

+ Zombie setting in Home City

- Parasite named "Winter's Bite", scientific name *Hiems Mordetis*
- Common in hot climates like South America and Africa
- Came back to Canada from the end of Rio Olympics with returning athletes
- Starts as small tick-like creature that can be swallowed or crawl into people
- Can spread as fast as lice in an enclosed area
- Would often cling to a person (hair or clothes) and crawl into their mouth at night while sleeping
- Such as a post-Olympics news interview
- Once inside stomach acid breaks the tick down into a worm
- Worm is normally diagnosed, extracted, and killed
- Otherwise worm causes itching and burning under the skin and causes people to go to water for relief
- Worm then dumps more tick larvae into water
- But in cold northern temperatures the worm mutated and processes differently
- Instead of burning and itching to get to water, the worm wants to survive winter to have a better chance of reproducing
- Still causes a bit of discomfort as worm grows, but worm tries to live symbiotically with host initially, until strong enough to control
- So the worm grows and clings to the host's nerve endings, specifically in the arm and rib cage and a hook into the spine
- Intent is to protect and empower the host to survive
- Stronger, faster, versatile against all weather
- Eventually after settling into the host, specifically the brain stem (where the parasite learned?), the worm decided the best approach to survive was to wipe out any chance of being removed by non-infected humans
- So hosts "went crazy" and started attacking people or spreading the parasites

- Olympics end in August, meetings and spread happen in September, worms grow through October, then become aware enough to "go crazy" near the end of October. Play starts 3 weeks after the first "outbreak"
- Specifically November 24th (Thursday)
- Home City has a lot of enclaves and factions (by quadrant especially) with human gangs and the like
- Police blocked major highway or ring road, became a deadlock of six or seven cars wide
- Had cellphones, internet, and electricity for about a week after, to spread information, now all shutdown for the most part
- Players just heard a radio transmission that the military are coming through Home City in a week
- In addition the evolution of Winter's Bite hosts happened with Armored and Nest broke apart a lot of barricaded homes

Winter's Bite Features:

- Kill host by severing the spine
- Cannot safely remove the parasite from anything but a stage 1 or 2 (tick or fresh worm) without killing the host
- Even removing stage 1 or 2 is hard with dwindling electricity and technology, need clean access to host's spine
- Early stages can somewhat be reasoned with, maintain intelligence of their host, but are heavily influenced by worm
- While infected maintain memories, so a lot of hosts would intentionally spread to their office, workplace, etc.
- Still need to eat, but with the worms help can process a lot worse quality (expired food, cannibalism, waste, etc.)
- Can detect early stages by having the person swim and look for tick larvae escaping
- Worms cannot live on their own outside the body, only their tick form

- Some mutations happen over the course of play, like special infected from L4D
- Spread by tick larvae being injected or entering the host somehow (ear, nose, etc.)
- Can try to throw up immediately to get ticks out in case a person thinks they are infected

Winter's Bite Types:

Normal: Nickname "Mordy" (for Mordetis), stage 3, crazy, fast and strong, looks like a normal human but sometimes has worm parts poking through the surface

Nest: Slow and burdened with ticks and larvae, can do a swarm attack with their babies

Armored: Worm has layered the outside skin to protect against cuts and bullets

Lasher: Uses long worms from tips of fingers to attack and entangle targets

Slug: Hosts a massive worm, slow and putrid

Runner: Worm infested legs mostly, so very fast and able to jump quite high