

# Maelstrom

## Exotherm Anatomy

The anatomy of warm-blooded creatures is divided into three areas the study of the viscera and organs, the study of the skeletal structure and the study of the blood and other bodily fluids. Since the body operates as a whole it is easier to consider these separate three elements in combination with relation to each area of the body. However it would be wise to remember that just the study of the skeletal structure alone could be a lifetime's work.

### **The Head**

The head is the sensory centre of the body with the senses of sight hearing taste and smell all centred here. This may lead the layman to the impression that consciousness is centred in the head however all empirical evidence shows this to be an illusion mostly created by the fact that the eyes are located there. Within the head there are the eyes, which seem to focus light via a series of complex lenses, the ears which resonate sound though a series of small bones that lead to a sound sensing apparatus of spiral shape in the inner ear. The sense of smell is more mysterious although the membranes inside the nasal cavities seem related to this.

When examining a cadaver the following areas should be examined as a matter of course. The skull itself seems mainly protective in nature and any recent fractures, especially those that are depressed or that have caused bone splinters to enter the brain, are often fatal. The alignment of the vertebrae and integrity of the spinal chord should also be noted as this is a common cause of death.

The brain is the only major organ inside the skull but damage to this organ can cause death or severe personality disorders. This is because the brain is vital for cooling the blood. Damage to the brain is often indicative of overuse of Flame and Oco Powder and the side effects of these drugs is caused by the brains inability to cool the blood properly while afflicted. Those that have been poisoned with Swamp Fever may show a discolouration at the edges of the brain whereas those that have been the victims of Scorbutic Fire show physical damage to the brain itself with small holes approximately an eighth of an inch in diameter appearing within the brain structure.

Within the inner ear three semicircular structures can be noted, whilst damage to this area is not fatal in itself, atrophy of these structures indicates that the individual was a user of Catamite but damage to the tendons holding the incus, malleus, and stapes bones indicates frequent Vineweed Root use over a prolonged period. The eyes are often altered in structure by age with the lenses becoming opaque in a condition known as cataracts. Habitual Oco Powder use causes long term damage to the iris which remains detectable long after death in most cases.

### **The Torso**

The torso is where the majority of vital organs lie; the digestive organs tend to be located below the sternum whereas the circulatory and respiratory organs are located above the sternum and beneath the ribcage. The torso not only has numerous connections to the spinal chord but also direct to the cranium via the ten cranial nerves. Sadly, current lenses are not powerful enough to study these in detail.

When performing an autopsy the torso should be carefully opened. If the lungs are filled with fluid this is indicative of drowning or death by pneumonia. Wounds to the heart or major arteries are often a cause of death, if these wounds were caused before death then there should be considerable amounts of blood in the chest cavity as well as externally surrounding the wound. Wounds below the sternum are rarely immediately fatal with the most common cause of death from injuries in this area being blood loss infection and the leaking of bile into the intestinal area.

The state of the digestive tract and the surrounding organs can provide the attentive mortician with numerous clues regarding the lifestyle and cause of death. The size of the stomach is generally indicative of the size of meal the individual is used to eating. The contents of the stomach are often useful to note as well. If you have access to a good quality lens then it is worth examining the lining of the stomach. If the pits of the stomach wall are swollen with a black discharge then this is indicative of Geum poisoning, although this is almost impossible to note with the naked eye. The liver is also worthy of examination. An enlarged liver indicates that the cadaver was an imbiber of alcoholic beverages; however yellow spots on the liver indicate that the liver has become diseased. Those who have been poisoned by Geum may show some slight swelling of the liver but this is also indicative of Rantsin use.

The small intestine, gall bladder and bile duct are relatively unremarkable digestive organs. Gilded Berries and Scorbutic Fire both cause swelling of the small intestine although this will tend to subside once the poison has passed the initial stages of effect. The kidneys are also of interest since they generally have an unhealthy appearance except in the very young and in those who regularly use Brandyblend. The lower intestine is also worth investigating as this area tends to swell with fluid if the victim has suffered from Swamp Fever poisoning.

### **Limbs**

The limbs are more than mere assemblages of tendon muscle and bone. To the dedicated mortician they can be a mine of information regarding the life and death of a particular cadaver. When examining the bones it is often possible to see signs of breakages both old and new. Fatal wounds to the limbs usually involve damage to the major arteries either directly from the wound or indirectly through bone splinters.

Examination of the bones can reveal if the cadaver was physically active and approximate age. If the cadaver was a long term user of Oco Powder the bones will be considerably harder but more prone to shattering and may well show signs of past breakages. Examination of the muscle tissue in anything beyond the crudest measure requires at the very least a lens and if at all possible some form of greater magnification must be sought. If you have a lens you should be able to spot the twitching of the muscle fibres that are distinctive of poisoning by Gilded Berries. Greater magnification will allow you to spot the atrophy of nerve fibres that indicate that the individual was a user of Flame.

### **Blood**

A thorough examination of the blood is necessary for a complete examination of any cadaver. Extensive blood loss internally or externally always results in a loss of consciousness and eventually death. The fluidity and temperature of the blood can be a good indication of the time since death. Although methods to measure temperature that are sufficiently portable can be difficult and expensive to obtain. A dark colouration of the blood is usually caused by asphyxiation but be aware that regular users of Seraph Tear show a similar discolouration, but with a distinct blue tinge.

