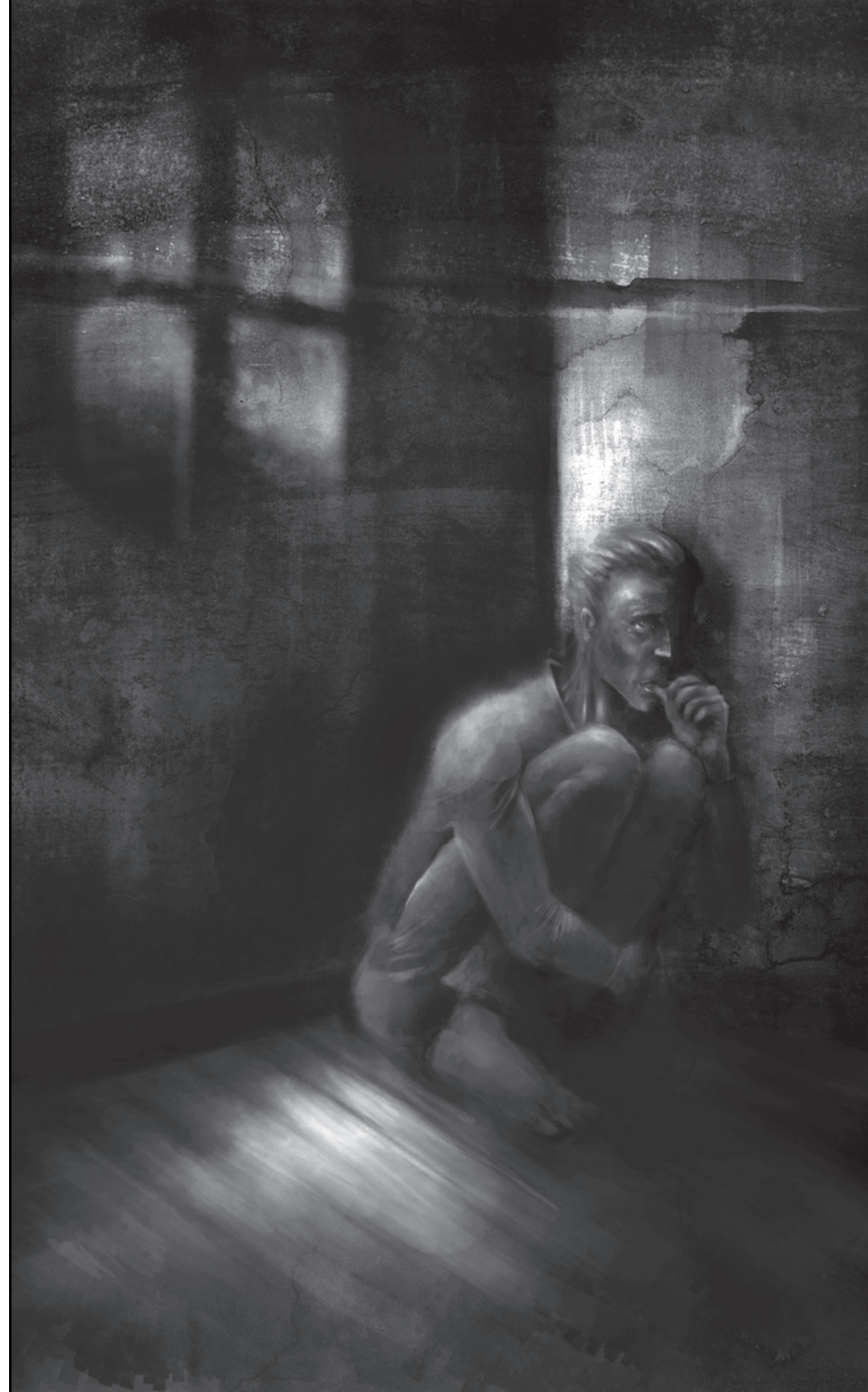
The corridor leading off from the main temple floor was once lined with small tombs on each side, but one side has collapsed. This area was apparently intended to be decorated with patterned friezes and images of important priests, but the work was unfinished when the temple was sealed, and only a couple of half-sculpted sections remain on the stone walls. A single electric lamp still burns here.

Of the six small tombs that remain, three are empty, two are sealed and the last is where Drake has walled himself up. The two sealed tombs contain stone coffins with the fragmentary remains of skeletons (the remains of Sin's priests). Grave goods in these tombs are little more than trash – a few broken jars, some scraps of wood and clay tablets, and a lot of dust.

Drake's tomb has been hastily walled up with bricks taken from the nearby walls. Drake had no mortar, so the bricks require little more than a good shove to open the tomb. Drake himself cowers at the back of the tomb, shivering and sweating with fear. He smells of sweat, urine and terror. Even if he drew the characters' attention deliberately, he still assumes they are out to harm him and begs them to let him live.

Storyteller Goals

Heighten the tension by introducing a character mortally afraid of whatever is waiting for the characters, and allow a change of pace with a social encounter rather than a combat or problem-solving one. This also gives a chance to feed the characters useful information about the temple and the exorcism ritual, and to foreshadow the appearance of Bashanipal.



Ruins of Ur

Character Goals

Explore. Interact with Drake and discover what they can from him.

Actions

Dealing the Drake is the most important action the characters can attempt here.

Speaking with Drake

Dice Pool: Manipulation or Presence + Empathy

Action: Extended. 5 successes are required. Each roll takes 10 minutes.

Drake is deeply traumatized and must be dealt with carefully if the characters are to get anything out of him. Play up the difficulty of talking with Drake – he trusts no-one and is almost paralyzed with fear. Only characters who are sympathetic and kind with Drake will receive any of the valuable information he has to offer.

Hindrances: Character looks dangerous, such as being covered in blood and gore (-1)

Help: Food and water (+1), kind smile (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Drake is reduced to an incontinent wreck, curled up in a fetal position on the floor. The character cannot attempt to speak with him again.

Failure: Drake will answer no questions, but the same character may try again in subsequent scenes.

Success: Once 5 successes are reached, Drake will answer the characters questions. He will not automatically offer up everything he knows; characters need to ask him about a topic to learn about it.

- If anyone asks Drake what he knows about the Temple of Sin in general, he mentions the exorcism ritual he learned during his previous research into Babylonian religion. This can be used to expel Scorn from his host and bind him into the characters' service (see "Suffering Scorn" for more information on this). The ritual requires the "bones of a god," but Drake isn't exactly sure what this means. (It is in fact literally true, and Sin's bones can be used in the ritual.)

- He knows that during the initial dig, Stellan went crazy and killed Jenks. (Drake didn't see this happen but he saw Stellan with his hands covered in blood murmuring about how Jenks had to die. This was what made Drake wall himself up.) He doesn't know where Stellan is now, but he's sure Stellan is dangerous.

- He has heard the whispered voice of Bashanipal and, though he couldn't quite place what the monster was saying, he's certain that it was threatening to suck out his soul. He also believes the monster is named "Bashanipal," though he cannot be sure whether this is something the voice told him or not.

- He does not believe Steele can be trusted because she is in league with Bashanipal (although the characters have probably worked this out for themselves by now).

- He knows the nature of Sin and the rough dates and layout of the temple, and the basics about the Babylonian Empire (although he does not know that Marduk was something other than human – he thinks that Marduk was a just particularly powerful tyrant).

Exceptional Success: As "Success," but Drake is also willing to accompany the characters in the temple instead of staying in his hiding place. He'll even fight, although he is still likely to run away if he is hurt or the characters look like they're losing.

Consequences

Drake is an important Storyteller character, if only because he gives the characters someone to talk to and (once he's calmed down) a potential sounding board for their ideas and a commentator on events. Once the characters calm him down, it is a good idea to have a tomb seal break. This gives Drake something to react to – he is sure that Bashanipal is about to wake, and can underline the fact that the breaking of the seals is an indication of how much time is left before Bashanipal emerges from his tomb.

The Bones of Sin

Actions

Breaking Open the Casket

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL –

SOCIAL –

Overview

The characters enter the main temple floor. Here lie the Bones of Sin, the remains of a titanic human figure.

Details

The temple floor is spectacular and huge. It is almost the size of a football field, and its roof is held up with eight stout columns. Heaps of sand have spilled through and lie in drifts around the bases of the pillars. The walls are covered in enormous ceiling-high carved reliefs of Sin. He is a tall, handsome male figure shown far taller than priests and kings gathered around his feet, and he is always crowned with a symbol of the moon in one of its phases. At one end of the room is an altar, a raised section of floor in the shape of a crescent moon.

Behind the altar is an archway leading to a dark room beyond. In the center of the room is a massive stone casket about five meters long and two wide. An underground stream has broken through into the temple and cut a deep furrow into the floor, through which it still flows. The river has cut into one corner of the stone casket and the casket's lid has fractured, revealing an enormous skeleton inside. Based on the glimpses you can see of the skeleton, it looks like a man that was ten feet tall.

Storyteller Goals

Crank up the atmosphere! The Bones of Sin represent a scene of great potential horror, and the revelation of Sin's bones removes any doubt that the Temple of Sin is a profoundly supernatural place. Hint at the possible history of Marduk's empire, where the Emperor of Babylon and the God of the Moon were allies.

Character Goals

Explore, and acquire the bones of a god (if they know about the exorcism ritual).

Dice Pool: Strength + Stamina

Action: Extended

The bones are in remarkably good condition, and the rest of the lid can be removed to reveal the whole thing. The lid of the casket is Durability 2, Structure 2. Each success gained in excess of the Durability is a point of Structure damage inflicted. Sin's bones are those of a human, vastly oversized. The exorcism ritual described in "Suffering Scorn" requires one of these bones.

Hindrances: Missing appropriate tools (-2)

Help: Focusing on the fractures in the lid (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The entire lid falls into the casket, smashing the bones inside to powder. Luckily, a double-handful of the bone powder will work just as well as a complete bone for the exorcism ritual described in "Suffering Scorn."

Failure: No progress is made in breaking open the casket.

Success: Some progress is made in breaking open the casket.

Exceptional Success: The lid of the casket is broken off, revealing the intact skeleton inside.

Consequences

Characters may continue exploring, in which case move on to another exploration scene. If they choose to check out the archway beyond the altar, move on to "Stone Lions."

The Mouth of Sin

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••

SOCIAL ••

Overview

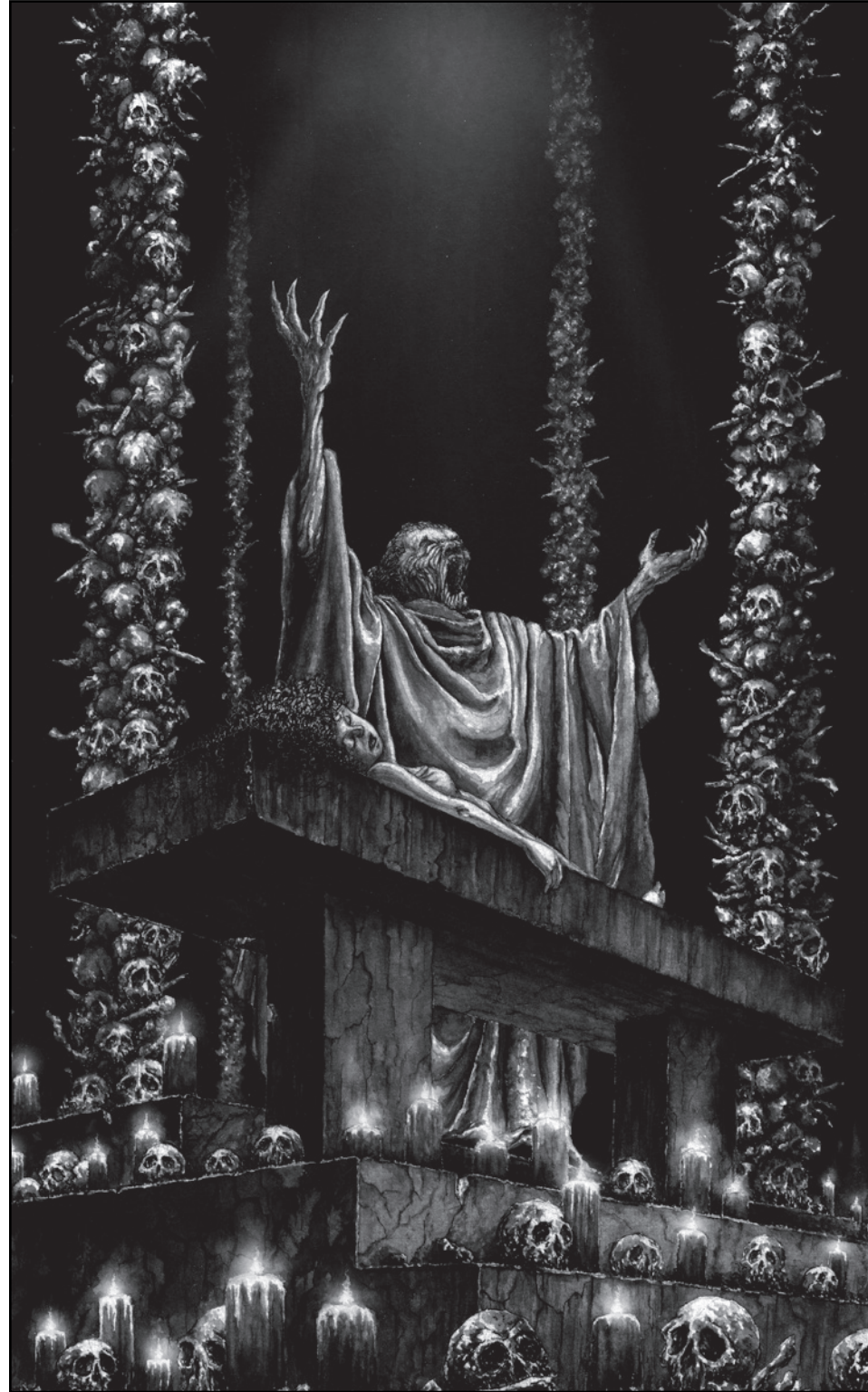
The characters find the sacrificial pit beneath the temple, and have the opportunity to sacrifice a living human in return for great (albeit temporary) power.

Description

The sacrificial chamber is beneath the main body of the temple, and unlike the rest of the temple it is a natural cave rather than a man-made structure. The light down here is very faint, coming from some bioluminescent fungi on the ceiling, and the chamber is extremely dark. Stalactites drip from the ceiling and the stone is cold and slick to the touch. Benches are cut into the walls for observers to watch whatever went on down here. In the center of the room is a large pit, about six meters across and four deep.

The floor of the pit is silty mud. This pit was cut into the floor and was not originally part of the natural cave. This is the Mouth of Sin, probably the most dangerous and ill-omened place in all of Ur. The ritual of sacrifice described by Jenks' notes in the "Promenade of Kings" scene will work here. All the sacrificer has to do is throw some hapless soul into the pit and say the prayer of sacrifice out loud. If the sacrificial victim is already dead or isn't human, nothing happens and the characters will have to decide whether or not to try again.

Black holes open up in the mud floor of the pit – not holes but mouths, ringed with glistening ivory teeth. They wail and snarl, creating an appalling cacophony as they chew at the sacrifice. The victim is held spread-eagled on the floor by mouths clamping down on (his/her) arms and legs, and then bitten and chewed by the mouths until (he/she) comes apart in their grasp and the gory chunks of the corpse are dragged below the ground. For a few moments there is silence, broken only by the drip of water from the stalactites. Then a silver light gathers around the sacrificer, suddenly streaming from his eyes and mouth in beams of what looks like moonlight. Instantly, the moment is gone and the sacrificer has received the blessing of Sin. He knows that he is stronger and more capable – he feels like he can do anything. The rush is euphoric, but it's matched by the horror of what had to be done to achieve it.





Sin's blessing is powerful, and imbues the sacrificer with the strength, wisdom and skill of a deity. For the remainder of the story the sacrificer gains the 8 Again rule to all the rolls he makes. Furthermore, he can see in complete and even magical darkness. Sacrificing a living being is a heinous act, and the sacrificer (and anyone who assisted) must make Morality rolls as per a planned murder – any character with Morality 3 or more must make a degeneration roll on 2 dice. As noted previously, if Scorn inhabits a character who knows the sacrificial prayer, than he would take great delight in pushing another character (Storyteller character or player character) into the pit and watching them get devoured gruesomely.

A character can enter the pit (taking falling damage if they are thrown or fall in – the pit is easy to stumble into while blundering around in the dark) without being consumed, as long as the sacrificial prayer is not said out loud while they are in there. Digging around in the pit reveals a few well-chewed bones below the surface of the silt, though only a proper forensic examination will demonstrate them to be human (they are in too poor a condition to tell otherwise).

Storyteller Goals

Create a sense of distant horror as the characters realize what the pit is for and create a moral dilemma for the players to debate. To create a moment of visceral horror should the sacrifice go ahead, and potentially arm the players with potent abilities for use against Bashanipal while extracting from them a terrible cost.

Character Goals

Discover the Mouth of Sin. Deal with the question of whether to sacrifice to Sin, even if one of the characters will gain some extremely useful abilities in doing so.

Actions

Pushing or Throwing Someone into the Pit

Dice Pool: Strength + Stamina vs. Strength + Stamina

Action: Contested

Unwilling targets must be grappled first (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 157-159). Throwing an unconscious target makes the

roll instant, but the thrower or throwers must have a combined Strength of 3 to lift a Size 5 person. See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 47-48 for more on lifting.

Hindrances: Slick, slippery stone (-1 to each combatant)

Help: None

Consequences

If a sacrifice is made, this is an excellent time to have a tomb seal shatter. Characters can continue exploring, in which case you should move on to another exploration scene. The most profound consequences can be internal in this scene, as the characters have potentially traded in the life of a human being for an increased chance of their own survival.



Ruins of Ur

The Mouth of Sin

Stone Lions

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL –

Overview

A side chamber leading off from the main temple contains a pair of dramatically sculpted stone lions, as well as the corpse of the unfortunate Jenks. The stone lions are magical and have fed on Jenks' corpse. If the corpse is disturbed, they animate and attack.

Description

This chamber is a sort of side chapel, leading off from the main temple. The chamber is quite plain and has suffered some wear over the millennia. Deep cracks run down the walls and dust is everywhere. Inside the chamber are two large stone lions, dramatically sculpted into poses of fierce guardianship. The lions stand flanking a large stone basin raised off the floor. A corpse lies draped over the front edge of the basin, and there is congealed and semi-dried blood all over the chamber floor.

The chamber was used for ceremonial ablutions by priests and visitors, and the lions were put there to pounce on any visitors who were not pure in their devotion to Sin. The lions have blood flecked around their stone lips, but this will only be obvious to a character who specifically examines them. The corpse is Jenks.

Storyteller Goals

This combat is intended as an interlude in the main story, a moment of action that lets the characters loose off a few rounds and maybe blow something up. At the Storyteller's option the combat can be skipped, and this scene will consist of finding Jenks' body.

Jenks' body lies draped over the front edge of the basin. He has been down here for a few days and stinks (although not as badly as Stellan in the "Priests' Quarters" scene). He lies on his front, and though there is plenty of blood on the chamber floor, his injuries will only be revealed if he is turned over. After his throat was slit by Stellan, the lions animated and bit large chunks out of his torso. Examining Jenks' body to see how he died will reveal

that most of his chest and stomach have been torn away and are nowhere to be seen. The character will have no more time to finish the examination because that's when the lions growl (a terrible gravelly sound), break from their plinths and start mauling anyone in front of them.

Character Goals

To discover what happened to Jenks, and to survive the lions.

Actions

The lions are saving the rest of Jenks for later, and will animate to attack the characters if Jenks' body is disturbed, since they don't want their first meal in thousands of years to be taken away. The lions are tough, but they have to be up close to hurt the characters, so guns and especially explosives are handy here. The lions are also very large, and if all the characters flee the chamber, the lions might get stuck in the doorway trying to get through at the same time. The lions are stupid and can be tricked into charging into the underground river from which they will have a lot of difficulty escaping. Finally, the chamber itself is structurally unsound, and a couple of grenades can collapse the ceiling, burying the lions and ending their threat.

Consequences

Once the fight with the lions is over, this is a good time to have a tomb seal shatter. Characters can carry on exploring the temple, moving on to another exploration scene.

Suffering Scorn

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •

SOCIAL •••

Overview

The spirit Scorn takes over one of the characters. The characters can perform an exorcism ritual to expel him from the character and bind Scorn to serve them.

Description

This scene can kick in any time after “Priests’ Quarters,” preferably while the characters are doing something tense or dramatic (like combat or the sacrificial ritual). Scorn tries to take over one of the characters and control his actions, creating as much mayhem as possible – when he makes his move, use the possession rules on p. 212 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** to see if he succeeds.

Scorn has no long-term plans; he just wants to screw the characters over. The simplest way of doing this is to have his host attack the other characters. If at all possible, however, Scorn should do something a bit more imaginative: setting off explosives, sacrificing someone, freeing Steele or a captured insurgent, or leading the characters into the Night Court ambush. Scorn can also be used to lead the characters into a previously unexplored part of the temple.

Actions

Performing the Ritual

Drake knows the ritual that will force Scorn out of the character and force him to obey the characters. Assuming the characters get his information out of Drake and have one of (or some of) Sin’s bones, the ritual can proceed.

First, the possessed character (no doubt spitting Scorn’s imaginative curses) must be restrained and laid on the floor in a circle drawn on the ground. An item personal to the possessed character is then destroyed. Examples of this might be the burning of a photograph, the smashing of a weapon or the removal of a patch of skin with a tattoo on it. An image of the sun is inscribed on the character’s flesh - a circle with

some lines radiating out from it will do, and it can either be cut or burned into the skin. The final stage involves sprinkling some dust made from the “bones of a god” onto the possessed character and intoning a hymn to the sun god Shamash. This dust can be made from pounding a bone from Sin’s corpse into fragments. The hymn, which can be spoken in English, is

“Lord Sun, Child of Night and Father of Dawn, expel the wickedness from this soul. Break it, burn it, curse it and cast it out. O Shamash, Lord of Light, enslave it, so that it will serve us as we serve you.”

Scorn will make every attempt to disrupt this ritual. He will try to escape his bonds and talk his way out of it, trying threats, reason and pleading in rapid succession. Bashanipal may also understand what is happening and whisper to the participating characters, hinting that the ritual is a trap and the Drake is lying to them, or that only Bashanipal himself can cure the possessed character. Whatever happens, remember the rule of horror stories: exorcisms *never* go smoothly.

If Scorn is forced out, the characters can see him for the creepy little creature he is. He now has to do whatever the characters will say, although he will sulk about his lot at every opportunity. He has to answer their questions, too, although all he knows is that he was minding his own business feeding off Babylon’s misery when Bashanipal summoned him and forced him to inhabit some stupid box. Scorn remembers Babylon as a land of plenty, where Marduk the God-King (Scorn doesn’t know what Marduk actually was, other than that he wasn’t human) was such a ruthless and wanton tyrant that wrath, jealousy and despair were everywhere and a spirit could feed off them at his leisure. He can also tell the characters that he tried possessing Stellan, but that poor bastard was too insane to be of any use. After his messy escape from Stellan, Scorn went back to wait for the next potential host. If asked why he didn’t explode the character he possessed, Scorn replies that without a host or a binding point nearby (like the casket or, after the ritual, the characters) Scorn couldn’t exist outside a host and would have fizzled away into nothing. Scorn will, if instructed, help in the fight against Bashanipal during “Oh Shit, We’re All Going To Die” and can be a useful ally.

Consequences

The immediate consequences of this scene depend on when Scorn decided to make his move. This is also a good time to have one of the seals break.

Screw This, I'm Getting Out of Here

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL ••

Overview

The characters flee the Temple of Sin and find themselves in hostile territory. They encounter the Night Court or a group of insurgents and then a coalition vehicle patrol before Bashanipal catches up with them.

Description

This scene is something of a last resort, as the plot of **Ruins of Ur** is designed to take characters through the Temple of Sin to the final confrontation with Bashanipal.

However, players may ignore their orders and the various devices used to keep them at the ruins, and choose to flee into the desert rather than wait for Bashanipal to wake and face him. This is not an unreasonable course of action, but it will still end up in a throwdown with Bashanipal, and has consequences of its own.

Firstly, Church will die. Her injuries are severe enough that if moved, her internal injuries will rupture and she will bleed out. If she is left behind, she will be Bashanipal's first meal. Secondly, the characters are in the middle of nowhere and they will inevitably run into a group of insurgents during the night.

Should any characters survive the confrontation with Bashanipal, then a remaining soldier can drive them the rest of the way to base when dawn breaks. If no soldiers remain, the characters will have to drive themselves. Back at base, the characters probably won't even have time for the traditional ice cold beer before they are ushered into a darkened room and given a very thorough debriefing indeed.

Storyteller Goals

Provide a gruesome, frightening and intense finale. Make sure the characters don't get off easily by fleeing – in fact, they'll probably have it worse than if they had explored the temple.



Character Goals

Survive and get home. Maybe to kill Bashanipal if they want to stop him from roving around Iraq feeding on innocent people.

Actions

The Inevitable Fight

What the characters do and where they go is up to them. They might strike out on foot, or just camp a short distance from the ruins. In any case, the Storyteller has a choice.

- If the characters have not yet encountered the Night Court and the Storyteller wants to foreshadow the later encounter with Bashanipal, then the Night Court scuttle out of the shadows to kill the characters before they bring any more intruders to the temple (see “The Promenade of Kings” for some suggestions about running this encounter). If they dispatch the vampires, they wind up encountering a patrol of soldiers (below).
- If the Storyteller doesn't want to introduce vampires until Bashanipal himself, or the characters have already dispatched the Night Court, a patrol of insurgents finds them (or if the characters kept moving,

they and the patrol run into one another). There are five insurgents traveling in a technical, but this time their vehicle works. Ideally this encounter will occur near some cover or shelter, such as an abandoned farm or a group of burned-out vehicles, allowing for some tactical thinking by both sides. At this point the characters can go back to the temple, stay where they are or press on.

The characters encounter a patrol of soldiers on their way back to their base (this might well be the characters' own home base if they are military characters). If the characters are getting their asses handed to them in the above encounter, the patrol might arrive to investigate the gunfire. Otherwise, the characters run into the patrol. There may be the potential for misunderstanding and even friendly fire, particularly if the characters are driving the insurgents' technical. The patrol is led by Captain David O'Connel, a gruff American combat veteran, and consists of an armored personnel carrier (APC) and a self-propelled gun. It has six soldiers, four in the APC and two gun crew, who have been awake for almost twenty-four hours and have itchy trigger fingers given the reports of major insurgent pushes into the area. They will probably be willing to take the characters back to base unless the characters are obviously up to no good.

After the characters hook up with the patrol, Bashanipal catches up with them. He has woken from his tomb and followed the characters' trail to the coalition patrol. If the characters left Church behind, his first action is to hurl her drained corpse onto whatever vehicle the characters are driving. He then kills the crew of the self-propelled gun, rips a wheel off the APC and attacks the soldier spilling out of it – starting with the player characters.

Bashanipal in particular wants the player characters (and he knows which ones they are) because they were promised to him as a meal, so the characters are likely to be forced into action against him. The characters have the assistance of the coalition soldiers, but are unlikely to have acquired the secrets of the Temple of Sin (the Lyre, the sacrifice and Scorn) to help them out. Also, Bashanipal now has at least 5 points of Vitae in his system (he's fed on either Church, a hapless insurgent straggler or both) and has activated Stone of Ur, Fist of Sin and Moonlight's Speed (in **Requiem** terms,

Resilience, Vigor and Celerity, respectively) before the fight begins. Otherwise, this encounter unfolds much the same as in "Oh Shit, We're All Going To Die."

Consequences

The characters have opportunities before meeting the coalition patrol to return to the Temple of Sin. Otherwise, following the clash with Bashanipal, the story has ended. Move on to the Aftermath.



Oh Shit, We're All Going to Die

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL •••• SOCIAL •

Overview

The sixth seal breaks and Bashanipal's tomb opens. Bashanipal tries to kill the characters and drink their blood. Characters may have prepared for this fight with traps, defenses and so on.

Description

The door to the tomb shudders and the entrance chamber shakes with it. The whole temple rumbles with the power building up behind the door, dust and debris falling as stones are shaken loose. Finally the tomb door falls forward, hitting the ground with a deafening crash. Behind it, framed in the light of the oil lanterns now somehow burning in the tomb itself, is a towering figure dressed in priestly regalia and a crown bearing the emblems of the moon. His face is an inhuman mask of dead gray flesh, his hands are impossibly long and gnarled, and in his hand he holds a massive bronze sword. Hatred, pure and black, seethes in his eyes.

The breaking of the final seal is a significant event, which should not be lost on the players. Bashanipal is loose, and now it's time to have that promised showdown with him. Characters may have used the gradual shattering of the tomb seals to prepare for this battle by setting up a barricade, rigging traps or explosives, bringing the machine gun from the technical, preparing firing positions and so on. All these are good plans, and the Storyteller should cut the characters a break for coming up with them – after all, that's thinking like a soldier. The success or failure of the preparations is discussed at the end of this scene.

Bashanipal's insanity has been exacerbated by millennia of supernatural sleep, but he's still dangerously cunning. He uses his various powers cleverly, in particular by dominating the characters and using them against each other. He likes to cripple characters and pick them up to feed, biting into their necks with his grotesque fangs (which might give the other characters a moment of respite).

Though Bashanipal promised he wouldn't hurt Steele when he awoke, this was a blatant lie. He is quite happy to drink her blood and she will probably be his first meal if she's around. Steele will only realize her master's betrayal when he sinks his fangs in. He will also drink his fill from other Storyteller characters like Drake or a captured insurgent if he gets the chance. If the fight goes outside, he might prey on the invalid Church.

This is the story's climax, and it should feel like it. Bashanipal needs to earn his screen time – have him speak to ensure the characters know what he thinks of them (they are just vermin compared to his divinely blessed stature) and sacrifice Storyteller characters to underline his ruthlessness. Characters who try to fight toe-to-toe with Bashanipal are in real danger of dying.

Storyteller Goals

Provide a dramatic climax and present a memorable arch-villain. Up the ante by threatening the players with immediate hideous death. Finally, bring the story to a close, whichever side prevails.

Character Goals

Survival: try to kill Bashanipal before he kills them.

Actions

Preparing for the final battle with explosives or traps and begging for mercy from Bashanipal are some actions characters might attempt to help their chances of survival. Rigging explosives can be done using the rules on p. 178 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Rigging Traps

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Crafts or Survival

Action: Extended. At least 4 successes are required, but characters may take more time up to a maximum of 8 successes. Each roll takes half an hour per trap.

Hindrances: Low-quality materials (-2)

Help: High-quality materials (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The trap won't work, but the character thinks it will.

Failure: The trap won't work and the character knows it.

Success: The trap, when triggered, will inflict levels of bashing damage equal to the successes rolled. A target can mitigate up to three levels of damage with a Dexterity + Athletics roll.

Exceptional Success: As “Success,” but the damage is lethal.

Pleading for Mercy

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion

Action: Instant.

Hindrances: Character has already attacked Bashanipal (-1)

Help: None. It’s up to the character’s powers of persuasion.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Bashanipal is so offended by the character’s pathetic pleading that he drops whatever he is doing to kill the character next.

Failure: Bashanipal ignores the character’s pleas.

Success: Bashanipal offers to spare the character’s life if the character turns against his fellows. After all the other characters are dead, Bashanipal tries to kill the pleading character anyway. The pleading was successful in that it bought a few more minutes of life.

Exceptional Success: Bashanipal sees in the pleading character a soul who can be molded to his will. He offers to spare the character’s life and even to extend it far past mortal bounds, if the character turns against his fellows and pledges eternal allegiance to Bashanipal and Sin. After the conflict, if the character is still alive, Bashanipal is as good as his word and turns the character into a vampire to better serve him. Should the character turn on Bashanipal after this point, Bashanipal will kill him immediately.

Consequences

This is the story’s climax. Move on to the Aftermath section, if anyone’s still alive.

Aftermath

If the characters are still at the Temple of Sin, then rescue is coming. As dawn breaks, a helicopter arrives to pick up the survivors. On board is a medic who can get Church on board and start treating her. With surgery and convalescence, she will live. The pilot, Lt. Chuck Duquesne (who is a soft-spoken, level-headed man), will ask what happened, but if descriptions from the survivors get too outlandish, he will tell them to save it for the debriefing.

The information that the supernatural exists and that something supernatural ruled an empire more than three millennia ago is likely to be life-changing for the survivors of Ur. If they are mercenaries or military characters, they will receive some form of debriefing. How much do they tell? The answer is up to the characters, as are the consequences for telling or concealing the truth. The characters need to at least come up with some answers to explain the deaths of any personnel during the mission.

The greater repercussions of the story are not to be underestimated. Should the U.S. Army learn of the secrets beneath Ur, it will institute an ARCHINT program to find other artifacts like the Lyre of Isis for use against supernatural and mortal enemies. They will also seek to catalog the sinister history of Mesopotamia in the hope of finding any ancient force influencing events in Iraq. The Babylonian Empire, meanwhile, does not die with Bashanipal. Other priests of Sin and courtiers of Marduk slumber beneath the Mesopotamian plains, and perhaps Bashanipal’s awakening has spurred some of them to action. Will the coalition and the insurgency alike find themselves fighting an ancient foe that emerges from beneath their feet, hungry for blood? What heinous weapons might the military deploy against such a foe?

And what will happen if they lose?

Experience

As per usual, characters who survive the story are rewarded two points of experience (one for taking part and one for facing the dangers inherent in the story). Other points are the at the Storyteller’s discretion but here are some suggestions.

- Defeating Bashanipal (+1 experience point)
- Bashanipal is incontrovertibly destroyed, perhaps by fire (+1 experience point)
- Good roleplaying, including getting into the mindset of a soldier and reacting realistically to the horrible situations inflicted upon the characters in the ruins (+1 experience point, rising to 2 points if the player’s depictions of his character’s behavior added greatly to the story).
- Characters who change dramatically internally because of the story (+1 experience point).

SCENE: Going Down

12

MENTAL — PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Interrogating a Prisoner:
Badly wounded prisoner (-1)

Helping Church:
Under fire (-2)

HELP

Interrogating a Prisoner:
(For characters) Previous
brutality (+1), prisoner is sole
survivor (+1); (for prisoner)
Religious fervor (+2)

Helping Church: Trauma
kit (+2)

OTHER

There are four insurgents in
total: one on the technical,
two taking cover behind a
pile of rubble and another
in the cover of the timbers
shoring up the entrance to
the ruins.

STs An exciting action sequence that sets up the situation for the rest of the story.

PCs Survive. Maybe kick some ass.

SCENE: The Maw

15

MENTAL ●●● PHYSICAL ●● SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

Interrogating Steele:
Failure while interrogating
insurgent (-1)

Examining the chamber:
Worn by the ages (-1),
faltering light (-1)

HELP

Interrogating Steele:
(For characters) Previous
brutality (+1), success at in-
terrogating insurgent (+1);
(for Steele) An insane
conviction that keeps her
from speaking too much of
her "master" (+2)

Examining the chamber:
Exceptional success inter-
rogating Steele (+2)

OTHER

Striking the door to the tomb
will cause the character to
be thrown back across the
room, inflicting 3 bashing.

First seal breaks.

STs Reveal Steele's treachery and set up the threat of Bashanipal and the significance of the door seals breaking.

PCs Work out that Steel has screwed them over and gain information about their predicament.

SCENE: The Promenade of Kings

18

MENTAL ● PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Horribly mangled corpses (-1)

HELP

Previous experience with
vampires (+1), medical
equipment (+1)

OTHER

There are two excerpts from
Jenks' diary here (p. xx).

Potential seal breaking.

STs Throw a horrific action sequence at the characters. Provide them with the opportunity to learn about the sacrificial pit and the power it can grant them.

PCs Survive the Night Court. To discover more about the temple, in particular the sacrificial pit.

SCENE: The Priests' Quarters

20

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL — SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Examining Stellan's Corpse:
Darkness (-1)

Playing the Lyre: Loud noise
(such as combat; -1)

HELP

Examining Stellan's Corpse:
Medical Equipment (+1)

Playing the Lyre: Previous
experience on a lyre or other
stringed instrument (+1)

OTHER

There is an excerpt from Stel-
lan's notebook here (p. xx),
as well as the Lyre of Ishtar
and Scorn.

Potential seal breaking.

STs Add mystery to the Temple of Sin and to enable the characters to acquire the Lyre of Ishtar. Set up a future conflict with Scorn.

PCs Explore and discover the Lyre of Ishtar.

SCENE: Drake

23

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ●●●●

HINDRANCES

Character looks dangerous, such as being covered in blood and gore (-1)

HELP

Food and water (+1), kind smile (+1)

OTHER

Potential seal breaking.

STs Provide useful information to the characters via Drake. Run a relatively sedate social encounter as a change of pace. Increase the sense of impending doom and mystery, again through Drake.

PCs Find out more about what is going on.

SCENE: The Bones of Sin

25

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL — SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Missing appropriate tools (-2)

HELP

Focusing on the fractures in the lid (+1)

OTHER

Contains the bones of Sin needed for the ritual.

STs Provide an eerie scene illustrating the supernatural nature of the temple and Marduk's empire.

PCs Explore. Acquire a bone from Sin's corpse.

SCENE: The Mouth of Sin

26

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●● SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

Slick, slippery stone (-1 to each combatant)

HELP

None

OTHER

Potential seal breaking.

STs Provide a powerful moral dilemma for the characters, and create a chance for inter-character conflict.

PCs Acquire mystical power through the sacrifice, or oppose the sacrifice on moral grounds.

SCENE: Stone Lions

28

MENTAL ● PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Lions are very tough.

HELP

Lions are stupid, large and need to be up close to hurt the characters.

OTHER

Potential seal breaking.

STs Provide an exciting combat encounter.

PCs Survive the lions.

SCENE: Suffering Scorn

29

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ● SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

The ritual is the result of information gained in the temple rather than characters' own occult knowledge or abilities, and doesn't require a roll to use.

Potential seal breaking.

STs Run a different form of conflict, that of an evil force possessing the character. Give characters the chance to acquire Scorn's services.

PCs Deal with Scorn.

SCENE: Screw This. I'm Getting Out of Here

30

MENTAL ● PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

Insurgents.
Night court vampires.
Bashanipal.

HELP

None. The characters are on their own.

OTHER

Church will die.

STs Provide a climax to the story. Illustrate how fleeing is not enough to avoid Bashanipal's hunger.

PCs Survive and get home.

SCENE: Oh Shit. We're All Going To Die

32

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●●●●● SOCIAL ●

HINDRANCES

Rigging Traps:
Low-quality materials (-2).

Pleading for Mercy:
Character has already attacked Bashanipal (-1).

HELP

Rigging Traps:
High-quality materials (+2).

OTHER

None

STs Provide a spectacular climax.

PCs Survive. Possibly to kill Bashanipal so he does not become a threat to the wider world.

SCENE:

○

MENTAL PHYSICAL SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

HELP

OTHER

STs

PCs

Name: Miranda Steele
Concept: Driven Archeologist

Virtue: Faith
Vice: Pride

Faction:
Group Name:

Shoot Back ●●●○○○○○○○

Miranda isn't much of a shot, but she'll sure as hell return fire if the characters try to kill her (and given her role in the story, that's a very real possibility).

Run Like Hell ●●●○○○○○○○

Miranda is expecting trouble, knows the ruins, and is a very fit woman. She's ready to run for it.

○○○○○○○○○○

○○○○○○○○○○

Notes

Name: Lt. Deborah Church
Concept: Gung-Ho Chopper Pilot

Virtue: Justice
Vice: Lust

Faction:
Group Name:

Pilot ●●●●●●●○○

Church is a damned good pilot. Flying is her life.

○○○○○○○○○○

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Notes

Name: Roger Drake
Concept: Traumatized Postgraduate

Virtue: Prudence
Vice: Sloth

Faction:
Group Name:

Maintenance ●●●●○○○○○

Drake has convinced himself that the only way to survive is to be the Michael Jordan of hide-and-seek.

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Notes

Name:
Concept:

Virtue:
Vice:

Faction:
Group Name:

○○○○○○○○○○

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Notes

Name: Bashanipal
 Concept: Ancient Babylonian Evil

Virtue: Faith
 Vice: Pride

Plan: Nosferatu
 Covenant:

<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills	Merits	Health
Occult ●●●●●	Disarm ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●
Politics (Religious) ●●●●●	Fast Reflexes ●●●●●	□□□□□□□□□□
Athletics ●●●●●	Giant ●●●●●	
Brawl ●●●●●		<i>Willpower</i>
Weaponry (Sword) ●●●●●		●●●●●●●●●●
Expression ●●●●●		□□□□□□□□□□
Intimidation ●●●●●		
Persuasion (His Own Superiority) ●●●●●		<i>Vitae</i>
Socialize ●●●●●		□□□□□□□□□□
Subterfuge ●●●●●		□□□□□□□□□□
●●●●●		Vitae per turn <u>13/2</u>
●●●●●	<i>Disciplines</i>	<i>Blood Potency</i>
●●●●●	Celerity ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●
●●●●●	Majesty ●●●●●	□□□□□□□□□□
●●●●●	Nightmare ●●●●●	
●●●●●	Resilience ●●●●●	<i>Flaws</i>
●●●●●	Vigor ●●●●●	
●●●●●		

Notes

Humanity 2
 Size 6
 Speed 11
 Defense 2
 Initiative Mod 7
 Armor 3/2



Bashanipal

Abilities

Armor

Bashanipal's priestly vestments are thrice-blessed implements of Sin's worship. They grant him 3 points of armor (2 against firearms).

Attack

Bashanipal rolls 10 dice (Strength + Weaponry, +3 dice for his sword) when attacking in melee. His attack pool can be increased by improving his Strength (see "Fist of Sin" below). His sword does lethal damage.

Undead

Bashanipal takes bashing damage, not lethal damage, from firearms.

Blood

Bashanipal's vampiric powers are fueled by blood, in the form of Vitae. Bashanipal starts with only 3 Vitae in his system, and he wants more. He can get it by grappling an opponent, as described on p. 159 of the World of Darkness Rulebook. Bashanipal may choose to inflict only 1 point of lethal damage that turn, and in exchange gain 1 point of Vitae. Since he has very little blood in his system, he will have to do this if he wants to use all his powers.

Heal Wounds

Bashanipal can spend Vitae to heal his wounds. As a reflexive action, he can heal 2 points of bashing damage or 1 point of lethal damage per point of Vitae he spends. He can spend up to 3 points of Vitae in this way every turn. He cannot heal aggravated damage in this way.

Moonlight's Speed

By spending 1 Vitae, Bashanipal calls upon the moon as an instant action to grant him supernatural speed for the remainder of the scene. This adds 2 to his Initiative and increases his Speed to 33. It also subtracts 2 from assailants' dice pools to attack him as he dodges and weaves with impossible speed (this applies to both melee and ranged attacks).

Fist of Sin

Bashanipal can spend 1 Vitae to imbue himself with the divine Strength of Sin as an instant action. For the remainder of the scene, Bashanipal adds 3 to his Strength, and his Speed increases to 14. When active at the same time as "Moonlight's Speed," Bashanipal's Speed increases to 36.

Stone of Ur

Bashanipal can spend 1 Vitae to turn his dead flesh as tough as the foundations of Ur itself as an instant action. For the remainder of the scene, he adds 4 points to his Stamina. This increases his Health to 10, and the first 4 points of aggravated damage inflicted on him after he activates it are reduced to lethal damage.

The Face of the Moon

Bashanipal is ugly enough, but he can also channel the monstrous evil within him to turn his face into a vision of horror as an instant action. Bashanipal rolls 10 dice, opposed by his target's Composure. If he wins, the target flees for a number of turns equal to the successes by which Bashanipal defeated the target. The target will get out of sight of Bashanipal and try to hide. Once a character has been affected by Face of the Moon, he cannot be affected by it again.

Kneel to Sin

Bashanipal's arrogance finds form in his ability to compel others to become his followers. He may spend a turn radiating majesty and authority, enough to cow a character into serving him. Bashanipal rolls 5 dice. His target rolls his Composure. If Bashanipal wins, the target becomes Bashanipal's servant for the remainder of the scene. This effect will end if Bashanipal attacks or otherwise harms the affected character.



Name: The Night Court Virtue: Hope Clan: _____
 Concept: Ravenous Nocturnal Predators Vice: Greed Covenant: _____

Intelligence ●○○○○○	Strength ●●●○○○	Presence ●●●○○○
Wits ●●●○○○	Dexterity ●●●○○○	Manipulation ●●●○○○
Resolve ●●●○○○	Stamina ●●●○○○	Composure ●●●○○○

Skills	Merits	Health
Crafts ●○○○○○	Danger Sense ●●○○○○	●●●●●●●●○○○○
Investigation ●○○○○○	Disarm (Local Business) ●○○○○○	□□□□□□□□□□
Medicine (Butchering Corpses) ●○○○○○	Fast Reflexes ●●○○○○	<u>Willpower</u>
Occult ●●○○○○	Fleet of Foot ●○○○○○	●●●●●●○○○○○○
Politics (Religious) ●○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	□□□□□□□□□□
Athletics ●●○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	<u>Vitae</u>
Brawl ●●○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	□□□□□□□□□□
Larceny ●○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	□□□□□□□□□□
Stealth (Using the Dark) ●●●○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	Vitae per turn _____
Survival ●○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	<u>Blood Potency</u>
Weaponry ●●○○○○	<u>Disciplines</u>	●●○○○○○○○○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	□□□□□□□□□□
Persuasion ●○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	_____
Subterfuge ●○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	<u>Flaws</u>
_____ ○○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	_____
_____ ○○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	_____
_____ ○○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	_____
_____ ○○○○○○	_____ ○○○○○○	_____

Notes

Humanity 3
 Size 5
 Speed 12
 Defense 3
 Initiative Mod 7
 Armor _____

The Night Court

Moonshadow	Obsidian Claw	Warrior Priest
Clan <u>Mehket</u>	Clan <u>Gangrel</u>	Clan <u>Daeva</u>
Disciplines: Obfuscate ●●●○○○ ○○○○○	Disciplines: Protean ●●●○○○ ○○○○○	Disciplines: Celerity ●○○○○○ Vigor ●●○○○○
Weapon <u>Sacrificial Dagger</u>	Weapon <u>None</u>	Weapon <u>Bronze War Axe</u>
Damage <u>1(L)</u>	Damage _____	Damage <u>3(L)</u>

Abilities

Attack
 Moonshadow rolls 6 dice to attack with his sacrificial dagger, but prefers to do this to unsuspecting targets from the darkness. Warrior-Priest is more warlike and charges into combat with his axe, rolling 8 dice. Obsidian Claw attacks with his bare hands, rolling 5 dice, unless he grows his claws (see "Tiamat's Fangs," below), in which case he rolls 6.

Undead
 The Night Court take bashing damage, not lethal damage, from firearms.

Blood
 The Night Court desire blood, and can spend points of Vitae to activate their powers. They each have only 1 point of Vitae in their system to begin with. They can get more blood by drinking it from victims. To do so, they must grapple an opponent as described on p. 159 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*. The vampire may choose to inflict only 1 point of lethal damage that turn, and in exchange gain 1 point of Vitae.

Heal Wounds
 The Night Court can spend Vitae to heal wounds. As a reflexive action, they can heal 2 points of bashing damage or 1 point of lethal damage per point of Vitae they spend. The Night Court can only spend 1 point of Vitae in this way every turn, and cannot heal aggravated damage.

Moonshadow
 Moonshadow can cloak himself with the darkness to hide himself from potential victims as an instant action. To do this, he spends 1 point of Vitae and rolls 6 dice. If he gets any successes, he is then invisible for the rest of the scene. He can do this even if directly observed, and if his successes exceed an observer's Willpower dots, then the witness doesn't remember the vampire was there at all. This effect ends if the vampire does anything to reveal himself, such as attacking. Moonshadow prefers to activate this power before the characters know he is there, and then strike at unsuspecting targets from the darkness.

Warrior-Priest of Sin
 Warrior-Priest was a soldier as well as a priest, and he can augment his physical abilities as an instant action. He spends 1 point of Vitae and for the remainder of the scene he gains improved strength and speed. He adds 2 to his Strength, increasing his attack pool to 10. He also adds 1 to his Stamina, increasing his Health to 9.

Obsidian Claw
 Obsidian Claw is a feral butcher, and can grow claws for the length of a scene by spending 1 Vitae as an instant action. His claws, which he prefers to unsheathe before the fight begins, inflict aggravated damage as well as increasing his attack pool to 6.

THE CARVING APPEARS TO BE A RITUAL OF SACRIFICE.
CIRCLE IS DESCRIBED AS "MOUTH OF SIN."
VICTIM IS HUMAN (NOTE - DIFFERS TO ANIMAL
SACRIFICE RITUALS IN TEXTS ELSEWHERE).
~~THOUGHT HUMAN SACRIFICE WAS A RUMOR~~
NO PREVIOUS EVIDENCE OF HUMAN SACRIFICE HAS
EVER BEEN DISCOVERED! SACRIFICE NOT NORMALLY
ASSOCIATED WITH LUNAR DEITY SIN. RITUAL INVOLVES
HURLING VICTIM (STILL LIVING - TEXT UNUSUALLY
CLEAR ON THIS, "THE HEART MUST BEAT, THE
BREATH MUST FLOW") INTO THE MOUTH (PIT?).
SIN'S JAWS WILL CLOSE (GATE? LIVE BURIAL?) AND THE
SACRIFICING ENTITY WILL GAIN "THE STRENGTH OF THE
MOON" TO DEFEAT HIS ENEMIES. PRE-BATTLE RITE?
RITUAL CHANT: "LORD OF MOONS, GRANT ME
DARKNESS THAT BURNS THE LIGHT!"
NATURE OF REWARD UNCERTAIN.
STRENGTH AND FEARLESSNESS?
MAGICAL POWERS?
PERHAPS "BLESSING OF SIN."

STELLAN IS SURE THE RITUAL IS REAL! POWERS SIN, AND EVERYTHING.
EVEN TALKED ABOUT TRYING IT. CAN'T TELL IF HE WAS JOKING.
PIT BELOW THE MAIN TEMPLE COMPLEX IS THE MOUTH OF SIN!
I'M STAYING THE HELL OUT OF THERE - GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

THEY ARE ALL COSMIC BEINGS of the same
universe. Only I can see it. The voice that speaks to us is the
cosmos! It is everything! The whole of it must be destroyed
to free us. It is the only way. I cannot tell any others
because they will not believe me. Jenks did not believe, and I
had to kill him. I saw what the cosmos had done to him! All
must perish before we all go the same way. The whole world
and everything else is against us. Death is my only master
now. The priests' quarters are my only solace. Here is the
HOLY POWER that will save us. The Lyre of Ishtar did
not appear to me by accident. It is here! I know where it
is! Sealed in its casket by the EVIL ONES who are the
secret lords of our universe! Once I have it I will bring
death to them! Only I know. I am a soldier of the universe.
I am a child of the holy fight. With the Lyre I will be
all-powerful. The one who whispers will be the first to die.
Everyone and everything else will follow. It is the only way!
I am a child of the universe!



WAS DOWN HERE FOR EIGHT HOURS WITH THAT BLOODY RITUAL. GOT THE WHOLE THING WORKED OUT NOW, JUST NEED TO TYPE IT UP. STEELE DIDN'T LIFT A FINGER. WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING IN THERE ALL DAY? HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO STELLAN, EITHER. STEELE'S SENT AWAY THE NATIVES. HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO OPEN UP THIS WHOLE PLACE BY OURSELVES? HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN ON THE TEMPLE FLOOR OR THE PIT. SPOKE TO DRAKE. HE WANTS TO LEAVE. DON'T THINK HE'S SLEPT, I WANT TO LEAVE TOO. NEXT SUPPLY TRUCK IS A GONE, IF THERE IS A NEXT ONE.

NIGHT. JUST SPOTTED MOUNTS FOR SOMETHING ON THE PROMENADE CEILING. PRISONERS MANACLED THERE? THIS PLACE GETS WORSE AND WORSE.



SIN