

HIPPENSTEEL

Appearance:	Loony Street Personality
True Nature:	Pickli-Tash, Cat Lord of Atlantis
Job:	Wheeler & Dealer
Motivation:	To have somewhere comfortable to sleep and shed hair
Secret:	Loves playing with water. This habit would disgust other cats if they knew. Back in Atlantis, she would often while away the hours playing with the water in the toilet with all her cat toys. The other cats never knew although they often made rude suggestions as to why she cloistered herself away.
Hit Points:	9

A millennia ago, the great city-state of Atlantis was the greatest empire in the known world. It was ruled by the Matagots, cat sorcerers who lorded their power over their human slaves. But all empires fall. A group of human slaves stole arcane knowledge from their feline betters and rose up in rebellion. The magical forces unleashed in the conflict destroyed the empire, the very island sank beneath the waves, to the sound of a million shrieking cats.

A few of the Matagots survived this catastrophe (pun not intended) and set up a new empire in an eastern European nation. Learning from their mistakes they let the humans think that they had control and ruled the country from a shadowy cabal. Pickli-Tash is the descendant of these great cat lords. She is a feline agent for this country, infiltrating other nations and gathering information to use against them. Her magical powers are quite weak but she has a notebook containing some of the spirit magic rituals she learned at the academy. She is not strong enough to bind any but the weakest of spirits to objects or recently killed bodies, yet she once enabled a willing spirit to bind itself to a corpse.

She once lived with the Lobsang Rampa, an occultist who claimed to be a lama from Lhasa but who was actually a plumber from Plympton. He defrauded the occult and hippy movements of the sixties with his bullshit mysticism. Amused by his audacity, Pickli-Tash let him in on her secret and he let her write his autobiography "My Life with the Lama" by Lobsang Rampa's Cat.

When he died she moved to Al Amarja and pretended to be the familiar of one of the Fable's Creed (an Al Amarjan exclusive club of Satanists), Montgomery Knapp. He was a vain fool so she never told him that she was intelligent. His coven once dabbled with cannibalism and cooked up a small piece of human thigh. They did not like it so they fed it to the cat. Since that day she has had a taste for human flesh.

This parasitic arrangement came to an end one day when a big black dog attacked and killed Montgomery Knapp. Hippensteel fled and hid amongst the alley cats. She does not know what the dog was or why Knapp is now walking around apparently alive and she does not really want to know. Satanists, however pathetic are usually into some dangerous shit. Knapp was researching an ancient race which is supposed to live alongside humanity which are called "aphids" or something. They appear to be human except for the fact that they sometimes get very stupid for some reason. Perhaps Knapp discovered some mystery which he should have left alone. She has seen the dog once again in an alley where she and some cats were skulking. They hissed at it and it loped away. Ugly bastard!

Pickli-Tash was considering her next move when she discovered that her country had been destroyed by the Semiotic Assassins. These insane power-mongers had long been opposed by the

Matagots and had used some kind of semiotic magic to destroy the country of the Matagots in such a way that it has never existed.

The movement of postmodernism has taught us that power is knowledge and knowledge is power. The science of semiotics has taught us that much power is caught up in the meanings of words - the interpretation we assign to things defines their reality. The Semiotic Magicians have put this theory into practice.

If you can deconstruct a reality to its bare essences then you can destroy it or even reconstruct it in a different manner. Many primitive religions place importance on a person's true name. Control the name and you control the person. This is a form of Semiotic Magic.

The Semiotic Assassins are a conspiracy of magicians who use ritual semiotic magic to destroy or alter their targets. This is the sorcery which was used to destroy the country of the Matagots - a country which no longer has a name. The Semiotic Assassins gathered the nine essences of the nation and deconstructed its reality - the name fell out of books and living memory, atlases rearranged themselves around the space where the country used to be, millions of people ceased to have ever existed.

While other spies may have been out of the country at the time, Pickli-Tash is the only survivor that she knows of. She has vowed revenge upon the Semiotic Assassins. Pickli-Tash does not know very much about the assassins save that it is rumored they must mutilate themselves in some way during their training.

Pickli-Tash has been living on the streets, eating the corpses which are common finds in the alleys of the Edge. Due to the sympathetic magic of her eldritch stomach, she has learned how to adopt a human shape. This is a far more effective form to pursue her revenge. She has chosen the name "Hippensteel" because of the brand name of an osteopathic replacement she found inside one body. She prowls around, thieving interesting things and in Al Amarja, one can find a buyer for most things, however bizarre, given enough time and perseverance.

Hippensteel has made it her business to discover what is happening in her territory, around the Plaza of Flowers. She has been following the American tourist, Bruno Roth. She is sure that he is up to something. After breaking into his hotel room, she found a copy of his book "The Perpendicular Grimm" and decided to keep it. The book is an interesting read, it recreates old fairy stories in a modern setting.

One character, the girl in the red dress reminds Hippensteel of Faith the prostitute. Perhaps Roth knows Faith from somewhere else? Both live above a sweet shop and both are entirely ruthless and heartless. Faith seems literally to have no emotions. Hippensteel has peeked through her window while crouching on the rooftop and seen Faith in front of her mirror, practicing emotions. Mimicking laughter, pretending to be angry, feigning affection. Between each of these expressions Faith's face returned to a blank, robotic state, totally tabula rasa.

Further, Hippensteel saw Faith coldly and callously kill a man. She crept up behind the poor old inoffensive blind pencil seller and cut his throat with a straight razor. She then made some markings in the man's blood. Perhaps it was some kind of ritual? Anyway, word on the street was that the Aries Gang was responsible and Hippensteel can guess who started that rumor.

The only person Hippensteel has told about this is the sleazy street dealer Mathurin Turgot. He had in his possession a crystal sphere filled with tiny metal fragments which made a tinkly noise when shaken. Knowing that Hippensteel was fond of curiosities he offered it to her in exchange for any snippet of information. Although she does not trust Turgot (she has seen him sneak off to church in disguise and also some nights he heads off to the woods in his beaten up old land rover for some

nefarious purpose), she told him about Faith anyway and he gave her the ball.

She does not know what the ball does, but it makes a great noise when you chase it across the floor. It also floats very well. Actually, it *used* to float very well but earlier this evening she took it into the men's toilets in order to play with it in the lavatory. All was going well until she heard a dreadful "clink" as it hit the porcelain and swiftly fell to the ground. She picked it up before it rolled away, but it has a hole in it and no longer makes the nice tinkly noise. Perhaps someone can fix it.

Hippensteel is curious to see Donald Baughman here in Sad Mary's tonight. She found his body by the bank of underground river which flows under The Edge a few days ago - quite dead. Not being one to let things go to waste, she ate it. The dead seem to be rising in great numbers these days. Perhaps it is a sign of something worse to come?

OBJECTIVES

- Locate any Semiotic Assassins and get them killed
- Find the dog. Do something spiteful to it because it is a dog and you are a cat.
- Find someone who can fix your favorite toy.

ABILITIES

Catburglar: After engaging a character in conversation for two minutes you may make an attempt to pick their pocket. To do this engage them in a game of rock paper scissors. On a success you get a random item that was in their possession. On a failure they notice you stealing from them. On a tie they notice nothing, nor do you get anything from them. Usable 5 successful times. (General Ability)

Rough & Tumble: When you fight you hiss, spit and use every dirty trick in the book. After a tie in combat, describe what you are doing and how this helps you. You then win the tie. Usable 5 times. (General Ability)

Eldritch Stomach: You can eat anything you can fit in your mouth without it harming you. Drugs do not affect you if eaten. Furthermore, you can hide an item for five minutes this way. After those five minutes are up you hack the item back up along with a hairball. Usable 5 times. (Fringe Power)

Person-Eater: You have a taste for human flesh. Anytime a character nearby is dead or unconscious for more than a minute, you must go gnaw on the body a bit. This does no real damage, but you must declare to anyone in arm's reach what you are doing. (Flaw)

EQUIPMENT

- "Daniel Boone" Hat
- Stolen Objects:
 - a contortionary chronometer
 - a tube of dutch bicycle lubricant
 - single orange sock
 - several ballpoint pens

Bitter Tears at Sad Mary's Bar and Girl

- a packet of worry dolls
- a medal with “cretaceous cretin” inscribed on it
- a spray can of instant membrane
- Bruno's Book "The Perpendicular Grimm" (stolen from his hotel room)
- Tinkly crystal sphere (broken)
- Gold clam-shaped handbag with \$300 in it
- Notebook containing a few handy Matagot rituals (which Hippensteel is unfortunately not very good at)