This is a fan work meant to enhance the *World of Darkness* roleplaying game system and the setting of *Geist: The Sin-eaters*.

*Geist: The Sin-eaters* is property of White Wolf/CCP/Onyx Path Publishing. Initial Concept and Design: Rose Bailey, Kelley Barnes-Hermann, Jason Bolte, Joseph Carriker, John Chambers, Aileen E. Miles, Ethan Skemp, Richard Thomas, Aaron Voss, Zack Walters, Eddy Webb and Chuck Wendig; Written by Alan Alexander, Jess Hartley, Jesse Heinig, Wood Ingham, Matthew McFarland, John Newman, Christopher Simmons, John Snead, Malcolm Sheppard, Travis Stout, Chuck Wendig and Stewart Wilson; Developed by Ethan Skemp; Creative Director Richard Thomas

If CCP/Onyx Path lawyers ask, you never heard of me.
Born With A Caul

Much as I love Geist: The Sin-eaters, the book is kind of a hot mess. The fluff is all over the place, and the mechanics were so bad originally that a "Geist 1.1" PDF had to be released. Unfortunately it did little to help ‘fix’ the problems with Geist, it just made the Manifestation mechanics actually clear, in some cases completely rewriting them (it also cut out an editing problem where Keys were referred to as having dots, presumably from an earlier version). It didn’t fix many of the pressing concerns about the game, especially the lack of actual focus. This document is going to attempt to fix this. Less an actual book of errata and more of an ST’s guide, it will provide sample fluff and attempt to expand on certain aspects of the setting.

Where things differ from the book, I'll try to set up a short explanation of what was changed and why, and if possible give a few other options. But mostly I'm going to focus not on rewriting the fluff but on focusing it.

The main thing that Geist lacked is focus. They have little reason to do anything at all beyond the constant pestering from ghosts. Without an overarching social structure the way that vampires or mages have, Sin-eaters have little reason to group together other than being like minded individuals, but the structure of krewes and the interactions between krewes is an interesting mixture of gang and cult. Unfortunately there's no actual reason for this beyond it being cool. That, among other things, is what this document is intended to fix.

The other major gripe about Sin-eaters beyond what purposes they have is what they fight. Their power set is rather high, placing them in a 'tier' all their own when it comes to solving problems, but much of what they do invalidates their powers. One complaint is that Sin-eaters deal with ghosts, but ghosts aren't powerful and Sin-eaters can quickly end a haunting. When they do have what could serve as chronicle level antagonists—the Abmortals, Sacrosanct, Vacant, Wretched, and of course the Kerberoi—there's little detail given on them, and even littler explanation for why a Sin-eater would bother, other than a sense of duty that player characters don't often have.

There's even mention of Cthonians, but they're given absolutely no mention elsewhere. No stats, no explanations, just a vague hint of what they might be without any detail about them. At best there's what can be found in the Mage supplement Summoners, but even that is vague, since Mages wouldn't have to deal with Cthonians as often as one would assume Sin-eaters do.

So, with that out of the way, it's time to focus on helping other Storytellers run a game in this setting that I love so much, even if a lot of it is house.ruled.

Books of Interest

While Sin-eaters haven't really gotten their own supplement, they have been featured here and there in other books. A lot of the information compiled comes from elsewhere. Those books are:

- Dem Bones – an SAS
- Through the Ebon Gate – an SAS
- The House Always Wins – an SAS
- Mirrors – a generic WoD book about alternate universes and shake ups.
- Book of the Dead – Where most of the information of the Underworld comes from

Each of these helps to add a little more to Geist, though none of them really make up for it's lack of a full supplement. A lot of the information presented in those books will also be used to expand the world of the Sin-eaters. Mortal Remains especially helps to build upon the Sin-eater's history in a way that the corebook failed to do, despite it being a Hunter: The Vigil book.
Theme: Death is a Door

The core book calls itself “A Storytelling Game of Second Chances”, and I don't plan on changing that. Likewise, the blurb on the back of the book ends by saying that “Death is a door. You are the one with the key”. This is a theme I want to emphasize. Sin-eaters are the ones who straddle the line between death and life, and they have a sense of duty to keep that balance, much in the way that the Uratha are meant to keep the balance between Spirit and Flesh.

At the same time, though, despite the comparisons, Geist is and should be a very different game from Werewolf: The Forsaken, even if both have similar goals of keeping two worlds from invading and harming the other. A Sin-eater and a Werewolf might have a lot to talk about—and the Sin-eater especially might be interested to hear what life is like for the Werewolf over a pint—but they should still feel very different. Because Ghosts and Spirits are very different.

Geist therefore is a game about being the person with the keys. How you use them, and whether you can figure out what key is the right one, that is up to you, the individual Sin-eater—or Storyteller.

Mood: Sugarskulls and Irish Wakes

Quite a lot of people seem to characterize the tone of Geist to be “hopeful” or “optimistic”. While this is true in some ways, I feel like it doesn't quite capture what it's like to be a Sin-eater. Every Sin-eater has a second entity sharing living space with them, and every Sin-eater is inherently tied to Death in a more-than-intimate way. Each and every one of them is capable of feeling it's resonance and knowing where people have died. They all see the Dead, and the Dead often seek them out, whether simply to bother them or to ask for help. Despite that, krewe culture for the most part is jovial, aside from rivalries and struggles over turf. They hold Carnivale and Flesh Fairs, and grudges are put aside for some beers and fried food.

As such, it's not so much that Sin-eaters are hopeful, instead it's that they don't let the World of Darkness touch them as much. They don't hold parties and get drunk because they don't care about the horrors lurking in the shadows, they get drunk and have parties because of the horrors that lurk in the shadows.

Sin-eaters push on no matter what. Not only does every one of them have a Geist in their head urging them forward, but every single Sin-eater accepted the Bargain. While many come to regret it, they came back, often screaming and kicking, from Death's doorway. They aren't the type to give in. In fact, many of them live for the challenge.

And after the challenge is met, win or lose, they have people there for them, to console them, to pat them on the back. To drink with them.

There's always a second chance.

How to Use This Document

In formatting this document like a proper sourcebook, I'm going to break everything up into sections instead of just throwing it out without any sort of organization. There's no guarantee anything will make sense to anyone who hasn't read Geist yet, but for those who have, it will hopefully give you something to work with as an ST (or even player).

Eaters of the Dead discusses the world of the Bound, and emphasizes krewe structure. A lot of this will be taken from Mortal Remains and extrapolated on, discussing the history of Sin-eaters and where they have appeared in history. It also will attempt to delve deeper into their “cannibalized culture”, as the book calls it.

One thing this chapter seeks to 'undo' in a way is the fact that currently Geists transform into new forms when a krewe binds together, and the Sin-eater takes the Geist at their word, despite the
obvious falsehood of the revelation. Or as one player has put it “your geist was Santa Claus the whole time”.

Another aspect that's toned down is the concept of a Tier 3 krewe, which throughout most of the book is presented as being a rumour or legend, but has a disproportionate amount of time devoted to it.

Bound Together focuses both on the krewe and the nature of Sin-eaters and their Geister. More than just rehashing, though, this section will talk about why a krewe might get together, and why they might stick together, as well as how Sin-eaters deal with their Dark Passengers and the entities that now share a soul with them.

One important tweak to this chapter is an increased emphasis on the Thresholds and Archetypes, including suggestions for a few mechanical alterations that make them matter.

KHAQQ Calling Itasca gives a new treatment to the enemies of Sin-eaters, elaborating and expanding on the scant information the Geist book gives on things like the Sacrosanct and Abmortals. It will also actually make Cthonians into a thing.

Currently the average Sin-eater has little reason to deal with problems unless they're being bothered by a ghost. This chapter will make that source of conflict stronger, as well as flesh out the antagonists of the Bound.

I'll also be expanding the concept of the Church of the Unified Spirit—or the Church of the Black Gate—from the Storyteller Adventure System adventure Through the Ebon Gate. The Church is a group that worships Sin-eaters, seeing the union of two souls in one as something enlightening and desirable.

Rounding things out, there's New Locks, New Keys, which serves as an Appendix and offers both houserules and ways to update Sin-eaters and Geist to the God-Machine Chronicle rules.

And finishing the document off is Almost Midnight, a discussion of Twilight and what exactly this half-world frequency of existence is, and what it means for Sin-eaters that they can interact with it.

This document won't serve to completely rewrite Geist: The Sin-eaters, but hopefully it will allow for more comprehensive games to be played, and will tide us all over for the next few years until Rum and Bones: The Kerberoi Chronicles. (Fingers—and bones—crossed).

Goals and List of Things to Address:

- Plasm generation (one plasm a scene from ofrendas and one per week for a Haunt is ridiculous)
- De-emphasizing krewe channels and Tier 3 krewes.
- More about Abmortals, and why Sin-eaters would come into conflict with them.
- More reasons for Sin-eaters to go into the Underworld beyond it being cool
- Meaningful emphasis on Archetypes as diverse groups and their importance in Plasm generation
- Meaningful emphasis on Thresholds as more than just starting Key and fluff of the Sixth Sense
- Giving krewes a reason to be together
- Fleshing out the Sin-eater antagonists, in particular Abmortals, the Sacrosanct, Cthonians, the Vacant, and the Church of the Unified Spirit, a cult that worships the Bound as the perfect expression of humanity.
- Power level fix concerning Manifestations (every sin-eater gets at least +3 to their starting Manifestation/Key combo as is, and then can get Mementos)
- Discussion of Sin-eater culture around the world, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the pre-Colombian Americas.
- Various bits and bobs concerning the Twilight
Network, Gravedigger's Cant/Old Tongue, and the Horsemen, adding to the culture of Death and giving it something more concrete.

Any suggestions are more than welcome! You can add any you have in this Reddit thread or any of the threads on 4chan's /tg/ boards (which is probably where you got this document anyway).
Chapter One: Eaters of the Dead

There were five of us that night. Ten, depending on how you count. We didn’t really know what we were doing, but then again, it didn’t really matter. Our plasm mingled together and for a moment we were all one. Bound by something not quite blood.

From that moment on, brought together by a yellowbones terrorizing Twilight, we were a krew. The old cave where it came out of became our territory, and we became family.

Sin-eaters don’t entirely have their own culture, the way that Mages or Vampires do. But instead, they grab and steal from other cultures, and form them together. At least, that’s the way it’s presented in the core book, but it isn’t entirely accurate. The culture of Sin-eaters is Death. Wherever death is celebrated as a passage or another stage of life, that is the culture of the Bound. In fact, with the World of Darkness being the way that it is, it’s quite possible that those cultures were inspired by Ghostwalkers. It isn’t the Sin-eaters who steal bits and pieces of other ceremonies and patch them together, it’s that other cultures see what the Sin-eaters—the loa and the shaman and the conjurer men and women—did and took them for themselves, following their examples. The Bound are the ones who create the ceremonies.

Sin-eaters don’t really have one big monoculture, or a secret history where they once ruled the world, the way that Mages and Werewolves (and Mummies) do. They also don’t have a multiple choice past, the way that vampires do. Presented in the book, Sin-eaters have little to no origin, and no history to speak of.

Mortal Remains on the other hand has quite an interesting section about the history of “Ghostwalkers”, their term for Sin-eaters. The earliest of the Ghostwalkers seems to have been from the Old Kingdom of Egypt, where they were treated as Gods. Osiris may even have been a Sin-eater, having died only to come back to life.

The Sin-eater culture of Egypt may have been so great that when the massive conspiracy split into two factions, it nearly tore the kingdom in half, putting the South and North at war with each other. While this might have been the largest example of Sin-eaters—and an inter-krewe rivalry—throughout history, it isn’t the only one.

Wherever there has been death, there have been Sin-eaters. Sometimes, like in Egypt, they’ve been revered, claiming to be Gods or acting on the will of the Gods. Other times they’ve kept to themselves, drifting from one place to the other as outsiders. In many cultures, Shaman were said to have two souls. Sometimes they were transgender, or simply acted as two people. Many of them were seen as liminal beings, one foot in one world—male, alive, war—and one foot in the other—female, dead, peace.

It’s not hard to imagine that these dual natured people were actually the Bound, acting as emissaries to the dead, and go-betweens for the deceased. These shaman even conducted the ceremonies that would be rather familiar to a modern Sin-eater in function, if not entirely in form. It was also these dual natured mediums who lead their respective cultures in rites of the dead.

R ritual Sources †

Of course, trickling down throughout history, a Mage or savvy Werewolf, or even a simple mortal occultist, might see what a Sin-eater does, taking bits and pieces and stringing them together, and call it trash, insulting it as simply pandering to the dead as opposed to being something of substance. But the fact of the matter is that the Sin-eater methods work for Sin-eaters. It

† This denotes where something is almost completely extrapolation, and not mentioned in any of the existing sources. It shouldn't be considered canon, but should also serve as a good place to get ideas from, and a jumping off point for any chronicles that might involve these things.
might even be said that it's their job to create the ceremonies that honour the dead. Everyone else is just picking up what they figured out a couple hundred or thousand years ago and using the thing that worked best. Despite the appearance to the contrary, Sin-eaters are honest and often even earnest when they perform their 'slapdash' ceremonies. This—as well as a little bit of Plasm—is why they work, even if they've been cribbed from comic books and poorly researched history as often as they are from "legitimate" sources and first hand cultural knowledge. They care about what they do, and by empowering their rituals with their Psyche, the ritual works.

What they do doesn't matter as much as the fact that they're doing something. The symbols mean only as much as they ought to for the individual Bound. Their connection to Death as a concept allows them unprecedented flexibility in their use of symbology.

The rituals of the past, the ones that have become commonplace among occultists and written down in great old tomes, those where the ceremonies of Sin-eaters of old who's rituals worked not only for people with the Bound's unique connection to Death, but also for mortals and those others. While some supernatural groups make use of symbolism, the Bound are in the unique position to make symbolism—at least when it comes to Death.

Mesoamerica and Death

Central America is a place steeped in the lore of death. Even before humanity ever rose to prominence, the Chicxulub Crater, in the northern reaches of the Yucatan, was the impact site of the K-Pg Extinction Event, which wiped out 75% of all the world's species. Even now the boundary of the crater is marked with cenotes—both the traditional kind and those the Sin-eaters find useful as sites for their Haunts.

Many of the legends of the area, and much of the culture, is centered around death and the Underworld (Xibalba and Mictlan respectively). Many of the cultures there even performed human sacrifice. The priests cutting out hearts and offering them up to the sun was perhaps a sacrifice of New Death, meant to reinvigorate the priest. Or perhaps it was just part of a ritual Ceremony. After all, killing a living creature does aid in many sin-eater rituals, even if most modern Bound prefer rabbits and chickens.

Duality and Death

The culture of the Aztec is one of duality. They believe the world itself was created by the deity Ometotl, an entity both masculine and feminine—again, a very likely candidate for one of the Bound and their Geist—that thought the world into existence and gave birth to the rest of the Gods in the pantheon.

The creation myth of the Nahua people involves a cycle of four previous worlds, each watched over by a different sun. The world of the Jaguar Sun was ruled over by Tezcatlipoca, until Tezcatlipoca and Quetzacoatl fought. In the end, Tezcatlipoca turned into a giant Jaguar and ate the world, killing the race of acorn eating giants. The next world, the Wind Sun, was ruled by Quetzacoatl, at least until a still bitter Tezcatlipoca knocked him over with a giant jaguar paw, and the world was destroyed by a hurricane. The surviving humans of this world turned into monkeys. The third world was the Rain Sun, ruled by the rain God Tlaloc, until Tezcatlipoca stole his wife, the flower Goddess Xochiquetzal. Angered at the slight, Tlaloc withheld the rain. When Quetzacoatl usurped Tlaloc and forced him to make it rain, the rain god, in spite, made it rain fire instead of water. Everything burned and the people of the world who survived became birds.

The Water Sun replaced the Rain Sun, and was ruled over by She of the Jade Skirt, Tlaloc's second wife (his marriage to Xochiquetzal obviously didn't last). The brothers Quetzacoatl and Tezcatlipoca, though, were jealous of her and overthrow her, resulting in a flood that once again destroyed the world. This time the humans who survived became fish.

The Feathered Serpent and the Smokey
Eaters of the Dead

Mirror finally put aside their differences long enough to bring land back to the world—at the cost of Quetzecoatl's foot—and then the pair had to settle the matter of how to populate this world. The reasoning of the Gods was that much as corn seed grew corn, human bones would grow humans. As such, Quetzecoatl ventured into the Underworld with Xolotl, the dog-headed lightning God.

In the Underworld of Mictlan, they beseeched Mictlantecuhtli—Lord of Mictlan—to part with the bones of the humans that rested within his world. He gave Quetzecoatl the impossible task of playing a tune on a conch shell with no holes. With the help of worms who bored holes in the shell, they were permitted to see the bones, provided they didn't take them.

Xolotl caused a ruckus on behalf of Quetzecoatl, who stole the bones away to the land of the living. There he ground up the bones, mixed with his own blood and plasm, and performed a Ceremony where he raised the dead and gave them new life. Some Charonites with a classical bent claim that this was a particular form of the Wings of the Moth ceremony, while others claim that in the more mythic era, the whatever Bound that Quetzecoatl was—for how else could he continually die and be reborn?—was able to perform a Ceremony so powerful it actually created life from the Dead. Other, powerful or perhaps desperate Sin-eaters are aware of Mictlantecuhtli, and Xolotl, where he still resides, having been unable to make it back to the land of the living with Quetzecoatl. Making impossible music sounds like one of the questlike tasks that Polydegmon Mictlantecuhtli is known to give to the would-be Orpheans who beg for the return of the dead.

And of course a discussion of the Aztecs’ and their relationship with Death wouldn't be complete without mention of the constant blood sacrifice needed to keep the world turning. The actual number of sacrifices was never as high as is often assumed, but there's little denying that the Mexica sacrificed people in a nearly unprecedented number. The blood of the sacrifices fueled the turning of the sun. Life from death, a concept that every Sin-eater knows intimately.

The reign of Sin-eaters in Central America continued for many years, throughout the thousands of years that the Maya and Mexica ruled that stretch of land. It finally came to an end with the arrival of the Spanish, and their conquest. One of the Conquistadors was a Sin-eater with the Geist of Quetzecoatl, returning from the East with the Spanish, and a krewe of Sin-eaters from the Old World. Returning to Central America to find the unprecedented level of human sacrifice that the other Geister and their successors had built up—even going to war to gain victims—Quetzecoatl urged his Bound to wage war on the Mexica and throw them from power.

No one is quite sure who among the Conquistadors was the successor to Quetzecoatl, though due to the legend that Montezuma was afraid it was Cortez himself, many Sin-eaters in Latin America go by that version of the story. Whoever it was, Christianity eventually took over as the dominant religion in the area, with syncretism merging the aspects of many of the teotl as saints, or demonizing them. With the Sin-eater Bound to Quetzecoatl leading the war against the Mexica, it's little surprise that Quetzecoatl became considered a saint. History is written by the victors, of course, even that of the Sin-eaters.

Mexica or Aztec?
The people we know as Aztecs actually called themselves the Mexica, named after one of the primary cultural groups. They were said to come from a place in the North known as Aztlan, where they were mistreated slaves ruled over by giants, living in caves. The Aztlan were lead south to the place that would eventually become Tenochtitlan by Huitzilopochtli, Left Handed Hummingbird (who, despite the name was a war god, and one of the ones who demanded sacrifice—though really all of them other than Quetzecoatl did). They were told not to call themselves the Aztecs, and instead to call themselves the Mexica. Archeologists and scholars on the other hand have since referred to them by the name they abandoned to separate them from the modern Mexican people.
Plague and Violence

While Sin-eater culture would never again get to the height that it did in the Old Kingdom of Egypt or the *Mexica*, there have been several times when their numbers rose. Of all the Thresholds, the Torn and Stricken have been the most obviously prevalent in history. During plague outbreaks and wars, the Ravaged Ones and the Victims of Malice are the most common to come about, respectively. Of course, both war and plague can lead to deprivation and accidents as well. Even the Prey can become more common.

This is why Sin-eater numbers often comparatively swell when there's long periods of tragedy. At the same time, though, many Sin-eaters are too busy “setting things right” for all those ghosts—keeping them from harming the living, resolving their anchors and helping them to pass on—to form the sort of world spanning organizations that other groups have. When a Sin-eater accepts the Bargain in a time of strife, they have a duty to the unquieted dead. Many might come to regret their decision, but almost every one of the Bound will still push forward, struggling to live and even thrive in a plague ravaged or war torn land. It's what they do.