

HOWLING SHADOWS

Sample file



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INTRODUCTION

In the Sixth World, people usually assume that the thing that goes bump in the night is a group of gangers dumping the body of their latest thrill kill. Denizens are generally so worried about monsters in human form that they don't take much time to worry about actual monsters.

That's a mistake.

The same Awakening that turned humans into dwarfs, elves, trolls, orks, and a large number of other metatypes played a number on the animal kingdom as well, altering and mutating animals in bizarre ways, and bequeathing some species with powers that make them incredibly dangerous, especially if their powers can be put to use by the wrong hands. Which, in the Sixth World, is a high percentage of the hands in existence.

These weapons are going to be used against shadowrunners, so shadowrunners need to know what they are, where they might be found, and what to do about them.

Simply put, they need this book.

Here's what it's got: *Howling Shadows* begins with **Nature Is a Bitch**, providing an overview of the critters of the Sixth World, why runners need to worry about them, and how they might be able to take advantage of the powers they possess. **Untamed Security** becomes a little more specific, detailing security uses for critters, including information on how some specific corps employ them in their security arrangements.

From there, we dive into specific types of critters. While many animals have changed and mutated in the Sixth World, there are still plenty of normal animals; some are listed in *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, and more can be found here in the **Mundane Critters** chapter. Then we start getting to the weird ones. **Paranormal Animals** talks about a wide range of animals that have unusual or even magical powers, doing things that runners might not expect and very possibly ruining their day. Some of these critters gained their power through the Infection of the

HMHV virus, and they're unusual enough to earn their own sub-chapter here.

Things get even nastier with the **Mutant and Toxic Critters**, which is filled with beasts who might dissolve the ground they walk on with every step. Since some Infected critters are extreme enough to fit into this category, you'll find more of them here, too.

Then there are the **Extraplanar Travelers**, a listing of critters that seems to grow more relevant with every passing day. From reports of extraplanar breaches all the way down in Antarctica to the meddling of the Seelie Court in the affairs of Tír na nÓg and beyond, extraplanar critters are exerting an increasing amount of influence on the material plane, meaning any runner would do well to know what they're all about.

Then we move on to make sure Matrix denizens don't get too comfortable as they wander the virtual world, since there are critters waiting for them, too. **Technocritters** talks about critters who, like technomancers, have accessed the Resonance, and what they do with that ability. Then there are **Protosapients**, critters that exist solely within the Matrix and provide a taste of wildness inside the carefully manicured digital world.

The last group of critters are **Drakes**, the tools/pets/whatever of dragons who are bound to the service of the giant lizards, but in return get access to some pretty intimidating powers.

Next, **Building Man's Best Friend** allows meddlers and tinkerers to think up their own abominations of nature and set them loose on the streets. **Game Information** has a list of all the new powers in this book, and a table with all critter powers from *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*. Finally, there are some reference tables to make it easy to find particular critters.

That's what's inside! So move ahead, buckle up, and get ready for a wild ride with critters all too eager to chew you up and spit you up. Just remember that, like your gun, they work best when pointed at someone else.

HOWLING SHADOWS CREDITS

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NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

"What the frag is that?" Nightrow stabbed a black chrome finger at a blob in the center of the corpse.

I took a knee on the flagstone of the solarium and prodded the gel with a gloved hand. "They're salamander eggs, I think. They prefer moist locations for their nests, but this is a strange choice. I'd love to stay here a little and look into this." I glanced at my teammates, who wore varying degrees of revulsion. "Or not, but this is useful. Now we know he can't have been dead long. I mean, for his chest cavity to still be moist, even after having been opened up so wide ..."

"Does the size of the eggs tell the size of the parent?" Random's already weak voice cracked.

"No. It could be a parabiological relative of a mundane genus, but my knowledge of parabiology is slim. I only know the fun rumors: owls that strike you terrified and blind, dogs that lead critter armies to fight evil, bats that turn you into stone, but nothing about paranormal salamanders. Mundane animals are fascinating enough."

"Reed, sweetheart? It doesn't matter." Face smiled at me. "We've got what we came for, and we need to go."

I eyeballed him. Sweetheart? Although he was a condescending ass, Goddess he was beautiful. I'm embarrassed to admit he intrigued me. I'd caught him watching me during the boat ride, and now there was this "sweetheart," so maybe the feeling was mutual. He didn't have to be partner material for us to have fun back home.

Nightrow shook his head and examined the flayed corpse of Keben Charger, the island's owner, and a retired, once-famous animal trainer. "What a drek way to go."

"I'm surprised that fazes you." Oss flashed her tusks in a grin. "You know they had to do at least that much to you to install your 'ware. They cut you open, peeled back the layers, scooped out—"

Nightrow twitched, and a thin, black spur shot up out of his forearm, stopping centimeters from the underside of Oss' chin. "I get it! Shut the frag up!"

Oss' grin froze in place on her mouth as it melted from her eyes. "Careful, pup. You wouldn't want us to think you unstable, would you?"

"Ladies and gentleman," Face said, holding his palms out by his sides. "We have six hours to get that chip back to Mr. Johnson. If we miss the meet, we don't get paid. We need to go."

"What was that?" The words shot out of Nightrow as quickly as his spur had. He retracted the spur and grabbed his gun. Oss drew her rifle and stood beside him. They aimed into the jungle beyond the doorway in the northern wall.

The south side of the solarium overlooked the cliff on which the manor house was built. Through the massive hole in the wall behind Face, I could see the sky behind the trees. I watched lightning snake through the clouds, casting the canopy of palms into silhouette over mottled black and blue sky. It would be so easy for something to hide out there. We would never notice a thing until it

