

# Getting Her Back

MENTAL ••• PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL ••

## Overview

Someone important to the characters, most likely a child or other family member, vanished on her way to or from school or some other activity. There were no witnesses to her abduction, and the police have no leads. With the abducted in peril, the characters must investigate the disappearance on their own. Can they find and rescue their loved one before it's too late or will she become the latest in a line of grisly murders?

While **Getting Her Back** can be used as a single story unconnected to a larger chronicle, it works best when placed in the context of an ongoing story. In a larger chronicle, the players get to spend more time with their characters, learning more about them, their families and the relationships in between. This familiarity inspires pathos when the story begins and one of those beloved family members is suddenly missing. Furthermore, using **Getting Her Back** as part of a larger chronicle allows you to seed the story into the setting long before it actually begins. You can mention disappearances and murders that have made the news long before one of the characters' loved ones vanishes. This context allows the characters to understand precisely what is at stake for them.

If using **Getting Her Back** as a single story, it might be best to begin it by working a newscast into the action as the story opens. The reporters mention that the body of a missing boy has been found, making him the most recent victim in a string of grisly murders. Shortly thereafter, one of the characters' loved ones goes missing.

The details of the disappearance are left up to you, and should be tailored to the characters. With reports of a murderer in the area, characters are likely to be far more careful with their children than usual. Unfortunately, they can't be with the child all the time. Eventually the characters will leave an opening through which Emily can strike (possibly when they're out hunting other monsters).

You should also determine why Emily has targeted the specific character. Emily is driven by her need to enact justice for her husband's death. Perhaps the character was in some way connected to the accident, even if only tangentially; for example, the character may work at a company that designed the airbags used in Emily's husband's SUV. The decision need not be wholly rational. Alternatively, Emily may be entirely insane, in which case the decision should make sense to *her*, but based on an insane logic. If the characters were responsible for Emily's death in a prior story, Emily's reasons are obvious.

Once the kidnapping has occurred, the characters have a limited amount of time to save the loved one. If the characters have no experience with Emily, the first step should be figuring out who took the missing person. With no witnesses, they are left in the dark. Luckily, characters with Contacts in a variety of areas may get the lead they're looking for. Police or media Contacts might mention that the string of murders reminds them of a series of attacks that occurred in Philadelphia. They might even produce the coroner's report prop (p. 6). Contacts among hunters might produce the coroner's report below (or the chapter on Emily in the **Horror Recognition Guide**, pp. 99-120), which should set the characters in the right direction.

Thereafter, it's a matter of finding where Emily has been hiding. Characters might be able to deduce her location based on what nearby buildings would offer her the most safety. Luckily, Emily stands out, so finding her can be as easy as asking around and finding someone who has seen her leaving a local home or getting into a car (that can then be found by scouring the neighborhood). Emily stays near her victims' homes, which works in the characters' favor.

Once the characters find Emily's lair, they can either attempt to sneak in and rescue the abducted, or they can storm the house looking to kill Emily. You shouldn't force a confrontation with Emily (whose undead body is far more powerful than her slender frame would suggest), but characters who wait too long for an opportunity to sneak into the house without Emily noticing run the risk of giving her too much time with the kidnapped. Alternatively, characters who go in with guns blazing may be terrified to realize that their loved one died when caught in the crossfire.

## EMILY GILLEN ACROSS THE PAGES

*This story assumes that Emily Gillen died in a battle with hunters, and that her ghost returned to her body afterwards to continue its violent work. This need not be the case.*

*If you already introduced Emily to the chronicle and the characters failed to kill her (or otherwise resolve her story), the Emily presented in these pages may represent an evolution of sorts, as Kyle Gillen takes greater control of her body, imbuing it with Dread Powers.*

*If the characters dispatched Emily, this story can be used as is, but updated so that they were responsible for Emily's death. Conversely, if the characters killed Emily without dealing with Kyle, it may be that Kyle has taken over the body so recently vacated by Emily. Perhaps that he answers to her name and affects her mannerisms is due to some lingering aspect of her personality in the otherwise dead body. Perhaps it's nothing more than a ruse.*

## Description

The house is dark and quiet. The air is stagnant and smells slightly of mildew. Something must be wrong with the electricity, because the lights flicker and pop, their shallow pools of light fading and returning irregularly. You hear a slight ringing in your ears, an electrical buzz like the high hum of a power line. But then you hear a whimper, and you know you've come to the right place.

## Storyteller Goals

Establish tension by establishing Emily's modus operandi before setting her against one of the characters' loved ones. Emphasize the passage of time. Let the characters know that the clock is ticking.

## Character Goals

Find the abducted before time runs out. Possibly stop Emily from taking any other lives.

## Actions

**Getting Her Back** can involve any number of actions, from investigation of old newspapers or police reports to combat with the dead Slasher. In all cases, remember that time is limited. That pressure may levy penalties on characters as they race to save their friend or family member.

## Finding Emily Gillen

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation

**Action:** Instant

If the characters get lost or stuck, it may be best to offer them this roll as a push in the right direction. You should offer hints or advice to the player (based on the character's knowledge), but this represents the character's knowledge of what to do next rather than any intuitive leaps of logic.

**Hindrances:** Time is running out (-1), characters don't know the area well (-2), characters have found no information on Emily Gillen or have otherwise spun their wheels over the course of the hunt (-3)

**Help:** Characters suspect that they're looking for Emily and have some basic information about her, including a description or her corner's report (+2), characters gain access to and read the information on Emily presented in the **Horror Recognition Guide** (+4).

Characters who talk this out with one another can benefit from the **Tearwork** rules.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character knows precisely what to do next. Unfortunately, her sudden inspiration is dead wrong.

**Failure:** The character's training doesn't offer her any insight into what to do next.

**Success:** The character's training points her in the right direction. Provide a hint regarding a possible good course of action to take.

**Exceptional Success:** As success, and you can provide an additional hint.

## Consequences

Obviously, the most likely consequence of this scene comes in two flavors: the characters rescue the loved one or they don't. Success in saving the abducted should be accompanied with an additional experience point and the return of a spent Willpower point for everyone involved. If the characters fail to save the kidnapped, the characters may try to avenge themselves on Emily.

Emily is the other major factor of this scene. Characters who allow her to escape may find her plaguing them again in the future. Killing her, on the other hand, may result in a loss of Morality. Worse yet, destroying Emily may not guarantee that she won't come back. While utterly destroying Emily's body will protect others from the worst of her predations, she may become an even more difficult antagonist to overcome if her ghost lingers on.

# Emily Gillen, Talisman Resurrected

**Quotes:** (Socialize) *"Excuse me. My husband and I just moved here, and, well, we were wondering... can you point us towards a good take-out Chinese place?"*

(Intimidation) *"Stop it, Kyle! These are mine!"*

(Persuasion) *"You don't understand! This is right! This is justice!"*

**Virtue:** Justice. Emily Gillen used to care about others, never letting them give in to their fears and doubts. Losing her husband took some of that from her, and her own death stripped away the rest. Now Emily is driven by her demented desire for a twisted justice.

**Vice:** Wrath. Those who have harmed her simply won't learn until they are forced to do so. Luckily, pain is an extremely good motivator, whether the pain of losing a child or the agony of having one's skin slowly peeled from one's face.

**Background:** Emily Gillen had it all: a nice house in a safe neighborhood, a loving husband who owned his own business, a pair of beautiful sons. Even her looks hadn't faded with age and the birthing of two children. Her life was perfect, at least until the semi truck plowed through her husband Kyle's SUV at an intersection only a few miles from home.

Then came the dark time. Emily began to hear Kyle's voice. He came to her whether she was awake or asleep. He spoke to her from beyond the veil of death. He guided her and taught her, and wielded her as a weapon of vengeance against those whose actions had let his killer walk free without so much as a trial. It began with the driver's daughter, but by the time *they* caught up with her, her murders had affected people who were far less directly involved in Kyle's death.

They killed her. She doesn't remember who they were, exactly, but she could sense a certain attitude about them. They were vigilantes, and they had hunted her down. When she awoke again, she was on the doctor's slab. She felt different: stronger, colder. And now she cannot just speak with and hear Kyle, but *see* him as well.

Kyle helped her escape, and promised vengeance on those who had taken so much from her. Now the two move more carefully, seeking out those responsible for their deaths. The pair have taken to finding the homes of those who don't get out much: singles and older people, invading the home and using it as their own for however long they need to remain in an area. Sometimes Emily loses time, usually no more than a few hours, but she recognizes that Kyle needs her body to do things she simply can't handle. What kind of wife would she be if she refused?

**Description:** Emily's beauty has not been tarnished with death. If anything, she moves with more ease and grace than she ever did when plagued with the pains and weaknesses of life. Her wardrobe, however, has suffered, and she contents herself with whatever she can buy from local boutiques with the cash she finds in the homes that she and Kyle move into. She works to keep her clothes clean, but sometimes the bloodstains just won't come out.

**Storytelling Hints:** Emily has become an echo of her former self, and Kyle is the echo of an echo. Due to Emily's madness, it can be difficult to tell where one of the personalities begins and the other ends. In fact, one might be able to chalk all of her behavior, including any claims about Kyle's influence over her, as a result of a fractured psyche, except for the fact that Emily knows things that she shouldn't, whether it be knowledge that only Kyle had or information that only a ghost could gain access to.

One thing is certain: the body of Emily Gillen is under the control of at least one ghost. Emily's ghost is driven solely by the emotions she felt as she died: anger, hatred, bitterness and remorse over leaving her husband's vengeance unfulfilled. Now those emotions fuel her body, preserving it, burning from within it with so much power that they can influence those who get too near her (simply being near her for too long results in a buzzing sensation in the mind and the growth of acerbic emotions).

