Sourcebook Solitaire

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SWAMP THING

sourcebook/adventure

HEROES ROLE-PLAYING GAME

By Ray Winninger

SWAMP THING

•SOURCEBOOK•

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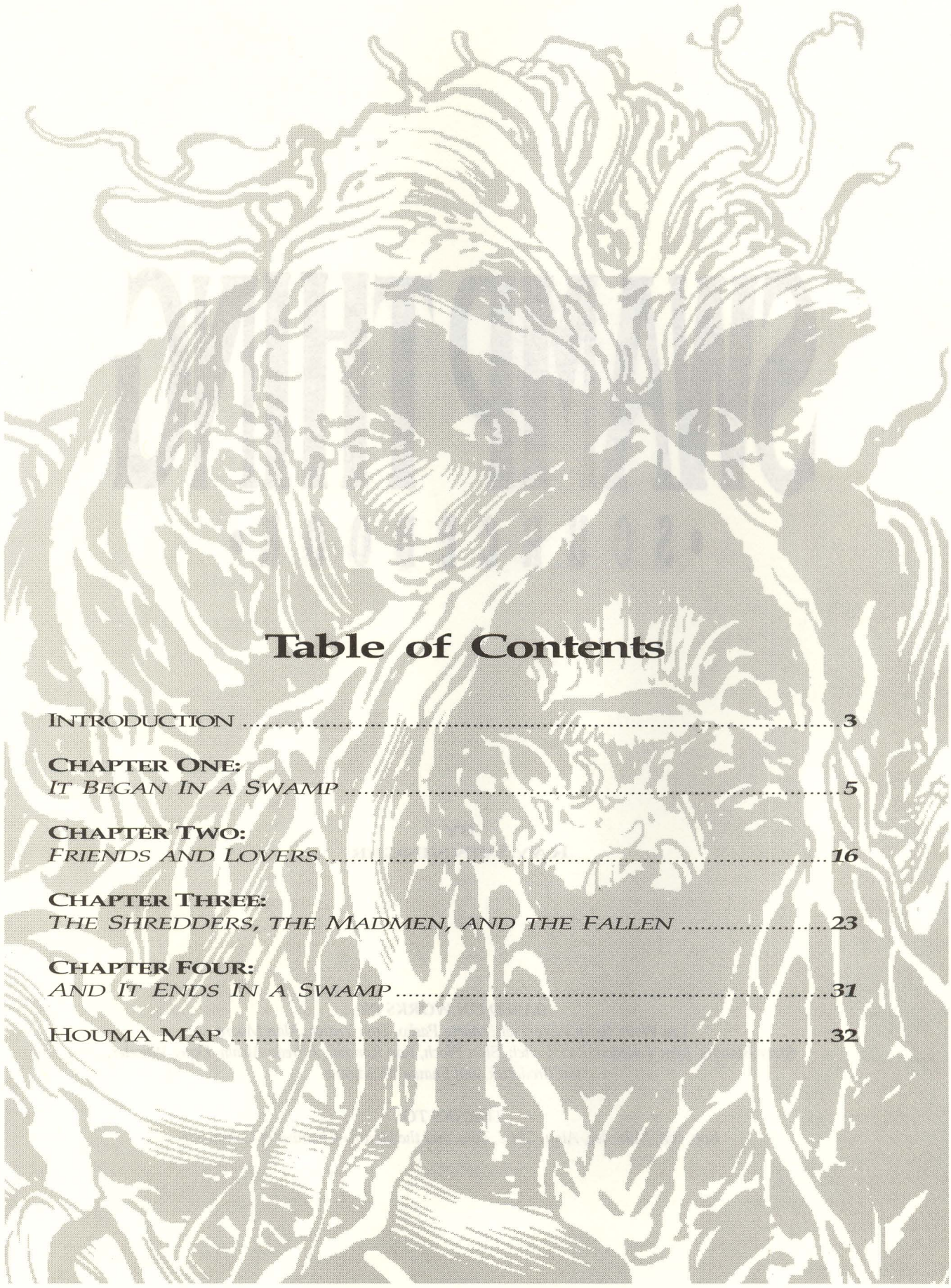


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INTRODUCTION

This is the place.

This is the place where even the brave men with pig-iron in their hearts ran out of steam, and nerve, and concrete, saying "this far we go. No further." The last outpost of the Jurassic, where the anemic rocks still ring with the death shrieks of mastodons. This is the edge of the twentieth century.

It was here that Emperor Napoleon faltered and lost faith with the New World. He sold it to Thomas Jefferson, 909,130 square miles of it, for fifteen million dollars, and the United States doubled in size overnight. But there are certain territories which, though they may be sold, can never truly be owned. There are certain territories that are property of something older than ourselves.

Berries the color of iodine glisten amongst the viscous shadows. Insects of poisonous beauty couple in the damp, rot-scented air. Louisiana swelters beneath an icebound moon.

This is the place.

The elements blur together dangerously here: solid land dissolves away to water; water thickens to mud and then to firm earth. The inviting meadow of hyacinths will part if stepped upon, allowing access to the deep and stagnant darknesses beneath. The waters rise, establishing a slime-line on the bolls of the closest trees. The waters drop. Divorced from the ocean and its implacable schedule, the tides here are alien and glacially slow. Fresh mudbanks erupt from nowhere, brown and glistening. They remain for a week and then melt, sliding away to blossom elsewhere. The waters rise. The waters drop. The Swamp is breathing, in great, humid lungfulls.

Lovers came here once, in white clothes that became streaked with green. After an hour they went away again to lead largely happy lives, leaving crushed fern, crumpled tissues, and one third of a bottle of Sangria. The Swamp devoured it without haste.

Two men with eyes as dull and flat as nail-heads came, leaving behind them five cases of whiskey and one dead man. They returned for the whiskey after a fortnight. This was long ago. Nobody ever found out.

And there was a teenage girl who also came, her despair so fierce and black that the midges would not gather to her. The shopping bag in her hand contained something small and cold and still and a stone to weight it down with. Her heart contained the same things, but after a different fashion. The first she let slip beneath the iridescent scum. The second she took away and carried with her always.

The Swamp devoured them, devoured them all, without haste, without discrimination.

This is the place.

There are all sorts of tricks to the storytelling trade.

The best "horror" stories are usually built around a simple but effective "trick" known to literature majors as *situational irony*, a term which roughly translates into something like "an artfully executed contrast between appearance and reality." The first principle that devotees of the horror genre learn to accept is that things are seldom what they seem. The neighborhood butcher may claim that he's been selling his customers pork sausage for all these years, but who can ever be certain about what those little cellophane packages *really* contain? And what of Mrs. Whitney, the doting old matron who occasionally takes in the odd dollar babysitting for the young couples who live in the new housing developments on the other side of the railroad tracks? Might she have a secret or two neatly tucked away beneath her crawlspace?

Of course, if you think about it, the fact that the entire horror genre owes such a tremendous debt to this single bit of literary chicanery isn't nearly as unusual as it may seem. By definition, the objective of every horror story is to shock or "scare" its reader, and this very process seems to imply a sudden unexpected separation of facade from fact. The Phantom of the Opera dramatically tears off his mask to reveal his horribly scarred visage; as the Mummy, Boris Karloff chooses a startling moment to open his eyes, revealing that he is somehow "undead" after spending more than two thousand years imprisoned beneath dusty restraints; Edgar Allan Poe's anonymous detective finally discovers that the Rue Morgue murderer is an orangutan. Any collection of the world's most memorable thrillers would be, uh . . . *swamped* with moments like these.

For the most part, the truly great horror stories, then, are those that are built around an unusually subtle or *relevant* irony. Would Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* have passed the test of time had the infamous creature failed to reveal himself to the reader as something altogether different from the inhuman monster the Bavarian townsfolk were led to believe they were pursuing? Then, of course, there are the legends of the vampires, inhuman beings of great power who sustain themselves by feeding upon the blood of the living, and the vampires' obvious resemblance to the tyrannical nobles who figured prominently in the lives of the European peasants who created them. And surely H. P. Lovecraft's creations would not have seemed nearly as unsettling had he not used such rich and poetic language to describe them.



And then there's the *Swamp Thing*.

Yes, I do mean the comic book. And no, I haven't lost my mind. At its best, I'm forced to conclude that the *Swamp Thing* stands up alongside the very best horror fiction that our contemporary culture has generated (and I'll defy you to cite a culture more naturally inclined toward the stuff).

And again, it's a rather tasty irony that ultimately makes the *Swamp Thing* so spectacular. This is best exemplified by the image of the swamp itself, a unique setting that is somehow simultaneously immeasurably beautiful and deeply disturbing. Think about those floating hyacinths that crop up in the opening passage above, and then think about what might be found in the murky depths they conceal. The swamp *is* the last outpost of the Jurassic and of the natural order, and we've all learned from Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman just how, well, *ideal* a natural unravaged setting should be. But aren't there alligators and snakes and cholera and mud and horrible clouds of stinging insects in the swamp?

Exactly.

Long ago, avid readers learned that the Swamp Thing himself is a literal personification of the daisies and hallelujah aspect of nature. In the typical episode, he spends panel after panel reflecting upon just how beautiful his little corner of the world is, and shares his perceptions with friends and followers whenever the opportunity arises. But then he goes on to spend the other half of that episode flooding away entire vampire villages, confronting serial killers, and confessing his own ignorance to vast primordial darkness beings on the rim of Hell itself. Now *that* is ironic.

But what's so relevant about this particular dichotomy? Well, if I wanted to make this introduction even more pretentious, I might try to claim that the irony of beauty and horror is the irony of life itself and a struggle with which we are all intimately familiar. I might then add a little irony to the mix myself by observing that here and now there may be no better starting point for a horror story than the world of real life and its struggles.

But instead, I'll simply urge you to dip into the back-issue bin down at your local comic shop. I think I'd rather just let Swamp Thing and *Swamp Thing* both speak for themselves.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The *Swamp Thing Sourcebook* brings the Swamp Thing and his world to the second edition of the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game, and covers the very first comic through *Swamp Thing* #93 (second series). In the following pages you will find background information and descriptions enabling you to add Swamp Thing, his friends, and his foes to your own DC HEROES campaign adventures.

Our starting point, of course, is obvious . . .

It Began In A Swamp

It began in a swamp. Alec Holland and his wife Linda, both top-notch research scientists and experts in the field of botany, were secreted away in an isolated shack in the middle of the Louisiana bayous so that they might finish work on the "bio-restorative formula" they were developing for the United States Government. Designed to stimulate plant growth, the formula was to be the Hollands' contribution to the world hunger crisis. Once completed, it may have had the potency to restore biological viability to even the most arid of soils. With a large enough quantity of the formula, all of the earth's deserts could have been metamorphosed into lush jungles and farmlands overnight.

Unfortunately, the Hollands' work did not completely escape the notice of the outside world. A particularly sinister criminal industrial concern known as "the Conclave" caught wind of the Hollands' activities and quickly recognized the profit potential in their magic formula. This discovery prompted Nathan Ellery, the leader of the Conclave, to dispatch to Louisiana a small-time thug named Ferrett with a mission to acquire the Hollands' notes at any cost.

At first, Ferrett attempted to bribe the formula out of the young scientists. But after Alec rather impolitely refused his "generosity," Ferrett and his men later returned with guns and bombs. When Alec again refused to divulge the secret of the formula, Ferrett's men left his unconscious form in the bayou laboratory and planted a time bomb meant to finish him off.

But later, when Ferrett's bomb finally detonated, Alec Holland was not instantly killed as one might have expected. Instead,

Alec Holland

Dex:	2	Str:	2	Body:	2
Int:	7	Will:	7	Mind:	6
Infl:	12	Aura:	5	Spirit:	7
Initiative:	13			Hero Points:	5

- **Skills:** Gadgetry: 3, Scientist: 5
- **Advantages:** Connections: U.S. Secret Service (Low), Scientific Community (High); Genius; Scholar (botany)
- **Drawbacks:** Married
- **Motivation:** Upholding the Good
- **Occupation:** Research Scientist
- **Wealth:** 5

Swamp Thing

Wein/Wrightson Era

Dex:	4	Str:	8	Body:	9
Int:	7	Will:	7	Mind:	6
Infl:	7	Aura:	5	Spirit:	7
Initiative:	18			Hero Points:	60

- **Powers:** Regeneration: 4
- **Skills:** Gadgetry: 3, Scientist: 5, Thief (Stealth): 4
- **Advantages:** Area Knowledge (Louisiana Bayous); Scholar (botany)
- **Drawbacks:** Married; Strange Appearance; Serious Physical Restriction: During this era, the Swamp Thing was capable of speech, though the process caused him a great deal of pain. Up until around the time of the Woodrue incident (*Saga of the Swamp Thing* #23-24) Swamp Thing must spend one Hero Point for every word he utters; Traumatic Flashbacks (triggered by fire)
- **Alter Ego:** Alec Holland
- **Motivation:** Unwanted Power
- **Wealth:** 0

Swamp Thing

Alan Moore Era/Current Version

Dex:	5	Str:	7	Body:	8
Int:	10	Will:	15	Mind:	12
Infl:	12	Aura:	15	Spirit:	10
Initiative:	27			Hero Points:	120

- **Powers:** Animal Control: 8, Animal Summoning: 8, Animate Objects: 8, Awareness: 10, Dimension Travel: 12, Growth: 13, Invulnerability: 15, Joined: 20, Magic Sense: 12, Personality Transfer: 8, Plant Control: 20, Plant Growth: 25, Regeneration: 10, Sealed Systems: 20, Self Link (Plant Growth): 20, Self Link (Spirit Travel): 25, Solar Sustenance: 20, Speak With Plants: 25, Split: 12, Telepathy: 15
- **Bonuses:** Miscellaneous: Swamp Thing's Splits do not reduce their APs of Physical Attributes when they Split. See page 15.
- **Limitations:** Miscellaneous: Animal Control only works on non-intelligent insect life forms; Animate Objects only works on wooden objects; Swamp Thing can only use the "travel" function of Dimension Travel; Spirit Travel only works into areas where there is native plant life.
- **Advantages:** Area Knowledge (Louisiana Bayous); Connections: John Constantine (Low), Parliament of Trees (High)
- **Drawbacks:** Married; Strange Appearance; Traumatic Flashbacks (triggered by fire)
- **Equipment:** **Psychogenic Tubers**: see page 14.
- **Alter Ego:** "Alec Holland"
- **Motivation:** Responsibility of Power
- **Wealth:** 0

the bomb merely set Holland aflame and sent him fleeing out into the cold marsh, where he blacked out in agony, his body saturated with the small samples of the bio-restorative formula that he and his wife had already prepared.

When Alec Holland finally awoke and pulled himself out of the muck, he found that he was now something altogether "inhuman." His skin had been replaced by a thick layer of wet loam, his eyes had narrowed and reddened, his muscles had been somehow augmented with stiff organic materials, and his vocal cords had lengthened and seized up. In short, he had become the Swamp Thing.

While Holland was busy surmising about how the bio-restorative formula might have simultaneously acted upon both his own body and the native plant life in the bayou around him, leaving him in his current state, Ferrett and his men were successfully tracking down Linda, whom they murdered when she refused to divulge the secret of the formula herself. While they were escaping the scene of their crimes, Ferrett and the other Conclave thugs ran headfirst into the newly metamorphosed Alec Holland, who demonstrated his augmented physical capabilities by nearly slaying them all. Before he could finish his dirty work, however, the Swamp Thing was spotted by Lt. Matt Cable, the government agent who had been assigned to protect the Hollands. From the sights he had seen and the evidence he had collected, Cable incorrectly assumed that the Swamp Thing was responsible for the Hollands' deaths, and asked his agency for permission to begin tracking the beast. At the same time, Nathan Ellery lost interest in the Hollands' bio-restorative formula once he heard the first reports of the swamp creature and began funneling the resources of the Conclave into an attempt to capture the Swamp Thing and harness its power. Fortunately for Ellery and his endeavor, Cable had more or less "adopted" a hound which the Hollands had discovered in the swamp a few days prior to their deaths. Unknown to everyone, the hound was actually placed outside the Hollands' shack by Ferrett, who was hoping that the Hollands would bring the seemingly stray mutt into their home. Implanted within the skull of the hound was a radio transmitter that not only enabled the Conclave to track Cable's every move, but allowed Ellery to hear every word Cable and his associates uttered in the presence of the dog.[1]

In addition to both Matt Cable and Nathan Ellery, there was yet another party who was closely monitoring the events surrounding the death of the Hollands. The newly spawned Swamp Thing also happened to attract the attention of an ageless sorcerer known as Anton Arcane. Although Arcane had already placed an enchantment of immortality upon his own soul, his physical body was beginning to break down and decay due to age. While scrying with an enchanted mirror, Arcane noticed the Swamp Thing, and decided that the creature's powerful physical form would provide him with the ideal body in which to house his already formidable spirit. Almost immediately after he dispatched Ferrett and his men, Swamp Thing was captured by a group of "Un-Men" that Arcane had sent to Louisiana to bring the creature to a secret occult laboratory in Bavaria.

At first, Holland voluntarily relinquished his new body to Arcane. In return, the sorcerer promised to restore Holland's humanity, a pledge he seemingly kept. But after Holland realized that the body of the Swamp Thing had given Arcane the power he needed to begin implementing a mad dream of world conquest, Holland reneged on the agreement and smashed the mystical talisman which was maintaining the body switch. During the ensuing battle, Arcane fell from a towering spire and seemingly perished.[2]

In the meantime, Matt Cable had tracked the Swamp Thing to Europe, finally catching up with the creature just outside of Arcane's castle. Here man and beast later encountered Arcane's brother Gregori, whom Anton had transformed into a hideous "Patchwork Man," and Gregori's daughter Abigail, who began assisting Cable in his investigation of the Hollands' deaths.[3] The Swamp Thing's European sojourn finally ended with an adventure in which Holland snatched Cable and Abigail from the grasp of a Scottish werewolf before stowing away aboard a freighter headed for America.[4]

Back in the United States, Swamp Thing once again dodged the Conclave, this time in an automated town of robots built by a benevolent professor named Klochmann.[5] Holland then tracked Conclave leader Nathan Ellery to Gotham City and briefly confronted the legendary Batman, from whom he

BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA

Just before his run-in with Ferrett, Alec Holland calculated that 300,000,000 gallons of the bio-restorative formula he and his wife had been developing could have turned a desert the size of California's Mojave into a fertile crop field. In game terms, the formula looks like this:

BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA - Actual Version
[Plant Growth: 5, R#: 5]
BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA - Projected Version
[Plant Growth: 12, R#: 3]

The Actual Version is the last prototype developed by Linda and Alec Holland. The Projected Version reflects the abilities of the final version of the formula had the Hollands been allowed to complete their research. Both sets of statistics assume that a 0 AP volume container of formula is being applied to the affected area (roughly one gallon). If more formula is used, add the the quantity's volume in APs to the formula's Plant Growth value (i.e. 1,000,000 gallons of Projected Version formula yields a Plant Growth value of 32). Once produced, each gallon of the formula would have cost roughly $400 (4 APs). You can calculate the cost of a large quantity of formula by adding 4 to its volume measured in APs (i.e. 250 gallons, or 8 APs of formula, costs a rated 12 APs, or roughly $100,000).

barely escaped after playing a major role in Ellery's death in retribution for the Conclave's murder of his wife.[6]

Then, after a brief confrontation with a menace known as M'Nagalah,[7] Swamp Thing learned that the threat of Anton Arcane had not been removed once and for all during their previous encounter. Arcane had issued his Un-Men a set of instructions for transplanting his soul into a grotesquely misshapen "back-up" body that he had created by stitching together pieces salvaged from various corpses. Once this transformation was complete, Arcane and his minions began hunting down the Swamp Thing, again hoping to steal the creature's powerful body. Arcane finally caught up with Holland in the American deep south, though he was again bested by the swamp creature, this time with the aid of the ghosts of a group of slaves who had been horribly mistreated in the region.[8]

Shortly after this last incident, Matt Cable finally came to realize that he had severely misjudged the swamp creature, and learned that Alec Holland and the Swamp Thing were one and the same. Shortly thereafter, Cable and Abigail Arcane were married, and the couple became the Swamp Thing's only human friends.

The Sunderland Corporation and the Anatomy Lesson

With the Conclave finally broken and Matt Cable appeased, the Swamp Thing spent the next several years wandering about the bayous and backwaters of the American south in solitude. During this era, he encountered the occasional occult monstrosity and eluded the odd curiosity-seeker who came to the bayou to investigate rumors of the legendary "swamp man," slowly drifting further and further away from the Cables as time progressed.

This relative peace ended only after yet another sinister industrial concern, known as the Sunderland Corporation, began inquiries into the death of the Hollands and the final fate of their bio-restorative formula. As part of a deeply rooted conspiracy, Sunderland operatives stole Linda Holland's corpse, hoping it had absorbed traces of the formula, and began a giant manhunt for the Swamp Thing. This conspiracy was eventually unearthed by Lizabeth Tremayne, a television reporter who had written a book discussing the various accounts of the legendary "swamp man" which were just beginning to accumulate. Tremayne's response was to begin her own search for the Swamp Thing, hoping to warn him before Sunderland could reach him. In this endeavor, she was assisted by a doctor by the name of Dennis Barclay whom she had met while following Sunderland's trail.[9]

In the end, the Sunderland affair came to a head amidst a series of stunning revelations. First, while on the run from Sunderland, Swamp Thing once again ran into Abby Cable and her husband Matt, who had become a bitter alcoholic in the months since he had last seen Alec Holland. This encounter led to the revelation that Dennis Barclay was once employed by the D.D.I., an organization closely allied with the Sunderland Corporation, and the same covert government agency for which Matt Cable had once worked. During his employment with the agency, Barclay had unwittingly subjected Cable to electroshock therapy and brainwashing techniques as part of a joint Sunderland/D.D.I. effort to erase the memories of everyone who had ever met the Swamp Thing. In addition to shattering his life and bringing on his bout with alcohol, these treatments also endowed Cable with the power to bring his deepest fears and inhibitions to life as threatening physical creations.[10]

At the same time, the Swamp Thing once again discovered that Anton Arcane's last defeat had not been final. The Un-Men were again able to transplant their master's soul into yet another body, this one resembling a large stinging insect with a human head. In the end, of course, Arcane's latest plot for gaining revenge upon his nemesis failed and the sorcerer was once again seemingly killed, but not before Sunderland Corporation troops had killed the Swamp Thing as well, by splitting his skull with a powerful explosive projectile.[11]

Once Swamp Thing was "dead," Sunderland officials moved him to a secret laboratory and sprung a plant-based alien supercriminal known as Jason Woodrue from prison. Woodrue was to dissect the creature in the hopes of finding traces of the bio-restorative formula. The information that Woodrue's experiments eventually yielded shocked everyone. Woodrue learned that the Swamp Thing was not an altered Alec Holland as the creature itself had always believed. Instead, the Swamp Thing was made up entirely of plant material that had somehow modeled aspects of Holland's form and intelligence. Thus, the real Holland had died long ago, and the Swamp Thing's ongoing quest to restore its humanity had always been in vain. This also meant, of course, that the bullet the Sunderland troops had pumped into the Swamp Thing's "brain" had not killed the creature but had merely sent it into deep shock, it being impossible to kill a plant by shooting it in the head. Hours after Woodrue delivered his final report to Sunderland officials, the Swamp Thing awoke, found Woodrue's notes, and brutally murdered General Sunderland (the founder of the Sunderland Corporation) before retreating back into the bayou.[12]

In the weeks that followed this incident, the Swamp Thing went into a sort of "hibernation" and wrestled with his newfound station in life, eventually arising only with the aid of Abby Cable, who had tracked his progress after the dramatic escape from the Sunderland lab. After days of rueful soul-searching, the Swamp Thing finally chose to accept his present form and recognize that he no longer had any hope of restoring any sort of "humanity."[13]

THE CONCLAVE HOUND

Here are game statistics for the hound that Ferrett and his men left outside of the Hollands' shack. The hound accompanied Matt Cable on several adventures after Linda Holland's death, serving as a Conclave "spy" all the while:

DOG

Dex:	3	Str:	1	Body:	2
Int:	1	Will:	1	Mind:	2
Infl:	0	Aura:	0	Spirit:	1

Initiative: 4

Powers:
Analytical Smell/Tracking Scent: 7, Extended Hearing: 3

Equipment:
IMPLANTED TRANSMITTER
[Body: 1, Extended Hearing: 23]
The transmitter allowed Nathan Ellery to hear all audible sounds within fifty yards of the dog from several thousand miles away (range of 23 APs). The transmitter apparently drew its power from the dog's autonomic nervous system and never needed to be recharged.

But two major crises arose which had to be dealt with before the Swamp Thing could comfortably pass into the next stage of his existence. First, the criminal Woodrue had been driven partially insane by the discovery that a plant creature as powerful as the Swamp Thing existed on the Earth. This prompted Woodrue, also known as the Floronic Man, to "ally" himself with all of Earth's plant life in an attempt to wipe out all animal life on the planet. Although Swamp Thing successfully aided the legendary Justice League of America in engineering Woodrue's defeat, the Floronic Man temporarily held the entire world at bay by calling upon his formidable plant control powers during the affair.[14]

Then, Matt Cable "died" in an automobile accident, and his physical body was seized by Anton Arcane's spirit, which had been imprisoned in the body of an enormous insect since Arcane's death. For a time, Arcane lived with Abby by masquerading as Cable, and tortured her by making Abby believe that Cable had finally resolved his alcohol problem and rebuilt his life. When he finally decided to confront the Swamp Thing to exact his vengeance, Arcane was taken aback by the startling new powers that Swamp Thing had developed since their last encounter. Arcane was handily defeated, which allowed Matt Cable to reoccupy his body, but left Cable in a coma from which he still has yet to emerge. Before the duel between Swamp Thing and Arcane began, however, Arcane killed Abby and somehow damned her soul to the deepest region of Hell. Once Arcane had been dispatched, Swamp Thing successfully used his newly discovered abilities to travel through the mystical Realm of the Just Dead and into Hell itself to rescue the woman.[15] With Cable permanently hospitalized, Abby shortly thereafter declared her love for the Swamp Thing, and the couple began to consider themselves "married."[16]

The American Gothic and The Parliament of Trees

Just a short time later, a mysterious Englishman named John Constantine appeared in the bayou, offering to give the Swamp Thing valuable information concerning its origins and abilities in return for the creature's aid in some sort of mysterious mission. Exactly how Constantine had managed to acquire this information was left unsaid, though the enigmatic Englishman still managed to intrigue the Swamp Thing into accepting his offer.[17]

Constantine's mission was later revealed to be peripherally intertwined with the *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, an unpredictably devastating event which, before it had run its course, reshaped the entire DC Universe. The *Crisis*, it turns out, had sent out certain emanations on the mystical planes which allowed a mad cult of South American nihilists called the Brujería to enact a magic ritual, thereby unleashing a great being of primordial chaos upon the afterworlds. Constantine and his followers were attempting to prevent the chaos being from swallowing up all of creation, and it was for this purpose that he enlisted the aid of the Swamp Thing.

Anticipating a final dramatic confrontation with the chaos being, Constantine sent Swamp Thing on a series of adventures designed to teach the creature the true nature of evil. In Illinois, the Swamp Thing watched one community destroy another simply because the latter was different and apparently threatening.[18] On the east coast, he confronted sexism;[19] in the south, racism.[20] And in Kentucky, he was given a lesson in the madness that drives men to murder.[21] In the end, the Swamp Thing came to realize that good and evil cannot be so easily separated and that each springs eternal from the other, a philosophy which stands in marked contrast to those favored by many of the "superheroes" who inhabit the Swamp Thing's world. By sharing this revelation with the chaos being on the edge of Hell, Swamp Thing appeased the creature and averted a metaphysical catastrophe, but not before the chaos being's rampage had killed the Earth sorcerers Sargon and Zatara, and had forever altered the nature of the once-omnipotent mystical being known as the Spectre.[22]

The series of adventures surrounding the emergence of the chaos being also provided the Swamp Thing with the revelations as to his own true origins and abilities which Constantine had promised. Just before the confrontation with the chaos being, Constantine took the Swamp Thing to an isolated grove on the fringe of the river Tefé in Brazil. There, the swamp creature encountered a group known as the Parliament of Trees, made up entirely of creatures much like himself. From the Parliament, the Swamp Thing learned that he is actually the latest in a series of "plant elementals" mystically created by the Earth in order to safeguard the planet and its environment from outside forces. Each of the members of the Parliament were elementals themselves and had been created in the same fashion as Swamp Thing, with the "death by fire" of a human being signaling each of their arrivals. In time, each of the elementals grew weary of their mission and came to the grove to retire, prompting the Earth to create a new elemental. The members of the Parliament assured Swamp Thing that one day he too would come to the grove to take root and join them.[23]

Gotham City and the Space Saga

While Swamp Thing was battling against the Brujería alongside John Constantine, Abby Cable was fighting her own battle back in Louisiana. A snapshot of Abby and her new "husband" that had been taken surreptitiously by a Baton Rouge photographer was published in a local newspaper, prompting the authorities to charge her with "crimes against nature" on the incorrect assumption that Abby and the Swamp Thing had been engaging in sexual intercourse. After she was released on bail, Abby decided to flee to Gotham City, fearing the verdict of the courts and hoping to escape from the reporters and degenerates who were hounding her in Louisiana.[24]

When Swamp Thing finally returned to the bayou, he discovered Abby's plight and followed her to Gotham. When the local authorities refused to release Abby, the Swamp Thing turned all of Gotham into a botanical forest, threatening to destroy the entire city if Abby was not returned to him. After confronting the Swamp Thing himself, the Batman, Gotham's legendary defender, realized that the charges against Abby were unfair and ridiculous and arranged to have her released.[25]

As the Gotham affair was brewing, however, officials of the D.D.I. again became interested in the Swamp Thing, this time deciding to destroy the beast in retribution for the slaying of General Sunderland. In order to draft a workable plan, the D.D.I. hired notorious supercriminal Lex Luthor at the price of $1,000,000 for a ten-minute consultation, more than enough time for Luthor to sketch out a simple device capable of scrambling the Swamp Thing's brain. Seconds after Abby was released, D.D.I. operatives unleashed this device upon the Swamp Thing and once again seemingly killed him.[25]

In actuality, the device merely forced the Swamp Thing to

project his consciousness out into space, desperately looking for some form of plant life he could seize upon and use to recreate his physical form. He eventually found such plant life on an isolated blue planet several million light years away from the earth, and from there he hopped from planet to planet, hoping to return home.[26] During the course of these travels, Swamp Thing encountered the noteworthy Adam Strange on his adopted home of Rann and aided Strange in restoring the viability of Rann's soil.[27] Swamp Thing also met up with a vegetable-based member of the Green Lantern Corps known as Medphyll,[28] and assisted the New God Metron in one of his many attempts to shatter the Forever Barrier and unite himself with the omnipotent Source.[29]

During this last encounter, Swamp Thing gained the information he needed to once again return to the Earth through a union with a Mother Box, the odd "living computer" carried by the New Gods. Once home, the Swamp Thing quickly killed all of the members of the D.D.I. conspiracy that had left him stranded in space before returning to Abby and the bayou.[30]

The Sprout Saga and the Time Odyssey

Just after Swamp Thing was finally reunited with Abby, he learned that the members of the Parliament of Trees, believing him dead, had already put into motion the events necessary to create a new plant elemental. By refusing to retire, Swamp Thing caused a formidable disturbance in Earth's biosphere, which was incapable of properly supporting two active elementals. This disturbance manifested itself in a series of bizarre events prompted by the unborn plant elemental, later known as "the Sprout," and its efforts to create itself on the physical plane. The crisis was finally resolved when the Swamp Thing decided to raise the Sprout as his own child. To accomplish this aim, the Swamp Thing used his powers to temporarily place his own consciousness within the body of John Constantine, and then used Constantine's body to impregnate Abby, allowing the Sprout to occupy the unborn fetus.[31] Months later, after the Sprout child was born, her parents would name her Tefé in honor of the Parliament of Trees.[32]

Between Abby's impregnation and the birth of her child, however, the Earth was attacked by a savage alien race known as the Dominators. As a prelude to their invasion, the Dominators targeted some of the Earth's most powerful superbeings for destruction, Swamp Thing among them. But instead of killing the swamp creature, the weapons which the Dominators turned upon him again only forced his consciousness to leave its current environs, this time thrusting Swamp Thing back in time.[33] In the adventures which followed, Swamp Thing encountered such luminaries as Hans von Hammer, the Enemy Ace of World War I; Sir Justin, the Shining Knight; Sgt. Rock; and Etrigan the Demon. The Swamp Thing also became involved in a multi-generational plot engineered by his past and future nemesis Anton Arcane, and made the stunning discovery that he himself paradoxically gave rise to the plant elementals created by the Earth.[34]

History is history, but what makes the Swamp Thing tick? The answer to this question depends upon which of Swamp Thing's incarnations you are asking about.



Role-Playing the Swamp Thing

In his earliest adventures, Swamp Thing was basically a version of the Frankenstein monster—a dark, brooding chap whom humanity wrongfully believed to be a horrible killer. This misconception was frequently contrasted by an implied subtext that ran through the early issues which suggested that Swamp Thing was actually more "human" than the majority of his accusers, most of whom were shown to be overly greedy, unconcerned with human life, and highly hypocritical. The only exception to this general rule was Matt Cable, whose "misunderstanding" of the swamp creature was a necessary plot device that drove many of the early adventures.

In those early adventures, the Swamp Thing's "personality" matched that of Alec Holland: the dashing heroic archetype with an added pinch of self-doubt. The concern for the preservation of life which goes hand-in-hand with this archetype is the factor which prompted Alec Holland to dedicate his life to the bio-restorative formula in lieu of accepting high-paying jobs in big business. Later, as the Swamp Thing, this same dedication prompted Holland to risk life and limb upon more than one occasion in order to save someone or something that was threatened with harm, even if that someone or something was one of his most zealous pursuers.

But Swamp Thing's personality begins to deviate from that of the dashing heroic archetype and his dedication to life begins to falter when you consider his "code of vengeance." Unlike most of the superheroes who share his universe, the Swamp Thing apparently has no qualms about killing those who have done him grave harm. Although he didn't quite murder Nathan Ellery during his first visit to Gotham City, he certainly would have done so, given the opportunity. And later, Swamp Thing murdered General Sunderland and every single member of the D.D.I. conspiracy that left had him stranded in space. Reconciling this code of vengeance with Swamp Thing's general reverence for life is tricky. From the comics, it seems that the code only comes into play when it is the Swamp Thing himself or someone very close to him (Linda Holland, or later Abigail Arcane, for example) who has been wronged. In other words, if Nathan Ellery would have killed another scientist's wife and turned that scientist into a swamp monster, Alec Holland probably would have attempted to capture Ellery and bring him to justice, even if it meant tangling with the swamp creature who was trying to gain his revenge. But since it was Holland himself who had been wronged, Ellery became a target.

Another of the early Swamp Thing's characteristics that bears mention is the creature's inability to speak. Although the narrative of the early stories usually forced the reader to identify with the Swamp Thing by taking him or her inside the creature's head with a series of wordy thought balloons, the strip's creators were well aware of the dramatic potential of allowing the reader to see the Swamp Thing from the point of view of an outside observer—as a stoic monstrosity frustrated at its inability to communicate.

In terms of goals, the Swamp Thing's one ambition throughout the early issues was to regain his lost "humanity." In fact, he was so desperate to achieve this end that it was sometimes possible for his enemies to goad him into making mistakes by dangling the carrot of humanity in front of him, a tactic that was employed by Anton Arcane during the pair's first meeting.

Once the Swamp Thing learned that he was not a metamorphosed Alec Holland and had no humanity to regain, of course, all the rules were changed. Swamp Thing went through a brief period of hallucinatory "hibernation" in which he struggled to accept his new form, a battle which he eventually won. When he again awoke, the "new" Swamp Thing was much wiser and far more rational than his earlier counterpart. Perhaps the greatest change his stunning discovery wrought upon him was the newfound appreciation of nature, which he apparently acquired the first time his mind touched "the Green" (see page 13). Swamp Thing is now eminently capable of putting everything into its proper perspective, and the Earth and its environment are at the top of his priority list.

Personalitywise, this latest incarnation of the Swamp Thing is akin to a nineteenth century romantic poet (like Shelley or Coleridge). He is a keen observer of life and the universe and is fully appreciative of all their sensual beauties. But at the same time, the Swamp Thing sees creation's dark undercurrent and the more sinister paradoxes standing in opposition to these beauties.

Does Swamp Thing "Look Down" Upon Humanity?

Considering his formidable powers and abilities, you might expect Swamp Thing to look upon humans with contempt, especially when you consider the frequent abuses which men have heaped upon the earth, the sphere which he is pledged to protect. But instead, the Swamp Thing is remarkably forgiving. Since he is such a keen observer, Swamp Thing is well aware of his own weaknesses and foibles. He is so aware of these shortcomings, in fact, that he tends to look upon human beings as his equals. Both he and humanity are fallible enough to have very little control over their individual destinies, an ability which Swamp Thing truly respects.

In fact, most of the time it appears that mankind is harming the environment, he is actually only harming himself. Toxic chemicals or nuclear wastes may affect man's burial sites for two thousand years or more, but these two thousand years are but a wink of an eye to an entity as old as the Earth. Swamp Thing is well aware of this fact, and this is the reason he does not travel around killing everyone who pollutes or dumps

harmful chemicals into the ocean. Swamp Thing tends to view such people and their activities as little more than a pathetic tragedy.

Another factor which prevents the Swamp Thing from becoming too detached from humanity is his relationship with Abby Cable. In Abby, Swamp Thing has seen the delights engendered by the human spirit, and has learned just how precious mankind can be—failures, indiscretions, and imperfections included.

But in spite of all this, it is clear that somewhere in his "subconscious" mind the Swamp Thing does harbor a sort of grudge against humanity. Whenever Abby is threatened or Swamp Thing is angered in some other way, this grudge comes to the forefront, urging him to unleash his frightening wrath and spout off a litany of human failures. Fortunately, such occurrences are extremely rare: the incident in Gotham City and the attack upon the D.D.I. conspirators being the only recent examples.

Le tonerre est le cri-terreur de la mère.

Les nuages, ils sont paupiers lourdes et affamés.

La brise, c'est une lamentation chuchotée avec la crainte.

La pluie est les larmes de l'homme du marais.

"Thunder is the terror shriek of the mother.

The clouds, eyelids heavy with hunger.

The breeze, a lament whispered in fear.

The rain is the swamp man's tears."

—old Cajun ballad

Why Doesn't Swamp Thing Chase Supercriminals?

Although he shares the average superhero's reverence for life and liberty, Swamp Thing does not spend his time chasing after the hundreds of supercriminals who inhabit the DC Universe. This policy stems from the Swamp Thing's keen observational faculties. Because his perceptions are so unrestricted, Swamp Thing tends to see the "big picture" when viewing the world of man and his affairs: the criminal, the crime, and all the factors that played a role in the crime's commission. Swamp Thing sees that society is just as responsible for many of the crimes committed by the so-called supervillains as the individuals themselves. And until human society as a whole can be rehabilitated, Swamp Thing believes that incarcerating an individual perpetrator is nearly pointless when one's goals are to save the world and protect humanity. Even if the Joker is finally placed behind bars, thousands of murders will still be committed each day and someone else will soon spring up to take his place.

This is not to say that the Swamp Thing never concerns himself with these matters. Because he is a very compassionate individual, he will almost certainly help anyone in trouble whom he happens to stumble across, and any villain or menace who accidentally crosses paths with him has a great deal to fear. But unlike the Batman and Superman, the Swamp Thing does not actively seek out such criminals and their crimes.

How Intelligent is the Swamp Thing?

Well, the Swamp Thing may be the wisest being on the DC Earth. When the chaos creature unleashed by the Brujería attacked the afterworlds during the *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, only the Swamp Thing was capable enough to answer its query and send it on its way. Among those who failed in this endeavor were Etrigan the Demon, Doctor Fate, the Spectre, and the Phantom Stranger—all extremely potent mystical entities. Of course, Swamp Thing entered into the encounter armed with some of the wisdom of the Parliament of Trees, but later, after his ordeal in space, he clearly demonstrated that he now understands the universe and its functionings even more precisely than his illustrious forbearers. In fact, the only earthbound being who regularly interacts with the Swamp Thing and seems to have penetrated more of life's little mysteries is John Constantine, a perfectly ironic situation given the fact that Constantine possesses none of the extraordinary powers or abilities that the Parliament and some of the Swamp Thing's other associates possess.

Note that the "wisdom" of the Swamp Thing is not at all the same thing as the "intelligence" of someone like Lex Luthor. Swamp Thing has a better understanding of metaphysics and the mysteries of life than Luthor, but he doesn't share Luthor's knowledge of science and technology or Luthor's ability to make logical deductions.

Again, Swamp Thing's wisdom seems to spring from his unique perceptions and his unparalleled ability to observe.

What About Swamp Thing and Alec Holland?

In his conscious day-to-day personality, Swamp Thing retains almost none of the influence of Alec Holland. At present, he still retains most of Holland's memories, but even those are slowly slipping away. Swamp Thing no longer retains much of Holland's unparalleled knowledge of the botanical sciences, for example, and is just now beginning to fail to recognize some of Holland's old friends and associates, though it seems that Holland's strongest memories (Linda, Ferrett, Nathan Ellery, and so on) will remain with the Swamp Thing forever.

Although he is an emotional creature, Swamp Thing would like to believe that he has forever excised the particularly "human" emotions such as greed, envy, lust, and jealousy from his consciousness. Recently, however, the Mother Box was able to drive Swamp Thing temporarily insane with jealousy by granting him a future vision of Abby together with Constantine (at the time, Swamp Thing was not aware that his own spirit would be residing in Constantine's body during this encounter), perhaps indicating that there is more of Alec Holland buried deep within the Swamp Thing's consciousness than he realizes. More evidence for this assertion can be found in the fact that Swamp Thing still seems to fear fire because of its tendency to dredge up the unpleasant memories of Holland's death.

What Does the Outside World Know of Swamp Thing?

Until very recently, the average inhabitant of the DC Universe considered the Swamp Thing a mere legend akin to Bigfoot or the Abominable Snowman: several witnesses claimed to have seen him, a few hazy photographs existed, some tracks were found, and so on.

Just after the clash with the Brujería and the darkness creature, however, a clear photograph of Swamp Thing and Abby Arcane was published in a Louisiana newspaper. This photograph was convincing enough to persuade most of the residents of the area around Houma that the swamp creature was genuine. In fact, it was so convincing that it prompted the local police to bring Abby up on charges of cavorting with a monster. And in the next few weeks, Swamp Thing proved his existence to the rest of the world by taking over Gotham City and turning it into a botanical paradise. This incident received so much worldwide press coverage (in fact, Swamp Thing granted all of the major networks impromptu live "interviews" during the affair) that all but the most skeptical observers are now firmly convinced of the creature's veracity.

In the hero community, Swamp Thing has encountered: Adam Strange, the Batman, Captain Atom, Deadman, the first Doctor Fate, Etrigan the Demon, Firestorm, John Constantine, Metron, Phantom Stranger, Red Tornado, and Superman. Batman and Superman both have a great deal of respect for the Swamp Thing, but remain suspicious of his motives and power. Deadman, Phantom Stranger, Etrigan, Adam Strange, and Constantine can all be considered "friends" of the Swamp Thing, though his relationship with Constantine is partially built upon a foundation of mistrust.

The Swamp Thing's Abilities and Powers

Swamp Thing's unique abilities and powers make him a very unusual character as far as the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game is concerned. In order to properly reflect the Swamp Thing's capabilities, many of these Powers need further explanations beyond those offered in the *Character Handbook*. Here is a complete catalog of Swamp Thing's paranormal abilities:



Physical Strength: Swamp Thing is far stronger than a normal man, though he is currently not as strong as he was during the Wein/Wrightson "muck monster" era. This is due to the fact that Swamp Thing rarely has a need to call upon his great strength now that he has access to a broad array of formidable powers. Consequently, he tends to form bodies with his Self Link (Plant Growth) Power that are a bit weaker though far more supple than his old form. This is also the reason why his Dexterity has increased over the years.

High Intelligence: See "How Intelligent is Swamp Thing?" above. Swamp Thing's unparalleled observational abilities are responsible for his relatively high Intelligence score, while his formidable "wisdom" earns him a high Willpower. After he discovered that he was no longer human, Swamp Thing developed an impressive mental fortitude that is reflected by his high Mind score.

Recently, Swamp Thing has discovered that he can enhance his mental capacities even further by using his Self Link (Plant Growth) Power to grow a giant model of an organic human "brain" and then attaching that brain to his head. Growing the brain takes approximately two hours (11 APs of time), during which Swamp Thing can perform no other activities. Once the brain has been grown and attached, Swamp Thing's INT and WILL are both raised to 16 APs, but he cannot move until the brain is disconnected.[35]

Mystic Aura: As a mystical plant elemental, Swamp Thing exudes a powerful mystic aura that is responsible for his high Influence, Aura, and Spirit scores. This aura only began to fully manifest itself after the Swamp Thing discovered his true nature when he first encountered the Parliament of Trees. Swamp Thing's mystical aura can be detected through the use of the Magic Sense Power (see page 50 of the *Character Handbook*).

Self Link (Plant Growth): This Power reflects the fact that the Swamp Thing's body is actually a single giant plant. Swamp Thing completely controls the form of this body and is capable of expanding it to the size of a ten-story building (the Power's limit of 20 APs of volume; larger if the Power is Pushed) or shrinking the body down to the size of a single cell of algae. Swamp Thing can also control the shape of his body. He can appear as a human figure, a chair, a tree, or just about anything else, though he almost always maintains the form of a seven-foot-tall humanoid.

When Swamp Thing forms a new body after traveling with his Spirit Travel Power (see below), he actually "grows" the body out of the available vegetation. The color, appearance, and properties of the body vary with the type of plant life the body is based upon. Usually, Swamp Thing uses normal underbrush, grass, and trees as the basis of his body, giving him his standard "mossy green" appearance, though he can achieve a number of special appearances and effects by basing the body upon other plant types. Some examples are presented below, though many other forms are possible:

REDWOOD TREES: When based on or around Redwood trees, Swamp Thing's body becomes dense and more invulnerable to harm. Add 1 AP to his STR and 3 APs to his BODY when he is in this form. Subtract 1 AP from his DEX.

VENUS'S-FLY-TRAP: In this form, Swamp Thing can turn his body into a giant mobile Venus's-fly-trap. As a fly-trap, he can catch victims in his toothy trap (the equivalent of a Grappling Attack with a STR equal to his STR Attribute plus 3) and begin to dissolve them by secreting powerful acids (Acid Power APs equal to Swamp Thing's STR Attribute).

CACTUS: Swamp Thing gains all the abilities of a cactus. His body is covered with sharp needles (anyone who attacks him is immediately counterattacked with an AV equal to Swamp Thing's DEX and an EV of 4) and he is capable of drawing an adequate supply of water from within himself.

FLOWERS: When he bases his form upon flowers, Swamp Thing becomes a colorful wall of petals and stems. When he is in this form, his Animal Control Power works particularly well (add 1 AP to its effectiveness). If Swamp Thing bases himself upon a rose, his body is covered with thorns (same effect as the cactus needles).

HYACINTH: In this form, Swamp Thing becomes a giant floating flower, and would make an ideal boat for a friend or companion.

Note that Swamp Thing can only grow a body out of the vegetation that is immediately available in the area in which he wishes to appear, though he doesn't need a very large sample of a plant form to base a body around it. While visiting Gotham City for the second time, Swamp Thing took on the form of a Redwood tree by using only the small samples of Redwood bark stored at a nearby botanical garden as a base.[36]

When using Self Link (Plant Growth), it takes Swamp Thing two minutes (5 APs of time, or 30 phases) to grow a new body, even though instead of growing a body he can instantly transfer his consciousness into any wooden or plant-based object. In this case, the physical statistics of that object replace his own; a wooden ladder, for example, might have a DEX of 0 (it can't move), a STR of 3, and a BODY of 2. Whenever Swamp Thing transfers his spirit into a new receptacle (whether it is an actual body or an unmodified object), his Current BODY Condition is immediately restored to its starting value.

Self Link (Spirit Travel): This Power reflects the fact that Swamp Thing is not really a giant plant but a powerful spirit capable of inhabiting plants. Damage to his physical body will not harm the Swamp Thing, just the body or plant he is inhabiting. When this body is destroyed, he can simply transfer his consciousness to another. The only way to permanently harm Swamp Thing himself is through Mystical or Mental Attack, though reducing his Current BODY Condition down to 0 APs or below forces him to abandon his current body.

When Swamp Thing's spirit leaves his body, it enters an area known as "the Green," a collective embodiment of all the plant life on the Earth, and the area where the Swamp Thing and the other plant elementals were created. The Green extends to every part of the Earth where there is any sort plant life, and possibly out into space as well. The Green itself has an odd sort of sentience, and Swamp Thing finds traveling through it quite pleasurable. By traveling through the Green (at a speed of 25 APs per phase), Swamp Thing can essentially "teleport" from place to place. He simply leaves his old body, rapidly travels through the Green to his destination, and grows a new body out of the native plant life. Note that this tactic does not allow him to teleport to areas where there is no plant life available, though again he needs only a small sample around which to base a body. In Gotham City, for example, Swamp Thing was able to teleport into a crowded courtroom by growing his body out of a single clipped rose.

Animal Control and Animal Summoning: By manipulating the scents and fluids that are secreted by his plant-based body, Swamp Thing can summon and control various forms of insect life. Although Swamp Thing always has access to this ability, it functions much better when he is inhabiting a body based around some form of flower (in this case, raise the AP scores of both Powers to 9).

In game terms, its easiest to handle summoned insects as a single swarm rather than a collection of separate individuals. A swarm of bees, for example, has the following statistics:

Lex Luthor's Weapon

Although it is essentially impossible to harm the Swamp Thing by attacking him physically, Lex Luthor helped the D.D.I. build a weapon capable of doing just that. Here is how it worked:

The difficulty in physically attacking the Swamp Thing rests in the creature's ability to transfer his spirit from body to body. Just as an opponent is about to physically destroy his current body, Swamp Thing can simply transfer his spirit into another, escaping destruction. Luthor's weapon circumvented this problem by neutralizing the Swamp Thing's ability to transfer his spirit before hitting him with a damaging electric charge capable of destroying his physical body. The idea was to trap the spirit in the body as it was destroyed, an outcome which would no doubt destroy the spirit as well. Fortunately, the weapon only prevented Swamp Thing from transferring his spirit to another point on earth rather than neutralizing the ability altogether. In game terms, Luthor's weapon looked like this:

Luthor's Weapon [BODY: 3, Lightning: 15, Neutralize: 40, R#: 2]

The Weapon's Neutralize Power works only on Self Link (Spirit Travel).

With its Wealth rating of 21 (the D.D.I. receives a budget of approximately one billion dollars each year from the federal government), the D.D.I. must have spent a few Hero Points on the Wealth Check necessary to buy the parts to build Luthor's weapon on such short notice, especially since the organization must have made another Wealth Check earlier in the week in order to pay Luthor's one million dollar fee.

BEES

DEX:	4	STR:	4	BODY:	5
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE: 4					

- **POWERS:**

Flight: 4

The bee swarm is immune to all Physical Attacks, except those that can be spread over an area, such as fire, electricity, and Energy Blasts. Punches, gunshots, and so forth have no effect. The bees sting with an AV/EV equal to their DEX/STR.

A successful Animal Summoning or Animal Control attempt summons a single swarm comprised of as many as 500 insects. Treat the entire swarm as a single Character. Each round it can attack one target (or several targets by declaring a

Multi-Attack). Once the swarm's Current Body Condition has been reduced down to 0, the entire swarm is dispersed and flees.

Animate Objects: Swamp Thing has the ability to animate any wooden objects with a Body of 8 or less that are within 8 APs (one-quarter mile) of his present location. Both of these limits can be increased by Pushing the Power. Swamp Thing animates a wooden object by sending a tiny fraction of his consciousness to inhabit it. Destroying a wooden object that Swamp Thing is animating does not harm him in any way.

Awareness: Since he has become aware of his true nature, Swamp Thing has become more in tune with the mystical workings of the cosmos. He now has the ability to foresee mystical crises, an ability that is shared by so many of the magically oriented entities who inhabit the DC Universe. Excellent illustrations of this ability at work can be seen in the Monkey King saga[37] and all throughout the American Gothic.[38]

Dimension Travel: When Swamp Thing rescued Abby's soul from Hell during his third clash with Anton Arcane, he discovered that he could shift his spirit out of the Green and into many of the other dimensions which border the Earth plane, including Heaven, Hell, and the Realm of the Just Dead. In DC HEROES terms, this means that he has access to the Dimension Travel Power. Note, however, that Swamp Thing is unable to use his version of the Dimension Travel Power to "banish" or "summon." See page 48 of the *Character Handbook*.

Incidentally, *any* character with the Dimension Travel Power can use that Power to travel into the Green (Travel Value of 7). When Swamp Thing transfers his spirit, he enters the Green automatically and no Dimension Travel roll is necessary.

Growth: Although Swamp Thing's Growth Power works exactly like the Power described in the *Character Handbook*, it represents an entirely different ability. Swamp Thing does not use Growth to increase the size of his body (he uses his Self Linked Plant Growth for that purpose), instead Growth enables Swamp Thing to expand the fibrous tissues he uses as muscles, making him stronger and tougher. For each AP of Growth that Swamp Thing activates, he receives all of the bonuses and penalties listed on page 27 of the *Character Handbook*, except for the change in height. Swamp Thing can only activate a number of APs of Growth equal to the number of APs of Self Link (Plant Growth) he has activated. Thus, if Swamp Thing were to activate 13 APs of Self Link (Plant Growth), making him roughly forty feet tall, he could also activate 13 APs of Growth, raising his Str by 13 APs and his RV against physical attacks by 13 APs, and lowering his OV by 6.

Invulnerability: As a plant, Swamp Thing has none of the vital organs or nerve centers possessed by animals, making it difficult to permanently harm his physical body. In DC HEROES terms, this is the equivalent of the Invulnerability Power. It was this ability that enabled Swamp Thing to "return to life" in the Sunderland lab during the "anatomy lesson."[39]

Joined: This Power represents Swamp Thing's ability to take root in the ground like a normal plant. When the Power is active and Swamp Thing is rooted, his physical body draws all its nourishment from the soil (see Solar Sustenance below).

Plant Control/Plant Growth: In addition to controlling the growth and shape of his physical body, Swamp Thing can control the growth of any and all other plants in his immediate vicinity through the use of these formidable Powers. By Pushing these Powers a bit and spending a couple of Hero Points, Swamp Thing was once able to turn all of Gotham City into a lush jungle.

In addition, Swamp Thing has developed a particularly nasty tactic which he uses in conjunction with his Plant Growth Power. By using Plant Growth upon the microscopic floral organisms which naturally reside in the digestive tracts of most living creatures, Swamp Thing can suddenly cause a victim to

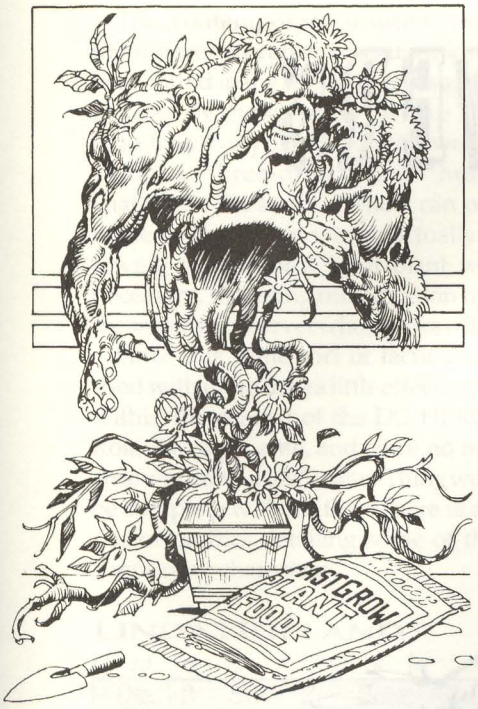
Psychogenic Tubers

The Swamp Thing has one Power not listed with his statistics. From time to time, small orange tubers grow from his back and chest. When eaten, these tubers have a powerful psychogenic effect upon the consumer, causing him or her to experience lifelike illusions keyed to his or her psyche: good, honest people experience pleasant and relaxing illusions; evil or selfish individuals experience more painful and terrifying illusions.[40]

Psychogenic Tubers [Body: 1, Illusion: 12, R#: 4]

Limitation: Illusion Power only works on individuals who eat a Tuber.





burst apart from the inside out. In DC HEROES terms, the AV and EV of this attack are both equal to Swamp Thing's Plant Growth APs. The OV is equal to 12 (Herculean Task) and the RV is equal to the victim's BODY. Of course, it should go without saying that the Swamp Thing is quite loathe to use this special attack, and only calls upon it when he is extremely angry. Note that this attack is unique to the Swamp Thing and *cannot* be duplicated by other characters with the Plant Growth Power.

Personality Transfer: Recently, Swamp Thing discovered that he could nest his consciousness in the living bodies of humans as well as in plants. So far, he has used this ability to temporarily take control of the bodies of Abby Arcane and John Constantine. While Swamp Thing occupies the body of a human, that human's consciousness is temporarily held in the Green or in any of the mystical dimensions which border it.

Regeneration: In Swamp Thing's case, this Power is basically an offshoot of his Plant Growth Power. Swamp Thing can easily and rapidly repair any damage inflicted upon his Physical body by simply regrowing damaged fibers. This process takes almost no time and functions exactly like the Regeneration Power. Note that Swamp Thing can only use this Power if he is occupying a plant-based physical body (Regeneration does not work if he has used Personality Transfer to enter a human body, for example).

Sealed Systems: Swamp Thing need not breathe and can easily withstand severe radiation, the vacuum of space, and other extremely hostile environments. These factors will never harm the Swamp Thing himself under any circumstances, but they do begin to damage his Physical body after about one month of continued exposure (hence the Power's 20 AP rating).

Solar Sustenance: Swamp Thing's plant-based physical bodies can draw most, though not all, of the nourishment they need from the sun. Approximately once per month (hence the Power's 20 AP limit), Swamp Thing must supplement this nourishment in some way. Usually, he simply finds a dead bird or rodent in the swamp and places it directly into his body, drawing sustenance from the creature's decay. When Swamp Thing is using his Joined Power to take root, he draws sustenance from the sun and soil indefinitely, with no need for any supplement.

Speak With Plants: This Power enables Swamp Thing to commune directly with the sentience of the Green. Basically, the simplicity of this sentience limits queries to finding the whereabouts of a person or object, or asking for information about an area. For a more complete description of the Power and how it functions, see page 52 of the *Character Handbook*.

Split: In Gotham City,[41] Swamp Thing demonstrated his ability to divide his consciousness into several different physical bodies, all operating and acting at the same time. In DC HEROES terms, this is the Split Power, though Swamp Thing's Splits don't function like those discussed in the *Character Handbook*. Swamp Thing's Splits do not have their Physical Attribute levels reduced each time a new duplicate is formed, they have no Mental or Mystical Attributes, and they possess none of Swamp Thing's Powers (only the original "primary" body can call upon Swamp Thing's other abilities). Thus, each of the Splits looks like this:

SWAMP THING SPLIT

DEX:	5	STR:	7	BODY:	8
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	0
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	0
INITIATIVE: SPECIAL					

Swamp Thing's Splits are immune to Mental and Mystical Attacks and act at his Initiative score. Any damage inflicted upon any of the Splits has no effect on Swamp Thing.

ENDNOTES:

1. Swamp Thing #1, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
2. Swamp Thing #2, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
3. Swamp Thing #3, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
4. Swamp Thing #4, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
5. Swamp Thing #6, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
6. Swamp Thing #7, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
7. Swamp Thing #8, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
8. Swamp Thing #10, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
9. Saga of the Swamp Thing #4-20, *second series (Pasko / Yeates / Bissette / Totleben)*
10. Saga of the Swamp Thing #19, *second series (Pasko / Bissette / Totleben)*
11. Saga of the Swamp Thing #20, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
12. Saga of the Swamp Thing #21, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
13. Saga of the Swamp Thing #22, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
14. Saga of the Swamp Thing #23-24, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
15. Saga of the Swamp Thing #30-31, Annual #2, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
16. Swamp Thing #34 *(drops* "Saga of" *with issue #31), second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
17. Swamp Thing #37, *second series, (Moore / Veitch / Totleben)*
18. Swamp Thing #38-39, *second series (Moore / Woch / Totleben)*
19. Swamp Thing #40, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
20. Swamp Thing #41-42, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Alcala)*
21. Swamp Thing #45, *second series (Moore / Woch / Alcala)*
22. Swamp Thing #50, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
23. Swamp Thing #47, *second series (Moore / Woch / Randall)*
24. Swamp Thing #52, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
25. Swamp Thing #53, *second series (Moore / Totleben)*
26. Swamp Thing #56, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
27. Swamp Thing #57-58, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
28. Swamp Thing #61, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
29. Swamp Thing #62, *seconds series (Veitch / Alcala)*
30. Swamp Thing #63, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
31. Swamp Thing #65-76, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
32. Swamp Thing #90, *second series (Wheeler / Broderick / Alcala)*
33. Swamp Thing #81-88, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
34. Swamp Thing #89, *second series (Wheeler / Yeates)*
35. Swamp Thing #75, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
36. Swamp Thing #52, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
37. Saga of the Swamp Thing #25-27, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
38. Swamp Thing #s 37-50, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Woch / Alcala / Bissette / Totleben / Randall)*
39. Saga of the Swamp Thing #21, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
40. Swamp Thing #43, *second series (Moore / Woch / Randall)*
41. Swamp Thing #52, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*

FRIENDS AND LOVERS



One of the problems that has confronted the *Swamp Thing* creative team over the years is the difficulty in getting the reader to identify with a seven-foot-three-inch, 317-pound, walking plant. This problem was compounded further when writer Alan Moore converted the Swamp Thing from a misunderstood outsider (a situation to which we can all relate in one degree or another) into an otherworldly "earth elemental" that was spawned in a sort of mystical land and sent to protect the planet from the scourge of humanity.

The contemporary solution to the identification problem has traditionally been found in the series' strong supporting cast. By showing us a Swamp Thing who frequently interacts with well-developed, three-dimensional human characters, the series' writers can often make us forget that we are actually following the life of a giant plant when necessary, focussing our attention upon the sensitive observer who resides within.

Since this same sort of tactic can be used with more than a little effectiveness within the context of the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game, and since no reference work about the Swamp Thing would be complete without them, here is a series of profiles detailing some of these supporting characters.

LINDA HOLLAND

(D E C E A S E D)

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	5	WILL:	4	MIND:	3
INFL:	2	AURA:	3	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	10			HERO POINTS:	5

- **SKILLS:** Gadgetry: 2, Scientist: 3
- **ADVANTAGES:** Connections: U.S. Secret Service (Low), Scientific Community (Low); Scholar (botany)
- **DRAWBACKS:** Married
- **MOTIVATION:** Upholding the Good
- **OCCUPATION:** Research Scientist
- **WEALTH:** 5

Linda Holland was Alec's wife and the co-developer of the now infamous bio-restorative formula. She accompanied Alec into the Louisiana bayou to finish work on the formula, and was murdered by Ferrett and his Conclave thugs shortly after the Swamp Thing was created.[1]

Since Linda's active role in the saga was so brief, very little is known about her. Like her husband, she was an expert botanist, though her work wasn't quite the caliber of Alec's. In fact, it was their mutual interest in science that drew Linda and Alec together. The young couple met in college, where they studied botany under the guidance of Jason Woodrue (see *Floronic Man*, page 26) alongside Dr. Phillip Sylvian, the creator of Black Orchid (see page 62 of the *Background/Roster Book*); and Pamela Isley, who is now known as Poison Ivy (page 87 of the *Background/Roster Book*).[2]

Although she died in the very first issue, Linda's presence has been felt throughout the entire run of the *Swamp Thing* series. In the early issues, Linda's murder was primarily responsible for much of the rage which drove the Swamp Thing to embark upon his lengthy quest to destroy the Conclave, an endeavor which culminated in the death of Nathan Ellery.[3] And later, after the Swamp Thing discovered that he was no longer a human being, his memories of Linda were the hardest to relinquish.[4] In fact, Linda still appears to Swamp Thing from time to time in haunting hallucinations and dreams, despite the fact that he has excised much of his "Alec Holland" self from his consciousness.[5] Perhaps the tiny bit of Alec Holland that remains alive within the Swamp Thing harbors a sliver of guilt over his relationship with Abby Cable and subconsciously believes that he is betraying Linda's memory.



ROLE-PLAYING:

Linda was a total innocent, a characteristic which made her tragic death seem all the more ironic. She was a bright, energetic, and sensitive individual who was slain, in essence, because she had decided to dedicate her life to feeding the hungry.

ABIGAIL "ABBY" ARCANE-CABLE

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	3	WILL:	2	MIND:	3
INFL:	4	AURA:	4	SPIRIT:	5
INITIATIVE:	9			HERO POINTS:	15

- **SKILLS:** Charisma: 5, Occultist: 5, Medicine: 2
- **ADVANTAGES:** Area Knowledge (Louisiana Bayous); Connections: Swamp Thing (High)
- **DRAWBACKS:** Married; Mistrust
- **MOTIVATION:** Upholding the Good
- **OCCUPATION:** Former Medic/Child Counselor
- **WEALTH:** 0

Other than the titular character himself, Abby Cable has played the longest active role in the Swamp Thing's saga, first as the niece of Anton Arcane, the Swamp Thing's archenemy, and later as the Swamp Thing's "wife" and mother of his child.

Abby's story begins in a small Bavarian village, where she spent all of her childhood. Abby's mother died when she was very little, leaving her under the full-time care of her father, Gregori. When Abby was fifteen years old, her Uncle Anton's legendary misdeeds (see *Anton Arcane*, page 23), coupled with Gregori's frequent absences due to lengthy business trips, prompted Abby's fellow villagers to begin a legal campaign to have her removed from Gregori's custody. One day, Abby finally became so startled by all the confusion surrounding herself and her family that she bolted out of the village and off toward the nearby mountains, planning to run away. As soon as Gregori discovered she was missing, he ran after her. But just as he caught sight of the frightened child, he stepped on an unexploded land mine left over from the Second World War. Seeing her father devastated like this inflicted a psychological wound upon young Abby which still intermittently troubles her to this day.[6] Later, her discovery that Gregori had been rescued by his brother Anton

just after the explosion and used as a subject for a series of scientific experiments which turned her father into the so-called "Patchwork Man" (see *Patchwork Man*, page 25) tore this wound open even further.[7]

Believing her father dead, Abby then took up residence with some of her more kindly neighbors and began studying medicine. When she was in her early twenties, she met U.S. Intelligence agent Matt Cable (see *Matt Cable*, page 19), who had come to her village looking for the Swamp Thing, whom Cable had tracked to Anton Arcane's castle in Bavaria. At the time, Abby was still young, frightened and lonely, while Cable was a dashing outsider with an exciting occupation and a sound knowledge of the outside world. After the Patchwork Man was seemingly killed during an ensuing encounter with the Swamp Thing, Abby left Europe to accompany Cable,[8] and the pair quickly fell in love. About two years later, they were married.[9]

At first, Matt and Abby were very happy together and began building a life for themselves in Louisiana. But not long after they wed, Matt's life began to deteriorate as he used alcohol to attempt to dissolve the psychological damage inflicted upon him by an earlier government-sponsored brainwashing attempt. Toward the end of their relationship, Matt had become a cruel beast, who would regularly subject Abby to verbal abuse, even going so far as to gain a secret "revenge" against her after particularly heated arguments by using his newly discovered paranormal abilities to concoct elaborate illusory fantasies of his wife degrading herself before him.[10]

The final blow came when a drunken Cable was injured in a terrible auto accident one evening while out looking for Abby. Sensing the fact that Cable was on the verge of death, Anton Arcane made a pact with Cable and took possession of his physical body, hoping to avenge himself upon both the Swamp Thing and his hated niece, who had betrayed him when she began a friendship with the Swamp Thing.[11] For a couple of weeks thereafter, Arcane tortured Abby by posing as Cable and convincing her that her husband was slowly getting his life back together and winning his bout with alcoholism, only to later allow her to discover the truth, just before killing her and damning her soul to the deepest corner of Hell.

But Arcane's revenge was ultimately hollow. Swamp Thing's newly discovered "plant elemental" powers allowed him to travel to Hell itself to retrieve Abby's soul, after again sending Arcane back to Hell and helping Matt Cable reclaim his physical form.[12] But Cable came out of the whole affair in a deep coma, from which he never emerged, leaving Abby alone once again.

Abby escaped this second major bout with loneliness and deep depression by professing her love for the Swamp Thing,[13] though it would be unfair to characterize this confession as the product of desperation alone. Abby and the Swamp Thing quickly fashioned a bond of love between them that was strong enough to survive multiple unimaginable catastrophes.

First was the ordeal in Gotham City, during which Abby was subjected to abuses and torments too numerous to mention. Her "affair" with the Swamp Thing suddenly came under scrutiny from the whole world, and people whom she had loved and respected were labeling her a "freak." Abby was also forced to endure the shock of watching her "husband" vent his rage upon an entire city, a sight she found more frightening than satisfying. By the time the affair had run its course, however, her fortitude and unswerving devotion had regained the respect of the citizens of Gotham and much of the world at large.[14] Immediately thereafter came the first of Alec's apparent "deaths" and the couple's first lengthy separation.[15] And just a few months after that, Alec's second death and another separation.[16] (See page 9.)

The emotional damage wrought by this last apparent calamity was compounded by the fact that Abby was carrying the Swamp Thing's child throughout. In order to resolve the Sprout saga, Swamp Thing convinced Abby that they should birth a child in order to provide the Sprout with a convenient physical body to inhabit. Naturally, the conception of this child proved quite tricky, and eventually involved Swamp Thing borrowing the body of John Constantine for a time.[17]

While Alec was away during both the space and time odysseys, Abby lived with some old friends: Chester Williams, Lizabeth Tremayne, and Labo the Cajun healer. Just moments before her child was born, Alec finally found his way

The Legacy Of The Arcanes

The members of the Arcane family all share some sort of odd mystical property which grants them an unusual affinity for the occult. This property often manipulates their destinies in such a way as to continuously weave them in and out of the world's major mystical events. It might be used to explain Anton Arcane's involvement with the Klaue Von Aelkhund affair, Abby's involvement with the Swamp Thing and the birthing of the human elemental, and Gregori's resilience as the Patchwork Man.

Because of this property, each of the Arcanes exudes a mystical aura which can be detected easily by spellcasters and mystical entities. As an example, Etrigan the Demon's human alter ego, Jason Blood, effortlessly picked up Abby's aura when they met during the Monkey King affair.[19] In game terms, the Arcanes can all be detected with the Magic Sense Power as described on page 50 of the *Character Handbook*. In fact, the Arcane aura is so strong that anyone detecting an Arcane in this fashion is then allowed to make a Magic Sense Action Check against an OV/RV of 6/6 (Strenuous Task) to recognize their target as an Arcane. (Normally Magic Sense only tips its user to the presence of magic and gives no indication as to the type of magic he or she has detected.)

home to her, and the couple has since lived happily in the bayous.[18]

ROLE-PLAYING:

In her earliest adventures alongside the Swamp Thing and Matt Cable, Abby was quite an enigma. Although shy, she was hardly timid, and could usually be found up on the front lines during the trio's many battles against the agents of the occult. More than once, a fledgling knowledge of occult lore which she gleaned from her uncle proved the margin of victory in these struggles.

During her failed marriage to Matt, Abby became more outspoken and even stronger willed. When Cable sunk down into his deepest depression, Abby fought back against him and struggled to build a life of her own by taking on a job at the Elysium Lawns Center for Autistic Children, a move which demonstrated her lingering sensitivity in the midst of the psychological turmoil which had engulfed her. Although she eventually lost her cool and temporarily snapped under the enormous weight of the Houma Daily photograph scandal, Abby remains an extraordinarily courageous woman.

Another interesting facet of her character that is not to be forgotten stems from the fact that Abby seems to retain a strange sort of innocence, even in the wake of what happened to her uncle, her father, and Matt; the incident in Gotham; and everything else the world can throw at her. Even in the DC Universe, this combination of impressive intestinal fortitude and essential purity is more than a little rare.

MATT CABLE

(DECEASED)

DEX:	4	STR:	3	BODY:	4
INT:	3	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	4	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	3
INITIATIVE:	13			HERO POINTS:	15

- **POWERS:** Illusion†: 8
- **SKILLS:**

Detective: 4, Martial Artist: 4, Military Science: 4, Vehicles: 5, Weaponry: 5

- **ADVANTAGES:**

Connections: U.S. Government (Low), New Doom Patrol (Low); Scholar (covert operations)

- **DRAWBACKS:**

Serious Irrational Attraction to alcohol†; Guilt

- **EQUIPMENT:**

Government Issue .45 caliber pistol [BODY: 4, EV: 5, Ammo: 8, R#: 2]

- **MOTIVATION:**

Seeking Justice

- **OCCUPATION:**

Former Government Agent

- **WEALTH:** 4

†*Saga of the Swamp Thing* #19 and later

What makes Matt Cable such an interesting player in the Swamp Thing saga is the number of times he flip-flopped between adversary and ally.

Cable's chronicled involvement with the Hollands began when he was assigned to secret the couple away in the Louisiana bayous by the D.D.I., the top secret government agency for which he worked, though it is strongly implied in the series' early issues that Cable had known and befriended the Hollands even earlier. Judging by the laxity of his security arrangements, Cable must have believed that the Hollands were not in any real danger, a supposition which proved wrong when a group of thugs hired by a mysterious criminal organization known as the Conclave murdered both Alec and Linda Holland right under Cable's nose. As he was returning to check up on his charges just before he learned of their deaths, Cable stumbled across the newly created Swamp Thing (see page 6) and witnessed the creature taking revenge upon the Conclave killers. Since the Conclave thugs carried out both murders with enough professionalism to disguise their involvement, and Cable was unaware that the swamp creature and Alec Holland were more-or-less one in the same, Cable leapt to the conclusion that it was actually the Swamp Thing who had murdered his former friend, and began relentlessly tracking the beast.[20]

While trailing the Swamp Thing to Anton Arcane's castle in Bavaria, Cable met his future wife, Abigail, Arcane's niece.[21] For a while, he and Abby continued the pursuit of the Swamp Thing, but eventually abandoned the chase after finally discovering that the Swamp Thing was not responsible for the deaths of the Hollands.[22] After he learned that Swamp Thing *was* "Alec Holland," he and Abby became the creature's only human friends and accompanied him on his travels for a time.

Things didn't begin to go bleak for Matt until after he and Abby were married and separated from the Swamp Thing, when his old employers, the D.D.I., began cooperating with the Sunderland Corporation to unearth the secret of the Hollands' bio-restorative formula. After they had analyzed each clue the Hollands left behind, the D.D.I./Sunderland conspirators destroyed the clue in order to prevent competitors from using it to glean similar information. Matt Cable himself was one such clue. After he told D.D.I. investigators everything he knew about the Holland/Swamp Thing affair, the agency subjected him to a lengthy brainwashing session, hoping to forever remove from his mind what little information he could reveal. These sessions, unwittingly administered by Doctor Dennis Barclay (who would later join the fight against the conspiracy), had an odd effect upon Cable's psyche, activating certain latent and mysterious paranormal powers. But to the dismay of the D.D.I., the brainwashing did not eradicate Cable's knowledge of the Hollands and their formula.[23]

In addition to activating his odd powers, the D.D.I. brainwashing psychologically shattered Matt Cable, turning him into an alcoholic and ruining his marriage. His problems were compounded by the fact that, at first, he had no control over his illusion powers, leaving his subconscious mind to use them against his will to attack himself and his loved ones. By the time Cable began to understand his powers and bring them under control, his marriage had all but ended.

It was at about this time that Cable was in a tragic auto accident that left him on the brink of death. In order to escape the pain and suffering of his predicament, Cable forfeited his body to the soul of Anton Arcane as part of a pact the sorcerer negotiated with him. By the time Arcane had used the body to attempt to gain revenge upon both the Swamp Thing and Abby, and Cable was able to reclaim it, the exertion of leaving the physical plane altogether, coupled with the still-lingering accident trauma, threw him into a coma from which he would never emerge.[24]

Throughout Cable's hospitalization, Abby never forgot her husband, visiting him frequently despite her subsequent "remarriage." Years later, after Cable was erased from the government's pension and insurance plans as part of a D.D.I. cover-up, and the hospital where Cable was laid up began hounding Abby for the payment of his bills, Abby finally decided to end everyone's suffering by secretly disconnecting Matt from the machines which were sustaining his life.

But just before she could pull the plug, Matt suddenly awoke and disconnected himself in order to spare Abby the guilt of responsibility for his death. Matt gained the courage to perform this last heroic act after a dream encounter with the mystical Sandman, the master of the dream dimension, who helped him understand his failings as a human being and showed him how to put his soul to rest.[25]

ROLE-PLAYING:

In the early years, Matt Cable, like Alec Holland, was a dashing hero. He was bold, courageous, noble, and experienced. His only real failure was underestimating the danger that the Hollands' revolutionary work had placed them in. All of this, of course, greatly built up the irony inherent in his subsequent downfall. During the last part of his life, alcohol and psychological damage had rendered Cable an unfeeling brute, though his ultimate handling of the Arcane affair and his last courageous act demonstrated that at least a tiny part of the old Matt Cable had always lived on inside him.

LIZABETH TREMAYNE

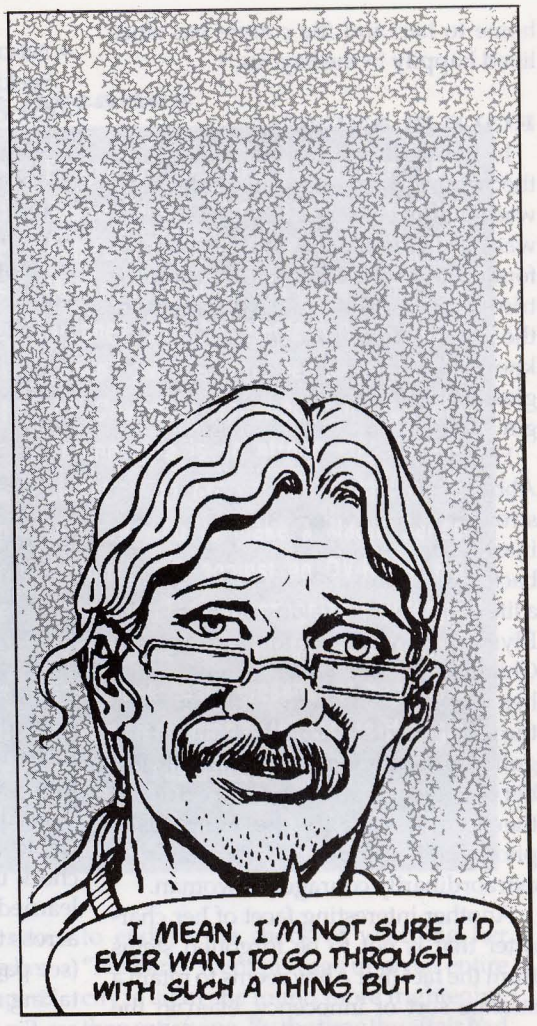
DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	3	WILL:	3	MIND:	2
INFL:	3/2†	AURA:	3/2†	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7			HERO POINTS:	5

- **SKILLS:**
  Artist (Writer): 2, Charisma†: 4
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Connections: Press (Low), Swamp Thing (Low)
- **DRAWBACKS:**
  Miscellaneous: Several years ago, Liz was deeply traumatized by an explosion. For many years, she was incapable of interacting normally with other people. Although this is no longer the case, the trauma still inhibits her abilities to think clearly and remember.
- **MOTIVATION:**
  Upholding the Good
- **OCCUPATION:**
  Former News Reporter/Writer
- **WEALTH:**
  Formerly 7, now 3

†Liz lost the Charisma Skill and her INFL and AURA were reduced to their lower values due to the events of *Saga of the Swamp Thing* #20.

A television reporter and free-lance writer, Lizabeth Tremayne brought the outside world its first glimpse of the Swamp Thing when she completed an exposé on the legendary Louisiana "swamp man" just prior to the "anatomy lesson," though her book was dismissed by many as mere tabloid sensationalism. While researching her story, Liz discovered the Sunderland/D.D.I. conspiracy that had set its sights on the Swamp Thing, and actually managed to locate the creature and warn him before the conspirators could get hold of him. Shortly thereafter, she began cooperating with the Swamp Thing and a dentist she had met by the name of Dennis Barclay in an effort to penetrate the mysteries that shrouded the conspiracy.[26]

Just before the Swamp Thing was finally captured by Sunderland troops, D.D.I. agents planted a bomb in the hotel where Dennis and Liz had been staying, hoping to eliminate the couple. Although neither of the targets were in the room at the time the bomb exploded, the incident would deeply affect the both of them for the rest of their lives. Liz was so traumatized by the explosion that she could no longer think straight or interact with others. And although Dennis seemingly escaped the blast unharmed, it soon became apparent that the bomb blast had rendered him a hopeless paranoiac, condemned to forever unearth "Sunderland conspiracies" aimed at ending his life in all but the most innocent of events.[27]



Liz spent the next two years hiding in a Louisiana apartment with Dennis, who remained convinced that hundreds of D.D.I. agents were combing the country looking for them. After one day noticing some of the news reports concerning Abby Cable's relationship with the Swamp Thing that were coming out of Gotham City, a disheveled Liz finally decided to come out of hiding to seek out her former friends. As soon as he discovered she was missing, Dennis followed her to Houma, where the pair finally met up with Abby, whom Dennis believed to be a D.D.I. impostor. In the tragic struggle which ensued, Dennis was killed by an alligator, more or less forcing the essentially helpless Liz to move in with Abby.[28]

Lately, Liz has made dramatic progress in her battle to put the past behind her. In the last few months she has begun to write again, and she has recently moved in with Abby's friend Chester Williams, with whom she now enjoys a romantic relationship.

ROLE-PLAYING:

When she began appearing alongside the Swamp Thing, Liz was an inquisitive, crusading journalist rather like Lois Lane. Not only did she have the skills to track down the Swamp Thing and assemble the facts relating to his story, she also had the courage and determination to stand with him against the insurmountable odds of the Sunderland/D.D.I. conspiracy.

After the explosion that almost killed her, Liz lost her courage and became very tentative and easily flustered. Her condition was so acute that Dennis Barclay was able to exploit it to the point where he completely dominated her life for more than two years. Now, with Chester's help, Liz is finally beginning to overcome her problems and regain her self-esteem.

CHESTER WILLIAMS

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	2	WILL:	3	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	3	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7			HERO POINTS:	5

- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Connections: Environmentalist Groups and Agencies (Low), Swamp Thing (High); Scholar (1960s culture, narcotics).
- **MOTIVATION:**
  Upholding the Good
- **OCCUPATION:**
  Environmentalist
- **WEALTH:** 3

Chester is an aging "hippy" environmentalist. His first "contact" with the Swamp Thing came when he discovered one of the Swamp Thing's psychogenic tubers in the bayou while out searching for herbs.[29] Later, Chester joined those who flocked to Gotham City after the Swamp Thing turned it into a sort of Eden, and met Abby Cable just after Alec's apparent death at the hands of the D.D.I.[30]

After they both moved back to Louisiana, Chester and Abby began full-time volunteer work for a local environmentalist group, supporting themselves with the pension checks that Abby received as Matt Cable's wife. Chester was at Abby's side during both of Alec's long absences, and has consistently proven himself one of her closest friends. Recently, Chester began a romantic relationship with an old friend of Abby and Alec, Liz Tremayne. He now shares his apartment with her.

ROLE-PLAYING:

Chester is a truly "nice" guy in a very non-melodramatic sense. He would go out of his way to help almost anyone at almost any time, he is very sensitive to the needs of others, and he almost never gets angry. Over the years, Chester has become a very reliable friend to both Abby and Swamp Thing.

LABO

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	2	WILL:	3	MIND:	2
INFL:	3	AURA:	3	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7			HERO POINTS:	5

- **SKILLS:**
  Medicine: 5
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Area Knowledge (Louisiana Bayous)
- **ALTER EGO:** Gene LaBostrie
- **MOTIVATION:**
  Upholding the Good
- **OCCUPATION:** Cajun Healer
- **WEALTH:** 3

Labo is the *traiteur* or "healer" of the Cajun village that rests on the outskirts of the region of the bayou inhabited by Swamp Thing and Abby.[31] For years Labo has befriended the couple and helped them avoid the curiosity seekers and reporters who occasionally come looking for them.[32] It was Labo and his wife who delivered Abby's baby in Alec's absence, an event which has drawn Labo even closer to the Swamp Thing and his mate.[33] He and his family are now numbered among the couple's closest friends.

ROLE-PLAYING:

Labo is a very stable, practical man with an aura of mystery about him. He doesn't speak much, but constantly gives off the impression that he knows a lot more than he is saying.

TEFÉ

Tefé is Alec and Abby's baby and the heir to the Swamp Thing's post of earth elemental and protector of the biosphere. At present, it would be pointless to present a set of game statistics for her since so little will be known about her abilities for the foreseeable future. One can assume that she will eventually develop all of Alec's powers, though exactly how her power level will compare with Alec's is completely unknown. As of this writing, Tefé has already demonstrated the Self Link (Spirit Travel) and Dimension Travel Powers.[34]

In terms of role playing, Tefé is a baby and acts like all babies: she cries, coos, gurgles, sleeps, and gets into things.



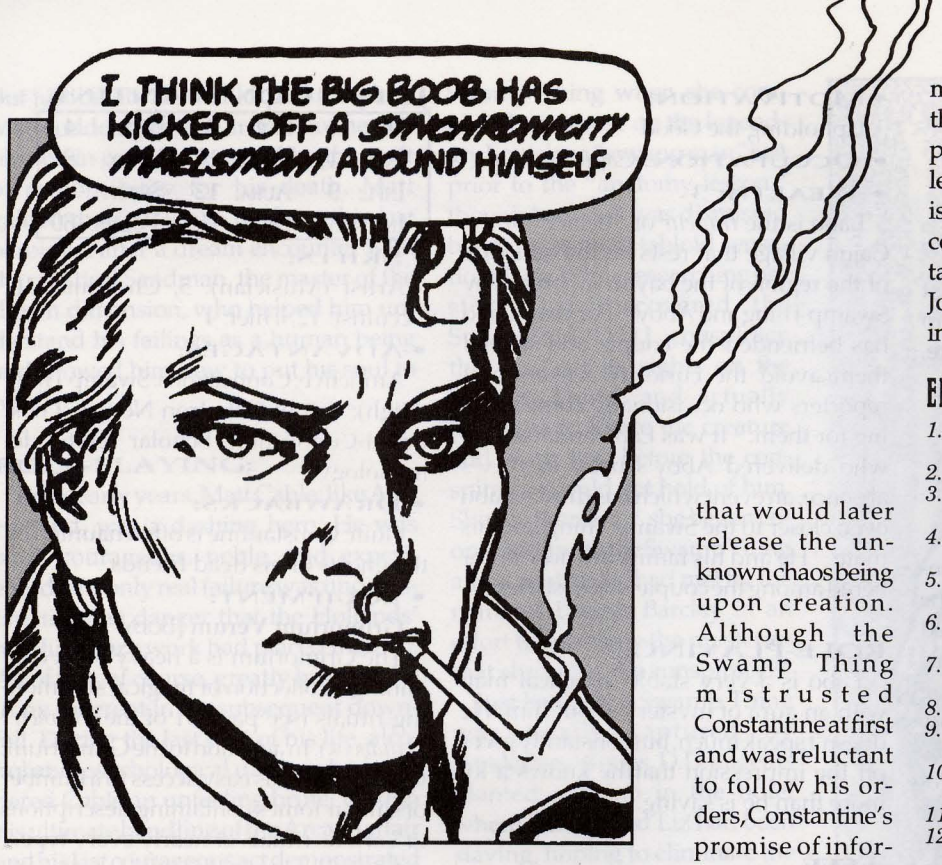
JOHN CONSTANTINE

DEX:	4	STR:	3	BODY:	4
INT:	11	WILL:	10	MIND:	8
INFL:	9	AURA:	12	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	24			HERO POINTS:	60

- **SKILLS:**
  Artist (Musician): 5, Charisma: 10, Occultist: 12, Thief: 4
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Attractive; Connections: Swamp Thing (High); Gift of Gab; Iron Nerves; Luck; Omni-Connection; Scholar (cults, demonology)
- **DRAWBACKS:**
  Guilt: Constantine is often haunted by the ghosts of his dead friends.
- **EQUIPMENT:**
  Grimorium Verum [BODY: 1]
  The Grimorium is a heavy book containing a collection of magical summoning rituals (see page 61 of the *Character Handbook*). In addition to the Grimorium, Constantine has easy access to a number of similar tomes containing descriptions of various rituals of nearly every type.
- **MOTIVATION:**
  Responsibility of Power
- **OCCUPATION:** Meddler
- **WEALTH:** 5

Although each of them may profess a strong dislike for the other, the relationship between John Constantine and the Swamp Thing has always been more cooperative than adversarial. On the surface, the Swamp Thing loathes Constantine's constant interruptions and the arrogance with which he so flippantly begins issuing orders. But at the same time, at least a tiny part of the Swamp Thing is grateful for Constantine's vigilance. He and Abby have grown to fear Constantine's occasional visits because they know the calamities that a typical visit portends. John Constantine has never been one to overreact.

Constantine's past remains as shady and mysterious as some of his motives. In the late 1970s, he was a prominent figure in the English punk rock scene, heading up a band known as "Mucous Membrane." Apparently, dabbling in the occult was something of a fad amongst the punk musicians of the day, and Constantine and his fellow band members were no exceptions. In fact, Constantine had a certain knack for conjuration that was not shared by his "rude boy" colleagues. While most of the punks simply pushed ceremonial candles around and had a good laugh,



Constantine and some of his friends got their hands on a couple of authentic arcane tomes and even went so far as to summon a real demon into a deserted nightclub in Newcastle, England. That night, Constantine learned that magic is not a very healthy hobby for inexperienced dabblers. The demon, whom Constantine later identified as Nergal, horribly killed a couple of Constantine's friends and swore vengeance upon the summoner himself before returning to the nether regions.[35]

Shortly after this incident occurred, Constantine began a sort of relentless one-man campaign to oppose any of the more sinister occult forces that attempted to intrude upon the earth, quite probably spurred on by guilt over the death of his friends. Between the Newcastle incident and the time that his war began to weave its way into the saga of the Swamp Thing, Constantine made the transition from rank occult amateur to skilled, seasoned veteran. By the time he first encountered the Swamp Thing, Constantine had already acquired a reputation as the "bad boy" of the conjuration circuit amongst the legion of Earth's mystical heroes, probably owing to the fact that he'd had brief affairs with half their daughters.[36]

The first time that Constantine sought out the Swamp Thing's aid was when the South American Brujería were preparing to enact the ritual that would later release the unknown chaos being upon creation. Although the Swamp Thing mistrusted Constantine at first and was reluctant to follow his orders, Constantine's promise of information as to the Swamp Thing's true nature and abilities was enough to convince the creature to enter the fray. Before the entire affair ended, the Swamp Thing went on to play an absolutely vital role in the defeat of the Brujería and the preservation of all creation, though not all of the warriors Constantine had assembled survived the campaign.[37]

Later, Constantine became a major player in the mystical catastrophe that erupted over the Sprout saga (see page 9), eventually "loaning" his body to the Swamp Thing, thereby permitting the creature to conceive a child with Abby.[38]

ROLE-PLAYING:

John Constantine is best played as an enigma. Nobody knows exactly where his detailed and intimate knowledge of the occult comes from, and this particular fact is precisely what makes him so interesting.

On the outside, Constantine is arrogant, pushy, and, at times, annoyingly witty. True to his "punk" background, he has a deeply rooted mistrust of authority and the practical experience to back it up. But on the inside, Constantine's soul is in a constant state of turmoil. His youthful mischief and his many battles against the forces of the occult have left quite a body count in their wake, and Constantine feels every single death almost every night. His skills at concealing this vulnerability, however, are flawless, partially due to the fact that the first lesson every good conjurer needs to learn is how to hide his fears, lest the entities he conjures begin to use him to their advantage. (For more detailed information on John Constantine, watch for the upcoming *Magic Sourcebook*.)

ENDNOTES

1. Swamp Thing #1, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
2. Black Orchid #1, *(Gaiman / McKean)*
3. Swamp Thing #7, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
4. Saga of the Swamp Thing #22, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
5. Swamp Thing #62, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
6. Swamp Thing #59, *second series (Bissette / Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
7. Swamp Thing #3, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
8. *ibid.*
9. Saga of the Swamp Thing #17, *second series (Pasko / Bissette / Totleben)*
10. Saga of the Swamp Thing #27, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
11. *ibid.*
12. Swamp Thing Annual #2 *(Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
13. Swamp Thing #51-53, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
14. Swamp Thing #52-53, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
15. Swamp Thing #53, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
16. Swamp Thing #81, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
17. Swamp Thing #76, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
18. Swamp Thing #91, *second series (Wheeler / Broderick / Alcala)*
19. Saga of the Swamp Thing #26, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
20. Swamp Thing #1, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
21. Swamp Thing #3, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
22. Swamp Thing #13, *first series (Wein / Redondo)*
23. Saga of the Swamp Thing #19, *second series (Pasko / Bissette / Totleben)*
24. Saga of the Swamp Thing #31, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
25. Swamp Thing #84, *second series (Veitch / Mandrake / Alcala)*
26. Saga of the Swamp Thing #1-20, *second series (Pasko / Yeates / Bissette / Totleben)*
27. Swamp Thing #54, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
28. *ibid.*
29. Swamp Thing #43, *second series (Moore / Woch / Randall)*
30. Swamp Thing #52-53, *second series (Moore / Veitch / Alcala)*
31. Swamp Thing Annual #4 *(Bissette / Hoffman)*
32. Swamp Thing #64, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Yeates / Alcala)*
33. Swamp Thing #90, *second series (Wheeler / Broderick / Alcala)*
34. Swamp Thing #96, *second series (Wheeler / Broderick / Alcala)*
35. Hellblazer #11, *second series (Delano / Piers Rayner / Buckingham)*
36. Swamp Thing #49, *second series (Moore / Woch / Alcala)*
37. Swamp Thing #50, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
38. Swamp Thing #76, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*

THE SHREDDERS, THE MADMEN, AND THE FALLEN

The villains who have graced the pages of *Swamp Thing* have been quite a motley lot. Over the years, Swamp Thing has tangled with evil mega-corporations, clockwork robots, demons, devils, giant chaos beings, alien space entities, and narcissistic evil sorcerers, in addition to the more traditional (or perhaps not so traditional) vampires, werewolves, and zombies.

Of course, the supernatural tone of the book essentially guarantees that the Swamp Thing's enemies will deviate a bit from those faced by Superman, the Batman, and the rest of the heroes populating the DC Universe. But over the years, the typical *Swamp Thing* antagonist has differed from his four-color colleagues in another important respect that has much less to do with the book's mystical slant—namely, in the realm of motivation. Megalomania and greed, both of which are so common in the pages of, say, *Justice League of America* or *Detective Comics* have been nearly nonexistent in the Swamp Thing's corner of the world for some time now. The adversaries whom Swamp Thing squares off against are typically driven by motives that are much harder to explain: madness, nihilism, fear, hatred; and this unpredictability is often the peg which keeps the typical *Swamp Thing* story firmly grounded in the horror genre. Gamemasters creating their own Swamp Thing villains should definitely keep this characteristic in mind.

And unlike the archenemies of the bulk of the DC heroes, very few of the Swamp Thing's nemeses come back for return engagements, a fact which has swelled the ranks of the Swamp Thing's foes considerably. For this reason we could never hope to publish game information for every menace the Swamp Thing has ever confronted. Below is catalog of those antagonists who we feel would make the most interesting additions to the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game.

Our first choice, of course, will surprise no one . . .

ANTON ARCANE

(D E C E A S E D)

ORIGINAL HUMAN BODY

DEX:	4	STR:	3	BODY:	3/7†
INT:	12	WILL:	9	MIND:	7
INFL:	10	AURA:	13	SPIRIT:	10
INITIATIVE:	26			HERO POINTS:	75

†BODY is 3 prior to 1944, and 7 after

"PATCHWORK" BODY

DEX:	4	STR:	9	BODY:	9
INT:	12	WILL:	9	MIND:	7
INFL:	10	AURA:	13	SPIRIT:	10
INITIATIVE:	26			HERO POINTS:	75

INSECT BODY

DEX:	4	STR:	7	BODY:	10
INT:	12	WILL:	9	MIND:	7
INFL:	10	AURA:	13	SPIRIT:	10
INITIATIVE:	26			HERO POINTS:	75

- **POWERS:**
  Invulnerability: 13
- **SKILLS:**
  Gadgetry: 12 , Medicine: 12 , Occultist: 13, Scientist: 13
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Connections: Nazi Germany (High); Genius; Iron Nerves; Leadership; Scholar (magical artifacts, surgery)
- **DRAWBACKS:**
  Catastrophic Irrational Attraction to revenge on Swamp Thing and Abby Cable; Strange Appearance (in most bodies)
- **EQUIPMENT**
  UN-MEN: see page 24.
  MYSTIC MIRROR [BODY: 6, Remote Sensing: 25]
  INSECT CRAFT [BODY: 11, Flight: 10, Flame Project: 10]
  Various Arcane Tomes Detailing Mystic Rituals: see page 60 of the *Character Handbook*. One ritual definitely contained in his texts which Arcane has frequently used in the past mimics Personality Transfer at a rating of 16 APs.
- **MOTIVATION:** Power Lust
- **WEALTH:** 11

It is particularly embarrassing to lead off this chapter with a discussion of Anton Arcane after making the above observations, since Arcane serves as a counterexample to almost every one of them. Unlike most of the Swamp Thing's adversaries, Arcane has much in common with the traditional four-color comic villain, and this contrast with the series' other antagonists is probably more than a little responsible for his continuing popularity with the book's fans. Arcane has also confronted the Swamp Thing many times over the years, first appearing in the title's second issue published almost twenty years ago and still playing an important role in the saga today.

The earliest recorded chapter of Arcane's story is set during the First World War, when he studied at the Hamburg School of Medicine in Germany. Not content with the school's more traditional curriculum, it wasn't too long before young Arcane began conducting frightening experiments of his own design upon half-dead soldiers he'd capture from nearby battlefields. Shortly after these experiments began, Arcane's atrocities were uncovered and he was removed from the Hamburg School. But by that time,

his own inquiries were already beginning to bear more fruit than his academic work anyway.

One day, the body of one of the unfortunate soldiers serving as a subject for one of Arcane's mad experiments became possessed by the spirit of the Swamp Thing, who had unwillingly entered the era during his "time odyssey" (see page 9). Arcane became so impressed by the sudden resilience this particular soldier began to show that he temporarily stopped all of his other experiments in order to study the soldier full time, hoping to find a clue to the secret of immortality. For weeks thereafter, Arcane tortured the soldier (and the Swamp Thing within), meticulously cataloging the Swamp Thing's ability to repair his damaged flesh. After he ran out of physical tortures, Arcane turned to his burgeoning knowledge of the occult and began an attempt to magically torture his captive. But just before he could implement this plan, Arcane's villainy was discovered by his mother and her cousin Hans von Hammer, Germany's legendary Enemy Ace. In the ensuing struggle, von Hammer shot and killed Arcane while trying to rescue his victim.[1]

Or at least, von Hammer *thought* he had killed Arcane. Actually, by this time, Arcane had already learned enough about both medicine and sorcery to easily repair his seemingly fatal wounds. After a quick magic ritual, he fled from Castle Arcane and began serving in the German Army as a medic. One of the soldiers whom Arcane served alongside during this era was a young Adolf Hitler, whose later exploits were partially inspired by Arcane's urgings.

When he finally rose to power twenty years later, Hitler brought Arcane with him, and eventually bestowed upon his former mentor the rank of general in the *Deutsch Wermacht*, the Nazi army. Other than a source of clout he could use to gain access to medical equipment and fresh subjects for experimentation, however, the title meant little to Arcane, who had grown both bored and frustrated with Hitler shortly after World War II began. It was around this time that Arcane actually began to make dramatic progress toward his goal of immortality. Before long, he had learned how to modify the body so that it was capable of repairing itself when confronted with a traumatic wound, though he was still unable to conquer the aging process. During these years, Arcane created the first of his "Un-Men" as well.

UN-MEN

DEX:	4	STR:	6	BODY:	6
INT:	3	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	3	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE: 10					

The Un-Men are creatures constructed from the mutated body parts of several different organisms. Although they are intelligent and have independent free wills, the Un-Men always follow Arcane's orders blindly. When he was alive, Arcane had a virtually unlimited number of Un-Men at his disposal. Note that the statistics above are for a typical Un-Man, and specific individuals can vary greatly. Some of the Un-Men, for example, were quite intelligent (INT of 6) and were capable of performing complex brain transplant operations.

Toward the end of World War II, Arcane again encountered the Swamp Thing as part of the "time odyssey." This time, Swamp Thing had occupied the body of a freshly deceased member of the legendary Easy Company, led by the indefatigable Sgt. Rock. During the ensuing brief encounter, Arcane noticed the resilience of the Swamp Thing's physical form and began making plans to capture the creature and transplant his own soul into the Swamp Thing's powerful body as a means of circumventing the aging obstacle to immortality.[2]

Unable to locate the Swamp Thing and implement these plans for several years after World War II ended (because, unknown to Arcane, the Swamp Thing would not be created for another forty years), Arcane finally decided to put his research back on its original track. But for the next three decades, the secret to retarding the aging process eluded him. Finally, when he was beginning to reach a point of desperation due to his body's imminent collapse, Arcane happened to notice the then newly created Swamp Thing while scrying with a magic mirror. His immediate response was to dispatch a group of Un-Men to Louisiana to capture the beast and return him to Castle Arcane, which he had reoccupied decades earlier.

When the Un-Men returned with their captive, Arcane was amazed to discover that the creature did not remember him (because their earlier encounters would actually take place in Swamp Thing's future). Delighted that there was no need to force the creature into submission, Arcane tried the easier route of simply tricking the Swamp Thing into giving up his body. In return for the body, Arcane promised to restore Alec Holland's humanity. Still unaware that he could never possibly reclaim his human identity, Swamp Thing immediately accepted this offer and the switch was made. Although it appeared as though Arcane had fulfilled his part of the bargain at the time, Swamp Thing would later learn that he could not have possibly regained his Alec Holland identity during this encounter. Instead, it is likely that Arcane simply transplanted his soul into the body of one of the Un-Men and cast a spell of illusion over the creature that made it appear to resemble Holland. In any case, after he discovered that Arcane had wanted his body so that he could use its power to launch a demonic scheme to take over the world, "Holland" voluntarily smashed the mystic talisman that was maintaining the body switch, an action which returned everyone to their previous forms. In the struggle that followed, Arcane fell off a tall spire and seemingly died once again.[3]

This time, Arcane dodged death because he'd had the foresight to issue his Un-Men with a set of instructions for transferring his soul into a hideous "backup body" he had built in case anything should happen to him. When he finally awoke after this painful and lengthy procedure, the one thing that was on Arcane's mind was avenging himself upon the Swamp Thing. A couple of months later, Arcane caught up with his nemesis in the American South, but was again defeated after his Un-Men became possessed by the ghosts of some mistreated slaves and tore him to pieces.[4]

But the Un-Men had again been issued their instructions, and Arcane later returned in another back-up body, this model even less human-

looking than the last. Again, Arcane came looking for the Swamp Thing and revenge, this time piloting a large flying "insect craft." Again Arcane was killed. But this time Swamp Thing had the foresight to confirm his adversary's demise, making sure that Arcane could not be resurrected by the Un-Men once more.[5]

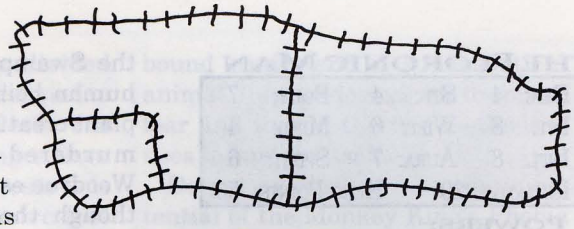
But not even this extraordinary measure ended the threat of Arcane forever. Months later, his spirit was able to occupy the body of Matt Cable (see *Matt Cable,* page 19). Using Cable's physical form, Arcane was able to kill his niece Abby, who had betrayed him in his eyes when she began her friendship with his enemy, though he was again defeated by the Swamp Thing, who then rescued Abby's soul and brought her back to the world of the living.[6]

From this point on, Arcane's only appearances came in the form of a strange sort of comic relief, as the reader was given periodic glimpses of his exploits in Hell, where the demons seemed to take a special delight in torturing and punishing him. But just recently, Arcane was elevated to the status of a demon himself, and it is likely that he will be back to menace the Swamp Thing yet again.[7]

ROLE-PLAYING:

Arcane is a melodramatic, power-mad villain with a very unsettling twist: he absolutely refuses to die. He is bold, arrogant, and intelligent, though never quite intelligent enough.

One of the reasons why Arcane has been particularly effective in the *Swamp Thing* comics is that he has always been surrounded by interesting but disturbing imagery that enhances his villainy. This trend began with Berni Wrightson's wonderfully hideous Un-Men, and continued on all the way up through the depictions of the various inhuman bodies he has inhabited and the results of his confinement in Hell. When using Arcane in your own adventures, you should try to make use of this technique as well. Of course, there are no true visual images in role-playing games, but you can easily stress this aspect of the character in your descriptions and plot lines.



THE PATCHWORK MAN

(D E C E A S E D)

DEX:	3	STR:	8	BODY:	10
INT:	1	WILL:	4	MIND:	2
INFL:	8	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	7
INITIATIVE:	12			HERO POINTS:	40

- **POWERS:**
  Invulnerability: 12
- **DRAWBACKS:**
  Catastrophic Physical Restriction: Patchwork Man cannot speak and has greatly difficulty with his long term memory.
- **ALTER EGO:** Gregori Arcane
- **MOTIVATION:**
Unwanted Power
- **WEALTH:** 0

Anton and Abby, of course, are not the only Arcanes who have played a role in the Swamp Thing saga. Abby's father, Gregori, also known as the "Patchwork Man," has been a feature player in a couple of stories as well, though Gregori is nothing like his brother Anton. In fact, placing Gregori alongside Swamp Thing's various nemeses in this chapter is sort of awkward given the fact that the Patchwork Man isn't exactly a "villain" (note his heroic Motivation), though he's never exactly been a "friend" to the Swamp Thing either.

Exactly when Gregori was born remains unknown, but he is clearly much younger than Anton. While Anton was busy disgracing the family with his horrible experiments and leaving a trail of carnage across Europe, Gregori was studying in the best German universities and building his own successful business. When he was in his early thirties, Gregori married and soon had a child, a daughter named Abigail. But when Abigail was still very young, her mother died, leaving Gregori a widow. A few years later, this unfortunate turn of events led Gregori's neighbors to begin a legal campaign to remove Abby from his custody. Although the ostensible reason for the campaign was the fact that Gregori's frequent business trips kept him away from home too long to raise a child properly, the real reason for the outcry was the villagers' basic mistrust of the Arcane family. Anton had so ruined the family's reputation that the villagers had begun to mistrust Gregori as well, fearing that Abby, too, might become a monster if left in his care.

One day, Abby became so distressed by the events in the village that she decided to run away. As soon as he discovered she was missing, Gregori ran out after her. But just as he finally caught up with the frightened child, he stepped on an unexploded land mine that was left over from World War II. Horrified by the sight of her father being torn to pieces by the explosion, Abby fled the scene just before her uncle Anton arrived and collected up his brother's remains.

For the next two weeks, Anton labored over his brother, finally managing to preserve Gregori's life by grafting various rotting and ill-fitting body parts on to his basic human shell. When Gregori (now the Patchwork Man) awoke, he found that he could no longer speak. Eventually, he discovered his predicament by glancing into a nearby mirror, and was so horrified by his shattered visage that he tried to kill his brother in retribution. With the aid of his Un-Men, however, Anton easily sedated Gregori and locked him in the dungeon of Castle Arcane.

Years later, after Anton was driven out of the castle during his first encounter with the Swamp Thing, Gregori was left unsupervised and easily managed an escape. All the years he had been imprisoned, Gregori's only thoughts were for his daughter, whom he immediately began to seek out. But when he finally found Abby, she no longer recognized him, prompting Gregori to abduct her, though the Swamp Thing was on hand to come to her aid. In the end, the two "monsters" fought an epic battle over a sprawling chasm that ended with the both of them cooperating to save Abby's life after she nearly slipped into the chasm herself. In order to complete the rescue, the Patchwork Man had to release his own grip, seemingly sacrificing his life, but content with the fact that Abby recognized him just moments before he fell.[8]

Due to the unusual resilience of his patchwork body, however, the tremendous fall did not kill Gregori after



all. He then spent the next several years wandering the Bavarian countryside until he was finally captured by a scientific organization headed up by a Doctor Elijah Chomes, who sedated the Patchwork Man and brought him to the United States for testing.

Years later, the Patchwork Man escaped from Chomes' laboratory and happened to stumble upon a newspaper containing a report about his daughter's relationship with the Swamp Thing. He immediately set off for Louisiana and eventually located Abigail. In the end, however, he was so ashamed to face her in his present form that he tore himself to pieces.[9]

ROLE-PLAYING:

Not only was the Patchwork Man incapable of speech, but the many years he spent imprisoned beneath Castle Arcane had rotted his brain to the point where he could barely think as well. His only real memories of his former life were his daughter Abigail, his instinct to protect her, and his hatred of his brother Anton.

THE FLORONIC MAN

DEX:	4	STR:	4	BODY:	7
INT:	8	WILL:	6	MIND:	4
INFL:	8	AURA:	7	SPIRIT:	6
INITIATIVE:	20			HERO POINTS:	55

- **POWERS:**

Plant Control: 15, Plant Growth: 18, Speak With Plants: 18

- **SKILLS:**

Gadgetry: 7, Scientist: 11

- **ADVANTAGES:**

Connections: Arkham Asylum (Low); Scholar (botany)

- **DRAWBACKS:**

Serious Psychological Instability; Strange Appearance

- **EQUIPMENT:**

False Flesh Spray [BODY: 2]

Woodrue sprays the false flesh over his body, temporarily restoring his human appearance.

- **ALTER EGO:** Dr. Jason Woodrue
- **MOTIVATION:** Psychopath
- **WEALTH:** 4

Although his last several appearances have been within the pages of *Swamp Thing,* Woodrue began as a nemesis to the more traditional costumed heroes who inhabit the DC Universe. He is actually an alien scientist from a dimension inhabited chiefly by wood creatures, flower spirits, and other plant-based life forms.

Woodrue came to Earth after he was banished from his homeworld for various crimes and misdeeds. Shortly after his arrival, Jason Woodrue used his knowledge of the botanical sciences to assemble a plant army which he used as part of an attempt to conquer North America, a scheme that was foiled by a member of the Justice League of America known as the Atom,[10] who quickly became Woodrue's worst enemy.

After nearly innumerable defeats at the hands of the Atom and various other superheroes in the years that followed, Woodrue finally wound up in the Arkham Asylum for the Criminally Insane in Gotham City. By this time, he had perfected a chemical elixir which turned him into a walking plant and bestowed a broad array of powers upon him.

Eventually, Woodrue was released from Arkham at the behest of the Sunderland Corporation, which brought him in to study the recently captured Swamp Thing. In fact, it was Woodrue who first discovered that the Swamp Thing was no longer a human being at all, but a powerful plant creature.[11] After Swamp Thing murdered General Sunderland, Woodrue escaped out into the world, though the discovery that a plant creature as powerful as the Swamp Thing existed had only heightened his madness. Soon, he began a lengthy campaign to destroy all animal life on the Earth, and deluded himself into believing that the instructions to carry out this plan were coming from the Green itself. But ultimately, the Swamp Thing overcame the horror of his recent self-discovery in time to foil Woodrue, leaving the Justice League to send him back to Arkham.[12]

Most recently, Woodrue's body was nearly occupied by the Sprout, though the unborn plant elemental ultimately judged him unworthy (see page 9).[13]

ROLE-PLAYING:

After encountering the Swamp Thing, Woodrue abandoned his former megalomania and declared himself a servant of the Green. Not really a criminal, he now does anything he feels will please the Green. His crimes stem from the fact that his brain is incapable of comprehending the Green's vastness and all its subtleties, meaning that his "tributes" are usually extremely inappropriate.

Although Swamp Thing has tried to show him the error of his ways, Woodrue still carries a deep-seated resentment of humanity within his subconscious.

THE MONKEY KING

DEX:	7	STR:	1†	BODY:	1†
INT:	4	WILL:	6	MIND:	6
INFL:	9	AURA:	9	SPIRIT:	7
INITIATIVE:	14			HERO POINTS:	40

- **POWERS:**

Aura of Fear: 11 , Claws: 7, Phobia: 13, Power Reserve: 35

- **DRAWBACKS:**

Fatal Vulnerability to daylight.

- **LIMITATIONS:**

†Miscellaneous: the Monkey King's Power Reserve begins at 0 APs. Every RAP Aura of Fear or Phobia the Monkey King earns against its host character (see below) increases the Power Reserve by 1 AP up to its maximum of 35. Reserves gained last for just one hour and must be recharged the next hour. The Monkey King's APs of Power

Reserve are automatically divided between its STR and BODY. Also tied to the Monkey King's Power Reserve is its physical size, which ranges from that of an insect (when the reserve is drained) to that of a twelve-foot monster (when the reserve is full).

Host Character: when it enters the Earth plane, the Monkey King must choose a host. It is the fear of the host that gives the Monkey King the Power to remain on the plane. The Monkey King cannot allow harm to befall the host unless it wishes to leave the plane until summoned again.

- **MOTIVATION:** Nihilist
- **WEALTH:** N/A

The Monkey King is an example of the sort of foul beast one can find grazing through the chasms of Hell. It was released onto the Earth plane by Anton Arcane as a prelude to his seizing control of Matt Cable's body in an effort to gain revenge upon the Swamp Thing and Abby. Arcane was able to tune into a Louisiana couple's attempts to use a ouija board to contact the spirits of the dead. Guiding their hand, Arcane forced them to use the board to spell out an incantation which brought the Monkey King to earth. Once it arrived, the beast immediately killed the couple who summoned it and chose their son Paul as its host.

After his parents' deaths, Paul was placed in the Elysium Lawns Center for Autistic Children, where Abby Cable had just taken on a job as a counselor. Each night thereafter, the Monkey King would visit Paul and terrorize him and his fellow patients. Eventually, Abby noticed certain peculiarities at the center and brought them to the attention of the Swamp Thing, who had already detected the Monkey King's malevolence. Rushing out to the center one night to investigate, the pair encountered Etrigan the Demon, who had been tracking the Monkey King since it left Hell. But unfortunately, the beast proved too powerful even for the combined forces of the Swamp Thing and the Demon. In the end, the Monkey King was defeated by Paul, who strangled off its supply of fear, thereby allowing Etrigan to devour it.[14]

ROLE-PLAYING:

Although the Monkey King is quite cunning, it is essentially the hell-bound equivalent of a nonsentient animal. Its only desires are to spread fear and to kill, the two methods it uses to sustain itself.

Do not overlook the dramatic potential of the Monkey King's Phobia Power when planning an adventure in which he appears. Vividly describing a character's deepest fears after he has been subjected to the Power is an ideal method for getting across a little character development.

ROSEWOOD VAMPIRES

DEX:	7	STR:	7	BODY:	10
INT:	4	WILL:	6	MIND:	8
INFL:	8	AURA:	7	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	19			HERO POINTS:	30

- **POWERS:**

Claws: 5, Hypnosis: 7, Invulnerability: 16, Sealed Systems: 20, Vampirism: 9

- **SKILLS:** Thief (Stealth): 6
- **DRAWBACKS:**

Attack Vulnerability to wooden stakes (-4 CS); Fatal Vulnerability to running water; Catastrophic Irrational Fear of holy symbols and holy water

- **BONUSES:**

Miscellaneous: Any creature drained down to a Current BODY Condition of zero or lower through the use of the vampires' Vampirism Power becomes a vampire.

VAMPIRE QUEEN

DEX:	1	STR:	9	BODY:	15
INT:	4	WILL:	6	MIND:	8
INFL:	9	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	19			HERO POINTS:	30

- **POWERS:**

Claws: 5, Hypnosis: 7, Invulnerability: 16, Sealed Systems: 20, Vampirism: 9

- **SKILLS:** Thief (Stealth): 6
- **DRAWBACKS:**

Attack Vulnerability to wooden stakes (-4 CS); Fatal Vulnerability to running water; Catastrophic Irrational Fear of holy symbols and holy water

- **BONUSES:**

Miscellaneous: Any creature drained down to a Current BODY Condition of zero or lower through the use of the vampires' Vampirism Power becomes a vampire.

- **MOTIVATION:** Nihilist/Survival
- **WEALTH:** N/A



A couple of decades ago, a more or less traditional vampire came to the town of Rosewood, Illinois, and began to spread its rather unique "disease." Before too long, virtually every one of Rosewood's inhabitants had been turned into a vampire as well, leaving the entire town literally full of the creatures. Although several "mysterious disappearances" began to take place in the towns neighboring Rosewood, the vampires were always careful to cover enough of their tracks to avoid annoying investigations. Soon, the town had understandably earned a rather eerie reputation amongst its neighbors, and was avoided by the residents of the region at all costs.

A couple of years later, the Swamp Thing was travelling on a freight train that passed through Rosewood, when he was attacked by a group of the vampires. Stopping in the town to investigate, he somehow stumbled across the few Rosewood citizens who had not been "corrupted," and helped them implement a plan to destroy all of the vampires by blowing up a nearby dam and flooding the entire town with running water.[15]

Years later, however, the Swamp Thing discovered that this stunt had not destroyed all the vampires after all. A few of the creatures hid in the airtight freezers of the Rosewood supermarket, and went on to found another large colony of vampires under the floodwaters. For years, the vampires survived by drinking the blood of fish and various other sea creatures. But when the Brujería were attempting to push the worldwide belief in the supernatural up to the necessary levels to cast the spell which would unleash the great chaos being upon creation, the South American nihilists emboldened the vampires from afar, prompting the creatures to





begin hunting human victims once again. It was this event that attracted the attention of John Constantine, who brought the Swamp Thing back to Rosewood as part of his education as to the nature of true evil.

In the end, Swamp Thing was once again forced to destroy the vampire colony, this time by inhabiting an entire hill with his consciousness and calling down another brace of running water upon the creatures. But before the deed was done, he learned an important lesson when he watched the vampire queen give birth to a litter of young and noticed that the vampires were really no different than humans: both groups essentially wanted only to be left alone, both killed to survive, and both could be ferocious in their own defense.[16]

ROLE-PLAYING:

In many ways, the Rosewood vampires are no different than the version of the vampire you are likely to find in the typical midnight movie. The major exception to this last statement is the fact that the Rosewood vampires do not kill out of malevolence, only out of a need to survive. But this does not mean that the vampires have any sort of special reverence for human life either. To the vampires, a human is the same thing as a cow or a fish. The only difference is the taste of its blood.

PENNAMAQUOT WEREWOLVES

DEX:	8	STR:	7	BODY:	9
INT:	3	WILL:	6	MIND:	5
INFL:	8	AURA:	7	SPIRIT:	7
INITIATIVE:	19			HERO POINTS:	30

- **POWERS:**

Analytic Smell/Tracking Scent: 7, Invulnerability: 14, Jumping: 2, Telepathy: 3

- **DRAWBACKS:**

Attack Vulnerability to silver weapons (-4 CS); Serious Irrational Attraction to vengeance upon males

- **MOTIVATION:** Psychopath
- **WEALTH:** N/A

Long ago, the Pennamaquot Indians of the northeastern United States would isolate their menstruating females from society and place them in dark huts, known as "the Red Lodges," where the women were forbidden to stand, lie down, touch anything, to see the sun, sky, or the moon.

Many decades later, as part of their effort to increase the worldwide belief in the supernatural, the Brujería enacted certain magic rituals which ultimately caused the souls of the Pennamaquot women to bind themselves to contemporary women living on the sites of the Red Lodges. The fury of the Indian spirits manifested itself by turning these women into werewolves and forcing them out to gain vengeance upon the males who had abused and degraded them.

The Swamp Thing met one of the Pennamaquot werewolves in Kennescock, Maine, while travelling around the country at the behest of John Constantine. Before Swamp Thing was forced to end the creature's rampage, the werewolf killed itself in frustration.[17]

ROLE-PLAYING:

The Pennamaquot werewolves provide the GM with a perfect opportunity to throw the players into a moral dilemma, a situation that is all too rare in the normally black-and-white world of role-playing ethics. The werewolves are clearly a menace to life and limb, yet they are so clearly the victim of injustice and their story is so compelling that it would be quite interesting to see what a group of players' heroes would do when confronted by them.





NUKEFACE

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	2	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	6			HERO POINTS:	25

- **POWERS:**
  Cell Rot: 15, Invulnerability: 5
- **DRAWBACKS:**
  Serious Psychological Instability; Strange Appearance
- **EQUIPMENT:**
  Irradiated Alcoholic Beverages [BODY: 1, Cell Rot: 8]
- **MOTIVATION:** Psychopathic
- **WEALTH:** N/A

"Nukeface," as he is called, is a derelict who used to store his supply of alcohol in a hole on the outskirts of a chemical factory in Pennsylvania. One day, the chemical factory caught fire, spilling harmful chemicals and radiation across the immediate countryside. By the time Nukeface recovered his alcohol, it had been thoroughly contaminated. When he later drank the alcohol, Nukeface inexplicably survived, but became a walking source of contamination himself. From that day forward, Nukeface has wandered around the country, accidentally killing other derelicts (with whom he shares his alcohol when they meet) and anyone else he touches or nears.

The Swamp Thing's physical body was destroyed for the first time when he met Nukeface in Louisiana just prior to the American Gothic. When last seen, Nukeface was heading for the road to continue his travels.[18]

ROLE-PLAYING:

The irradiated chemicals which damaged Nukeface's body also did severe damage to his mind. He is completely unaware of his current predicament and of the fact that his touch is fatal. Unless stopped, he will happily walk around spreading poison and disease forever.

BRUJERÍA

DEX:	4	STR:	4	BODY:	4
INT:	6	WILL:	9	MIND:	9
INFL:	6	AURA:	6	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	18			HERO POINTS:	15

- **SKILLS:**
  Weaponry: 5
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Area Knowledge (Brazilian rain forests)
- **EQUIPMENT:**
  Poisoned Spears [BODY: 2, EV: 4, Poison Touch: 8]
- **MOTIVATION:** Nihilist
- **WEALTH:** N/A

BRUJERÍA SHAMANS

DEX:	4	STR:	4	BODY:	4
INT:	9	WILL:	9	MIND:	9
INFL:	9	AURA:	11	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	18			HERO POINTS:	45

- **SKILLS:** Occultist: 11†
- **ADVANTAGES:**
  Area Knowledge (Brazilian rain forests); Leadership
- **EQUIPMENT:**
  Poisoned Spears [BODY: 2, EV: 4, Poison Touch: 8]
- **MOTIVATION:** Nihilist
- **WEALTH:** N/A

†All Brujería shamans have memorized various magic rituals and need no book or tome to cast them (see page 60 of the Character *Handbook*).

INVUNCHE

DEX:	5	STR:	8	BODY:	9
INT:	2	WILL:	9	MIND:	9
INFL:	6	AURA:	6	SPIRIT:	8
INITIATIVE:	13				

- **SKILLS:** Thief (Stealth): 7

The Invunche are the near-mindless, but physically impressive servants of the Brujería. One magic ritual commonly used by Brujería shamans mimics the Teleportation Power rated at 20 APs. The Brujería frequently

use this ritual to send Invunche all over the world to slay their enemies.

The Brujería are the mysterious tribe of otherwise primitive South American shamans that may be the most formidable menace the Swamp Thing has ever faced. It was the Brujería that set into motion the events that culminated in the American Gothic saga and the near destruction of all creation at the hands of the great chaos being.

To accomplish their aims, the Brujería tapped into the enormous amounts of mystical energy that were produced by the destruction of the various alternate universes during the *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. They then used this energy to cast several potent spells of their own energizing thousands of werewolves, vampires, and other occult menaces across the world.[19] The goal of this stage of the operation was to increase worldwide beliefs in the supernatural by confronting people with the more traditional supernatural menaces. The more people who believed that mysticism and the supernatural were real, the greater the power of the Brujería grew. Eventually, the Brujerían shamans accumulated enough power to enact the last great ritual which unleashed the chaos beast. Although the Swamp Thing seemingly destroyed the caves system hidden deep in the South American jungle which the Brujería used as a lair,[20] it is quite possible that a number of the tribesmen survived.

ROLE-PLAYING:

Throughout their tribe's entire existence, the Brujería have been interested in only one aim—the total destruction of all of creation. Exactly why they are so set upon accomplishing this goal remains a complete mystery.

Although the above statistics don't necessary look very impressive, don't be deceived. The real power of the Brujería rests in their voluminous knowledge of magic rituals. You can assume that one or more of the Brujerían shamans has memorized a ritual mimicking nearly every power detailed in the *Character Handbook*, and is capable of casting it on very short notice.

ENDNOTES

1. Swamp Thing #83, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
2. Swamp Thing #82, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
3. Swamp Thing #2, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
4. Swamp Thing #10, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
5. Saga of the Swamp Thing #19, *second series (Pasko / Bissette / Totleben)*
6. Swamp Thing #29-31, Annual #2, *second series, (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
7. Swamp Thing #96, *second series (Wheeler / Broderick / Alcala)*
8. Swamp Thing #3, *first series (Wein / Wrightson)*
9. Swamp Thing #58, *second series (Bissette / Veitch / Alcala)*
10. The Atom #1
11. Swamp Thing #21, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
12. Swamp Thing #24, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
13. Swamp Thing #66, *second series (Veitch / Alcala)*
14. Swamp Thing #25-27, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
15. Saga of the Swamp Thing #3, *second series (Pasko / Yeates)*
16. Swamp Thing #38-39, *second series (Moore / Woch / Totleben)*
17. Swamp Thing #40, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
18. Swamp Thing #35-36, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben)*
19. Swamp Thing #37-50, *second series (Moore / Bissette / Totleben / Veitch / Woch / Alcala / Randall)*
20. Swamp Thing #49, *second series (Moore / Woch / Alcala)*

And It Ends In A Swamp

The vast majority of Swamp Thing's adventures have been set in and around the bayou where Alec Holland's accident occurred, just outside of Houma, Louisiana. Houma is located in the southwestern portion of Louisiana, approximately fifty-seven miles from New Orleans. Together with nearby Terrebonne Parish, it makes up an urban area with a population of just over 100,000.

One of the things that makes Houma such an interesting place is its proximity to "Cajun country." The Cajuns are Americans of French decent with a fascinating culture all their own. Among other things, they are noted for their music, dancing (known as the "Fais Do Do"), cuisine (étouffée, gumbo, shrimp), woodcarving, and traditional festivals. Today, many of the Cajuns live in the urban areas in and around Houma/Terrebonne, but some (like Gene LaBostrie) still live in small "villages" in and around the bayou.

The swamplands frequented by the Swamp Thing and Abby are approximately thirty minutes travel from Houma. They lie in the deepest, most isolated part of the bayou network that slices up the entire area. Unlike the Swamp Thing's domain, the bayous closer to the large towns are usually quite crowded. Six different firms located in Houma alone run between five and eight tour groups through the nearby swamp country each day.

Here is some quick data that should make running an adventure set in Houma a bit easier:

Climate:

Avg. Annual Temp.
69°
January 51.9° F
July 82.4° F
Avg. Rainfall:
49.11 inches
Prevailing Winds:
Easterly

Special Events:

JANUARY:
Fishing Rodeos
Ecumenical Song Fest

FEBRUARY:
Mardi Gras Parades
Livestock Show & Sale
"Taste of the Bayou" Food Festival

MARCH:
St. Joseph's Altar
Home & Garden Show
Le Petit Theatre Presentation
St. Patrick's Day Celebration

APRIL:
Blessing of the Shrimp Fleet
New Growth Festival
Celebration of Spring *(Arts & Crafts)*
Le Petit Theatre Presentation
Creole Festival

MAY:
Tourist Appreciation Day
Square Dance Festival
Cajun Country Outdoor Opry &
Fais Do Do
Praline Festival

JUNE:
Fishing Rodeos
Music Festival

JULY:
Le Petit Theatre Presentation
Fishing Rodeos

AUGUST:
Fishing Rodeos

SEPTEMBER:
Labor Day Pirogue Festival
Le Petit Theatre Presentation
Art Focus Week
Autumn Festival
Bayou Blue Blood Festival
Fishing Rodeos
Bon Ton With the Cajuns Festival

OCTOBER:
Cajun Country Outdoor Opry
"Lagniappe" on the Bayou Festival
Fisherman's Fair
Harvest Square Dance Festival
Southdown Plantation October-Fest

NOVEMBER:
Southdown Fall Marketplace
(Arts & Crafts)
Square Dance Festival

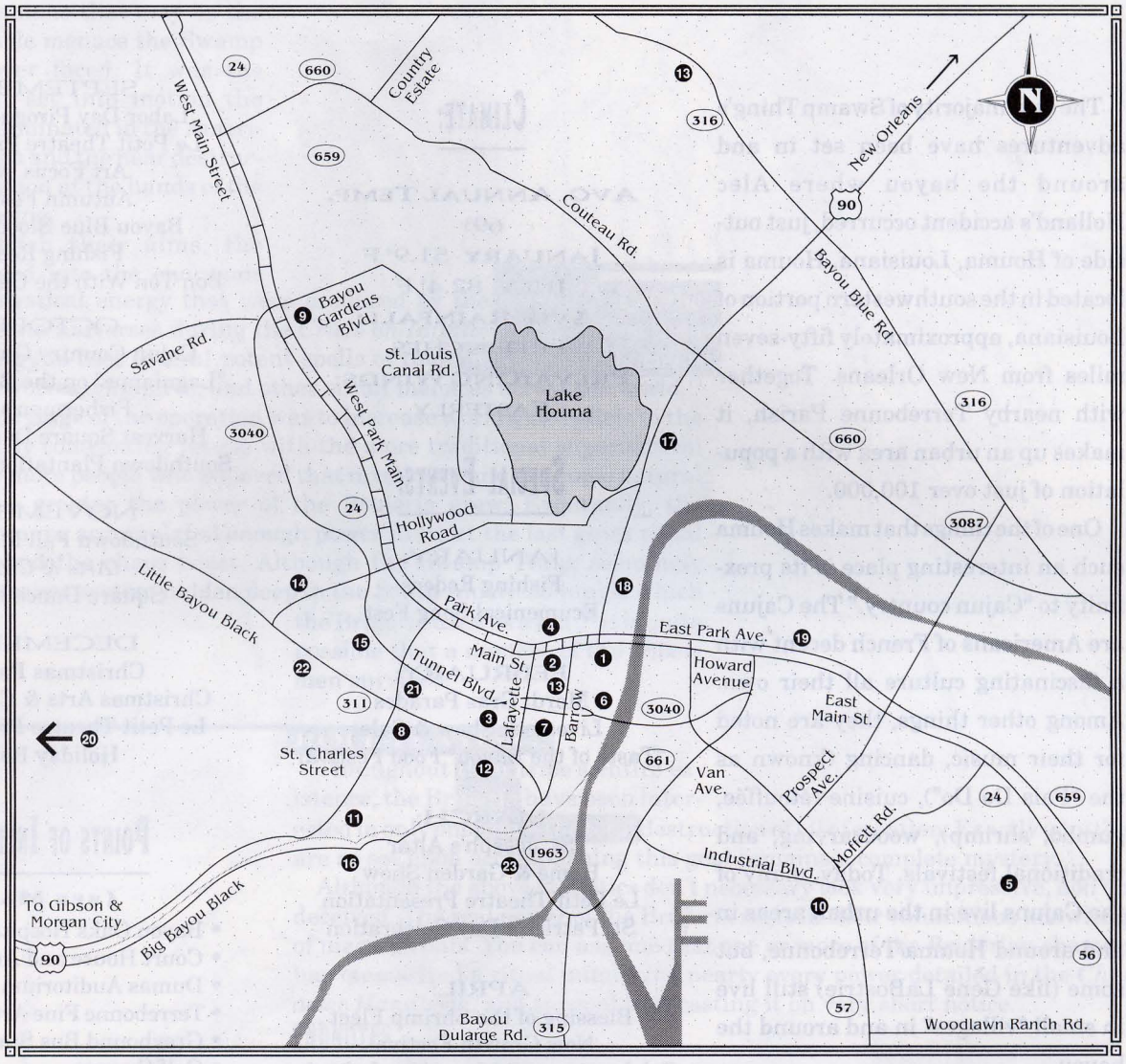
DECEMBER:
Christmas Parade
Christmas Arts & Crafts Show
Le Petit Theatre Presentation
Holiday Bowl

Points of Interest:

(see Map)

- Bayou Oaks Hospital
- Court House and Annex
- Dumas Auditorium
- Terrebonne Fine Arts Guild Gallery
- Greyhound Bus Station
- Golf Courses
- Houma Terrebonne Airport
- Le Petit Theatre
- Municipal Auditorium
- Police Station
- Post Office and Federal Building
- St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
- St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church and above ground cemetery
- Southdown Plantation House/The Terrebonne Museum
- Southland Mall
- South Louisiana Medical Center
- TARC (Terrebonne Association for Retarded Citizens)
- Terrebonne General Medical Center *(this is the hospital where Matt Cable was laid up for years).*
- Tourist Office
- U.S.D.A. Sugar Cane Experimental Station
- Y.M.C.A.

HOUMA



1. Bayou Oaks Hospital
2. Court House and Annex
3. Dumas Auditorium
4. Greyhound Bus Station
5. Houma Terrebonne Airport
6. Municipal Auditorium
7. Police Station
8. Southdown Plantation Terrebonne Museum
9. Southland Mall
10. South La Medical Center
11. Tourist Office
12. U.S.D.A. Sugar Cane
13. Capri Court Campground
14. Nan King Motel
15. Benedict House
16. Red Carpet Inn
17. Lake Houmas Inn
18. A-Bear's Motel
19. Buds's Overnighters
20. Swamp Thing & Abby's Home
21. Chester Williams & Liz Tremayne's Home
22. Elysium Lawns Center for Autistic Children
23. Blackriver Recorporations (destroyed)

SWAMP THING

IN

RACING WITH THE RATS

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SWAMP THING
SOURCEBOOK & ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

It breathes. It eats. And, at night, beneath a crawling ground fog, it dreams; dreams while tiny predators stage a nightmare ballet in the sharp black grass. It is a living thing. It has a soul. It has a face.

At night you can almost see it.

At night you can almost imagine what it might look like if the Swamp were boiled down to its essence, and distilled into corporeal form; if all the muck, all the forgotten muskrat bones, and all the luscious decay would rise up and wade on two legs through the shallows; if the Swamp had a spirit and that spirit walked like a man . . .

At night you can almost imagine.

You can stare into those places where the evening has pooled beneath the distant trees, and glimpse an ambiguous shifting of the darkness: something large, large and slow, its movements solemn and inevitable, heavy with the clotted, sodden weed that forms its flesh. Its skeleton of tortured root creaks with each funeral pace, protesting at the damp and sullen weight. Within their sockets its eyes float like blood-poppies in puddles of ink.

You can inhale through flared nostrils, drinking in its musk, green and pungent. The delicate scent of mosses and lichens adorning its flanks. There is the dry and acrid aftertaste of the pinmold that spreads across its shoulders, fanning out in a dull gray rash.

You can stand alone in the blind darkness and know that were you to raise an arm, reaching out to its fullest extremity, your fingertips would brush with something wet, something supple and resilient.

Something moving.

You shouldn't have come here.

This is the place.

This is the story.

Racing With the Rats is a solitaire adventure for use with the second edition of the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game. Unlike most DC HEROES adventures, solitaire adventures do not require the services of a Gamemaster; they are played by a single player. To play, all you will need are the Character Record Sheet and the Resource Allocation Props found on pages 5-6 and 29 of this book, a pencil, some scrap paper, and a copy of the DC HEROES RPG.

Just as the *Swamp Thing* comic is quite unlike most of the other titles published by DC Comics, *Racing With the Rats* is a rather unusual DC HEROES adventure, as you shall soon see. But before we get to the adventure itself, some guidelines on solitaire adventures are in order.



PLAYING THE ADVENTURE

First, make sure that you have read over all of the background and introductory material carefully. If you are not familiar with the Swamp Thing and his published adventures, you may wish to take a look at the adjoining *Swamp Thing Sourcebook* before playing the adventure, since the text assumes that you are already familiar with some of the characters and situations you will encounter. If you don't wish to write in this book, make sure you have photocopies of the Character Record Sheet and the Resource Allocation Props before beginning play.

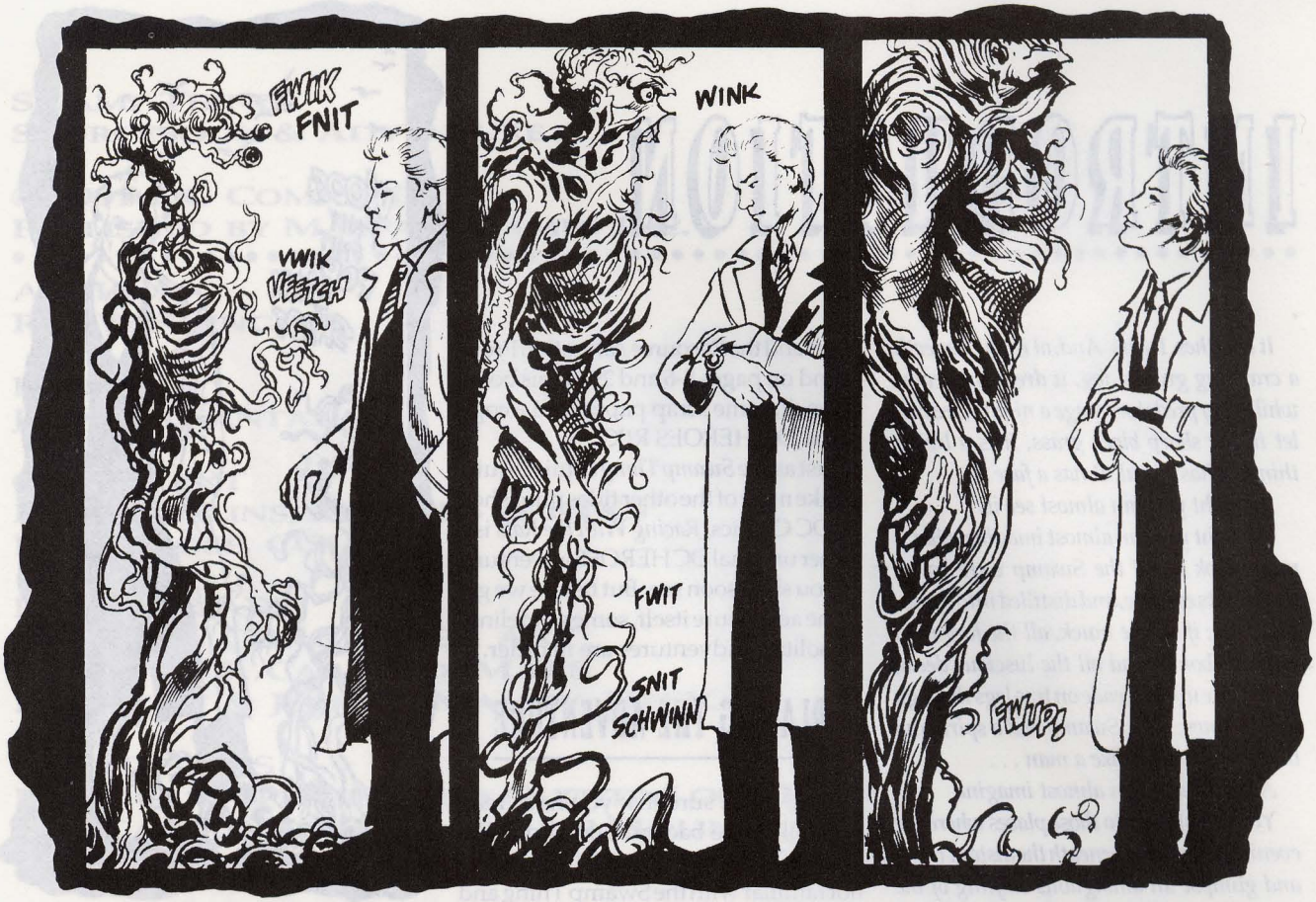
Once you are ready to go, flip to **Passage 1** on page 7 and read it carefully. This passage contains a description of the opening scenes which get the adventure rolling. Notice how you are given choices at the end of the passage and how each choice is followed by another passage number. Choose your option and flip to the appropriate passage, where you will find the results of your decision, more choices, and more passage numbers.

In some passages, you will be instructed to make an Action Check, the results of which will dictate the next paragraph you should read, and so on. You should probably keep a running record of the passages you have read, just in case you get lost. That way, you can always backtrack and relocate your proper position. Always pay close attention to the options presented at the end of each passage and consider them carefully before selecting your next course of action.

ACTION CHECKS AND HERO POINTS

When making Action Checks, follow all the rules and instructions found on pages 6-8 of the *Rules Manual* included with the DC HEROES Boxed Set. Any time you make an Action Check, you have the option of spending as many Hero Points as you like, subject to the normal Hero Point expenditure rules found on page 19 of the *Rules Manual*. Your beginning Hero Point total is listed on your Character Sheet, which also includes a space for you to record any Hero Point expenditures. Note that Swamp Thing's beginning Hero Point total for this adventure is substantially less than his usual total.

The Opposing and Resistance Values of all Action Checks are provided within the text of the individual paragraphs. Sometimes the number of RAPs you earn on an Action Check will affect the passages you are instructed to read. Other times, you will only be asked to determine whether you have succeeded or failed. Success means that you have earned one or more RAPs; failure means that you have gained no RAPs.



TIME

As the adventure progresses, you will be instructed to keep track of time. Cross off one box on the time track printed on the Character Record Sheet each time you are instructed to do so. As stated on the Record Sheet, each box represents one day. Once you have crossed off the first two boxes for example, you are on Day 3 of the adventure; having crossed off the first three boxes, you are on Day 4, and so on.

TOWN TRAVEL

Later in the adventure, Swamp Thing finds himself in a small town and is sometimes allowed to travel about the town at will. Town travel is resolved using the town map and Town Travel Chart found on page 30 and page 6 of this adventure, respectively. Once you are allowed to travel, simply select your destination on the town map and cross reference it with the current time on the Travel Chart to find the passage number you should consult. If you wanted to visit the bank on Day 2, for example, you would flip to Passage 20.

CONDITION NUMBERS

In some passages, you will be told to put a certain "Condition" into effect (example: "Put **Condition 4** into effect"). When you receive such instructions, check off the appropriate Condition box on your Character Sheet and continue play. In a later passage, whether or not a certain Condition is in effect might influence which paragraphs you are instructed to read (example: "If **Condition 3** is in effect, go to **Passage 21**. Otherwise, go to **Passage 13**"). Note that several different Conditions can be in effect at one time and that the text might also instruct you to take one or more Conditions out of effect. In this case, you should erase the check mark in the appropriate Condition box before resuming play.

The Conditions represent certain events and items that you may have experienced or received which might have an impact on play. Do not forget to check or erase them when you are instructed to do so.

SANITY

For this adventure only, Swamp Thing has a special Attribute called Sanity. Sanity is a measure of the Swamp Thing's current state of mind. It is similar, though not identical, to Current MIND Condition. Swamp Thing begins with a Sanity of twelve, which is equal to his MIND score. Whenever the Swamp Thing has a particularly harrowing experience, the text will instruct you to subtract one or more points from his Sanity. Particularly calming or soothing events will instruct you to restore points to Swamp Thing's Sanity. Note that Sanity points may not be restored unless the Swamp Thing has already lost some, and that Sanity may fall below zero. In other words, Swamp Thing's Sanity can never be increased past its starting value, and may even reach a negative value.

Exactly how Sanity affects game play will be revealed within the adventure.

HOW TO WIN

Swamp Thing's adventures are rarely of the good-guys-versus-bad-guys variety, and his victories are often mysterious and elusive. For this reason, you shouldn't expect any clear-cut victory conditions to emerge in the adventure. In other words, the goal of the adventure is unlikely to be something like discovering and diffusing a bomb before it blows up a room full of ambassadors, or capturing Lex Luthor before he can commit some master crime.

SWAMP THING CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

SWAMP THING

DEX:	5	STR:	7	BODY:	8
INT:	10	WILL:	15	MIND:	12
INFL:	12	AURA:	15	SPIRIT:	10
INITIATIVE:	27			HERO POINTS:	25



- **POWERS:**

Animal Control: 8, Animal Summoning: 8, Animate Objects: 8, Awareness: 10, Dimension Travel: 12, Growth: 13, Invulnerability: 15, Joined: 20, Magic Sense: 12, Personality Transfer: 8, Plant Control: 20, Plant Growth: 25, Regeneration: 10, Sealed Systems: 20, Self Link (Plant Growth): 20, Self Link (Spirit Travel): 25, Solar Sustenance: 20, Speak With Plants: 25, Split: 12, Telepathy: 15

- **BONUSES:**

Miscellaneous: Swamp Thing's Splits do not reduce their APs of Physical Attributes when they Split. See page 15 of the *Swamp Thing Sourcebook.*

- **LIMITATIONS:**

Miscellaneous: Animal Control only works on nonintelligent insect life forms; Animate Objects only works on wooden objects; Swamp Thing can only use the "travel" function of Dimension Travel; Spirit Travel only works into areas where there is native plant life.

- **ADVANTAGES:**

Area Knowledge (Louisiana Bayous); Connections: John Constantine (Low), Parliament of Trees (High)

- **DRAWBACKS:**

Married; Strange Appearance; Traumatic Flashbacks (triggered by fire)

- **EQUIPMENT:**

Psychogenic Tubers: see page 14 of the *Swamp Thing Sourcebook.*

- **ALTER EGO:** "Alec Holland"
- **MOTIVATION:**

Responsibility of Power

- **WEALTH:** 0

CONDITIONS:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

TIME

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4

SANITY (12):

HERO POINTS (25):

PASSAGES READ:

TOWN TRAVEL CHART

Location	*Day 1*	*Day 2/Morn. of Day 3*	*Aft. of Day 3*	*Day 4*
Bank	30	20	108	40
Pawn Shop	110	75	75	31
Bar	113	41	29	109
Emp. Agency	16	93	18	47
Hotel	111	24	57	112
Workplace	58	89	34	35
Home†	32	45	77	N/A

Cross Reference Time and Location for proper passage number.
†Only in afternoon.

RACING WITH THE RATS

1.

Louisiana, Late Spring.

You take the hand of your wife and for a moment contemplate the rhythms of flesh. Beneath her delicate skin you feel staccato bursts of fluid pushing themselves through miles and miles of supple vein, and contrast them with the faint creak of her ribcage imperceptibly expanding and contracting with each oppressive breath. Together the bursts and creaks form a feral drumbeat, a veritable percussive symphony stripped of nothing save sensibility. It is the dreary fate of all flesh to endlessly pirouette to this savage music and then rot away without so much as a bow or bouquet.

Although its melody is alien to you now, you too once danced to this tune. But that was long ago. Alec Holland is dead. He died many years ago . . . in an explosion.

Of course the Green, too, has its rhythms, though they are hardly so primal and scarcely so totalitarian. Unlike the symphony of flesh, the symphony of the Green is comprised of infinite movements. Decay and flourish, spring and fall, life and death, all without end.

Although you would rather suffer unspeakably than betray the hand you now hold, you'll certainly admit the improbability of your union. The Green is an orchestra. Flesh, a single moaning saxophone.

"Alec, how come we've never come this far out into the bayou before?"

The buzz of a nearby Munson's Cypress Bayou Tours boat gives you your cue. "Because . . . I prefer . . . to keep you all to myself."

Your wife laughs and disappears behind a curtain of green with your child. "Alec, come look at Tefé."

You follow the voice through the brush up ahead. You expect to giggle at the sight of your child burbling in the tall grass. Instead, you shiver as a horrible apparition catches your eye: sparkling blue smoke drifting out over the bayou.

So the men have finally come with their smoke and machines. Why should this distress you so? You've already seen it a thousand times in a thousand places. Have you always believed that the bulldozers and power lines would swerve to avoid Louisiana when the time came?

It doesn't take Abby long to notice your contempt. "Alec? Alec, what's wrong?"

"They . . . are poisoning the bayou." At once, the screams of the local ferns cut through the Green and join the familiar shrieks from Brazil and the sobs from Oregon. Why have you failed to notice them for what must have been so long? Have you become so caught up in your Prince Charming fantasy that you have betrayed the Green?

"Humans are so . . . hopeless."

"Humans are so . . .?" Abby always takes these things the wrong way. The remark was perhaps unwise, but it was clearly not aimed at her. You often forget that she is one of them. "Some of my best friends happen to be humans. We're concerned too. What about Chester? What about Liz? . . .What about me? Are we hopeless? We've fought against these industrial people for a long time."

"And where were your environment groups . . . and your activists and . . . your picket signs while they . . . were building the factory . . . on the bayou?" Another poor choice of words. In another second that most undesirable fire will certainly kindle itself in Abby's eyes.

"Alec, do you have any idea what we gained by allowing that factory to be built in New Terrebonne? It was part of a compromise. By agreeing not to block the single factory here, we got the company executives to agree to drop plans to build three other factories in areas that would be even more sensitive to the damage. Chester and his friends collected money and helped fund a scientific survey. We know. And besides, the company that built that factory isn't like the others—they'll be careful. They manufacture medical supplies and make charity donations. The people around here need the jobs that the factory provides."

"You compromised away... the Earth?" The moment the words leave your lips you realize you have just swung at your rhetorical third strike. Abby's response is predictable like the rhythms of flesh. She snaps up Tefé and walks away with a scowl. The last time you blundered your way into this argument she didn't speak to you for two days.

"Abby?" No, this time you are not going to follow her. This time she'll have to beg your forgiveness. For now, you need to be alone, alone with your anger. Alone with the Green. Its been so long since you last sampled its delights.

You wait until she is gone and grow out long roots and sink them deep into the Earth, hungrily sucking up the nutrients and minerals beneath the still fertile topsoil. Your roots reach down through the loam, tap-dancing over the fossilized skeletons of fallen flesh. You sigh for a moment as you break through a deep pocket of silt and steal into the sweet mud below. Encouraged, you push on still further, past the clay layer and into an unexpected delight—a tasty underground waterway.

But almost at once, a horrible jolt fires up through the soil and into your spirit. Your thick limbs seize up, and your back aches with a strangely familiar feeling which you finally recognize as the pain of flesh. Your normally expressionless eyes glaze over with an expression resembling fright. Everything is going red, and a loud buzzing fills the air around you.

Suddenly, the swamp is gone and you reappear elsewhere—in a paneled office with thick piled carpeting. You are wearing a conservative grey suit and a red tie. The buzzing you heard in the swamp is here in this office too, only it is much softer, though still loud enough to obscure your memory. You begin to panic. Who are you?

Desperately seeking a clue, you stumble across a soothing Rosetta Stone that returns you to reality. Now you remember. The clue is the name plate on the desk in front of you. You are Alec Holland. You work in advertising.

It is 9:11 AM. The red light on the telephone answering machine is blinking, indicating that you have a message. Your secretary, Miss Tremayne, is at the door.

"Good morning, Mr. Holland. It seems that the copier downstairs is acting up again, and Mr. Green would like to see you as soon as possible."

If you want to look around your office to get your bearings, go to **Passage 52.** If you want to have Miss Tremayne call the repair people to look at the copier, go to **Passage 27.** If you want to try and fix the copier yourself, go to **Passage 33.** If you want to go see Mr. Green, go to **Passage 8.** If you want to play your answering machine message, go to **Passage 71.**

2.

Exhausted, you drop your slogan choices and all of the associated data on Mr. Green's desk, loosen your tie, and think about heading home to your wife. Miss Tremayne catches you just as you go to the closet to retrieve your coat.

"Mr. Holland, there is a Mr. Calkins from the Calkins and Calkins law firm on line two. He says he needs to talk to you."

If you want to take the call, go to **Passage 7.** If you want to instruct Miss Tremayne to have Mr. Calkins call back tomorrow and leave for home right now, go to **Passage 12.**

3.

Ten minutes later, you are again sitting in your hotel room. The buzzing in your head is still so loud you can barely think. You want the pain to end. Right now, that's all you want.

Cradled in your arms is the shotgun from the pawn shop.

What few thoughts you can manage to sneak by the obscuring buzz are dedicated to Tefé. Will her mother tell her that her father was a coward—that in the end he could simply no longer face the pain?

Whether 'tis nobler in the heart to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them—that was Hamlet's dilemma, you remember reading that in high school. But Hamlet's fortune had not been so outrageous as to fail to provide him with an opportunity to both seize the sword and suffer the arrow—to have his cake and eat it too. Few are so lucky.

But you can't end it yet. Not before taking some time to think about Abby. You at least owe her that. The buzzing has now reached the point where you can feel a sabre slash with each individual synapse firing off in your brain, but you coax out these last few painful thoughts.

"Alec?"

Abby, what happened? I didn't hurt you. I never wanted to hurt you. Before I would hurt you I would . . . kill myself.

"Alec?"

Abby, tomorrow you are going to find out what happened here and you are going to blame yourself. I know you were just angry and didn't mean some of the things you said. I just want you to know that all of this has nothing to do with you. I . . . I just can't stand the horrible buzzing. I can't stand the pain.

"ALEC!"

Your thoughts focus themselves for a moment and you realize that the voice is coming from the hall!

"Abby?"

The door swings open and Abby enters, her face shellacked with tears. She always comes through in the end.

"Wait. Labo, he's... he's crying! He moved!"

"Tu must coax him, Abby!"

Constantine lights another cigarette.

"Abby, I'm so sorry, I . . . "

"No. No Alec, I'm sorry . . . "

"Abby, about the job . . ."

"No. We'll discuss it in the morning."

She slides the shotgun out of your arms and carefully sets it on the floor before burying you with her warmth. You are grateful for that warmth, grateful even for the pain—grateful for anything capable of inspiring such a delicious reconciliation. For a moment, the buzz melts away in her warm embrace, and along with it, all your memories. You are a child again.

Suddenly, you feel flushed. Who are you?

"Yes look, it's working!"



You are in a swamp, ***you are the Swamp Thing.***

You snap open your eyes and find yourself staring into Abby's warm face. There are others present, and a cigarette odor. Constantine?

"Oh Alec, I'm so sorry . . ."

Abby cradles your head in her lap. Your soul embraces her primitive rhythms. Her soul is your soul. Her words are your words.

"No Abby, I am sorry . . ."

"Alec, about the fight . . ."

"No. We'll discuss it in the morning."

The adventure is over. Record the fact that you read **Passage 3** and proceed to the **Endgame** section on page 28.

4.

You approach your wife. "Abby, I have something to tell you. I . . . I was fired today. Something, uh, went wrong with the Sleepease account, and I had to accept the blame for it. I . . ."

"What?"

She pauses a decade before beginning in earnest, "You were fired? Now you haven't even got a job? And just yesterday you were telling me you would get the money for Tefé's college bond. Look at you, Alec. You walk around the house for days without paying attention to either of us . . . you, you break my goddamn lamp! What kind of a father are you? What kind of a life is this?"

The buzz is digging deeper fortifications into your head.

"I want you to get your things and get out of my house—get out of my sight. Go sleep in the hotel for a couple of days.

"And don't come back until you can make a contribution to this family." A single tear rolls down her face as she speaks.

In agony, you grab a suitcase, throw a couple of changes of clothes inside, and head out into the rain outside, stopping only to take a last brief glance at Tefé.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. If **Condition 9** is in effect, go to **Passage 115.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 82.**

5.

Miss Tremayne carefully lays out the packets containing your plans for the Sleepease account before the assembled executives, and you begin your speech.

"Anyway, our approach is really rather conservative . . ."

The very first time you glance up to make eye contact with your audience, you notice that something is very wrong.

"Holland, what is the meaning of this?" The voice belongs to Mr. Green. He is waving a black piece of paper. Confused, you stare at him for an instant before you recognize the problem—the copy machine downstairs, the one that Miss Tremayne had told you was not functioning properly! Instead of spitting out crisp copies of your proposal, it has apparently produced the offending piece of paper. A quick look around shows that the damage is much more serious. Every single page in each of the packets is totally illegible. You hadn't checked them. You didn't really have the time. It slipped your mind.

Without the photocopies, there is no way you can continue your presentation. The executives will have to wait while new copies are prepared, and that could take hours.

"Holland, I want to see you in my office, right now!"

The painful buzz is slicing a river through your brain.

Lose 3 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 92.**

6.

Ten minutes later, you find yourself in the pawn shop. You sift through the assembled collection of junk, trying to find shells for the shotgun in your hand. The pain is spurring you on like some frenzied mole.

So it has come to this.

You push past some old silk shirts and a largely unused guitar. What few thoughts you can manage to sneak by the obscuring buzz are dedicated to Tefé. Will her mother tell her that her father was a coward—that in the end he could simply no longer face the pain?

Whether 'tis nobler in the heart to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them—that was Hamlet's dilemma, you remember reading that in high school. But Hamlet's fortune had not been so outrageous as to fail to provide him with an opportunity to both seize the sword and suffer the arrow—to have his cake and eat it too. Few are so lucky.

You push past the little tubs of inexpensive watches and bracelets, and past the clocks. You once again curse the pain as you dig down through the layers of appliances and accouterments: an umbrella, a space heater, a battered cassette player, a strobe light, a lamp, a VCR, a . . . a lamp? yes, a red lamp—a red lamp with delicate white stripes.

Nineteen dollars and a short walk later, you're forcing the pain into submission. You're knocking on her door and thrusting the lamp into her hands. Her eyes are black and white. She's been crying.

"Wait. Labo, he's crying. He moved!"

"Tu must coax him, Abby!"

Constantine lights another cigarette.

"Abby, I'm so sorry, I . . ."

"No. No Alec, I'm sorry . . ."

"Abby, about the job . . ."

"No. We'll discuss it in the morning."

She buries you with her warmth. You are grateful for that warmth, grateful even for the pain—grateful for anything capable of inspiring such a delicious reconciliation. For a moment, the buzz melts away in her warm embrace, and along with it, all your memories. You are a child again.

Suddenly, you feel flushed. Who are you?

Yes look, it's working!"

You are in a swamp, ***you are the Swamp Thing.***

You snap open your eyes and find yourself staring into Abby's warm face. There are others present, and a cigarette odor. Constantine?

"Oh Alec, I'm so sorry . . ."

Abby cradles your head in her lap. Your soul embraces her primitive rhythms. Her soul is your soul. Her words are your words.

"No Abby, I am sorry . . ."

"Alec, about the fight . . ."

"No. We we'll discuss it in the morning."

The adventure is over. Record the fact that you read **Passage 6** and proceed to the **Endgame** section on page 28.

7.

"Thank you, Miss Tremayne. You have a good night."

You walk over to a nearby extension and punch up line two.

"Alec Holland, may I help you?"

But there is no one on the line. The phone light is flashing, indicating that a call is holding, but no one answers you. Now the phones are apparently going out of order as well.

You look to see if Miss Tremayne took down a number so you can try to return the call, but come up empty. Oh well, they'll try again tomorrow.

Now its time to head home. Maybe Abby can help you relax and escape the annoying buzz that is bouncing around in your head.

Go to **Passage 28.**

8.

Miss Tremayne enters the room. "Mister Holland, did you hear me? Mister Green would like to see you right away." You are an advertising representative. Mr. Green is your boss. You stroll across the hall into his office.

"Holland, I need the slogan choice for the Sleepease account on my desk by the time you leave today."

"Yes, Mr. Green, but . . ."

"No but's, Holland. I don't have time to discuss it. Just get the choice on my desk by closing time tonight."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

If you want to return to your desk and get to work, go to **Passage 13.** If you want to leave the building and take a walk outside for a couple of minutes to calm down, go to **Passage 96.**

9.

The buzzing in your head has not relented, but the comforting environs have muffled it a bit. Abby smiles as you sit down to dinner.

"Alec, I've been thinking. I think we should buy a college bond for Tefé, like the Wilsons down the street. I mean, who knows what will happen to us?"

"Abby, the Wilsons' bond was very expensive. We don't have that kind of money yet.

"It was only a thousand dollars."

"Right now we have 600 dollars in the bank. Maybe after I settle into this new job we can think about it."

"Isn't there something we can do? It would just make me feel so much more comfortable if I knew we had some sort of plan for her future. And the longer we wait, the less the return."

"I just don't see that we can afford it yet."

After dinner you help Abby clear away the dishes.

"The overhead light in the bedroom needs a new bulb."

"I'll take care of it." You find a bulb and your footstool in the closet and head upstairs.

Make an Action Check using your DEX/STR as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 6/6. If you succeed, go to **Passage 53.** If you fail, go to **Passage 26.**

10.

Your alarm goes off, waking you to face another day.

Check off the Day 2 box. Make an Action Check using your WILL/WILL as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 12/12. If you succeed, go to **Passage 54.** If you fail, go to **Passage 121.**

11.

You finally reach your home. Abby is waiting for you at the door.

"Alec, where the hell have you been? I've had dinner waiting since five."

"I'm sorry, Abby. I was delayed."

"Why didn't you call me! Your dinner went cold long ago. Now I'll have to reheat it."

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Take **Condition 5** out of effect. Go to **Passage 67.**

12.

"Thank you, Miss Tremayne, but please ask him to ring back tomorrow. I'm not feeling well. I think its best if I just get home."

"Whatever you say, Mr. Holland. Hope you're feeling better tomorrow."

"Thank you, Miss Tremayne. You have a good night."

Go to **Passage 28.**

13.

You return to your desk and open the Sleepease file. Sleepease is a brand of sleeping pill. You've been working on the Sleepease account for days. It is an extremely important account and means a great deal to your future with the firm. The fact that Mr. Green has been monitoring your work on Sleepease so closely is more than a little responsible for your dramatic increase in blood pressure. It may be responsible for the buzzing in your head as well.

This afternoon you must decide which of three slogans you are going to recommend as the backbone of the Sleepease line. The product research people who created the slogans have provided you with some data that should help you reach a decision.

You bring your fingers to your head and lightly massage your temples—one last futile attempt to exorcise the annoying buzz before you get down to work.

The three slogans you have to choose from are:

1) SOUND SOULS SLEEP SOUND WITH SLEEPEASE.

2) SLEEPEASE. DOCTORS RECOMMEND IT.

3) JUST TAKE TWO SLEEPEASE. WE'LL HAVE YOU COUNTING SHEEP IN NO TIME.

To help you make your decision, product research has provided you with some market surveys. The surveys break the product's target market down into four geographic regions: Region 1 has a population of approximately 200,000; Regions 2 and 3 both have populations of approximately 100,000; and Region 4 has a

population of approximately 80,000. The marketing surveys provide the following data:

1) The three slogans were all tested in different areas of Region 1. Of all the test units sold in this region, 45% were sold in stores using slogan #2 in their displays, 29% were sold in stores using slogan #3 in their displays, and only 26% were sold in stores using slogan #1 in their displays.

2) Consumers living in Regions 2 and 3 were polled as to the sorts of advertising slogans they believe affect them the most. The results of this poll showed that 50% of the consumers believed that very short slogans (five words or less) affected them strongest, 20% of the consumers believed that very long slogans (9 words or more) affected them the strongest, and 30% of the consumers believed that a slogan's length has no impact whatsoever upon its total effectiveness.

3) Another survey was conducted in Region 4, indicating that a whopping 75% of its population preferred alliterative slogans to all others.

The day's work is quite taxing. Lose 1 point of Sanity. If you would like to choose slogan #1, put **Condition 2** into effect. If you would like to choose slogan #2, put **Condition 3** into effect. If you would like to choose slogan #3, put **Condition 4** into effect. Go to **Passage 2.**

14.

You move on into Mr. Green's office.

"You have a very busy day today, Holland. The Sleepease account is almost wrapped up. I don't want any slipups."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

"All right now, at 1:00 PM the senior partners in the firm are going to meet in the conference room to discuss your resource allocation strategy. I don't think I need to tell you that if your strategy bombs out, it could be very damaging to the confidence our client has placed in you."

You meet his gaze with silence. The buzzing in your head is a rodent, happily chewing away on your nerve endings.

"Attend that meeting Holland. And I want you to convince the partners to see things your way."

"Yes, sir."

"And remember, you have a presentation with the Sleepease executives scheduled for 3:30. For your own sake, you'd better not be late."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

Go to **Passage 64.**

15.

Here is what your observations tell you:

Miss Schute seems to strongly dislike Mr. MacGalvary and Mr. Baker and will probably vote against anything they favor.

Miss Sherman seems to like Miss Schute and will probably vote with her.

Mr. Baker strongly disagrees with Miss Sherman on just about everything.

Mr. Sampson seems to despise Miss Simmons but respects Mr. MacGalvary.

Mr. Russell is an old friend of Mr. Sampson and usually supports him.

Miss Simmons is not very fond of Mr. Russell.

Go to **Passage 122.**

16.

The employment agency helps neighborhood residents find jobs commensurate with their skills. There is a sign in the window reading: "Closed for remodeling until Friday."

Friday is Day 4. Put **Condition 5** into effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to head home, go to **Passage 32.**

17.

You reenter the building, return to your desk, and open the Sleepease file. Sleepease is a brand of sleeping pill. You've been working on the Sleepease account for days. It is an extremely important account and means a great deal to your future with the firm. The fact that Mr. Green has been monitoring your work on Sleepease so closely is more than a little responsible for your dramatic increase in blood pressure. It may be responsible for the buzzing in your head as well.

This afternoon you must decide which of three slogans you are going to recommend as the backbone of the Sleepease line. The product research people who created the slogans have provided you with some data that should help you reach a decision.

You bring your fingers to your head and lightly massage your temples—one last futile attempt to exorcise the annoying buzz before you get down to work.

The three slogans you have to choose from are:

1) SOUND SOULS SLEEP SOUND WITH SLEEPEASE.

2) SLEEPEASE. DOCTORS RECOMMEND IT.

3) JUST TAKE TWO SLEEPEASE. WE'LL HAVE YOU COUNTING SHEEP IN NO TIME.

To help you make your decision, product research has provided you with some market surveys. The surveys break the product's target market down into four geographic regions: Region 1 has a population of approximately 200,000; Regions 2 and 3 both have populations of approximately 100,000; and Region 4 has a population of approximately 80,000. The marketing surveys provide the following data:

1) The three slogans were all tested in different areas of Region 1. Of all the test units sold in this region, 45% were sold in stores using slogan #2 in their displays, 29% were sold in stores using slogan #3 in their displays, and only 26% were sold in stores using slogan #1 in their displays.

2) Consumers living in Regions 2 and 3 were polled as to the sorts of advertising slogans they believe affect them the most. The results of this poll showed that 50% of the consumers believed that very short slogans (five words or less) affected them strongest, 20% of the consumers believed that very long slogans (9 words or more) affected them the strongest, and 30% of the consumers believed that a slogan's length has no impact whatsoever upon its total effectiveness.

If you would like to choose slogan #1, put **Condition 2** into effect. If you would like to choose slogan #2, put **Condition 3** into effect. If you would like to choose slogan #3, put **Condition 4** into effect. Go to **Passage 2.**

18.

The employment agency helps neighborhood residents find jobs commensurate with their skills. There is a sign in the window reading: "Closed for remodeling until Friday."

Friday is Day 4. Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you are stopping

by the employment agency after work, go to **Passage 77** when you wish to return home.

19.

Back in the Swamp, Abby makes her way through the tall black grass and back over to the dark spot where she left her husband in anger. This is the second or third time they'd had this particular little row. There was nothing really unusual about it. Perhaps this time she had raised just a bit too much of a fuss. Perhaps she was only fishing for Alec's usually inevitable humbling. And perhaps this time, Alec had seen through her.

In any case, it seems like it is now her turn to raise the white flag, and she is more than willing to comply.

"Alec? Alec, I'm sorry about what I said earlier, but . . ."

She doesn't finish her sentence. As she pushes a clump of ferns out of the way, she suddenly comes upon the body of her husband still rooted into the Earth. The eyes glow indicating that the body is still inhabited by his consciousness, but there is no movement or sound. He looks startled and flushed. A slight tremor gently tugs his head back and forth.

Someone is singing in a distant corner of the swamp, "I'm sooooo . . ."

"Alec? My god, are you all right?"

Her husband does not respond. The expression on his face remains utterly emotionless. "Alec!" No, he is elsewhere.

"I'm so booored . . ." The singing voice is growing louder. Abby can hear it now. It is accompanied by the gentle splash of a punt casually impaling the murky surface of the water.

"ALEC, ANSWER ME!"

Abby begins to recognize the singing voice. There is something familiar about it. The voice is approaching her.

"I'm so booored with the U-S-A, but what can I do?"

"Constantine?" Constantine's boat drifts out of some small weeds and comes into sight.

"I was in the neighborhood, and I just thought I'd nip in and visit the happy couple."

"Constantine, quick! You've got to help me. There's something wrong with Alec!"

"Glad to see me, then, luv?"

Go to **Passage 25.**

20.

You approach the local bank.

Although the bank is closed (the bank is only open during hours you are working), you can withdraw your money with a magnetic ATM card. You have $600 in the bank. If you wish to make a withdrawal, you must withdraw all the money you have on account.

If you wish to withdraw your money, put **Condition 9** into effect. If you are stopping by the bank in the morning before going to work, put **Condition 6** into effect. If you are stopping by the bank at night after work, put **Condition 5** into effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you are stopping by the bank before work, go to **Passage 79** when you wish to finally go to work if it is Day 2, or **Passage 21** if it is Day 3.

21.

You arrive at work run down and weary. The buzzing in your head has become increasingly painful. You've had this headache for three days now. Why hasn't it gone away?

The red light on your answering machine is blinking, but with the events of the last two days, you've learned not to bother with it. Miss Tremayne has not yet at the office. There is a note on your desk: Mr. Green would like to see you.

If **Condition 6** is in effect, go to **Passage 66.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 14.**

22.

Your wife is waiting for you, but she doesn't seem very happy.

"Where the hell have you been? You should have been home half an hour ago?"

She's right. Your detour has cost you time. Abby gets so angry when you are late. At the beginning of her day, she lays out a methodical agenda. She finds any deviation from this plan most annoying. A protracted argument is the last thing you need right now.

If you wish to make up an excuse to explain your tardiness, go to **Passage 50.** If you wish to tell Abby the truth, go to **Passage 95.**

23.

You stroll into Mr. Green's office fearing the worst.

"Holland, give me a progress report on the Sleepease account."

"Well sir, everything seems to be progressing smoothly. We selected a slogan yesterday, and Miss Tremayne just informed me this morning that the Sleepease executives are coming by for a full presentation tomorrow."

"All right. We'll need a resource allocation program by that time. I want it on my desk before you leave."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

"And Holland . . . I looked over your slogan choice this morning."

If **Condition 2** is in effect, go to **Passage 38.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 102.**

24.

Derelicts line the sidewalks in front of the hotel. You find nothing of any interest there at present.

If you are stopping by the hotel before work, put **Condition 6** in effect. If you are stopping by the hotel after work, put **Condition 5** in effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you are at the hotel in the morning, go to **Passage 79** when you are finally ready to go to work if it is Day 2, or **Passage 21** if it is Day 3. If you are here in the evening, go to **Passage 45** when you are ready to go home.

25.

You're glad to see the bright sunshine outside of the office. It is 5:07 PM. You're on your way home at last.

You should now begin the Town Travel sequence as explained on page 4. A map of the town can be found on page 30. When you are finally ready to go home, go to **Passage 32.**



26.

As you reach up to change the bulb in the overhead light, you feel the footstool beneath you giving way. You have no time to steady yourself. You teeter precariously for only an instant before diving off the stool and landing on a nearby nightstand.

Your fall has dislodged a lamp from atop the nightstand and sent it crashing to the floor, where it has shattered. The lamp was a present from Abby's father. It was red with delicate white stripes on its sides. Abby was very fond of it.

"Alec, what happened?" She enters the room and finds her smashed keepsake.

"Alec, what's wrong with you? Couldn't you even change a goddamn light bulb without making a mess. Is . . . is that my lamp? Oh Alec!" The tears begin streaming down her face. "That lamp was the only thing my father ever gave me! You know what it meant to me Couldn't you have been more careful?"

Each word seems to make the buzzing in your head grow louder.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 97.**

27.

"We're going to need that copier. We have an important presentation coming up in the next few days.

Miss Tremayne, would you call the repair people and see if you can get them out here some time today or tomorrow?"

"Yes, Mr. Holland."

If you want to look around your office to get your bearings, go to **Passage 52.** If you want to play your answering machine message, go to **Passage 71**. If you want to go see Mr. Green, go to **Passage 8.**

28.

You walk out of your office building and down onto the breezy street below. Your head is throbbing; you feel terrible. You need rest. Perhaps your wife has a remedy. Perhaps Abby can help you relax.

Go to **Passage 19.**

29.

You stop in the local bar and have a quick drink before returning home. After the events of the last twenty-four hours, you need it. For just a moment you succeed in dissolving the infernal buzz away in alcohol.

How are you going to look at Abby? What are you going to say to her?

Continue the Town Travel sequence. When you are finally ready to go home, go to **Passage 77.**

30.

You stop by the local bank.

Although the bank is closed (the bank is only open during hours you are working), you can withdraw your money with a magnetic ATM card. You have $600 in the bank. If you wish to make a withdrawal, you must withdraw all the money you have on account.

If you wish to withdraw your money, put **Condition 9** into effect. Put **Condition 5** into effect. Continue the Town Travel sequence. When you are finally ready to go home, go to **Passage 32.**

31.

The pawn shop is closed. There is a sign in the window that reads: "Stepped out for a moment, open soon."

Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you haven't yet visited the employment agency and wish to do so, go to **Passage 47.**

32.

You finally reach your home. It is a small six-room house on the fringe of the city's working class district. You and Abby moved out of your first apartment and bought the house just after Tefé was born. It may not be much, but it's yours (well, it belongs to the bank; it will be yours in eighteen more years) and you like it.

As you stroll up the walkway, you see Abby peeking out the curtains as usual, waiting for you. Relations between the two of you have been rather strained lately. You hope that a day of rest has worked a miracle upon her mood. In any case, everything will be all right in the end. She'll come through. She always does.

If **Condition 5** is in effect, go to **Passage 22.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 9.**

33.

You take a stroll downstairs and take a look at the offending copier. This is nothing new; there have been problems with the copier in the past. You throw a handy memo on the machine and run off a couple of test copies.

Every so often, a few of the copies come out completely black and illegible. Right now, about every third copy is obscured. In the past, you've been able to remedy this problem by adjusting the toner. You'll give it another shot now. You can just imagine Mr. Green screaming about maintenance budgets when you go in to ask him about getting some repair people out here.

Make an Action Check using your INT/WILL as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 8/8. If you earn 4 or more RAPs, go to **Passage 39.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 49.**

34.

You return to your office, but security stops you as you enter the lobby.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Holland, but Mr. Green has instructed us not to let you back into the building. If there is something you have forgotten, we can pop upstairs and get it for you."

"No . . . no thank you, it's all right."

You return to the damp streets.

Continue the Town Travel sequence. When you are finally ready to return home, go to **Passage 77.**

35.

You return to your office, but security stops you as you enter the lobby.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Holland, but Mr. Green has instructed us not to let you back into the building. If there is something you have forgotten, we can pop upstairs and get it for you."

"No . . . no thank you, it's all right."

You return to the damp streets.

If you haven't yet visited the employment agency and wish to do so, go to **Passage 47.**

36.

Just before you go to sleep that night, you begin to realize how much this college bond means to Abby. Since dinner, she has barely said a word.

You try to provide for your family. You try to give them everything you possibly can. Perhaps Abby doesn't understand how hard it can get sometimes.

No, that's not fair. Abby works hard, too. She knows. This is just something special that she's set her mind on. You'll just have to do what you can to get it for her, to get it for Tefé. Then maybe everything will be all right. Then maybe the horrible buzzing will cease.

Go to **Passage 10.**

37.

You are in a hurry. You have exactly twenty-nine minutes in which to get dressed and get to work. When you first began this job, you timed the walk from the house at eleven minutes. Normally, it takes you sixteen minutes to get dressed. This leaves you with two minutes to spare—cutting it close perhaps, but it has yet to become a problem.

As you dress, the sunlight glints off your watch with the silver face plate and your silver class ring on the dressing table next to your bed.

When you leave for work, begin the Town Travel sequence. When you finally want to go in to work, go to **Passage 89.** Before you leave, you may choose to take either your watch or your class ring with you. If you take the watch, put **Condition 7** into effect. If you take the ring, put **Condition 8** into effect.

38.

"Sound Souls Sleep Sound with Sleepease. I can't say I like it, but it will do. It appears to be a good choice based upon the marketing surveys. I'll have to compliment the product research people.

"Anyway, you're doing all right so far, Holland. But make sure it stays that way. I don't think I have to tell you what a slip up on this account could cost us all."

"No, Mr. Green."

"All right then. Remember, I want that resource allocation strategy by the end of the day."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

Go to **Passage 55.**

39.

A quick adjustment of the toner cartridge seems to do the trick. You run off another series of test memos to make sure you have corrected the problem. Everything appears to be just fine.

Your repair of the copier was a rare stroke of good luck. You are well aware of how Mr. Green might have reacted to a requisition for more maintenance funds.

Put **Condition 1** into effect. If you want to play back your answering machine message, go to **Passage 71.** If you want to answer Mr. Green's summons go to **Passage 8.** If you want to go back and look around your office to get your bearings, go to **Passage 52.**

40.

You stop by the bank, but there is nothing to interest you there. You have already withdrawn all your money.

Continue the Town Travel sequence. If you have not yet visited the employment agency and wish to do so now, go to **Passage 47.** If you want to head to your first interview, go to **Passage 78.**

41.

You stop by the local bar.

If you are coming here before work, the bar is closed. Put **Condition 6** into effect.

If you are coming here after work, you stop into the bar and pick up a drink. The drink temporarily refreshes you and momentarily drowns out the buzzing. Put **Condition 5** into effect and regain 1 point of Sanity.

Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you are coming to the bar before work and wish to go directly to the office, go to **Passage 79** if it is Day 2, or **Passage 21** if it is Day 3. If you are coming to the bar after work and wish to head directly home, go to **Passage 45.**

42.

You have allocated an ad solicitor to the billboard phase.

Put **Condition 13** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**

43.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Mr. Russell, hoping to win him over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Russell makes a pitch for you but is soon opposed by Miss Simmons, which almost immediately earns you Mr. Sampson's vote. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Mr. Russell, Mr. Sampson, and Mr. Baker vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Miss Simmons, Miss Schute, and Miss Sherman vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

44.

Just as you're getting ready to leave, Miss Tremayne approaches you.

"Mr. Holland, Mr. Calkins from Calkins and Calkins is on the line again. He says he needs to speak with you. He claims it's most urgent."

If you want to take the call, go to **Passage 107.** If you want to ignore the call, go to **Passage 51.**

45.

You take the turn down the street heading to your home. You are not particularly proud to raise your child in this place, but you are not really ashamed

either. The city has fallen on hard times lately. Sometimes you wish the number of friends you could call upon was greater than the number of derelicts you have grown to know on a first name basis due to your daily walks to and from work. And then, of course, there are the crooked politicians, and the dirty alleys, and the muggers, and the hungry children, and the hundreds of tiny discarded glass vials, and the street gangs and their drive-by shootings.

But somehow, you feel comfortable knowing that Tefé will grow up knowing that such things exist—that she will never be ignorant of the true workings of the world.

Not that you intend to keep her here for very long. As soon as you get a couple of promotions, all three of you are leaving for a larger house that is as far away from this place as you can stand to travel. That was a decision you made when you first came here.

Once you leave, then maybe everything will be all right in the world. Maybe even the buzzing will go away.

If **Condition 11** is in effect, go to **Passage 133.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 131.**

46.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Mr. Baker, hoping to win him over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Baker makes a pitch for you but is soon opposed by Miss Schute, which almost immediately brings Miss Sherman over to your opposition. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Mr. Baker, Mr. Sampson, and Mr. Russell vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Miss Simmons, Miss Schute, and Miss Sherman vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

47.

You stop by the neighborhood employment agency. A woman steps up as soon as you approach the counter.

"Hello, may I help you?"

"Yes, my name is Holland. I'm looking for work."

"Have you been employed within the last six months, Mr. Holland?"

"Yes. I was an advertising representative until yesterday."

"I see. Well, fill out this form and wait over there for a moment. We'll make a few quick calls and get right back to you."

You follow the woman's instructions. Fifteen minutes later, she returns.

"It seems you're in luck, Mr. Holland. We already have some leads for you. Would you be available for interviews this afternoon?"

"Yes, of course."

"Good. I'll set up an interview for you at Brooks and Maddox for 3:00 PM, and another with Clybefeld Deliveries at 4:15. Brooks and Maddox is a straight ad agency. Clybefeld is looking for someone for their sales staff. It's a bit out of your area of expertise, but I think you can handle it.

"Good Luck, Mr. Holland. If you don't hear anything positive, feel free to come back here tomorrow and we'll make a few more calls."

"Yes, thank you."

Resume the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to go out on your first interview, go to **Passage 78.**

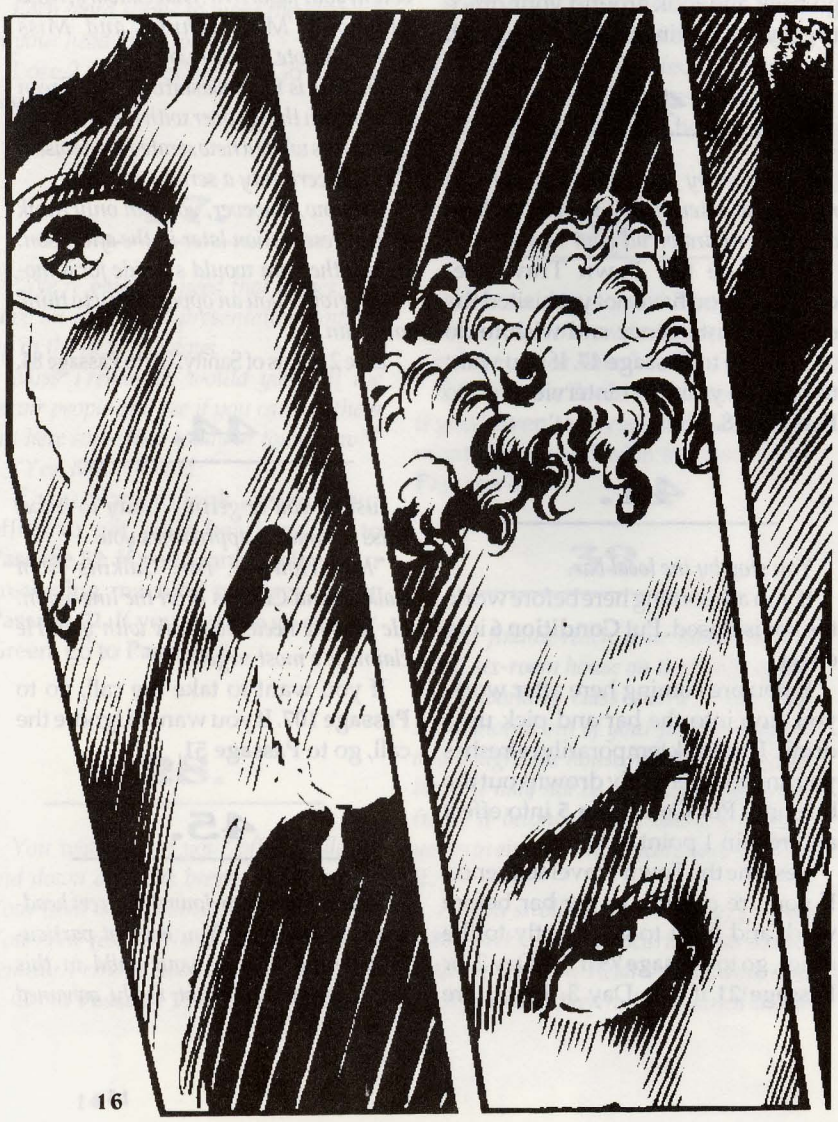
48.

Miss Tremayne enters your office.

"Mr. Holland, the copier's been acting up again! I've called the repair men. They say that they'll be in late this afternoon.

"That'll be fine Miss Tremayne, there's still plenty of time to get the packets ready for the Sleepease presentation."

Go to **Passage 23.**



49.

A quick adjustment of the toner cartridge seems to do the trick. You run off another series of test memos to make sure you have corrected the problem. Everything appears to be fine.

But just as you're about to leave, a secretary throws a memo down on the copier and is soon moaning in disgust.

"This damn thing! Why don't they bring somebody in to fix it?" You notice she is holding another blacked-out copy. Her yelling combines with buzzing in your head for just a moment and splits your temples with a sharp pain.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. If you want to have Miss Tremayne call the copier repair people, go to **Passage 27.** If you want to play back your answering machine message, go to **Passage 71.** If you want to answer Mr. Green's summons, go to **Passage 8.** If you want to go back and look around your office to get your bearings, go to **Passage 52.**

50.

"Yes Abby, well . . . I was delayed at the office. Mr. Green absolutely needed the Sleepease slogan before closing today, and the products research people couldn't get me some of the market surveys until after 3:30. Things got pretty tense for a while. I hope I didn't spoil any of your plans."

You must Persuade Abby to accept your story using the rules found on page 28 of the *Rules Manual.* Since she is rather upset, you should treat Abby as though she is Neutral. Her statistics can be found on page 17 of the *Swamp Thing Sourcebook.* If your Persuasion attempt succeeds, go to **Passage 70.** If the attempt fails, go to **Passage 72.**

51.

"Thank you Miss Tremayne, but I'm not really feeling very well. Can you please ask them to ring again tomorrow?"

"He said it was very important, Mr. Holland."

"Yes, I know. I . . . I just don't feel well."

"Certainly, Mr. Holland."

Go to **Passage 100.**

52.

You slowly take in your surroundings. It's odd but they simultaneously seem both mysterious and familiar.

You are sitting behind a modest wooden desk. The name plate before you reads: "Alec Holland, representative." Next to the name plate is a picture of your wife. Her name is Abby. Abby is cradling your child. Her name is Tefé. Sitting before you on the desk is a manila file folder marked "Sleepease." Thumbing through its contents, you find some mock-ups of Sleepease advertisements and some sales figures. The Sleepease account is your current project.

Through a glass window, you can see your secretary, Miss Tremayne, busily shuffling her fingers over a keyboard. You've known her for a long time. Her name is Liz.

If you want to have Miss Tremayne call the copier repair people, go to **Passage 27.** If you want to try and repair the copier yourself, go to **Passage 33.** If you want to play back your answering machine message, go to **Passage 71.** If you want to answer Mr. Green's summons go to **Passage 8.**

53.

You gently twist the replacement bulb into place in the overhead light in the bedroom. As you are replacing the light's cover, you feel your footstool begin to wobble a bit, but you have no trouble steadying yourself. When the deed is done, you snatch up the stool to leave. But as you do so, you hear a loud crash!

As you snatched up the stool, you dislodged a lamp from atop the nightstand and sent it crashing to the floor, where it has shattered. The lamp was a present from Abby's father. It was red with delicate white stripes on its sides. Abby was very fond of it.

"Alec, what happened?" She enters the room and finds her smashed keepsake.

"Alec, what's wrong with you? Couldn't you even change a goddamn light bulb without making a mess. Is . . . is that my lamp? Oh Alec!" The tears begin streaming down her face. "That lamp was the only thing my father ever gave me! You know what it meant to me. Couldn't you have been a bit more careful?"

Each word seems to make the buzzing in your head grow louder.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 97.**

54.

You pull yourself out of bed. Again, you have exactly twenty-nine minutes in which to get dressed and get to work.

When you leave for work, begin the Town Travel sequence. When you finally want to go in to work, go to **Passage 21.** Before you leave, you may choose to take either your watch or your class ring with you. If you take the watch, put **Condition 7** into effect if you have not done so already. If you take the ring, put **Condition 8** into effect if you have not done so already.

55.

You sit down at your desk and begin to contemplate exactly how horrible your day is going to be. Plotting out an entire research strategy is a grueling and time-consuming process. And to make matters worse, the mysterious buzzing inside your head is beginning to grow in intensity once again.

The only real course of action is to roll up your sleeves and get to work.

Remove the Resource Allocation Props found on page 29. Each of the small markers represent different resources that are at the disposal of your agency. The larger boxes represent different sorts of advertising arenas to which these resources must be allocated. The need of each arena is printed in its corresponding box. PRINT, for example, needs at least $35,000 allocated to it, while BILLBOARDS needs only $10,000. Each of the resources at your disposal is worth a certain amount of money. AD SOLICITORS, for example, are worth $15,000 in resources, while a GRAPHICS BUDGET is worth $12,000.

To allocate a resource, place its marker in the box of the arena to which you are allocating it. If you want to allocate an AD SOLICITOR to the BILLBOARD arena, for example, you would simply place the AD SOLICITOR marker in the BILLBOARD box. You can allocate as many resources to each arena as you wish,

subject to the restrictions below. Your goal is to allocate a total value in resources to each arena that equals or exceeds that arena's need. Placing the AD SOLICITOR in the BILLBOARD box, for instance, completely handles all of the needs in that arena since the BILLBOARD arena needs only $10,000 and you have allocated $15,000 toward it.

There are a few rules that restrict or enhance your allocation of resources:

1) Allocating an AIDE to the same arena as an AD SOLICITOR doubles the value of the SOLICITOR.

2) Allocating both AD SOLICITORS to the same area doubles both their values (for a total allocation of $60,000).

3) The AUDITOR refuses to work in the PRINT arena.

4) Allocating an ACCOUNTANT to the same area as an AUDITOR doubles the value of the AUDITOR.

5) The AIDE can handle the BILLBOARD arena all by herself.

6) The SUPERVISOR can handle any one arena all by himself. He refuses to work if you are going to allocate an AD SOLICITOR to any other arena and refuses to work in the TELEVISION arena.

7) BANK ACCOUNTS may not be allocated to the BILLBOARD arena.

8) Only one resource may be allocated to both the RADIO and BILLBOARD arenas.

9) The GRAPHICS BUDGET may only be allocated if the SUPERVISOR is going to be allocated.

Note that not all resources must be allocated.

The day's work is going to be particularly harrowing. Lose 1 point of Sanity. When you have finished your allocation, go to the passage number that appears on the resource marker allocated to the BILLBOARD arena.

56.

You can't wait for the repair men. The pain in your head is simply too great.

"I . . . I'm sorry, Miss Tremayne. I feel terrible. I had better get home. But you go along. Ask the copy people if they can come back first thing in the morning."

"But Mr. Holland, what about the Sleepease presentation?"

"Everything will be fine. I'm sure the repairmen can return."

Go to **Passage 124.**

57.

Derelicts line the sidewalks in front of the hotel. You find nothing of any interest here at the present.

Continue the Town Travel sequence. If you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 77.**

58.

You get about halfway home when you remember you left your hat lying on your desk at work. You quickly double back and scamper off after it.

A few moments later, the security guards are greeting you in the building lobby.

"Your hat, Mr. Holland? We can't let you back in the building after hours, but I'll go get it for you." A moment later, the guard returns with your hat and you are on your way.

Put **Condition 5** into effect. Continue the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to return home, go to **Passage 32.**

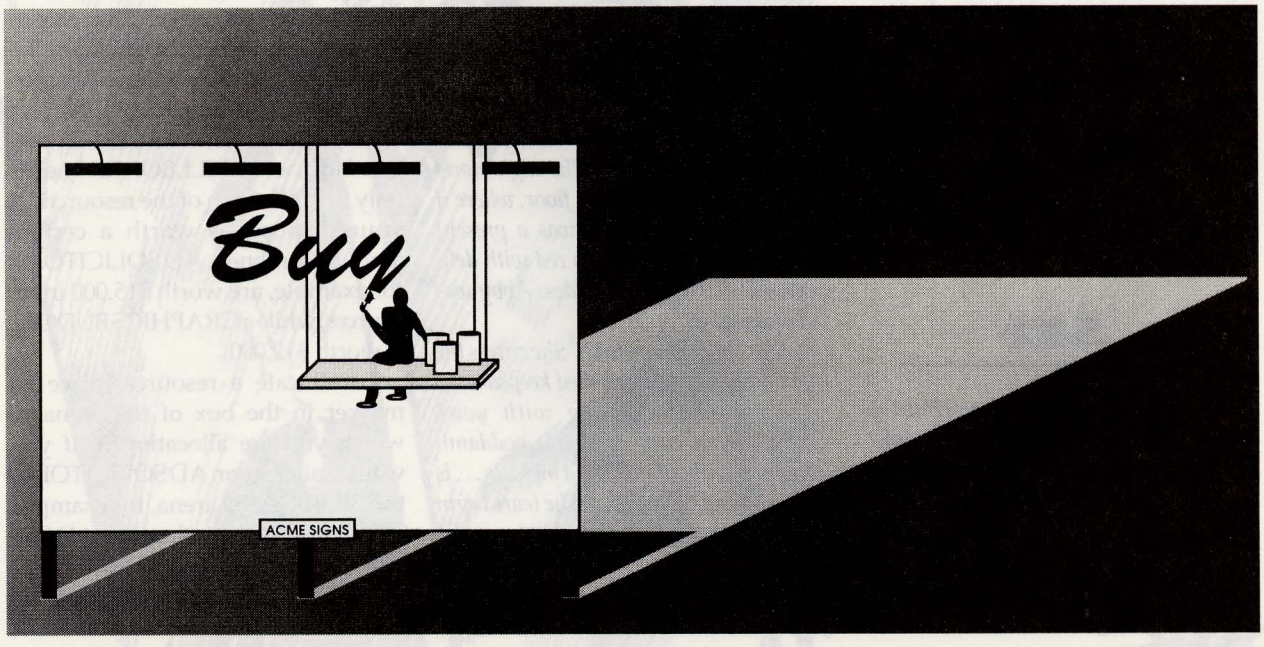
59.

You have allocated the supervisor to the billboard arena.

Put **Condition 14** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**

60.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Mr. Sampson, hoping to win him over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Sampson



makes a pitch for you and is soon joined by Mr. Russell, which almost immediately brings Miss Simmons over to your opposition. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Mr. Sampson, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Russell vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Miss Simmons, Miss Schute, and Miss Sherman vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

61.

You have allocated an auditor to the billboard phase.

Put **Condition 13** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**

62.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Miss Sherman, hoping to win her over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Sherman makes a pitch for you but is soon opposed by Mr. Baker, which almost immediately brings Miss Schute over to your side. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Miss Sherman, Miss Schute, and Miss Simmons vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Sampson vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

63.

You have allocated the $10,000 bank account to the billboard arena.

Go to **Passage 44.**

64.

You manage to drag your body out of Mister Green's office and back into your own. For brief little spurts of time now and again, the buzzing pulse in your head begins to take control of your body, preventing it from answering your own mental commands.

Miss Tremayne has left a message on your desk from a Mister Calkins of the Calkins and Calkins law firm. He's been trying to reach you for days. You pick up the phone to return his call but discover that Miss Tremayne neglected to get his number.

What could the lawyers possibly want? That's something else to worry about, but you've no time to worry about it now. You've got to get ready for the senior partners' meeting. If your resource allocation strategy isn't approved, it could be a serious setback for the Sleepease account.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 73.**

65.

Here is what your observations tell you:

Miss Schute seems to strongly dislike Mr. MacGalvary and Mr. Baker and will probably vote against anything they favor.

Miss Sherman seems to like Miss Schute and will probably vote with her.

Mr. Baker strongly disagrees with Miss Sherman on just about everything.

Mr. Sampson seems to despise Miss Simmons, but respects Mr. MacGalvary.

Go to **Passage 122.**

66.

Before you can even get out of your office, Mr. Green enters and is all over you. He must be angry. He didn't knock, and he never knocks when he's angry.

"Well Holland, glad you could join us this morning."

"Excuse me, Mr. Green?"

"Look at your watch." You take his advice. He's right; it's sixteen minutes past nine. You are late.

"What's the problem?"

"No problem, Mr. Green. I . . . had to make a stop on the way here. It won't happen again."

"It had better not. Be in my office in ten minutes to discuss your agenda for today."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

Lose 2 points of Sanity. End **Condition 6.** Go to **Passage 14.**

67.

You settle in for the evening and sit down to Abby's delightful dinner. You are thankful that the pain in your head has decided to spare you for a while.

"Alec, I've been thinking about that college bond. Couldn't we borrow the money?"

"I don't think so, Abby. Our mortgage payments are putting a strain on our finances already. I don't think we could get the bank to give us any more credit."

"What if we put up collateral?"

"What collateral do we have?"

"Its only a thousand dollars. I could put up my wedding ring."

The familiar buzz is starting to come back. You reach across the table and gently grasp her hand. "No . . . I'll get the money somehow." She stares up into your face for just a second before once more fixing her gaze upon her food.

Go to **Passage 36.**

68.

Here is what your observations tell you:

Miss Schute seems to strongly dislike Mr. MacGalvary and Mr. Baker and will probably vote against anything they favor.

Miss Sherman seems to like Miss Schute and will probably vote with her.

Go to **Passage 122.**

69.

The man behind the pawnshop counter hands you five twenty-dollar bills, and you add them to the supply in your wallet. You still haven't enough money for the precious college bond, but you are making progress. Perhaps that will please Abby.

Regain 1 point of Sanity. If **Condi-**

tion 10 is in effect, put **Condition 15** in effect. Otherwise, put **Condition 10** in effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. Once you finally decide to head for work or home, refer to the last passage you read for the passage numbers to consult.

70.

Abby stares at you for what seems like a century without saying anything at all.

"Abby?"

"It's okay, Alec," she says with a totally emotionless face, "next time you're going to be late, call me."

"Yes, Abby. I'm sorry, I wanted to call . . . but I was busy."

Take **Condition 5** out of effect. Go to **Passage 9.**

71.

"You make your way over to the answering machine and press the button which is supposed to trigger its memory. You hear the tape within hustling back to total rewind.

"(click) BEEEEEEP—Mr. Holland, I've kdglkfjgiapdjdkfadfffffffff, we won't be kadfdfglkfja;0l lkvj dfsfsd advsa90. Thank you."

Damn! This blasted machine isn't working properly either. There's no point in fixing it. You haven't the slightest idea as to how it works. Next time you have some spare money in the maintenance budget, you'll have somebody look at it.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. If you want to have Miss Tremayne call the copier repair people, go to **Passage 27.** If you want to try and fix the copier yourself, go to **Passage 33.** If you want to answer Mr. Green's summons, go to **Passage 8.** If you want to go back and look around your office to get your bearings, go to **Passage 52.**

72.

"Damn it Alec, that's no excuse! You have a telephone at work. You could have called me. Now I'll have to reheat our entire dinner!"

"Yes, I'm sorry Abby, but . . ."

"Forget it. Dinner will be ready in twenty minutes."

She sulks off into the kitchen without saying another word.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 9.**



73.

At 1:00 PM you shuffle into the conference room to attend the meeting of the firm's senior partners. They will be voting on the resource allocation strategy you devised for the Sleepease account. The meeting is extremely important. A negative vote could be disastrous. Should the partners reject your strategy, a new strategy would have to be devised, and the Sleepease executives would lose a great deal of confidence in you personally.

After just a few minutes, you begin to grow disgusted with the whole affair. The texture of the "debate" greatly resembles the tight buzzing that echoes in your head. If one partner is fond of another, he or she will favor any position taken up by his or her compatriot, while a partner that loathes another will do anything to confound the other's interests. Very little of the discussion is centered around the merit of your proposal.

A ridiculously small amount of time has been allotted for you to address the meeting. Your strategy is to pick the right partner and focus your entire brief speech upon him or her, hopefully causing a quorum of the others to fall into line.

There are seven partners in all: Mr. Russell, Miss Simmons, Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Miss Schute, Mr. Sampson, and Miss Sherman.

You spend the time prior to your own speech carefully observing all of the partners. Make a Perception Check (see page 26 of the *Rules Manual*) against an OV/RV of 10/10. If you earn 10 or more RAPs, go to **Passage 15.** If you earn between 5 and 9 RAPs, go to **Passage 65.** If you earn between 1 and 4 RAPs go to **Passage 68.** If you fail, go to **Passage 122.**

74.

Miss Tremayne carefully lays out the packets containing your plans for the Sleepease account before the assembled executives, and you begin your speech.

"Anyway, our approach is really rather conservative . . ."

The very first time you glance up to make eye contact with your audience, you notice that something is very wrong.

"Mr. Holland, this packet looks very impressive, but didn't you get our messages?"

"No. Messages?"

"We decided to change the name of the product to Shuteye 4000. We left two separate messages on your telephone answering machine."

Of course.

Your head is beginning to pound—endless insects tunneling in and out of your cranial cavity. You've almost certainly lost the account. The entire slogan was to be based around the name. A whole new program will have to be devised. It could take months. Any second, Mr. Green will be shouting.

"Holland, I want to see you in my office, right now!"

Lose 3 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 92.**

75.

You stroll into the neighborhood pawn shop. As you enter, a firearm that is perched in the window catches your eye. You don't know much about guns, but you do know enough to recognize the weapon as a shotgun—twelve gauge, pump action. You saw a made-for-TV cop reciting a litany of the weapon's virtues to his co-star just last weekend.

"Bought that last week at a police auction." The voice of the proprietor. He's locked in a sort of steel cage behind the counter. "Last guy who owned it used it to blow his brains out."

Life is cheap these days. The price tag dangling from the gun reads $551.07—Five hundred fifty-one dollars and seven cents.

"How can I help you?"

If **Condition 8** is in effect, go to **Passage 90.** If **Condition 7** is in effect, go to **Passage 134.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 114.**

76.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Miss Simmons, hoping to win her over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Simmons makes a pitch for you but is soon opposed by Mr. Sampson, which almost immediately brings Mr. Russell over to your side. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Miss Simmons, Miss Schute, and Miss Sherman vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Sampson vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

77.

You are finally within sight of your house. What is Abby going to say? What are you going to do?

Even though it is only 4:11 and you are home much earlier than you have ever returned before, you spot Abby peering out the curtains, waiting for you as usual. It's almost as if she expected you.

Now the buzz is tugging your brain down into your neck and allowing it to pop back into place with a painful snap. You approach your wife with caution.

If **Condition 12** is in effect, go to **Passage 104.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 4.**

78.

Your head is pounding. Brooks and Maddox is downtown. You'll have to take a cab. The fare is two dollars and thirty cents. During the ride in, you are only intermittently present. Now and again, the pain takes your place.

When you finally arrive, you are met by a man named Jacobs. He gives you some details about the position the firm is looking to fill. You would be a file clerk, far lower down the ladder than the position you held at your last job, though he promises room for advancement.

You try to tell him about your former job and your duties. Sometimes, the pain lets you. The interview is not going well. You break off contact as soon as possible. You hop back in a cab and spend another six dollars and thirty-four cents. Next stop Clybefeld Deliveries.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 103.**



79.

You drag your weary body into your office. Miss Tremayne is not there to greet you, though she has left you a note:

"Mister Holland—the Sleepease executives' presentation is tomorrow at 3:30."

The red light on your telephone answering machine is blinking again. You attempt to play back the message and get only garbled warbling. Great.

For a moment, the pain in your head had subsided, but the moment you activated the answering machine it immediate kicked in again. It was almost as if the pain had forgotten to come calling this morning and had to be spurred into action by its sibling.

Mr. Green has left a written note as well: "Holland, see me ASAP."

If **Condition 6** is in effect, go to **Passage 106.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 99.**

80.

You have allocated the graphics budget to the billboard phase.

Put **Condition 13** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**



81.

Your alarm goes off, waking you to face another day.

If you have not already done so, check off the Day 1 box on the time track. Make an Action Check using your WILL/WILL as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 12/12. If you succeed, go to **Passage 37.** If you fail, go to **Passage 98.**

82.

You can't protest. You can't cry. The pain won't allow it. Instead, you leave your house and head out onto the cold streets. Right now, you've got to find a place to rest. You've got to get to the hotel. Maybe you can make the pain go away for just an instant.

But before you reach the hotel, you'll need money. You stumble your way down the street to the bank and run your ATM card through a hungry machine—six hundred dollars. All the money you have.

Go to **Passage 129.**

83.

The copier repairmen were only fourteen minutes late: 840 seconds. You sit in your office as they fiddle with the machine downstairs.

After about twenty minutes, they call you down to inspect their handiwork.

"This ought to do it." The repairman runs off a few sample copies in order to demonstrate that the machine is, in fact, running smoothly. You sign his voucher, and he and his associates are on their way.

If Abby has previously scolded you for returning home late, lose 1 point of Sanity. In any case, lose 5 Hero Points. Put both **Condition 1** and **Condition 5** into effect. Go to **Passage 124.**

84.

After the meeting, you retreat to your office, hoping to catch a bit of rest before facing off with the Sleepease executives. You desperately search for an aspirin, but to no avail. You've already gone through your bottle in the last two days.

Only moments after you arrive, you're already forced to begin preparing yourself for the presentation. When 3:30 rolls around, you stumble off to the conference room.

Of course you are the last attendee to arrive. Mr. Green scowls at you menacingly.

" . . . to assure you that we don't run that sort of company. We're careful. We manufacture medical supplies and make donations to charit . . . Why hullo Mr. Holland. My name's Constantine. I'm the area coordinator assigned to this project. Perhaps you remember me? We've spoken on the phone." Constantine is a tall blond Englishman. You remember his voice. He takes you around and introduces you to his staff.

The pain is beginning to creep up on you again. You are going to have to make this short.

"I know your time is at a premium, so I will try to be brief. Miss Tremayne, will you please hand out the packets?"

If **Condition 1** is in effect, go to **Passage 74.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 5.**

85.

Back in the bayou, Abby and La Traiteur punt back down to the resting place of the Swamp Thing in a small wooden boat. Constantine awaits them.

"You sure took your sweet time

then, didnya?"

"What's happened since I've been gone? Have there been any signs?"

"None that I could read. Doesn't seemed to have changed much, really. Let's let your boy have a go."

Labo calmly strolls out of the boat and begins to practice his art. He starts by examining his patient's eyes. Normally, he would then proceed on to glands and tongue. But in this case, there is no need to go any further.

"Yes, Je can aid him." Labo pulls out a penknife and tears open a tiny slit in Alec's forehead, before unwrapping a poultice and laying it across the open wound.

"Now we wait. Help him, Abby. Tu must stand by his side. He can feel you there. Give him strength."

"What have you done to him?"

"In a way, he has been poisoned. Je simply applied a common remedy—the same mixture je would use for a snake bite. Mais he still has a long fight ahead of him. Reach out to him, Abby. He is weak. Lend him your strength."

Go to **Passage 116.**

86.

You collect your belongings, take one final look around the office, and head out the door. Most of your co-workers have assembled to watch you go. They look sad and sympathetic, but you have been around long enough to know that many of them are actually quite happy. The fact that you have been bumped off the ladder is quite likely to mean that many of the people below you will receive a promotion. No one has the courage to display his or her true emotions in your presence.

Begin the Town Travel sequence. When you are finally ready to go home, go to **Passage 77.**

87.

You crawl up the stairs and into your fourth floor hotel room. The walls and doors are thinner than the glass in the window, though your neighbors are certainly rather quiet. What are you going to do about the pain?

You roll around on the bed in agony. What is causing this terrible headache?

Go to **Passage 120.**

88.

"All right Mr. Holland, so be it. You'll be hearing from us."

Mr. Calkins casually walks out of your office.

Put **Condition 12** into effect. Go to **Passage 86.**

89.

If you are travelling in the morning and have not yet gone to work, go to **Passage 79** if it is Day 2 or **Passage 21** if it is Day 3. If you are travelling here after normal working hours on Day 2, then:

You get about halfway home when you remember you left your hat lying on your desk at work. You quickly double back and scamper off after it.

A few moments later, the security guards are greeting you in the building lobby.

"Your hat, Mr. Holland? We can't let you back in the building after hours, but I'll go get it for you." A moment later, the guard returns with your hat and you are on your way.

Put **Condition 5** into effect. Continue the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to return home, go to **Passage 45.**

90.

"Yes, I would like to pawn this ring. It's made of fine grade silver."

"Let's see it. Yeah, so it is. I'll give you a hundred bucks for it."

"Only one hundred dollars?"

"Yeah, that's all, pal. Take it or leave it."

If you accept the offer, go to **Passage 69.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 114.**

91.

Miss Tremayne enters your office yet again. "Oh and Mr. Holland, I almost forgot: the copy repair people will be here at exactly five minutes to five. You'll have to stay here with them and lock up. I'm afraid I can't. I have a ballet lesson at 5:15."

The pain is throbbing in your head.

If you want to wait for the repair men, go to **Passage 83.** If you want to decline to wait for the repair men, go to **Passage 56.**

92.

Amidst snickers from the Sleepease—no, Shuteye 4000 executives, you follow Mr. Green into his office.

"Holland, I'm a fair man. I try not to mistreat anybody. Have I ever mistreated you?"

The buzzing drowned out the question, so you haven't an answer.

"Of course I haven't. But Holland, what am I going to do with you? Do you have any idea what you've just cost this firm in terms of lost man hours and lost revenues? I'm sure you realize that after your little fiasco in there, there's almost no way we are going to be able to salvage this account.

"As I say Holland, I am a fair man. But I'm afraid I have no choice but to fire you immediately. I'd like you to pack up your things and be out of here by close.

"That's all. You may go."

Throughout Green's lecture, you only picked up two words: "fire" and "immediately." But they were all you needed to hear. Right now, you've got to get back to Abby; she's the only one that can kill the pain.

You run off to collect your things.

Go to **Passage 105.**

93.

The employment agency helps neighborhood residents find jobs commensurate with their skills. There is a sign in the window reading: "Closed for remodeling until Friday."

If you are stopping by the employment agency before work, put **Condition 6** in effect. If you are stopping by the employment agency after work, put **Condition 5** in effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you are here in the morning, go to **Passage 79** when

you are finally ready to go to work if it is Day 2, or **Passage 21** if it is Day 3. If you are here in the evening, go to **Passage 45** when you are ready to go home.

94.

You have allocated an accountant to the billboard phase.

Put **Condition 13** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**

95.

"Yes, Abby. I am very sorry. I made a stop on the way home. I didn't think it would take me very long, and I guess I sort of lost track of time.

You must Persuade Abby to accept your story using the rules found on page 28 of the *Rules Manual.* Since she is rather upset, you should treat Abby as though she is Hostile. Her statistics can be found on page 17 of the *Swamp Thing Sourcebook.* If your Persuasion attempt succeeds, go to **Passage 70.** If the attempt fails, go to **Passage 72.**

96.

You step outside your office building and out into the park next door.

This brief break is exactly what you needed. The effect of the fresh air is very liberating. It clears your mind. For the first time all day, the annoying buzzing sound is no longer plaguing you.

Regain 1 point of Sanity. When you are ready to return to work, go to **Passage 17.**



97.

You tried to talk to Abby, tried to calm her down. But she didn't say another word to you all evening.

You are laying beside her now, waiting to drift to sleep. Tomorrow things will be better. Abby will come around eventually . . . she always does. And tomorrow your headache should be gone.

You sink back and close your eyes.

Cross off the Day 1 box on the time track. Go to **Passage 132.**

98.

You have a hard time dragging your weary body out of bed. You've only been awake for eleven seconds, and you've already been far less than fortunate.

Your schedule is off. You'll have to hurry or you'll be late.

Put **Condition 6** into effect. Go to **Passage 37.**

99.

If **Condition 1** is in effect, go to **Passage 23.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 48.**

100.

If **Condition 1** is in effect, go to **Passage 124.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 91.**

101.

You have allocated the aide to the billboard arena.

Put **Condition 13** into effect. Go to **Passage 44.**

102.

"What is this? Did you look at the market surveys at all? I've barely looked at this data, and I can already recognize some very serious problems with your selection. What are we supposed to tell the Sleepease executives?

"I'm not going to make you go over this again because quite frankly, you haven't got the time. You're going to have to make a full presentation to the executives any day now. I'm going to kick this downstairs and let product research handle it.

"I just wanted to let you know that you're skating on thin ice here, Holland. Don't let it happen again. And remember, I want that resource allocation by closing."

Go to **Passage 55.**

103.

Your head is pounding. Clybefeld Deliveries is on the northwest side, well out of your neighborhood. You're in a cab. You've paid a fare. Your head is pounding. During the ride in, you mercifully lose consciousness once or twice. Its getting harder and harder to control yourself. Your head is pounding.

When you finally arrive, you are met by a man named Palmer. He gives you some details about the position his firm is looking to fill. You would be a sales representative, a position roughly equivalent to the one you held at the advertising firm. Your head is pounding.

You think of Tefé and try to keep your composure. You try to tell Palmer about your former job and your duties. Sometimes the pain lets you. The interview is going very poorly. You leave early. You hop back in a cab headed back to your neighborhood and shell out another eight dollars and fourteen cents.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 119.**

104.

Abby is obviously very angry. "Do you know a man named Mr. Calkins, Alec? He was just here. I wrote him a check for one hundred dollars. He told me you owed your ex-wife some money, and he was threatening to sue. What the hell is this all about?"

Tell her. Tell her now, or you'll never find the words.

Go to **Passage 4.**

105.

As you stumble out of the office, an unfamiliar man approaches.

"Alec Holland? Can I have a word with you for a moment?"

"I . . . no longer work here. I'm sure someone else can help you."

"No Mr. Holland, it's you I'm looking for. My name is Calkins. My law firm has been trying to get in touch with you for a couple of days now, but we've been having some problems with our phones."

"Y. . . Yes?"

"Mr. Holland, we represent a collection agency that has been trying to collect some money from your ex-wife for the last couple of months. Last week we discovered that you failed to make one of your alimony payments back in 1977, and we had a judge sign an order rolling your debt to your wife over to cover her costs."

"Ex . . . wife?"

*"**Linda** Holland?"*

"Linda?"

"Yes, Mr. Holland. If you would only be so good as to write us a check for one hundred dollars, we can leave you alone and let you get back to work."

"But I no longer work here."

"Yes, I'm sorry about that. But about that check . . ."

If you write Calkins the check, go to **Passage 128.** If not, go to **Passage 118.**

106.

Before you can even get out of your office, Mr. Green enters and is all over you. He must be angry. He didn't knock, and he never knocks when he's angry.

"Well Holland, glad you could join us this morning."

"Excuse me, Mr. Green?"

"Look at your watch." You take his advice. He's right; it's sixteen minutes past nine. You are late.

"What's the problem?"

"No problem, Mr. Green. I . . . had to make a stop on the way here. It won't happen again."

"It had better not. Be in my office in ten minutes to discuss your agenda for today."

"Yes, Mr. Green."

Lose 2 points of Sanity. End **Condition 6.** Go to **Passage 99.**

107.

"Thank you, Miss Tremayne." You pick up the receiver. "Alec Holland. May I help you?"

"Yes, Mr. Holland? My name is Calkins. I was . . ."



Suddenly, your line goes dead. You bang the phone for a bit in frustration, but you're completely unable to restore the connection. Doesn't anything around here work properly?

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 100.**

108.

You approach the local bank.

Although the bank is closed (the bank is only open during hours you are working), you can withdraw your money with a magnetic ATM card. You have $600 in the bank. If you wish to make a withdrawal, you must withdraw all the money you have on account.

Resume the Town Travel sequence. If you wish to withdraw your money, put **Condition 9** into effect. When you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 77.**

109.

You stop by the local bar.

Looking for relief, you attempt to drown your pain in alcohol. But this time the bitter drink acts only as a lens, magnifying your suffering and sending it back at you with an increased intensity. You drop your drink to the ground and stagger back out into the streets amidst the derelicts you know by name.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Resume the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 77.**

110.

You approach the local pawn shop. A sign in the window reads: "Closed—come back tomorrow!"

Resume the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 32.**

111.

Derelicts line the sidewalks in front of the hotel. You find nothing of any interest there at present.

Resume the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 32.**

112.

You return to your hotel room to rest, but you can't melt away the excruciating pain. You sense that you are beginning to lose control of yourself. From time to time,



you can't remember who you are.

If you have not yet visited the employment agency, you may do so by proceeding to **Passage 47.** If you have visited the agency and are ready for your first interview, proceed to **Passage 78.**

113.

You enter the local bar.

You greet the bartender and have a quick drink before heading home. The drink temporarily refreshes you and momentarily drowns out the buzzing.

Put **Condition 5** into effect and regain 1 point of Sanity. Resume the Town Travel sequence.

114.

There is nothing else that interests you in the pawn shop. You head on your way.

Put **Condition 11** into effect. Resume the Town Travel sequence. Once you finally decide to head for work or home, refer to the last passage you read for the passage numbers to consult.

115.

You can't protest. You can't cry. The pain won't allow it. Instead, you leave your house and head out onto the cold streets. Right now you've got to find a place to rest. You've got to get to the hotel. Maybe you can make the pain go away for just an instant.

Go to **Passage 129.**

116.

Abby is your only chance now. You are on fire. She is the only thing that can relieve the pain. What was it that she said? Make a . . . contribution?

You are going to have to crawl out into the streets and build a life for yourself, a life for your family.

Resume the Town Travel sequence. It is now Day 4. If you want to check with the local employment agent, go to **Passage 47.**

117.

"Four days? That'll be one hundred thirty-two dollars and fifteen cents, sir."

Barely thinking, you give the man his money. He gives you a key, and you stumble on upstairs.

Go to **Passage 87.**

118.

"Mr. Calkins . . . I . . . I'm sorry. I cannot pay you, excuse me."

"Now Mr. Holland, we were hoping we wouldn't have to press this issue and involve your current wife, but we will if we have to.

"Please Mr. Holland, be reasonable."

If you want to write Calkins a check, go to **Passage 128.** Otherwise, put **Condition 12** into effect and go to **Passage 77.**

119.

An hour later, you step out of the cab in front of your hotel and stagger up the stairs to your room, clutching your head in agony. Someone has slipped a message under your door.

The message is from the employment agency. You were turned down at Brooks and Maddox because you are "overqualified." Clybefeld Deliveries turned you down because your skills are "not appropriate to the job they are offering."

You no longer have any control over yourself. Your limbs move, but you are no longer pulling the strings. You are a slave to the primal rhythm of the flesh.

Your mind too, is beginning to run on automatic. You begin to search for something, anything that may provide you with temporary shelter from the shrill buzzing that is splitting your skull. A blanket, or some food perhaps. It takes you fifteen minutes to remember that you can purchase such items. In desperation, you count your money, no easy task under the present circumstances.

In your pocket, there is exactly . . . five hundred fifty-one dollars and seven cents.

Make an Action Check. Add your Sanity score to your WILL score and use this value as the AV/EV of the Check (if the total is negative, you automatically fail the check). The OV/RV of the roll is equal to 7/7. If the check earns 1 or more RAPs, go to **Passage 6.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 3.**

120.

After whirling about in agony for more than an hour, you mercifully fall asleep.

Cross off the Day 3 box on the time track. Go to **Passage 85.**

121.

You have a hard time dragging your weary body out of bed. You've only been awake for eleven seconds, and you've already been far less than fortunate.

Your schedule is off. You'll have to hurry or you'll be late.

Put **Condition 6** into effect. Go to **Passage 54.**

122.

You make your speech to the senior partners, targeting one specific individual.

You must Persuade the partner of your choice to accept your resource allocation using the rules found on page 28 of the *Rules Manual.* There are seven partners to choose from: Mr. Russell, Miss Simmons, Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Miss Schute, Mr. Sampson, and Miss Sherman. All partners have an INFL/SPIRIT of 3/3. If **Condition 14** is in effect, consider the partner Hostile. Otherwise, consider him or her Neutral.

If your Persuasion attempt fails to earn any RAPs, go to **Passage 130.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 123.**

123.

If you targeted Mr. Russell, go to **Passage 43.** If you targeted Miss Simmons, go to **Passage 76.** If you targeted Mr. MacGalvary, go to **Passage 125.** If you targeted Mr. Baker, go to **Passage 46.** If you targeted Miss Schute, go to **Passage 126.** If you targeted Mr. Sampson, go to **Passage 60.** If you targeted Miss Sherman, go to **Passage 62.**

124.

You step out of your office building and begin to head for home, all the while massaging your aching head.

Begin the Town Travel sequence. When you are ready to go home, go to **Passage 45.**

125.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Mr. MacGalvary, hoping to win him over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, MacGalvary makes a pitch for you but is soon opposed by Miss Schute, which almost immediately brings Miss Sherman over to your opposition. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution passes 4-3. Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Russell, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Sampson voted in your favor. Miss Schute, Miss Simmons, and Miss Sherman voted against you.

This was an important victory. It will give Mr. Green a bit more confidence in you and confirm the faith of the Sleepease executives. But you are not out of the woods yet. There is still so much that could go wrong.

Lose 1 point of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

126.

Taking advantage of the small time you have been allotted for your speech, you focus your presentation on Miss Schute, hoping to win her over to your cause. When it comes time to vote, Schute makes a pitch for you and is soon joined by Miss Sherman, which almost immediately throws Mr. Baker against you. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Miss Schute, Miss Sherman, and Miss Simmons vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Sampson vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the afternoon presentation. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

127.

Four days? That'll be one hundred eighty two dollars and fifteen cents, sir."

Barely thinking, you give the man his money. He gives you a key, and you stumble on upstairs.

Go to **Passage 87.**

128.

Reluctantly, you pull out your checkbook and write Calkins a check for one hundred dollars.

Note that this hundred dollars does not come out of the six-hundred-dollar bank account you may or may not have withdrawn. It comes from your checking account. Go to **Passage 86.**

129.

You stagger through the streets, finally reaching the hotel. There is a single old man who sits behind the counter.

"May I help you?"

"I . . . uhnn . . . I need a room."

"And how long will you be staying with us, sir?"

"What?"

"Sir?"

"Uh, four days?" You pull the figure out of the air.

If **Condition 10** is in effect, go to **Passage 117.** If **Condition 15** is in effect, go to **Passage 127.**

Otherwise, the old man rings up your bill. You hand him eighty-two dollars and fifteen cents, grab your key, and run upstairs. Go to **Passage 87.**

130.

You fail to convince your targeted senior partner to vote in favor of your resource allocation strategy.

When it comes time to vote, however, Miss Schute makes a pitch for you and is soon joined by Miss Sherman, which almost immediately throws Mr. Baker against you. The executives continue to bicker back and forth in this fashion for another hour.

In the end, your resolution fails 4-3. Miss Schute, Miss Sherman, and Miss Simmons vote in your favor. Mr. MacGalvary, Mr. Baker, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Sampson vote against you.

The loss is not devastating. Mr. Green can smooth things over with the Sleepease executives while a new strategy is devised. But it is certainly a serious setback.

For now, however, you can only think of the presentation later in the afternoon. If only the pain would subside for a moment, giving you an opportunity to think and plan.

Lose 2 points of Sanity. Go to **Passage 84.**

131.

You turn down the street heading to your house. As you pass by the neighborhood pawn shop, a firearm that is perched in the window catches your eye. You don't know much about guns, but you do know enough to recognize the weapon as a shotgun—twelve gauge, pump action. You saw a made-for-TV cop reciting a litany of the weapon's virtues to his co-star just last weekend.

"Bought that last week at a police auction." The voice of the proprietor. He's just come out to sweep the sidewalk. "Last guy who owned it used it to blow his brains out."

Life is cheap these days. The price tag dangling from the gun reads $551.07—Five hundred fifty-one dollars and seven cents.

Go to **Passage 133.**

132.

"Constantine, what's wrong with his eyes?"

"What?"

"They're twitching!"

"That's just a bit 'a REM, dearie."

"Bem?"

"No, REM! R-E-M. He's dreaming. Or hallucinating, I should think. How long's he been like this?"

"Maybe four hours. Constantine, this isn't some sort of evil magical

plot, is it?"

"What, been readin' the funnies again? Are you kidding? A hallucination gag's a parlor trick to any sorcerer worth his salt. If this were some type of plot, he'd be far worse off. You don't even want to know what your old man could have done to him if he'd somehow opened himself up to some sort of spell.

"No, we're missin' something here. I'm gonna have a look about."

"Just don't go too far."

"Hang on, I think this is your culprit right here."

Abby rushes down alongside Constantine on the bank of the bayou, maybe five yards from where the Swamp Thing's body rests. Protruding from the side of the bayou at that point is a thick drainage pipe that is spilling green and yellow chemicals into the stagnant waters below.

"Did this come standard with that chimney over there, or did they make you pay extra?"



"Constantine, I want you to tell me what's going on right now!"

"Well, look at him. He's rooted, isn't he? His roots go down into the Earth, unwittingly suck up a bit of this gob, and he's gone. You never know what strange chemicals can do to you."

"You mean... he's been poisoned?"

"No, not really. It looks like he's just tripping. I don't think it'll be fatal, but like I said, you never know what strange chemicals will do to you."

"Can you do something?"

"Me? Not a thing."

"C'mon Constantine, don't keep jerking me around!"

"I'm deadly serious, luv. I haven't the faintest as to how to tackle this."

"Oh what am I going to do?"

"Well there's always La Traiteur."

"Labo?"

"Whatever. He might have some sort of spooky cure for an all out binger. In fact, it might be worth hanging around to see if I can pick up the recipe. Might come in handy, y'understand."

"Yes. Labo. Yes, of course. I'll go get him. You stay here and watch Alec. CONSTANTINE! No jokes, stay here and watch Alec. I'll be back in an hour."

Constantine sets himself beneath a fern. "Wake me up when its over."

Go to **Passage 81.**

133.

You've finally reached your home. As you stroll up the walkway, you notice Abby peeking out the curtains, waiting for you as usual.

If **Condition 5** is in effect, go to **Passage 11.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 67.**

134.

"Yes, I would like to pawn this watch. It's made of fine grade silver."

"Let's see it. Yeah, so it is. I'll give you a hundred bucks for it."

"Only one hundred dollars?"

"Yeah, that's all, pal. Take it or leave it."

If you accept the offer, go to **Passage 69.** Otherwise, go to **Passage 114.**

ENDGAME:

LEVEL OF OPPOSITION:
Equal 20

CRITICAL POINTS:
None 0

AREA OF CONSEQUENCE:
Personal 0

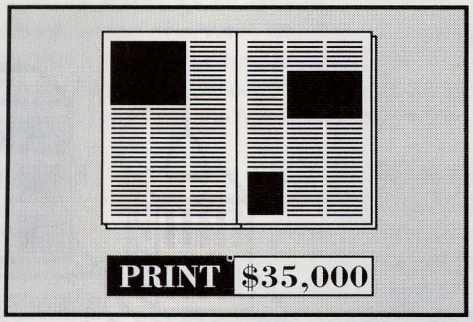
SEVERITY:
None* 0

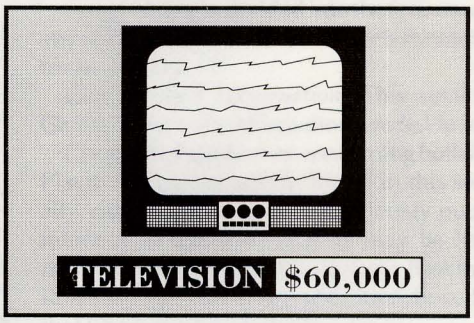
TOTAL STANDARD AWARD 20

*There are no undesirable consequences should Swamp Thing "fail."

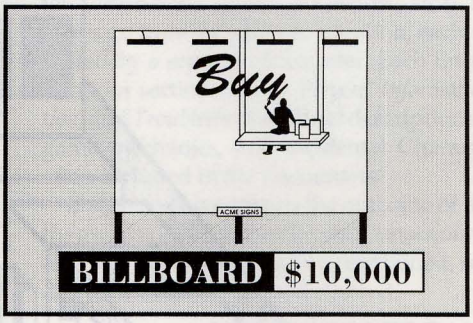
If you read **Passage 3**, halve your Standard Award.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROPS









GRAPHICS BUDGET
$12,000
P# 80

AIDE
$5,000
P# 101

BANK ACCOUNT
$5,000
P# 94

AD SOLICITOR
$15,000
P# 42

BANK ACCOUNT
$10,000
P# 63

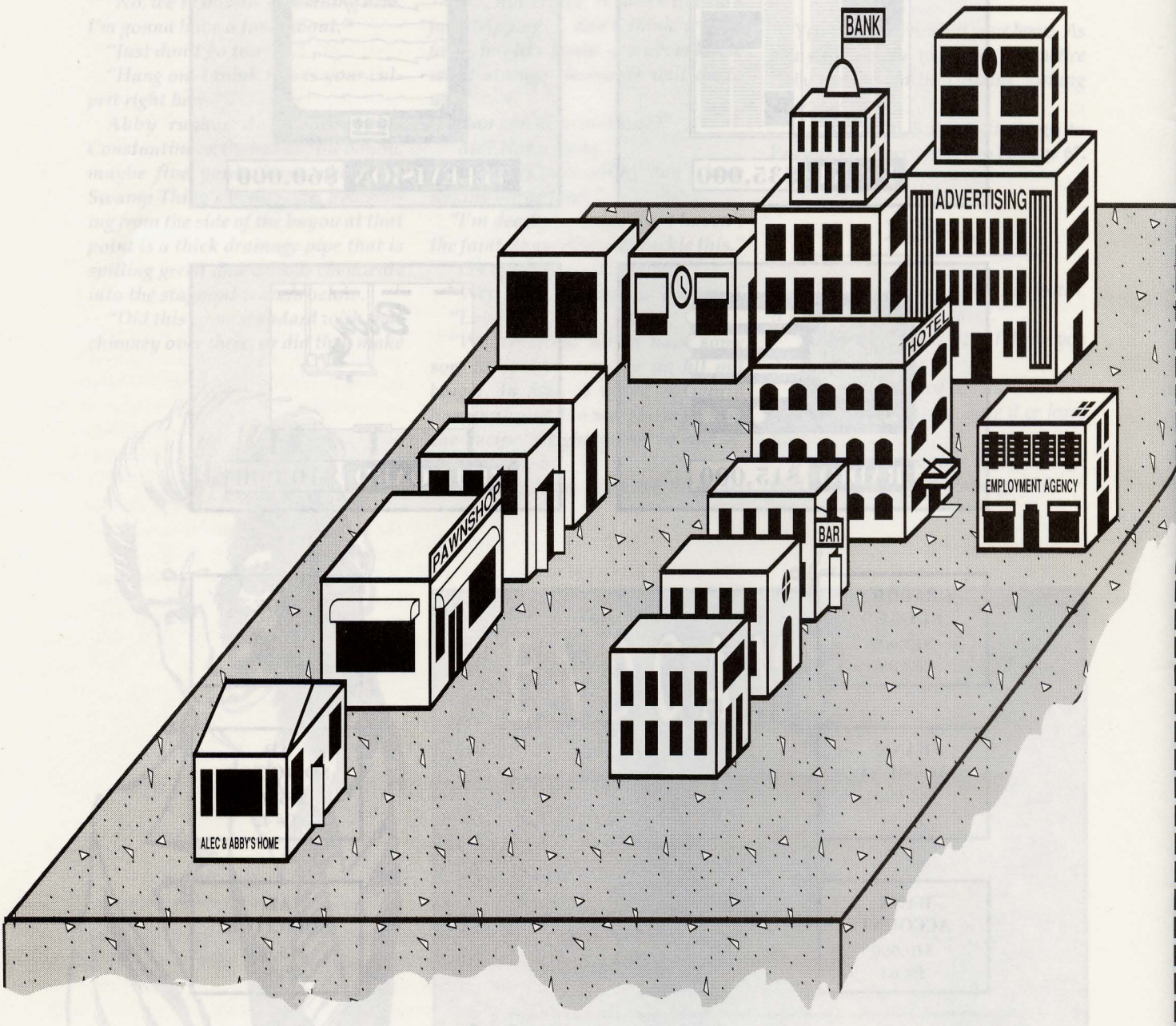
AD SOLICITOR
$15,000
P# 42

SUPERVISOR
P# 59

AUDITOR
$25,000
P# 61

ACCOUNTANT
$5,000
P# 94

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is a supplement for use with the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game, Second Edition. All the statistics and game mechanics contained herein conform to the rules and guidelines for play presented in the Second Edition boxed set, except where specifically noted in the text.

TYPES OF MODULES

This book is one of several different types of gaming modules that are available for use with the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game. The specific type can be found on the upper left-hand corner of the front cover, and will be one of the following:

Sourcebook: A sourcebook contains game-related and background material on a certain subject relating to the DC Universe, most often a specific group of heroes, a certain location, or a special genre. Gamemasters who prefer writing their own adventures will find sourcebooks especially helpful, since in addition to Characters' statistics, sourcebooks contain historical, organizational, and reference material about the sourcebook's subject.

Adventure: An adventure contains a full-length scenario for play with a certain hero, heroes, or teams of heroes. Adventures for individual heroes are called One-On-One adventures and are intended for only two players, one of whom acts as Gamemaster.

Match-Play: A Match-Play adventure is also designed for two players, but features a unique system whereby each player alternates between playing a hero and Gamemastering for his or her partner.

Solitaire: A Solitaire is an adventure for one player, where the book acts as Gamemaster.

Anthology: Anthologies are collections of shorter adventures, each featuring a different hero or heroes, and each written by a different author.

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED MATERIALS

There are certain Characters whose statistics are somewhat different in this book from those given in First Edition DC HEROES Role-Playing Game modules, the *Background/Roster Book*, and/or previous Second Edition modules. This is because of the constantly-evolving nature of the DC Universe, and new developments which have occured in the Character's comics. For example, a Character may have gained a new Power or Skill, and that new ability is now included in his or her statistics.

Some Power descriptions in this book may also be different from other descriptions of the same Power. These differences reflect an updated perception of how these Powers work in the DC Universe.

The Gadgetry rules have been modified from the First Edition of the DC HEROES Role-Playing Game and the *Hardware Handbook*. Most of the changes should be self-explanatory, with the following exceptions.

A Gadget whose name is in all capitals (BATTLE SUIT, AUTOMOBILE) cannot be taken away in combat, while Gadgets whose names are in upper- and lower-case letters (Pistol, Radio) can be taken away in combat. A Gadget with italicized Attributes (*Str, Body*) can substitute its APs of the Attribute for the user's APs of the Attribute in all situations, while non-italicized Attributes (Str, Body) can only be substituted for the user's Attributes in certain situations, depending on the nature of the Gadget. If a Gadget does not possess Mental and/or Mystical Attributes, it is immune to Mental and/or Mystical Attacks, respectively. The R# listed in a Gadget's statistics represents its Reliability Number. Gadgets with no R# listed are considered to have a Reliability Number of 0. If a Player rolls the Gadget's R# or lower while using the Gadget, the Gadget immediately breaks down and must be repaired.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

Adventures are divided into the following four sections. In any of these sections, *italicized type* is meant to be read directly to the Players.

Gamemaster's Introduction: This section provides the Gamemaster with information needed to run the adventure.

Characters: Information concerning both Players' and Non-Player Characters will be found in this section. Occassionally, only modifications to previously published Character information and Hero Points may be listed. See the full description in the *Background/Roster Book* in the DC HEROES Role Playing Game, Second Edition, boxed set for the rest of that Character's statistics.

Encounters: The bulk of an adventure is a series of Encounters which make up the adventure's storyline. That is, Characters go from situation to situation, each of which is represented by a separate Encounter. Each Encounter is divided into four sections: *Setup, Players' Information, GM's Information,* and *Troubleshooting*. Brief descriptions, including maps, game mechanics, and incidental Character locations, are often included in the Encounters.

Endgame: This explains the outcome of the adventure and the awards given to the Players. Consequences of incomplete or failed adventures are also mentioned, so that the GM can design further scenarios if desired.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP(s)	Attribute Point(s)
Aura	Aura Attribute
AV	Acting Value
Body	Body Attribute
CS	Column Shift(s)
Dex	Dexterity Attribute
D10	Ten-Sided Die
EV	Effect Value
GM	Gamemaster
HP(s)	Hero Point(s)
Infl	Influence Attribute
Int	Intelligence Attribute
Mind	Mind Attribute
N/A	Not Applicable
NPC(s)	Non-Player Character(s)
OV	Opposing Value
RAP(s)	Result AP(s)
RV	Resistance Value
R#	Reliability Number
Spirit	Spirit Attribute
Str	Strength Attribute
Will	Willpower Attribute
2D10	Two Ten-Sided Dice

A WORD ABOUT GRAMMAR

The male pronoun (he, his, him) is used in this book as a third-person singular in many instances. This usage is intended as a neuter term, and should be read as "he or she," "his or her," or "him or her" in all instance where it is used to imply a person of either gender. The use of the male pronoun is not intended to exclude women from this game or to suggest their exclusion.



Almost Dawn:

A bird speaks, barely awake. Another answers. Soon, all the birds are talking, telling each other their dreams.

I want to walk here forever. I want to struggle with the alligators, turning over and over in the mud. I want to be alive, and grow, and rise up to meet the sun.

Alec Holland™ is dead. He died many years ago in an explosion. I am... the Swamp Thing.™



For nearly twenty years, *Swamp Thing* has been the definitive horror comics series, with its constant innovations and outstanding stories. It has been almost uniquely responsible for the new renaissance in graphic storytelling. Now, this outstanding work is detailed for use with the *DC HEROES Role-Playing Game* in this *Swamp Thing* sourcebook and adventure.

The 32-page *Swamp Thing Sourcebook* presents the reader with a detailed history of Swamp Thing, with progressive sets of game statistics that reflect his abilities at different stages of his existence. All of Swamp Thing's powers are explained in detail, to allow players to capture the essence of the comic book series in role-playing. Also featured are game statistics and role-playing information on Swamp Thing's supporting cast, including Abby Cable,™ John Constantine,™ Anton Arcane,™ and others.

In the full-length solitaire adventure, *Racing With the Rats*, Swamp Thing is infected by toxic waste and plunged into a horrific hallucinatory world, where he becomes trapped in a deadly delusion. The player must try to maintain his grip on sanity long enough to reverse the damage and return to reality.

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