CALL of CTHULHU

23107

PULP CTHULHU

TWO-FISTED ACTION AND ADVENTURE AGAINST THE MYTHOS



MIKE MASON
WITH BLIGH, LOWDER,
TIDBALL, WHITE, FRICKER,
BAUR, SANDERSON, AND KRAMER

CHAOSIUM® INC.

Pulp Cthulhu

Two-Fisted Action and Adventure Against the Mythos

Mike Mason

with Bligh, Lowder, Tidball, White, Fricker, Dorward, Baur, Sanderson, and Kramer



CREDITS

Written By

Mike Mason, Alan Bligh, James Lowder,
Jeff Tidball, Glyn White, Paul Fricker, Scott Dorward,
Wolfgang Baur, Matt Sanderson, and Dan Kramer.

Cover Art

Victor Manuel Leza Moreno

Interior Art

Jonathan Wyke
Linda Jones
Reuben Dodd
Richard Pace
Victor Manuel Leza Moreno
Roman Entsov
Chris Lackey
Fifa Finsdottir

Cartography

Stephanie McAlea and Dean Engelhardt

Layout & Art Direction

Nicholas Nacario

Book Design

Michal E. Cross

Proof Reading

John Kingsnorth

Pulp Cthulhu Character Sheet

Dean Engelhardt

Original Concept

Dustin Wright

With thanks to James Lowder, William Jones, Alan Bligh, Dan Kramer, Matt Sanderson,
Paul Fricker, Scott Dorward, John Kingsnorth, John D. Rateliff, and Dean Engelhardt.

Thanks to all of the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition backers who helped make this book possible.

PULP CTHULHU
is copyright © 2016 by Chaosium Inc. All rights reserved.
This supplement is best used with the CALL OF CTHULHU (7th Edition) roleplaying game,
available separately from www.chaosium.com
This is a work of fiction. This book includes descriptions of real places, real events, and real people. These may not be presented accurately and with conformity to the real world nature of these places, people, and events, and are reinterpreted through the lens of the Cthulhu Mythos and the *Call of Cthulhu* game in general. No offence to anyone living or dead, or to the inhabitants of any of these places is intended. Material is fictionalized and used here as the basis for tales inspired from the imagination of H. P. Lovecraft and other writers of weird horror fiction, as well as from the tradition of pulp comics and stories.
The reproduction of material from within this book for the purposes of personal or corporate profit by photographic, electronic, or other retrieval media is prohibited.
Period photographs and WPA Posters were acquired from
the Library of Congress and reside in the Public Domain.

Chaosium Publication 23107 ISBN 9781568820910
Printed in China

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 7
Pulp-O-Meter: How Much Pulp? 7
Using *Pulp Cthulhu* with *Call of Cthulhu* 8

CHAPTER 1: THE PULPS 9
Entertainment for the Masses 9
Lone Guns Against All Hell: The Hero Pulps 10
Strange Horrors in Rough Print 11

CHAPTER 2: CREATING PULP HEROES 15
Creating Pulp Heroes 15
Step One: Choose a Pulp Archetype 15
Step Two: Generate Characteristics 23
Step Three: Determine Pulp Talents 23
Step Four: Determine Occupation 24
Step Five: Decide Skills and Allocate Skill Points 34
Step Six: Create a Backstory 38
Step Seven: Round Out the Hero 41
Quick-Fire Hero Creation 41
Pulp-O-Meter: Optional Rules 42
Quick Reference Chart 43

CHAPTER 3: PULP ORGANIZATIONS 44
The Vanguard Club 44
Department 29 49
Caduceus 50
The Ambrosia Foundation 52
The Gray Tigers 55
The Inheritors 57

CHAPTER 4: GAME SYSTEM 60
Using Luck 60
Dirty Tricks: Using Luck with Non-Player Characters 62
Mooks 63
Combat 63
Wounds and Healing 65
Hero Development Phase 69
Pulp-O-Meter: Optional Rules 70

CHAPTER 5: PULP SANITY 74
The Effects of Insanity 74
Insane Talents 75
Using Insane Augmented Skills 76
Augmented Skill Suggestions 80

CHAPTER 6: PULP MAGIC, PSYCHIC POWERS, AND WEIRD SCIENCE 81
Pulp Magic 81
Learning a Spell 81
Spell Casting 83
Pulp-O-Meter: Optional Rules 83
Psychic Skills 84
Psychic Attacks and Possession 85
Weird Science 86
Sample Gadgets 87

CHAPTER 7: RUNNING PULP GAMES 90
Pulp Plots 90
Pulp Themes 91
Scenario Hooks 92
Action! 93
Reccurring Villains 96
Cliffhangers 98
Rewards 98

CHAPTER 8: THE 1930s 99
The Great Depression 99
Timeline of the 1930s 101
The New Deal 102
Prohibition and Repeal 104
Crime 105
The FBI 108
Daily Life 108
Agriculture 110
Entertainment 112
Culture 114
Technology 114
Global Peril 117
Another Night in Arkham 119

CHAPTER 9: PULP VILLAINS AND CHARACTERS 121
Villain Hit Points 121
Non-Player Character Pulp Talents 121
Sample Pulp Villains and Other Characters 122
Generic Characters 131
Pulp Monsters 132

CHAPTER 10: THE DISINTEGRATOR, SCENARIO.....135
CHAPTER 11: WAITING FOR THE HURRICANE, SCENARIO.....158
CHAPTER 12: PANDORA'S BOX, SCENARIO 176
CHAPTER 13: SLOW BOAT TO CHINA, SCENARIO.....205
CHAPTER 14: APPENDIX: COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS.....235
CHAPTER 15: REFERENCES 254
INDEX.....264
PULP HERO SHEET 271

Clear Credit

Elements used from Chaosium's *Basic Roleplaying*, with thanks to: Jason Durall, Sam Johnson, Steve Perrin, Steve Henderson, Warren James, Greg Stafford, Sandy Petersen, Ray Turney, Lynn Willis, Ken St. Andre, William Barton, Bill Dunn, William Jones, Ben Monroe, Gordon Monson, Sam Shirley, Mark Morrison, Richard Watts and diverse others. Elements used from Chaosium's Astounding Adventures, with thanks to Troy Wilhelmson. Mike Mason penned the Introduction; James Lowder and Alan Bligh wrote The Pulps; Creating Pulp Heroes, Game System, Pulp Magic, Psychic Powers and Weird Science, and Running Pulp Games were written by Mike Mason, with some rules developed from work by Paul Fricker; Chad Bowser originally wrote the optional dodging rules for *Cthulhu Dark Ages* (2nd ed.), The Vanguard Club was written by James Lowder, and Caduceus was written by Scott Dorward, with other Pulp Organizations written by Mike Mason and Alan Bligh; Pulp Insanity and the optional dual wielding rule was written by Paul Fricker; The 1930s was written by Jeff Tidball; the Arkham Narrative was written by Dan Kramer, Villains and Monsters was written by Mike Mason with Alan Bligh; *Slow Boat to Chin*a was written by Wolfgang Bauer, *The Disintegrator* was written by Alan Bligh, *Waiting for the Hurricane* was written by Matthew Sanderson, and *Pandora's Box* was written by Glyn White.

Play Testers

Dan Kramer, Brian Murphy, Michael Medwick, Chad Bouchard; "No Guts No Glory": Sean Connor, Stephen Pitson, Simon Butler, Mark Wright, Ben Newman, Mark Smith; and Pat Eadie, Matthew Sanderson, Suzan Bator, Daniel Campbell, Robin Farndon, Eleanor Hingley, Jessica Waters, Mairi White; Paul Fricker, Mik Parkin, Andrew Noble, Simon Hall, Alasdair Armstrong, Steve Foster; Garrie Hall, Dave Winfield, Hasna Rahman, Martin Earnshaw, John Bolton, Mark Denham, Matt Decker (thanks to Premium Tattoo, Oakland), Obi Kaufmann, John Adams, Glenn Blythe, Mark Flynn, Elina Gouliou, Richard Gravestock, Neal Latham, Jef Lay, Simon Lee, Matt Nott, Robin "Richard" Poole, Tom Richardson, John Ruddy, Alan Watson, Paul Watts, and Lynn Yin.



INTRODUCTION

By Mike Mason

Welcome to *Pulp Cthulhu*!

Pulp Cthulhu is a game of two-fisted adventure, weird science, dark deeds, and brave heroes. With this book, some roleplaying dice, and the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, you have everything you need to build and enjoy games set in the exciting pulp genre.

Tired of your investigators dying in quick succession when jaunting around the world in a desperate bid to save humanity? Wishing that sometimes your investigator could make a stand instead of hiding and waiting for the eldritch horror to pass? *Pulp Cthulhu* ups the ante and provides you with tougher, more capable heroes—ready to take on the villainous machinations of the Cthulhu Mythos!

"Pulp" can mean a lot of different things to different people and so, along with an adapted character generation system, new rules for psychic powers, weird science, and a streamlined magic system, you will also find tips for Keepers on developing pulp-style games and guidance on fine tuning the level of pulp in your games. This means that *Pulp Cthulhu* can be as full-throttled as you desire.

While in many aspects, the *Pulp Cthulhu* rules are similar to standard *Call of Cthulhu*, making it completely compatible with the game's many campaigns and scenarios, there are several new additions and more options to allow players to develop a game style that best suits their tastes. The system is designed to allow players to create hardier player characters (called heroes rather than investigators) with which to confront villainous cults, alien horrors, and outlandish monsters.

The core setting for *Pulp Cthulhu* is the 1930s, the era of post-Prohibition, the Great Depression, and the road to World War II. The thirties are resplendent with heroes, anti-heroes, and straight-up villains, all supplying inspiration for pulp games. The world is turning from the hedonism of the bright young things into a darker, more menacing place. Corruption is endemic, foreign powers maneuver at the international level, and conspiracies abound—all perfect material for your games. However, the game mechanics, pulp tropes, and guidance in this book are equally suited to any time period and setting. Using the advice within, Keepers can bring the flavor and action of pulp to the classic 1920s or modern-day eras, as well as anywhere they see fit. Think of *Pulp Cthulhu* as a toolbox to enable you to "pulpify" your games, wherever and whenever they may take place.

This book is structured so that you will first find an introduction to the pulps themselves in Chapter 1. If you are less history inclined, then dive straight into pulp hero creation in Chapter 2 and read up on the sample pulp organizations detailed in Chapter 3. For the Keepers among you, you'll probably want to get straight into the new rules and tweaks that can be found in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, as well as taking a look at Chapter 7 which is all about running pulp games. The rest of the book features useful reference information for Keepers: a chapter looking at the 1930s, a chapter of villains and non-player characters to use in your games, four scenarios of varying pulp horror and mystery, and lists of equipment and weapons.

As with any set of additional rules and extras, use what you will to build the game for you and your group. It's all about creating memorable experiences and fun.

PULP-O-METER: HOW MUCH PULP?

Do you prefer no-holds-barred, full-on, high-octane games, or a somewhat gentler version of pulp? The level of pulp action is designed to be customizable. Choosing which level of pulp is right for your games is very much a personal preference and Keepers are advised to try things out before deciding on a pulp level that is best for them and their players. Don't be afraid to mix things up even further if it helps you to reach the style of game you are aiming for.

Here's some advice on which rules are better suited to differing levels of pulp:

- Low pulp is most akin to standard games of *Call of Cthulhu*. Use hero generation (**Chapter 2: Creating Pulp Heroes**, page 15) as is, but either limit **Pulp Talents** (page 23) to one or do away with them completely. You will probably also want to use the optional hit point rule to reduce the heroes' hit points (page 42). Also don't allow heroes to take psychic skills or weird science (**Chapter 6: Pulp Magic, Psychic Powers, and Weird Science**, page 81). In terms of spending Luck to affect the game (**Chapter 4: Game System**, page 60), you may prefer to limit the amount of Luck points a player can burn to affect a skill roll, and refrain from using the **Avoiding Certain Death** rule (page 61).
- Mid pulp is the standard for *Pulp Cthulhu*: use all of the rules in this book, and allow players to take two Pulp Talents for their heroes (**Step Three: Determine Pulp Talents**, page 23).
- High pulp increases the heroes' abilities to dramatically affect skill rolls. Use all of the rules presented in this book and allow players to choose up to four Pulp Talents for their characters. Likewise, players should have access to psychic skills and weird science. No limit on spending Luck should be set.

USING *PULP CTHULHU* WITH *CALL OF CTHULHU*

While the *Pulp Cthulhu* rules and options within this book have been designed to emulate and simulate a pulp style of play there is no reason why, if you particularly like a specific pulp rule, you cannot transport it across into your other games of *Call of Cthulhu*. Certain previously published Chaosium titles, like *Masks of Nyarlathotep* and *Horror on the Orient Express*, are campaigns where investigators face tough challenges and where the body count can be very high. Using *Pulp Cthulhu* rules—like increased hit points, spending Luck to avoid certain death, and the adjusted Sanity rules can go some way to increasing the investigators' options and chances of survival.

As previously mentioned, the rules presented in *Pulp Cthulhu* are tools for you, the Keeper, to use to build the kind of game you want to play. Don't be afraid to experiment!



CHAPTER 1

THE PULPS

ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE MASSES

In 1896, publisher Frank A. Munsey started what would become a revolution in the mass media of the first half of the twentieth century. His retooling of the magazine *The Argosy* was ground-breaking; he dropped the slick paper format prevalent in up-market magazines, eliminated run-of-the-mill articles and reproduced photographs, and gave his readership instead 192 pages of popular fiction, all printed on rough, cheaply produced, wood pulp paper, and all for the price of a dime. Its cover slogan offered "A Dollar's worth of reading for Ten Cents." The rest, as they say, is history.

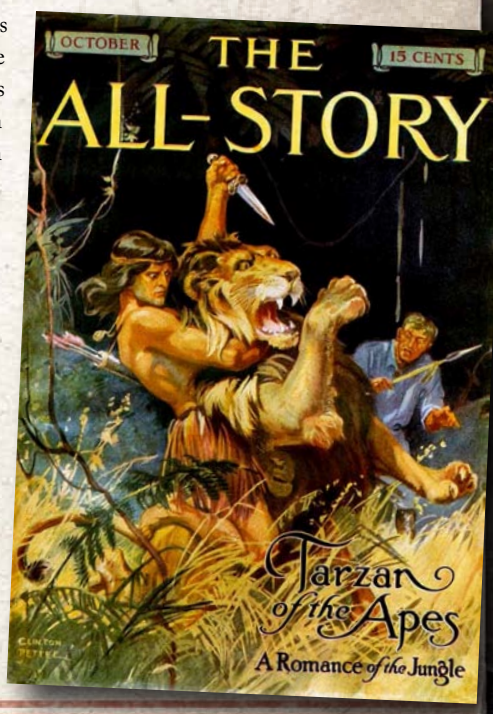
The effect pulp magazines have had on popular culture, to this day, is immense. They spawned and developed the writers, readers, and genres that would go on to dominate mass-market paperbacks and the comics industry; as well as significantly influencing television, cinema, and gaming—even now, more than a century later.

"Pulp Fiction"—often a misused and misunderstood term—refers more accurately not to a single genre but rather to a low-cost publication format which caused an explosion in publishing. It was made possible through a confluence of new press technology, along with better and cheaper distribution, and most importantly a general public—particularly a working class—hungry for escapist entertainment. This untapped market, for whom the price of the more upmarket magazines (the "slicks") was too high, but for whom the ten- and twenty-five cent pulps were affordable, would be pulps' major readership. They would be the final arbiters in deciding what succeeded and what didn't in pulp magazine publishing.

Though the margins were tight, publishers soon realized there was money to be made from the pulps. The American public—its appetite whetted particularly for adventure, romance, action, mystery, and indeed horror—flocked in their millions to the newsstands every month in search of the thrills and chills that the coarsely-printed pulps provided.

To meet this demand the early pulp trailblazers were followed by a growing wave of titles covering a wide range of themes. This period was dominated by the likes of *The Argosy*, *Blue Book*, *Adventure*, *Short Stories* and, early on, by the powerhouse *All-Story Magazine*, which brought the world the likes of Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, and Zorro. As the years rolled by these would be joined by a legion of titles ranging from the famous *Black Mask*, *Astounding Stories*, *Weird Tales*, and the long-lived *Western Story Magazine*, to now lesser-known publications such as *Spicy Detective*, *Flying Aces*, *Cupid's Diary*, *Exciting Sports*, and *Jungle Stories*. Also of note were the later, single character-centric, "Hero Pulps" considered by many to be the direct forerunners of modern comics, such as *Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *The Spider*, and *Secret Service Operator #5*.

The true heyday of the pulps came in the twenties and the thirties, with individual issues of some pulps selling a million copies each. Pulps which focused on escapist adventure of one sort or another were particularly popular during these hard times. It is from this age, with its hard-boiled detectives, lost worlds, dames to kill for, hideous monsters, out-of-control super-science, outlandish plots, and larger-than-life characters that most people today get their conception of what pulp means. For others, pulp fiction also has a darker side, it encompasses



not just the outré but the transgressive and truly strange, from the brutality and implied sadism of some of the later "weird menace" and "true crime" pulps, to the more worthy cosmic horror and otherworldly imaginings of Howard Phillips Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, et al.

To the modern reader, much of what can be found on the pages of the pulps can seem nonsensical, anticlimactic, or downright unreadable, either due to outmoded styles or changing tastes and times. Some pulp stories can also make for uncomfortable reading owning to outdated and disreputable treatments of race and gender, but for that, they are hardly alone in the history of literature. There is, however, a great deal of good to outweigh the bad in the pulps, not simply in terms of content but also in authorship, thematic range, and treatment. Without the pulps, there would have been little or no market for the likes of H. P. Lovecraft to see their work in print (and therefore, no *Call of Cthulhu* RPG either!). They also provided an early home for the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Fritz Leiber, Louis L'Amour, Robert Bloch, C. L. Moore, Ray Bradbury, and many, many more.



The Second World War saw the end of the heyday of the pulps, not least of all owing to rising production costs. A decade of decline followed, but rather than a sudden death knell for the stories the pulp magazines told, it was instead the corrosion of the medium itself. Glossy mass-market paperbacks, four-color comics, anthologies, and higher-grade "slick" or digest format magazines were welcomed by the public and ultimately replaced the pulps.

The pulps themselves may have gone but many of the stories, conventions, genres, and characters they created, shaped, or recycled for a new audience have lived on and returned again and again in new media, be they Buck Rogers, Sexton Blake, Conan, or Great Cthulhu.

LONE GUNS AGAINST ALL HELL: THE HERO PULPS

"The weed of crime bears bitter fruit"—or so claims that most recognizable of pulp heroes, the Shadow, at the close of his radio exploits. In the pulps, that fruit could prove peculiar indeed. In the course of his weird adventures (in print and on the air), the Shadow faces not only run-of-the-mill lowlifes, but phantom killers, raving madmen, mob kingpins, mad scientists, Satanists, Voodoo masterminds, super-spies, and maniacal cults—and he isn't alone. Many of the more outlandish sub-genre offerings of the pulp age feature lone protagonists—or a single hero, their attendant sidekick, and an occasional love interest—fighting a range of diabolical antagonists, many of whom are akin to those encountered in modern superhero comics (although far more murderous). It is this extreme end of the pulp magazines' output that many modern readers think of (often in a nebulous way) when "pulp fiction" is mentioned, and its influence has continued to be felt long after the wood pulp presses finished rolling.

Primarily a feature of the '30s, the first and arguably best of these single character titles was *The Shadow*, created in 1930 as part of a radio tie-in, and was later followed by the herculean polymath Doc Savage, the gumshoe gunslinger Nick Carter, and a series of increasingly bloody-handed crime-fighters such as *The Spider* and Operator #5. Their adventures are outlandish tales of both high contrast color and plunging darkness. The stakes are invariably high, be they the life of a kidnapped heiress, the fate of stolen secret plans that could tip the balance of power, the lives of hundreds, or even the would-be conquest of the world… or its ending. A key axis of these stories is that it is the hero—or more rarely heroes—of these tales that stands the only chance of stopping the villains, and without their intervention, evil will undoubtedly triumph.

The life of the vigilante and the dedicated federal agent has a halo of honor and adventure about it, but the benefits often end here. In the war on crime, a typical pulp hero and their companions can expect to be shot, beaten up, drugged, hypnotized, and tortured, all on a regular basis. An endless parade of mobsters and twisted scientists, with countless henchmen in their employ, threaten all the hero holds dear. Evil will return again, often with another face or an unpleasantly familiar one, out for revenge, wielding a more outrageous weapon, a larger grudge against the world, and a bloodier rampage planned. Regardless of the nightmare tide of madness and bloodshed unleashed, regardless of how nefarious or cunning the scheme, the dark heroes of these pulps stand firm. They are often imperfect "damaged goods" themselves, reformed villains or more than a little crazy, yet they stand where others will not and don't surrender to despair. They realize that some monstrous threat will eventually overtake them and that the odds are stacked against them. But even if death is inevitable, it is better to die standing than live kneeling in submission to evil.

As for the villains in these yarns, most can expect to meet a grisly end, sometimes courtesy of a crazed vigilante like the Spider, the occasional competent cop, or lucky G-man, or sometimes at the hands of their own treacherous fellow gangsters. The highest profile criminal masterminds, however—such as the technology-hating Dr. Death or the twin Fu Manchu-imitators Wu Fang and Yen Sin—manage an improbable escape at the close of each thwarted scheme, and always stay one step ahead of that final, fatal defeat.

These villains and heroes are, with rare exception, willing participants in the strange and epic struggles presented in the pulps. They enter the fray knowing the cost, understanding that any victory is temporary. In this, the hero pulps aren't much different from the typical Silver Age superhero comic—a larger-than-life grappling match between wildly exaggerated representatives of good and evil. But they differ often in that the shadow of death and destruction is, in comparison, noticeably very real and the villains frighteningly competent in metering it out. In short, the villains of the hero pulps actually kill people; they topple landmarks, dose crowds with poison gas, bomb trains, and murder the innocent and the good in their beds. They need to be stopped not because they are about to do something terrible, but because they are doing terrible things!

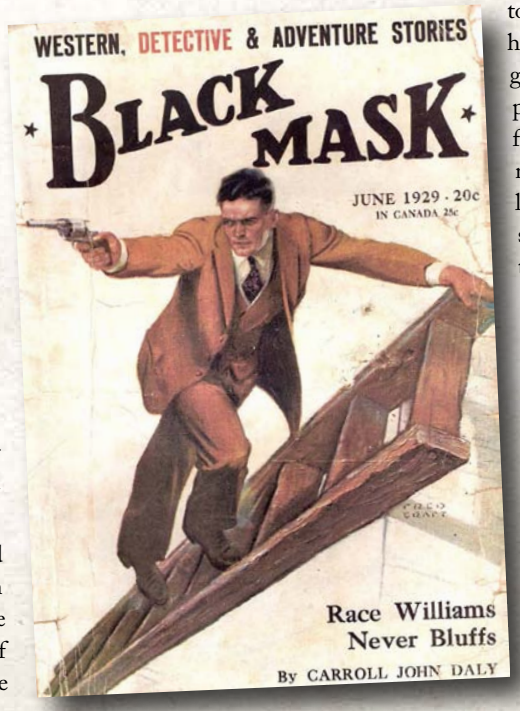
Take the New York built up around that most crazed of vigilantes, the Spider, particularly in the tales penned by Norvell Page. Citizens of the Big Apple find it all but impossible to stroll down Broadway without some mastermind's latest death ray melting them while crazed cultists spring at them from behind every bush in Central Park. In the more extreme hero pulps, if it isn't chunks of the collapsing Empire State Building raining down on New Yorkers from on high, it's poison-fanged bats, claw-handed robot monsters marauding on Broadway, or worse. If the villains are not stopped by the vengeful Spider, the super-agent Operator #5, or the enigmatic Shadow, then the worst is yet to come.

Towards the end of the '30s, the most outlandish of these hero pulp stories end up as a kind of alternate near-future fiction, going so far as to shatter cities, see America invaded by foreign hordes, and the use of weapons of mass destruction—most notably poison gas and mass aerial bombing which, thanks to World War One, was more than real enough a threat for any reader to believe. These outer-edge pulp stories—many of which it must be said pushed the boundaries of the form's popularity with readers—took up the growing fears of impending world war and catastrophe which would prove to be all too real in time. Unfortunately, they sometimes lead their own characters and narratives up blind alleys—after all, leaving Chicago in ruins in one story means you can't have it back and fresh-as-a-daisy a month later without losing a touch of credibility or impact when you threaten to knock it over again.

The best of the hero pulps are wildly inventive and characterful. They serve both as thrilling yarns and great escapist entertainment, albeit of the darker kind, where the villain "gets what they deserve" without moral ambiguity or the messy and imperfect business of the courts. In these stories, however bleak, the rising tide of chaos is almost always thwarted, if not with finality, and often at a worryingly realistic cost.

STRANGE HORRORS IN ROUGH PRINT

Despite the impact they would later have down the years, stories featuring horror and the supernatural were not a major feature of the pulps in terms of volume, neither in terms of output nor range of titles. Early on in the pulp era there were no magazines dedicated solely to what became most commonly known as "Weird Fiction" and it made only a few passing appearances in other titles by way of recycled classic tales—cozy ghost stories and elements that hinted at, but seldom dealt squarely with, the occult and the diabolic. There were, of course, exceptions—of note for devotees of Lovecraftian horror is Irvin S. Cobb's excellent trailblazer "Fishhead" published in a 1913 issue of *The Cavalier* and frequently still analogized to this day. Perhaps surprisingly, the horror genre and uncanny tales in general, once a stalwart feature of the penny dreadfuls, remained untapped for some time. *The Thrill Book*, a modest effort to capitalize on this lack of horror, launched in 1919 but soon foundered. It was not until 1923 that a minor company called Rural Publications Inc. was to create what it promised on its byline a most "unique magazine." This was *Weird Tales* and it would prove to be a seismic quake in horror, fantasy, and science fiction whose aftershocks can still be felt today. Not least of all *Weird Tales* was to be the publication where the words "*The Call of Cthulhu*" were first writ in print, and it would provide the home for many of the major tales which, years later, came to be regarded as founding the Cthulhu Mythos.



The influence and small but loyal following of *Weird Tales* grew as it shifted publisher and editor in 1924, broadening its horizons and gaining its recognizable identity as the home of the uncanny and the strange. It grew to be the preeminent title in its field and arguably spawned a whole market largely on its own. As well as launching and sustaining the careers of dozens of writers in its pages—most notably for our purposes H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and Clark Aston Smith—it effectively crystallized what was to become both the weird fiction and heroic fantasy genres for a burgeoning audience. Over the years, its pages were also filled with a far wider gamut of more conventional terrors than the horrors of the Mythos or the primordial beasts of Hyboria, such as werewolves and vampires, devil worshipers, slime monsters, family curses, occult artifacts, alien invaders, and vengeful ghosts. The bulk of these stories were supplied by the likes of the prolific Seabury Quinn, Edmond Hamilton, and C. M. Eddy, Jr., as well as a host of others, most now largely overlooked by a modern audience. *Weird Tales* spawned some true classics of the genre which have had a huge influence on later horror fiction far beyond their first printing, such as "The Graveyard Rats" by Henry Kuttner, "The Thing in the Cellar" by David H. Keller, and Robert Bloch's "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper". Alongside these more overtly horror and supernaturally focused stories, *Weird Tales* also published groundbreaking early science fiction and some of the best dark heroic fantasy of the era, such as Howard's Conan and Solomon Kane stories and the fantasy works of C. L. Moore.

Weird Tales reached its hay-day in the mid-to-late 1930s, roaring through the decade at the height of its inventiveness and range, and entering a slow decline not long after the untimely demise of both Lovecraft and Howard at the end of the decade. The magazine's downward trajectory continued along with the rest of the pulps throughout the forties, with further changes of ownership and editorship, and its flares of brilliance, while bright, were fewer and further between, and reprinted stories more common in the lead-up to its final issue in 1954 when it ceased its run, outlasting it must be said, many of its more populist rivals. *Weird Tales* would have an impact, however, which far outlasted its glory days, creating and defining whole genres of speculative and bizarre fiction, launching dozens of careers, and inspiring generations of writers and artists to come. *Weird Tales* is still avidly collected today, and from its pages can be gleaned a treasure trove of plots, antagonists, and creatures for Keepers looking to recreate the style of pulp horror. Although it is perhaps worth pointing out that Lovecraft as a stylist is far from the archetype of the stories commonly presented, with dark action-adventure, violent danger, and overt menace more common than introspective fear and existential threat.

Although both then and now *Weird Tales* was regarded as the premier of the pulps which dealt with horror and the supernatural, there were, of course, others which followed its lead or hoped to garner some of its success, particularly through the '30s. Some of these horror and fantasy titles lasted for only brief runs or focused on particular sub-genres in order to try and carve out their niche, such as mythological-inspired or oriental and arabesque stories in *The Magic Carpet*, which ran between 1930 and 1934 as an offshoot of *Weird Tales*. Others, like *Strange Tales* and *Strange Stories*, were created as direct



competition for the trailblazer by rival publishers and designed to appeal to the same readership, using much the same stable of freelance authors. It is perhaps of note that the demand for these titles flowered in part at the very height of the Great Depression, and this fact speaks perhaps to the desire for pure escapism, although the financial strains of the era took their toll on publishers and production schedules alike, and each struggled to stay afloat in hard times regardless of demand. After the Depression, more titles followed in an evolution that saw the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and horror begin to pull away from each other and take their own paths. These magazines included (most notably) the excellent *The Unknown* featuring a self-consciously more literary brand of tale, and *Ghost Stories* which mixed fiction with supposed "true accounts" of supernatural encounters and paranormal phenomena.

One late offshoot of the horror pulps also worth mentioning was the somewhat infamous "weird menace" sub-genre. This was a brand of pulp horror that largely skipped the haunted atmosphere, fantastical vistas, and literary style in favor of macabre murder, outré torture, strange twists of fate, and nasty endings, often depicted in surprisingly graphic detail, and most often carried out by ultimately human—rather than supernatural—monsters. Immediately popular and unashamedly low-brow stories of this ilk graced the pages of *Dime Mystery Magazine*, *Terror Tales*, and *Uncanny Tales* and were soon competing with each other to shock and disturb their readers on a visceral level. This competition inevitably led to an escalation in the atrocities on offer in print, creating a common currency of crazed deviants, mad surgeons, disemboweling, flesh devouring, and flaying. It eventually led to worse, by way of implied or actually depicted sexual violence, and child murder in the most extreme cases, creating a fad, which rapidly burned itself out in the late '30s and early '40s. Unlike the output of the likes of *Weird Tales* and *The Unknown*, the short-lived weird menace craze has arguably left few outstanding stories to posterity, but better examples of the oeuvre have a certain ghoulish charm. It also serves to prove that there is little new under the sun as surprisingly similar fads would later be repeated in both horror comics, the second wave of pulp '50s and '60s paperback fiction, and later horror cinema.

As time went on, the weird fiction genre would also blur into other titles, such as the rapidly evolving science fiction magazine *Astounding Stories*, featuring the works of writers from *Weird Tales*, such as Lovecraft, and with up-market horror stories featuring occasionally in more "respectable" magazines also mindful of the genre's appeal. Horror and weird fiction in its many guises would continue to feature until the end of pulp magazines as a popular format.

It is a tribute to the quality and range of these stories published in the pulps and the talents of its greatest proponents that these stories—like some of their protagonists—would not die. Anthologized for a new era and kept in print and nurtured by the likes of Arkham House and the Pan Books of Horror in the lean years of the '50s and '60s, these tales are still influential and enjoyable today, as well as being widely accessible now in forms ranging from lavish hardcovers to roleplaying games and blockbuster movies. The best of these stories can still raise more than a shudder or two, as well as excite the imagination of the perhaps jaded modern reader, nearly a century later.





CHAPTER 2

CREATING PULP HEROES

In *Pulp Cthulhu*, investigators are called heroes and are designed to be hardier and more capable than standard *Call of Cthulhu* investigators. The hero generation system is different. Archetypes and Pulp Talents are introduced, allowing for larger-than-life characters that are more experienced, proficient, and better able to survive.

The full hero generation system follows and it is recommended that you use this version when first creating a pulp hero player character. A quick-fire creation method is also provided at the end of this chapter, which cuts a few corners to speed up the process, allowing players to build pulp heroes in next to no time (see page 41).

CREATING PULP HEROES

Here are the steps to creating a pulp hero:

- **Step One**: Choose a Pulp Archetype.
- **Step Two**: Generate characteristics.
- **Step Three**: Determine Pulp Talents.
- **Step Four**: Determine occupation.
- **Step Five**: Decide skills and allocate skill points.
- **Step Six**: Create a backstory.
- **Step Seven**: Round out the hero.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE A PULP ARCHETYPE

Pulp archetypes are shorthand character concepts, allowing players to choose a character ideal that becomes the foundation of their hero. Each archetype provides certain skill and characteristic bonuses. Choose the archetype that best fits the type of character you wish to play.

Each entry provides a brief summary of the key personality aspects of the archetype, as well as detailing a core characteristic and the likely skills such an archetype would possess. Keep a note of these on some scrap paper and apply them as you go through the rest of hero creation.

Option: If you prefer to more fully establish your hero's background before determining characteristics and skills, jump to Step Four to decide an occupation and then to Step Six to work out their backstory. These steps determine "who" your hero is, what drives them, and their vocation. Once you have fleshed out your hero in this way, jump back to Step Two and work through their characteristics, skills, and talents.

Guidance notes:

- Each archetype has a core characteristics. Sometimes there is a choice between characteristics—choose one of these as the core characteristic for the hero.
- Most characteristics for standard *Call of Cthulhu* investigators normally start no higher than 90%; pulp heroes, however, can begin with 95% in their core characteristic. To determine a core characteristic, roll 1D6+13 and multiply the result by 5 (see Step Two).
- Any or all of the skills listed under each archetype may be chosen; allocate the bonus points to as many or as few of these skills as desired.
- A list of suggested occupations is provided, although players can choose whatever occupation suits their character concept (such as choosing occupations from other *Call of Cthulhu* supplements like the *Investigator Handbook*).
- In some cases, the archetype states whether a particular talent is recommended or must be taken.
- Some suggested backstory traits are provided; you don't have to take these for the hero, just use them for inspiration.

Adventurer

A life without adventure is not worth living. The world is a big place and there is much to experience and many chances for glory. Sitting behind a desk, working a job nine to five

Opposite: The Monday Night Heroes s by Victor Manuel Leza moreno

is a death sentence for such folk. The adventurer yearns for excitement, fun, and a challenge.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or APP.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Climb, Diving, Drive Auto, First Aid, Fighting (any), Firearms (any), Jump, Language Other (any), Mechanical Repair, Pilot (any), Ride, Stealth, Survival (any), Swim.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Archaeologist, Athlete, Aviator, Bank Robber, Big Game Hunter, Cat Burglar, Dilettante, Drifter, Gambler, Gangster, Hobo, Investigative Journalist, Missionary, Nurse, Photographer, Ranger, Sailor, Soldier, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: easily bored, tenacious, glory hunter, egotistical.

Beefcake

Physical, muscular, and capable of handling themselves when the chips are down. Born that way or has worked hard in the pursuit of physical perfection. You won't find these guys and gals in the library, but you might see their faces on a billboard. Beefcakes come in two varieties: the caring, silent type, or the brazen loud-mouth.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: STR.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Climb, Fighting (Brawl), Intimidate, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Psychology, Swim, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Athlete, Beat Cop, Bounty Hunter, Boxer, Entertainer, Gangster, Hired Muscle, Hobo, Itinerant Worker, Laborer, Mechanic, Sailor, Soldier, Street Punk, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: domineering, brash, quiet, soft-centered, slow to anger, quick to anger.

Bon Vivant

A bon vivant is "one who lives well," but that doesn't necessarily mean they are rich. While many are accustomed to wealth, the bon vivant is someone who could be said to enjoy life to the fullest and damn the consequences! Why wait until tomorrow when you can start living life today? Enjoying food and drink, as well as other pleasurable pursuits, is the key to a lifestyle where excess is the norm. Whether poor or rich, such a person puts little thought to saving for a rainy day, preferring to be the center of attention and a friend to all.

PULP ARCHETYPES

Adventurer	Hunter
Beefcake	Mystic
Bon Vivant	Outsider
Cold Blooded	Rogue
Dreamer	Scholar
Egghead	Seeker
Explorer	Sidekick
Femme Fatale	Steadfast
Grease Monkey	Swashbuckler
Hard Boiled	Thrill seeker
Harlequin	Two-Fisted

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: SIZ.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any), Charm, Fast Talk, Language Other (any), Listen, Spot Hidden, Psychology.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Artist, Butler, Confidence Trickster, Cult Leader, Dilettante, Elected Official, Entertainer, Gambler, Gun Moll, Gentleman/Lady, Military Officer, Musician, Priest, Professor, Zealot.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: excessive, greedy, hoarder, collector, name-dropper, boastful, attention seeking, kind, generous.

Cold Blooded

A rationalist who is capable of just about anything. Cold blooded types may follow some twisted moral code, however, their view of humanity is cold and stark; you're either good or bad. There are no shades of gray to navigate, just the harsh realities of life and death. Such people make effective killers as they have little self-doubt; they are ready to follow orders to the letter, or pursue some personal agenda for revenge. Such people may do anything to get the job done. They are rarely spontaneous people; instead, they embody ruthlessness and premeditation. Sometimes they will try to fool themselves into believing they have a "line" they will not cross, when in reality they are merciless and will go to any length to fulfill what they see as their goal.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: INT
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (Acting), Disguise, Fighting (any), Firearms (any), First Aid, History, Intimidate, Law, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Psychology, Stealth, Survival (any), Track.
- Suggested occupations: Bank Robber, Beat Cop, Bounty Hunter, Cult Leader, Drifter, Exorcist, Federal Agent, Gangster, Gun Moll, Hired Muscle, Hit Man, Professor, Reporter, Soldier, Street Punk, Tribe Member, Zealot.
- Talents: must take the Hardened talent, plus one other.
- Suggested traits: rationalist, sees everything in black and white, ruthless, callous, brutal, pitiless, hardnosed.

Dreamer

Whether an idealist or visionary, the dreamer has a strong and powerful mind. Such types tend to follow their own direction in life. The dreamer looks beyond the mundane realities of life, perhaps as a form of escapism or because they yearn for "what could be," wishing to right wrongs or improve the world around them.

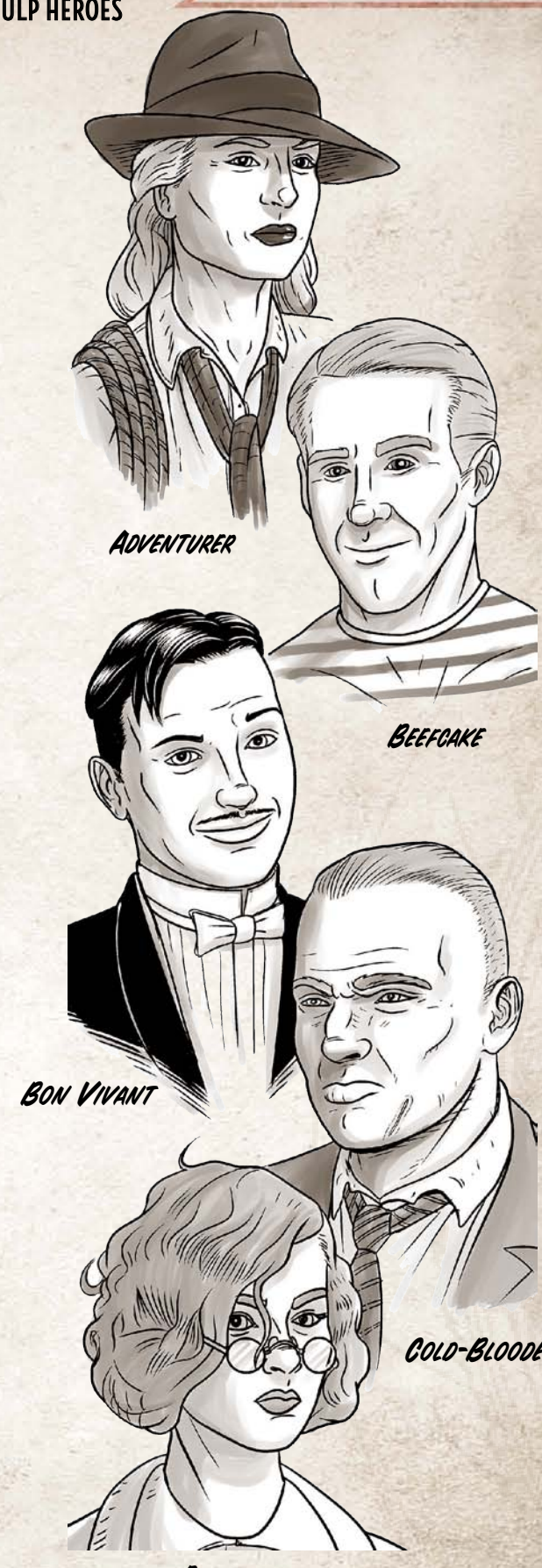
Adjustments

- Core characteristic: POW.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Charm, History, Language Other (any), Library Use, Listen, Natural World, Occult.
- Suggested occupations: Artist, Author, Bartender/Waitress, Priest, Cult Leader, Dilettante, Drifter, Elected Official, Gambler, Gentleman/Lady, Hobo, Hooker, Librarian, Musician, Nurse, Occultist, Professor, Secretary, Student, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two (Strong Willed talent recommended).
- Suggested traits: idealist, optimist, lazy, generous, quiet, thoughtful, always late.

Egghead

Everything can be broken down and analyzed in order to understand how it works. Knowledge is a treasure and a joy—a puzzle to explore. Where the scholar is bookish, the egghead is practical and thoroughly enjoys getting their hands dirty. Whether it's wires and gears, valves and computational engines, or blood and bones, the egghead likes to figure out what makes things tick. Perhaps an absent-minded genius or a razor-sharp virtuoso, the egghead can easily become absorbed in the problem before them, leaving them exposed and unaware of what is actually happening around them.

Depending on the pulp level of your game, the egghead may be able to invent all manner of gizmos, useful or otherwise, see **Weird Science** on page 86 for details.



Archetypes s by Chris Lackey



Archetypes s by Chris Lackey

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either INT or EDU.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Anthropology, Appraise, Computer Use, Electrical Repair, Language Other (any), Library Use, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, Science (any).
- Suggested occupations: Butler, Cult Leader, Doctor of Medicine, Engineer, Gentleman/Lady, Investigative Journalist, Mechanic, Priest, Scientist.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: knowledgeable, focused, tunnel vision, information seeker, oblivious to surroundings, lack of common sense, tinkerer, irresponsible.

Explorer

"Don't fence me in," is the oft-heard cry of the explorer, who wishes for a more authentic and fulfilling life. Strong willed, virtually unshakeable, the explorer is ever questing for what lies over the horizon. Possibly at one with nature, such types are content to sleep where they fall, happily disdaining the soft comforts of urban life. Whether hacking through jungles, squeezing through caverns, or simply charting the hidden quarters of the city, the explorer is often a misfit who grows restless and annoyed by those they consider to be "weak" or "cowards."

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or POW.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Animal Handling, Anthropology, Archaeology, Climb, Fighting (Brawl), First Aid, Jump, Language Other (any), Natural World, Navigate, Pilot (any), Ride, Stealth, Survival (any), Track.
- Suggested occupations: Agency Detective, Archaeologist, Big Game Hunter, Bounty Hunter, Dilettante, Explorer, Get-Away Driver, Gun Moll, Itinerant Worker, Investigative Journalist, Missionary, Photographer, Ranger, Sailor, Soldier, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: outcast, brave, misfit, loner, bullish, strong willed, leader, restless.

Femme Fatale

A deadly woman or man whose outward beauty usually masks a self-centered approach to life; one who is ever vigilant. By constructing an alluring and glamorous persona the femme fatale is akin to a spider. She draws others to her web in order to possess what she desires or destroy her target. Brave and cunning, the femme fatale is not shy of getting her hands dirty and is a capable foe. Neither is she foolhardy, and she will wait until her web is constructed before dealing out a sudden and well-timed assault (be it mental or physical). A classic pulp archetype, the femme fatale could as easily be termed homme fatale if so desired.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either APP or INT.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (Acting), Appraise, Charm, Disguise, Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Fighting (Brawl), Firearms (Handgun), Listen, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Stealth.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Agency Detective, Author, Cat Burglar, Confidence Trickster, Dilettante, Elected Official, Entertainer, Federal Agent, Gangster, Gun Moll, Hit Man, Hooker, Investigative Journalist, Musician, Nurse, Private Investigator, Reporter, Spy, Zealot.
- Talents: any two (Smooth Talker talent recommended).
- Suggested traits: alluring, glamorous, wicked, deceitful, cunning, focused, fraudulent.

Grease Monkey

The grease monkey is practically minded, able to make and repair all manner of things, be they useful inventions, machines, engines, or other devices. Grease Monkeys may be found lurking under the hood of a car, or playing with the telephone exchange wires. Such types have a "can do" attitude, able to make the most of what they have at hand, using their skills and experience to wow those around them.

Depending on the pulp level of your game, the grease monkey may be able to "jury-rig" all manner of gizmos, useful or otherwise; see **Weird Science** on page 86 for details.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: INT.
- Add 100 bonus points divided amongst any of the following skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any), Fighting (Brawl), Drive Auto, Electrical Repair, Locksmith, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, Spot Hidden, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Bartender/Waitress, Butler, Cat Burglar, Chauffeur, Drifter, Engineer, Get-Away Driver, Hobo, Itinerant Worker, Mechanic, Sailor, Soldier, Student, Union Activist.
- Talents: any two (Weird Science talent recommended).
- Suggested traits: practical, hands-on, hard working, oil-stained, capable.

Hard Boiled

Tough and streetwise, someone who is hard boiled understands that to catch a thief you have to think like a thief. Usually, such a person isn't above breaking the law in order to get the job done. They'll use whatever tools are at their disposal and may crack a few skulls in the process. Often, at their core, they are honest souls who wish the world wasn't so despicable and downright nasty; however, in order to fight for justice, they can be just as nasty as they need to be.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: CON.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Fighting (Brawl), Firearms (any), Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Intimidate, Law, Listen, Locksmith, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, Stealth, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Agency Detective, Bank Robber, Beat Cop, Bounty Hunter, Boxer, Gangster, Gun Moll, Laborer, Police Detective, Private Investigator, Ranger, Union Activist.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: cynical, objective, practical, world-weary, corrupt, violent.

Harlequin

While similar to the femme fatale, the harlequin does not like to get their hands dirty (if they can help it). Usually possessing a magnetic personality, although not necessarily classically beautiful, such types find enjoyment in manipulating others to do their bidding, and often hide their own agendas behind outright lies or subtle deceptions. Sometimes they are committed to a cause (personal or otherwise), or act like agents of chaos, delighting in watching how people react to the situations they construe.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: APP.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (Acting), Charm, Climb, Disguise, Fast Talk, Jump, Language Other (any), Listen, Persuade, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Stealth.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Agency Detective, Artist, Bartender/Waitress, Confidence Trickster, Cult Leader, Dilettante, Elected Official, Entertainer, Gambler, Gentleman/Lady, Musician, Reporter, Secretary, Union Activist, Zealot.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: calculating, cunning, two-faced, manipulative, chaotic, wild, flamboyant.

Hunter

Maybe it's the thrill of the chase, the prize at the end, or just because they have an innate drive to master their environment, the hunter is relentless in pursuing their prey. Calm and calculated, the hunter is willing to wait for the most opportune moment, despising the reckless behavior of the unwary.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either INT or CON.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Animal Handling, Fighting (any), Firearms (Rifle and/or Handgun), First Aid, Listen, Natural World, Navigate, Spot Hidden, Stealth, Survival (any), Swim, Track.

- Suggested occupations: Agency Detective, Bank Robber, Beat Cop, Bounty Hunter, Boxer, Gangster, Gun Moll, Laborer, Police Detective, Private Investigator, Ranger, Union Activist.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: relentless, cunning, patient, driven, calm, quiet.

Mystic

A seeker of the hidden, explorer of the unseen realm; the mystic quests for secrets and the fundamental truth of existence. They may be book-learned academics, shamanistic healers, circus diviners, or visionaries, but all pursue knowledge and the experience of forces outside of the natural order, be it for personal gain or the betterment of mankind.

With the Keeper's permission, a mystic is able to tap into supernatural powers beyond the ken of average folk. Often they have been persecuted and hunted, hiding their "gifts" from those who would call them "witch," while others are considered charlatans and little more than sideshow freaks. Such heroes must take the Psychic talent, allowing them to invest skill points in one or more psychic skills (see **Psychic Powers**, page 83).

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: POW.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Science (Astronomy), Disguise, History, Hypnosis, Language Other (any), Natural World, Occult, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Stealth; if the Psychic talent is taken, allocate skill points to the chosen psychic skill(s).
- Suggested occupations: Artist, Cult Leader, Dilettante, Exorcist, Entertainer, Occultist, Parapsychologist, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two (Psychic talent recommended).
- Suggested traits: calculating, cunning, two-faced, manipulative, chaotic, wild, flamboyant.

Outsider

The outsider stands apart from the rest of society, either figuratively or literally. Such people may be alien to the environment in which they find themselves, perhaps from a different country or culture, or they are part of the society but find themselves at odds with it. The outsider is usually on some form of journey, physically or spiritually, and must complete their objective before they can return to, or at last feel part of, the greater whole. Often the outsider will have distinct skills or a different way of approaching things; utilizing forgotten, secret, or alien knowledge.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either INT or CON.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Animal Handling, Fighting (any), First Aid, Intimidate, Language Other (any), Listen, Medicine, Navigation, Stealth, Survival (any), Track.
- Suggested occupations: Artist, Drifter, Explorer, Hired Muscle, Itinerant Worker, Laborer, Nurse, Occultist, Ranger, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: cold, quiet, detached, indifferent, brutal.

Rogue

The rogue disobeys rules of society, openly questioning the status quo and mocking those in authority. They delight in being non-conformists, acting on impulse and deriding conventional behavior. Laws are there to be broken or skirted around. Most rogues are not necessarily criminals or anarchists intent on spreading chaos, but rather they find amusement in pulling off stunts that will confound others. They are often sophisticated, governed by their own unique moral codes, loveable and careless.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or APP.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any), Charm, Disguise, Fast Talk, Law, Locksmith, Psychology, Read Lips, Spot Hidden, Stealth.
- Suggested occupations: Artist, Bank Robber, Cat Burglar, Confidence Trickster, Dilettante, Entertainer, Gambler, Get-Away Driver, Spy, Student.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: charming, disarming, self-absorbed, crafty, shrewd, scheming.

Scholar

Uses intelligence and analysis to understand the world around them. Normally quite happy sitting in the library with a book (rather than actually facing the realities of life). A seeker of knowledge, the scholar is not particularly action orientated; however, when it comes to the crunch, he or she might be the only person who knows what to do."

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: EDU.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Accounting, Anthropology, Cryptography, History, Language Other (any), Library Use, Medicine, Natural World, Occult, Science (any).
- Suggested occupations: Archaeologist, Author, Doctor of Medicine, Librarian, Parapsychologist, Professor, Scientist.
- Talents: any two.

- Suggested traits: studious, bookish, superiority complex, condescending, loner, fussy, speaks too quickly, pensive.
- Special: always begins the game as a non-believer of the Mythos (see Chapter 9: Sanity, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).

Seeker

Puzzles and riddles enthrall the seeker, who uses intelligence and reasoning to uncover mysteries and solve problems. They look for and enjoy mental challenges, always focused on finding the truth, no matter the consequences or tribulations they must face.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: INT.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Accounting, Appraise, Disguise, History, Law, Library Use, Listen, Occult, Psychology, Science (any), Spot Hidden, Stealth.
- Suggested occupations: Agency Detective, Author, Beat Cop, Federal Agent, Investigative Journalist, Occultist, Parapsychologist, Police Detective, Reporter, Spy, Student.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: risk taker, tunnel vision, deceitful, boastful, driven.

Sidekick

The sidekick embodies aspects of the steadfast, rogue, and thrill seeker archetypes. Usually, a younger person who has yet to live up to their full potential, someone who seeks to learn from a mentor type figure, or those content not to be the center of attention. Alternatively, the sidekick wishes to belong, to be the hero but is overshadowed by their peers or mentor. Subordinate sidekicks can at times struggle against their (usually) self-imposed restraints, venturing off on flights of fancy that mostly just get them into trouble. Sidekicks usually possess a strong moral code of duty and responsibility.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or CON.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Animal Handling, Climb, Electrical Repair, Fast Talk, First Aid, Jump, Library Use, Listen, Navigate, Photography, Science (any), Stealth, Track.
- Suggested occupations: Author, Bartender/Waitress, Beat Cop, Butler, Chauffeur, Doctor of Medicine, Federal Agent, Get-Away Driver, Gun Moll, Hobo, Hooker, Laborer, Librarian, Nurse, Photographer, Scientist, Secretary, Street Punk, Student, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: helpful, resourceful, loyal, accident-prone, questioning, inquisitive, plucky.



Archetypes s by Chris Lackey

Steadfast

Moral righteousness runs thickly in the blood of the steadfast. They protect the weak, put the interests of the others before themselves, and would willingly sacrifice their life for another's safety. Whether they follow a clear spiritual or religious path or some internal moral code, they do not stoop to the depths of others, fighting with honor and acting as role models to those around them. Whatever else they fight for, they also fight for justice.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: CON.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Accounting, Drive Auto, Fighting (any), Firearms (Handgun), First Aid, History, Intimidate, Law, Natural World, Navigate, Persuade, Psychology, Ride, Spot Hidden, Survival (any).
- Suggested occupations: Athlete, Beat Cop, Butler, Priest, Chauffeur, Doctor of Medicine, Elected Official, Exorcist, Federal Agent, Gentleman/Lady, Missionary, Nurse, Police Detective, Private Detective, Reporter, Sailor, Soldier, Tribe Member.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: unwavering, loyal, resolute, committed, dedicated, firm but fair, faithful.

Swashbuckler

Passionate and idealistic souls who are always looking to rescue damsels in distress. Gallant and heroic, the swashbuckler is action-orientated and fights fairly, disdaining the use of firearms as the tools of cowards. Most likely boastful, noisy, and joyous, even when in the direst of situations. A romantic at heart, a swashbuckler possesses a strong code of honor but is prone to reckless behavior

that risks more than just their own life".***Adjustments***

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or APP.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Charm, Climb, Fighting (any), Jump, Language Other (any), Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Pilot (any), Stealth, Swim, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Artist, Aviator, Big Game Hunter, Bounty Hunter, Dilettante, Entertainer, Gentleman/Lady, Investigative Journalist, Military Officer, Missionary, Private Detective, Ranger, Sailor, Soldier, Spy.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: boastful, gallant, action-orientated, romantic, passionate, highly-strung.

Thrill Seeker

Some people are like moths to a flame. For them, the easy life is no life at all, and they must seek out adventure and danger in order to feel alive. The stakes are never high enough for thrill seekers, who are always ready to bet large in order to feel the rush of adrenaline pumping through their veins. Such daredevils are drawn to high-octane sports and activities, and for them, a mountain is a challenge to master. Foolhardy to a fault, they cannot understand why no one else is prepared to take the same risks as they do.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either DEX or POW.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Art/Craft (any), Charm, Climb, Diving, Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Jump, Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Pilot (any), Ride, Stealth, Survival (any), Swim, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Actor, Athlete, Aviator, Bank Robber, Bounty Hunter, Cat Burglar, Dilettante, Entertainer, Explorer, Gambler, Gangster, Get-Away Driver, Gun Moll, Gentleman/Lady, Hooker, Investigative Journalist, Missionary, Musician, Occultist, Parapsychologist, Ranger, Sailor, Soldier, Spy, Union Activist, Zealot.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: daredevil, risk taker, manic, exhibitionist, braggart, trouble maker.

Two-Fisted

"Live fast, die hard" is the motto of the two-fisted. Such individuals are storehouses of energy, strong, tough, and very capable. Such types are inclined to resolve disputes with their fists rather than words. Usually hard-drinking and hard-talking, they like getting straight to the point and dislike pomp and ceremony. They do not suffer fools gladly. The two-fisted seem to live life in a hurry, quick to anger, contemptuous of authority, and ready to play as dirty as the next guy.

Adjustments

- Core characteristic: choose either STR or SIZ.
- Add 100 bonus points divided among any of the following skills: Drive Auto, Fighting (Brawl), Firearms (any), Intimidate, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Spot Hidden, Swim, Throw.
- Suggested occupations: Agency Detective, Bank Robber, Beat Cop, Boxer, Gangster, Gun Moll, Hired Muscle, Hit Man, Hooker, Laborer, Mechanic, Nurse, Police Detective, Ranger, Reporter, Sailor, Soldier, Street Punk, Tribe Member, Union Activist.
- Talents: any two.
- Suggested traits: tough, capable, determined, quick to anger, violent, dirty, corrupt, underhand.

STEP TWO: GENERATE CHARACTERISTICS

Use the following rolls to determine each of the characteristics, although substitute a roll of 1D6+13 multiplied by 5 for the hero's core characteristic (as determined by the archetype chosen in Step One).

- Strength (STR): roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Constitution (CON): roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Size (SIZ): roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.
- Dexterity (DEX): roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Appearance (APP): roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Intelligence (INT): roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.
- Power (POW): roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Education (EDU): roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.

Write the result for each characteristic on the *Pulp Cthulhu* hero sheet, and also write in the half and fifth values for each of them—entering the values alongside the full characteristic percentage:

- Divide the percentage value by two, rounding down, and enter for the "half" percentage value.
- Divide the percentage value by five, rounding down, and enter for the "fifth" percentage value.

Note: a **Quick Reference Chart for Half and Fifth Values** can be found on page 43.

The half and fifth numbers are used in relation to characteristics and skills in the game and all the numbers are calculated up front so that play is not hindered by mental calculations. If you prefer, you can always work these out during the game as necessary.

Age

Choose any age between 15 and 90 years. Age modifiers (characteristic penalties or experience bonuses) are not used in *Pulp Cthulhu*.

Determine Other Attributes

- Luck: roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.
- Sanity points (SAN): equal to POW.
- Hit points (HP): add CON and SIZ together, then divide the total by 5 (round down).
- Magic points (MP): equal to one-fifth of POW.
- Damage Bonus (DB) and Build: add STR to SIZ together and look up the total on Table 1: Damage Bonus and Build.
- Movement Rate (MOV): compare DEX, STR, and SIZ as per **Table 2: Movement Rates**.

TABLE 1: DAMAGE BONUS AND BUILD

STR+SIZ	Damage Bonus	Build
2-64	-2	-2
65-84	-1	-1
85-124	None	
125-164	+1D4	+1
165-204	+1D6	+2
205-284	+2D6	+3
285-364	+3D6	+4
365-444	+4D6	+5
445-524*	+5D6	+6*

**Add an additional 1D6 to Damage Bonus and +1 to Build for each additional 80 points or fraction thereof.*

TABLE 2: MOVEMENT RATES

STR+SIZ	MOV Rate
If both DEX and STR are each less than SIZ	MOV 7
If either STR or DEX is equal to or greater than SIZ, or if all three are equal	MOV 8
If both STR and DEX are each greater than SIZ	MOV 9

STEP THREE: DETERMINE PULP TALENTS

Pulp talents provide a way to further customize characters, enabling certain benefits and enhancements that reflect pulp themes and styles. While they won't turn heroes into superheroes, they do provide specific advantages allowing heroes to be particularly adept in certain circumstances.

When creating a hero, choose two talents from the ones listed below. During the course of the game, heroes may gain additional talents at the discretion of the Keeper (see **Hero Development Phase**, page 69, **Chapter 4: Game System**).

TABLE 3: PHYSICAL TALENTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

Roll	Physical Talent
1	**Keen Vision**: gain a bonus die to Spot Hidden rolls.
2	**Quick Healer**: natural healing is increased to +3 hit points per day.
3	**Night Vision**: in darkness, reduce the difficulty level of Spot Hidden rolls and ignore penalty die for shooting in the dark.
4	**Endurance**: gain a bonus die when making CON rolls (including to determine MOV rate for chases).
5	**Power Lifter**: gain a bonus die when making STR rolls to lift objects or people.
6	**Iron Liver**: may spend 5 Luck to avoid the effects of drinking excessive amounts of alcohol (negating penalty applied to skill rolls).
7	**Stout Constitution**: may spend 10 Luck to reduce poison or disease damage and effects by half.
8	**Tough Guy**: soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
9	**Keen Hearing**: gain a bonus die to Listen rolls
10	**Smooth Talker**: gain a bonus die to Charm rolls.

There are four tables of pulp talents: either choose two talents from any of the tables, or roll for talents randomly. The tables are themed for physical, combat, mental or miscellaneous talents. If deciding randomly, roll 1D4 to determine which table to roll on:

1. Table 3: Physical Talents
2. Table 4: Mental Talents
3. Table 5: Combat Talents
4. Table 6: Miscellaneous Talents

STEP FOUR: DETERMINE OCCUPATION

Your hero's occupation determines the skills they are most proficient with, their income level, and who they are likely to know. Bear in mind the occupations suggested by the chosen pulp archetype.

The following suggested occupations are naturally pulp flavored and some are more closely tied to the 1930s setting. Additional occupations can be found in Chaosium's *Investigator Handbook*.

Once you have chosen an occupation, write it down on the pulp hero sheet and then make a note of the occupational skills for Step Five.

Actor, Film

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 20–90.
- **Suggested Contacts**: film industry, media critics, writers.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Acting), Disguise, Drive Auto, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties (e.g. Ride or Fighting).

Actor, Stage and Radio

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–40.
- **Suggested Contacts**: theater industry, newspaper arts critics, actor's guild or union.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Acting), Disguise, Fighting, History, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Agency Detective

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (STR × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 20-45.
- **Suggested Contacts**: local law enforcement, clients.
- **Skills**: One interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Fighting (Brawl), Firearms, Law, Library Use, Psychology, Stealth, Track.

TABLE 4: MENTAL TALENTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

Roll	Mental Talent
1	**Hardened**: ignores Sanity point loss from attacking other humans, viewing horrific injuries, or the deceased.
2	**Resilient**: may spend Luck points to shrug-off points of Sanity loss, on a one-for-one basis.
3	**Strong Willed**: gains a bonus die when making POW rolls.
4	**Quick Study**: halve the time required for Initial and Full Reading of Mythos tomes, as well as other books.
5	**Linguist**: able to determine what language is being spoken (or what is written); gains a bonus die to Language rolls.
6	**Arcane Insight**: halve the time required to learn spells and gains bonus die to spell casting rolls.
7	**Photographic Memory**: can remember many details; gains a bonus die when making Know rolls.
8	**Lore**: has knowledge of a lore specialization skill (e.g. Dream Lore, Vampire Lore, Werewolf Lore, etc.). Note that occupational and/or personal interest skill points should be invested in this skill.
9	**Psychic Power**: may choose one psychic power (Clairvoyance, Divination, Medium, Psychometry, or Telekinesis). Note that occupational and/or personal interest skill points should be invested in this skill (see **Psychic Powers**, page 83).
10	**Sharp Witted**: able to collate facts quickly; gain a bonus die when making Intelligence (but not Idea) rolls.

TABLE 5: COMBAT TALENTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

Roll	Combat Talent
1	**Alert:** never surprised in combat.
2	**Heavy Hitter**: may spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat (die type depends on the weapon being used, e.g. 1D3 for unarmed combat, 1D6 for a sword, etc.)
3	**Fast Load**: choose a Firearm specialism; ignore penalty die for loading and firing in the same round.
4	**Nimble**: does not lose next action when "diving for cover" versus firearms.
5	**Beady Eye**: does not suffer penalty die when "aiming" at a small target (Build –2), and may also fire into melee without a penalty die.
6	**Outmaneuver**: character is considered to have one point higher Build when initiating a combat maneuver (e.g. Build 1 becomes Build 2 when comparing their hero to the target in a maneuver, reducing the likelihood of suffering a penalty on their Fighting roll).
7	**Rapid Attack**: may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further melee attack in a single combat round.
8	**Fleet Footed**: may spend 10 Luck to avoid being "outnumbered" in melee combat for one combat encounter.
9	**Quick Draw**: does not need to have their firearm "readied" to gain +50 DEX when determining position in the DEX order for combat.
10	**Rapid Fire**: ignores penalty die for multiple handgun shots.

TABLE 6: MISCELLANEOUS TALENTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

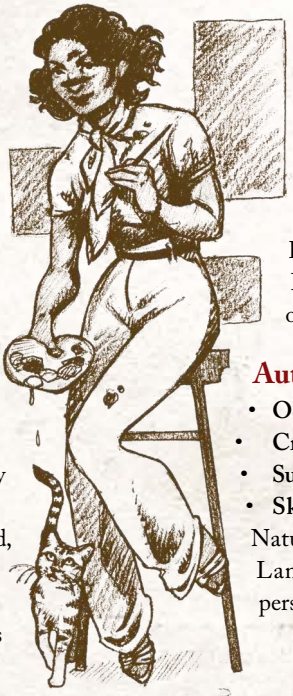
Roll	Miscellaneous Talent
1	**Scary**: reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die (at the Keeper's discretion) to Intimidate rolls.
2	**Gadget**: starts game with one weird science gadget (see **Weird Science**, page 86).
3	**Lucky**: regains an additional +1D10 Luck points when Luck Recovery rolls are made.
4	**Mythos Knowledge**: begins the game with a Cthulhu Mythos Skill of 10 points.
5	**Weird Science**: may build and repair weird science devices (see **Weird Science**, page 86).
6	**Shadow**: reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die (at the Keeper's discretion) to Stealth rolls, and if currently unseen is able to make two surprise attacks before their location is discovered.
7	**Handy**: reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die (at the Keeper's discretion) when making Electrical Repair, Mechanical Repair, and Operate Heavy Machinery rolls.
8	**Animal Companion**: starts game with a faithful animal companion (e.g. dog, cat, parrot) and gains a bonus die when making Animal Handling rolls.
9	**Master of Disguise**: may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die to Disguise or Art/Craft (Acting) rolls; includes ventriloquism (able to throw voice over long distances so it appears that the sound is emanating from somewhere other than the hero). Note that if someone is trying to detect the disguise their Spot Hidden or Psychology roll's difficulty is raised to Hard.
10	**Resourceful**: always seems to have what they need to hand; may spend 10 Luck points (rather than make Luck roll) to find a certain useful piece of equipment (e.g. a flashlight, length of rope, a weapon, etc.) in their current location.

Archeologist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 10–40.
- **Suggested Contacts**: patrons, museums, universities.
- **Skills**: Appraise, Archeology, History, Other Language (any), Library Use, Spot Hidden, Mechanical Repair, Navigate or Science (e.g. chemistry, physics, geology, etc.)

Artist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or POW × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–50.
- **Suggested Contacts**: art galleries, critics, wealthy patrons, the advertising industry.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), History or Natural World, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Other Language, Psychology, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.



ARTIST

Athlete

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–70.
- **Suggested Contacts**: sports personalities, sports writers, other media stars.
- **Skills**: Climb, Jump, Fighting (Brawl), Ride, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Swim, Throw, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Author

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: publishers, critics, historians, etc.
- **Skills**: Art (Literature), History, Library Use, Natural World or Occult, Other Language, Own Language, Psychology, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Occupations s by Fifa Finsdottir

Aviator

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + DEX × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 30-60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: old military contacts, other pilots, airfield mechanics, businessmen.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Electrical Repair, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Pilot (Aircraft), Spot Hidden, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.



Aviator

Bank Robber

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (STR × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 5–75.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other gang members (current and retired), criminal freelancers, organized crime.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Electrical or Mechanical Repair, Fighting, Firearms, Intimidate, Locksmith, Operate Heavy Machinery, any one other skill as personal or era specialty.



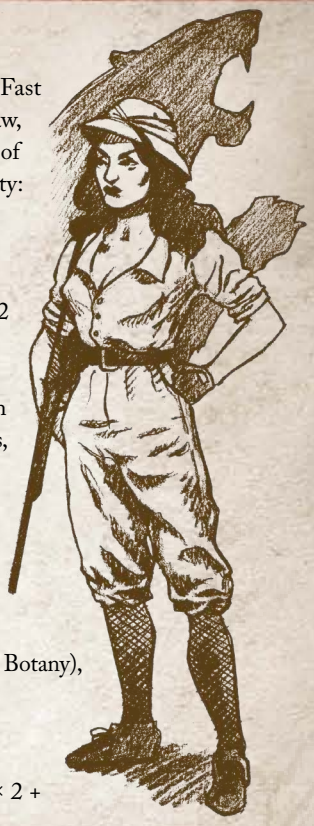
Beat Cop

Bartender/Waitress

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- Credit Rating: 8-25.
- Suggested Contacts: regular customers, possibly organized crime.
- Skills: Accounting, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Fighting (Brawl), Listen, Psychology, Spot Hidden, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Beat Cop

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: law enforcement, local businesses and residents, street level crime, organized crime.
- **Skills**: Fighting (Brawl), Firearms, First Aid, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Law, Psychology, Spot Hidden and one of the following as a personal specialty: Drive Automobile or Ride.



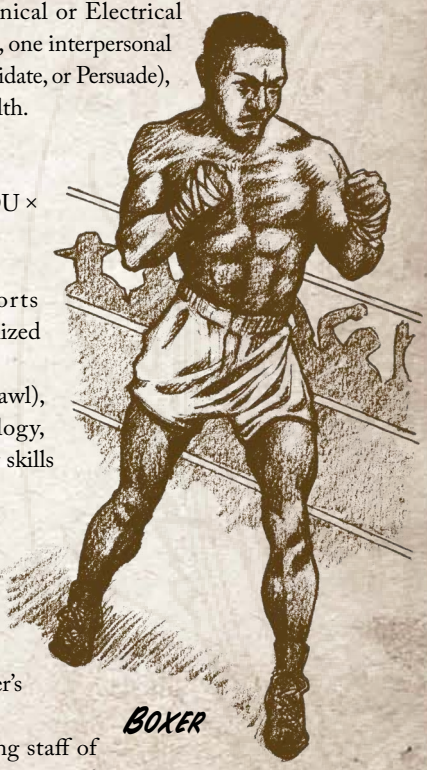
Big Game Hunter

Big Game Hunter

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU ×2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 20–50.
- **Suggested Contacts**: foreign government officials, game wardens, past (usually wealthy) clients, black-market gangs and traders, zoo owners.
- **Skills**: Firearms, Listen or Spot Hidden, Natural World, Navigate, Other Language or Survival (any), Science (Biology or Botany), Stealth, Track.

Bounty Hunter

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: bail bondsmen, local police, criminal informants.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Mechanical or Electrical Repair, Fighting or Firearms, one interpersonal skill (Fast Talk, Charm, Intimidate, or Persuade), Law, Psychology, Track, Stealth.



Boxer

Boxer/Wrestler

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + STR × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: sports promoters, journalists, organized crime, professional trainers.
- **Skills**: Dodge, Fighting (Brawl), Intimidate, Jump, Psychology, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Butler

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–40 (dependent on their employer's status and credit rating).
- **Suggested Contacts**: waiting staff of other households, local businesses, and household suppliers.

- **Skills**: Accounting or Appraise, Art/Craft (any, e.g. Cook, Tailor, Barber), First Aid, Listen, Other Language, Psychology, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Cat Burglar

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + DEX × 2.
- Credit Rating: 5–40.
- Suggested Contacts: fences, other burglars.
- Skills: Appraise, Climb, Electrical or Mechanical Repair, Listen, Locksmith, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Spot Hidden.

Chauffeur

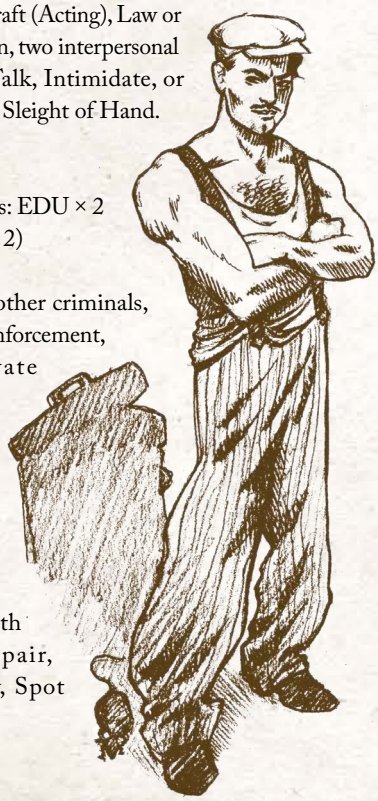
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + DEX × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 10–40.
- **Suggested Contacts**: successful business people (criminals included), political representatives.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Listen, Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Spot Hidden, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Confidence Trickster

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- Credit Rating: 10–65.
- Suggested Contacts: other confidence artists, freelance criminals.
- **Skills**: Appraise, Art/Craft (Acting), Law or Other Language, Listen, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Sleight of Hand.

Criminal

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or APP × 2)
- Credit Rating: 5–65
- Suggested Contacts: other criminals, organized crime, law enforcement, street thugs, private detectives.
- Skills: Art/Craft (any) or Disguise, Appraise, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk or Intimidate), Fighting or Firearms, Locksmith or Mechanical Repair, Stealth, Psychology, Spot Hidden.



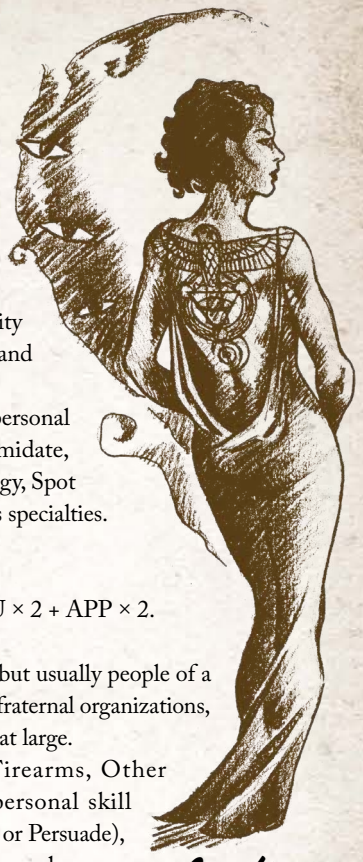
DRIFTER

Cult Leader

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- Credit Rating: 30-60.
- Suggested Contacts: while the majority of followers will be "regular" people, the more charismatic the leader, the greater the possibility of celebrity followers, such as movie stars and rich widows.
- Skills: Accounting, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Occult, Psychology, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as specialties.

Dilettante

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 50–99.
- **Suggested Contacts**: variable, but usually people of a similar background and tastes, fraternal organizations, bohemian circles, high society at large.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Any), Firearms, Other Language, Ride, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any three other skills as personal or era specialties.



CULT LEADER

Doctor of Medicine

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 30–80.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other physicians, medical workers, patients, and ex-patients.
- **Skills**: First Aid, Medicine, Other Language (Latin), Psychology, Science (Biology and Pharmacy), any two other skills as academic or personal specialties.

Drifter

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- Credit Rating: 0–5.
- Suggested Contacts: other hobos, a few friendly railroad guards, soft touches in numerous towns.
- Skills: Climb, Jump, Listen, Navigate, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Stealth, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.



DOCTOR

Elected Official

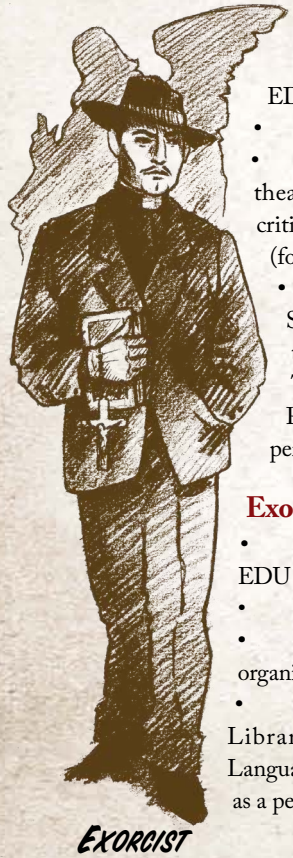
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 50-90.
- **Suggested Contacts**: political operatives, government, news media, business, foreign governments, possibly organized crime.
- **Skills**: Charm, History, Intimidate, Fast Talk, Listen, Own Language, Persuade, Psychology.



ENTERTAINER

Engineer

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 30–60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: business or military workers, local government, architects.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Technical Drawing), Electrical Repair, Library Use, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machine, Science (Chemistry and Physics), any one other skill as personal or era specialty.



EXORCIST

Entertainer

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–70.
- **Suggested Contacts**: Vaudeville, theater, film industry, entertainment critics, organized crime, and television (for modern-day).
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (e.g. Acting, Singer, Comedian, etc.), Disguise, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Listen, Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Exorcist

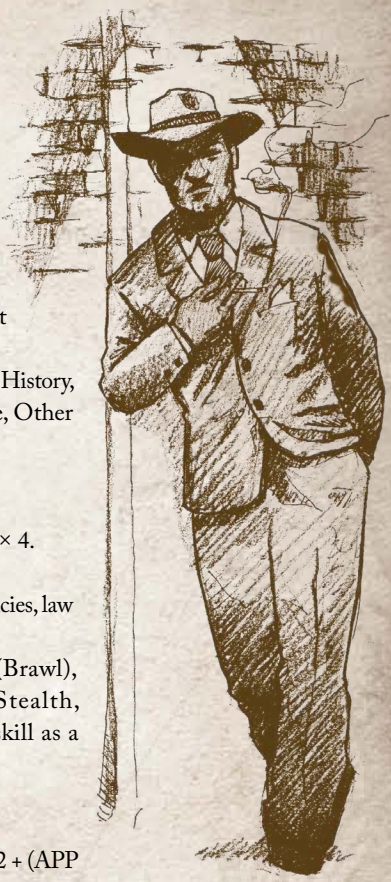
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 25–55.
- **Suggested Contacts**: Religious organizations.
- **Skills**: Anthropology, History, Library Use, Listen, Occult, Other Language, Psychology, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

Explorer

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 55–80.
- **Suggested Contacts**: major libraries, universities, museums, wealthy patrons, other explorers, publishers, foreign government officials, local tribespeople.
- **Skills**: Climb or Swim, Firearms, History, Jump, Natural World, Navigate, Other Language, Survival.

Federal Agent

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 20–40.
- **Suggested Contacts**: federal agencies, law enforcement, organized crime.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Fighting (Brawl), Firearms, Law, Persuade, Stealth, Spot Hidden, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.



FEDERAL AGENT

Gambler

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 8-50.
- **Suggested Contacts**: bookies, organized crime, street scene.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Art/Craft (Acting), two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Listen, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden.

Gangster, Boss

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 60–95.
- **Suggested Contacts**: organized crime, street-level crime, police, city government, politicians, judges, unions, lawyers, businesses and residents of the same ethnic community.
- **Skills**: Fighting, Firearms, Law, Listen, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Spot Hidden.

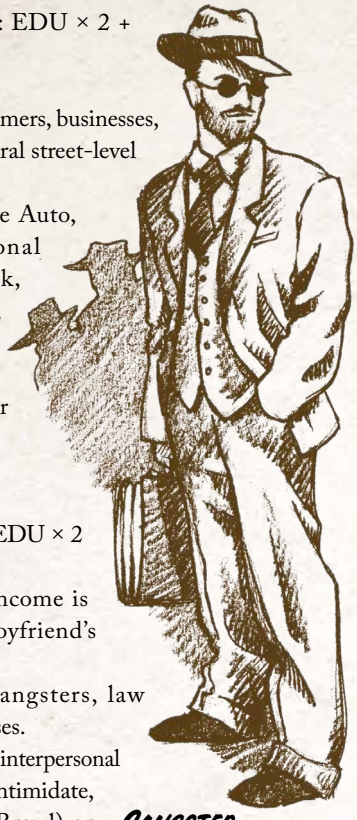
Gangster, Underling

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–20.
- **Suggested Contacts**: street-level crime, police, businesses and residents of the same ethnic community.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Fighting, Firearms, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Occupations s by Fija Finsdottir

Get-Away Driver

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–20.
- **Suggested Contacts**: customers, businesses, law enforcement and general street-level life.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Drive Auto, Listen, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Psychology, any one other skill as personal or era specialty.



GANGSTER

Gun Moll

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 10-80 (income is usually dependent on boyfriend's income).
- **Suggested Contacts**: gangsters, law enforcement, local businesses.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Fighting (Brawl) or Firearms (Handgun), Drive Auto, Listen, Stealth, any one other skill as personal or era specialty.

Gentleman/Lady

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 40-90.
- **Suggested Contacts**: upper classes and landed gentry, politics, servants and agricultural workers.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun), History, Other Language (any), Navigate, Ride.

Hired Muscle

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + STR × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 5–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: organized crime, street-level law enforcement, local traders.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Fighting, Firearms, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Stealth, Spot Hidden.



GENTLEMAN

Hit Man/Woman

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 30-60
- **Suggested Contacts**: few, mostly underworld; people prefer not to know them too well. The best will have earned a formidable reputation on the street.
- **Skills**: Disguise, Electrical Repair, Fighting, Firearms, Locksmith, Mechanical Repair, Stealth, Psychology.

Hobo

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 0–5.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other hobos, a few friendly railroad guards, soft touches in numerous towns.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), Climb, Jump, Listen, Locksmith or Sleight of Hand, Navigate, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.



GUN MOLL

Hooker

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 5-50.
- **Suggested Contacts**: street scene, police, possibly organized crime, personal clientele.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Dodge, Psychology, Sleight of hand, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Itinerant Worker

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- Credit Rating: 0–10.
- **Suggested Contacts**: hobos, drivers, farmers, law enforcement.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), Climb, Sleight of Hand, Mechanical Repair, Natural World, Navigate, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Investigative Journalist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- Credit Rating: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: news industry, politicians, street-level crime or law enforcement.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Art or Photography),

Occupations s by Fifa Finsdottir

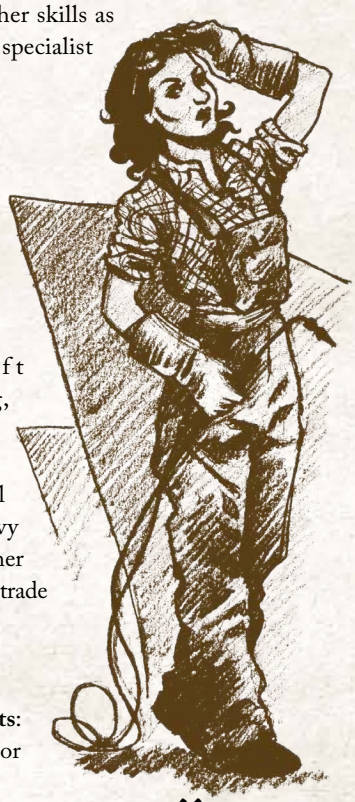
one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), History, Library Use, Own Language, Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Laborer

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 + STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 5–20.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other workers and supervisors within their industry.
- **Skills**: Drive Auto, Electrical Repair, Fighting, First Aid, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, Throw, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Librarian

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–35.
- **Suggested Contacts**: booksellers, community groups, specialist researchers.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Library use, Other Language, Own Language, any four other skills as personal specialties or specialist reading topics.



MECHANIC

Mechanic

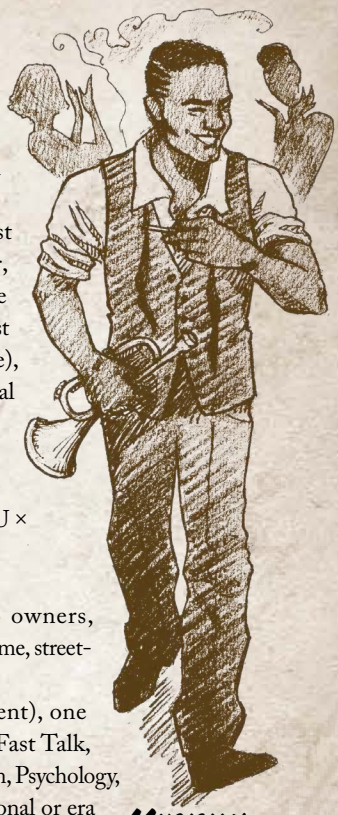
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–40.
- **Suggested Contacts**: Union members, trade-relevant specialists.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Carpentry, Welding, Plumbing, etc.), Climb, Drive Auto, Electrical Repair, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, any two other skills as personal, era or trade specialties.

Military Officer

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 20–70.
- **Suggested Contacts**: military, federal government.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Firearms, Navigate, First Aid, two interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, any one other skills as personal or era specialties.

Missionary

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + APP × 2.
- **Credit Rating**: 0–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: church hierarchy, foreign officials.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (any), First Aid, Mechanical Repair, Medicine, Natural World, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any two other skills as personal or era specialties.



MUSICIAN

Musician

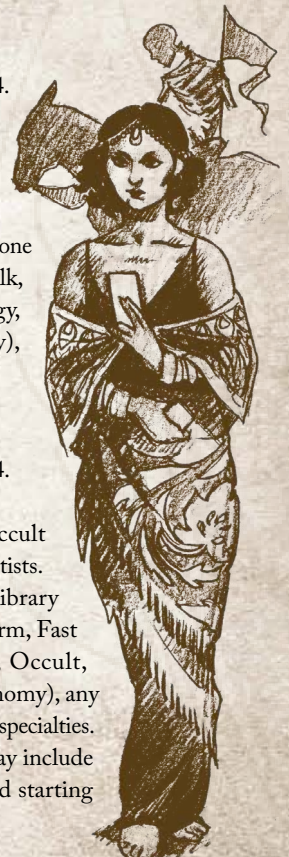
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: club owners, musicians' union, organized crime, street-level criminals.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Instrument), one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Listen, Psychology, any four other skills as a personal or era specialties.

Nurse

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: hospital workers, physicians, community workers.
- **Skills**: First Aid, Listen, Medicine, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Science (Biology and Chemistry), Spot Hidden.

Occultist

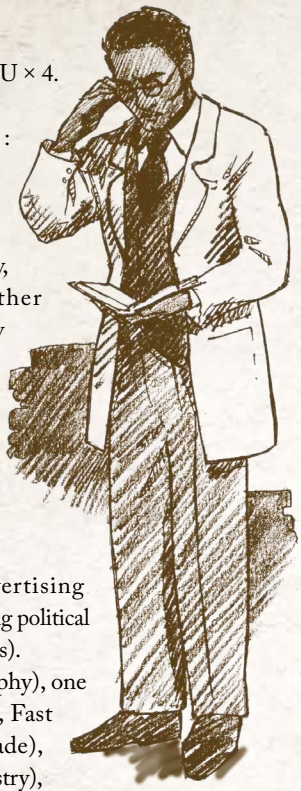
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 10–80.
- **Suggested Contacts**: libraries, occult societies or fraternities, other occultists.
- **Skills**: Anthropology, History, Library Use, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Occult, Other Language, Science (Astronomy), any one* other skills as a personal or era specialties.
- *With the Keeper's agreement, may include Cthulhu Mythos (with an advised starting maximum of 20%).



OCCULTIST

Parapsychologist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: universities, parapsychological societies, clients.
- **Skills**: Anthropology, Art/Craft (Photography), History, Library Use, Occult, Other Language, Psychology, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.



PROFESSOR

Photographer

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 4.
- Credit Rating: 9–30.
- Suggested Contacts: advertising industry, local clients (including political organizations and newspapers).
- Skills: Art/Craft (Photography), one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Science (Chemistry), Stealth, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Police Detective

- Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- Credit Rating: 20–50.
- Suggested Contacts: law enforcement, street-level crime, coroner's office, judiciary, organized crime.
- Skills: Art/Craft (Acting) or Disguise, Firearms, Law, Listen, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Spot Hidden, any one other skill.

Priest

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: church hierarchy, local congregations, community leaders.
- **Skills**: Accounting, History, Library Use, Listen, Other Language, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, any one other skill.

Private Investigator

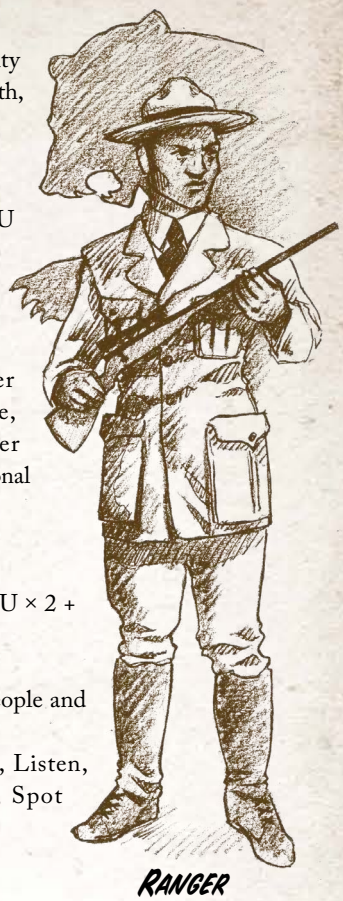
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: law enforcement, clients.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Photography), Disguise, Law, Library Use, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Spot Hidden and any one other skill as personal or era specialty (e.g. Computer Use, Locksmith, Fighting, Firearms).

Professor

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU x 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 20–70.
- **Suggested Contacts**: scholars, universities, libraries.
- **Skills**: Library Use, Other Language, Own Language, Psychology, any four other skills as academic, era or personal specialties.

Ranger

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 5–20.
- **Suggested Contacts**: local people and native folk, traders.
- **Skills**: Firearms, First Aid, Listen, Natural World, Navigate, Spot Hidden, Survival (any), Track.



RANGER

Reporter

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: news and media industries, political organizations and government, business, law enforcement, street criminals, high and low society.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Acting), History, Listen, Own Language, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Stealth, Spot Hidden.

Sailor

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: military, veterans' associations.
- **Skills**: Electrical or Mechanical Repair, Fighting, Firearms, First Aid, Navigate, Pilot (Boat), Survival (Sea), Swim.



REPORTER

Occupations s by Fifa Finsdottir

Scientist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 9–50.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other scientists and academics, universities, their employers and former employers.
- **Skills**: Any three science specialisms, Computer Use or Library Use, Other Language, Own Language, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Spot Hidden.


Scientist

Secretary

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or APP × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other office workers, senior executives in client firms.
- **Skills**: Accounting, Art/Craft (Typing or Short Hand), two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Own Language, Library Use or Computer Use, Psychology, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.

Soldier

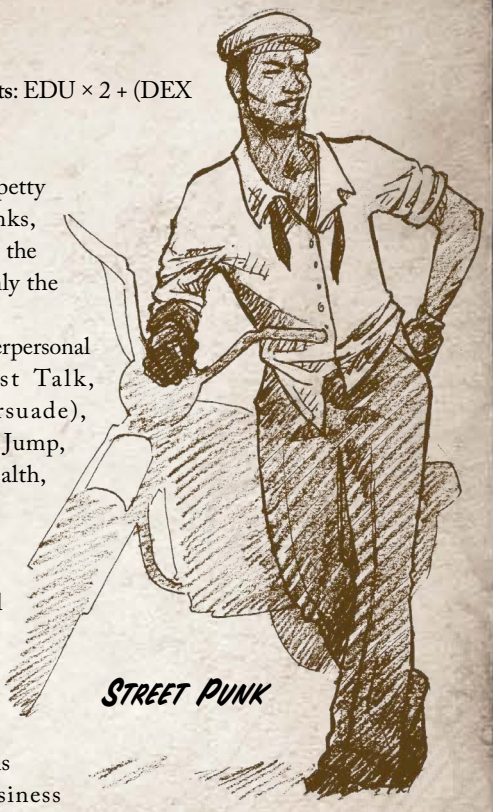
- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 9–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: military, veterans' associations.
- **Skills**: Climb or Swim, Dodge, Fighting, Firearms, Stealth, Survival and two of the following: First Aid, Mechanical Repair or Other Language.

Spy

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or DEX × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 20–60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: generally only the person the spy reports to, other connections developed while undercover.
- **Skills**: Art/Craft (Acting) or Disguise, Firearms, Listen, Other Language, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Stealth.

Street Punk

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 or STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 3-10.
- **Suggested Contacts**: petty criminals, other punks, the local fence, maybe the local gangster, certainly the local police.
- **Skills**: Climb, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Fighting, Firearms, Jump, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Throw.


Street Punk

Student/Intern

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 5–10.
- **Suggested Contacts**: academics and other students, while interns may also know business people.
- **Skills**: Language (Own or Other), Library Use, Listen, three fields of study and any two other skills as a personal or era specialties.

Tribe Member

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (DEX × 2 + STR × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 0–15.
- **Suggested Contacts**: fellow tribe members.
- **Skills**: Climb, Fighting or Throw, Listen, Natural World, Occult, Spot Hidden, Swim, Survival (any).

Union Activist

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 5-30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: other labor leaders and activists, political friends, possibly organized crime. In the 1920s, also socialists, communists, and subversive anarchists.
- **Skills**: Accounting, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Fighting (Brawl), Law, Listen, Operate Heavy Machinery, Psychology.


Student

Yogi

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 4.
- **Credit Rating**: 6–60.
- **Suggested Contacts**: tribespeople, occult or spiritual fraternities, wealthy patrons.
- **Skills**: First Aid, History, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Natural World, Occult, Other Language, any two* other skills as a personal or era specialties.
- *With the Keeper's agreement, may include psychic skills (see page 84).

Zealot

- **Occupation Skill Points**: EDU × 2 + (APP × 2 or POW × 2).
- **Credit Rating**: 0–30.
- **Suggested Contacts**: religious or fraternal groups, news media.
- **Skills**: History, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), Psychology, Stealth, and any three other skills as personal or era specialties.

STEP FIVE: DECIDE SKILLS AND ALLOCATE SKILL POINTS

Pulp Cthulhu skills, in the main, use the same skill descriptions as found in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, and so the majority are not repeated here. A number of skills have been adapted for *Pulp Cthulhu* and these skill descriptions can be found starting on the following page.

Occupation Skills

After you have chosen an occupation, calculate your occupation skill points using the characteristics specified alongside the occupation. Allocate the resulting total as percentage points among those skills listed for the occupation—your hero's professional skills. Points must also be allocated to Credit Rating (see following) within the range indicated for the occupation.

Not all the skills need to have points allotted to them; however, any unused points are lost. Note that each skill has a number in brackets next to it on the pulp hero sheet: this is the base chance of success in that skill, and any points allocated to that skill are added to this base number. There is no cap on the number of points that can be invested into a skill, although players are advised that a hero with a variety of skills in the 40%–80% range (rather than possessing only three or four skills at 90%–100+%) is liable to be more useful in the game, as their breadth of ability means they won't become "one-trick ponies."

Write down the total points for each skill on the pulp hero sheet (the points you've allocated plus the base chance printed on the sheet). The sheet also has space to write in the half and fifth values for each skill, allowing you to reference them quickly in the middle of a game. See **Table 7: Quick Reference Chart for Half and Fifth Values** on page 43. It is advised that you allocate occupation skill points, archetype skill points, and then personal interest skill points before writing in the half and fifth values alongside the full value for each skill.

Archetype Skills

Decide which of the skills listed under the chosen archetype you wish to allocate the bonus points to. Some of the archetype skills may be the same as ones listed under the chosen occupation; decide whether to bolster such skills or round out the hero further by electing to use the bonus points for non-occupation skills. Archetype bonus skill points cannot be used for skills not listed under the archetype, and if unallocated are lost.

Note that if your hero has a psychic skill, (see **Step Three: Determine Pulp Talents**, page 23) then you will also need to invest skill points into that skill.

Personal Interests

Multiply the hero's INT by 2 and allocate the result as points to any skills (which can include adding further points to occupation skills). Note that points cannot be allocated to the Cthulhu Mythos skill unless otherwise agreed with the Keeper.

Write down the total points for each skill on the pulp hero sheet (the points you've allocated plus the base chance printed on the sheet). See **Table 7: Quick Reference Chart for Half and Fifth Values** on page 43.

Credit Rating

A hero's starting Credit Rating (CR) is determined during character creation, based on the hero's chosen occupation. In play, Credit Rating determines the amount of money a character has available on hand, as well as their assets and general living conditions.

A hero's Credit Rating skill begins at zero. The range of starting levels for each occupation can be broad, and the level chosen should reflect the hero's rank in that occupation. For example, a criminal could be a poor, lone pickpocket (Credit Rating 9) or for a wealthy gang boss (Credit Rating 90). Any number of skill points can be invested in Credit Rating within the recommended limits for that occupation.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The vast majority of *Pulp Cthulhu* skills are identical to those used in standard *Call of Cthulhu*. Thus, skills which are unchanged from standard *Call of Cthulhu* are not repeated here (see Chapter 5: Skills, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* for their full descriptions).

In some cases, certain skills have been tweaked to better align with pulp games. Additionally, a new set of skills is

introduced: Psychic Skills, which provide a range of mental abilities suitable for the pulp milieu. For more about psychic skills, see **Chapter 6: Pulp Magic, Psychic Powers, and Weird Science**.

Computer Use (00%)

Computer Use is the province of scientists and inventors in the 1930s era, and it is highly unlikely that those outside of such professions would have any skill at all, or even know how to turn a computer on.

The skill enables the programming, operation, and repair of computers and other logic device operation. These devices are not small desktop appliances; rather they can fill entire floors and usually can't be moved. Row upon row of glass tubed valves, jumbles of wires, flashing lights, and strange popping sounds are common. Such machines are programmed by adjusting dials and inputting hole-punched cards, with computational results displayed via light boards and gauges.

The scope of 1930s pulp computers is very much the province of the Keeper. Some suggestions include:

- Predicting the percentage chance of specific events happening (e.g. "It says there's a 90 percent chance of the Statue of Liberty becoming sentient if the ritual is performed").
- Decoding ciphers or translating ancient texts (e.g. "The computer says we were wrong, the message is a warning not a call for help!").
- Powering the brain of servant, helper robots (e.g. "Look, the computer sends the robot orders by radio waves. Of course nothing can go wrong. The computer is our friend").
- Solve complex mathematical problems (e.g. "Great! The computer has worked out that if we draw this geometric shape on the floor then it'll open up a non-Euclidian portal, allowing us to cross into other dimensions!").

Timescales for computer or logic device operation are uncertain and Keepers are advised to adjust times by the success of the skill roll, although very complex operations and highly unusual programming will always be in hours or days rather than minutes.

In the pulp era, computers are in their infancy, strange devices that no one really understands, with a propensity to cause more harm than good. Those with any skill should approach a computer with caution.

Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

- Regular difficulty: program a computer to perform a specific activity.
- Hard difficulty: quickly repair a computer that's been smashed up.
- Extreme difficulty: connect a human brain to a computer in order to download its contents.

LIVING STANDARDS

Credit Rating 0: Penniless

- A person that cannot even afford the level of 'poor' is considered penniless.
- Accommodation: such a person would be living on the street.
- Travel: walking, hitchhiking or stowing away on a train or ship.

Credit Rating 1-9: Poor

- Able to afford the bare minimum of a roof over their head and, at least, one meager meal each day.
- Accommodation: restricted to the cheapest rental housing or fleabag hotel.
- Travel: public transport of the cheapest sort. Any transport possessed will be cheap and unreliable.

Credit Rating 10-49: Average

- A reasonable level of comfort, three meals a day and occasional treat.
- Accommodation: an average home or apartment, either rented or privately owned. Expect to stay in moderately priced hotels.
- Travel: standard forms of travel can be used, but not first class. In a modern-day period, this person would be likely to own a reliable car.

Credit Rating 50-89: Wealthy

- This level of wealth affords luxury and comfort.
- Accommodation: a substantial residence, perhaps with some domestic help (butler, housekeeper, cleaner, gardener, etc.) Possibly a second home in the country or abroad. Stay in expensive hotels.
- Travel: first class. This person would own an expensive car or equivalent.

Credit Rating 90+: Rich

- This level of wealth affords great luxury and comfort.
- Accommodation: a plush residence or estate with abundant domestic help (butler, servants, cleaner, gardener, etc.). Second homes in the country and abroad. Stay in top hotels.
- Travel: first class. In the modern day, this person would own numerous luxury cars.

Credit Rating 99+: Super Rich

- As Rich, but money is really no object. Individuals in this category are among the richest in the world.

SKILL LIST

Key:
Bold Text denotes the skill has been tweaked for *Pulp Cthulhu* and a description follows. All other skill descriptions are not repeated here and can be found in Chapter 5: Skills of the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*.

[Uncommon] denotes an uncommon skill not written on the *Pulp Cthulhu* Hero Sheet.

[Specializations] denotes a skill that is broken up into various separate, allied skills.

Accounting (05%)
Animal Handling (05%) [Uncommon]
Anthropology (01%) [Uncommon]
Appraise (05%)
Archaeology (01%)
Art and Craft (05%) [Specializations]
Artillery (01%) [Uncommon]
Charm (15%)
Climb (20%)
Computer Use (00%)
Credit Rating (00%)
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)
Demolitions (01%) [Uncommon]
Disguise (05%)
Diving (01%)
Dodge (half DEX)
Drive Auto (20%)
Electrical Repair (10%)
Fast Talk (05%)
Fighting (varies) [Specializations]
- Axe (15%)
- Bow (15%)
- Brawl (25%)
- Chainsaw (10%)
- Flail (10%)
- Garrote (15%)
- Sword (20%)
- Whip (05%)

Firearms (varies) [Specializations]
- Flamethrower (10%)

Handgun (20%)
Heavy Weapons (10%)
Machine Gun (10%)
Rifle/Shotgun (25%)
Spear (20%)
Submachine Gun (15%)
First Aid (30%)
History (05%)
Hypnosis (01%) [Uncommon]
Intimidate (15%)
Jump (20%)
Language (Other) (01%) [Specializations]
Language (Own) (EDU)
Law (05%)
Library Use (20%)
Listen (20%)
Locksmith (01%)
Lore (01%) [Specializations]
Mechanical Repair (10%)
Medicine (01%)
Natural World (10%)
Navigate (10%)
Occult (05%)
Operate Heavy Machinery (01%)
Persuade (10%)
Pilot (01%) [Specializations]
Psychoanalysis (01%)
Psychology (10%)
Read Lips (01%)
Ride (05%)
Science (01%) [Specializations]
Sleight of Hand (10%)
Spot Hidden (25%)
Stealth (20%)
Survival (10%) [Specializations]
Swim (20%)
Throw (20%)
Track (10%)

Pushing examples: taking longer to devise the program; using experimental components; rewiring the instruments.

Sample consequences of failing a Pushed roll: provides inaccurate results that could lead the heroes into disaster; the computer blows up; becomes sentient and believes all humans are its servants.

If an insane hero fails a pushed roll, the consequences are limitless, for example: the computer begins to randomly generate gates, allowing all manner of Mythos entities through.

Cthulhu Mythos (00%)

In addition to the standard description for this skill, users have the option of spontaneous use of Cthulhu Mythos, allowing the user to improvise magical effects akin to spells. This is resolved in the same way as any regular skill use. The player first states an aim; the Keeper then considers if the aim is acceptable, suggesting a lesser aim (in preference to blocking the player's proposal) if possible.

The default difficulty level for use of the Cthulhu Mythos skill in this way is Regular (the player needs to roll equal to or under the hero's Cthulhu Mythos skill). Alternatively, if the character is using their Cthulhu Mythos skill to affect a target that is resisting them, treat this as an opposed roll between the caster's Cthulhu Mythos skill and the target's POW. In

addition, the Keeper must decide on a cost in magic points and Sanity points. The Keeper should gauge the cost and make it similar to a comparable spell.

The cost and consequence of pushing the Cthulhu Mythos skill roll and failing are the same as those for failing a pushed spell casting roll (see Chapter 6: Pulp Magic, Psychic Powers, and Weird Science). The Keeper may allow the player's aim to be achieved when a pushed roll is failed, however, this is not guaranteed. Unlike casting a spell, using the Cthulhu Mythos skill to achieve a given effect must be rolled for every time.

Some examples of spontaneous Cthulhu Mythos skill use:

- **To cause physical harm to one target:** the caster chooses the number of magic points expended, and loses half that number of Sanity points. To be effective, the caster needs to beat the target in an opposed Cthulhu Mythos versus POW roll. If the caster wins the roll, the target takes damage equal to the number of magic points expended. Damage caused in this manner is always horrific, with skin blistering, blood boiling, and so on.
- **To banish a monster:** the caster spends magic points equal to one-fifth of the monster's POW and 1D4 Sanity points. The caster must then succeed in an opposed Cthulhu Mythos versus POW roll against the monster.
- **To commune with the recently deceased:** costs the caster 10 magic points plus 1D10 Sanity points. The effect last 1D6 rounds before the deceased speaks no more.
- **To commune with the long-term dead:** costs the caster 15 magic points plus 1D10 Sanity points. The effect lasts 1D4 rounds before the bones of the corpse speak no more.
- **To create a physical ward:** costs the caster variable magic points plus variable Sanity points. Each magic point invested in the barrier acts as if armor, on a one-for-one basis. Such a ward does not prevent mental and psychic attacks, nor Mythos spells.
- **To comprehend Mythos languages:** costs the caster 8 magic points plus 1D6 Sanity points. The caster is able to comprehend Mythos languages, such as Aklo, Elder Thing murals, R'lyehian, and so on. This ability to read and understand lasts for around 1 hour.

First Aid (30%)

For *Pulp Cthulhu*, First Aid grants 1D4 hit points of recovery with a successful application; otherwise, the skill performs exactly as described in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*.

As an option, Keepers may award an automatic 4 hit points recovery with an Extreme success.

Hypnosis (01%) [Uncommon]

The user is able to induce a trancelike state in a target causing them to experience heightened suggestibility, relaxation, and possible recall of forgotten memories.

Using hypnosis is an opposed roll between the user's Hypnosis skill and the target's POW or Psychology (with a willing and compliant target the hypnotist only needs to succeed in their Hypnosis skill roll). Only one target at a time can be affected by hypnosis. Use of hypnosis for devious or malignant purposes should always come at the cost of Sanity points.

Possible uses for hypnosis:

- **Alleviate mental trauma:** Hypnosis may also be attempted on a character suffering mental trauma, eliminating the effects of a phobia or mania for one occasion. A series of successful hypnotherapy sessions are needed to fully cure someone of a phobia (minimum of 1D6 sessions, at the Keeper's discretion).
- **Post-hypnotic suggestion:** an implanted suggestion prompts the target to perform a single particular action without forethought and without perceiving that he or she is doing it. The urgency of the suggestion usually fades rapidly.
- **Aid recollection:** fragmented or suppressed memories might be recalled to consciousness. Someone who went temporarily insane from seeing the darkness move at the bottom of a well may remember the fear but not remember what was seen. Hypnosis might bring such a memory to light, but could also cost Sanity points in the process since fear was the reason for repressing the memory in the first place. When a successful Hypnosis roll uncovers the sanity-threatening memory, an Intelligence roll should be made for the hypnotized subject; if successful, it means that the subject fully recalls the repressed memory and suffers the appropriate Sanity loss, while a failed roll means that the subject only recalls vague portions and loses no Sanity.
- **Alleviate pain:** Hypnosis can ease symptomatic pain or temporarily erase it, but the pain does not cease so much as it is ignored. If the subject is in physical pain, the hypnotist may staunch the pain, allowing the character to perform as if uninjured for 1D6 rounds. At the end of this period, the subject's wounds are fully felt and, depending on the situation, the Keeper may impose additional hit point loss or call for a CON roll to avoid unconsciousness.
- **Freeze a target:** using a focus (such as a gemstone, watch on a chain, and so on) the hypnotist is able to hold the attention of a target for as long as they like, as long as they remain focused on the target. This effect can be used during combat to essentially freeze an opponent, who is unable to do anything but stare at the focus. However, if the hypnotist or target takes damage during this time the hypnosis is broken and the target may act normally. If the hypnotist fails their skill roll, the target gets an immediate free attack on the hypnotist (counts as a "Surprise" attack, giving the target a bonus attack die, with the hypnotist unable to react (fight back or dodge)). Using hypnosis in this way means that the roll cannot be pushed.

- **Misinformation:** the hypnotist changes a memory of a non-player character. The Keeper may supply false and misleading replies to future inquiries regarding those memories from the same subject. An unscrupulous hypnotist can effect considerable change in the memories of a trusting subject, confusing real and unreal memories so thoroughly that the subject is unable to distinguish real and manufactured recollections.
- **Cause a subject to concentrate:** with hypnotic aid, the target can diligently focus on a specific subject, like a book, a code, or problem. The subject may be able to memorize long passages or strings of unrelated numbers. The outcome is dependent on the subject's focus:
  - If a book, reduce the reading time.
  - If a problem, allow a bonus die to the associated skill roll (e.g. Mechanical Repair, Mathematics, Physics, etc.).
  - If memory, the subject has remembered the passage or number sequence, able to recall it at the drop of a hat.

Opposing skill/Difficulty level:
- Hypnosis is opposed with Psychology or POW for an unwilling subject.

Pushing examples: increasing your influence on the target by ensuring their full and undivided attention, or by making a Hard Charm or Persuade roll to increase your influence; assaulting the target's senses with confusing lights or props; the use of drugs to make the target more susceptible to suggestion.

Sample consequences of failing a Pushed roll: some past memory or trauma is bought to the surface, causing the target 1D6 Sanity loss; the target falls into a trance, causing them to walk in front of a bus at a later time; the target's mind (or the hero's mind) is temporarily emptied, allowing possession by a malevolent entity.

If an insane hero fails a pushed roll, his or her mind regresses to a childlike state until treatment is administered.

Medicine (01%)

For *Pulp Cthulhu*, a person treated successfully with Medicine recovers 1D4 hit points (in addition to any First Aid they have received), otherwise, the skill performs exactly as described in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*.

Psychoanalysis (01%)

For *Pulp Cthulhu*, this skill refers to not only to clinical therapy but also to "dime store" emotional therapy, which includes the intuitive support of a friend (a shoulder to cry on, or a slap in the face to "bring them to their senses"). Such mental first aid reflects that, in pulp fiction, certain people have a way with words and sometimes a good talking to is all that is needed to bring a character out of a fugue or emotional crisis. Such dime store medicine can only ever be a short-term fix and specific, long-term treatment by a professional is actually required if the character is ever to properly recover (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).

Quick and dirty, dime store psychoanalysis by a non-medically trained person can return Sanity points to hero patient. Make a Psychoanalysis skill roll; if successful then the patient gains 1D3 Sanity points; in addition, the successful application also reduces the length of time by half for the effects of temporary insanity. If the roll fails, add no points. If the roll is fumbled, then the patient loses 1D6 Sanity points, and can never be treated by that same person again. Psychoanalysis cannot increase a person's Sanity points above 99–Cthulhu Mythos.

The skill can also be used to allow a hero to ignore the effects of a phobia or mania for a brief period (1D6 minutes), allowing a claustrophobe to hide in a broom cupboard, or an arachnophobe to touch a spider, and so on. Equally, Psychoanalysis might be used to help a delusional hero see through their hallucination for a brief period.

Opposing skill/Difficulty level for dime store psychoanalysis:
- Regular difficulty: plenty of time to talk things out in a relaxing environment.
- Hard difficulty: in the middle of dramatic action (such as a fight or tense situation).

Sample consequences of failing a Pushed dime store psychoanalysis roll: the patient strikes back in a fit of uncontrolled aggression; the patient seems OK and then goes and does something like smash up the psychoanalyst's car with a baseball bat; the patient loses 1D8 or 1D10 sanity points.

STEP SIX: CREATE A BACKSTORY

Think about what personal history, friends, enemies and achievements could have led your hero to delve into the secrets of the Mythos. There are ten categories listed on the back of the pulp hero sheet; try to write down, at least, one entry for the first six (Personal Description, Ideology/Beliefs, Significant People, Meaningful Locations, Treasured Possessions, and Traits). It's not essential to have an entry for each category, but the more you are able to define, the more your hero comes to life. Further entries may be added or existing ones altered during play.

The categories of Injuries & Scars, Phobias & Manias, Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts, and Encounters with Strange Entities may be written in during play. Of course, some heroes might start the game with a significant injury or scar if implied by your hero's history—if so, write it in.

USING RANDOM TABLES FOR INSPIRATION

You can simply come up with your own backstory entries as you see fit; however, the following tables provide a quick way to determine some details. Either roll on the tables or just pick ones that you like.

Above all, be clear that the random tables are there as a springboard for your imagination. Each dice roll will give you something from that realm of life to react to: embrace it or reject it, but be sure to react to it and use it to help fuel your imagination.

Personal Description

Think of a distinct "look" that sums up your hero's appearance (APP). Whether your appearance and your personality match are another question; a person may look stuffy but actually be very personable and open.

Here are some possibilities listed by male, female, or unisex; pick one that best matches your character concept, or roll 1D20 and add the results together.

Roll	Male	Female	Unisex
1	Rugged	Alluring	Elegant
2	Virile	Tom-boy	Youthful
3	Handsome	Mousy	Tattooed
4	Baby-faced	Graceful	Bookish
5	Strapping	Shapely	Slim
6	Hardy	Exquisite	Plump
7	Robust	Pretty	Dull
8	Wolfish	Homely	Awkward
9	Winsome	Ravishing	Frail
10	Large	Vivacious	Ugly
11	Flashy	Dainty	Odious
12	Stout	Sultry	Skinny
13	Slothful	Vixen	Slovenly
14	Dashing	Waspish	Muscular
15	Bald	Beautiful	Neat
16	Hairy	Elfin	Nimble
17	Scruffy	Sassy	Sullen
18	Well-built	Serene	Sneering
19	Flabby	Curvy	Chubby
20	Stocky	Slender	Decent

Ideology/Beliefs

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following; take the result and make it specific and personal to your hero.

Roll	Ideology/Beliefs
1	Everyone let me down, so I take care of myself.
2	Don't touch me; I'm special.
3	Everyone wants a piece, and I'm out for all I can get.
4	I don't trust anyone.
5	You gotta have faith brother.
6	Hard work never killed anyone.
7	There is no higher power than truth.
8	It's all about community, working together.
9	My destiny is already decided; I'm just following along.
10	Without my family and friends, I am nothing.

Significant People

Roll 1D10 or pick one from each of the two lists below. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your hero. Think of a name for these people.

Roll 1D10	Who are they?
1	Parent (e.g. mother, father, stepmother).
2	Grandparent (e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandfather).
3	Sibling (e.g. brother, half-brother, stepsister).
4	Child (son or daughter).
5	Partner (e.g. spouse, fiancé, lover).

Roll 1D10	Who are they?
6	The person who taught you your highest occupational skill. Identify the skill and consider who taught you (e.g. a schoolteacher, the person you apprenticed with, your father).
7	A friend (e.g. classmate, neighbor, imaginary friend, business associate).
8	A famous person. Your idol or hero. You may never have even met (e.g. film star, politician, musician).
9	A fellow hero in your game. Pick one or choose randomly.
10	An enemy. Discuss and choose someone appropriate with the Keeper.

Next, determine why that person is so significant to you. Not all of these options will mesh with every person, so you may have to roll more than once or simply pick something that feels appropriate.

Roll	Why are they significant?
1	You are indebted to them. How did they help you? (e.g. financially, they protected you through hard times, got you your first job).
2	They taught you something. What? (e.g. a skill, to love, to be a man).
3	They give your life meaning. How? (e.g. you aspire to be like them, you seek to be with them, you seek to make them happy).
4	You wronged them and seek reconciliation. What did you do? (e.g. stole money from them, informed the police about them, refused to help when they were desperate).
5	Shared experience. What? (e.g. you lived through hard times together, you grew up together, you served in the war together).
6	You seek to prove yourself to them. How? (e.g. by getting a good job, by finding a good spouse, by getting an education).
7	You idolize them (e.g. for their fame, their beauty, their work).
8	A feeling of regret (e.g. you should have died in their place, you fell out over something you said, you didn't step up and help them when you had the chance).
9	The place you were happiest (e.g. the park bench where you first kissed, your university, your grandmother's home).
10	Your workplace (e.g. the office, library, bar).

Treasured Possessions

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your hero.

Roll	Treasured Possession
1	An item connected with your highest skill (e.g. camera, certificate, the bullet that nearly killed you).
2	An essential item for your occupation (e.g. doctor's bag, gun, lock picks).
3	A memento from your childhood (e.g. comics, pocketknife, lucky coin).
4	A memento of a departed person (e.g. jewelry, a photograph in your wallet, a letter).
5	Something given to you by a Significant Person (e.g. a ring, a diary, a map).
6	Your collection. What is it? (e.g. matchbooks, jewelry, cigarette cards).
7	Something you found but you don't know what it is—you seek answers (e.g. a strange letter written in an unknown language, a curious book, an odd meteorite found in your garden).
8	A sporting item (e.g. cricket bat, a signed baseball, a football).
9	A weapon (e.g. father's hunting rifle, brass knuckles, hunting knife).
10	A pet (e.g. a dog, a cat, a parrot).

Traits

Each archetype provides a selection of possible traits to draw upon; alternatively, pick one of the following, or roll 1D10 (there are three choices per roll). Take the result and make it specific and personal to your hero.

Roll	Trait		
1	Generous	Dreamer	Loyal
2	Fearless	Aggressive	Impulsive
3	Trusting	Honorable	Pious
4	Greedy	Unreliable	Cautious
5	Idealistic	Truthful	Vicious
6	Materialistic	Skeptical	Affable
7	Cheerful	Jolly	Polite
8	Honest	Dishonest	Cowardly
9	Extrovert	Stubborn	Emotional
10	Hedonist	Risk-taker	Ambitious

Key Backstory Connection

Consider your hero's backstory, and pick the one entry that you feel is most important to them. This is their key connection: the one thing above all else that gives meaning to their life. Mark it with a star or underline it on the pulp hero sheet. This connection can aid your hero in regaining Sanity points (see **Self Help**, Chapter 9: Sanity, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).

STEP SEVEN: ROUND OUT THE HERO

Additional Details

Fill in the following details on the pulp hero sheet:

- Name
- Birthplace
- Gender
- Picture
- Cash and Assets
- Equipment

Cash and Assets

The following amounts, in US dollars, by period, denote the wealth of a hero. Cash is readily available to the hero (day-to-day regular expenses, like rent and food, are already deducted from the hero's available cash), whereas wealth that is tied up in assets can only be spent if time is taken to realize the capital.

Look up the hero's Credit Rating on **Table 7: Cash And Assets** to determine the available cash, assets and spending level.

Equipment

The final step is to write down any important items, weapons or equipment your hero possesses. There's no need to write a detailed list of everything your character owns—just list the notable items.

In some cases, starting heroes don't really have anything exceptional or worth writing down in the way of equipment. Items that fit the profile of your hero's living standard do not need to be paid for—you simply own those. Any items standard to the hero's occupation can be considered to be owned (with the Keeper's consent). A player may buy additional items, if available for purchase.

Refer to Chapter 14: References for possible equipment and weapons.

QUICK-FIRE HERO CREATION

This method is recommended if you wish to get up and running quickly.

1. Pick a Pulp Archetype.
2. Allocate 90 to the core characteristic, and then 80, 70, 60, 60, 50, 50, 40 where you like among your other characteristics.
3. Choose two Pulp Talents.
4. Choose an age (no adjustments need be made).
5. Calculate Damage Bonus and Build (see page 23).
6. Calculate Hit Points (CON+SIZ divided by 5) and Luck (2D6+6 x 5).
7. Decide on an occupation and select eight appropriate occupation skills.
8. Allocate the following values among the eight occupation skills and Credit Rating: one at 80%, two at 70%, two at 60%, three at 50% and one at 40% (set the skills directly to these values and ignore the skill base values). If your chosen profession states a lower Credit Rating skill than 40%, you should set an appropriate Credit Rating skill value and distribute the excess points elsewhere.
9. Pick five non-occupation skills and boost them by 20% (adding 20 to the skill base values).
10. Add bonus skill points from the Pulp Archetype as desired (suggest picking two or three skills to bolster).
11. Roll for backstory details then elaborate on them later, during play.
12. Start playing.
13. Fill in half and fifth values during play.
14. Sort out money if and when you need it.

TABLE 7: CASH AND ASSETS

1930's Credit Rating	Cash	Assets	Spending Level
Penniless (CR 0 or less)	$0.50	None	$0.50
Poor (CR 1-9)	CR x 1 ($1–$9)	CR x 10 ($10–$90)	$2
Average (CR 10-49)	CR x 2 ($20–$98)	CR x 50 ($500–$2450)	$10
Wealthy (CR 50-89)	CR x 5 ($250–$445)	CR x 500 ($25,000–$44,500)	$50
Rich (CR 90-98)	CR x 20 ($1800–$1960)	CR x 2000 ($180,000–$196,000)	$250
Super Rich (CR 99)	$50,000	$5M+	$5000

Key

Cash: not necessarily carried on the person. The Keeper may ask where it is being kept.

Spending Level: this is an arbitrary amount below which, for ease of play, no record keeping is required. A character can spend up to his or her spending level with no expenditure of cash. In theory, a hero could spend any amount just below their spending level every day, but in practice it should be used only occasionally—if the Keeper feels a player is exploiting this financial abstraction, a use of assets may be called for.

Assets: assets are the things that your hero owns at the start of play and the dollar amount on the chart is the total value of those things. The player should note down the dollar amount and decide what form it takes, usually property or investments, or perhaps shares in a business. The standard list of possessions is included within the various brackets of living standards. If your living standard includes a house and car, those things constitute a part of your asset value.

PULP-O-METER: OPTIONAL RULES

OPTIONAL HIT POINTS

Pulp heroes can take double the amount of damage as a standard *Call of Cthulhu* character. If you prefer heroes to be less resilient and want a low-level pulp game, add CON and SIZ together, then divide the total by 10 rounding down any fractions.

OPTIONAL TALENTS

Each hero gets two pulp talents, however, this number can be lowered or raised to suit styles of play. For low-level pulp, reduce talents to one per hero, or do away with them completely. If you wish to really pump up the heroes, then allow them to take three talents apiece. Note that the more talents you allow heroes to have, the more adept they become.

QUICK REFERENCE CHART FOR HALF AND FIFTH VALUES

Find the characteristic or skill value under the Base Number column, and read across to determine the half (Hard) and fifth (Extreme) values.

Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)
1	0		26	13		51	25		76	38	
2	1	0	27		5	52	26	10	77		15
3			28	14		53			78	39	
4	2		29			54	27		79		
5		1	30	15	6	55		11	80	40	16
6	3		31			56	28		81		
7			32	16		57			82	41	
8	4		33			58	29		83		
9			34	17		59			84	42	
10	5	2	35		7	60	30	12	85		17
11			36	18		61			86	43	
12	6		37			62	31		87		
13			38	19		63			88	44	
14	7		39			64	32		89		
15		3	40	20	8	65		13	90	45	18
16	8		41			66	33		91		
17			42	21		67			92	46	
18	9		43			68	34		93		
19			44	22		69			94	47	
20	10	4	45		9	70	35	14	95		19
21			46	23		71			96	48	
22	11		47			72	36		97		
23			48	24		73			98	49	
24	12		49			74	37		99		
25		5	50	25	10	75		15	100	50	20

CHAPTER 3

PULP ORGANIZATIONS

A hunter of the minions of Mythos takes a great risk by operating alone. Without a team behind them, he or she has little-to-no back-up or support. When the chips are down, who can they rely on to watch their back, pull them from the burning wreckage of the flaming cult temple, or suck the poison from a deadly snakebite? By working in a team, heroes benefit from the greater range of skills available, as many heads are better than one. More eyes to spot hidden doors, more ears to hear the monsters approaching.

How such teams come together in the pursuit of hunting monsters and villains is important, helping to build a degree of believability for players, and providing access to resources and information.

In this chapter a number of sample pulp hero organizations are outlined; each can be used as is, or adapted to better suit the players' concept of an organization. Equally, just use the following teams as inspiration, letting the players discuss and work out the kind of organization they want their heroes to belong to. Along with the organizations described here, more can be found in the *Investigator Handbook*.

Naturally, such organizations are not limited to the heroes. Villains in *Pulp Cthulhu* are often members of cults and secret societies. Just like the heroes working together to thwart the foul machinations of the enemy, evil cabals organize and construct a supporting infrastructure. To this end—and for the Keeper's eyes only—three villainous organizations are described towards the end of this chapter. As with the hero organizations, these villainous cabals can be slotted directly into your games to provide suitable adversaries, or used to stimulate your own ideas and designs.

SAMPLE HERO ORGANIZATIONS

THE VANGUARD CLUB

The Vanguard Club is an international organization of explorers and adventurers. By the nature of their activities, Vanguard members often encounter manifestations of the Mythos, but tend to consider these incidents in their historical or archaeological context rather than as an indication of a greater supernatural menace.

Purpose

The Vanguard Club's purpose is best summed up by its motto: *Semper primus ad limes* ("always first to the frontier"). Club members take great pride in being the first to explore an uncharted region or test out a radical scientific device. This isn't to say that members are merely thrill-seekers and headline-grabbers—though their colleagues in more stodgy scientific circles sometimes dismiss them as such. To be certain, a lack of respect for the niceties of precise record keeping and the finer points of scientific objectivity has tainted some Vanguard discoveries over the years. Despite a few notable scandals, however, Vanguards regularly publish important papers and monographs, and the membership book of many local groups includes noteworthy and respected scientists from diverse fields.

Powering the club's drive to stand at the forefront of exploration is a belief in humankind's ability to master their world. The Vanguards hold that it is their responsibility to put this philosophy into action and prove its validity to the rest of society. Thus, they strive to leave civilization's mark on the most remote reaches of the globe to demonstrate humankind's dominance over all aspects of nature.

Organization

Taken as a whole, the Vanguard Club is not so much a single organization as it is a loose affiliation of independent local groups sharing a common belief in the spirit of human achievement. The Vanguards do recognize a headquarters, located in London's Mayfair district. The original Vanguards first met in these luxurious rooms in 1878, and it was here that the group's mission statement was drafted. Beyond its significance as the birthplace of the club, however, the London branch has little actual power. Its sole official function is the granting of charters to new clubs. Because the criteria for starting a new branch are so meager, even this authority to grant new charters tends to be viewed as largely symbolic.

To start a local Vanguard Club a sponsor needs only to demonstrate the ability to achieve notable feats in exploration or scientific endeavor, and a belief in the club's philosophy of human achievement. Each branch is expected to be self-sufficient, so affiliation with a wealthy patron, corporation, or university is encouraged. Until the turn of the century, a statement of political affiliation was also required, with applicants expected to express views in keeping with the founders' conservatism. Over time, that practice has fallen by the wayside, though the Vanguards as a whole tend to lean to the Right politically.

Once satisfied with the applicant, the London club issues an official charter. The local founder determines the new branch's organizational structure and membership criteria. In general, the founder names himself president and creates a working committee composed of the first half-dozen members to join. Over time, this structure evolves to fit the membership. Meritocracies are common in the United States, with younger members earning a spot on the ruling committee or even taking the president's chair as a reward for a particularly astounding adventure. In older branches, such as the Paris club, family name and fortune earn more respect than simple achievement—though even the most blue-blooded member must prove his or her worth from time to time.

Consideration of potential new members is held at regular intervals. In deciding upon base eligibility, the local membership committee assesses a candidate's individual accomplishments, but also his or her social and financial value to the club. The latter holds more importance to some groups than others. Still, money alone is unlikely to earn membership unless accompanied by some level of achievement, even in the most cash-strapped clubs. If the membership committee deems a candidate worthy, he or she is presented to the general membership for a vote—in some places secret, in others open. A few of the older clubs eschew such democratic voting and reserve the right to decide the fate of new members to the president and ruling committee. Membership in any Vanguard Club gains access to clubs worldwide, though some branches treat such "associate members" with scorn.

By 1920, all locals had admitted women as full members, though some clubs remain reluctant to welcome any but the most remarkable female adventurers and inventors. The Vanguard Club's roots in conservative soil remain evident in the consistent blackballing of any candidate with substantiated communist or anarchist ties. Anti-clerical leanings are common—which is little surprise, given the club's extreme humanism. Despite the tendency to public atheism, the clubs tend not to deny membership simply because a candidate subscribes to an organized church.

The five oldest Vanguard Clubs—all chartered between 1878 and 1880—can be found in London, Paris, Vienna, Stockholm, and Boston, Massachusetts. These clubs each boast well over one hundred active members, sumptuous club-owned meeting quarters, extensive libraries, and impressive trophy rooms. More typical is the Arkham branch of the Vanguard Club, which averages a mere dozen active members, who meet in modest rented rooms near Miskatonic University. Whereas the Stockholm or Vienna clubs lodge visiting Vanguards in well-appointed rooms within the meeting halls, the Arkham branch billets visitors at the homes of club members or, if arrangements can be made, at the university dormitories.

Regardless of size, each Vanguard Club does whatever it can to assist members (and selected potential members) in the achievement of great deeds and worthwhile adventures. Individual clubs have been known to fund expeditions or experiments, though only the largest branches can afford to do so alone. It is far more common for a local branch to work with a nearby university or research laboratory in staging a specific project.

A committee in each local branch considers requests for support and, after reviewing a formal proposal, presents recommendations to the club president, who decides upon the level of support to be offered. Requests from members find favor over those from non-members, but clubs will generally consider any proposal that furthers the Vanguard Club's goals and which places the organization and its members at the forefront of exploration. Scientific value is also crucial for any proposal's success, though pure science holds less allure than an original application or bold idea. The Vanguards are not afraid to be allied with men or women considered "eccentric" in establishment circles, though they will not long tolerate any member or project that makes a laughing stock of the club.

Should a club president decide in favor of a project, one of two levels of Vanguard participation can be offered:

If an expedition or experiment is sponsored by a Vanguard Club, it means the local branch has officially endorsed the project on behalf of all Vanguard Clubs everywhere. In addition to the use of the local library and the cooperation of local members, the team of a sponsored project can expect assistance from any Vanguard branch they visit while on project business. Thus, sponsorship grants access to the entire network of club libraries and some of the greatest scientific minds in the world.

It should be no surprise, then, that such participation is difficult to secure, even for club members, but once sponsorship is granted it lasts for the entire duration of the project. In return for this high level of assistance, the Vanguards insist upon a contract granting specific control of publicity and publications resulting from the sponsored project. Most petitioners find ceding this control is a small price to pay for the benefits of full Vanguard support.

A local group can also identify an expedition or experiment as one sanctioned by the Vanguard Club. As opposed to full sponsorship, sanction does not extend beyond the local club. Team members for a sanctioned project will be granted reasonable access to the local library and to members' expertise, but should have no expectations of such cooperation from other branches.

Barring club politics, local sanction is automatically given to any project in which a local member plays a prominent role. A no publicity contract is required for a sanctioned project, though the local Vanguards will turn away any request from someone who has previously accepted assistance but failed to publicize the club's positive role in their endeavor.

The facilities for all local Vanguard Clubs, whether rented or owned, include a meeting room and a library. The more wealthy clubs also house well-stocked laboratories, large dining halls, impressive trophy rooms, suites for the use of visiting or local club members in need of temporary accommodations, and halls for the presentation of public lectures. All branches are expected to sponsor local lectures by traveling Vanguards or other speakers, in keeping with the club philosophy. No matter how large the branch, though, the library invariably serves as the cynosure of club life.

A typical Vanguard library contains several hundred volumes, with the selection heavily skewed toward obscure historical and scientific non-fiction. Atlases and maps form the core of the library's reference collection, with language guides and dictionaries a close second. Vanguard members donate copies of their own published works to the local chapter, as well as to the libraries of the five oldest clubs. Local libraries also serve as an archive for members' unpublished papers, correspondence, notebooks, and maps, as well as similar items from sponsored or sanctioned projects.

Such unique material makes a Vanguard library especially helpful to adventurers or scientists. The private logs often hold practical details that are invaluable—what tribes to trust or distrust in remote jungles, lists of supplies used on previous expeditions, suppliers of esoteric scientific equipment friendly to Vanguard projects, and so on. The private journals also hold the details of failed adventures and botched experiments; material the Vanguards have never released to the public. The clubs control access to these materials carefully, and



The Arkham Vanguard Club by Richard Pace

non-members are only allowed to view such items after signing agreements never to disclose the details. Researchers open to the possibility of powers greater than humankind have often found clear indications of Mythos encounters in these chronicles, even if the Vanguard's philosophy prevents them from admitting any such possibilities.

Researchers are unlikely to find any Mythos tomes of substantial power lurking on the shelves of a Vanguard library. The sole exception to this is the Arkham branch. Because of the club's proximity to Miskatonic University, the possibility of access to Mythos tomes is high.

Although most Vanguard Club libraries do not offer direct access to tomes, they house quite a lot of information that can aid investigators or adventurers in Mythos encounters. Because of this, both pro-Mythos and anti-Mythos groups frequently attempt to plant spies in the Vanguard ranks. Investigators who do not make their queries at the local club discreetly could find themselves the recipients of unwelcome attention from cultists (or worse).

History

The legend of the Vanguard Club's founder, Frederick Gustavus Burnaby, looms large over the organization, even in the 1930s. Born in Leicestershire in 1842, Burnaby eventually stood six foot four, with a forty-seven-inch chest, and was renowned for such feats of strength as carrying a small pony under one arm. Despite his imposing bulk, he could also cleanly vault the billiard table in the officers' mess of his regiment. But it was not merely for his physical prowess that Burnaby is remembered.

In his time, Frederick Burnaby made a name for himself as a world traveler, soldier, journalist, linguist, and balloonist. As a young officer, he set off on an unofficial mission across Asia to the exotic city of Khiva to spy on the Russians, who had captured the remote slave-center two years earlier. He reached the city, only to be met with a frantic message from his commander to return as quickly as possible from this unapproved jaunt into enemy territory. His account of this journey, *A Ride to Khiva* (1876) became a best seller, as did a follow-up, (1877), which detailed his equally dangerous winter expedition from Constantinople through eastern Turkey.

At other times, Burnaby journeyed to Central and South America and took part in an expedition with Charles "Chinese" Gordon that followed the Nile as far as the equator. He fought in several battles on the Russo-Turkish front and in the Sudan, and it was there that he finally died, in 1885, while attempting to relieve his old friend General Gordon at Khartoum. Though Burnaby's corpse was never recovered, popular accounts at the time had it that more than a thousand dead Mahdists shared the final resting place of Burnaby and his seventy-three fallen comrades.

The Vanguard Club was born of one of Burnaby's few notable failures. Returning to England in 1878, after commanding the Fifth Turkish Brigade against the Russians, he took up politics. Running on an ultra-conservative platform of industrial protection for Britain and military law for Ireland, he contested the Birmingham Conservative seat but was defeated. During a consolation party with some friends in London, someone suggested that the soldier and adventurer deserved a better class of comrades than mere politicians. Impulsive as always, Burnaby took up the suggestion and set about drafting the charter of the London Vanguard Club.

By 1880, clubs had been established in Paris, Vienna, Stockholm, and Boston, Massachusetts. Notable early members included General Charles "Chinese" Gordon, and such noteworthy African explorers as Gustav Nachtigal (who crossed and recrossed the Sahara and Sudan in 1869), and the famous and controversial Henry M. Stanley. Later members sometimes lacked the impressive credentials of Gordon or Stanley, but they always embodied the spirit or philosophy of the club. Of these "adventuresome celebrities" invited into the ranks, the most famous were heavyweight boxing champion John L. Sullivan, and the novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling.

The Vanguards took an active role in the race for the North and South Poles. Carsten Borchgrevink was already a member when, in 1895, he made the first confirmed landing on the mainland of Antarctica. Vanguard funds and sponsorship helped Borchgrevink to return to Antarctica three years later, where he established the record for southerly travel. R.F. Scott and Ernest Shackleton both enjoyed Vanguard support for their expedition, though Roald Amundsen refused the group's help when he set off for the South Pole in 1911. The reason for Amundsen's clash with the Vanguards remains a mystery.

The club also welcomes inventors. Nikola Tesla, dirigible pioneer Ferdinand von Zeppelin, and bathysphere creator Charles William Beebe have all belonged to the club and benefited from some sort of support in their endeavors. Most often, this support takes the form of fellow Vanguards willing to be the first to test out their inventions. In return, the club gets positive publicity and unusual access to the knowledge and laboratories of these creative pioneers.

The club has also suffered its share of embarrassments due to its connection with inventors since more than one highly publicized invention backed by the Vanguards has failed to develop as promised. Such was the case with the early flying machine designed by the Austrian Wilhelm Kress. A longtime member of the Vienna club, Kress spent twenty years perfecting the design, and from 1890 to 1901, when the plane was finally ready for a test flight, he enjoyed full Vanguard sponsorship. On the maiden flight, however, the seaplane—the first piloted plane to use an internal combustion engine—skipped on the water once before crashing and sinking into a reservoir. At the time of the crash, the Wright Brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk was a full two years away. Had the project succeeded, the Vanguards would have gained substantial glory and Kress would have secured a place in aviation history. Instead, the spectacular nature of the failure caused the Vanguards to withdraw support from

several inventions and downplay much of their involvement with inventors between 1900 and 1920. Kress' failure also made some scientists wary of involving themselves with the club. After the wreckage was salvaged, Kress discovered the plane's Daimler engine was twice as heavy as the one he had ordered. Both Kress and the Vanguards suspected foul play perpetrated by Russian agents. Though nothing was ever proved, several inventors distanced themselves from the club in the wake of the accident, for fear of similar sabotage.

In recent years, the memory of the Kress embarrassment has faded and scientists once again ally with the Vanguards regularly. In 1917, the old animosity toward the Russians transformed overnight into a loathing of the Soviets. Yet the Soviet government's stance on religion as a danger to humanity and the importance of scientific progress have won over some within the membership. Others denounce the Communist regime as even more dangerous than the Tsar and his minions. While no club has been chartered in the Soviet Union, at least not as of 1933, it seems possible that one could be started there by the close of the decade. Fred Burnaby would not be pleased.

The Arkham Vanguard Club

The Arkham Vanguard Club was founded in 1890 by German immigrant Hans Gottering, whose exploration of South America had garnered very positive press in both Europe and America. Prior to chartering the Arkham club, Gottering was well known to the Boston branch, but personal clashes with several important committee members had ruined his chances of joining there. With his achievements in South America and his close ties to Miskatonic University, which seemed ready to help fund future treks, Gottering easily won a charter from the London club.

The Arkham club's early years proved to be disastrous. In 1892, Gottering staged an expedition to South America. Though the expedition suffered no fatalities, a mysterious sickness struck the entire group, forcing a hasty retreat from the jungle. During the grueling trek back to base camp, a fever-wracked Gottering was separated from the party when unfriendly natives staged an ambush. The explorer spent several days wandering in the wild, where he glimpsed what he described in his notebooks as "a temple of almost unearthly beauty." A search party finally discovered Gottering, unconscious but alive, and carried him to the base camp. When he finally regained consciousness, neither his rescuers nor the locals could confirm his sighting of the temple.

Visions of the strange temple haunted Gottering. As president and founder of the Arkham club, he staged Vanguard-sponsored expeditions back to the jungles in 1893 and 1894. On the latter trip, he discovered a previously unrecorded village of native people near the suspected temple site. These reclusive hunter-gatherers related several unsettling tales, which had been passed from generation to generation, of a cursed and time-lost temple, but such stories did not help him locate the actual site.

On the day before their departure from the village, Gottering staged one last foray into the wild. What happened next is a matter of some speculation, for Gottering's journals are uncharacteristically silent on the matter. All anyone knows for certain is that the party met with some disaster, with Gottering alone returning from the jungle, raving and spattered with blood.

Only one member of the Arkham club, botanist Dr. Homer Winside, had excused himself from the expedition. It became his task now to retrieve his deranged colleague and whatever remained of the expedition's notes and equipment. Upon returning to the States, Winside committed Gottering to the local sanitarium and helped the authorities conduct an investigation. Only intercession by some influential members of the Boston club, who disliked Gottering, but wished to shield the Vanguards' reputation, prevented the police from charging the madman with murder. A few cryptic entries in expedition journals were generously interpreted to indicate treacherous locals, and the case was closed.

For two years Winside held the distinction of being the sole member of Arkham's Vanguard Club, though he spent far more time on his teaching and research at the university than he did promoting the organization. Soon, however, others joined. Anthropologist Laban Shrewsbury belonged to the club for many years, before his disappearance in 1915. Chester Armwright, always an avid hunter, joined while a medical student at Miskatonic just after the turn of the century, and renewed his membership when he returned to Arkham as dean of the medical school in the 1920s. Dr. William Dyer, head of the natural sciences program at M.U., had been asked to join the Vanguard several times since arriving in Arkham. Dyer finally accepted, in the hope of gaining access to Vanguard resources and experience, when it became clear he was to head the university's expeditions to the Antarctic and Western Australia.

The current president of the Arkham club is Dr. Ernest McTavish, chair of the Archaeology Department. Other important members include Professor Woodbridge of the School of Applied Science, who has used Vanguard funds for his experiments in rocketry; archaeologist and adventurer Dr. Francis Morgan; and Professor Abram Bethnell, the club's resident anthropologist and steadfast cynic in matters relating to the supernatural and the Mythos. Though retired from the university and the Vanguards, Homer Winside retains an honorary position on the club's committee. His shop on South Garrison Street, Almen's Flowers, is often frequented by club members asking questions pertaining to botany or the local history of the Vanguards.

The initial meetings of the Arkham club were held in various private residences, university offices, and restaurants. Gottering, who served as the group's first president, soon decided upon some modest rooms at 431 West Saltonstall Street as the club's permanent home. The apartment's sitting room serves as the club's meeting room and trophy hall. For the first decade of the club's existence, one of the two small

bedrooms was reserved for visiting Vanguards. By 1900, both bedrooms had been taken over by the club's library, and visitors were billeted in either private homes or university dormitories, depending upon need and availability. The Vanguards have a long-term lease on the Saltonstall Street rooms and hope some day to buy the whole building.

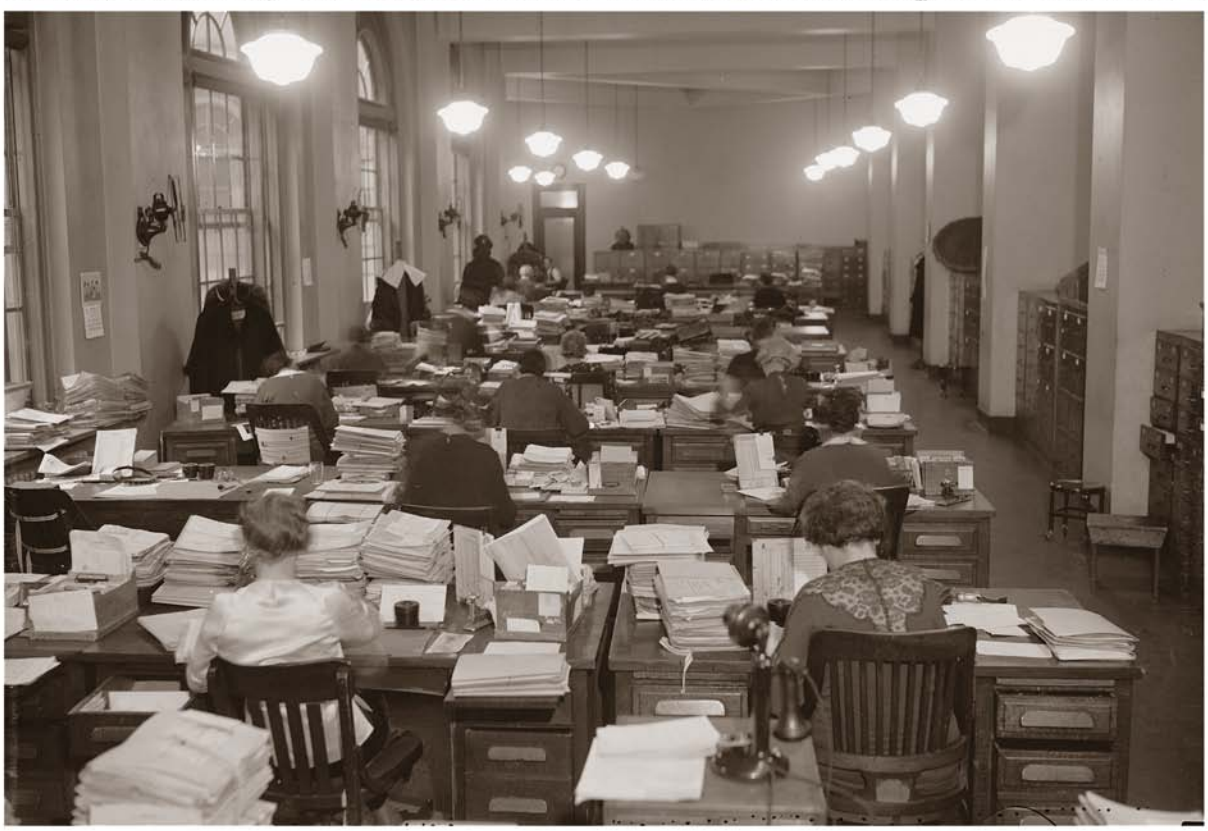
The Arkham club's library contains a wide variety of books but is especially strong in the areas of Massachusetts and Miskatonic Valley lore, South American geography, and, thanks to the influence of Homer Winside, botany. The journals and maps for all of Gottering's expeditions, as well as his personal diaries, are housed here. Over the years, many fans of sensational crimes have tried to purchase or even steal these volumes, so the Vanguards are particularly wary of granting access to them. Cataloging for the collection is a bit haphazard, and the Vanguards do not possess an exhaustive index. However, Dr. Henry Armitage, director of the Miskatonic University's Orne Library, has a personal listing of the books housed there that is surprisingly complete. How he created or gained such a list is unknown, but Armitage's catalog notes two Mythos tomes of interest in the Vanguard Library: an 1801 edition of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan*, and an imperfect handwritten copy of Winter-Hall's *Eltdown Shards* containing no spells. Armitage's catalog also notes that a badly preserved paw in the club's trophy room does not belong to a polar bear, as labeled, but to an immature gnoph-keh.

DEPARTMENT 29

Throughout the 1920s, the Bureau of Investigation was primarily concerned with the investigation of criminals of the Prohibition era, as well as the resurgence of white supremacy movements like the Klu Klux Klan. The organization was relatively small with limited powers. With the appointment of 26-year-old J. Edgar Hoover in 1924 the organization began to change and by 1935 Hoover had effectively rebuilt the Bureau into a larger, more capable crime-fighting agency. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was born.

In 1928, an FBI operation focused on an unusual religious cult in the decaying seaport of Innsmouth, Massachusetts, caused Hoover to question whether other, similar, cults were flourishing in the forgotten corners of the United States. Seeing the potential for such cults to undermine the American way of life, Hoover set about appointing a small task force to look into the matter; their chief remit was to ascertain whether a real and credible threat existed.

By 1932, Hoover's cult task force believed it had an answer. Since the Innsmouth raid, the task force had spent its time researching related and similar organizations to that of the Esoteric Order of Dagon—the cult at the heart of the Innsmouth troubles. Visiting states from the east to west coasts, three agents sifted through endless police reports, visited crime scenes, and interviewed many witnesses. Isolated



fragments of a larger picture began to emerge. Hoover was right. Across America there were, what seemed to be, a small number of cult-like groups, acting either as religious or benevolent organizations but which were clearly covers for criminal and morally dubious activities. While the evidence was patchy, to say the least, it was credible. Hoover decided to act, and Department 29 came into being.

Operating Remit

With the majority of the Bureau's manpower and resources already committed to fighting organized crime and anti-trust violations, a small team of agents was established with a limited budget. Department 29, as it was officially known, held the remit to research and investigate possible cult terrorist threats. The remit was intentionally broad as the full scale of any danger was still unknown. An inherent component of the Department's job would be to assess just how far the cult threat was spread. While the initial research had suggested that the majority of organizations suspected of cult activity were small and isolationist, some intriguing pieces of evidence pointed to possible lines of communication between such groups. The fear was that the small cults could join together in some form of unholy alliance, working together to infiltrate and corrupt the heartland of America.

Operating from the New York Field Office, Department 29 is able to access the full range of FBI resources, from the national fingerprint library to the forensic science criminal investigation laboratory at the FBI's headquarters in Washington D.C. The full membership is rarely all together in New York, though, as teams of agents can usually be found across the country, looking into all manner of suspected cult activities and crime.

Operating Practices

With the Department still in its infancy, teams of agents usually operate as a single entity, comprised of a small number of agents assigned to a particular location or suspected cult. Cooperation between teams does happen, although given their limited number and the size of the country in which they operate, such joint missions tend to only occur when disparate teams find they are actually investigating the same cult.

Each team of agents has the ability to hire outside expertise on a case-by-case basis, with some experts becoming full-time agents in all but name. Doctors, scientists, religious studies professors and, of course, state and county police, are often sequestered to help Department 29 agents in their work. Sometimes such outside help is unaware of the agents' true mission, while at other times the experts have to be brought into the loop due to the necessities of a case.

A number of agents have begun to work undercover, attempting to infiltrate suspected cults to gather evidence that is hard to come by from the outside. So far not all the undercover work has gone smoothly. It is not unheard of for a cult to "turn" an agent, brainwashing them to embrace the cult's worldview and in so doing effectively gaining a devoted recruit. Such an instance occurred recently when an agent working undercover to infiltrate the Fellowship of Nature's Salvation was apparently turned. The agent arranged a meet up with his team to review the evidence he had gathered, only to murder all but one of his fellow agents when they arrived. When apprehended and questioned, the brainwashed agent calmly stated he had been directed to "kill the unbelievers" by Dexter Winward, the cult's self-styled leader.

CADUCEUS

History

In 1912, Joshua Meadham of New York City, founder of Meadham Pharmaceuticals, sold the business empire he had built up over the previous thirty years. This was a surprising move, as Meadham had a reputation as a cutthroat businessman, and no one who knew him could imagine him doing anything else with his life.

Meadham took the proceeds of the sale and founded a charitable organization to bring medical care to people affected by epidemics, natural disasters, and wars around the globe. He called this organization *Caduceus*, after the staff of Hermes. While many people incorrectly associate this symbol with medicine (because of its similarity to the rod of Asclepius), Meadham was perfectly aware of its more esoteric meanings.

While Caduceus carries out these charitable works, it has a more secret purpose. In his business dealings, Meadham had a few brushes with the Mythos, most notably in the form of serpent people trying to use the growing global trade in pharmaceuticals as a vehicle to interfere with humanity. Realizing that mankind faced dangers even greater than those Caduceus purports to deal with, Meadham has since used his considerable resources to seek out and combat Mythos menaces where he can, especially where serpent people are involved.

Most of those who work for Caduceus have no knowledge of anything beyond its surface mission. A smaller core team works on the true mission of Caduceus, using the guise of medical aid workers to gain access to dangerous places and carry out missions of assassination, sabotage, and subterfuge against Mythos targets, using the chaos of medical crises to cover their actions.

While it is possible for heroes to join Caduceus as uninitiated medical workers, they should become privy to the inner workings of Caduceus quickly. It may be preferable to bring them into the true mission immediately. Caduceus is always on the lookout for people who have had brushes with the Mythos to help in its work.

Even in its guise as a medical organization, the fact that Caduceus works in dangerous regions means a wide range of skills is required to support its cover operations, let alone its less



Caduceus by Jonathan Wyke

public operations. An average Caduceus mission requires doctors, nurses, local experts, negotiators, researchers, armed guards, and people of questionable backgrounds to procure supplies through extra-legal channels. There are few hero professions that could not find some way of fitting into the organization.

New York Headquarters

The main operations for Caduceus are based in the Meadham Building on Park Row, on the east side of Manhattan Island. It is currently one of the tallest buildings in New York City, at 18 stories, and is topped by a majestic dome structure and the American flag.

It is here that Caduceus organizes its operations, handles its finances, and carries out various research and training projects in secure laboratories. Security in the building is unusually tight, and most staff are not permitted access to the research laboratories in the lower basements, or the floors where the planning for missions in pursuit of the organization's real goals takes place—including the top two floors, where Meadham and his inner circle have their offices. Armed security guards are on duty at all times, although most have no idea what Caduceus really is.

Despite this secrecy, most of the building is given over to the innocuous activities of Caduceus' cover mission, and traveling around these floors will bring the heroes into contact with accountants, administrators, lawyers, procurement clerks, and various layers of management. The vast majority of these people have no idea that there is more to Caduceus than meets the eye, although some do have questions about the secure areas of the building, or some of the strange invoices and shipping manifests that end up on their desks.

Floors 7–8

Once the heroes have been told the true mission of the organization, they are given access to the 7th and 8th floors of the Meadham Building. This is where the real mission planning goes on, and there are walls covered with notes, clippings, maps, old books, and artists' pads with odd diagrams in them. The team based here track the movements of various Mythos threats, trying to work out their schemes and how to stop them ahead of time. This work involves collating information from news sources and paid informants, as well as research into ancient texts and artifacts. Heroes talking to the staff here are just as likely to encounter people poached from military intelligence, newspaper offices, PI firms, and the halls of academia.

The offices are abuzz with activity, like a busy newsroom, with telephones going off constantly, people shouting questions and answers across the room, and impromptu meetings taking place around desks. The air is thick with cigarette smoke.

While most of the office is open-plan, the senior planners have offices, and there are a small number of meeting rooms. There is also a soundproofed room on the 8th floor where a small group of radio operators stays in touch with the various field teams.

The heroes are given a dedicated handler based here, named Dr. Victor Gomes Goncalves—a Brazilian medical doctor who has worked for Caduceus for 15 years and is part of Meadham's trusted inner circle of advisors. He handles all briefings and debriefings and acts as a general point of contact for any requests the heroes may have for information, equipment, or funding.

Note: *the organization, reach, and work of Caduceus are explored in greater detail in the Pulp Cthulhu campaign*, The Two-Headed Serpent.

KEEPER'S EYES ONLY: EVIL CABALS

THE AMBROSIA FOUNDATION

The Ambrosia Foundation is on its surface an extremely wealthy, socially progressive, pro-scientific and secularist political organization with a transcontinental reach. It takes its name from the legendary "wine of the gods" of ancient Greek myth, whose transformative powers provided both divine immortality and knowledge. The organization promotes the enhancement and improvement of the human condition and world society through scientific progress. It also champions universal equality over traditional politics and what it deems the "superstitious delusions" of both conventional religion and occultism. Though not widely known to the general public, the Foundation has been active in international academic and educational circles for a number of years where it has acquired something of a mixed reputation: positive through its charitable works, and negative through its adherence and acceptance of much which is regarded as far outside the scientific mainstream.

Beneath the benevolent, if eccentric, exterior of the organization lies a dark secret and a strange design of non-human origin, and the Ambrosia Foundation can serve both as patron and peril in *Pulp Cthulhu* campaigns. Indeed, it can fulfill both roles over time as the heroes uncover the real truth at the heart of the Foundation.

Stated Purpose and Operations

The avowed and stated purpose of the Ambrosia Foundation is "The furtherance and improvement of mankind and the pursuit of universal peace and prosperity through scientific advancement and social justice." A lofty aim and one that might appeal to many, particularly in academic and scientific circles with liberal and egalitarian leanings; however, beneath this statement is an agenda more complex, subtle, and in fact far more outlandish than first appears. The Foundation's principle thesis is that science and intellectualism—unbound by the petty restrictions of conventionality and the anchor weights of greed, commerce, nationalism, and superstition—is capable of solving all the ills of a troubled world and heralding in a new Golden Age. The Ambrosia Foundation seeks to bring about such a Golden Age.

To this end, its activities include backing scientific research projects and theorists whose works are so far beyond the accepted wisdom that, for their proponents, conventional sources of funding (and indeed legal protection) would be impossible to acquire. The Foundation often asks nothing in return except for full and frank disclosure of all results and copies of experimental data and where relevant blueprints and prototypes exist, that these be given over to the Foundation. The range of experiments and projects the Ambrosia Foundation is willing to back is breathtaking: be it radical new energy sources, parapsychological research, epidemiology, non-Euclidian mathematics, and for what to all intents and purposes amounts to alchemy. Secondly, and in many ways quite separately, the Foundation operates as a political interest group backed by what appears to be considerable financial resources. Promoting public and private advocacy in favor of its causes, (and against fundamentalist religion and occultism), the Ambrosia Foundation is slowly extending its network of contacts and acquiring influence in an increasing number of selected scientific and legal institutions, as well as social charities across the globe. In this guise the Foundation sponsors secular charities that provide education or nourishment for the poor, provide generous scholarships for technical and scientific subjects, and funds literacy and numeracy projects. With these latter activities, the Foundation has fostered more good will than it might otherwise have done with a number of local authorities and institutions. This work has set the organization at odds with several political interests and traditional institutions, particularly in the U.S., where some have leveled accusations of communistic ideology at the Foundation, which it has vociferously denied.

Organization

The structure and organization of the Ambrosia Foundation are both complex and somewhat opaque to outsiders. It does not actively court new members to swell its ranks (although it is more than happy to add any interested parties to its mailing lists and direct volunteers to its contact organizations), nor does it actively seek monetary donations (neatly avoiding the scrutiny such activities naturally attract). It acts most often through a series of representatives, often lawyers and technical agents, who are based out of a series of well-appointed and thoroughly conventional offices in a number of major cities

worldwide, most notably in the U.S. These offices, in turn, act as hubs and communication centers for the Foundation's activities, hiring and contracting further services and professionals as needed: from printing and distributing free school books to bulk purchasing industrial chemicals, and providing oversight and logistical support for any projects they are backing—scientific or social—in their broad geographical area. The Foundation's local offices are individually headed by a general manager (themselves often with some kind of legal, scientific, or technical background) who is, it may be noticed, rarely native to the local area or indeed country in which the office is kept. These general managers, in turn, report to… Well there's the question that anybody who starts to look into the Ambrosia Foundation will eventually reach, and will likely hit dead silence.

Considerable digging may amass certain facts and suppositions, particularly in regard to the Foundation's seemingly bottomless pool of wealth (the details of which cannot be entirely concealed). The organization's financial origins appear to lie in a number of sizable mineral extraction and petrochemical concerns, particularly in South America and sub-Saharan Africa (in which the Foundation is a major investor). Some idea of the Ambrosia Foundation's scope can also be gleaned from thorough investigation: it has public offices in Washington D.C., San Francisco, Texas, Montreal, Lima, Buenos Aires, London, Lisbon, Zurich, Accra, Pretoria, and Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia). From these, the Foundation continues to extend an almost invisible web of influence and patronage without ever coming fully to the public attention. It is a web without a visible center (or indeed a spider).

History

The history of the Ambrosia Foundation and its origins remain shrouded in mystery and what is known cannot be readily confirmed by concrete sources. Its open statements on the matter begin and largely end with the information that it was, "Founded some years ago by a number of philanthropic individuals, some of which were scientists and thinkers, and others who were captains of industry, who wished selflessly to see the fruits of their labors benefit mankind and free the generations to come from the chains of ignorance and superstition." These founders remain anonymous; even in the Foundation's own literature.

The organization seems to have sprung up, almost fully formed, in the U.S. and South America, in the very early part of the twentieth century, not long after war began to rage in Europe. In this, the Ambrosia Foundation had something in common (at least superficially) with a number of other progressive and pacifist societies which developed in reaction to the industrialized carnage of the war. From the beginning, it professed an emphasis on science and technology, which marked it out from the crop and has clearly outlived many of its contemporaries. It has continued to expand, opening international offices in the years since. It has only had a handful of public successes and failures associated with it, the majority of the scientific projects it has backed going largely unpublished and unpublicized. Despite such lack of publicity, its notoriety in academic circles is growing, particularly in the U.S.

The Ambrosia Foundation has also come to the attention of such interested parties as the FBI and the U.S. State Department, although they see it as being very far from a pressing concern. The organization's willingness to fund fringe, esoteric scientific theories and controversial and outlandish experiments makes it a desirable patron to scientific outcasts and revolutionaries alike—not least of all pulp heroes—just as its reputation among more conventional academic and scientific institutions makes it a laughing stock for some, and a source of more sinister rumors for others.

The Secret Truth

The entirety of the Ambrosia Foundation is a deliberate artifice. A confection created and controlled by a single abominable and inhuman intelligence, an entity that refers to itself as the Shard. Once a member of that time-unbounded order of life known to some as the Great Race of Yith, the Shard was considered insane and perverted among its exalted kind and convicted of strange crimes beyond human understanding. The Shard's psychic entity was mutilated by its fellows, who cast it down but found they could not reliably destroy it. Instead, they stole from it much of its identity and ability to project itself through time. Once this was accomplished, they imprisoned it in a period of Earth's history caught on a knife edge of utter destruction—by forces they hoped would prove capable of finishing the job of annihilating the Shard's being—a period known to its human inhabitants as the twentieth century. Deathless but disembodied, its former powers and vast time-transcending knowledge in tatters, the exiled entity has nevertheless formed a plan to escape what it sees as a prison akin to a crumbling dungeon on the precipice of an abyss.

The Shard means to leave the Earth, and indeed the solar system, doomed (as it sees them) to ultimate destruction by terrifying cosmic forces as readily as the mammalian primitives who live in ignorance of the true order of things. Those same primitives, whose bodies the Shard is forced to wear, will be used to fashion an agency to facilitate the Shard's escape. Before that can be done, however, the humans must first be honed, improved, and made serviceable in body and in mind. Resources must be gathered, machinery and materials developed to aid the ultimate aim of escaping this terrestrial prison. Ultimately, the Shard wishes to find a world and fashion it in its own image.

Secrecy has been a paramount concern. The Shard fears discovery, not simply by humanity (as this would ultimately prove at worse an inconvenience), but by other non-human entities and agencies that move through the shadows of the



Earth. It fears the Old Ones and their by-blows (a factor which lies at the root of the Foundation's anti-occult stance), just as it fears the ignorant bungling of humanity will hasten the very doomsday it seeks to escape. To this end, the Shard has spun the web of the Ambrosia Foundation. With it the Shard has been seeking out the suitable minds and bodies, guiding and molding them to its own ends. Meanwhile, it clouds the true building blocks of science and technology with a smokescreen of pseudo-science and irrelevant dead-ends that serve no other purpose than to cover its tracks.

Given its para-human levels of intelligence and fragmented but still powerful psychic abilities, it has been all too easy for the Shard to remain the "ghost in the machine" within the Ambrosia Foundation. It has already worn a dozen faces; its innate paranoia moving it from body to body between the management of the Foundation to preserve its anonymity. While not actively malevolent in an understandable way, the Shard is utterly ruthless, viewing mankind much as a farmer might view the animals in a farmyard: dumb creatures which might be trained to do useful tasks or to provide sustenance, but to be slaughtered when they have outlived their usefulness. When it departs the Earth it may take some of these useful animals with it, albeit altered in some way to better survive the passage. As for the Earth itself, the Shard cares not if its nations must ultimately be made to topple and the survivors made to bow down before it, or if it is left a burning cinder in its wake—either is acceptable as long as the Shard can effect an escape.

Using the Ambrosia Foundation

The Ambrosia Foundation can prove both an attractive direct patron to pulp heroes, as well as a more casual source of adventuring opportunities: from experiments-gone-wrong to appeals for help and paid commissions in tracking down missing scientists, obtaining strange artifacts or weird inventions, investigating unusual goings-on related to the scientific community and weird phenomena—the Ambrosia Foundation is interested in it all such matters and has very deep pockets.

The power at the heart of the Foundation is also ever-alert for entities and conspiracies it considers to be a threat, directly or indirectly. It views using a third party—such as the heroes—as a perfectly suitable and disposable tool for further investigation and direct action.

As an enemy, the Ambrosia Foundation is very dangerous and ultimately very hard to tackle. It is no mere cult or criminal gang but a multi-national hydra with dozens of offices and hundreds of employees. Beyond its everyday resources, it also possesses a myriad of contacts, hidden caches of weird science and bizarre weaponry, and is backed with almost unlimited

funds. It can, if it chooses, attack the heroes both through violence and also through wielding the levers of legal and political influence against them. As a legitimate charitable foundation, it enjoys a degree of public protection the average dark cult or secret society couldn't dream of. Worse yet for the heroes, the vast majority of those employed by the Ambrosia Foundation are entirely innocent, normal human beings, utterly unaware of the power or the design they are serving. The only vague defense the heroes might have is the Foundation's desire for its more extreme actives to remain out of the public eye and to avoid outright scandal. If the foundation comes to view the heroes as a direct threat, then they face a dire peril indeed. There is only one sure way of defeating the Ambrosia Foundation in outright conflict—cutting the head off the snake (or Shard, as it were)—but that will likely prove a nightmarishly difficult proposition.

Suggested statistics for the Shard can be found in ***Chapter 9: Pulp Villains and Characters****, page 130.*

THE GRAY TIGERS

The Gray Tigers (A.K.A. The Gray Tiger Hunt and the Gray Tiger Old Fellows) are an infamous group of big-game hunters, trackers, and sometime explorers of the kind that give their ilk a bad name. Their reputation is for hunting the most dangerous and rare of game, and for doing so in the most hazardous and forlorn corners of the world—caring little for how much blood is spilled or how much damage is caused in the process. They hunt for their own pleasure and also for profit. The cabal at the heart of this loose organization often funds its own blood sport by arranging hunts for the rich and decadent—satisfaction guaranteed (so the rumor goes)—whether the desired quarry has four legs or two.

The Heart of Darkness

At the center of the self-styled "Gray Tigers" are a score of savage and brutal men. Men for whom hunting and killing has become an addiction. These men do not merely hunt beasts, such as the lion and the bear, or even human prey (although this too has long been part of the group's activities); their keen desire is to hunt monsters—a most dangerous game indeed. The Gray Tigers know the forgotten reaches of the world harbor terrors undreamt of; they have witnessed the wreckage left in the wake of such creatures, and the strange signs of their passing. A few of their number have encountered such entities and lived to tell the tale, returning "twisted" by the experience. To find and hunt such monsters has become the fever dream of the Gray Tigers and, in this, they have begun an inexorable shift from human evil to something much worse. The Gray Tigers have looked into the abyss and found the abyss staring back at them.

History

The Gray Tigers owe their origin to a trio of hunters who gathered in Shanghai, in 1912, for the pursuit of the big cat which gives them their name. This animal, deemed no more than a myth by some, and often called the Maltese Tiger (owing to its supposed coloration), first came to prominence after claims by an American missionary and big game hunter named Harry Chapman Adams. Adams professed to have seen such a creature in the wild country of the Fujian province of China in 1911. Long before Adams had published the account in a later book, the stories of the tiger had made their rounds throughout the colonial barrooms and legation houses, firing the imagination of would-be hunters, young and old. Several expeditions were mounted into the densely forested mountains in search of the animal, but the survivors returned empty handed. One such party comprised three particularly jaded and ill-reputed hunters: "Captain" Caleb Lusk (a former U.S. Marine sharpshooter), Englishman Simon Lagrange (a tiger hunter and old India-hand), and a wealthy German ex-mercenary, Dominik Rost. Bankrolled by Rost, whose wealth was reputed to have been bloodstained plunder taken in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, their expedition, mounted in late summer, was well provisioned, well organized, and well armed. It was attended by a dozen bearers and several local guides and was undertaken with the consent of the local nobility (who were bribed to ensure safe passage through their territory).

Investigations later carried out by the colonial authorities uncovered evidence that the Rost party had continued a fruitless hunt for several months, with Rost himself growing increasingly hostile towards the Chinese peasantry and local hunters they encountered as they progressed further and further off the beaten track. Evidence suggests that after an altercation at a Buddhist wayside shrine, the expedition was directed to a secluded and shunned area known locally as the Valley of the Hungry Winds, where they would find "The gray beasts that hunt soon enough." What followed cannot be confirmed, but only one of the party, Caleb Lusk, would be seen again. Eight weeks later he blundered, raving, badly injured, and half-starved, into a Jesuit mission some one-hundred-miles southwest of his party's last known sighting. It would be almost a full year before Lusk recovered enough to aid an official inquiry into the missing party, but, in his fever, he claimed to remember nothing of what had come to pass in the Valley of the Hungry Winds. The inquiry returned an open verdict and the matter was widely ascribed to the actions of animals and bandits, while others quietly whispered that, alone in the wilderness, the three had finally given into their natures and turned upon each other.

Lusk, now fearsomely scarred and blinded in one eye, became a notorious figure in East Asia, seemingly possessed of a second and furiously vital lease on life. He founded a company named the Gray Tiger Hunt; its name perversely playing on the tragedy he had endured and the dark fame it had earned him. For the Gray Tigers, no hunt was too dangerous, no hunting ground

forbidden, so long as the right price was met. In the two decades since, the Hunt has operated across the world and its ranks have swollen to a core group of perhaps twenty "old fellows" who share Lusk's dark passion for blood sport against deadly prey, and its clientele has ranged from the debauched sons of the nouveau riche to jaded royalty. Lusk is still its undisputed master, showing no signs of slowing down or loss of his strange and feverish vitality despite now being in his late sixties (by even a generous estimation), while the Gray Tigers' reputation has grown increasingly more sinister and malign.

Operations

The Gray Tigers operate on the fringes of civilized society, both as mercenary hunt masters for hire and to engage in dark hunts of their own design. Such activities can range from the indiscriminate slaughter of game animals without license (not to mention any natives that get in the way) to manhunts where human prey is deliberately hunted—and they don't care which so long as the price is right. In this regard they have no care for morality or the law, ensuring that such activities take place far from potential discovery or retribution. To this end, the Gray Tigers usually take on various specialists and local lackeys drawn from the worst elements of the area, whose services can be cheaply bought, while one or two of their own number act to oversee and run the show.

In the case of their own hunts, they pursue and pay well for stories and evidence of strange creatures (including those of myth and legend)—the more dangerous and deadly, the better. These things they hunt to kill, both as the ultimate thrill and, as Lusk has shown his inner circle, for the power and the vitality this can bring. So far, some terrible successes in these goals have been met. In the jungles of East Africa, they hunted and exterminated a hidden colony of intelligent carnivorous white apes in the ruins of a nameless fallen city. In the aftermath, the Gray Tigers, under Lusk's direction, devoured the apes, taking from them their nightmarish ivory idols and bloody gemstones as trophies. In the Urals, they stalked and slew a half-lizard, half-insect beast that was a terror of local legend (though it cost them a dozen lives to do so). While on a forlorn island in the South Pacific, several of their number fought a walking corpse-thing that had fingernails like glass daggers. The thing came from beneath the sea and was propitiated by the folk of the islands with the blood of the young to stave off its wrath. The Gray Tigers trapped it and had to resort to burning it to ash before being driven away by a frenzied mob of local fishermen. The inhabitants of the region later paid the price for the outsiders' hunt when a sudden and lethal plague swept the region, savaging the human inhabits of a dozen nearby islands. The Gray Tigers have also lost entire expeditions without a trace, including a group who journeyed



The Gray Tigers by Richard Pace

deep into forests of New Zealand on the trail of the legendry Maero, and another that set forth upon the sands of the Gobi Desert in search of the Olgoi-khorkhoi. The survivors of one expedition into the high Carpathians returned to Budapest, bewildered and raving, only to be found later, torn apart in their rooms behind locked doors.

Lusk and his coterie's unquenchable blood lust in the face of creatures beyond their knowledge courts disaster, and it is only a matter of time before their desire to hunt the deadliest of all prey will see them disturb something their guns and explosives cannot hope to counter or kill. The world may ultimately pay the price for their folly. As for Lusk himself, he is no longer altogether human; the things he has seen and done have marred his mind and spirit, while the flesh he has tasted has begun to work its own changes on his body.

Using the Gray Tigers

The Gray Tigers make great antagonists for pulp heroes whose adventures take them to the ends of the Earth and into the dark hearts of jungles and deserts. In this, they can serve both as direct enemies, unwelcome and decidedly unwholesome rivals, or even as very reluctantly accepted allies when the chips are down and the fate of the world is at stake. They are, after all, very good at what they do and are suicidally fearless.

The Gray Tigers' public reputation is entirely unwholesome, yet the true depth of their crimes is largely unknown. No one has uncovered the truth about Lusk, although his innermost circle is starting to suspect. As well as their lethal skills and brutal immorality, it is the Gray Tigers' ignorance that ultimately may prove their most dangerous quality. Their knowledge of the truth of the Mythos is actually woefully small and they are, quite simply, playing with fire. Whether drawn like sharks to the scent of blood on the trail of monsters, hired as hunters, or as bodyguards for some deranged madman with a hidden agenda, who knows what catastrophe they might unleash?

Suggested statistics for "Captain" Caleb Lusk can be found in ***Chapter 9: Pulp Villains and Characters****, page 131.*

THE INHERITORS

The Inheritors is a powerful and deadly doomsday cult devoted to unleashing the Old Ones' reign over the Earth. A relative newcomer, but rapidly growing in menace, they operate as a murderous secret society devoted to catastrophe and death. Its members lead double lives—like a dark mirror to every myth, conspiracy theory and fanciful story told about groups such as the Rosicrucians, the Knights Templar, and the Theosophist movement—except every whispered horror that might be leveled against them is likely true and worse besides. Their principle ritual is murder, their credo is chaos, and their delight is in disaster.

If they are not stopped they will end the world.

Cult Beliefs

Their principle goal is nothing less than bringing about the end of the world. This insanity is predicated on the belief that the extinction of mankind is inevitable, as one day the stars will be right and the Old Ones will wake from their slumbers to lay waste to all. When that day comes it is they who will become its inheritors, becoming transfigured and blessed into a new form more suited to the endless age of nightmare that will follow (or so they believe).

The cult finds evidence for their belief in certain cryptic passages of the *Necromonicon* and other forbidden and blasphemous works, including a suppressed Georgian occult treatise called *The Inheritance of the Kingdom*. They believe that by hastening this end they will be rewarded, and see occult significance in the steady worsening of the human condition. Poverty, war, hardship, famine, catastrophe, and disaster, both natural and man-made, are the trumpet blasts heralding a new age of wanton destruction and the return the Old Ones. The cult encourages greed, spite, and ruthless violence among its members—to be practiced in their daily lives—calling these things "freedom." It sees nothing but virtue in its own members rising to the top and acquiring temporal power and wealth on the broken backs of their fellow man.

Such knowledge of the Mythos that the cult's rank-and-file members possess is a garbled and incoherent mess, filled with half-truths and lies handed down the ranks, and most of its initiates cannot comprehend the nature of the forces they serve, believing them to be more traditionally "Satanic" or mythological in nature rather than alien and uncaring. Such displays of genuinely otherworldly power performed by the cult's masters—including lesser creatures of the Mythos summoned to make grisly feasts of human sacrifices, or to destroy those that stand in the cult's way—have made true believers of those initiates selected because they carry a stain of evil in their hearts or a touch of madness in their minds. Participation in indiscriminate or ritualistic murder is used to bind the cult's members in dark brotherhood against the world. Loyalty is further ensured by fear of retribution for any failure or transgression.

Organization

The Inheritors is an organization believing in a creed of secrecy and terror. Its present incarnation, which has taken root foremost in New York and Chicago, has taken on a number of deliberate trapping and modes of operation borrowed from the likes of the Klu Klux Klan and the Chicago Mob. It has formed itself into a number of cell-like groups it refers to as "Covens," each of which takes on a lurid name such as the "Killing Hand" or the "Carrion Crows," with a symbol to match. Each coven is made up of a circle of initiates led by a master. Below them are the rank and file of the cult's minions—known as "the worms"—who do the coven's bidding in hopes of proving their loyalty and receiving the eventual

MYTHOS TOME: THE INHERITANCE OF THE KINGDOM

Its authorship marked only by a crimson "X" upon modern copies of this book, *The Inheritance of the Kingdom* serves as a dark bible for the cult. The tome purports to be of early eighteenth century English origin from a handwritten and previously unreproduced manuscript. It is a viperous and bitter polemic, advocating the freedom inherent in avarice, bloodshed, and savagery; praising the "true gods" and the bounty they promise to those who unleash them.

The work is singled out by being peppered with horrific "experiments in agony," which it advocates be performed upon the reader's fellow man to "strengthen the soul and become more alike unto the gods by indulging in such appetites as they own." True scholars of the Mythos find the work a fabric of half-truths and bitter lies, threaded through with dangerously intact rituals and twisted passages culled from works such as the Dee edition of the *Necromonicon*, and the 17th century English translation of the *Mysteries of the Worm*, reused and altered for the author's own ends.

The Inheritance of the Kingdom
English, author unknown, c. 18th century

- **Sanity loss**: 2D4
- **Cthulhu Mythos**: +2/+4 percentiles
- **Mythos Rating**: 18
- **Study**: 32 weeks to study
- **Suggested Spells**: Bind Enemy, Clutch of Nyogtha, Contact Servitor of the Outer Gods, Death Spell, Stop Heart, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler.

gift of initiation into the cult's higher secrets and echelons of power.

When a coven meets to perform rituals or carry out its attacks, the member's identities are always concealed from each other and their victims by sinister masks entirely covering their faces. The nature of these masks may vary from coven to coven, from black executioners' hoods to bloodstained sackcloth. Such concealment when carrying out the cult's business is, to them, sacrosanct and failure to use a mask is a crime punishable by a painful death. As for the masters of the covens, they hold complete authority of life and death over the cult's lesser members, while they themselves live only at the pleasure of the cult's master, the head of its most powerful New York coven, an individual known as "The Slaughter." None has seen beneath the crimson mask of The Slaughter, but it is with this insane sorcerer that the true power of The Inheritors can be found.

Recent History

The Inheritors is a cult that has only recently come to light in the last few years, although its name has become known to several watchers of occult affairs. Police authorities across the eastern U.S. know of "The Inheritors" as a name linked to a series of bloody but as yet not apparently connected crimes. These include a railroad heist in Philadelphia in which a number of privately-owned antiquities were stolen and several guards killed, and a later gun battle in an illegal gambling club in Atlantic City which left six dead, and allegedly resulted in another five individuals connected with organized crime being kidnapped and never seen again. The worst incident connected to the cult by name involved a customs raid on a warehouse in Providence, which uncovered the remains of a yet unknown number of persons (believed to be missing transients from the region) jumbled up with an unknown number of unidentified animal corpses. The bones, for the most part, were in a mutilated and partially-dissolved condition, making complete identification and accounting impossible. Three masked men were killed resisting arrest at the scene. A police officer was also fatally injured and later died, while two others had to be treated for what the official report records as "shock and the traumatic effects of the inhalation of chemical fumes." Strangely attired, hooded or masked perpetrators have also been witnessed in a string of other crimes in the Eastern States over the last several years, including a lethal tenement fire on the Southside of Chicago, a string of ritualistic murders in rural New Jersey, and a series of break-ins and art thefts committed with a remarkable level of violence in several major cities. This is merely the tip of the iceberg. In response, various District Attorney's offices—as well as the FBI's Department 29—are actively looking into the existence of a masked killer cult operating in the Eastern U.S. So far the respectable press has been kept away from the story and the separate investigations have gone nowhere.

Goals and Operations

The Slaughter's ultimate plans are to conduct a series of rituals to break down the walls of reality and free the Old Ones and their servants to walk the earth, ushering in the apocalypse. To this end, he and the coven masters have been expanding the cult's numbers, preparing ritual sites for use (primarily by bloody rites of consecration), and seeking to acquire artifacts and instruments of power to increase The Inheritors' reach and abilities. Additionally, the cult conducts more mundane but often no less criminal expansions: stockpiling weapons and explosives, establishing safe houses, and muscling in on the underworld to provide a ready supply of victims and money. The masters also quest to acquire more Mythos lore

for their own use—New England being a prime resource for this—and seek knowledge of how to bind and summon entities of the Mythos to their control. They are pursuing such activities by the only means they believe in: murder, blackmail, torture, and robbery. The Inheritors' plans are evolving and they have already set their sights on Arkham, with its secrets and treasure-troves of forbidden books, as well as what can be gleaned from desolated Innsmouth, along with several established occult groups to plunder and destroy in the coming days. Soon The Slaughter will direct the first of the great rituals of sundering, opening the way to the horrors from beyond. The sites of these nightmarish acts will not be some forsaken desert or wind-blasted wilderness hill, but in the hearts of the great metropolises of America.

Using the Inheritors

The Inheritors depicted here is a deliberate example of an "evil" cult in the adventure pulp tradition, rather than the somewhat more subtle iterations represented in most classic *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns. Here the trope is played right down to the Grand Guignol repertoire of horrors, a megalomaniac mastermind to match wits with, and a horde of masked killers with bloody axes and submachine guns for your pulp heroes to fight. They are, of course, out to destroy the world. The Inheritors are shown here as an emerging threat; a monster only just starting to rear its head out of the shadows to menace the public and keep the forces of law and order awake at night shivering in dread of what they might do next.

Deliberately, The Slaughter has been left as something of an empty framework for the Keeper to fill out. Depending on just how high-pulp the campaign is, he can be played as an out-and-out sorcerous super-villain, a previously unknown "Mask of Nyarlathotep" spawned by the industrial age, or a more subtle but entirely human mastermind spoken of in whispers, whose power is felt rather than seen. This latter option can lead to finding and unmasking him as the arch-villain—a particularly satisfying conclusion to a story arc within your campaign (especially if it turns out to be a long-standing NPC the players didn't suspect!) Likewise, the organization is not presented as worshipers of a particular Old One, or their direct servants, but rather they are enamored of the insane idea of forcibly bringing forth the whole nightmarish mess of the Mythos to tread the Earth. It's worth remembering that to the long-term devotees of the Mythos powers, or those bloodlines and beings touched for generations by their taint, that The Inheritors' schemes might be as much anathema to them as to the forces of sanity, reviled as dangerous upstarts, meddlers, thieves, and blasphemers to be destroyed.



The Inheritorss by Jonathan Wyke

CHAPTER 4

GAME SYSTEM

While *Pulp Cthulhu* uses the same game system rules as found in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* there are some additional components designed to produce a pulpier style of play.

Each gaming group is different. Often what is considered to be pulp style by one Keeper will be different to how another Keeper views things. This is perfectly fine. At the end of this chapter, a number of optional rules and suggestions are provided, allowing Keepers to fine tune the pulp level for their games. Optional rules can affect the level of "two-fisted" action and Keepers are at liberty to incorporate or ignore such optional rules as best serves their needs and play styles. Certain optional rules from the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* are included here as standard rules for *Pulp Cthulhu*.

SKILLS OVER 100%

The Keeper may allow characters to have skills in excess of 100%, providing for greater probabilities of Hard and Extreme successes. Note that a roll of 100 ("00") is always a failure.

USING LUCK

Players may use their hero's Luck score to affect certain outcomes or die rolls in the game. A player may only spend Luck to affect their own hero.

The points spent are deducted from the hero's Luck score, which reduces the chance of passing a future Luck roll, and reduces the amount of Luck points they can go on to use to affect other skill rolls, and so on.

INVESTIGATOR LUCK SPENDS

Investigators may use Luck points on the following things:

Adjusting Skill or Characteristic Rolls

Cost: 1 for 1 basis

After the player has made a skill roll (using a skill or characteristic), Luck points may be spent to alter the result. The player can use Luck points to alter a roll on a 1 for 1 basis. The amount of Luck points that can be spent in this manner is limited only by the character's available Luck score.

For example: *Dirk Dagger is being attacked by a hideous swamp beast. The swamp beast rolls and gets an Extreme success, aiming to tear out Dirk's throat! Unfortunately, Dirk fails to dodge with a roll of 63, far above his Dodge skill of 35. This is life or death, and so Dirk's player goes all out and spends 56 of Dirk's Luck points to convert the Dodge roll to an Extreme success (thus changing the roll to a 07). Both have scored an Extreme success but, in a tie, the dodging character wins. Just as it looks like the swamp beast is about to kill Dirk, our hero springs back on the heels of his feet, staggering backward to avoid the blow. Dirk now has only 4 Luck points remaining. It's a desperate situation and Dirk had better think twice about engaging the swamp beast again—his best option is to hotfoot it away the first chance he gets, leaving his steadfast colleagues to cover his retreat!*

Adjusting Weapon Fumble or Firearm Malfunction Outcomes

Cost: 10 Luck

When a roll indicates a melee weapon fumble or a firearms malfunction, 10 Luck points may be spent to ignore the result. The actual die roll result is not adjusted and the attack is still a failure. Luck is spent to avoid the dire consequences of the roll, allowing the hero to avoid a weapon breaking or a firearm jamming, and so on.

Halving Sanity Loss

Cost: double the Sanity point loss

When a Sanity roll has been failed, the number of Sanity points lost may be halved by spending Luck points equal to double the Sanity loss. For example, a hero is about to lose 8 Sanity points from seeing a horror from beyond (the Keeper has rolled 1D10 to figure the loss). The hero spends 16 Luck points in total, reducing the loss from 8 to 4 points

Note that heroes with the Resilient Talent (see page 25) can also apply its effect to the Sanity loss, after the Sanity loss has been halved by spending Luck.

For example: Dirk sees an awful monster and fails his Sanity roll. The Keeper rolls and gets the maximum Sanity loss of 20 points. Dirk's player decides that now is not a good time for Dirk to lose it, and so states he is spending 40 Luck to halve the Sanity loss to 10 points. Dirk also has the Resilient Talent; his player decides to spend 10 further Luck to reduce the Sanity loss by 5. Dirk is now losing only 5 Sanity points but has spent 50 Luck points in doing so.

Avoiding Unconsciousness

Cost: 1 Luck point, doubles each round thereafter

Whenever a hero fails a CON roll to remain conscious, or if they suffer automatic unconsciousness, they may spend 1 Luck point to remain conscious until the end of the current round. For each successive round thereafter that the hero wishes to remain conscious, the cost doubles—2, 4, 8, 16, and so on—and should be spent at the start of each round.

As soon as their Luck points run out or if they no longer wish to spend Luck, they immediately fall unconscious. This is a mixed blessing, as an active character may present a more attractive target for further damage.

For example: Jake Ironside loses half of his hit points in a single attack and fails his CON roll. He automatically falls prone and should become unconscious, but instead he spends 1 point of Luck to remain conscious to the end of the present round. At the start of the following round, he spends 2 Luck points. At the start of the third round, he spends 4 Luck points. A total of 7 Luck points has been spent, at which point Jake has reached safety. At the start of the fourth round Jake doesn't spend Luck points, and automatically falls unconscious.

It's Only a Scratch!

Cost: 20 Luck

Wounds can sometimes look a lot worse than they actually are. Pulp heroes are able to call upon their inner reserves and gain an instant health boost to reduce the damage they have received. When damage has been taken, a hero may spend 20 Luck points to gain an immediate 1D6 hit points recovery. Hit points gained may not exceed the hero's maximum hit point total.

In some situations, this may bring a hero back from the brink of death or simply give him or her an adrenaline rush to shake off their injuries and get on with the job in hand. The Keeper may also allow this health gain to provide faster recovery for a severely injured hero (allowing the Luck spend to be made sometime after the injury was received).

Avoiding Certain Death

Cost: all Luck points, 30 points minimum spend required

If a hero has 30+ Luck points remaining, all of these Luck points may be spent to bring a hero back from the brink of death. The hero has avoided certain death and immediately regains 1D6+1 hit points (see **Death's Door**, page 67), turning up in the next scene in an appropriate state.

The player (possibly assisted by the Keeper and other players) should describe what happened; how their hero managed to survive what seemed like certain death. Players are encouraged to dramatically embellish the story of their near-death escapade (within reason!) Such explanations can really develop the hero's legend and be a lot of fun too.

Invoking this rule means the hero will be at zero Luck for the rest of the session and unlikely to regain 30 Luck points for one or more sessions thereafter, making the hero vulnerable if further death-dealing encounters ensue.

What Luck Cannot Buy

Luck points cannot be spent on:

- Luck rolls.
- Adjusting damage rolls.
- Altering the result and outcome of a pushed roll.
- Sanity rolls (Luck may be used to adjust Sanity losses, but not the Sanity roll itself).
- Skill experience checks (as per the Hero Development Phase).

In addition, heroes only receive skill experience checks for skill roll successes made without spending Luck points.

LUCK RECOVERY

At the start of each session of play, each player makes a Luck Recovery roll. This is rolled in the same way as for normal skill improvement (see page 94, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*). The player rolls 1D100 and if the roll is higher than their current Luck score they add 2D10+10 points to their Luck score. If the roll is equal to or less than the hero's present Luck score, 1D10+5 Luck points are recovered.

Naturally, a hero's Luck score will vary throughout play, but may never exceed 99 (excess points are lost). The starting Luck value is not used again in the game and can be exceeded in the course of play.

For example: Dirk managed to escape from the swamp beast and the Keeper decides to end the gaming session there. At the start of the following session, Dirk's player makes a check for Luck recovery. Dirk's Luck is currently at 4 points. The player rolls 36 (above the current Luck, thus a success) and so adds 2D10+10 to Dirk's Luck, getting 18 in total (3+5+10). Dirk has a Luck score of 22 for this gaming session.

CRITICAL SUCCESSES AND FUMBLES

A critical success only arises from a natural dice roll of "01." Should Luck points be used to lower a roll to 01 the result is always an Extreme success (rather than a critical one). The only exception to this would be in combat where two opponents have tied (both scoring Extreme successes), if one uses Luck to lower their combat roll to "01" it means that they beat their opponent's level of success (treat the result as an Extreme success though).

As with standard *Call of Cthulhu*, a naturally rolled critical success always means something beneficial has happened (determined by the Keeper and the situation at hand). Likewise, a natural fumble ("100") means something bad has happened. Note that while Luck can be used to avoid the effects of a fumble or malfunction in combat, for non-combat skills a natural fumble ("100") cannot be avoided!

DIRTY TRICKS: USING LUCK WITH NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Important non-player characters (NPCs) have a Luck score in *Pulp Cthulhu*, providing the Keeper with a way to add extra spice to the game. Not every NPC should have access to a Luck score: low-level mooks, street corner vendors, and the average patrol cop would not be blessed with Luck points. Whereas, important professors, major villains, and their chief subordinates would be able to spend Luck points to their advantage.

Monsters rarely, if ever, have Luck points. They already possess strange abilities and deadly powers, so giving them Luck points to spend can be overkill. Always think twice before allowing a ghoul or deep one to possess Luck points, as this mechanic will make them considerably more deadly. Of course, if you are playing a high-level pulp game where the heroes are shrugging off wounds and seem all but invincible, then perhaps it is time to begin letting some monsters have access to Luck points. If the heroes seemingly stride through an encounter with a pack of ghouls, then next time have them meet with a more experienced and more capable pack. Every human is different, so why should every deep one or mi-go be a carbon copy of one another?

A major NPC's Luck score is normally equal to their POW characteristic, although a subordinate NPC might have one-half of their POW or less as Luck points to reflect their lesser stature. If playing a one-shot scenario, reduce the overall Luck points to half POW, although the key villain's Luck should not be halved in this way. Note that an alternative system for generating NPC Luck is provided in the optional rules section at the end of this chapter.

NPCs may spend Luck points on a range of actions, depleting their supply as they go. An NPC's Luck points do not recharge in the same way as they do for heroes. Instead, an NPC's Luck points are essentially finite and do not reset at the start of a gaming session. In consequence, the Keeper should always think carefully when burning an NPC's Luck. The only exception to this rule is the main human villain, like an ancient wizard, significant cult leader, and so forth. Such individuals may refresh their Luck points between scenarios (should they be fortunate enough to escape and live to fight another day). However, during a scenario, such major NPC's Luck will eventually run out if they are careless and free-spending. If they survive to the end of the scenario their Luck score is refreshed to their starting total, ready for them to encounter the heroes at some future point.

NPC LUCK SPENDS

Significant NPCs may spend Luck points on the following actions.

Adjusting a Skill Or Characteristic Roll

Cost: 1 for 1 basis

After the NPC has made a skill roll (using a skill or characteristic), Luck points may be spent to alter the result. The Keeper may use Luck points to alter a roll on a 1 for 1 basis.

Buy a Second Attack

Cost: 10 Luck

An NPC may spend 10 Luck to purchase a second hand-to-hand combat attack.

Ignore a Melee Fumble or Firearms Malfunction

Cost: 10 Luck

When a roll indicates a melee weapon fumble or a firearms malfunction, 10 Luck points may be spent to ignore the result. The actual die roll result is not adjusted and the attack is still a failure.

Look Out Master!

Cost: all Luck points

If a hero is engaged in combat with an important villain and scores a hit, the villain may burn all of their Luck to have a nearby mook (within 2 yards) throw themselves in front of the hero's attack—effectively taking the hit. The mook is instantly killed or incapacitated by the attack. Such a move is a high price for a key villain, leaving them powerless to affect further rolls for the rest of the scenario.

Note: NPC use of Luck points can sometimes come off as a form of deus ex machina, potentially diminishing the internal logic of the game. Using Luck points should never conflict with the realities of the situation and game world. If the heroes have the major villain cornered and all of the available mooks are dead, the Keeper should not have a mook suddenly appear from nowhere to take the hit. The Keeper should always play fair!

MOOKS

In any cult or villainous organization there are underling workers, the mooks, who undertake mundane tasks and are often the first line of attack or defense. Most pulp heroes have no trouble in batting such mooks away, able to cut a swathe through them to reach the real monsters and villains.

Mooks are non-player characters with average characteristics and skills. Those with above average characteristics are, in the main, not to be considered mooks as they are probably important to the plot, and so should pose a greater threat to the heroes.

Allow mooks to be automatically incapacitated when reduced to half their hit points. This results in mooks being far less effective, allowing the heroes to focus on the major villains.

AVERAGE MOOK

STR 40	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 45	**INT** 30
APP 30	**POW** 30	**EDU** 40	**SAN** 30	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 6	**Luck:** N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Shotgun 12-gauge	40% (20/8), (damage 4D6/2D6/1D6)
Thompson SMG	30% (16/6), damage 1D10+2
.32 auto	40% (20/8)), damage 1D8
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Armor: none.
Skills: none.

COMBAT

Most pulp adventures include scenes of combat where daredevil heroes take on foul cultists, despicable criminals, and otherworldly monsters. Use the standard *Call of Cthulhu* combat rules alongside the following tweaks to inject more pulp into such encounters.

Escaping Close Combat

When a character wishes to withdraw from melee combat a successful Dodge roll must be made on their action in the combat round (opposed by their attacker's Fighting skill). If the character attempting to flee wins the opposed roll they have successfully stepped away from the melee. If they fail


BANG!
Uh!
BANG! BANG! BANG!
BLAM! BLAM!
WHACK!

to win the roll, their opponent has pressed the fight and maintained the melee. The fleeing character will have to make a further attempt next round.

Knockouts

In *Call of Cthulhu*, when an attack inflicts an amount of damage equal to or greater than half the target's hit points, the target must make a CON roll to remain conscious. We are accustomed to seeing pulp heroes who, rather than suffering from a concussion or a fractured skull, awake later, rub their head and carry on as if nothing happened. For *Pulp Cthulhu*, a character can declare they are attempting to knock out their opponent. On the character's turn in the DEX order, or if a surprise attack, treat this as a combat maneuver using a blunt attack (punch, club, rifle-butt, etc.) If the maneuver is successful, the opponent is rendered unconsciousness and only suffers only 1 hit point of damage.

Knockout attacks may be used on any opponent with a skull or similarly vulnerable spot (humans, deep ones, ghouls and so on, but not a shoggoth).

For example: Mary-Sue Rockbuster wishes to knock out the security guard at the British Museum. Mary-Sue picks up a fire extinguisher and successfully sneaks up (making an opposed Stealth roll versus the guard's Spot Hidden), and hits the guard on the back of the head with it. The Keeper decides that because the target is completely unaware of the attack, it will be an automatic success. The guard takes 1 hit point of damage and is knocked out cold

If Mary-Sue had failed her Stealth roll, she would have attempted a fighting maneuver with the goal of knocking the guard out. The guard is a big fellow with Build 1, one above Mary-Sue's Build of zero, so Mary-Sue takes one penalty die on the maneuver. She rolls a Regular success and the guard fails to dodge, so Mary-Sue succeeds in the maneuver and renders the guard unconscious.

Shooting at a Target through Cover

In some instances of partial concealment, the attacker may choose to shoot through the cover in an attempt to hit the target. In this case, add one penalty die (for partial concealment) and apply an armor rating for the type of cover. For example, a low brick wall could provide an armor rating of 10, whereas a thin wooden fence might only give 1 point of protection.

If a target remains completely concealed for the whole round, the attacker may still take shots through the cover in the hope of hitting their target. The chance of hitting depends on the size of the area in which the target is taking cover; there is a great difference between hiding in a small garden shed compared to hiding in an aircraft hangar. The attacker is mostly using intuition to hit the target. If the hiding space is small, the Keeper should raise the difficulty level by only one step (as partial concealment); if there is more space to hide in, raise it again or only allow a hit on a critical success.

Prone

A prone character is assumed to be lying flat on the ground. Kicking someone when they are down is easier; fighting attacks made against a prone character gain one bonus die.

By lying flat on the floor you present a smaller target; those targeting a prone character with a firearm get one penalty die (ignore this if at point-blank range).

A prone character may stand up when they successfully dodge or fight back against an opponent. Alternatively, when it comes to their turn in the round, they may stand up and then take their action.

Lying down provides a stable position from which to shoot; a prone character gets one bonus die when making a Firearms roll.

Suppressing Fire

Gangsters and cultists often hose an area in bullets to cause chaos, clear the area, and generally ensure total mayhem. Suppressing fire is used to clear an area or create panic, making a group of targets "dive for cover." Targets diving for cover cannot return fire (losing their next action, per Chapter 7: Combat, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).

The shooter must be using an automatic firearm (pistol, sub-machine gun, or machine gun) and does not nominate a specific target but declares that they are bringing suppressive fire upon a group. A group of targets might be all the people in one room, a street, or any group of people within the gun's firing arc. Each target in that area then has the option to dive for cover, simulating the panic that people might feel when being fired upon.

Heroes always get to decide if they dive for cover or not. It is assumed that all non-player characters dive for cover: make one roll for all non-hero bystanders (to determine whether the shooter receives a bonus die to their Firearms roll). Once those that wish to dive for cover have done so, the Keeper should determine the target or targets from the group at random, including those that chose to dive for cover. Those that successfully dived for cover will, of course, be harder to hit (penalty to Firearm's roll).

WOUNDS AND HEALING

In pulp games, the heroes are made of sterner stuff, able to shake off wounds that would probably incapacitate a standard *Call of Cthulhu* character; sometimes they can even escape death itself.

Pulp combat should always be highly dramatic. Description and visual illustration are thoroughly encouraged. Avoid saying, "You lost 4 hit points," and instead, say something like, "you feel the whack of the bullet as it slams into your shoulder, and then a sudden, sharp pain."

Opposite: Look Out Master! by Roman Entsov

Faster Recovery

Wounded heroes recover faster: natural healing is increased to +2 hit points per day (the Quick Healer talent increases this to +3 hit points per day). In addition, successful First Aid and Medicine healing is increased to +1D4 hit points (see **Skills**, page 36, **Chapter 2: Creating Pulp Heroes**).

Ignore Major Wounds

Do not use the major wounds rule for heroes. Heroes die if they take a single amount of damage equal to or greater than their maximum hit point total. If they take a single wound equal to or greater than half their maximum hit point total that also reduces their hit points to zero, they are dying (see **Dying and Death**, following). Otherwise, at zero hit points, the hero automatically falls unconscious. A character losing half or more of their maximum hit point total in a single attack (but who is still above zero hit points) must make a CON roll to remain conscious.

Note that unconscious heroes may be killed outright if left unattended at the hands of monsters and major villains!

DYING AND DEATH

A hero is dead when they have been reduced to zero hit points by a single attack equal to or greater than their maximum hit point total. If a hero takes a single wound equal to or greater than half their maximum hit point total that also reduces their hit points to zero then they are dying and automatically fall unconscious. Record the Current Hit Points as "D" for dying rather than a number.

> ***For example:*** *Jack has a maximum of 22 hit points. He has been badly battered by a series of unfortunate events while exploring the lost temple of Zok-Gah and is currently on 8 hit points. He triggers a trap, engulfing him in molten flame, and the fiendish Keeper rolls 4D10 damage; Jack takes 18 points of damage. As this is over 11 hit points, which is half of Jack's maximum, and takes him down below zero, Jack is dying. If the Keeper had rolled 22 points or more of damage, Jack would have died immediately.*

A dying hero must make a CON roll at the end of the next round and each round thereafter. If any of the CON rolls are failed, the character dies immediately. First Aid can be used to stabilize a dying character and so prevent death. In certain circumstances, such as a monster consuming or completely ripping the hero apart, the Keeper may declare First Aid to be inappropriate, ruling that death is inevitable.

If stabilized with a successful First Aid roll, the patient gains 1D4 hit points (an Extreme success automatically grants the maximum 4 hit points recovery) and removes the "D" for dying. The patient has been brought back from the edge of death and is no longer required to make a CON roll each round. If initially stabilized with a successful First Aid roll, a follow-up Medicine roll may be made; with success granting an additional 1D4 hit points (an Extreme success granting 4 hit points recovery). A failed First Aid roll may be pushed, but the consequence of failing this roll will be death for the injured party—note that a fumbled First Aid roll also means that, despite best efforts, the dying hero cannot be saved.

Once brought back from the edge of death, the patient's natural healing continues at the rate of +2 hit points per day thereafter until the hero returns to their normal maximum hit point total. Natural healing can be supported through continued medical treatment: each day a Medicine roll may be made by the attending physician; if successful, the patient's natural healing for that day is increased by one hit point to +3. Note that treatment and care in a modern, well-appointed hospital may grant a bonus die to the Medicine roll, whereas being forced to care for an injured comrade in unsanitary conditions could bring about a penalty die to the roll (as determined by the Keeper).

As desired, the Keeper may deem that fumbled Medicine rolls hinder rather than heal, knocking the patient's recovery back, meaning no hit points are gained that day. The consequence of a failed pushed Medicine roll could mean that 1D3 hit points are lost rather than gained!

In surviving a near-death incident, some form of Sanity point loss is probable; a Sanity roll should be made, with 0/1 Sanity loss depending on the outcome of the roll.

The Keeper should encourage players to take account of near-death injuries in how they consequently portray their heroes thereafter. Injuries, such as broken legs, missing hands, and so on, can all add to the excitement of the story and allow players to make the most of acting out their character's misfortune for both comedic and dramatic effect. As this is pulp, think carefully before applying additional penalties for injuries—many heroes of the pulp world are able to take such wounds on the chin, brush themselves off, and prepare for whatever the villain can throw at them next!

> ***For example:*** *Che "Holy-Fire" Westner, a fire and brimstone preacher, has a maximum of 34 hit points. Due to recent troubles, his hit points are currently on 17. Encountering a mighty star-spawn of Cthulhu, Che finds his words do not repel the monster. Despite his attempt to dodge out of the way of the star-spawn's claws, Che is sideswiped by the gigantic monster and takes 19 points of damage—as this is more than half of his maximum hit point total and reduces him to zero hit points, Che is now unconscious and dying. Ouch! The star-spawn then lumbers off to cause more havoc elsewhere.*
>
> *It will take Che's companions (who ran away and hid when they saw the star-spawn approaching) a full round to get to Che's battered body before they can attempt first aid. During this time, the Keeper asks Che's player to make a CON roll to*

see if Che can hold on to life for another round. Thankfully, he makes the roll and buys a little more time for his friends to get to him and attempt a First Aid roll. If they fail the roll then Che's player will have to make another CON roll at the end of that round. Fortunately for Che, Tommy Aderson's experience with dressing field wounds in the Great War pays off and he successfully makes the First Aid roll, stabilizing Che and granting him 1D4 hit points. Che's player erases the "D" marker on his sheet and puts his current hit points to 3 (the result of the 1D4 roll). His friends carry him to their car and set off in pursuit of the star-spawn. During the journey, Tommy tries his hand at cleaning and dressing Che's wounds, successfully making a Medicine roll, which grants Che a further 1D4 hit points. Che is now at 6 hit points, able to get up and join the desperate fight against the humungous fiend from the sea. As Che comes to his senses, he remembers nearly dying and the shock of the situation kicks in, necessitating a Sanity roll.

In the days that follow, Tommy continues to attend to Che's wounds and makes a Medicine roll each day. As the care is not being performed in a hospital, the Keeper rules that a bonus die will not be awarded to these rolls, but neither will a penalty die, as the general condition are fine (i.e. they are not in a hot and sweaty jungle). On the days that Tommy makes a successful Medicine roll, Che gains 3 hit points, otherwise (with a failed Medicine roll) he gains 2 points of natural healing.

Death's Door

As per **Dying and Death** (above), dying characters may spend all of their Luck points (30 points minimum) to avoid death. In such situations, the hero's Luck score is reduced to zero; their condition is slightly improved and they get to live through to the next scene, with the player describing how the hero managed to escape from the jaws of death.

The character immediately regains 1D6+1 hit points, the injuries they have suffered remain and still require attention in due course, however, the character has bought some time and they do not have to make CON rolls to remain conscious or alive.

***For example:** Maximillian Quest and his trusty companions have unwittingly released Great Cthulhu from his slumber. As they run for their lives, Cthulhu inadvertently stamps upon Maximillian. Rather than have Maxmillian squished, his player opts to spend all of his remaining Luck to avoid certain death. Currently, Maximillian has 36 Luck points (he needs a minimum of 30 points to avoid death, so there's no problem this time).*

The Keeper asks Maximillian's player to describe how he survives what seems like instant death. Taking a moment to think, Maximillian's player says how just at the last second, as Cthulhu's foot was about to stamp the life out of



Death and Dying by Richard Pace



him, Maximillian somehow managed to squeeze between the Great Old One's toes, preventing him from being totally crushed. Carried along upon Cthulhu's great strides, the hero was eventually thrown clear. Maximillian regains 3 hit points (1D4+1). The Keeper then describes how the rest of the heroes find Maximillian's battered form lying upon some strangely carved basalt stones. In the sky, they can see the dark silhouette of Great Cthulhu heading for California…

Blaze of Glory

When faced with certain death a hero has a choice to make. They may be able to avoid death by spending Luck points or they can choose to go out in a blaze of glory—allowing the hero to perform one final dynamic, spectacular, and dramatic action before they die.

Going out in a blaze of glory does not cost Luck points, it is a "free" option allowing the hero to attempt one thing—one last desperate act—before they die. If the final action involves a skill roll, then a free bonus die is awarded to the roll. Once the action has been attempted the hero is dead and cannot be revived.

Given that it is a "final" action, it is highly unlikely that a skill roll could be pushed, although imaginative players might be able to convince a Keeper with suitable justification. The Keeper is fully within their rights to announce (before the roll the made) that the roll cannot be pushed. If the Keeper does, however, allow a pushed attempt, then the consequences of failure must be very severe and involve at least one other player character—given the hero concerned is going to die anyway, the effect of a failed pushed roll must have an over-reaching consequence for the hero's companions or mission.

A blaze of glory act might be undertaken to enable another character to perform a heroic action, where the bonus die is actually awarded to the character the dying hero is assisting. Such self-sacrifice allows the player concerned to narrate what they are doing to aid the other character; what final flourish they provide that enables another to perform the dramatic action.

Examples of a final act might include: making one final combat attack, deactivating a bomb, saving an innocent, grabbing the wizard's tome of spells, reaching the telephone to send an important message, sacrificing oneself so that another may get a shot at the monster's weak spot, and so on.

As an option: the Keeper may declare that a blaze of glory final action is automatically successful; however, the full effect and consequence of the action could be determined by the level of success gained by the dice roll (a failed result meaning the action only partially achieves the goal, an Extreme success meaning the action's beneficial effects are much greater than anticipated, and so on).

Another option: Keepers may allow heroes who have gone permanently insane (zero Sanity points) to go out in a blaze of glory too. Whether such individuals somehow later turn-up, despite their apparent death, in the role of a villain is left to the Keeper.

HERO DEVELOPMENT PHASE

The Keeper determines when a hero development phase happens; usually at the end of a scenario or campaign chapter, but it can be called whenever the Keeper feels it appropriate. The phase allows the same character development and chances of skill increases as described in Rewards of Experience, page 94, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, as well as the following additions/adaptions.

Regaining Sanity

Using the Self-Help rule (page 167, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*), a hero may spend time with any of their backstory entries to regain Sanity points. In *Pulp Cthulhu*, if the hero makes a successful Sanity roll while spending time with the backstory element, he or she gains 1D10 Sanity points; however, if the roll is unsuccessful, then 1 Sanity point is lost, and the Keeper and player should revise that aspect of the hero's backstory in some way to reflect the failure. Of course, current Sanity may never exceed the hero's maximum Sanity (99–Cthulhu Mythos skill).

Indefinite Insanity Recovery

If time is spent with a "key connection" then the Sanity roll is made with a bonus die and, if successful, the hero has recovered from an indefinite insanity, as well as regaining +1D10 Sanity points. If the Sanity roll is failed, that key aspect of the hero's backstory is revised, and the hero no longer has a key connection (they make select a new key connection during the next hero development phase).

Note: see page 72 for optional rules concerning Sanity and indefinite insanity recovery in the Hero Development Phase.

Outstanding Achievement

The Keeper may recognize outstanding achievement by awarding a hero with a new Pulp Talent. Such an award should be made rarely, perhaps once or twice in a hero's career. The Keeper can decide if the player is allowed to pick the new talent or if it should be related in some way to their previous action and success.

Opposite: Blaze of Glory by Richard Pace

SUMMARY OF HERO DEVELOPMENT

- Improve skills: roll for checked skill increases.
- Self-help: regain Sanity points by spending time with a backstory aspect or use key connection to recover from indefinite insanity and regain Sanity.
- Alter or create one backstory entry for the hero.
- Reward outstanding achievement—at Keeper's discretion.
- Check Credit Rating and review finances (if necessary).
- Reduce Sanity limits by one (see **Getting Used To The Awfulness**, page 169, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*) and check to see if Mythos Hardened (page 169, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).

PULP-O-METER: OPTIONAL RULES

The following optional rules are suggested for those wishing further granularity within *Pulp Cthulhu*. These optional rules can add further complexity to the game, so Keepers should carefully consider their inclusion before committing to using them in play.

OPTIONAL: FINE-TUNING LUCK

Some groups may prefer a lower level of pulp, wishing to restrict Luck expenditure. Some options are suggested below for Keepers wishing to fine-tune their games and lessen the role of Luck spending in the game to some extent.

- Restrict the amount of Luck points that can be spent to adjust a skill or characteristic roll. Where normally there is no limit, Keepers may prefer setting a maximum limit of 10 or 25 points to affect any one roll (decreasing the margin of success).
- Don't allow Luck spending to avoid weapon fumbles or malfunctions, or increase the cost to 25 Luck points.
- Don't allow Sanity losses to be decreased through Luck spends, leave only the Resilient talent to afford such mental invulnerability.
- If outlandish escapes from certain death don't appeal to you or your group, forgo the **Avoiding Certain Death** rule.

The Keeper may forego the required Luck Recovery roll and simply allow +10, +20, or +30 Luck points automatically at the start of a new session of play. In addition, the Keeper may award Luck (+10 or +20 points) to heroes if they accomplish a specific objective or victory during play.

OPTIONAL: ALTERNATIVE NPC LUCK

The standard *Pulp Cthulhu* rules state that a major NPC's Luck is equal to their POW, one way to really "play" with the use of the heroes' Luck expenditure is for it to form the basis of the NPC's Luck pool. Thus, each major NPC's Luck points are determined by how much Luck the heroes spend during the scenario. Each point of hero Luck spent is added to the major NPC's Luck pool (which starts at zero at the start of the scenario/campaign).

This alternative system provides a balance to the players' spending—what they sow, their enemy reaps! However, it does mean additional bookkeeping on the part of the Keeper.

> ***For example:*** *the villainous Pale Claw, master of a thousand deaths, begins the game with zero Luck points. During the course of the first two game sessions of the scenario, the heroes end up collectively spending a total of 50 Luck points. When the heroes first meet the Pale Claw during game session three, the villain has, therefore, amassed a pool of 50 Luck points. During this encounter, the Pale Claw spends 30 Luck points in combating the heroes before he escapes (leaving him a pool of 20 points). During game sessions three and four, the heroes go on to spend another 60 Luck points, giving the Pale Claw a total of 80 Luck points for his revenge encounter with the heroes in session six, the climax of the scenario.*

RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL RULES FROM *CALL OF CTHULHU*

The following rules are both from the optional rules section of Chapter 7: Combat, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* and add a further level of detail to combat:

- Rolling for Initiative, page 123.
- Movement During Combat, page 127.

OPTIONAL: DODGING

If a character reacts to an attack by dodging, the outcome of their dice roll could have an impact on their next action in the combat round; perhaps the dodge was fumbled, meaning the hero is now at a disadvantage, and so on.

Dodge Outcome Level	Result
Fumble	Out of position: take a penalty die on the character's next action.
Critical	Prime position: add one bonus die to the character's next action.

Inserting these optional consequences of dodging means that everyone has something else to remember during combat. If you like such granularity in your games, try it out.

OPTIONAL: DUAL-WIELDING WITH TWO WEAPONS

Any character may choose to dual-wield, attacking either with two guns or two melee weapons, one in each hand, in a single round. The attacks are rolled according to the usual rules, with two exceptions.

Firstly, a penalty die is applied to all attacks including the first.

- In the case of dual-wielding melee weapons: one penalty die is applied to both the left-hand and right-hand attacks.
- In the case of firearms: the **Multiple Shots** rule (see page 113, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*) is applied to all shots, regardless of which hand they are made with, i.e. each bullet fired—whether a single shot from each gun or multiple shots per gun—has one penalty die applied to the attack roll.

Thus, a character attacking with a knife in each hand, or firing bullets from two handguns, makes both attack rolls with a penalty die. Modifiers for other factors may be also applied, in addition to setting the firearm difficulty level by range.

Secondly, the chance of a fumble is increased:

- If the dice roll required for success is 50 or over, a fumble occurs on a dice result of 96–100 (up from the usual 100).
- If the dice roll required for success is below 50, a fumble occurs on a dice result of 90–100 (up from the usual 96–100).

Note: a firearm malfunction only occurs if the dice result is within the malfunction range for the particular weapon.

Dual-wielding causes fumbles to occur far more often. As always, the Keeper decides what has occurred with a fumble result—suggestions include:

- Harm to self: the attacker accidentally shoots him or herself in the foot, or strikes him or herself in the face with the butt of their own club.
- Harm to an ally: the attacker accidentally slices into a friend, or hits a friend with a ricochet.
- Loss of balance: the attacker loses their footing and falls to the ground, or knocks into a friend causing them to fall.
- Loss of weapon: one of the attacker's weapons slips from their hand, perhaps thrown away some distance.
- Entangled: the attacker's weapons become somehow entangled in their own clothing or some aspect of the environment (such as tree branches or curtains).

Dual-wielding makes no change to a character's ability to fight back (using one weapon of their choice) when targeted with an attack.

Unarmed attacks, such as fists, count as melee weapons for the purpose of the dual-wielding rules. A character may attack with a sword in their left hand and strike with their right fist (taking a penalty die on both attacks for dual-wielding). Note that dual-wielding handguns makes reloading very difficult. Handguns can be dual-wielded in *Pulp Cthulhu*. It is the Keeper's decision on how pulpy they wish their game to be—e.g. would you let a character dual-wield shotguns, or do you prefer to just apply the rule to handguns?

For example: *Alice and Wendy are cornered by the foul cultists of the Blue Fang. Alice is dual-wielding two handguns (with a skill of Handgun 45%), while Wendy is dual-wielding two knives (with a skill of Brawl 40%).*

In the first round of combat, Alice shoots one bullet from each gun. A penalty die is added to each of the rolls: she hits with the first shot but misses with the second. Wendy now takes her attacks; again, both are made with one penalty die due to her wielding two knives. Wendy scores a hit on the first attack, badly wounding one of the cultists; however, as she's dual-wielding and her Brawl skill is below 50, she has an increased chance of fumbling—her second roll results in 91, a fumble. The Keeper declares that Wendy loses her footing and inadvertently wounds Alice! Luckily for Alice, Wendy rolls only 1 damage.

To Wendy and Alice's horror, more cultists are piling in, aiming to mob the plucky pair. Alice declares she will fire multiple bullets from each of her guns this round, hoping to try to mow down as many of the cultists as possible. Her handguns allow up to three bullets to be fired per round, so she'll be making six attack rolls in total and each is made with one penalty die. It's not quite point-blank range, so the Keeper declares the range is Regular difficulty. Blasting away, she scores two regular hits, three misses, and with the last result being "100," one of Alice's guns malfunctions and jams!

OPTIONAL: CRITICAL SUCCESS BENEFITS

The Keeper may want to reward a naturally rolled critical success ("01") during combat. While normally this means the hero wins the combat, the Keeper could award an additional beneficial effect or allow the player to choose. Here are some ideas:

- The hit automatically knocks their opponent unconscious.
- The hit negates all armor, finding a particularly weak spot.
- The hit causes double maximum damage.
- The roll sets up the hero's next action, netting them a bonus die to their next roll.
- The hit sends their opponent reeling, knocking them down to the ground, off of a steep ledge, etc., causing additional damage and/or losing them their next action.

Bear these ideas in mind particularly against human or human-like opponents.

OPTIONAL: HERO DEVELOPMENT PHASE— INDEFINITE INSANITY

Using the standard rules, a hero must spend time with their key backstory element as one way of recovering from indefinite insanity. While the hero receives a bonus die towards the Sanity roll to determine if they recover from indefinite insanity, the fact that their current Sanity may be very low does mean the chances of making a successful roll can be quite slim. For high pulp games, the Keeper may wish to use either of the following options:

- If the player is roleplaying a very convincing attempt to connect with their key backstory element (the player is making an effort and getting into the spirit of the scene) then award a second bonus die to the Sanity roll to determine if they have been successful.
- Alternatively, the Keeper may, at their discretion, remove indefinite insanity from heroes during the hero development phase without the need for a Sanity roll. The time and convalescence between the hero's adventures are enough that any lasting adverse effects (indefinite insanity) are diminished, allowing the hero to embark on their next adventure in sound mental health.

OPTIONAL: HERO DEVELOPMENT PHASE— GAINING CTHULHU MYTHOS POINTS

The Keeper may allow a small gain in Cthulhu Mythos points to a hero spending time with a backstory element where the intent is for the hero to try and piece together the Mythos information they have recently obtained. The hero must already have at least 6% in the Cthulhu Mythos skill and must also have encountered the realities of the Mythos in the very recent past (allowing for reflection upon the experience and their knowledge). As with Self-Help, the Keeper and player are encouraged to play out the scene, centered on the hero's backstory element.

A Cthulhu Mythos roll is attempted: if successful, he or she gains +1D4 Cthulhu Mythos (they are able to deduce connections from their experience and knowledge) but they also lose 1D4 Sanity points from the realization. If the roll is failed, he or she gains +1 Cthulhu Mythos point (they make slower progress, unable to truly unify the disparate information) and lose 1 Sanity point. If the roll is fumbled, the Keeper may declare the backstory element utilized is burned, severed, or corrupted in some way—perhaps due to manic obsessive behavior or a sudden bout of madness— which also provokes the automatic loss of 1D4 Sanity points.

OPTIONAL: ALCOHOL

Gin-soaked and beer-guzzling characters are often portrayed in pulp fiction. Alcohol, after being somewhat absent during the 1920s, returns with full vigor in the 1930s. Alcohol consumption rarely needs to be noted; however, there may be times when the Keeper deems a character's abilities to be affected by a large intake of liquor or booze.

Alcohol normally works to hinder a person's capacity for reasoned thinking and physical coordination; however, it can provide "Dutch courage." Optionally, a hero may be immune to lower level Sanity losses while inebriated—in their booze-fuelled state, things don't seem that bad and they feel able to "take on" anything the uncaring cosmos can throw at them.

Medium to excessive levels of drinking can mean a hero is temporarily immune to Sanity losses to a limited degree. The required Sanity roll is still made and the result is ignored if it is below a certain amount (see **Table 9: Alcohol**); if the result is a Sanity loss higher than the immunity, the result is

TABLE 9: ALCOHOL

Consumption Level	Example	Duration	Effect	Optional Additional Effect
Low	1-4 shots	1 hour	No Impairment	None
Medium	5-8 shots	3 hours	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level.	Temporarily immune to Sanity losses of up to 2 points.
High	9-14 shots	4 hours	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level.	Temporarily immune to Sanity losses of up to 4 points.
Excessive	15+ shots	6+ hours	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level. In addition, all rolls in this period also suffer from one penalty die.	Temporarily immune to Sanity losses of up to 6 points.

Key

Example: given in shots of hard liquor (1 shot is roughly equivalent to 1 pint of beer).

Duration: effects and optional effects may be applied within this period.

Effect: the standard negative effect applied to the character.

Optional Additional Effect: apply Sanity immunity at the Keeper's discretion.

recorded by the Keeper but the Sanity loss is only applied after the alcohol's effects have worn off. Once the booze is out of the hero's system, call for an INT roll: if successful, the hero remembers everything in shocking clarity and the full Sanity loss recorded by the Keeper is applied. If the INT roll is failed, the hero only partially remembers and so only suffers one-half of the Sanity loss recorded.

The Keeper should feel free to apply these guidelines as they deem necessary to avoid any potential for a player abusing the alcohol rules.

For example: *Barfly Dan has consumed about half a bottle of whiskey. The Keeper equates this to 10 shots and consults the table, noting that Dan will be negatively impaired for 4 hours and is temporarily immune to Sanity losses below 5 points. Returning to his seafront lodgings, Dan sees a deep one and fails a Sanity roll. The Keeper rolls 4 Sanity loss. As Dan is currently immune, the Keeper notes down the loss as 4.*

Next morning, Dan awakes with an awful hangover. The Keeper asks Dan's *player to make an INT roll—a failure: Dan hazily remembers seeing a monstrous thing but while he can't recall all of the details, he feels a shiver of absolute dread nevertheless and suffers the immediate loss of 2 Sanity points.*

CHAPTER 5

PULP SANITY

In *Call of Cthulhu*, when a person begins to investigate the Cthulhu Mythos their usual fate is a downward spiral, possibly ending in death or madness. While *Pulp Cthulhu* uses the same base Sanity rules as *Call of Cthulhu*, the way in which insanity manifests in the game is a little different. Player characters in *Pulp Cthulhu* are larger than life; they are heroes rather than the regular folk we see portrayed in standard *Call of Cthulhu*. When heroes go insane they may discover strange new powers; powers that, if overused, are likely to lead the hero deeper into insanity.

Permanent Insanity

When a hero's sanity falls to zero, he or she is permanently insane. Given the pulp setting, these insane heroes should not go quietly into an asylum as a *Call of Cthulhu* investigator might. They may instead go out in a blaze of glory or reappear later in the story as a major villain.

Once a hero becomes permanently insane, they may become an NPC under the Keeper's control. There may later be an option for the hero to return to play, but no player should count on this. In some cases, if the Keeper feels it is appropriate, a hero that becomes permanently insane might be co-opted, either to work with the heroes' adversaries or as a new independent adversary.

THE EFFECTS OF INSANITY

The effects of insanity in *Pulp Cthulhu* are much the same as they are in *Call of Cthulhu*. First there is a bout of madness, followed by an extended period of latent insanity. An altered, pulpier version of the bouts of madness is presented below. The only other significant change in the effects of insanity are the acquisition of **Insane Talents** (see following page).

A BOUT OF MADNESS—REAL TIME

Bouts of madness are a feature of *Call of Cthulhu* and represent a short period of extreme panic, frenzy, or irrational behavior that a hero displays when they become either temporarily or indefinitely insane. If a hero loses further Sanity points—even one—before they recover from insanity (either temporary or indefinite) they suffer a further bout of madness.

If the bout of madness happens during a scene in which other heroes are present, the bout of madness lasts for 1D10 combat rounds (note that this is not the full duration of the state of insanity—which is 1D10 hours for temporary insanity, or longer for indefinite insanity).

The option to play out the bout of madness in real time (round-by-round) may be used even when the investigator is alone, or whenever the Keeper thinks it appropriate.

To determine the nature of the bout of madness, choose an appropriate option from **Table 10: Bouts of Madness—Real Time** or roll 1D10.

A BOUT OF MADNESS—SUMMARY

If the bout of madness happens away from the company of other heroes, or if all the heroes present suffer a bout of madness simultaneously, the Keeper can simply fast-forward the action and describe the outcome. The Keeper may describe the crazy things that the hero has done, or simply say where the hero finds him or herself when the bout of madness comes to an end. In this way, the hero may be lost in madness (and not under the player's control) for minutes or hours (typically 1D10 hours, or as the Keeper judges appropriate). Note that these minutes or hours are not played out; they are simply summarized by the Keeper. The Keeper may just describe the unfamiliar place in which the hero returns to their senses, with no memory of where they have been or what they have done.

TABLE 10: BOUT OF MADNESS—REAL TIME (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

Roll	Bout of Madness: Real Time
1	**Amnesia:** the hero ceases to think of him or herself as a hero, losing the ability to use his or her pulp talents for 1D10 rounds.
2	**Crazy plan:** for 1D10 rounds the hero pursues an irrational or ill-conceived plan. The plan must either benefit the enemy's situation or increase the danger for the hero or his or her allies.
3	**Rage:** a red mist descends on the hero and he or she explodes in a spree of uncontrolled violence and destruction directed at their surroundings, allies, or foes alike for 1D10 rounds.
4	**Gloat:** the hero is compelled to boast, gloat, or exclaim their plans aloud for 1D10 rounds: "So, before my friends and I wipe out every ghoul in this lair, just let me tell you this…"
5	**Relax:** the hero is convinced that the threat is negligible, and he or she sits back and relaxes for 1D10 rounds. They might take a minute to light a nice cigar or make a toast with a hip flask.
6	**Flee in panic:** the hero is compelled to get as far away as possible by whatever means are available, even if it necessitates them taking the only vehicle and leaving everyone else behind. They travel for 1D10 rounds.
7	**Show off:** the hero becomes an attention-seeking maniac for 1D10 rounds, possibly prone to foolhardy acts.
8	**Alter ego:** the hero's personality undergoes a complete transformation and is replaced by one completely different for 1D10 rounds. The alter ego is a mirror opposite of the hero. Where one is kind, the other is callous. Where one is selfish the other is altruistic. This could be used by the Keeper to foreshadow the monster this particular hero will become if he or she ever descends into permanent insanity.
9	**Phobia:** the hero gains a new phobia. Roll 1D100 on the **Sample Phobias Table** (Chapter 9: Sanity, page 160, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*), or the Keeper may choose one. Even if the source of the phobia is not present, the investigator imagines it is there for the next 1D10 rounds.
10	**Mania:** the hero gains a new mania. Roll 1D100 on the **Sample Manias Table** (Chapter 9: Sanity, page 161, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*), or the Keeper may choose one. The investigator seeks to indulge in their new mania for the next 1D10 rounds.

Most of the outcomes require the hero to leave the place where the onset of insanity occurs. If this is not possible, the Keeper should adapt the outcome accordingly. If there is a chance that another hero might hear or see the insane hero leaving, they should be given a chance to intervene. If the insane hero is confronted by another hero before their bout of madness is over, the Keeper should hand control of the insane hero back to the player at that moment, allowing the players to roleplay the scene. This may mean that the intended outcome is cut short.

To determine the nature of the bout of madness, choose an appropriate option from **Table 11: Bouts of Madness—Summary** or roll 1D10.

INSANE TALENTS

At the Keeper's discretion, when a hero is pushed over the brink of insanity (i.e. they are either temporarily or indefinitely insane), they begin to discover hidden qualities that hitherto remained untapped. Once triggered, an Insane Talent is added to the hero's sheet and is available hereafter to the hero (whether sane or insane), in the same way as the talents acquired during hero creation.

TABLE 11: BOUT OF MADNESS—SUMMARY (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

Roll	Bout of Madness: Summary
1	**Amnesia:** the hero comes to their senses in some unfamiliar place, with no memory of who they are and lacking any of their pulp talents. Their memories slowly return to them over time. Their pulp talents only return in a time of crisis. In this case, a crisis is defined as someone's life being endangered. When someone's life is threatened, the hero should make a Luck roll; if successful, their talents return. If unsuccessful they may try again in 1D10 rounds.
2	**Robbed:** the hero comes to their senses 1D10 hours later, having been robbed. They are unharmed. If they were carrying a Treasured Possession (per their backstory), make a Luck roll to see if it was stolen. Everything else of value is automatically missing.
3	**Battered:** the hero comes to their senses 1D10 hours later to find themselves battered and bruised. Hit points are reduced to half of what they were before going insane. They have not been robbed. How the damage was sustained is up to the Keeper.
4	**Violence:** the hero explodes in a spree of violence and destruction. When the hero comes to their senses, their actions may or may not be apparent or remembered. Who or what the hero has inflicted violence upon, and whether they have killed or only inflicted harm, is up to the Keeper.
5	**Ideology/Beliefs:** review the hero's backstory entry for Ideology and Beliefs. The hero manifests one of these in an extreme, crazed, and demonstrative manner. A common outcome is some variant of megalomania, whereby the hero's talents and beliefs begin to corrupt their humanity and sense of right and wrong.
6	**Significant People:** consult the hero's backstory entry for Significant People and why the relationship is so important. In the time that passes (1D10 hours or more) the hero has done their best to get close to that person and act upon their relationship in some way.
7	**Institutionalized or apprehended:** the hero comes to their senses in a high-security psychiatric ward or police cell. They may slowly recall the events that led them there.
8	**Flee in panic:** when the hero comes to their senses, they are far away. They should be relocated somewhere appropriate and noteworthy, perhaps at the top of the Empire State Building, in the White House, or deep inside a military headquarters. How they reached the location is unknown to them.
9	**Phobia:** the hero gains a new phobia. Roll 1D100 on the **Sample Phobias Table** (Chapter 9: Sanity, page 160, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*), or the Keeper may choose one. The hero comes to their senses 1D10 hours later, having taken every precaution to avoid their new phobia.
10	**Mania:** the hero gains a new mania. Roll 1D100 on the **Sample Manias Table** (Chapter 9: Sanity, page 161, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*), or the Keeper may choose one. The hero comes to their senses 1D10 hours later. During this bout of madness, the hero will have been fully indulging in their new mania. Whether this is apparent to other people is up to the Keeper and player.

SELECTING INSANE TALENTS

The specific insane talent should be chosen as an answer to a situation in which the hero finds him or herself. Insanity in *Call of Cthulhu* and *Pulp Cthulhu* is always brought on by some concrete and traumatic event. Consider the trigger for the bout of madness and what has just occurred in the game. Try to choose an Insane Talent that would help the hero in their present dilemma from Table 12: Insane Talents, alternatively, roll 1D20.

USING INSANE AUGMENTED SKILLS

When using an augmented skill, the player makes a skill roll as usual. The change lies in what goals can be achieved with the skill. The limits of possibility are, as always, set by the Keeper. In *Call of Cthulhu*, investigators are regular men and women, and the goals that are set by them are limited to the bounds of what a real person could hope to achieve. In *Pulp Cthulhu*, these limits may be stretched somewhat. The difference between

TABLE 12: INSANE TALENTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D20)

Roll	Insane Talent
1	**Insane strength**: "I draw upon untold reserves of inner strength!" Gain a bonus die to a STR roll. If the roll is failed, something goes wrong. The Keeper chooses: either the hero is injured (take 1D3 + the hero's damage bonus in damage from torn muscles and the like), or the thing that the hero was working on breaks.
2	**Insane dexterity:** "My hands move quicker than the eye can see!" Gain a bonus die to a DEX roll. If the roll is failed, something goes wrong. The Keeper chooses: either the hero is injured (take 1D4 hit points of damage), or they break the thing that they were working on.
3	**Insane power:** "I can feel the power flowing through me!" Gain a bonus die to a POW roll. If the roll is failed, something goes wrong. The Keeper chooses: either the hero passes out, or the effect they were trying to achieve is dangerously greater than intended.
4	**Insane constitution:** "I grit my teeth and feel no pain!" When an amount of damage is suffered, the hero may choose to make a CON roll. If successful, they bear the pain and halve the damage. If the roll is failed, they take the damage that was rolled and fall to the ground, incapacitated for 1D3 rounds.
5	**Insane appearance:** "Damn, I look good baby!" The hero looks somehow very different; this may be purely in their facial expression and posture, or it could be that they take the time to change their clothes and hair to something radically different (clothes don't magically change—they must do that). Gain a bonus die to an APP roll or roll that could be affected by their appearance, such as Charm or Fast Talk. The effect is short-lived but may be applied to all interactions during a period of time, such as one scene or one meeting. If a roll is failed using the bonus die for their "improved" appearance, they suffer some form of social disgrace or consequence.
6	**Insane recall:** "I remember everything perfectly!" Every memory and fact the hero ever heard is right at their fingertips. Faces, figures, and details crowd their mind in a flood of information. Gain a bonus die to an EDU, Know, or skill roll when trying to remember information that the hero might feasibly have once heard or seen. If a roll is failed, the flood of information is too much! Lose a point of Sanity and suffer a bout of madness. If the hero was not already insane, they are now temporarily insane.
7	**Insane speed:** "Look at me—I'm faster than a speeding bullet!" When entering a chase, the hero takes a bonus die on their CON roll to determine their movement speed. If the roll succeeds, increase their speed by 1. If the roll is an Extreme success, increase their speed by 2. If the roll is failed, they blunder somehow, losing at least 1D3 rounds of movement.
8	**Insane driver:** "Nothing's going to stop me now!" Gain a bonus die to all the hero's Drive rolls for one chase. Should a drive roll fail, they lose control of the vehicle somehow (at the Keeper's discretion).
9	**Insane language:** "Nope, never had a Swahili lesson in my life, but how difficult can it be?" The hero gains a temporary grasp of all modern languages—or one archaic or Mythos language—for a short time. This effect lasts long enough to conduct an initial reading of a tome, conduct a conversation, or listen to a speech. The effective skill in the language is 75%. Should a skill roll be required for the use of the new language, a failed roll means the hero forgets their native tongue for 1D6 days, replacing it with the new language that was being used at the time.
10	**Insane accuracy:** "Seems like I just can't miss!" The hero gains a bonus die to all Firearms rolls until their gun is empty. They may continue to use the bonus die until one of their shots misses its target or they run out of bullets. That missed shot will hit something they do not want it to hit—an ally or something else of great value, dealing damage as if it had been an Extreme success (impale).

TABLE 12: INSANE TALENTS CONTINUED (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D20)

Roll	Insane Talent
11	**Insanely intimidating:** "You think I'm funny? Funny how?" The hero gains a bonus die to Intimidate rolls. If a roll is failed, they lose control of their actions for a short time. The Keeper chooses what happens: either they fly into a violent rage (possibly causing damage to the person they're speaking with), or they are belittled and shamed.
12	**Insanely hard to hit:** "Float like a butterfly!" The hero gains a bonus die on all Dodge rolls in the current combat scene until they fail a Dodge roll. Such a failure indicates moving into the blow, in which case they receive damage as if the attack had achieved an Extreme success.
13	**Insane sense of direction:** "Follow me, it's down here!" The hero's player tells the Keeper where they want to go or what they want to head towards. The Keeper gives the direction they should take in order to accomplish this. The hero makes a Luck roll: if the roll is failed, they walk straight into a trap or dangerous encounter of some kind.
14	**Insane understanding:** "Oh, I get it now!" The hero's player may ask the Keeper a question about the plot: *"Why is the enemy doing…?" "What does the enemy hope to achieve by…?" "What is the best thing that we could do the thwart the enemy's plan?" What is the enemy's greatest weakness?* The question should be quite specific and the Keeper should answer honestly. This talent can only be used once—it is then lost.
15	**Insane vision**: "Light? Who needs light?" The hero gains a bonus die to a Spot Hidden roll. Even in complete darkness, they get to make a roll as if it were twilight. If the roll is failed, the Keeper decides the outcome: either their eyes become painful and overly sensitive (effectively leaving them blind for 1D10 rounds) or they suffer delusions for the next hour.
16	**Insane hearing**: "Quiet everyone, what's that ticking?" The hero gains a bonus die to a Listen roll. Regardless of ambient noise or other sounds, they are able to pick up on even the quietest of sounds. If the roll is failed, the Keeper decides what happens: either some sudden noise leaves them deaf for 1D10 minutes, or they have auditory delusions for the next hour.
17	**Insane stealth**: "You ain't seen me, right?" The hero gains a bonus die to a Stealth roll. They move with catlike grace and might even attempt to hide in plain sight. If the roll is failed, they accidentally break something or cause a great deal of commotion.
18	**Insane brutality**: "I'm gonna chop you into tiny pieces!" The hero rolls all melee damage twice and takes the highest result. The downside is that once they start hitting, they cannot stop! They must continue until they deliver a killing blow. The only two things that will stop this is if they are either rendered unconscious or someone successfully makes a Hard Fast Talk, Charm, or Intimidate roll on them (only one person may attempt one of these on the hero in any one combat round).
19-20	**Insane skill augmentation**: "You think I'm crazy don't you? But it's possible I tell you!" As a side effect of insanity, a hero can augment one of their skills (of the player's choice, agreed by the Keeper) with some aspect of the Cthulhu Mythos. This will affect the scope of what can be achieved with the skill. Herbert West and Crawford Tillinghast are both good candidates for case studies on how this might affect a person.

using an augmented skill and a normal skill is that the goals for augmented skills can be of a supernatural quality.

When using an augmented skill, the player agrees on a goal with the Keeper. The Keeper should allow the goals for augmented skill use to stray into supernatural realms. Just how far is up to the Keeper's discretion and desired style of play. Examples follow for a number of skills as to what might reasonably be achieved. The player then makes one percentile dice roll and compares the roll with their augmented skill and their Cthulhu Mythos skill (akin to a combined skill roll):

- **If the result is equal to or below one-fifth of their augmented skill (an Extreme success):** the goal has been partially achieved.

- **If the result is equal to or below their Cthulhu Mythos skill:** the goal has been partially achieved.
- **If the result is equal to or below one-fifth of their augmented skill (an Extreme success) and equal to or below their Cthulhu Mythos skill:** the goal has been fully achieved.

If the goal is only partially achieved, the Keeper must decide what this means—what was attempted should be either short-lived or flawed in some significant way.

Some examples of partial successes follow:

The goal was to bring a hero back from the dead: the hero comes back wrong! They rise again as a malevolent non-player character or the hero comes back into play, missing an arm, permanently delusional, or with a hideous face!

The goal was to create a flying car: any failed Drive rolls causes the engine to die, resulting in the thing plummeting towards the ground or the engine is partly organic and requires fresh human blood in place of fuel.

The goal was to create a collar that would allow humans to communicate with dogs: the dog wearing the collar is able to control the minds of humans nearby (if it wins an opposed POW roll) or the collar works fine for a few minutes and then the dog begins to hear and follow the instructions of some malevolent supernatural force.

__Augmentation example:__ In H.P. Lovecraft's "Herbert West—Reanimator" Herbert is a medical doctor who brings corpses back to life. In game terms, his Medicine skill is augmented with the Cthulhu Mythos, allowing him to achieve supernatural effects.

An investigator with the profession of doctor in Call of Cthulhu has the skill of Medicine. The doctor can use that skill to save a dying person or grant a recovery of 1D3 hit points. In Pulp Cthulhu the same skill is stretched a little to grant the recovery of 1D4 hit points, but the Medicine skill cannot normally be used to bring a corpse back to life. However, if the Medicine skill becomes augmented, bringing a corpse back to life could be set as a goal.

THIS WAY LIES MADNESS

Every time a player makes use of an augmented skill their hero is delving ever deeper into the dark side of their mind, making connections that only a crazy person could conceive. If the hero is already insane then this may be done with ease and no additional Sanity rolls should be required. However, if a sane hero attempts to use an augmented skill, the opening of their minds to sinister thought patterns incurs an automatic loss of one Sanity point (regardless of whether they are successful or not).

The consequence of failing a pushed skill roll when using an augmented skill should be quite severe and include at least 1D6 Sanity point loss.



Martha Two-Barrels by Roman Entsov

Insane Talent example: Martha "two barrels" Gordon went temporarily insane and acquired an insane talent; choosing the insane augmented skill of Firearms. In her madness, she manages to use non-Euclidian geometry to make her shotgun barrels simultaneously fire in different directions, allowing her to target two opponents rather than one when both barrels are fired. Using her augmented skill while insane means that she is able to do so with no Sanity cost.

A little later on, Martha has recovered her sanity. When faced with two cultists coming at her, she chooses to make use of her insane augmented skill. This time, as she's sane, she sacrifices one Sanity point for using an insane talent.

AUGMENTED SKILL SUGGESTIONS

The potential applications of an augmented skill are many and varied. Those listed here are just examples to show the scope of possibilities. The player and Keeper should confer and agree on a suitable augmentation. The key aspect for each of these is not just that they are impressive but that there is some supernatural or Mythos aspect to them.

Appraise: by handling or studying an item the hero can divine the item's history—when and where the item was made, who made it, who has owned it, what the item was created for, etc. This information might come in the form of visions. The information gained should be beyond that which any normal person could hope to glean.

Art and Craft: the artist has the ability to create works of art that have a profound effect on the viewer. This effect might cause Sanity loss or inspire strong emotions. The artwork might possess magical effects; for example, a painting might work as a gateway to another location.

Astronomy: the hero is able to foretell events by reading the stars. By gazing at the stars for ten minutes the hero can make an augmented Astronomy roll. If successful, they may ask the Keeper about the present location or actions of another character (akin to astrology).

Brawl: the hero's shadow can fight alongside him or her at the same skill level.

Climb: the hero can climb like a spider, even across smooth surfaces.

Disguise: the hero is able to use their Disguise skill in such a way as to insinuate themselves into a non-player character's life. The target believes the hero to be a friend or relative who has always been a part of their life.

Electrical Repair, Mechanical Repair, Science: the hero gains the ability to create weird science type gadgets (see **Weird Science**, page 86, Chapter 6).

Firearms: the hero develops either the ability or a weapon that allows them to shoot around corners or through walls as if the wall did not exist.

Medicine: the hero gains the ability to reanimate the dead, or perhaps even return the dead to life.

Navigate: the hero gains the ability to unnervingly locate strange and forgotten places, such as Mythos gates.

Psychology: the hero gains the ability to read a person's thoughts, or something else akin to psychic abilities (see **Psychic Skills**, page 84, Chapter 6).

Swim: the hero gains the ability to breathe underwater (though this could lead to some very unfortunate circumstances); for example, a partial success might indicate this talent works by awakening the hero's latent deep one ancestry.

CHAPTER 6

PULP MAGIC, PSYCHIC POWERS, AND WEIRD SCIENCE

Unnatural wizardry, mental feats beyond belief, and crazed inventions are all to be found on the pages of pulp magazines. Such ill-considered endeavors are always dangerous and the province of the crazed, power-mad, and foolish. This chapter takes a look at how magic and spells work in *Pulp Cthulhu*, as well as introducing psychic powers and weird science.

PULP MAGIC

The magic of *Pulp Cthulhu* remains rooted in the concept that the Cthulhu Mythos is outside of the average human's ability to comprehend. However, time and time again, the foolish and unwise are wont to attempt to utilize magic for their own ends. While reading tomes and casting spells remains essentially the same as for standard *Call of Cthulhu*, here are a few tweaks that seek to acclimatize magic for pulp games.

MYTHOS BOOKS

Initial readings are quicker in *Pulp Cthulhu*, allowing heroes to more speedily get the gist of a book's contents. As always, the Keeper ultimately decides on the timescales involved; however, it is recommended that an initial reading usually will take "one evening of study" (up to approximately 6 hours). This ensures the game remains pacey, with no over long periods of downtime.

If required, a failed language roll to read a tome will still give the character some information at the Keeper's discretion, but no Sanity points are lost and no Cthulhu Mythos skill is gained. A failed roll may be pushed with suitable justification from the player, although the consequences of a failed pushed roll should always be dramatic. Some possibilities include:

- The tome catches fire, perhaps spontaneously combusting, or through an outside heat source.
- The reader falls asleep due to overwork and tired eyes, falling into a terrifying nightmare where they dream of the realities of the Cthulhu Mythos (Sanity loss of 1D6 points).
- The reader suffers from a delusion in which they see their colleagues as monsters, having to make the appropriate Sanity rolls until the delusion ends or they succeed in a Reality Check roll (see page 162, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*).
- An alien intelligence from elsewhere becomes aware of the reader and instigates a psychic attack in the hope of possessing the reader to perform some deed.

A full study of a Mythos tome may be accomplished at half the normal time period stated for standard *Call of Cthulhu*, although the Keeper may deem certain texts to require more time.

USING MAGIC

Magic is always an unusual thing in *Call of Cthulhu*, bending and manipulating cosmic laws usually means strange things happen. In *Pulp Cthulhu* magic should always be colorful, dangerous, and eventful. While heroes might uncover the secrets of casting spells, attempting to cast such spells remains a high-risk endeavor and not for the faint hearted.

LEARNING A SPELL

Learning spells in *Pulp Cthulhu* is accelerated; shortening the time spent poring over books and so on, making it more likely for characters to know spells and be able to use them.

From a Mythos Book

The hero must have made, at least, an initial reading of the book and chooses the spell to learn. He or she then spends

TABLE 13: FAILED CASTING EFFECTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D20)

Roll	Failed Casting Effect
1	Epic thunder and lightning.
2	Temporary blindness for 1D6 rounds (adjust difficulty levels for rolls/apply penalty die).
3	Strong winds appear from nowhere (make Luck rolls to hold onto any fly-away items like papers and books).
4	Bright green slime extrudes from walls, floor, window, etc. (0/1D3 SAN loss).
5	Bizarre hallucination of the Keeper's choosing (SAN loss as appropriate).
6	Small animals in the vicinity explode (0/1D3 SAN loss).
7	Caster's hair turns white.
8	Loud, disembodied screaming (0/1 SAN loss).
9	Eyes bleed for 1D4 rounds (adjust difficulty levels for rolls/apply penalty die).
10	Foul smell of brimstone.
11	Earth shakes and walls are rent asunder.
12	The caster's hand is withered and burned* (make Luck roll to determine which hand) and loose 1D2 hit points.
13	Blood rains from the sky for 1D6 rounds.
14	The caster ages unnaturally (+2D10 years and apply characteristic modifiers).
15	Caster's skin is permanently turned translucent (1/1D4 SAN loss to see the caster).
16	Caster gains +1D10 POW but also loses 1D10 SAN.
17	A Mythos monster is accidentally summoned.
18	The Keeper picks two spells as random, both activate (centered on the caster).
19	The caster and everyone nearby is transported to another place (Keeper decides where).
20	A Mythos deity is accidentally called.

**At the Keeper's discretion, the hand is temporarily burned (penalty die applied to all DEX and skill rolls requiring the use of the hand), or permanently withered and blackened (reduce DEX and all skills requiring the use of the withered hand by 20 points).*

1D6 hours studying the spell. During this time, the hero must concentrate on learning the spell, unable to do anything else—if the study is disrupted then a further 1D6 hours must be spent in getting the hero back on track and focused.

In most cases a spell is learned automatically. Where the Keeper deems necessary—perhaps for particularly high-powered spells—the hero can be requested to attempt a Hard INT roll to learn the spell. If the roll is failed, the hero has not learned the spell and may either push the INT roll (with suitable justification) or put the book aside and attempt to relearn it again one day later.

Possibilities for failing a pushed roll to learn a spell include:

- The spell is actually cast while in the process of learning it; the hero should make a Hard POW roll to determine if it is cast successfully. The roll is either successful or a failure and may not be pushed. Even if failed, the spell has done something—the Keeper should determine the outcome of both failed and successful results (both of which should be unpleasant).
- The spell is miscast while in the process of learning it; roll on **Table 13: Failed Spell Casting Effects** (nearby), or the Keeper should invent a suitable outcome.
- The spell learner is consumed with the spell, having it effects turn upon them, either in full or partially. Some strange and remarkable effects are likely.
- The hero believes the spell has been learned; however, when they cast it, the spell's effect is different to the one expected.

Perhaps the effect is warped and twisted, diminished or increased, or totally different.

In each case, the hero concerned should also lose an appropriate amount of Sanity, commensurate with the spell itself or the spell's effect.

From Another Person

One-on-one teaching is quicker than learning from a book, and a spell can be learned in 1D4 hours in this way. No rolls are required and the spell is learned automatically.

From a Mythos Entity

At will, any suitable Mythos entity may imbue a spell in a character's mind by telepathy. The spell is instantly learned, although the experience is nerve-wracking, causing an immediate loss of 1D6 Sanity points.

SPELL CASTING

A casting roll is required when a hero attempts to cast a spell for the first time. Once a spell has been successfully cast (even if a pushed roll was required to do so), subsequent uses do not require a casting roll; non-player characters and monsters do not need to make casting rolls.

To make a spell casting roll, the hero attempts a Hard POW roll. If the casting roll is successful, refer to the spell description for the outcome. Following a failed casting roll, the hero has a choice whether to make a second attempt to cast the spell (paying the costs a second time)—either immediately or at any time in the future—thereby pushing the casting roll.

If the pushed casting roll is successful then the spell works normally without negative consequences. If the pushed casting roll is failed, dire consequences ensue for the caster. The Keeper determines whether the spell works as intended, performs strangely, or fizzles out. The caster must pay the costs of the spell multiplied by 1D6. Any overspend of magic points are deducted from hit points—this can cause death when pushing powerful spells.

A failed pushed casting roll also means something weird, horrific, and strange has taken place as the energies of the spell manifest in some bizarre fashion. The Keeper should add one or more of the following side effects for less powerful spells—choose or roll randomly on **Table 13: Failed Spell Casting Effects** (nearby). Note that everyone within 1D10+5 yards (including the caster) may be affected and be required to make Sanity rolls as appropriate.

The only alternative to pushing a failed casting roll is to learn the spell again from scratch, requiring another 1D6 hours and a Hard INT roll. After relearning the spell, another casting roll may be made.

PULP-O-METER: OPTIONAL RULES

OPTIONAL: DEADLY CASTING

Greatly enhance the fear of spell casting by making each casting roll akin to a pushed roll (thus the hero gets one chance in a spell casting roll). If the roll is successful, the spell is cast as expected; however, if the roll is failed then go straight to a failed casting effect.

OPTIONAL: PSYCHIC POWERS

The Keeper determines the use of psychic skills in *Pulp Cthulhu*. The standard approach allows such skills to be available for both heroes and villains; however, the Keeper could restrict their use to just villains if that better suits their game style and concept. The Mystic archetype and the Occultist and Yogi occupations all provide for the option of taking psychic skills at the Keeper's discretion.

Psychic skills can enhance the roleplaying experience, and play firmly in the pulp vein but, if unchecked, the use of psychic skills can unbalance the game. The number of psychics in a game is best left to the style of play; although it is recommended that only one hero at a time should be psychic. Such individuals are meant to be rare, so they should be rare in the game.

Using psychic powers costs magic points, which work in a similar way as for spells. If the hero does not have enough magic points remaining to power the psychic ability (i.e. their magic points become exhausted), they should attempt a CON roll. If the roll is successful, the hero remains conscious and any outstanding magic point cost is taken directly from the hero's hit points (in effect, they are using up their physical vitality to power the ability). If the CON roll is failed, the hero falls unconscious and the psychic ability fails to work.

When making a psychic skill roll, a failed roll means nothing has happened (the ability's magic point cost is paid and lost). To observers, the character seems to hesitate for a moment; perhaps there is a strange look in their eye for a split second. A failed roll may be pushed, with suitable justification, allowing the psychic a second attempt.

Opposing skill/Difficulty level for using psychic skills:

- Regular difficulty: plenty of time to concentrate in a quiet environment.
- Hard difficulty: in the middle of dramatic action (such as a fight).

Sample consequences of failing a roll: the psychic blacks out; Sanity loss; the psychic completely misinterprets the information received leading to danger or disaster; the power used is released in an unexpected and dangerous manner; a dangerous or malevolent being attempts to possess the psychic.

PSYCHIC SKILLS

Clairvoyance (00%)

Also known as second sight, clairvoyance enables perception beyond the normal human senses, allowing the psychic to gain information about an object, person, location, or physical event. The clairvoyant may sense ghosts and invisible Mythos creatures, identify the rough whereabouts of a missing object or person, detect whether a tragic event occurred in a certain place, and so on.

The psychic concentrates for 1D6 rounds, focusing solely on the thing they wish to know about, spending 1D6+1 magic points in the process, and making a Clairvoyance roll. If the roll fails, the psychic is unable to determine anything and may attempt to push the roll (requiring a further spend of 5 magic points). A success means the psychic is able to perceive some relevant information. The nature and detail of the information gained are the purview of the Keeper. Often such information will be vague or incomplete.

If an outside force (another psychic, monster, etc.) does not wish to be "read" then the difficulty level of the roll is raised. Certain objects may assist in a reading, such a photograph of a missing person or an object personal to the clairvoyant hero. In such situations, the Keeper may reduce the difficulty of the skill roll. If the psychic reads and senses a Mythos presence, or somehow connects with the alien intelligence, they must make a Sanity roll, losing the usual amount for that monster. Other situations may also call for Sanity rolls at the Keeper's discretion.

Divination (00%)

Using a ritual (such as tarot cards, crystal dowsing, Ouija board, rune stones, etc.), the psychic is able to divine the future in some fashion. Usually, this centers on a specific question, such as, "Is there danger at the house on Ocean Avenue?" or, "Is Dr. Zarkov alive?" The question should be answerable with a yes or a no, with any additional information given at the Keeper's discretion.

A reading takes 1D10 rounds, costing the psychic 1D6 magic points and requiring a successful Divination roll.

Medium (00%)

Akin to divination and clairvoyance, a medium is able to communicate with spirits, perhaps even alien presences. The medium effectively becomes a channel for an outside intelligence—opening up a part of their mind to allow the incorporeal spirit to communicate. Often this takes the form of the spirit talking through the medium's mouth but can also manifest as words or phrases that pop into the medium's mind.

The medium must spend 1D10 rounds preparing themselves and then a Medium roll is made to determine if a psychic link is established, with 1D10 magic points spent (whether the roll is successful or not).

The Keeper arbitrates the nature and content of such psychic conversations. Bear in mind that outside forces do not always like to be contacted and that, in any event, the conversation is short, lasting only for a few minutes at best. The unseen world is awash with all manner of incorporeal beings and the medium has no way of knowing just what they will connect with. If a malevolent presence hijacks the situation, the medium may attempt an opposed POW roll to cast out the malignant entity. If failed, the entity may be able to control the medium's body for up to 1D10 rounds before the medium falls unconscious and the entity is thrown off. Such events are likely to call for Sanity rolls.

Psychometry (00%)

Like a sponge sucking up water, the psychic is able to absorb impressions and emotions from a physical (non-living) object, such as a book, a house, or a cigarette case. The reading is able to determine what the object's owner is (or was) like, their overriding personality, and perhaps further information.

The psychic must touch the object and spend 1D10 minutes concentrating (they can do nothing else during this period). At the end of this time, a Psychometry roll is made and 1D6+4 magic points are spent. Strong emotions come first (sorrow, hatred, or love), followed by more specific impressions. Some possibilities include:

- If the object was used to murder someone (possibly how long ago and a rough idea of the location).
- If the object belongs to a person who is already known to the psychic, then the psychic can confirm the object's ownership.
- If the object belongs to a person unknown to the psychic, then the psychic can gain impressions of owner's sex, body type, and personality.
- Impressions of the object's history (where it was made, places it has been for a length of time).

Further information is at the discretion of the Keeper; the information collected by psychometry should be relatively vague, as its use can unbalance investigations if not managed by the Keeper.

Telekinesis (00%)

This ability allows the psychic to manipulate objects by the power of their mind. Usually, this means moving a small physical object for a short distance.

Possible objects include: candlesticks, knives, vases, chairs, plates, rocks, swords, typewriters, and so on.



Medium by Richard Pace

The psychic is able to move any inanimate objects that an average person could easily lift and throw at the cost of 1 magic point per item. The psychic is able to move such objects either slowly or quickly, allowing objects to be hurled into opponents during combat if so desired (see following).

- Outside of combat, the psychic makes a Telekinesis skill roll and spends 1 magic point to move the object (normally in any direction, for up to 5 meters).
- During combat, the psychic makes a combined Telekinesis and Throw roll and spends 1 magic point. The combined roll must be equal to or under both their Telekinesis and Throw skills to be successful in terms of a ranged weapon (the roll cannot be pushed). The target of the attack (if aware) may attempt to Dodge (opposed by the psychic's roll). Damage inflicted is commensurate with the nature of the object thrown (usually 1D4 to 1D6 for small-to-medium sized items).

Telekinesis may also be used to defend against physical attacks, acting as a form of invisible armor. The psychic must succeed in a Telekinesis roll per attack and spend 1 magic point to gain 1 point of armor (10 magic points for 10 armor, and so on). When used in this manner the psychic may not push the roll.

Optional: where a psychic wishes to move an object beyond the capacity of an average person, such as a car, the cost in magic points is determined by the number of people it would realistically take to lift and move the object, and the Telekinesis roll difficulty is increased to Extreme. The object cannot be thrown or raised-up high, but it can be dragged slowly a short distance (up to 3 meters).

> ***For example:*** *Eugene the psychic attempts to move a small car. The Keeper estimates that it would take six people to lift and move the car a short distance, so Eugene needs to spend 6 magic points to accomplish the feat and succeed in an Extreme Telekinesis roll.*

PSYCHIC ATTACKS AND POSSESSION

Ancient wizards, devious mystics, and some monsters (ghosts, spirits, and the like) can wreak havoc through targeted mind assaults, perhaps even possessing others for periods of time. Keepers are advised to reserve psychic attacks and possession for monsters and villains only. Allowing pulp heroes to use these rules may unbalance the game; however, for those Keepers eager to allow their players to take advantage of psychic attacks, some guidance notes are provided.

Psychic attacks consist of a POW vs. POW opposed roll:

- **If the attacker overcomes the target's POW**: the target loses 1D10 magic points.
- **If the target overcomes the attacker's POW**: the attacker loses 1D10 magic points.

Psychic attacks may only take place when the attacker has line of sight upon the target or is in close proximity (within 10 feet). The psychic combat continues each round until the target is unconscious, possessed, or either side has fled. A spirit will flee before it reaches zero magic points, and a wizard will probably give up well before their magic point reserve is depleted. If the target runs out of magic points they immediately fall unconscious or become possessed (if that is the will of the attacker).

Onlookers might notice the target of the attack looking confused or pained but, otherwise, they will be oblivious to the mental assault taking place.

Those possessed may be controlled for a period of time, acting in accordance with the will of the possessor. Usually, this may take the form of performing a certain action, harming another person, or perhaps harming oneself. Possession usually lasts for 1D10 hours but may be longer at the Keeper's discretion. Those possessed for longer periods may attempt a new POW vs. POW roll every 8 hours in order to throw out the possessing spirit.

It is believed that certain ghosts who lose spirit combat are obliged to provide the victor a boon, which could be answering a single question, giving a direction, or some other piece of information, before departing.

A possessing spirit may be identified by casting the Identify Spirit spell, dislodged by magical attacks (using spells such as Cast Out The Devil or Dismiss), or if they are targeted by psychic attack and are reduced to zero magic points, at which point they immediately vacate the possessed body to return from whence they came.

Allowing Heroes to use Psychic Attacks

Only the Mystic archetype and the Occultist and Yogi occupations allow for the option of taking psychic skills at the Keeper's discretion. Such heroes must take the Psychic talent during character creation to access psychic skills. If the Keeper wishes for the hero to utilize psychic attacks the hero writes "Psychic Attack" in the talent box on their sheet —the hero cannot now take any other pulp talents during hero creation.

If the hero chooses to use a psychic attack on another person or monster, the following conditions are applied:

Monsters: psychic attacks are only useful against ghosts, spirits, and the like. Use the psychic attacks rules as described in the previous section. Psychic heroes may repel the monster, causing it to flee for the time being. It is at the Keeper's discretion whether such a hero could possess a weak-willed creature, like a zombie.

Mythos monsters: psychic attacks do not work on Mythos monsters. The minds of Mythos monsters are so alien that to connect with them is to risk losing one's own mind! A human attempting to psychically attack a Mythos monster must immediately make a Sanity roll; taking the standard Sanity loss as described in the monster's profile. This may mean that the hero must make two Sanity rolls for the same monster: one when first encountering the creature and a second when they attempt to psychically attack it. The connection is severed and the psychic immediately realizes they cannot connect with the monster in question.

Humans: the psychic may attempt a psychic attack if the target is in line of sight. If the initial opposed POW roll is failed, the psychic hero may attempt another opposed POW roll on their turn in the following round (Keepers may choose to allow the psychic to act on their POW rather DEX in determining their order in a larger combat situation). This second attempt effectively works like a pushed roll. If the second attempt fails, the target of the attack can never be targeted again by the same psychic. In addition, like a pushed roll, something suitably bad happens—possible consequences might include: bleeding from the ears and eyes, Sanity loss, an instant delusion, incapacitation by shaking and spasms, etc. Otherwise, if the psychic hero wins the initial or second opposed roll, then psychic combat is initiated and follows the same procedure as outlined in the previous section. Usually, psychic heroes may use a psychic attack to force the target to become unconscious (through the loss of magic points) and possession is not an option.

WEIRD SCIENCE

Access to inventions, gadgets, and other marvelous technology is often a key concept in pulp stories. The following rules allow Keepers to determine just how wacky science is in their games, as well as presenting a range of example gadgets useable in *Pulp Cthulhu* games.

For low-level pulp games, gadgets and weird science should be rarely encountered, perhaps only in the hands or claws of major villains and monsters. The extent of weird science in a game is determined by the Keeper, who should decide whether heroes are allowed access to—and the ability to build—weird science gadgets. The Egghead and Grease Monkey archetypes, as well as the Weird Science and Gadget pulp talents all provide access to gadget creation.

MYTHOS SCIENCE

Many Mythos races employ some form of technology, whether as weapons or tools. While such devices fall into the broad heading of "weird science," they are not designed for humans. If Mythos technology falls into the hands of humans it is not easy to use, often confounding the potential user—who is more likely to injure themselves than to get the thing to work properly. Humans also have no way of replicating these devices or of really understanding their manufacture and workings. At best, a very accomplished scientist or engineer might be able to conceive of replicating the effects of such a device by using ordinary Earth technology or might be able to jury-rig a device into operation. Those with an insane augmented skill may be able to operate or devise Mythos-like gadgets.

Such matters are best placed in the hands of the Keeper to determine in line with the level of pulp in their game.

BUILDING GADGETS

If a hero wants to build a gadget not normally available, they must first acquire the necessary components, as well as have appropriate facilities and tools. This may impact their available spending level, requiring them to turn assets into cash or credit, or engage in nefarious activities like stealing components.

Those wishing to create gadgets must also possess the appropriate knowledge and skill sets. For example: Mechanical Repair, Electrical Repair, Computer Use, Occult, and the Cthulhu Mythos skill for especially esoteric items. Depending on the gadget, a single or combined skill roll will normally be required to determine the success of their manufacture.

The Keeper must determine the level of difficulty for the gadget. Is it a relatively simple device that performs a low-powered function, or a complex weapon capable of delivering a ray of death? What mechanical effect does it provide in the game?

Avoid allowing gadgets to perform multiple functions; ideally, each gadget should perform one type of action or effect. Thus, a gadget created to transport people to the moon can only be used to perform this function and cannot be used to also send people to Jupiter or someplace else.

- **Regular difficulty**:
  - Performs one simple, non-destructive function.
  - Replicates a skill* roll at 40% chance of success (allowing a non-skilled person a 40% skill roll).
- **Hard difficulty**:
  - Performs one complex or destructive function (e.g. a weapon).
  - Replicates a skill* roll at 60% chance of success.
  - Provides a bonus die to a specific skill roll, limited by 1D4 maximum uses.
- **Extreme difficulty**:
  - Performs one highly complex function.
  - Performs one bizarre function.
  - Replicates a skill* roll at 90% chance of success.
  - Provides a bonus die to a specific skill roll, limited by 1D10 maximum uses.
  - Involves anything Mythos-related.

**Not including the Cthulhu Mythos skill.*

The time required to make the gadget is determined by the Keeper, but it should increase with complexity. For example, a simple gadget may take 1D10+5 hours to build, a complex one 1D10+5 days or months, and a highly complex gadget may take 1D10+5 years. Judge the timescales by the value of the gadget and its game effect. The suggested timescales are a guide and the Keeper is well within their rights to set a number rather than roll randomly.

When the amount of time constructing the gadget has elapsed, the hero may make the appropriate skill roll or rolls to determine if their hard work has been successful. A failure means the device does not work and an amount of time equal to that initially spent working on it may be required before another roll is allowed. Of course, if the hero comes up with a suitable justification, then they may push the failed roll. The consequences of a failed pushed roll should be dramatic, probably explosive, and involve hit point loss. A fumbled roll (whether pushed or not) means the device is totally destroyed.

Some possible outcomes for failed pushed rolls include:

- The gadget functions for a limited time but there is a high risk of it exploding without warning: the user must make a Luck roll each time the device is used, with failure indicating the gadget has exploded, causing 1D6 damage to the user, and all within five feet.
- The gadget explodes in a ball of fire, causing between 2D10 and 4D10 damage to all within 10-feet.
- The gadget does not work as intended, there is a serious side effect, or it performs in a dangerous and unexpected manner.

SAMPLE GADGETS

Here are a few sample gadgets that either can appear in the hands of non-player characters or be devised by heroes with access to weird science.

Auto Lock-Pick

A small, hand-held tube with retractable picks. The auto-lock enables non-skilled thieves a 40% chance to pick door locks.

- **To build**: parts cost $50, requires 1D10+5 hours, and a successful Regular Mechanical Repair roll.

Voice Mimicking

A 10" × 5" black box, with a small conical trumpet sticking out one end. Placing the trumpet against a telephone receiver

while speaking into the box uses the voice-mimicker. The user's voice is changed to higher or lower frequencies, enabling a voice to be disguised, or even allowing a man to sound like a woman, and vice versa.

- **To build:** parts cost $100, requires 1D10+5 hours, and a successful Regular Electrical Repair roll.

Ghost Detector

A satchel-sized device, weighing 10lbs, usually worn like a satchel around the neck of the user. The ghost detector has a 60% chance to detect the presence of ghostly spirits. It flashes a series of colored lights when in proximity to a spirit (within 20 feet), the more lights that flash, the closer the ghost.

- **To build**: parts cost $250, requires 1D10+1 days, and a successful combined Regular Electrical Repair, Science (Physics), and Occult roll.

Death Ray

A gun, requiring two hands to use, which fires a beam of intense light at a target, ignoring mundane armor* and causing 1D10+5 heat damage. Using the ray requires a successful Firearms (Rifle) roll, and is good for 1D8 shots before needing to be recharged for 10 hours.

**Not applicable to armor of non-terrestrial origin, such as Mythos monsters.*

- **To build**: parts cost $1000, requires 1D10+5 weeks, and a successful combined Hard Electrical Repair and Science (Physics).

Linguistaphone

A brass ear trumpet, approximately one foot long. When held to the ear it enables the user to hear and understand any languages of Earth origin.

- **To build**: parts cost $1500, requires 1D10+5 weeks, and a successful combined Hard Electrical Repair and Science (Mathematics) roll.

Portable Telephony Device

Two black boxes, each measuring 12" × 5" and weighing 20lbs. Each box is self-contained. A 3-foot coiled cable extends from the top of the box, which forks into two smaller cables. At the ends of the cables are a listening trumpet and a speaking box. On the side of the box is a winding mechanism, which must be turned quickly to generate enough charge for a 1-minute conversation.

Two users may speak to one another through the devices at a distance of up to 1 mile, and the devices are good for 30 minutes of use before needing to be recharged.

- **To build**: parts cost $1000, requires 1D10+5 weeks, and a successful combined Hard Electrical Repair and Science (Physics) roll.

Brain Enhancer

This device looks like a shower cap with dozens of glass valves inserted into it, with a cobweb of wires stretching out of the valves to a power box. When worn over the head, the brain enhancer allows the user to comprehend the written word at accelerated rates, reducing reading times by half. The reader must, of course, know the language being read; otherwise, the writing remains a mystery to them.

- **To build**: parts cost $2000, requires 1D10+5 weeks, and a successful combined Hard Electrical Repair and Science (Biology) roll.

Jet Pack

A shoulder-mounted pack, containing two pressurized fuel canisters linked to a jet propulsion system. The user is able to make a jump of up to 200 feet in the air, and travel approximately 100 feet in distance in a single burst of the rocket. The canisters are good for up to four jumps before refueling is required.

Due to the delicacy of the fuel canisters, they will explode if pierced by a bullet or other projectile, causing 3D10+5 damage to the user and 2D10 damage to all within 5 feet (reducing to 1D10 damage to those within 10 feet). The canisters have an armor value of 1.

- **To build**: parts cost $10,000, requires 2D10+1 months, and a successful combined Hard Mechanical Repair, Electrical Repair and Science (Physics) roll. Replacement fuel costs $500.

Elder Sign Bullets

Firearms ammunition carefully inscribed with the Elder Sign. When used against certain Mythos creatures, Elder Sign bullets cause an additional 1D10+1 damage and also work as a magical weapon against monsters who are normally unaffected by non-magical items.

Which Mythos monsters are affected by an Elder Sign bullet is determined by the Keeper. Note that an Elder Sign normally only works against minions of Mythos deities (e.g. Great Old Ones and Outer Gods). No one has yet confirmed whether magic bullets have had any effect upon the greater powers of the Mythos.

- **To build**: requires casting the Elder Sign spell (see page 255, *Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*), which allows for the creation of 6 bullets inscribed with the Elder Sign, in addition to a combined Firearms and Sleight of Hand roll. Note that a suitable Art/Craft skill may be substituted for the Sleight of Hand roll (denoting the fine manipulation required to carefully engrave the bullet).



CHAPTER 7

RUNNING PULP GAMES

One way to describe pulp is to say that everything is larger than life. The heroes are the stuff of legend—rare individuals with unique experience, knowledge, and talents. The villains might devise schemes that are sometimes small in scale, but overall, their plans tend to be ambitious and far-reaching. Plot and pacing, combined with heroes who are more uncommon than common are the very fabric of a *Pulp Cthulhu* adventure.

This chapter provides some tips for running pulp style games, as well as exploring pulp plots, MacGuffins, pacing games, scenario hooks, and injecting hazards to confound and endanger heroes.

PULP PLOTS

Most *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios and campaigns can easily be tuned to a pulp style with little work on the part of the Keeper; however, there are certain plot types that more easily lend themselves to the pulp style.

Adventure/Quest

This popular plot type is often called by either of two names, but typically both monikers refer to the same structure. The fundamental aspect of this plot is the search for a person, place, or thing—or maybe something less "material" in the Lovecraftian universe. It could be a tome of ancient lore, a strange rock from outer space, or the exploration of a wilderness, as in Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*. Even the most mundane of items, such as maps, postcards, and gems can serve as the objects of desire.

In the adventure plot, the heroes are on the prowl for some sort of item, perhaps because the item will aid them, perhaps because it will grant knowledge or power. Likewise, the heroes might need to find the item to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. Either way, the quest should test the heroes' resolve, making them work to find the item in question.

Another flavor of this plot is the quest plot, where the heroes have a vested interest for that in which they search. This requires the Keeper to devise personal connections between the characters and the quested item. Unlike the adventure plot, the quest should have great personal significance to one or more of the heroes. Perhaps the heroes learn of the escape of a feared villain from a prison and take on the task of locating the fiend before he or she can cause more harm, or possibly a beloved professor from Miskatonic University has gone missing.

The most important aspect of the adventure or quest plot is to keep the characters on the move, struggling against conflict and problems the entire time. Riddles, combat, chases, and dangerous undertakings are important features in such a game.

Mystery

There are many mysteries in the world of *Pulp Cthulhu*. Perhaps the most common focus of the mystery plot is the death of a person. Discovering the mystery is the best opening for such a scenario, but Keepers need not limit the story to the death of a person. The theft of a valuable object, the disappearance of a building (think big), or even the appearance of a strange statue are all suitable, as are many other possibilities.

It is the Keeper's job to provide clues in the form of items, characters, and riddles, leading the heroes down the path to success or failure. The use of skills to understand and interpret the clues is important to this plot. Likewise, to keep the action flowing, prolonged periods of research should be avoided. Let the players feel the pressure of time. Confine them to a number of hours or days to resolve the problem. The clock is ticking and the mystery must be solved quickly, otherwise, there will be dire consequences.

Discovery

Uncovering secrets can be a dangerous endeavor in the Lovecraftian universe. This favorite pulp plot is centered on a mad scientist, insane medical doctor, crazed inventor, or deranged cultists uncovering a secret that is perhaps better left unknown. This differs from the adventure and mystery in that the item being uncovered is usually previously unknown. A scenario might revolve around a re-animator who has discovered the secret to bringing the dead back to life. It could be a hero who has discovered an ancient secret and must destroy or hide it before others learn of it.

The "trust no one" trope also falls into this theme, applying to spies and political espionage, as well as plots concerning unmasking the alien within our midst.

While every plot can involve traveling to remote places of the globe, the adventure/quest and discovery plots are ideally suited for this. Exotic locations, alien cultures, and secret or lost cities are the staple of these plots. Bringing such environments to life through sight, sound, and smell really adds to the atmosphere of the game and the effectiveness of the scenario.

PULP THEMES

Most games of *Pulp Cthulhu* will probably include all of the following themes at one time or another. The Keeper should think about the style of game they wish to emulate, developing plots that emphasize the theme or themes they wish to explore.

Themes are embodied not only within the focus of the scenario but also in how the Keeper portrays non-player characters, their motivations, and outward aspects. Description of place and overall tone also help to establish and convey the atmosphere of the theme.

Possible pulp themes include:

Two-Fisted: the game is very much combat orientated, with the heroes thrown against all manner of adversaries intent on their blood. Try to avoid running combat scene after combat scene, allowing the heroes time to regroup and plan, and for the plot to develop. It can be easy for such games to become an escalation of firepower and the Keeper should try to vary the pace by placing the heroes in jeopardy, with diminishing resources and limited access to supplies. Perhaps the heroes are framed for a crime and are now hunted by the police, or they have crossed the wrong villain who is able to order his minions to scour the town; thus, the heroes are forced to dig in and lay low. Who wants the heroes dead? Why? Such games are likely to be gritty and very desperate, with few shades of gray.

Suspense: seemingly small and unrelated events conspire to weave a web of deceit and tension. Things are happening for a reason but don't make sense, as nothing is ever quite what it seems. Slow burn mysteries in the gumshoe tradition, suspense is all about building and layering tension. Something dark is coming and everyone knows it; it is up to the heroes to find the jigsaw pieces and figure out the big picture before it's too late. Such ticking bombs carry the pace while the suspense builds to a crescendo and the ultimate unveiling of the truth. Often a race against time, the suspense style places characters in fraught situations with little recourse for back up and fewer resources. Who can the heroes trust when every friend turns out to have their own agenda, ready to sell them down the river?

Exploration: adventure beckons, with the heroes leading the way into the unknown and unexplored. Be it dark jungles, forgotten cities, or strange tunnels leading to unbelievable lands, exploration places the heroes in the middle of the action. They are venturing into places where no "civilized" man or woman has walked before. Traps, native ambushes, and alien environments are all common to this theme. Are the heroes unlocking past secrets or are they unwittingly destroying ancient treasures? The unwary explorer must navigate their way through, making strange allies and steering clear of the opposition while fulfilling their primary objective—usually something like finding the hidden treasure or simply escaping with their lives. Don't forget that in the dark corners of the Earth old things sleep, ready to be awoken by the footfalls of those foolish to leave the security of civilization.

Out and Out Horror: the world is turned upside down and the heroes must stand resolute and face the oncoming darkness. This theme quickly builds the horror, placing the heroes at the forefront where they must work out what is going on before it consigns them to oblivion. Build the horror as the scenario moves forward, increasing the scope and breadth of the terror as events unfold. A single zombie attack may appear to be an isolated case, but when the whole graveyard starts waking up things take a serious turn for the worst. Soon the entire city is in trouble but this is still just the opening salvo in a greater, more awful scheme—as the populace tears itself apart in fear, something even worse emerges. Man versus man, man versus monster, the heroes are caught up in the middle of the action, figuring out the true meaning to all the horror around them. Perhaps it is all simply a warm up, a preparing of the way for an older evil to arrive and claim (or reclaim) its domain. Maybe the evil is insidious, hiding behind the scenes and pulling the strings to orchestrate a diabolical plan. Either way, the heroes must act lest they are responsible for unleashing the evil that will consume the world.

RED LINING

Pulp Cthulhu uses a trick borrowed from Chaosium's *Astounding Adventures*, called "red lining." While many great pulp scenarios can be set in a single location, such as a big city or remote farming community, often you will be tempted by the *big* stories where travel to exotic locations and globe-trotting adventure awaits. Such long distance travel can really slow down the pace of a game if you are playing through all it all. Red lining gets its name from epic adventure films, like the *Indiana Jones* series, where long distance travel is shown by a red line being drawn across a map, depicting the route the characters are taking.

Red lining is travel shorthand. Don't worry about detailing every day or hour spent traveling. Just cut to the next scene with the heroes arriving at the desired location. Only play through the travel if the travel is an important part of the plot in and of itself, like when playing Chaosium's *Horror on the Orient Express*.

Red lining can also be used to help move the action on even when not traveling. If things are slowing down and the heroes are kicking their heels waiting for something to happen, then red line to the next day, scene, or encounter!

SCENARIO HOOKS

Getting an adventure started requires the Keeper to have a hook with which they can reel in the heroes (and the players' interest). The better the bait on your hook, the more likely your players are to bite!

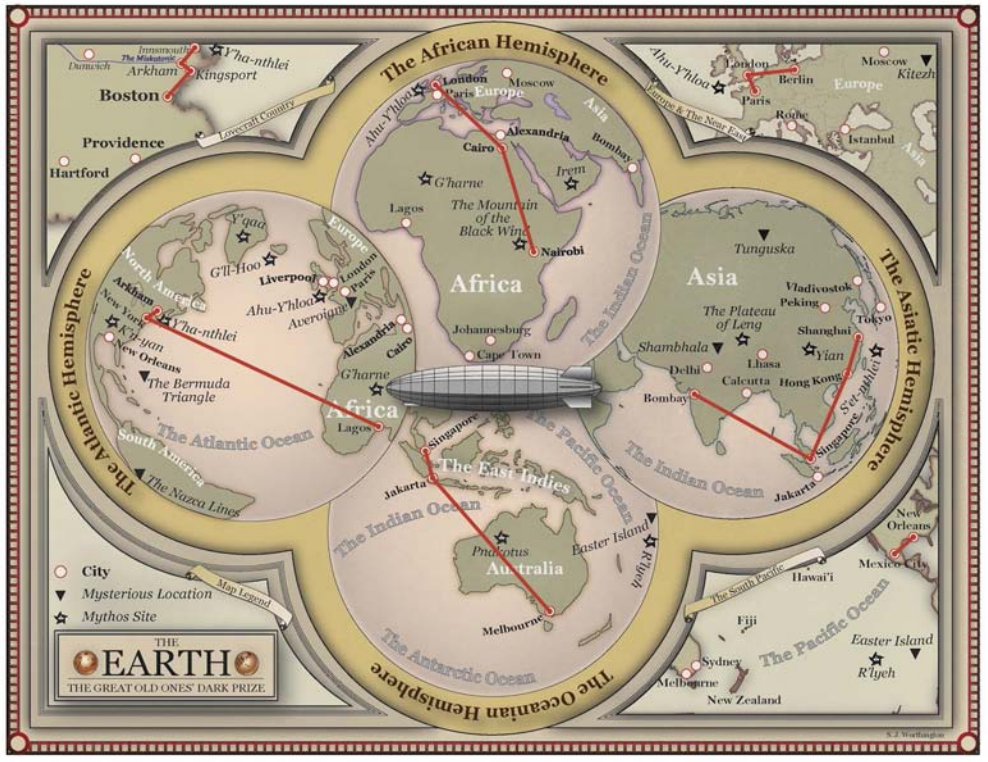
Hooks can be very simple and straightforward—often the simpler the better. If you make the hook too complex it can be difficult for the players to know where to focus, and so they find it hard to engage with the story. Here are a few classic hook types, as well as a MacGuffin generator to help and inspire Keepers wishing to bait their hooks.

Strange event: something has happened—a disaster, a person is missing, a body is found, a strange incident, and so on.

Call for help: a friend, family member, contact, or a stranger requests help or assistance that only the heroes can provide.

In media res: (*in the midst of things*) the game starts with the heroes right in the middle of the action, whether a gunfight, standing in a wood over a mangled corpse, being pursued, captured, or trapped. Perhaps the Keeper quickly explains how they came to be here, or perhaps not (and the heroes must figure it out). Either way, the heroes are faced with an immediate problem and must start from there.

Mistaken identity: one or more of the heroes are mistaken for someone else, someone who is either wanted by the authorities or by the villains of the piece.



World Map by Stephanie McAlea; Red lined by Nick Nacario

Information: the heroes come into possession of important information (they could know it or be unaware of it). This could be secret plans, blueprints, Mythos knowledge, a letter, telegram, newspaper article, map, and so on. The information is important to someone or something, and they will want it back or, at least, wish to eliminate those who possess the knowledge.

Crime: a crime has taken place, probably a murder but could be a theft. Who committed the crime is a mystery, although there may be suspects. The heroes are involved (the crime was committed against them) or become involved in solving the crime.

MacGuffin Generator

A MacGuffin is a term used by the great film director Alfred Hitchcock, it refers to a person, object, or goal key to the story's plot. If you need inspiration roll 1D20 or pick from **Table 14: MacGuffin Generator** to find a MacGuffin seed.

ACTION!

The key difference between standard games of *Call of Cthulhu* and *Pulp Cthulhu* can be summed up as "action." *Pulp Cthulhu* is very much about fast-paced action, be it combat, chases, or the rapid accumulation of clues leading to thrilling encounters and devious traps.

TABLE 14: MACGUFFIN GENERATOR

Roll	MacGuffin Generator
1	Something has broken (an item is wrecked, a person becomes ill, etc.) and must be repaired.
2	An object is irresistible; many people want the same object. What do the people think the object will do?
3	Someone is falsely accused. Who by? And why? Is it a case of mistaken identity or a clever distraction?
4	Someone wants to be rid of something. Perhaps it's dangerous, causing them harm, or has the potential to harm many.
5	The object is in pieces; some are lost or hidden. Someone wishes to find and gather the pieces together. Why?
6	A horrible crime is discovered. How it was performed is a mystery. Who did it, how did they do it, and why?
7	Taking a trip. Something unexpected happens while traveling; suddenly everyone is caught up in a life or death situation.
8	A hero (or a friend) has an object that the villain wants, and which they will stop at nothing to obtain.
9	Someone is dying and entrusts either knowledge or an object to the heroes' keeping. Why is it special?
10	Something is not meant to be held or known and must be destroyed.
11	Someone doesn't know they are carrying secret information and are in danger (others are searching for the person/information).
12	Something not of this Earth has arrived. Why? What does it want? What will it do?
13	Something can only happen at a certain place. Are people looking for the place, or trying to figure what will happen there?
14	The object or thing is hidden in plain sight. Perhaps it has always been there, or it has just arrived. What's it doing?
15	An object is deeply important to a hero; they do not realize how dangerous it is.
16	Someone's room has been ransacked. Why? What are "They" looking for?
17	The object is lost in time. Someone is going to have to find a way to get to where it is.
18	Someone is missing. Have they been kidnapped or are they lost?
19	Something is too good to be true. Who's profiting by it? What does it really do to those who take it?
20	Someone is scared. Why? Have they seen something or do they know of the doom about to take place?

Intense chases, larger than life characters, bizarre science, strange powers, blood-curdling horrors, deadly traps, combat, and adventure are all signposts for pulp style games.

Effective pacing is the key to good pulp games. Pace is "good forward momentum." If the heroes seem to be in a series of never-ending fights, then things will get monotonous quickly. Downtime and investigation are as important as a fight scene, as such elements help to balance out the game and keep the players focused. The trick is to keep things moving. Try to avoid overlong periods where nothing interesting is happening. If the players are spending too long in the library, remind them there will be consequences if they dawdle—the villain will not wait around until the heroes finally turn up at their door! The idea is not to let the heroes (and players) get too comfortable—expect the unexpected!

The world of pulp is full of unexpected events and situations. If the heroes' opposition is smart, they will look to take advantage of any situation, especially if the heroes seem to be unconcerned about the length of time it is taking them to move forward. Should you find the scenario slowing down—perhaps the players are endlessly discussing what their next step should be, or you simply feel the need to inject something for the heroes to react to—then it's time to pick up the pace. Some ideas for injecting a little pace follow. Try to weave such events into the plot, bringing the excitement to the heroes' front door, rather than necessarily having random strangeness abounding around them.

- **Ambush!** This could be by the major villain's mooks or a third party, such as some petty criminals who see an opportunity to relieve the heroes of their possessions.
- **Knock-knock!** Someone comes calling: perhaps the police are suspicious of the heroes, someone comes to them with information or an offer they can't refuse. Perhaps the callers want the heroes to come with them to be questioned—will the heroes go quietly?
- **The mysterious note!** A curious note is slipped under the door, left in a pocket, or passed via a third party. The note perhaps asks for a meeting, suggests where a clue can be found, or offers something the heroes want (for a price). Who sent the note? Can they be trusted?
- **Followed!** Someone (or something) is taking an active interest in the heroes. Is the tail obvious or subtle? Are the heroes actually being pursued—quickly turning into a chase as the heroes realize they must escape, be captured, or worse!
- **Threat!** A ticking bomb, a drive-by shooting, poison gas starts pouring into the room, and so on. Something is happening—now! The heroes must respond quickly or pay the price.
- **Natural catastrophe!** Sometimes everything is going wrong. Even the weather is against the heroes. Avalanches, flash floods, electrical storms, fist-sized hail, or simply torrential rain throws a spanner in the works. See **Hazards** for more ideas on this.
- **Unnatural catastrophe!** In a world where the Mythos impinges, crawling and festering at the edges of reality, almost anything can happen. Blood rain, ghostly apparitions, strange lights, unnatural sounds, and sudden chills are all possibilities. Perhaps the heroes receive a foreshadowing of the future via a vision or a sudden blackout induces a nightmare?

Hazards

Hazards are often used during chase sequences but can also be used to raise the stakes during other moments in a game. Hazards in this sense are usually environmental factors that put the characters in some form of risk. Such risks help to keep the action flowing without having to resort to fight scenes. The notion is that a hazard or risk is something that can either endanger the heroes, be an obstacle for them to negotiate, or provide an exciting backdrop to current events—helping to build atmosphere and tension.

Be aware too of situational hazards that force the heroes to decide the lesser of two evils. Having innocent bystanders caught up in life-threatening events makes the heroes question their actions, forcing them to decide to either try and save the innocents and let their suspect go or let the innocents perish in order to capture their quarry. Such climatic scenes can be highly effective in raising the stakes and ensuring that there isn't always a clear resolution. Situations like these always have consequences that the Keeper can draw upon to further develop the story.

Hazards should require some form of skill or characteristic roll and are a great way to get players to burn through Luck points. Try to avoid instant death traps, as they are no fun at all. Rather, allow the heroes a chance to spot a hazard before its full effects are brought to bear. Perhaps the hazard only happens as a consequence of the heroes' actions (a failed pushed roll and so on).

A burning building creates a great backdrop to any scene, implicit with its own inherent dangers. Candles can easily get knocked over during a fight leading to a situation where the heroes are not only fighting the villains but also fighting to avoid the raging fire burning all around them. Of course, no self-respecting villain would miss out on an opportunity to trap the heroes in a building in order to see them burn!

Note that if there is an earthquake on every street corner or quicksand in every jungle, then the hazards can soon become repetitive and lose their strength. Use sparingly.

Some possible hazards:

- Animals (angry dogs, bears, sharks, etc.)
- Avalanche (getting trapped or injured, or forcing the heroes in a certain direction)
- Blizzard (getting lost, separated)
- Chasm (barrier to be negotiated, or an entrance to somewhere below)



Hazard by Reuben Dodd

- Earthquake (major destruction, chaos)
- Electricity (damaged machines, electric fences)
- Fire (buildings, bush fires)
- Flash Floods (the dam breaks, heavy rain)
- Insects (army ants, poison, and general icky-ness)
- Lightning (dramatic, atmospheric)
- Quicksand (barrier to be negotiated)
- Situational (runaway vehicles, telegraph poles falling over)
- Tornado (get to place of safety, wrecking equipment and vehicles)
- Volcano (climatic big boom)

Plot Twists

Plot twists are events or information that push the action and focus of the scenario in a new and unexpected direction. Normally such events should be few and far between, as players will become frustrated or incredulous if every clue they follow turns out to be some unforeseen great revelation that radically alters their perception of what is going on.

Used sparingly, a good plot twist can really focus the minds of the players, putting them on the right track and giving them that essential clue to lead them to the conclusion of the plot. Characterized as "letting the penny drop," a plot twist should either come from the piecing together of disparate clues (the last piece of the puzzle provides an unexpected but true revelation), or from an important source (perhaps a clue the heroes have been aware of, but which they have been unable to find, like an elusive person or a rare book).

For example: *From the start of the scenario, the heroes have been told about the importance of something called "Red Alabama." No one seems to know what Red Alabama is for sure; hints and references are made, some people say it's a person, others that it is a place, perhaps a nightclub. As the scenario unfolds the heroes forget about Red Alabama and move on, focusing their attention on the clues they can find, which lead them to suspect a cult is about to unleash a deadly virus into the city. At some suitable point, the heroes capture and interrogate an important cultist who reveals that Red Alabama isn't a nightclub or person, but is, in fact, the code name of a military experiment to open portals to other dimensions. Everything the heroes have encountered so far has led them to think a cult has been responsible when in fact it's the U.S. Army! The heroes realize the cultists want to stop the army's experiment (they have other plans for the city…) and so must team up with their erstwhile enemies to break into the military complex and destroy the experimental dimension-bending device. This plot twist provides not only an unexpected revelation; it also dramatically changes the focus of the scenario—now the heroes now must work with the cultists ("the enemy of my enemy is my friend") to stop the horror unfolding around them.*

Traps

Used by major villains, traps can be dangerous or simply a means to confound or slow the heroes down. Traps might be modern (like a room filling with sleeping gas) or ancient (like a pyramid tunnel filled with extending blades). Either way, the heroes will need to think quickly and make suitable skill rolls to stay safe or escape.

Never make the trap unwinnable. Killing off your heroes suddenly and without warning is a sure way to end the game, and players —if given no opportunity to escape death—will become frustrated. *In films, only mooks get killed by traps.*

A trap should, ideally, work by degrees:

1. **Discovery**: the heroes become aware of the danger, making some form of awareness roll (e.g. Spot Hidden, Listen).
2. **Start**: the trap is already sprung and must be avoided, or its start can be prevented by a dice roll (e.g. Luck, Spot Hidden, Dexterity, Mechanical or Electrical Repair, Locksmith, etc.)
3. **Middle**: the trap is in process, the heroes must stop it or escape with a suitable dice roll (e.g. Mechanical Repair, Strength, Dexterity, Locksmith, Physics, etc.)
4. **End**: a desperate last chance to avoid injury or death (*e.g.* Strength, Dexterity, Luck, Intelligence, or suitable skill roll at higher difficulty level).

No single roll should determine if a hero dies outright from a trap. Allow the players to come up with ingenious get-outs and call for an appropriate skill or characteristic roll, and if this is failed then allow the roll to be pushed. Likewise, traps are not devices designed to merely kill off the heroes but should also be used to slow and incapacitate them. If all the players'

rolls fail, fade to black and move on to the next scene with the trapped heroes waking up in a cell or cave, perhaps locked in chains and looking the worse for wear. Certainly, hit point loss is likely, but remember the trap is an aid to advance the story—perhaps some heroes are caught, others have escaped, what will they do now?

RECCURRING VILLAINS

A staple of pulp stories is the great and powerful villain who conspires to wreak destruction and death upon the world. Whether a sinister cult overlord, ancient wizard, cruel and sadistic crime boss, or monstrous alien, such characters provide a focus for the heroes' attention and motivation.

Allow the heroes to slowly build a picture of the villain rather than placing him or her center stage and under the spotlight in the first encounter. As with most *Call of Cthulhu* plots, using an onion skin approach to peel away layers of information, with each layer providing more insight, can be highly effective in establishing the major villain in your players' minds. Such villains are likely to establish a web of lies around them. Each piece of information that the heroes gain allows another layer to be stripped away, until finally they get to the truth of just who and what their adversary really is.

Major villains didn't get to be so powerful because they are dumb. Rather than face off against the heroes, they will send their minions to handle the dirty work and avoid direct confrontations whenever necessary. The heroes should have to work hard to uncover who is the real villain and how to bring them down.

Use the villain's Luck points wisely as they are essentially a limited resource, not refreshed until the start of a new scenario or campaign chapter. Having your main villain trapped with no Luck pool to sustain them is sure way to allow the heroes to defeat them—this is fine if it's the climax of the story, but less so if it's the first encounter in what you had planned to be a long-running campaign. Your villains should act and think intelligently and this should be enough to ensure they pose an appropriate threat or challenge to the heroes. Avoid the temptation to "cheat" by making your villain omniscient, able to know and see things they really wouldn't know.

Of course, it won't be much fun if the heroes never get a chance to take down the villain. While outright victory is often an elusive goal in *Call of Cthulhu*, some form of victory (however pyrrhic) should be the aim for *Pulp Cthulhu* games lest your players decide to hang up their notebooks and revolvers. After a series of ever-mounting threats to sanity and life, the heroes' cat and mouse game with the major villain should eventually reach a climax.

Don't forget that most (if not all) key villains will be insane. As with the player characters, insanity means that the character lives on a knife-edge of madness, able to function within the world but also prone to bouts of madness—when all that is left is a crazed and demented madman. Thus, an insane cult overlord is able to function day-to-day with a modicum of "reason" despite their underlying insanity; however, at times of excitement, stress, or great emotion, the cultist is liable to undergo a bout of madness where their rationality is totally consumed by their insanity, leaving only utter madness. Understanding the distinction between insanity and madness allows the Keeper to not only develop the villain's character but to also understand how he or she responds to the world around them. When placed in an unexpected situation, where their great plan and goal is failing, the insane villain's reason may leave them and they will be driven only by crazed instinct. In such climatic situations, the heroes may finally get the upper hand.

Use the "Look Out Master!" rule (page 63) to help your villain live to fight another day, but when it comes to the climax allow the heroes the chance to diminish the villain's options. If the heroes manage to take down all of the mooks, then the villain becomes vulnerable. Good planning and quick thinking on the part of the heroes should be rewarded by a chance to finally get the villain in their sights. With limited options and being hemmed in on all sides, the villain's insanity melts into madness as they become solely focused on attempting to complete their evil plan with little regard for what is happening around them. Or, maybe, it simply becomes a fight for survival.

Tougher Opponents

Pulp heroes are tougher than standard *Call of Cthulhu* investigators, able to soak up damage and avoid death (if their Luck points hold out). Bear this in mind when composing scenarios and the opposition. Two or three deep ones are liable to cause plenty of damage to the average *Call of Cthulhu* party of investigators, but for pulp heroes, their number should be increased. For an average group of five pulp heroes, a suitable opposition would be at least six to ten deep ones.

Equally, for human opponents, don't rely on a handful of men to present a serious threat to the heroes. Double the amount of opposition based on the number of heroes. While the vast majority of such opponents will be mooks, thus easily dealt with, their superior numbers will grant them "Out Numbered" bonuses against the heroes.

Often Keepers will hold back on using big Mythos monsters in *Call of Cthulhu*, as a single one is often more than capable of killing the entire party. In *Pulp Cthulhu*, don't feel that you have to hold back! Dark young of Shub-Niggurath, shoggoths, and star-spawn of Cthulhu are all valid opponents for a band of pulp heroes. If you find your heroes are striding away from a fight with a single shoggoth without a scratch on them then have two or three shoggoths appear in the next encounter.

Remember that the monster statistics given in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* present only an average specimen. For *Pulp Cthulhu* Keepers are advised to increase monster attack values

Opposite: Reoccurring Villains by Victor Manuel Leza Moreno





anywhere between +20% to +40%. Make your monsters tougher.

Keepers should also note that bigger Mythos monsters mean higher Sanity losses for heroes, and you may find that while the heroes can handle a fight with star-spawn of Cthulhu, their minds may not! Rapid decreases in Sanity are likely—see **Rewards** (following) for advice on how to provide the heroes some mental respite.

CLIFFHANGERS

Try to end gaming sessions on a cliffhanger. This could be at a moment when the heroes are about to find a vital clue; they have the secret telegram but haven't read it yet, or just as a fight or chase is about to break out. It could be at some point of great danger, like a hero has just been thrown through a window, or the ancient god-monster is about to be revealed. Stop the game there and leave it until next session to reveal the clue, roll the damage, or make the Sanity roll. Stopping the game at such a crucial point should leave your players wanting more and eager to find out what happens next. When timed right, cliffhangers can be very dramatic, but don't push them to happen and don't overuse them.

REWARDS

One thing to note is that pulp heroes are liable to encounter larger numbers and more sanity-shattering monsters than in regular *Call of Cthulhu*—the effect of which means that they are highly likely to suffer greater Sanity losses. To help maintain balance, heroes have the opportunity to regain higher amounts of Sanity during hero development phases (see page 69). In addition, when determining Sanity awards for the conclusion of a scenario Keepers are recommended to be generous. At a minimum, there should be a Sanity reward equal to the Sanity cost of the toughest monster the heroes face. Thus, if the heroes tackled and successfully dispatched a star-spawn of Cthulhu, then there should be a reward of 1D20 Sanity points.

Awarding Luck points and bonus pulp talents might also be a consideration for particularly "good work" by the players and their heroes. Think about how the scenario played out and the story that unfolded. Did any of the heroes do anything of real note? Did one or more of them undertake and succeed in an overly ambitious and high-risk task? Consider awarding an extra 1D10 Sanity or Luck points, or where the hero has been exceptionally inventive and/or strived to develop their character, perhaps think about allowing the hero to gain a new skill or pulp talent appropriate to what they accomplished.

Don't overdo it, but be fair and always err on the side on generosity in *Pulp Cthulhu*.

CHAPTER 8

THE 1930S

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Above all else, the Great Depression was an economic disaster. The failures of the economy—failures that took many forms and affected everyone from the greatest business magnates to the lowliest farm hands—set the tone for the horrible malaise that beset the peoples of the United States and the world. Coming on the heels of what had been dubbed the Coolidge-Hoover Prosperity, an exciting time when expansion and affluence had seemed limitless, the sudden and disastrous downturn in the economy was not only horrible but surprising because the country fell from such a great height.

AN EXPANSION FOR THE COMMON MAN

During the second half of the '20s the stock market exploded, as it never had before. One of the factors contributing to this eruption of wealth was the newfound fascination with Americans from all walks of life with the stock market. Everyday Joes were investing their earnings and reaping the rewards of an economy firing on all cylinders. Grocers, salesmen, schoolteachers, gas station attendants, janitors, and others from all walks of life were conversing in barber shops, drug stores, and (of course) broker's offices about the day-to-day happenings on Wall Street.

As the decade wound to a close, many—chief among them President Hoover and the officers of the Federal Reserve Board—believed the market was vastly overvalued. They warned all who would listen that the prices being offered for stocks were simply too high. Many investors, however, believed exactly the opposite. They saw American prosperity as an unstoppable force that could not help but multiply their money as long as they continued to invest it.

Black Thursday

The optimists were proven wrong. The stock market hit its peak in August 1929. Prices fell gradually until October when the bottom fell out and the roller coaster ride really began. October 18 was the beginning of the end. The first day of true panic was Black Thursday, October 24. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost almost 13% of its value that day. Things did not improve on Friday; a further 12% flew out the window. In fact, Black Thursday and the Friday afterward are still the second and third largest single-day percentage losses in the history of the Dow.

By Tuesday next, prices had collapsed completely. More than sixteen million shares changed hands that day, a new record. Even so, the market had not hit bottom. The bottom would not come for nearly two months. By mid-November, more than thirty billion dollars were gone from the face of the Earth. Why had it happened?

For starters, more than one million Americans had invested on margin at the time of the Crash. That is to say, they had purchased stocks with borrowed money. The problem was that when prices fell precipitously, it triggered automatic sales of stocks purchased on margin. As falling stock prices triggered automatic sell-offs, a lack of buyers drove prices lower, which in turn caused more automatic sell-offs.

Margin investing alone cannot be blamed for the Crash, of course. Other contributing factors often cited include widespread corruption, graft, and fraud throughout businesses large and small; the pessimistic public pronouncements of high government officials and the unsettling effect they had on the confidence of investors; the destabilizing effect of new policies of the Federal Reserve Board on the market; plus the negative effects of the concentration of wealth into the hands of the few. Finally, it would be difficult to argue that stocks were not, generally speaking, overvalued in the heady days prior to the Crash. In that light, a market correction of some sort was definitely due. In the final analysis, since no

Opposite: Shoggoth by Linda Jones

'30s SLANG

Abercrombie	A know-it-all
Abyssinia	I'll be seeing you
Aces, snazzy, smooth, sweet, swell	Very good
All wet	No good
Alligator	Fan of swing music
Apple	Any big town or city
Babe, broad, dame, doll, muffin, kitten	Woman
Baddy	Person of ill repute
Baloney/Boloney	Nonsense
Bean shooter, roscoe, heater, convincer	Gun
Beat	Broke
Behind the grind	Behind in one's studies
Big house	Prison
Bleed	To extort or blackmail
Blinkers, lamps, pies, shutters, peepers	Eyes
Blow your wig	Become very excited
Bumping gums, booshwash	Talk about nothing useful
Butter and egg man	The money man, the man with the bankroll
Buzzer	Police badge

two economists could be forced to agree on the time of day much less the causes of economic events, a broad idea of the forces and trends which may have caused the Crash will, for our purposes, have to suffice.

Fallout Across Society

Remember the grocers, salesmen, schoolteachers, gas station attendants, janitors, and Americans from all walks of life who invested in the stock market in 1929? When it crashed their fortunes evaporated just like those of the wealthy Wall Street magnates. No one was untouched. It was a catastrophe penetrating all strata of society. Even those who had not invested directly were affected through the complex ties that bind economic society together. Retailers sold fewer products to those with less money to purchase them. Servants had to be let go by those who could no longer afford to pay them. The well-to-do did their own cooking and scrubbing for the first time in their lives. Professionals across the spectrum (architects, lawyers, and so forth) found that no one had the money to pay them and their work dried up.

Modern-day stories of legions of investors who simply opened their office windows and leapt to their deaths are typically exaggerated. Suicides were not unheard of but (even on Wall Street) there was no literal rain of the newly bankrupted. Actually, more people would commit suicide as the Depression deepened than killed themselves in the immediate aftermath of the Crash.

The most horrible casualty of the Crash was not a visible sign that can be easily encapsulated in some statistic. Instead, it was the complete devastation of the idea, built bit-by-bit in the Roaring Twenties, that America was somehow an enchanted land immune to the ups and downs experienced in the rest of the world. This was a rude shock and one that it would take a very long time to shake off.

The Collapse of Banking

After the Crash, to add insult to injury, global financial crises continued to mount. England went off the gold standard in 1931, which prompted a wave of gold hoarding based on speculation that the United States might do the same in the near future. Countries across Europe continued to have grave financial difficulties, whose roots lay in the massive damage caused by the Great War even though it had ended more than a decade ago.

And then banks across American began to fail. At first, the problems were contained by the action of federal bureaucracies and agencies, but in the last month of Hoover's presidency, in 1933, the banking collapse began in earnest. The governor of Michigan declared an eight-day banking holiday in mid-February, hoping to give banks in the state some time to regroup as withdrawals depleted their cash reserves. Maryland followed suit two weeks later, but panic was clearly spreading as people of all economic strata tried to stay ahead of the

game by making their assets liquid before they disappeared entirely. In early March more states went on holiday, and by the time Hoover was to be ushered off the political stage (on the last day of his Presidency) New York and Illinois, the last strongholds of financial power, joined the list. "We are at the end of our string," Hoover said famously. "There is nothing more we can do."

On the day after his inauguration, the newly minted President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) made the financial holiday nationwide and prohibited the export of gold. A week later, in the first of his famous "fireside chats," his radio addresses to the nation, FDR calmly exhorted the American people to remain even-tempered when the banks reopened and explained, in plain English, just what each citizen should do to prevent the return of hysteria. Considered as a whole, the following re-opening of the banks went off brilliantly, and while there were localized runs on particular banks, Federal funds were used to prevent another round of unreasoning panic.

Because the horrible economic situation was omnipresent in the lives of average Americans, solutions to the problem of the Great Depression were on everyone's mind. Some towns implemented barter systems whereby goods and services could be exchanged locally for the same. A number of municipalities issued "scrip"—local money good in local shops. What all of these solutions had in common was the universal mania to do something—anything—to bring an end to the crushing Depression. In the absence of practical solutions, people were willing to consider just about anything.

The New Deal promised an end to financial hardship. Despite a public honeymoon when things appeared to be picking up, by the middle of the decade the economy was slumping again. After more than half a decade of serious recession, a state of something like permanence came to be associated with the economic problems of the country. For all the suggested plans of action, and even for all of those that were implemented, nothing seemed to change.



TIMELINE OF THE 1930S

1930: Pluto discovered by astronomers; the cyclotron, a type of particle accelerator, is invented; British airship R100 accomplishes 78-hour passage to Canada; Elm Farm Ollie becomes the first cow to fly.

1931: Empire State Building completed; Al Capone imprisoned for income tax evasion; Auguste Piccard reaches the stratosphere; "The Star Spangled Banner" officially becomes U.S. national anthem.

1932: Amelia Earhart flies across the Atlantic; air conditioning invented; Lindbergh's Baby kidnapped; scientists split the atom; Zippo lighters for sale.

1933: Prohibition ends; Adolf Hitler appointed chancellor of Germany; assassination attempt on President Roosevelt; the New Deal is launched; Loch Ness monster first spotted.

1934: Bonnie and Clyde killed by police; the Great Terror begins in the Soviet Union; cheeseburger created; the Dust Bowl; "Monopoly" released by Parker Brothers.

1935: Mussolini invades Ethiopia and the League of Nations invokes sanctions; Social Security enacted in U.S.; Alcoholics Anonymous founded.

1936: Hoover Dam completed; Spanish Civil War begins; Nazi Olympics in Berlin; King Edward VIII abdicates to marry Mrs. Simpson; Carnegie publishes *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

1937: Golden Gate Bridge opens; Hindenburg airship disaster; Amelia Earhart vanishes; Japan invades China.

1938: British Prime Minister, Chamberlain, announces "Peace in our time;" Hitler annexes Austria; House Committee on Un-American Activities Committee is established; March of Dimes founded; Superman appears in *Action Comics*; the once thought extinct Coelacanth fish is found living off the east coast of South Africa; broadcast of "The War of the Worlds" causes panic.

1939: World War II begins; Einstein writes letter to President Roosevelt about building an atomic bomb; helicopter invented; major earthquake in Chile kills 30,000 people.

It was as though the problems were truly beyond the capability of mortal man to solve. For despite everyone's best efforts, in late 1937 and into 1938, the stock markets plunged again. Happily, some of the lessons learned from the Crash kept the plunge in prices from affecting society outside the markets to the extent they had between 1929 and 1933, but nevertheless, a new round of layoffs and unemployment followed in the wake of this new round of recession.

THE NEW DEAL

FDR first used the term "New Deal" in an address to the delegates at the Democratic National Convention upon the occasion of his nomination. He used it to describe, in broad strokes, his vision for the country's escape from the pit where it seemed imprisoned. The seeds suggested in this speech eventually grew into the vast social programs that came to comprise the New Deal.

In the first one hundred days of the New Deal, Roosevelt (depending on your point of view) either ran roughshod over Congress or worked with them more closely than any President in memory. Legislation was presented and rubber-stamped with blinding speed. Many members of Congress voted on acts they hadn't even had time to read. Out of the early New Deal offices flew legislation that, among other things:

- Took America off the gold standard permanently; devaluing American currency, sparking inflation, and leading to a temporary but marked increase in the purchase and stockpiling of supplies, especially among businesses.
- Created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), which paid farmers to leave a portion of their farmlands unplanted in order to increase the prices of various crops.
- Created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which put a quarter million people immediately to work, with more than three billion dollars allocated by Congress for new public works projects.
- Funded county and state relief organization; providing direct aid to the poor and unemployed with food, housing, and consumables.
- Created the National Recovery Agency (NRA), an administration with wide-ranging powers to regulate industry and workers, with the ultimate goal of spreading labor to the unemployed, creating a minimum wage, and establishing a way for the various industries to create rules and govern themselves.





Taken as a whole, these measures represented a new way of tackling the problems of the Depression. They directly emphasized the welfare of American citizens and tried to make society and economy whole by improving things from the bottom-up, rather than from the top-down.

Of course, it was insanity. The new organizations ran every which way, sometimes fixing problems within their purview, sometimes stepping on each others' toes, sometimes working at cross purposes, and always engaging in what looked as much like a slapstick comedy routine as a rational government at work. Even though all were not helped immediately (millions remained unemployed, for one thing) few minded greatly in this period of the New Deal honeymoon, as people were generally happy that something was being done to alleviate the endless, grinding experience that the Great Depression had become.

The honeymoon did not last forever. Before the end of 1933, much of the ground that had been gained in the first great push was lost. Political factions, which had been united behind the new President, began to clamor for advantage and see problems which had been glossed over in the initial excitement. In many industries, corporations which were supposed to be hashing out rules which would ensure fair competition instead took the opportunity to meet in smoky back rooms and fix prices.

ALPHABET SOUP

Many of the President's initiatives required agencies and administrations to carry out the activities they provided for. These organizations typically had long, polysyllabic names that, nearly without exception, came to be known by their abbreviations.

NRA

The National Recovery Agency may have had the most wide-reaching mandate and effect of any of the new administrations. The NRA was charged with implementing, or helping business implement, broad reforms related to work and industry. Central to the agency's mandate was to facilitate the creation of a code for each industry which would establish acceptable working hours, minimum wages to be paid, standards of competition within the industry, and so forth. As the codes would be written by the industries to be regulated by them, the government was to have final approval of these codes. Additionally, and very importantly, the Department of Labor insisted that workers be allowed to organize and give their input to these new codes, and that boards representing the interests of consumers also be established.

CCC

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a vast organization that put millions of young men to work on public works projects. It was supervised jointly by the U.S. Army and the Forest Service. Representative projects included the planting of tens of millions of trees, the building of reservoirs, the clearing of land, the creation of campgrounds, and the restoring of historic battlefields. Many members and former members of the Corps (or, "the C's," as they often called it) were stalwart defenders of the organization, boasting of the skills they had



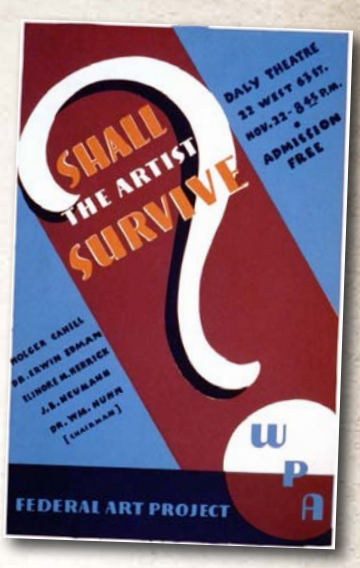
'30s SLANG

C-note	Hundred dollar bill
Canary	Female singer, typically fronting a big band
Carny	Carnival worker
Cats	Members of a big band
Cave	One's house or apartment
Check or checker	A dollar
Chicago overcoat	Coffin
Chicago typewriter, chopper	"Tommy Gun", Thompson Submachine Gun
Chisel	Swindle, cheat, work an angle
Clip joint	Gambling joint where patrons get flimflammed
Copper	Policeman
Crumb	A fink, a loser by social standards
Dead hoofer or cement mixer	Bad dancer
Dick, gumshoe, flatfoot	Detective
Dig	Think hard or understand
Dizzy with a dame	Very much in love with a woman
Doss	Sleep
Drumsticks, pins, pillars, stems	Legs
Dukes, paws, grabbers, meat hooks	Hands
Five spot, a Lincoln	$5 bill

'30s SLANG

G-man	Federal agent
Genius	An extremely, unbelievably, dumb person
Gin mill	Place that serves liquor, sometimes illegally
Goons, hatchetmen, torpedoes, trigger men	Hired gunmen and other tough guys
Greaseball, half portion, wet sock	Unpopular person
Grifter	A con man or woman
Gumming the works	To cause something to run less smoothly
Hard boiled	Tough
Harrumph	Sound emitted indicating dissatisfaction
Hep, hepcat	To be with it, one who is "hep"
Hocks, plates	Feet
Honey cooler	A kiss
Hooch, giggle juice, mule	Whiskey
Hooverville	Temporary town filled with make-shift buildings
Hop	To dance
Hop, rag, jolly up, romp, wingding	Dance or party
Horn, blower	Telephone
Hotsquat	Electric chair

learned, which they often credited for later successes.

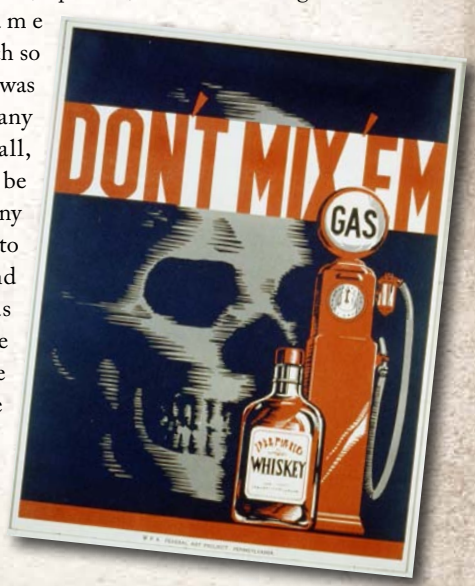


PWA and WPA

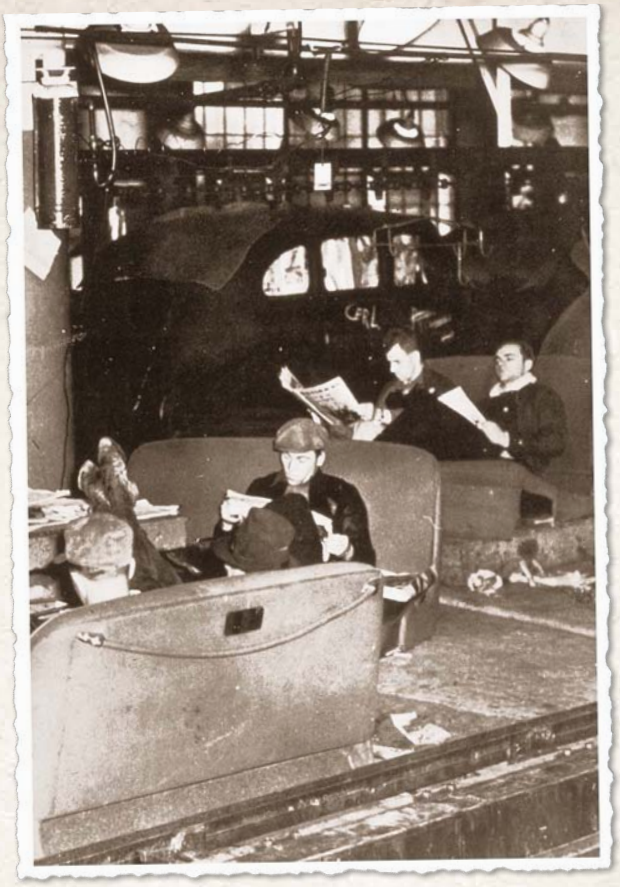
The Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration, respectively, were charged with constructing buildings, dams, ferries, electrical infrastructure, hospitals, fairgrounds, waterworks, and other improvements to the nation's public infrastructure. More than just building things, these organizations were charged with putting people to work so they could earn their livings. In addition, the WPA also patronized artists, writers, and performers—based on the theory that everyone should be put to work according to their skills. Thousands of plays were written and performed, works of music composed, and pieces of art created at the government's behest and for society's enrichment.

PROHIBITION AND REPEAL

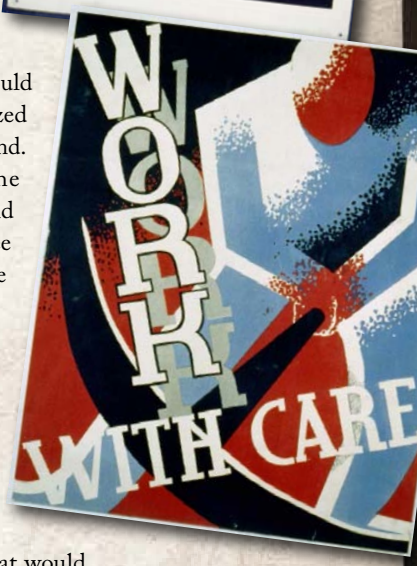
For a long time, the writing was on the wall that Prohibition no longer had the support it needed to remain as the law of the land. Once Congress moved to repeal the Constitutional Amendment that made the United States a dry society, two-thirds of states had to ratify Congress' decision. Utah became the state that pushed the count over the top in December 1933. Although eight states remained dry and fifteen made the sale of liquor a state monopoly, people flocked to speakeasies that quickly acquired liquor licenses, to hotels, to restaurants, and to newly constructed bars, taprooms, and cocktail lounges.



Drinking became respectable again. So much so that the supply of booze was quickly exhausted in many municipalities. After all, quality liquor could not be made overnight. As so many people were accustomed to drinking moonshine and bathtub gin, there was little discontent over the foul tasting stuff people were forced to consume immediately after the repeal. They were just happy to be imbibing again.







LABOR

The legislation that brought about the NRA had provided for the right of workers to unionize, and unionize they did. While it was not a new idea for workers to band together for common goals, the explicit blessing of the government led to the rapid establishment of a large number of labor organizations. In many cases, the leaders of the fledgling organizations, zealous and idealistic, immediately became antagonistic toward their employers. Strikes and other protests sprung up across the nation wherever these new unions were formed.

At the end of 1936, the most visible demonstration of labor unrest manifested first in Flint, Michigan, then in auto plants across the country when the workers who assembled cars for General Motors (GM) finally decided they'd had enough. The workers physically occupied more than a dozen plants, preventing managers and executives from entering and bringing the manufacture of GM autos to a complete nationwide standstill. Of course, even though Congress had made communal bargaining legal, the occupation of the plants was far from it. Nevertheless, the corporate masters, their hirelings, and the representatives of government had a difficult time evicting those participating in the sit-down strike, as much because of the political and public relations problems they faced as because of the practical and tactical concerns. By the time the GM strike ended, it had lasted 44 days and paralyzed more than a hundred thousand workers in fourteen states.

Far from being unique to GM or even the auto industry, tensions ran high on both sides of the management-labor fence across the country. In many places, companies hired union busters who worked with law enforcement to physically attack strikers. In other companies, private investigators were sent undercover to identify union organizers and rat them out so they could be dismissed from their positions on whatever pretense could be invented. Nevertheless, organized labor slowly but surely gained ground. In time, massive groups like the American Federation of Labor and the more revolutionary Committee for Industrial Organization became the rule at shops across the nation.

Communists

While the American communists were relatively small in number, the force of their ideas could easily be felt in the writings of their intelligentsia. But they were not only thinkers. In activities that would seem odd from a Cold War perspective, many communists were rabidly pro-American, attempting to outdo patriotic organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution in civic activities.

Politically, American communists were a force against the New Deal, though they fought it from the left rather than the right. Their objections were complex and varied but boiled down to the fact that they believed any attempt to prop up capitalism and forestall the final clash between labor and capital was ill advised.

CRIME

With the Depression came a rise in crime as the unemployed turned to theft to make ends meet and put food on the table. The gangster is a familiar cultural icon that goes hand-in-hand with Tommy guns, speakeasies, bootlegging, and Al Capone. Most of these images would be most accurately placed in the wild days of the Roaring Twenties, and were on their way out by the Great Depression. They gave way to a different brand of criminal who perpetrated crimes to fit the times.

FAMOUS CRIMINALS

John Dillinger

John Dillinger was a Navy deserter, first jailed after the failed holdup of a grocery store. In jail, he learned the art of bank robbery and, once he was released from prison, began holding up banks with an assortment of cronies. In and out of jail—he escaped or was broken out of a number of them—he was pursued vigorously by the FBI, ascending to the position of Public Enemy #1 on J. Edgar Hoover's list of the nation's most wanted.

Dillinger was a flamboyant criminal and nabbed headlines when he escaped, guns blazing, from FBI operations to capture him in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He was finally killed by FBI agents outside the Biograph Theater in Chicago—though some say, another man died in his place, with Dillinger escaping from the law in the end.

Bonnie and Clyde

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, like Dillinger, were flamboyant criminals. Their crimes, however, in spite of their ostentatiously violent nature, were paltry by comparison. The pair robbed only the smallest of banks, as well as gas stations and restaurants, never escaping with more than $1,500. Bonnie and Clyde worked with a number of accomplices and were eventually killed by police after a confederate tipped the cops off to their location.

"Machine Gun" Kelly

George Kelly was a small time bootlegger who did a fair amount of jail time before meeting his wife-to-be, Kathryn. It was Kathryn who had the idea to spin Kelly as a sharp-eyed machine gunner, and she bought a Tommy gun and made George practice with it. Kathryn then bragged to her friends and criminal associates that Kelly could write his name with lead in the side of a barn and knock walnuts off a fence at twenty-five paces. She emphasized the point by handing out his spent shells. As George and Kathryn gained more and more nationwide contacts in the underworld, the pair became more and more involved in robberies, killings, and kidnappings. Kelly's most famous crime was the kidnapping of Charles Urschel; an event picked up in newspapers across the nation due to the increased public interest in all kidnappings in the wake of the Lindbergh crime. Kelly died in Leavenworth penitentiary on his fifty-ninth birthday.

"Pretty Boy" Floyd

Charles Floyd was a farmer driven to crime by Dust Bowl conditions. He first went to jail for a failed payroll robbery and, while there, got to know many seasoned criminals. He robbed banks in Ohio, Michigan, and Kentucky, but returned to his native Oklahoma where he gained some popular acclaim for destroying mortgage papers during his bank robberies. All told, he robbed more than thirty banks in twelve years. Floyd was also accused of participating in the Union Station Massacre in Kansas City, where three police officers and an FBI agent were slain, though he denied involvement until his death. Floyd was a particularly violent criminal and, in the end, he was gunned-down by FBI agents in a field in Ohio.

"Ma" Barker and Sons

Arizona Clark Barker and her four sons, with various other accomplices including Alvin "Creepy" Karpis, committed crimes—ranging from bank and train robberies to kidnapping— down a stripe of America, from Minnesota to Texas. Herman, Arthur ("Doc"), Fred, and Lloyd Barker all met violent ends, as did their mother. There are, to this day, conflicting reports about the extent to which the matriarch of the clan planned or even participated in the various crimes that the Barker-Karpis gang committed.

BOOTLEGGERS, SPEAKEASIES, AND LAWLESSNESS

Prohibition was still the law of the land for the first third of the Great Depression. By this time, liquor sales had moved to what was practically the open light of day. It was possible to make purchases of the stuff in, for example, the office buildings of the U.S. Senate and retail storefronts disguised by a nearly transparent veneer of legality. No one who wanted a drink had any trouble finding one, and that made bootlegging (the business of distilling or brewing booze and selling it) and rum running (the smuggling of liquor from countries like Canada where it was legal) the rule of the day for organized criminals. It was a supremely profitable activity and one in which they were practiced.

Post-Prohibition Organized Crime

Oddly enough, the repeal of Prohibition did not spell the end of the bootlegging business—at least, not immediately. Taxes on liquor were high enough that the temptation to avoid them was great and, since organized crime was already skilled in avoiding the law, some bootleggers just continued supplying their regular customers at prices lower than legitimate wholesalers could offer. Other former bootleggers adopted the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" mantra and began distributing liquor legally. With existing customers in place and unscrupulous tactics not beneath them, some of these enterprises flourished.

No matter how a given group of criminals adapted to the end of Prohibition, the fact remained that many years of profitable operation had made the gangs wealthy and powerful. They had political contacts, criminal skills, and organizational experience that made them a force to be reckoned with—no matter where they turned their attentions. Prostitution, gambling, and loansharking are only a few examples of profitable enterprises that were left after Prohibition. Of course, racketeering continued unabated, as criminals shook down honest businesses for protection money, themselves protected from prosecution by their political allies on their payroll. Many gangs also became involved in legitimate business enterprises (though their tactics often remained dangerous and immoral, to say the least) and found strongholds in the developing unions.

Kidnapping

The public prominence of the Lindbergh kidnapping (see box nearby) brought public fascination and outrage with kidnapping to a peak never before seen. One kidnapper in the custody of the State of California, for example, was taken from his cell and lynched by a group of public citizens. Congress was as concerned as the populace at large and new laws were passed which allowed Federal agencies—the FBI particularly—to investigate these crimes even though the pretexts for doing so were, constitutionally speaking, slight.

Bank Robbers

Bank robbery became a very common crime during the Great Depression. In fact, some statistics suggested that banks in the United States were being robbed at the rate of two each day. Following the stock market crash, the near demise of the nation's banking structure, the wave of farm foreclosures throughout the Midwest, and increasingly common revelations that some financial companies had, for many years, been riddled with fraud and graft, the banks were not institutions held in particularly high regard. Because of this, many bank robbers, little more than violent thugs in reality, became popular heroes and received a level of moral support from citizens that had previously been reserved for "noble" bootleggers. Even as the "Most Wanted" list of "Public Enemies" was used to demonize these nationally known criminals, some people (not a majority, but nevertheless a sizable group) continued to root for and idolize these folk.

THE LINDBERGH BABY

When the two-year-old son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh was kidnapped from the Lindbergh home near Hopewell, New Jersey on May 1, 1932, the crime became a national obsession. Lindbergh had become a folk hero when he had made the first nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean (between New York and Paris, in 1927), and for a public looking for something, anything, to take their minds off the grim realities of the Depression, the kidnapping of a beloved public figure's young son fit the bill, and so newspapers constantly ran stories about the most minor developments in the case.

Lindbergh and his wife exhausted every avenue available to them, including making contact with various seedy underworld types, who many felt would be able to help reunite them with their son. Eventually, Lindbergh delivered a fifty-thousand-dollar ransom that had been demanded to a Bronx cemetery, but even then, the child was not returned. The national manhunt for baby and kidnapper continued, but it was later discovered that the child had been killed shortly after the kidnapping.

A German-born man named Bruno Richard Hauptmann was eventually apprehended in connection with the crime when he tried to pass gold certificates that had been part of the ransom. He was tried for the kidnapping and murder and, after being found guilty, was executed in April 1936.

FIREARMS

Public outcry to criminals and organized gangs using firearms to settle disputes caused the National Firearms Act (1934) to come into force. The Act covered two specific types of guns: machine guns and short-barrel firearms (including sawed-off shotguns). While it did not ban these weapons, it did impose $200 tax on sales and transfers. In 1938 the Federal Firearms Act was passed by Congress; aimed at those involved in selling and shipping firearms through interstate or foreign commerce channels. Those selling firearms were now required to obtain a Federal License from the Secretary of Commerce, as well as record names and addresses of everyone they sold guns to. In addition, sales were prohibited to people who lacked a permit or who had been convicted of violent felonies.

THE FBI

The Bureau of Investigation became known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1935. In the same year, the FBI National Academy was established to train police officers in modern investigation techniques. Even though many idolized the bank robbers of the day, far more found themselves drawn to the image of the crusading agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the "G-men." Under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI became a force of increasing power in the national fight against what seemed to be a crime wave of unprecedented proportions. G-men were frequently portrayed in popular culture; a trend embodied best in Warner Brothers' 1935 film, *G-Men*, which starred James Cagney as a Tommy gun wielding legal crusader.

J. Edgar Hoover himself was a strange bird if ever there was one. He had come to the FBI after law school when the organization was a refuge for political patronage jobs and limited to investigating a small handful of federal crimes. To add insult to injury, its agents lacked the right even to carry firearms or make arrests. When Hoover ascended to the post of Director, however, he addressed the first problem by imposing new standards for agents, tossing out those he felt were not up to the task and decreasing the rolls by nearly a third. His new standards were both professional and moral, aiming to ensure that those working for him were not only skilled but of unimpeachable character. He trained his agents with a special three-month course in crime fighting which he himself devised.

When the crime wave was brought forcefully to public (and congressional) attention by the Lindbergh kidnapping, a host of new laws were passed that made the FBI's job easier. Firstly, the number of federal crimes over which the FBI had jurisdiction increased, including the robbery of national banks, the theft of large sums of money carried across state lines, the assault of federal officers, and the crossing of state lines to avoid a court appearance. Secondly, the FBI received new powers of enforcement and action. FBI agents could now carry firearms and were allowed to make arrests rather than having to call in the local police to help them.

Hoover put these new powers to immediate use. Using technology in his fight against crime, he created a gigantic archive of fingerprints and instituted crime labs able to process the evidence gained from car tracks, fired bullets, and similar forensic clues.

Hoover became a national hero for his crusading ways and received a number of honorary degrees. He also spent a great deal of time speaking in public. He railed against criminals in his speeches, and even though his invective was often of dubious factual content, no one could call him anything less than completely intense.

Fraud, Graft, and Machine Politics

As banks failed and businesses went belly up, investigators from the public sphere (journalists, district attorneys, and the like) were discovering layer upon layer of fraud, graft, and corruption among the moneyed and privileged, going back many years. Although few were willing to suggest that this might have been a primary cause of the Crash, neither was the mass of Americans inclined to be particularly charitable toward these unmasked executive criminals when they themselves were in such miserable financial shape. Disillusionment spread.

In the realm of politics, there was little new under the sun. Just as they had in earlier decades, political machines played an enormous role in the election of officials across the nation. They handpicked county commissioners, mayors, state legislators, governors, and even United States Congressmen. Harry Truman, even, who was to take Roosevelt's place in the Oval Office in 1945, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1934 because Thomas Pendergast, the political boss of the Kansas City machine, willed it to be so. When he arrived in Washington, he was often referred to as the "Senator from Pendergast."

DAILY LIFE

To discuss, in an academic and detached way, the economic and political cause-and-effect of the Great Depression is one thing. To dig into the everyday plight of men and women across the country who lived the misery is quite another. Although Dow Jones averages and Electoral Vote totals tell one tale, they cannot impart a sense of the crushing desperation felt by those who were starving, unemployed, transient, and desperate during the '30s.

The extent to which the Depression affected everything—absolutely every facet of life—cannot be overstated. Retail storefronts were empty. Delivery trucks were idle. Street traffic thinned. Panhandlers and beggars were ubiquitous. Construction and expansion were non-existent. Colleges, clubs, charitable organizations, fraternal orders, and the like saw marked drop-offs in membership, donations, and interest. One of the few exceptions to this trend of contraction were gas stations, which sprang up across the country as people turned to car travel rather than more expensive means, like the railroad, of getting around. A typical price for gas was twenty cents a gallon.

Unemployment

Unemployment was a fact of life for around fifteen million Americans. These fifteen million represented nearly one-quarter of the national workforce, and they stood for another thirty million spouses and children who were dependent on them to live. Even those who did not directly lose their jobs were still affected, seeing their wages and salaries slashed.

Between 1929 and 1933, average hourly wages dropped sixty percent and average white-collar salaries dropped forty percent. Farmers who depended on commodity prices for their livelihoods saw those prices fall through the floor. In some cases, jobs were shared by multiple workers so everyone could have some income, no matter how meager. Independent professionals like doctors, dentists, architects, and lawyers either had no clients or could only find clients unable to pay for their services.

Faced with unemployment that seemed completely interminable, continuing day after day, week after week, month after month, and even year after year because there were simply no jobs to be had, people did what they could. Many dressed for work each morning and continued to ride the subway into town, walking the city streets looking for work. They visited their pre-layoff haunts, parks, lunch counters, restaurants, and so forth, out of the force of habit and in an attempt to at least keep up the appearance of normalcy. Broke job seekers discovered that an extra cup of hot water ordered with coffee at lunchtime, combined with the bottle of catsup on the table, made a passable tomato soup.

And in this way, the unemployed eventually depleted their savings. They borrowed from family and friends. At least, from those family and friends who were not themselves in dire financial straits. They economized expenses, economized the economizations, and cut and scrimped a little bit more after that. Sometimes they went without heat. Sometimes families evicted from their apartments moved in with other families, cramming a dozen or more people into just a few rooms. When these measures were inadequate to the task, families sold their possessions and even their homes.

Where it was possible to choke back pride, people could apply for assistance, either from private charitable organizations or, after the New Deal programs swung into effect, from government agencies. Assistance could come in the form of food, money, clothing, or other items—depending largely on the vagaries of what was donated. Standing in bread lines was hard on the pride but, at least, it held off starvation.

And even if one managed the great fortune of landing a job after months or years of searching, many found it psychologically difficult to keep it, having lived with deep-seated feelings of shameful inadequacy for so long.



'30s SLANG

House dick, house peeper	House detective
Jeeves	Butler
Joe	A average guy
Joed	Tired
Keen	Very Good
Kibosh	Squelch
Killer-Diller	A ladies' man
Kippy	Neat
Low down	All the information
Make tracks, dangle	Leave in a hurry, leave abruptly
Meat wagon	Ambulance
Micky, Micky Finn	Drink spiked with a knock out drug
Mitt me kid!	Congratulate me
Moll	A gangster's girlfriend
Moxie	Guts/nerves
Murder!	Wow!
Nuts!	Telling someone they are full of nonsense
Off base	Taken by surprise
Off the cob	Corny
Okie	Migrant worker from Oklahoma
Packing heat, wearing iron	Carrying a gun

'30s SLANG

Pally	Friend, chum, sometimes used sarcastically
Patsy	Innocent man framed for a criminal charge
Pill	Disagreeable person
Pip	Attractive person
Platter	A record
Plenty rugged	Big and strong
Plugging, filling someone with daylight, lead poisoning	Shooting a gun (at someone)
Ring-a-ding-ding	A good time at a party
Rotgut, bathtub gin	Low-quality alcohol
Sawbuck	$10 bill
Scrub	Poor student
Shake a leg	Hurry up
Skidrow	Run-down part of town
Slip me five	Shake my hand
Smooth	Well-dressed, without qualification
Sourdough	Counterfeit money
Speakeasy	Bar disguised as something else
Square	One unfamiliar with swing, an outsider
Squat	Nothing

Homelessness, Wanderers, Hobos

Even after taking what steps they could, many families wound up homeless, migrating across the country in search of jobs. In the cities, people slept on benches and in alleyways, depending on bread lines or scraps thrown out by restaurants for food. Where vacant lots, public lands, or the open spaces of rural areas allowed, the homeless often congregated in shantytowns literally built from cast-offs, detritus, and garbage. Food consisted of what could be found, stolen, grown, or hunted. Warmth was often provided by fires burning in fifty-gallon drums.

Hitchhikers were numerous on the highways and hobos were thick on the freight trains that crisscrossed the country. Though their travels were largely aimless, America's homeless generally kept moving, always on the lookout for something better. It has been estimated that there were more than one million transients on the move by 1933. Perhaps more frightening than the sheer quantity of transients was the fact that a sizable portion of them were young boys, and even girls disguised as boys.

Hoovervilles

Those at the bottom of the economic ladder (and some a few rungs up) were hit the hardest by the Depression. No job meant no wages, and those who could not pay their housing costs either moved in with their relatives or were left on the streets.

The number of homeless grew and many took to building shacks out of tarpaper, cardboard, and scrap materials. Communities of shantytowns comprised of shacks and tents grew up and became known as "Hoovervilles" as many of the homeless blamed the President for the crisis. Life in a Hooverville was no picnic for those unfortunate enough to find themselves with little more than the shirt on their back; unsanitary, cold, and stressful.

AGRICULTURE

Throughout the Midwest, farmers were discontent. Already in difficult straits at the beginning of the Depression because of low prevailing crop prices, farmers found themselves hard hit as the recession continued in the early '30s. In some places, they declined to sell their crops at all, preferring to allow them to rot, sometimes dumping milk in ditches to make a statement. In other places, they set up roadblocks to drive home their point that prices simply had to go up.

As the Depression wore on, farm bankruptcies became increasingly common. Farmers turned to unorthodox strategies for preventing banks from foreclosing, or for dealing with the situation once banks did foreclose. Sometimes, after a foreclosure, neighbors would crowd the resulting auction and prevent other buyers from bidding up the parcels of property. The animals, machinery, and tools would be returned to their original owners the next day, having been "purchased" for

pennies on the dollar. Of course, sometimes the auctions were simply prevented or disrupted.

It's important to note that even though they had been pushed to their limits and were acting out against their unfortunate situation, farmers did not act out of some sort of revolutionary zeal or political stance. They were simply venting their rage against a system that was completely failing to work the way they felt they had been promised it would.

THE DUST BOWL

Unfortunately for farmers throughout the Heartland of America, things were destined to get much, much worse before they got any better. Beginning in 1933, strong winds came and swept dirt up off the fields and blew it in great gusts across the plains. In many places, the dirt in the air was so thick that it was literally impossible to see because of the density of it. It penetrated everywhere. Anyone stepping outside choked on the stuff and could not prevent it from getting in the ears and nose. Farmers and their families spent weeks and months coughing up black mucus. It was impossible for people to keep the dirt out of their homes, even after taking such steps as sealing up the cracks under doors and windows with towels and spare clothing.

The situation was without compare to anything that had happened to these people before. But the worst part was not the fact that the swirling dust made it impossible to see, or breathe, or keep a clean house. The worst part was that it literally destroyed the farms, blowing away the topsoil that was absolutely necessary to the business of growing crops. It altered the landscape, with drifts of dirt covering roads, stacking up against houses, and simply disappearing areas of the countryside.



It was not all as random as it might seem. For decades farmers had been taking the short view of things, breaking up the sod that had held the earth to the ground when the entirety of the Great Plains was grazing land. In addition, the new processes of farming, which applied industrial practices to the growing of food, exacerbated the problem. All this is not to say that the climate and weather conditions did nothing to contribute. Overall, it was a confluence of bad timing and poor planning that brought with it complete disaster.





Oakies

Farmers left their impotent farms. Most of them traveled west, and the stereotypical image of the extended family with all their possessions lashed to a beat-up old auto was born. These families, referred to popularly as "Oakies," because so many seemed to be from Oklahoma, joined the mass of transients already wandering the highways of the Depression.

Many of them found work as seasonal laborers, working for large conglomerates that operated orchards in California and other parts of the nation. Even when they were lucky enough to find work, the wages were low and the hours brutal. The lack of job stability was part of the package, as pickers were only needed when the fruit was ripe. These horrible working conditions made the previously independent farmers fiercely bitter. Many tried to organize themselves in order to improve conditions and, as was the case across industry, the owners of the fruit and farming conglomerates did not look kindly upon pickets and protests. In many localities, law enforcement officers were enlisted to put a stop to the demonstrations.

Floods

As though Mother Nature was in the mood to add insult to injury, in 1937, a series of serious floods put a great deal of water in all sorts of places it didn't belong. The Merrimac, Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Potomac, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers all surpassed their banks. Large swathes of Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville were underwater. Business districts were flooded, homes were washed away, and wreckage floated on top of muddy water for miles and miles. Dams, breakwaters, and walls of sandbags were erected. In some places, they held only due to the heroic efforts of people protecting their property and loved ones. In other places, these bulwarks crumbled and entire cities were washed away. Close to nine hundred people died, all told, and many more were injured. It was complete madness.

ENTERTAINMENT

It would be difficult today to imagine that popular entertainment did not continue to march on in the face of any series of calamities, man-made or naturally occurring. And that's just what happened in the Thirties.

Radio

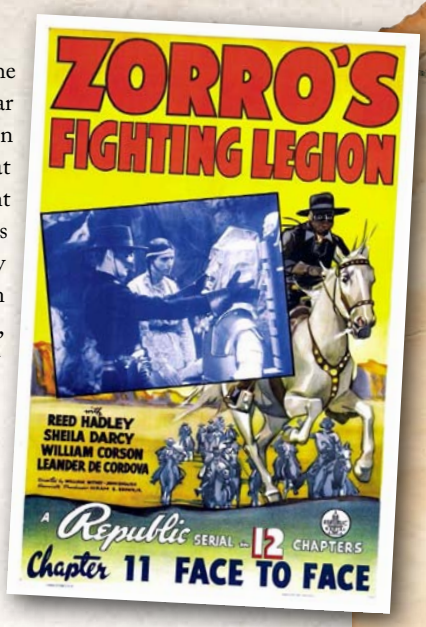
The dramas of the day were heard on console radios throughout America. Variety programs, musical programs, and serials were all part of the social fabric of the era. Popular programs and performers included Ozzie and Harriet, George and Gracie, Fibber McGee, and Mollie. Amos 'n Andy, a comedy serial performed in "black voice" by comics Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, was among the most popular of shows on the air.

Orson Welles' 1938 production of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* was a radio event of either great fame or infamy, depending on your point of view. Even though the broadcast began with and was interrupted at several points by disclaimers about the reality of the events that appeared to be taking place, the program, aired in the style of a newscast that detailed the events of an alien attack on the Earth, sent panic throughout the country as people mobbed streets and highways trying to escape from the otherworldly assault.

TOP FILMS

The Wizard of Oz (1939)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
The Bride of Frankenstein (1935)
Modern Times (1936)
Frankenstein (1931)
Freaks (1932)
King Kong (1933)
Dracula (1931)
Scarface (1932)
The 39 Steps (1935)
Duck Soup (1933)
Angels with Dirty Faces (1938)
The Invisible Man (1933)
The Thin Man (1934)

Film



Movies were nothing new in the '30s and they remained popular throughout the Depression era. It has been estimated that eighty-five million people went to the shows each week. Pictures with sound increasingly became the rule rather than the exception. Not only that, color was incrementally introduced to audiences throughout the decade. Two-color films had been shown in the mid-twenties, but the development of the three-color camera in 1932 brought about the introduction of full Technicolor. The first three-color film released was a Disney animated short, *Flowers and Trees* (1932). The first full-color live action short came two years later in *La Cucaracha* (1934), and the first feature film presented entirely in Technicolor was *Becky Sharp* (1935). Additional milestones in color production were *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939) due to their immense scope.

Literature

One public institution that saw increasing use during the Depression was the public library. In addition to the obvious cause that borrowing library books is a free pastime, people sought to understand the reasons for the collapse of society around them. Economic texts, political treatises, and the equivalent of the modern-day self-help book all circulated like gangbusters.

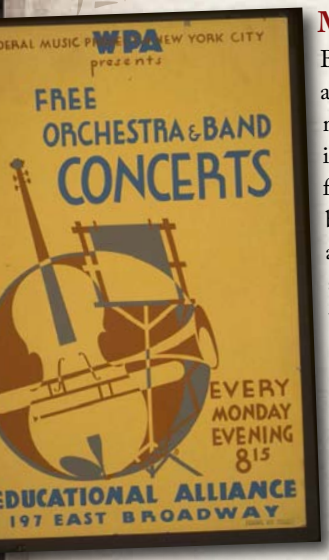


And while few serious academics would be tempted to call the pulps "literature," (at least not until academe became much more serious about popular culture many decades later) the circulation of pulp stories of all stripes—crime tales, supernatural tales, tales of G-men and other stupendous crime fighters, war stories, stories of aviation, and on and on—sold like mad on newsstands across the country. In addition to entertaining readers, the serial pulps also heavily advertised the brands of the

'30s SLANG

Stool pigeon, snitch	Someone who informs to the police
Suds, salad, dough, moolah, rhino, bacon, bread	Money
Sweet mama, sweet patootie, dish, tomato	An attractive woman
Take a powder, blow, split, scram, drift	Leave
Taking the rap (or the fall)	Taking responsibility for someone else's crime
The kiss off	The final goodbye (death)
Tin	Small change
Tin can, flivver	A car
Tizzy	State of anxiety or confusion and jittery nerves
Togged to the bricks	Dressed up
Trip for biscuits	A task that yields nothing
Twit	Fool or Idiot
Whacky	Crazy
What's your story, morning glory?	What do you mean by that?
Wheat	Person unused to city ways
Yo!	Yes
You and me both	I agree

day. Accessories like pins, toy guns, watches, secret decoder rings, and so forth were available for purchase. It is interesting to note that these stories, in a time of political polarization, were conscientiously devoid of political content, instead presented solely for their value as entertainment.



Music

By the late '30s, swing music was the craze among the young set. It had grown from the more traditional, sedate jazz of the twenties into an aggressive, loud genre of music featuring a lot of improvisation. Popular bands were associated with star musicians and singers who toured the country playing to sold-out auditoriums where people danced in the aisles and shouted out in musical ecstasy.

Dancing was popular. Highly skilled dancers leapt and ran and threw their partners into the air, creating an amazing spectacle. "Jive talk" was the official language of swing aficionados—or "alligators," as these devotees of swing called themselves.

CULTURE

Like developments in popular entertainment, social and cultural changes continued throughout the Depression. Though the Crash gave particularly violent notice that an economic recession was on its way, cultural and social changes typically associated with the '30s were slower to develop.

Sexual mores, which had become very liberal during the twenties, swung toward greater emphasis on families and marriage in the '30s. This in spite of the fact that, because of the widespread poverty, it was difficult for couples to get married since their financial future could not be guaranteed. If lovers who could not afford to get married spent the night together in a motor hotel from time to time, it was typically regarded as an inevitable if not acceptable outlet.

Attendance at churches continued a long trend of decline, and the relevance of religion to public life continued to dwindle. Atheism was not on the upswing by any stretch of the imagination; religion simply took a less important role in the lives of everyday Americans than it had in the past.

Along with their newly rediscovered zest for cocktails, people were smoking more. And not only were they smoking more cigarettes, they were doing it in mixed company. Interest in the men's' clubs that had been so popular in earlier years of the century waned as men discovered that they enjoyed spending time in the company of the fairer sex.

Café Society

While the rest of society wondered how they would survive from week to week, the moneyed continued as they always had. Every year a new crowd of beautiful debutantes in strapless gowns would premier as adults at celebrations whose expense could have fed dozens of families for a year. These glamor girls of café society, as it was called, were the subject of gossip columns across the country and were courted by the hottest nightclubs, as to be in the presence of these society queens was the most incredible of social fortunes. These glamor girls and their counterpart "men about town" were photographed by a legion of reporters for the likes of *LIFE* magazine, and their romances, marriages, and divorces were chronicled for the consumption of ardent admirers across the country and around the world.

TECHNOLOGY

One thing that did not slow down when the Depression struck was the pace of scientific innovation. Many new inventions came to the public eye during this time period. Even though such innovations were slow to reach consumers, nevertheless, humanity's collected body of knowledge and ability grew ever greater.

Metallurgy was constantly improving building materials by creating new alloys stronger and lighter than what had been available before. Innovation with plastic saw this material used in the construction of consumer goods across the broad spectrum of fabricature. New fibers and wood products were better than ever before. Such development and newness did much to set the American imagination on fire.

Domestic Advances and New Conveniences

Even as scarcity was the rule of the day, and every rule has exceptions, there were a number of new domestic advances and conveniences that made their debut during the Depression. Air conditioning, for example, was making its way into new locales. Previously a phenomenon for movie theaters and railroad cars, it was turning up in restaurants, public buildings, and offices. In addition to chilling their environment, people (who could afford to) were chilling their food in refrigerators rather than iceboxes. Supermarkets made shopping easier, even selling new-fangled pre-cooked frozen foods. Beer was available for the first time in cans, and bread was available for the first time pre-sliced.

Streamlining, a way to make vehicles more efficient, became a design fad. In addition to streamlining cars and trains, designers experimented with streamlining as a strictly decorative endeavor. Buildings and other stationary objects had rounded edges and looked for all the world like they ought to be racing along at a steady clip bound for somewhere.

Architecture

Skyscrapers were nothing new. Although the Chrysler, RCA, and Empire State buildings in New York City were all completed in the early '30s, generally speaking, the Depression was not a time when corporations were putting large sums of money into expansion and construction.

One interesting confluence of architecture and lighter than air travel was the installation of zeppelin mooring towers at the top of some great skyscrapers, the Empire State Building in particular. As travel by zeppelin was seen as the wave of the future, those who owned and operated the Empire State thought they were being quite forward-looking indeed when they installed theirs. After the *Hindenburg* disaster, of course, travel by zeppelin quickly went out of style, and mooring masts were eventually dismantled.

TRAVEL

Even though there was a depression on, Americans wanted to get around. Automobiles were everywhere, and everyday people were traveling around the country on vacations. This was especially true since an auto required only gasoline, which was inexpensive compared to train fares. Dovetailing with this trend in automotive vacationing was the wild popularity (among those who could afford them) of the house trailer, which had been invented in 1929 but was only really reaching its stride in the middle of the decade. It has been estimated that by 1936 more than 150,000 of these campers were in use on the roads of America.

As far as air travel went, in 1929, there was no transcontinental passenger service. It was possible, however, to travel by overnight train from New York to Columbus, fly from Columbus to Oklahoma, take another overnight train to New Mexico, and then make the final leg by air to the West Coast. Such segmented travel was required because night flying was prohibited. Nevertheless, determined travelers could get from coast to coast within two days. By the end of the decade, travel across the continent was a matter of routine in overnight air sleepers. Passenger travel across the Pacific Ocean also made commonplace what had once been headline news.

Amelia Earhart was a particular heroine of aviation. She was both the first female to cross the Atlantic as a passenger (1928) and also the first female to pilot a plane solo across the Atlantic (1932). Earhart may be best known for her disappearance (along with her navigator) over the Pacific Ocean in the middle of her attempt to fly all the way around the world. Her disappearance remains a mystery to this day.



AIRSHIPS



Airships or dirigibles (from the French *diriger*, meaning steerable) were a popular form of air transport during the '20s and '30s.

Essentially the airship was a buoyant, lighter-than-air craft, filled with either helium or hydrogen. As helium (a safe, nonflammable gas) was rare in most parts of the world, except for the U.S., many non-American airships used hydrogen gas, as it was easier to come by despite its more dangerous (flammable) characteristics.

Britain, the United States, and Germany were the main operators of airships, although they could also be found in Italy, France, and the Soviet Union. In Germany, airships were known as zeppelins, named after their inventor, Count Zeppelin.

In the years after the Great War, airships provided the first commercial transatlantic flights, with passengers finding the airship a quick and relatively cheap way to cross the world (when compared to more expensive sea travel). A ticket cost around $400 ($720 for a round trip) and allowed the passenger to travel in grand style. In 1929, the *Graf Zeppelin* flew around the world in just twelve days.

The *Hindenburg*, the sister craft to the *Graf Zeppelin*, could carry more than seventy passengers in style. Onboard was a dining room, a writing room, a lounge with a grand piano, viewing windows, and passenger cabins. Each cabin was equipped with a folding washbasin, a collapsible writing table, and bunk beds. Providing the first regularly scheduled air post service between Europe and America, the *Hindenburg* also boasted its own post office, allowing passengers to write and mail letters of their travels while onboard.

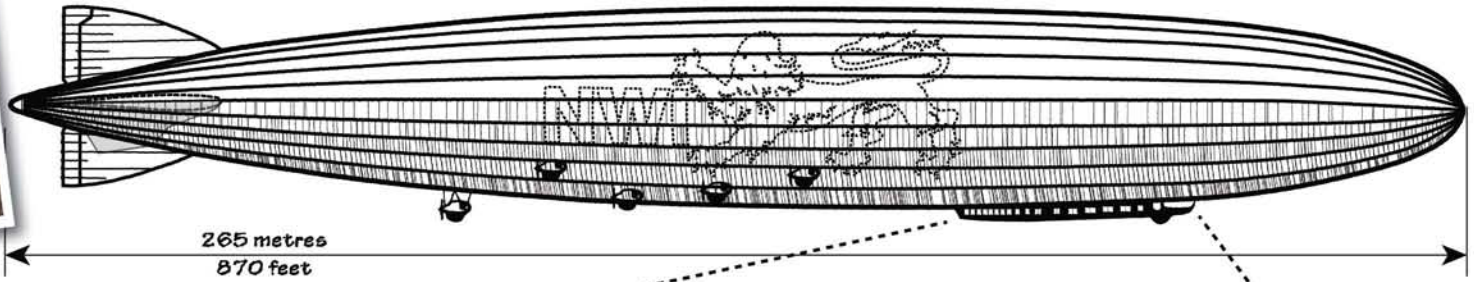
Each passenger was allowed up to 286 lbs. of baggage (66 lbs. of which could be hand luggage). Matches and lighters would have to be handed over on arrival, although a smoking saloon was available, along with a well-stocked bar for cocktails. While onboard the *Hindenburg*, like most airships, passengers were instructed to follow three key rules:

- To throw nothing overboard, in order to avoid damaging the hull and propellers.
- To not carry matches, lighters, or to smoke in any part of the airship, except for the Smoking Saloon.
- To remain in the passengers' quarters, unless permission was granted and they were accompanied by a member of the ship's company.



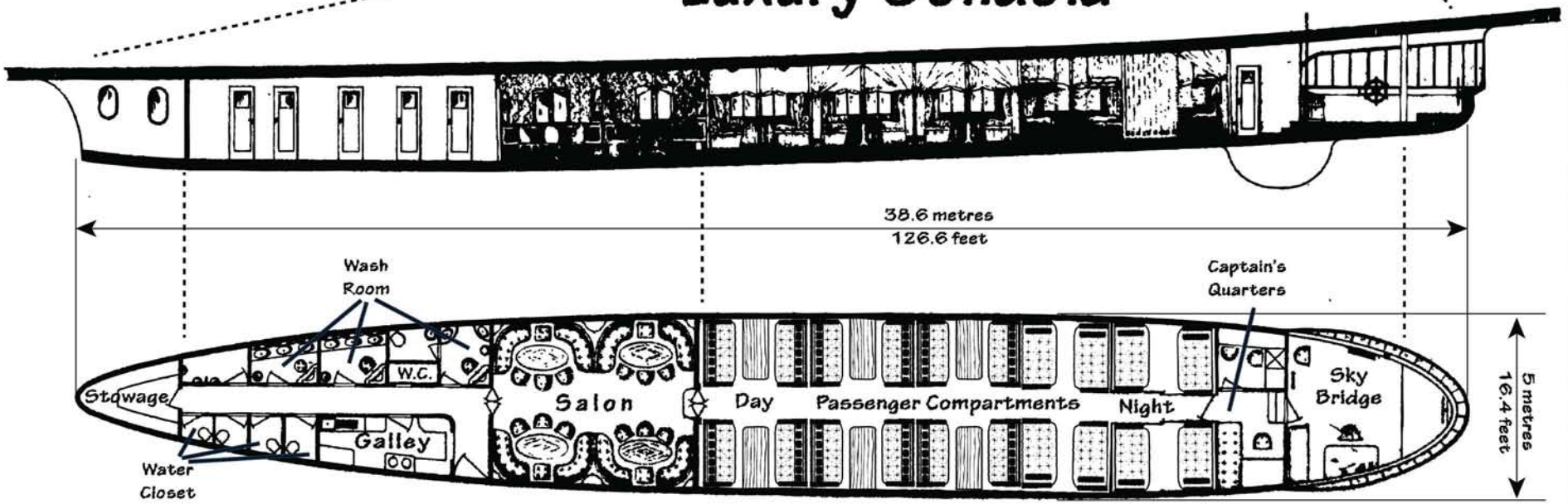
LONG DISTANCE PASSENGER ZEPPELIN

For long distance passenger and mail service

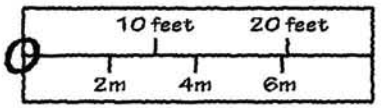


135,000 cubic metre hydrogen gas capacity

Luxury Gondola



Accommodations for 40 passengers besides the necessary crew. Each compartment converts from luxury seating to spacious sleeping berths (compartments shown above in both modalities).



For a while, airships ruled the skies in terms of passenger travel, but it was not to last. The three U.S. Navy airships (USS *Shenandoah*, *Akron*, and *Macon*) all came to untimely ends. The USS *Shenandoah* flew into a thunderstorm over Ohio and disintegrated, killing 14 crew; the USS *Akron* lost 73 of her 76 man crew when it crashed into the sea off the New Jersey shore in 1933; likewise, the USS *Macon* suffered structural failure of its upper fin while over the sea; 2 men died, however, the other 81 members of her crew survived thanks to the life jackets and inflatable rafts onboard. Britain too had its own airship disaster when the R-101, crashed in France with the loss of 48 onboard. However, it was the very public and tragic loss of the *Hindenburg* that effectively ended the public's affection for airships.

On 6th May 1937, the *Hindenburg* was approaching its mooring mast in Lakehurst, New Jersey, when it suddenly caught fire. Within 32 seconds flames consumed the craft, killing 35 people. Whereas other airship casualties had happened largely out of the public eye, a large crowd of people, including a radio news reporter, as well as film cameras that captured the whole incident, witnessed the Hindenburg disaster. The public, shocked by the images of the massive zeppelin turning so quickly into a fireball, lost confidence and the golden age of airships came to an end.

GLOBAL PERIL

By the middle of the '30s, as serious storm clouds were brewing in Europe and across the world, America was as isolationist as it had been in many years. The common man was coming to think more and more of war and conflict between nations as a blight of suffering born by the rank and file for the enrichment of the wealthy and privileged. In 1935, Congress passed a Neutrality Act prohibiting the United States from selling instruments of war to any of the countries involved in any dispute.

Germany

In 1933, Adolf Hitler ascended to the Chancellorship of the German government through a Byzantine agreement among several political parties, which was supposed to provide only superficial power to Hitler's National Socialist Party. Hitler plotted to gain greater influence and, after a new series of elections, the death of President Hindenburg, and the deployment of what amounted to government-sanctioned thugs throughout the country, Hitler eventually became the undisputed leader of the nation, with his proclamations having the force of law.

The goals of Hitler's government were to bring about the ascendancy of the German "master race" over the other races of the world, especially the Jewish race, which he saw at the heart of a global conspiracy. After consolidating power within Germany, Hitler began to build up the nation's military, which had been expressly forbidden by the treaty which had ended the Great War. In 1936, Hitler's armies marched into the Rhineland. None of the other European powers lifted a finger to stop him; emboldened, Hitler continued his policy of increasing the physical size of the German nation. In 1938 he annexed Austria. Later that same year he stepped into Czechoslovakia and threatened to go to war with the Czechs over alleged mistreatment of the German minority in the Sudetenland. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain arranged a conference in Munich between the Germans, Italians, French, and British in order to avoid war, at which the assembled powers essentially facilitated the handing over of the Sudetenland to Germany.

During this time in the United States, grave concern over Nazi activities in Europe manifested in calls for the investigation and, in some cases, the elimination of Germans and any and all organization with German heritage or German connections. This did not concern Hitler overmuch, if at all. After negotiating a completely unforeseen non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia in the fall of 1939, Germany invaded Poland on September 1. England and France, which had both pledged to defend Poland in just such an event in the hopes of frustrating Hitler's continued conquests and annexations, declared war, and World War II was joined.

Italy

Mussolini, the fascist dictator of Italy, invaded Ethiopia in 1935, intent on expanding Italy's hold on Africa. Although the country fell quickly, it became a drain on Italian resources while doing much to incite the wrath of the League of Nations, and especially of France and Great Britain. Mussolini joined in military alliance with Hitler but was unsuccessful in preventing Germany's annexation of Austria, which brought Nazis all the way to the Italian border. Italy invaded Albania in April of 1939 with the intention of using the country as a staging area for further domination of the Balkans.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 with a military coup that, while well organized, failed to take immediate control of the entire country. The fight, between right- and left-wing political groups, had been brewing throughout the politically polarizing years prior to the uprising.

More than a conflict within Spain itself, many within the international community saw the Spanish Civil War as a microcosm of a number of worldwide political divisions between various right- and left-wing orthodoxies. Because so many saw the conflict as so important, Germany, Italy, Soviet Russia, and other nations became directly involved. Germany and Italy on the side of the Nationalists, and Russia on the side of the more liberal Republicans. In addition, many volunteers from uninvolved nations, including the United States, joined the fight, forming a variety of International Brigades. In

Opposite: Zepellin Map by Dean Engelhardt

addition to being a political flashpoint, the conflict also served as a testing ground for technology that would see later use in World War II.

In 1939, the Nationalist army, led by General Francisco Franco, finally entered Madrid and the war was over. The Republican government, led at the time by Juan Negrín, fled the country.

The Rest of the World

In 1931, Japanese aggression in Manchuria concerned a great many world leaders as political fighting between the Japanese army on the Chinese mainland and the Japanese Imperial rulers in Tokyo resulted in a number of assassinations, attacks, and political intrigues. Although the League of Nations attempted to stop this and the other acts of national belligerence that continued throughout the decade, the organization, which had been established by the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the Great War, had no power greater than its individual member nations could exert. Thus, Manchurian aggression went largely unchecked, Germany's belligerence continued, and Italy's attempts at empire building were not successfully thwarted.

The Role of America

Even though most Americans were strongly anti-war and isolationist when the 1935 Neutrality Act was passed, the acts of aggression in Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as a general concern with the spread of fascism throughout the world, were making many U.S. citizens alarmed. As their minds changed, they became more and more convinced that the United States would eventually have to act.

Act America would—eventually. It would take a direct attack on Pearl Harbor to finally provoke the United States into joining what France and England had begun after Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939. But that is a story for the beginning of another era, and one that brings this one to a close.



ANOTHER NIGHT IN ARKHAM

Arkham, 1932. This once proud example of educated gentility took the Stock Market Crash right in the jaw. Most of the university students' rich daddies either took swan dives out of their 30th-floor corner offices or packed-up and headed for the hills when they saw that their four-figure salary went to two overnight. Arkham is my town. I watch over things and keep the worst elements down to keep Arkham from sliding to the level of Kingsport or Chicago. Sometimes the thankless jobs are the only ones worth doing. That's why I'm a cop.

Crime has been the only steady rise in employment in the last year. Most of the thugs I see sport the bugged eyes or thin lips that were once contained to that hellhole called Innsmouth. The U.S. military took care of that with all the finesse of a baseball bat on a wasp nest. Now the freak-frog refugees are spread all over the East coast.

Tonight I'm on a stakeout with the other boys at the precinct. We're watching for a gang of rumrunners who are bringing in a load of hooch from Canada. The warehouse is dark and deserted as a cathouse on Sunday morning. Hook's fallen asleep in the back seat. I'll wake him if this actually goes down. No use in all of us losing our beauty rest.

Gerard is the first to hear something. He points down the road where we can now see a cargo truck driving along with its lights off. It pulls up in front of the warehouse and the lights inside come on. Apparently there was someone home after all.

Murphy elbows Hook and we get our pieces out. Everyone is ready to go when I give the signal. The goons from the truck open a cargo door in the warehouse and pale golden light spills out. They're using lanterns in there to limit the light given off. Smart. That gives me a moment of hope that tonight might be worth our while. Most of the time these deliveries are handled by hired mooks that don't put that much thought into an operation. We might nab a boss in this bust if we play this right.

A hood brings around a forklift, and they're all occupied with getting a large crate out of the cargo bed of the truck, or watching their fellow lowlifes. Now's the time. We exit the car, leaving the doors open. We hustle to a side door of the warehouse while the bootleggers stay focused on the front and their crates. The door's locked… Gerard comes up with his lock pick gizmo and it opens with a soft click. Not bad, for a rookie. We can see the activity up front past some barrels and crates. As I peek over the scarred wood, I see a very shapely silhouette by the lantern light… Viper's here.

I look at my men and they see her too. This isn't a load of bootleg whiskey coming in. The Prince doesn't send his right hand to oversee the small stuff. Something big is happening, and we have to stop it.

When the others are in position, I stand, hold up my badge and announce loudly, "Arkham police! You are all under arrest on suspicion of violating the Volstead Act!"

The effect on the hired help is what one hopes to see. They scramble around, confused and unsure how to respond. Some cover their faces like I cared about their identities; others look like they are already resigned to their fate, waiting for the cuffs. The hardened ones reach for their weapons. Viper slowly turns around, as if I'd just called her name out at a dinner party. "Sergeant Donovan," she purrs, "how nice to see you again. And you brought friends." She flashes that thousand-dollar smile and stands there, daring me to fill her with lead.

As if to punctuate her words, guns start barking. Hook nails one poor bastard with the twin Tommys he insists on using. Armed men scatter, shooting at each other. Viper casually walks back behind her men like all this is nothing to concern her. She knows we want her alive for questioning. I divert my attention to other matters. A bruiser with a sledgehammer appears from behind a crate and is about to give me a pat on the back of the head. I roll across the dirty floor and get just enough distance to thrust the barrel of my shotgun into the center of his chest. The 8-gauge slug drives a hole a baseball could fit through, and that's all she wrote.

Murf takes a hit, but it doesn't look too bad. All the same, he takes no notice and keeps the bullets flying as he makes his way to Gerard and Hook. The shots coming at us are slowing down. Maybe we're winning. Either we are taking them out of the fight or they are running. I'm starting to feel pretty good about things.

That's when the world goes to Hell. I'm looking at one thug as he suddenly looks pained and then explodes in a splash of fire and gore. Viper's smiling face is visible over what remains of the torso of one of her own men. She's got a box on her back with tubes and hoses. A thick hose goes to a thing in her hand that looks for all the world like the lovechild of a fireman's hose and a shotgun. She has the expression a kid who's stolen the candy jar. She aims at another goon and he too explodes with a sickening splash and the smell of overcooked meat. In the split-second in which she glances my way, I yell out "FLOOR!"

We all hit the dirt as the air above is washed with red and white. I can feel my hair burning and the roar of Viper's machine. Suddenly it's quiet and I realize I'm still flesh and blood.

I sit up to see that she's cooked all of her men. The sound of a car screeching off alerts me and I run out front. She's gone, along with that machine of hers.

So the Prince has a new toy. This is going to be fun.



CHAPTER 9

SAMPLE PULP VILLAINS AND OTHER CHARACTERS

As well as all of the monsters and creatures detailed in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, this chapter provides a range of villains, non-player characters, and unusual monsters available for *Pulp Cthulhu* games.

VILLAIN HIT POINTS

While pulp heroes have double the number of hit points as regular *Call of Cthulhu* investigators, average Keeper controlled non-player characters' (NPC) hit points are **not** normally doubled: their hit points are determined by their CON + SIZ divided by ten.

Tougher villains may have their hit points doubled if deemed appropriate by the Keeper, but note that such tougher NPCs should be rare. Consider allowing key NPCs to have one or two pulp talents (see following) rather than necessarily increasing their hit points—pulp villains get to use Luck points to avoid death, so only make them even harder to kill when it is of particular significance to the plot and scope of your game.

Note: four characters in this chapter have had their hit points doubled: The Goop, The Raven, The Shard, and Caleb Lusk.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER PULP TALENTS

Some of the characters described in this chapter have a pulp talent. Normally, reserve pulp talents just for human NPCs as monsters already have special abilities that are essentially akin to pulp talents. It is advised that only important NPCs be allowed one or two pulp talents.

Here's a list of possible pulp talents for Keeper controlled characters:

- **Night Vision**: ignore penalty die for shooting in the dark.
- **Endurance**: may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die when making CON rolls (including to determine MOV rate for chases).
- **Stout Constitution**: may spend 10 Luck to reduce poison or disease damage and effects by half.
- **Tough Guy**: soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
- **Alert**: never surprised in combat.
- **Heavy Hitter**: may spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat (die type depended on the weapon being used, e.g. 1D3 for unarmed combat, 1D6 for a sword, etc.)
- **Nimble**: does not lose next action when "diving for cover" versus firearms.
- **Beady Eye**: does not suffer penalty die when "aiming" at a small target (Build –2), and may also fire into melee without a penalty die.
- **Outmaneuver**: character is considered to have one point higher Build when initiating a combat maneuver (e.g. Build 1 becomes Build 2 when comparing their hero to the target in a maneuver, reducing the likelihood of suffering a penalty on their Fighting roll).
- **Rapid Attack**: may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further attack in a single combat round.
- **Fleet Footed**: may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.
- **Quick Draw**: does not need to have their firearm "readied" to gain +50 DEX when determining position in the DEX order for combat.
- **Rapid Fire**: ignores penalty die for multiple handgun shots.
- **Resilient**: may spend 10 Luck points to shrug-off up to 5 points of Sanity loss.
- **Strong Willed**: may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die when making POW rolls.

Opposite: Pulp Villains by Jonathan Wyke

- **Psychic Power**: choose one psychic power (Clairvoyance, Divination, Medium, Psychometry, or Telekinesis).
- **Gadget**: choose or create one weird science gadget.

SAMPLE PULP VILLAINS AND OTHER CHARACTERS

Silas Caravaggio



Ruthless, greedy, power-mad, and murderous are all words used to describe Silas Caravaggio, the kingpin of a vast criminal enterprise that stretches around the world. Whether it is arms dealing, drugs, criminal rackets, or political maneuvering, somewhere behind the scenes lurks Caravaggio. His name is a byword for fear within the criminal community; gang bosses would rather keep sending a share of the profits to "Mr. C" than to receive a visit from him or his minions.

What he looks like is uncertain, as Caravaggio is only ever seen wearing a pale gray mask, which covers two-thirds of his face (apparently to disguise an old war wound). He stands just over six feet tall and seems to possess a cunning intellect. Combined together, such attributes make him the topic of many stories whispered amongst both the criminal and law enforcement communities. Of those that have crossed him, many have opted for suicide rather than meet the man face-to-face; such is the fear he inspires.

Whether he wishes to be the richest person on Earth, or if he wishes to simply control the Earth is unknown. Whatever his plan, only the foolish choose to make an enemy of Caravaggio.

SILAS CARAVAGGIO, *criminal mastermind*

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 90	**DEX** 60	**INT** 100
APP 35*	**POW** 80	**EDU** 93	**SAN** 50	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** 80

**With mask (unknown what's beneath the mask).*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
.45 auto	80% (40/16), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Appraise 80%, Art/Craft (Piano) 45%, Credit Rating 90%, Disguise 80%, Intimidate 90%, Law 50%, Natural World 60%, Occult 40%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 70%.
Languages: Africaans 30%, English 93%, French 70%, German 50%, Italian 60%, Latin 40%, Chinese 30%.

Pulp Talent

Strong Willed: may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die when making POW rolls.

Backstory

- **Description**: frightening—very tall, face hidden behind a pale gray mask.
- **Traits**: cold, calculating, vengeful.
- **Injuries & Scars**: apparently the mask hides a disfiguring war wound (or does it?)

Armor: 1-point bulletproof vest.

CARAVAGGIO HEAVY, *typical thug (mook)*

STR 60	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 40
APP 50	**POW** 40	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 40	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3, or brass knuckles, 1D3+1
Blackjack	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
.32 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Thompson SMG	45% (22/9), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 40%, Jump 30%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 40%, Throw 30%.
Armor: none.

The Jade Emperor



The Jade Emperor is the head of a criminal organization whose tentacles reach to many communities across the world. His followers are highly devoted, willingly sacrificing their lives at their master's whim. Indeed, most regard him with adoration, as each year, he provides lavish street parties for many poor

communities and bestows gifts of money to particularly hard-working families.

His age is uncertain; rumors circulate that he is very old indeed. Certain records, alleged to exist in China, recount a person calling themselves the Jade Emperor back in the 1700s. It is presumed that the name is an honorific passed down a secret line.

In reality, the Jade Emperor is an insane and evil man. Born some two hundred years ago, he is a devoted follower of Nyarlathotep who has magically prolonged his life so that he can better serve his dark master. To what foul ends the Jade Emperor is working is unknown, but his apparent consuming passion is the acquisition of R'lyehian artifacts and texts concerning the "Great Sleeper." Whether such items and knowledge are elements in some elaborate scheme seems uncertain. Only his inner circle of followers are privy to his plans, and even then, not all of them know for sure just what the Jade Emperor's end goal really is. More than once he has purged the members of his inner circle for questioning his ambitions.

THE JADE EMPEROR, *underworld mystic*

STR 60	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 80	**INT** 70
APP 50	**POW** 120	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 00	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 24	**Luck:** 80

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3, or dagger, 1D4+1
Darts	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+poison*
Dodge	40% (20/8)

**Poison: each dart is coated in poison, taking 1 round to act, causing 2D6 damage and muscle spasms (the target is incapacitated for 1D10+5 rounds). An Extreme CON roll reduces all effects by half (a critical success negates the muscle spams and reduces damage by half).*

Skills

Art/Craft (Calligraphy) 60%, Credit Rating 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, History 60%, Intimidate 60%, Natural World 70%, Occult 80%, Persuade 50%, Psychic (Telekinesis) 80%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 80%, Stealth 45%, Throw 70%.
Languages: Arabic 20%, Chinese 80%, English 60%, Greek 40%, R'lyehian 30%, Latin 50%.

Pulp Talent

Psychic Power: Telekinesis.

Backstory

- **Description**: wears traditional Chinese costume, long mustache and wispy beard, bright green eyes.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: devotee of Nyarlathotep.
- **Traits**: quiet and unassuming.

Spells: Cloak of Fire**, Cloud Memory, Death Spell, Contact Nyarlathotep, Summon and Bind Hunting Horror, others at the Keeper's discretion.
***See Villainous Spells, page 128.*
Armor: none.



Feng Wāng

Feng Wāng is possibly the Jade Emperor's most trusted accomplice; nearly always seen in his presence. Wāng is often sent to represent the Jade Emperor in business transactions or to meter out punishment to those foolish enough to have attempted to swindle or cross his master.

FENG WĀNG, *trusted emissary*

STR 80	**CON** 90	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 70	**INT** 60
APP 40	**POW** 40	**EDU** 40	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** 40

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (Wāng will spend Luck to buy second attacks)

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife, 1D4+2+1D4
Dadao	70% (35/14), damage 1D8+2+1D4
Dragon Fist*	80% (40/16), damage 1D8+2+1D4, or entangle maneuver
Dodge	40% (20/8)

**The Dragon Fist is a chain with a heavy weight on either end. May be used to cause blunt damage, or can be used with a successful combat maneuver to either entangle a target (target must spend a round untangling themselves with a DEX roll) or disarm a target.*

Skills

Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, History 40%, Intimidate 60%, Occult 30%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 65%, Throw 60%.
Languages: Chinese 60%, English 50%, R'lyehian 5%.

Pulp Talent

Fleet Footed: may spend 10 Luck to avoid being "outnumbered" in melee combat for one combat encounter.

Backstory

- **Description**: mid-30s, smartly dressed in a three-piece suit.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: worshipper of Nyarlathotep.
- **Significant People**: The Jade Emperor.

- **Traits**: cocky and cruel.
- **Injuries & Scars**: long scar down the left side of his face.

Armor: none.
Spells: Cloud Memory.

SERVANT OF THE JADE EMPEROR, *typical minion (mook)*

STR 70	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 50
APP 50	**POW** 40	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 40	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3, or small knife, 1D4.
Dadao	60% (30/12), damage 1D8+2
Garrote	40% (20/8), damage 1D6, victim requires successful maneuver to break free or suffers 1d6 per round each round.
.32 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 60%, Jump 40%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 50%, Throw 50%.
Languages: Chinese 60%, English 30%.

Armor: none.

Professor Cobalt



Once a mild-mannered scientist, Professor Cobalt's life was forever changed the day the mi-go took his brain! The mi-go had watched the professor for some time, as they were interested in his experiments to develop machines with organic interfaces. The professor theorized that one day organic components (such as brains, nervous systems, and so on) could be wired into machines, giving them a form of intelligence. Such machines might be able to "feel" and act in a human-like manner, performing mundane and repetitive tasks, freeing mankind to spend time on higher pursuits and leisure. Mi-go agents approached the professor, who willingly agreed to a deal that would enable him see the universe and learn the hidden truths of the cosmos. Thus, Professor Cobalt agreed to have his brain removed and swapped with an organic construct that housed the intelligence of an individual mi-go.

While the professor's brain is off amongst the stars (safely housed in its new brain cylinder), the mi-go "brain" now has access to Cobalt's body, able to conduct its own experiments right in the middle of human society. Such experiments are unorthodox, to say the least. It appears the mi-go brain is running a series of tests upon a number of human subjects (willing or unwilling is uncertain). Some tests seem to concern mixing human, animal, and alien anatomies, while others are centered on bizarre experiments with the human mind—one appears to be a form of hypnosis which turns the subjects into homicidal killers, while another seems to be about unleashing mankind's latent (yet hidden) psychic abilities. It is unlikely that Professor Cobalt's brain will ever be reunited with its body, so for now, at least, the mi-go-Cobalt hybrid appears free to undertake whatever avenues of research it desires.

PROFESSOR COBALT, *mi-go scientist*

STR 50	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 60	**INT** 80
APP 70	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 50

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	55% (27/11), damage 1D3, or by weapon
Death ray	60% (30/12), damage 1D10+5, ignores armor.
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Computer Use 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Hypnosis 70%, Intimidate 50%, Listen 60%, Medicine 90%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 30%, Science (any) 80%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%.

Special Abilities

Hypnosis 70% (opposed roll versus target's POW); success means the target is under the control of Professor Cobalt for a period of 1D6 hours. In addition, the professor can speak telepathically to humans, costing 1 magic point per 5 rounds. A human can resist the communication with a successful opposed POW roll.

Backstory

- **Description**: mid-50s, longish white hair and lab coat.
- **Injuries & Scars**: his hair hides a scar running around the top of his head (from where his brain was removed).

Armor: none; while the body is human, the brain is a mi-go construct and all piercing weapons (inc. bullets) do minimum damage to the brain (in theory the brain could be moved to a new host).
Spells: Dominate, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Shrivelling.
Sanity loss: 1/1D4 Sanity points if Professor Cobalt's mi-go brain is somehow revealed.

The Goop



Half man, half shoggoth, all monster! How the Goop came to exist is unknown. Some say he was an Antarctic explorer who saw too much, others that he is the foul progeny of an obscene military experiment to create a super-soldier, but most tend to believe he just crawled up from the sewers one day. Of course, if you already know about the Goop, then you're already dead—or soon will be!

A master of disguise, the Goop is able to wear the faces of its victims, allowing it to blend into society. It could be your next-door neighbor, your boss, or little Tommy from down the block—it could be anyone or anything! A few have come close to unmasking the Goop but either they have been mistaken or he's already left town and the trail of clues has dried up. Take Wendy Padmoore, an up-and-coming journalist who spent months piecing together information, eventually coming up with a theory that a watch repairer called Mr. Sparks was, in fact, some sort of serial killer. Wendy told her boss that she was going to tail Mr. Sparks to see if she could gain some hard evidence of his crimes, but a day later she returned to the newspaper offices telling her boss she had been wrong—Mr. Sparks was just a kindly old watch repairer after all. It wasn't long before Wendy announced she was leaving to take a job in New York City—"A new hunting ground for her to get her teeth into…"

Note that the Goop is not a Shoggoth Lord (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 307) as it is instead some weird conjoining of both human and shoggoth matter. Whether another shoggoth would consider "him" a friend or just another meal is up for debate.

Is the Goop simply a predator looking for its next meal, or does it have some grander plan in mind? If you take note of who the Goop has been consuming recently, then the evidence seems to suggest that he either particularly relishes the taste of biologists, or he is trying to learn something by ingesting their brains. Perhaps he's reaching the time when he'll give birth to many little Goops?

THE GOOP, *human-shoggoth hybrid horror*

STR 120	**CON** 120	**SIZ** 90*	**DEX** 90	**INT** 85
APP 50*	**POW** 60	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 42
DB: +2D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 10	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** 60

**Can adjust its mass to appear smaller or larger, likewise its physical features.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 or 2 (1 by weapon, 2 by pseudopods, or consume)

- **Pseudopods**: able to lash out with its powerful pseudopod fists, causing crushing damage.
- **Consume**: engulfs its prey into its gelatinous body where it can be digested. While being digested, the victim suffers 1D6+2 hit points damage each round from the caustic acids and digestive fluids breaking down the unfortunate's body. Those engulfed may attempt to break free each round by an opposed STR roll. The Goop may only feed on one victim at a time, and while feeding (in the rounds following the consume attack), the Goop can still lash out with its pseudopod fists.

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage by weapon, or 1D6+2D6 for pseudopods, or consume for 1D6+2 per round
Consume	(mnvr), damage 1D6+2 per round, see note
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Charm 55%, Climb 80%, Intimidate 60%, Jump 45%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 50%, Stealth 60%, Throw 70%.

Special Ability

Consume Likeness: once a victim has been completely consumed the Goop is able to outwardly appear like the victim in every detail, this includes possessing the victim's memories.

Consume Intelligence: for every brain devoured, the Goop permanently gains 1 point of Intelligence, as well as the victim's memories.

Backstory

- **Description**: whoever he feels like (normally his last victim).
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: survival of the fittest.
- **Traits**: very cunning, often quite logical in his approach.

Armor: none, but (1) fire and electrical attacks do only half damage; (2) physical weapons such as firearms and knives do only 1 point of damage per hit; (3) the Goop regenerates 1 hit points per round.

Sanity loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see the Goop in its true form. Keepers may add 1/1D3 Sanity point loss for those witnessing it change from human to semi-shoggoth form.

Scarlet Arachnis



The Scarlet Arachnis is a devoted worshipper of Shub-Niggurath, ever eager to perform rites and sacrifices to the Dark Mother. Hailing from the Southern States, she has cut a swathe of intrigues from New Orleans to California, and beyond.

She once was a member of a Shub-Niggurath cult, only to have it destroyed when meddlesome outsiders caught on to the cult's mission, and so now she prefers to work solo. From time-to-time she will indoctrinate and gather a small coterie of loyal followers to her cause when attempting a large-scale scheme; however, mostly she works alone.

Her mode of operation usually involves identifying a wealthy sap, with whom she can charm and ingratiate herself. She then marries the target, gaining his wealth, and then sacrifices him to her god. Each victim makes her wealthier and also increases her favor with Shub-Niggurath. To what end her schemes of deceit and murder are culminating in is unknown.

SCARLET ARACHNIS, *siren of evil*

STR 60	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 65	**INT** 70
APP 95	**POW** 70	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 70

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 65% (32/13), damage 1D3, or by weapon
.25 Derringer 70% (35/14), damage 1D6
.38 auto 70% (35/14), damage 1D10
Dodge 33% (16/6)

Skills

Appraise 50%, Art/Craft (Sing), Charm 90%, Credit Rating 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Disguise 60%, Intimidate 40%, Listen 40%, First Aid 50%, Occult 40%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 60%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 60%, Throw 45%.

Pulp Talent

Rapid Attack: may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further attack in a single combat round.

Backstory

- **Description**: appears as mid-20s, glamorous brunette.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: worshipper of Shub-Niggurath.
- **Significant People:** whoever is her latest target.
- **Traits**: charming and disarming.

Armor: none.

Spells: Deflect Harm*, Siren's Song*, Vanish*.

**See Villainous Spells, page 129.*

The Grave Robber (A.K.A. Samuel Paterson)



Samuel Paterson is a serial killer with a particular mission. When he began his spree of wanton murder, he was just another deranged killer with a sick desire to somehow find fame through his dark exploits. A turning point came when he broke into the home of old Ben Hamm. Intending to murder the old man, Paterson was surprised to find Hamm in the process of moving a corpse to an incinerator he had in the cellar. Somewhat startled, Hamm saw something in Paterson's eyes and realized he had found a kindred spirit. It didn't take long for Paterson to accept the old man's offer of a "special education."

The two became inseparable, with Hamm teaching Paterson about the "old ways," and how, like his father before him, he had come to learn about the process of resurrection. Hamm taught his young protégé about how a body could be rendered down to the essential salts of life, and how these salts (if carefully gathered and stored) could be used to bring back the dead, allowing for the acquisition of great wisdom and power.

Since that time, Paterson has struck out on his own (he carries Hamm's essential salts with him wherever he goes), but now he returns to the graves of those he has murdered in order to burn his victim's bodies and render them to "the salts." Never staying in one place too long, Paterson has amassed a collection of essential salts, as well as the name of "The Grave Robber" by one particularly insightful local newspaper.

Just what Paterson is learning from the use of the Resurrection spell is a mystery. Perhaps he is seeking something, or maybe he is building an army that one day he will unleash upon an unsuspecting world. Either way, whatever he does, it is unlikely to be good.

THE GRAVE ROBBER, *insane murderer and resurrectionist*

STR 90	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 70	**INT** 60
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 00	**HP** 16
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 50

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6
Cosh	80% (40/16), damage 1D8+1D6
Machete	80% (40/16), damage 1D8+1D6
Crossbow	60% (30/12), damage 1D8 + 2
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Disguise 55%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 30%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 50%, Throw 40%.

Pulp Talents

Alert: never surprised in combat.
Heavy Hitter: spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat.

Backstory

- **Description**: late 20s, tall and broad, scruffy, workman-like.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: insane desire to kill and collect his victim's ashes.
- **Significant People**: Ben Hamm.
- **Treasured Possessions**: Ben Hamm (in a tin, in his pocket), Hamm's "Book o' Learning" (a tome containing the Resurrection spell).
- **Traits**: portrays an affable persona to hide his sullen and detached psyche.

Armor: none.
Spells: Resurrection.

Y'ssiss (A.K.A. Susan Pulaski)



Susan Pulaski is the persona and form currently taken by Y'ssiss, a serpent man who aims to unleash a wave of terror upon mankind.

Awoken from centuries of slumber, Y'ssiss found himself alone. The great civilization of serpent people had gone and the world was now swarming with ape-men. Y'ssiss realized he had been roused from his sleep too early, but rather than simply allow himself to return to torpor, he saw the event as a sign from Yig; a sign that he would be the one to bring about the third great serpent man civilization. He believes Yig has appointed him with the task to prepare the way for his brothers and take back the world from the ape-men. Since that day, Y'ssiss has taken the form of a wealthy and influential dilettante, Susan Pulaski. Before Y'ssiss claimed her life, Pulaski was just another wealthy socialite, who had little interest in anything but herself; however, nowadays she (Y'ssiss) privately sponsors expeditions and archaeological digs across the world. Using Pulaski's form and wealth, Y'ssiss is sending teams of explorers and archaeologists to unearth the remnants of the lost serpent world, gathering technology, as well as serpent people stasis chambers, and transporting it all to a vast estate of private land in Arizona. The teams sent out are well paid not to ask questions, and to ensure that whatever they uncover is safely transported to the Pulaski estate. Lately, more and more of these teams include a number of serpent folk (awoken by Y'ssiss) disguised as humans, as it has become apparent that inquisitive archaeologists tend to ask too many questions, and want to look (too closely) at the relics they are uncovering for Pulaski. In some cases, the disguised serpent men have had to dispose of their team members, putting such deaths down as accidents.

Y'ssiss has decided an outright war with the ape-men would be a foolish step. He believes the ape-men can be manipulated into their own war, a war that will devastate the human population, making humanity weak and easier to conquer. To this end, Y'ssiss is placing human-disguised serpent people into positions of power to foster distrust and paranoia, in order to cultivate the right atmosphere to push humanity into war with itself. Already, serpents walk the corridors of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and if all goes to plan, soon a serpent man will control the White House.

Susan Pulaski / Y'ssiss, *serpent man*

STR 80	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 70	**INT** 80
APP 70*	**POW** 60	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 12
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** 60

**As Susan Pulaski.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw, bite, or weapon)

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or by weapon
Bite	40% (20/8), damage 1D8+1D4 + poison
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Computer Use 40%, Credit Rating 89%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Intimidate 70%, Listen 40%, Persuade 60%, Psychology (Human) 40%, Science (Biology) 60%, Science (Chemistry) 70%, Science (Physics) 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 50%.

Special Abilities

Poison: victim must succeed with Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

VILLAINOUS SPELLS

Bind Enemy

- **Cost**: variable magic points
- **Casting time**: 1 day

Either by physical attack or magical attack, the spell renders the target unable to harm the caster for the next seven days. A variable number of magic points are sacrificed into a small effigy of the target—the caster must invest more magic points than the target possesses for the spell to work. For the spell to take effect the caster must win an opposed POW roll with the target. If the target wins, the spell fails.

It normally takes a day to gather the materials, construct the effigy and chant the ritual that seals the magic points into the effigy. The effigy must contain a portion of the target (this could be a few hairs, nail clippings, blood from the target, or something else of a personal nature). The spell is broken if the caster attacks the target or if the effigy is destroyed.

Circle Of Nausea

- **Cost**: 4 magic points; 2 Sanity points
- **Casting time**: 5 minutes

Creates a powerful protective circle around the caster that causes nausea and pain for anyone approaching it. The caster must inscribe a circle on the ground in chalk and then fortify the circle with four enchanted opal stones—one at each of the four cardinal points of the compass. Enchanting the stones requires the previous sacrifice of 4 magic points into each.

Breaching the circle requires an opposed POW roll between the caster and the character wishing entry. Anyone who touches the circle and who fails the POW struggle vomits for the next five minutes or until he or she retreats at least 100 yards away (either way they are helpless to act against the caster). If anyone successfully breaches the circle, the spell collapses.

Cloak Of Fire

- **Cost**: 12 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time**: 1 round

The spell wreathes the caster in weaving, glittering points of light, each spark dragging a luminous trail and flickering white-hot. Sealed within the cloak, the caster rises several inches off the floor. While the spell is in effect, double the caster's MOV and grant a bonus die to DEX rolls (including Dodge). Impose one penalty die on all attacks against the caster. Anyone attacking with unarmed attacks (fist, kick) suffers 1D6 damage. The spell lasts for 4D4 rounds. Viewing the cloak in action costs 1/1D3 Sanity points.

If the caster touches someone, treat it as a melee attack using the caster's Fighting (Brawl) skill, doing 1D6 hit points of damage, or if using a weapon, add the melee weapon damage as well. Note that the caster also suffers half of that rolled fire damage (round down) as his or her skin and flesh flash away to feed the cloak's magical surface. It is possible that this spell could lower the caster's hit points enough to kill.

The Jade Emperor has mastered this spell and is able to utilize a deeper version: by expending an additional 4 magic points (per round), the Emperor can unleash a flaming tentacle at a designated victim. This is a melee attack and is made with one bonus die. The victim may attempt to Dodge or fight back. The fiery assault delivers 1D10+2 damage, melting flesh in horrific ways.

Domination Serum: ten drops of this colorless serum makes a target (if they fail to make a Hard Con roll) very suggestible to serpent people. The victim will do almost anything for serpent people, short of endangering his or her own life or the lives of loved ones. The serum metabolizes slowly, taking 1D10+10 days for a victim to be free of its effects, provided no more is imbibed in the meantime.

Backstory

- **Description**: appears as Susan Pulaski (age 32, dark hair and glasses, well dressed in expensive clothing).
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: praise Yig!
- **Traits**: plays the role of a somewhat self-obsessed, wealthy spinster.

Armor: 1-point scales.
Spells: Bind Enemy*, Consume Likeness, Contact Yig, Deflect Harm*, The Red Sign, Summon/Bind Star Vampire, Wither Limb, Wrack.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see Susan Pulaski's true form.
**See Villainous Spells, above.*

VILLAINOUS SPELLS

Deflect Harm

- **Cost**: 1 magic point; 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time**: Instantaneous

A defensive spell allowing the caster to negate various physical attacks by invoking the secret names of the Outer Gods. The caster intones the names and holds out a hand toward the source of attack. Until dropping the hand, the caster may deflect successive attacks by expending magic points equal to the rolled damage for each attack. If an attack would have missed, no magic points are expended. Upon dropping of the hand, the spell ends.

The spell may be recast. The caster may deflect any number of attacks until out of magic points—the caster may choose to continue the spell by burning hit points (this may be counterproductive!) He or she may choose which attacks to deflect and from which attacks to take damage, but must choose before knowing what the actual damage will be. Lacking the points to stop a particular attack, the spell ends and the attack hits or misses as it would in ordinary circumstances.

Siren's Song

- **Cost**: 1 magic point; 5 Sanity points
- **Casting time**: 2 rounds

Through an enchanting song or melody, the caster beguiles a target into believing that the caster is all that his or her heart desires. For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the target. If successful, the target acts as if completely charmed by the caster—willing to act and say as the caster desires. If the target is compelled to undertake an action that would inflict harm on another whom the target loves, or upon the target him or herself, a second opposed POW roll may be called for.

The spell affects all who hear the song, with each person affected needing to win an opposed POW roll with the caster to be unaffected. The spell lasts for 4D10 hours.

Vanish

- **Cost**: 5 magic points; 1 Sanity point; 10 POW to create a talisman
- **Casting time**: Instantaneous

The caster vanishes in a puff of smoke, to reappear in a prepared location. The location is defined by creating a talisman—usually a box containing components of the caster's body such as hair, teeth or nails. The box is magically prepared, taking about a day and the sorcerer must sacrifice 10 POW (this is a one-time cost). The location of the box might be as far as several hundred miles distant. More than one box might be prepared, allowing the caster to choose from a number of escape routes.

Taking but a moment to cast, the wizard spends the necessary magic and Sanity points to enact the spell. The spell may be cast any number of times. If the box is destroyed or opened and its contents scattered, the box is desecrated and the caster must prepare a new one and invest a further 10 POW.

The Raven (A.K.A. Walter Short)

Just what made Walter Short put on the Raven's mask and black trench coat is uncertain. Perhaps he had had enough of gangsters acting with impunity, or he was sick of rising criminality and violence on his home streets. Maybe he just thought he could do better than the police and that it was time for an honest man to take a stand.



Each night, Walter Short puts aside his daily life of newspaper vendor and takes up the mantle of the Raven, the crime-fighting scourge of the underworld. Well, that is what Walter thinks. Unfortunately, the Raven is more of a joke than a threat to the criminal fraternity; his attempts at combating organized crime have been lackluster, although he has had some success capturing a few street thugs and pickpockets and depositing them at the local police precinct.

Despite some early setbacks, the Raven is learning. Rather than take the fight directly to the criminals, he is watching them. Hidden on rooftops, the Raven spies on the criminals, cataloging their exploits and building evidence, which he aims to pass on to the police or newspapers.

Keeper note: the Raven is likely to be watching when the heroes decide to break into a building, kidnap a cultist, or some such other possible escapade. Perhaps he decides to keep a

close watch on this group of ne'er-do-wells, cataloging their exploits in order to expose their "criminal" antics. Maybe they won't notice him at first but, as time passes, his dark shadow might come to haunt them, dogging their tracks and being an ever-present witness to their deeds—forcing the heroes to face up to the consequences of their actions.

The Raven can be an annoyance, a potential ally, or simply an unusual sidetrack.

THE RAVEN, *masked vigilante*

STR 70	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 90	**INT** 65
APP 60	**POW** 80	**EDU** 40	**SAN** 80	**HP** 26
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** 80

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4 (+1 for brass knuckles)
Cosh	80% (40/16), damage 1D8+1D4
.32 revolver	60% (30/12), damage 1D8
Thompson SMG	40% (20/8), damage 1D10 + 2
Dodge	40% (20/8)

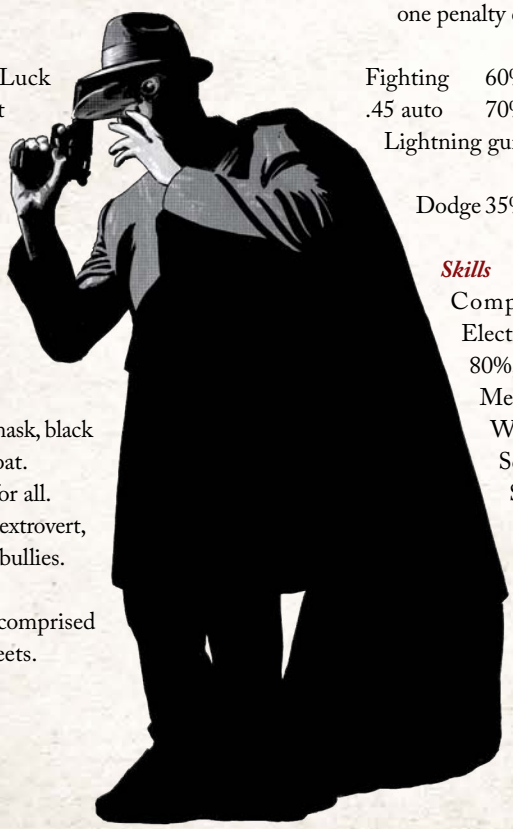
Skills

Climb 70%, First Aid 40%, Jump 60%, Intimidate 50%, Listen 40%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 70%, Swim 50%, Throw 50%.

Pulp Talents

Tough Guy: may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.

Heavy Hitter: may spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat.



Backstory

- **Description**: black raven mask, black fedora hat, black trench coat.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: justice for all.
- **Traits**: slightly egocentric, extrovert, compelled to stand-up to bullies.

Armor: 4-point body armor comprised of hard leather and metal sheets.

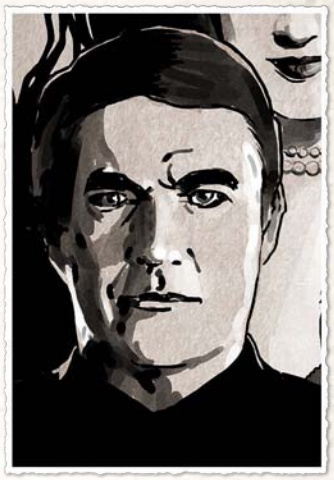
The Shard, *twisted Yithian*

For details about the Shard and the Ambrosia Foundation, see Chapter 3: Pulp Organizations.

STR 70*	**CON** 65*	**SIZ** 70*	**DEX** 70*	**INT** 120
APP 70*	**POW** 80	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 26
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 80

**The statistics here are for the Shard's current body.*

Combat



Attacks per round: 2 (the Lightning Gun may only be fired once each round).

- Lightning gun: the Shard has constructed a lightning gun variant, with 25 charges, and taking 1 round to reload. As many charges as desired may be fired as a single shot, however, each charge past 5 fired at once gives a 5% accumulating chance of burning out the gun (roll separately to determine burn out). The gun has a basic range of 100 yards. For each 100 yards fired past that base apply one penalty die to the roll to hit.

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
.45 auto	70% (34/14), damage 1D10 + 2
Lightning gun	50% (25/19), damage 1D10 per ***charg***e (cumulative)
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Computer Use 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 60%, Electrical Repair 80%, History 100%, Intimidate 80%, Languages (any desired) 70%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 80%, Medicine 50%, Natural World 50%, Occult 90%, Psychology 40%, Science (any desired) 90%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%.

Special Abilities

Mind Jump; able to move its consciousness from one body to another (usually human) by winning an opposed POW roll with the target body. The consciousness of the body possessed is destroyed in the process.

Pulp Talents

Gadget: choose or create one weird science gadget.
Alert: never surprised in combat.

Backstory

- **Description**: currently appears as a 38-year-old male named Dan Herbert.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** engineer humanity to a level of technology commensurate to enable escape from his earthly prison.
- **Traits**: cunning, manipulative, views humanity as nothing more than animals to trained.

Armor: none.
Spells: Circle of Nausea*, Dominate, Shrivelling.
**See Villainous Spells, page 128.*
Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to comprehend that the Shard is one of the Great Race.



"Captain" Caleb Lusk, *master of the Grey Tigers*

For details about Caleb Lusk and his Grey Tigers, see Chapter 3: Pulp Organizations.

Note: Lusk is now more than human due to his consumption of "unusual" meat.

STR 150	**CON** 120	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 90	**INT** 60
APP 45	**POW** 90	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 00	**HP** 36
DB: +2D6	**Build:** 3	**Move:** 10	**MP:** 18	**Luck:** 80

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 or 1 (2 melee, 1 firearm)

Fighting	100% (50/20), damage 1D4+2D6
Hunting knife	100% (50/20), damage 1D8+2D6
.45 auto	60% (30/12), damage 1D10 + 2
Elephant gun	90% (45/18), damage 3D6 + 4
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Climb 80%, First Aid 50%, Jump 70%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 60%, Navigate 50%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 70%, Stealth 70%, Survival (various) 70%, Swim 60%, Throw 60%.

Pulp Talents

Tough Guy: may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
Fleet Footed: may spend 10 Luck to avoid being "outnumbered" in melee combat for one combat encounter.

Backstory

- **Description**: grizzled, sunbaked leathery skin, with piercing blue eyes.
- **Ideology/Beliefs**: to hunt is to live.
- **Traits**: cruel, bitter and very hard-boiled.

Armor: 1-point body armor comprised of hardened skin.

GENERIC CHARACTERS

Beat Cop

STR 80	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 55	**INT** 60
APP 50	**POW** 65	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 65	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 13	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4, or nightstick 1D6+1D4
.38 revolver	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	27% (13/5)

Skills

Charm 35%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 26%, Drive Auto 45%, First Aid 45%, Law 25%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 40%.

Armor: None.

Police Detective

STR 65	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 55	**INT** 65
APP 45	**POW** 70	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 70	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3
.38 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	27% (13/5)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 30%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 38%, Intimidate 60%, Law 50%, Listen 40%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 44%.

Armor: none.

Nosy Journalist

STR 45	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 50	**INT** 80
APP 50	**POW** 70	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 70	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3

Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Art/Craft (Photography) 65%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 24%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 70%, Law 10%, Library Use 65%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 40%.

Armor: none.

Federal Agent

STR 55	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 65	**INT** 80
APP 50	**POW** 45	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 45	**HP** 14
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3

.32 auto 50% (25/10), damage 1D8

Dodge 32% (16/6)

Skills

Accounting 25%, Charm 45%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 28%, Drive Auto 60%, Intimidate 60%, Law 20%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 25%.

Armor: none.



Federal Agent and Malevolent Spirit by Reuben Dodd

National Guard

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 70	**INT** 60
APP 50	**POW** 50	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 50	**HP** 12
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4

.30 carbine rifle 40% (20/8), damage 2D6

Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 60%, Intimidate 40%, Navigate 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Track 35%.

Armor: none.

PULP MONSTERS

Tyrannosaurus Rex

Living in the Cretaceous Period, over 60 million years ago, the Tyrannosaurus Rex reached up to 40 feet in length and 13 feet tall.

STR	335	(10D6+32 × 5)
CON	175	(4D6+21 × 5)
SIZ	265	(6D6+32 × 5)
POW	65	(2D6+6 × 5)
DEX	80	(2D6+9 × 5)

HP: 44

Average DB: +6D6

Average Build: 7

Move: 12

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite, tear with its foreclaws, or kick).

Grab and bite (maneuver): grabs its prey with its foreclaws and then tears with its bite.

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 2D6 + DB, or Kick 1D6 + DB

Grab and Bite (mnvr) damage 1D6 + DB, following round bite for 2D6 + DB

Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Jump 50%, Listen 45%, Sense 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 50%.

Armor: 10-point hide.

Velociraptor

Lived over 70 million years ago during the later part of the Cretaceous Period, the velociraptor was 6.8 feet long and 1.6 feet high. Believed to hunt in packs (1D6+3 encountered together).

STR	80	(3D6+6 × 5)
CON	65	(2D6+6 × 5)
SIZ	45	(1D6+6 × 5)
POW	65	(2D6+6 × 5)
DEX	100	(4D6+6 × 5)

HP: 11
Average DB: +1D4
Average Build: 1
Move: 12

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite or tear).
Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D6 + DB
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Jump 70%, Listen 45%, Sense 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 40%.

Armor: 3-point hide.

Malevolent Spirit

Whether an alien intelligence from between the stars or the unquiet spirit of a deceased human, the malevolent essence is consumed with hate and an unquenching desire to interact with the physical word. It may be the spirit is jealous, wishing to possess a physical body in order to cause harm and chaos. Alternatively, the spirit is somehow alien to the Earth and its presence is somehow inimical to human life.

STR	*	(+20)
CON	*	
SIZ	*	
POW	80	(3D6+6 × 5)
DEX	*	
INT	85	(4D6+3 × 5)

HP: *
MP: 16**
** When possessing a physical body, characteristics are determined by the body that the spirit possesses. The spirit presence increases its host's strength (+20); adjust damage bonus accordingly. If the possessed body is reduced to zero hit points, the spirit must depart and find a new body.*
*** Treat magic points as hit points for a spirit.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (psychic attack or physical combat if it has possessed a body).

Psychic Attack Opposed **POW** roll with target, damage 1D10 magic points.
Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 1D6 + DB
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Sense Life 60%.

Armor: none.
Spells: none or 1D6 at the Keeper's discretion.
Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 for seeing a spirit.



Robot

Robots tend to come in two varieties: giant or killer. Normally created by mad scientists, such mechanized creatures may start as benevolent helpers which become faulty, or are designed to aid the scientist in their crazed schemes for world domination. Either way, the robot soon comes to see all human life as the enemy, wishing to replicate itself in order to form a robot army to enslave mankind or, at least, kill as many humans as it can.

GIANT ROBOT

STR	315	(18D6 × 5)
CON	210	(12D6 × 5)
SIZ	420	(24D6 × 5)
DEX	50	(3D6 × 5)
INT	65	(2D6+6 × 5)
POW	50	(3D6 × 5)

HP: 63
Average DB: +7D6
Average Build: 8
Move: 10

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (laser beam, smash or grab).
Weakness: if the robot's brain is rebooted it becomes docile and obeys human commands. The hero must somehow gain access to the robot's brain (possibly Climb, DEX, Mechanical Repair rolls) and then make a successful combined Computer Use and Electrical Repair roll.

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage as DB
Laser Beam	45% (22/9), damage 2D6
Grab (mnvr)	target held, following round robot may either carry off the target, drop the from height, or squeeze (DB inflicted)
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Spot Hidden 50%.

Armor: 10-point hide.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 Sanity loss for seeing a giant robot.

KILLER ROBOT

STR	190	(4D6+24 × 5)
CON	130	(4D6+12 × 5)
SIZ	80	(2D6+9 × 5)
DEX	50	(3D6 × 5)
INT	80	(3D6+6 × 5)
POW	50	(2D6 × 5)

HP: 21
Average DB: +2D6
Average Build: 3
Move: 9

Combat

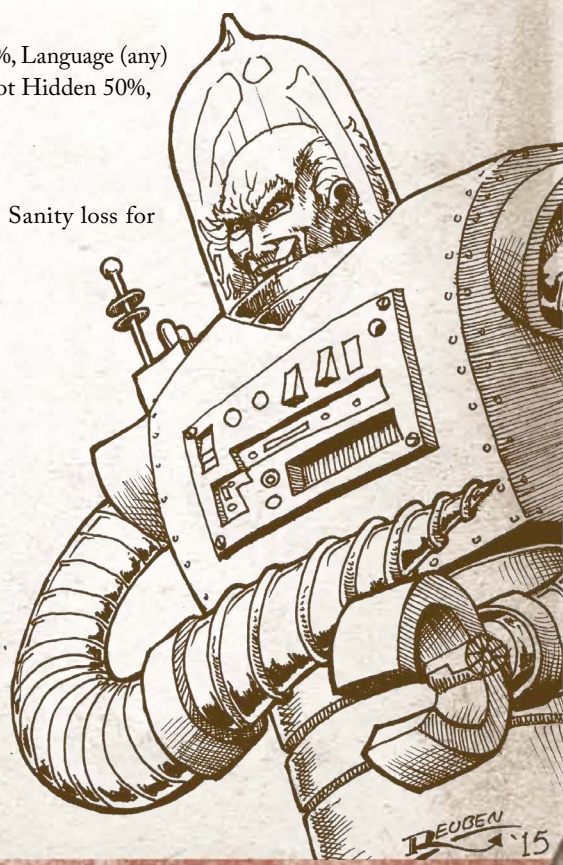
Attacks per round: 2 (laser beam, smash or grab).
Weakness: if the robot's brain is rebooted it becomes docile and obeys human commands. The hero must somehow gain access to the robot's brain (possibly DEX, Mechanical Repair rolls) and then make a successful combined Computer Use and Electrical Repair roll.

Fighting	60% (30/12), 1D6 + DB
Grab (mnvr)	target's arm, leg or neck held, the following round the robot may squeeze (DB inflicted), or continue to restrain the target.
Laser Beam	80% (22/9), damage 2D10
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Climb 40%, Jump 50%, Language (any) 60%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 50%, Throw 60%.

Armor: 8-point hide.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity loss for seeing a killer robot.



Giant Robot by Reuben Dodd

CHAPTER 10

THE DISINTEGRATOR

INTRODUCTION

The Disintegrator is a scenario set in a relatively isolated seaboard hotel on the New England coast in late October and intended for between two and five players. It concerns the heroes being engaged by a wealthy scientist and philanthropist of their acquaintance, named Professor Lionel Finch, on a very unusual errand to, in effect, gatecrash a private sale auction. The auction is for a most singular and potentially dangerous item—a so-called "disintegrator" device, which breaks down matter and destroys it utterly. Professor Finch wants the heroes to determine if the device is real, what it can do, and just what kind of danger it poses to public safety. Unbeknown to all, the truth is stranger and far more dangerous than anyone imagines.

This adventure is intended as an introduction to *Pulp Cthulhu* and deliberately engages in a number of tropes of the pulp genre—mad scientists, deadly inventions, mysterious and sinister strangers—as well as some dyed-in-the-wool stalwarts of the mythos—the isolated New England location, warring elder races, the deadly mi-go, and a hideous creature wearing the guise of a man—as an illustration of how these things can be seamlessly combined without clashing in tone. Although deliberately self-contained, this scenario can also serve to fit into a larger campaign, or perhaps start a campaign where the heroes first come together as a group and, should they survive, then go forward with a well-earned reputation with the occult, fringe-science, and unexplained phenomena. If *The Disintegrator* is being used as an introduction to a campaign, the Keeper is encouraged to add their own plot threads, encounters, and factions of their own design into the scenario (which may mean changing or adding to the attendees at the auction) to exploit at a later date, as well as provide the heroes with potential friends and contacts to aid them in the future—or conversely, enemies with a grudge to bear!

This scenario hinges on social interaction in its opening stages and then later on the ability to think fast in a survival situation. By the adventure's conclusion, the heroes will likely be fighting the other non-player characters (NPCs) even if they opt to flee or bargain with the horrors from beyond that turn up to claim their prize. Thus, a mix of occupations and pulp archetypes are advised. At least one hero with some detailed knowledge of science is helpful but not actually necessary (an optional NPC, Doctor William Walker, is provided if needed, to make up for this lack of expertise).

KEEPER INFORMATION

The auction sale is real, the disintegrator is real, but just about everything else the heroes come to know at the beginning of the scenario is a dangerous lie. Dark and inhuman forces are gathering at the White Point hotel.

THE OFFER

The man offering the disintegrator device for sale, one George Pelfry, is by trade a civil engineer and would-be inventor, whose few minor patents, most connected with radio and electrical resistor devices, have met with little success and even less profit—until now it would seem. Pelfry claims to have accidentally discovered and created a device capable of causing physical matter to "wither" and eventually disintegrate. He claims to have a working prototype but, not being a physicist, does not understand fully what it is he has built or the principle on which it operates. He lacks the knowledge or ability to further develop the device and wishes to sell it on so that another may explore its potential. Furthermore, Pelfry's health is failing and he sees the sale as an opportunity to provide for his wife and children should he—as seems likely—not be long for this world. So he is offering the "disintegrator" to the highest bidder at a private

auction sale, with the caveat and understanding that they will be able to accomplish with the device what he will not, and that he bears no responsibility for the consequences if they fail to turn his discovery into a replicable and marketable invention.

The Blind Auction

In order to make sure he can attain the best price for the disintegrator, Pelfry has obtained the services of a lawyer named Daniel Wade. What Wade lacks in imagination is made up for in greed, and he has been only too pleased to set up the private auction in a relatively secluded but quite well-heeled locale. The sale is to be conducted by blind auction.

The auction process calls for two sequential rounds of sealed and anonymous bidding, following a demonstration of the device. The location of the sale is the White Point Hotel, an upmarket seaboard guesthouse about five miles south of the scenic town of Kingsport, Massachusetts. As it is October and the summer tourist season now behind it, the White Point Hotel has few guests and is drawing down for its winter closure. Consequently, the hotel management is very glad of a late flurry of visitors for the private function. The hotel and its skeleton crew of staff are entirely unaware of what's really going on, other than that the private party will be gathering for a "patent demonstration" followed by a dinner and a private auction later in the evening.

The auction is being managed by Wade, along with two hired minders, named Dorcas and Kelly—on hand to make sure things go smoothly and manhandle the machinery as needed. George Pelfry, the disintegrator's inventor is also on hand, as is George's wife Emmeline who will not leave her ailing husband's side despite his desires to the contrary.

Prior to the auction Wade sent out a number of private feelers regarding who might be interested in this rather singular merchandise. His notices have largely been either ignored or met with some degree of derision (as he rather suspected they would). Nevertheless, several parties have expressed enough interest to either attend in person or send a private representative, and Wade has high hopes for a bidding war once they see what the disintegrator can do for themselves.

Those attending the auction are:

- Pietro Morasini, a New York financier and high-risk investor, plus his driver Russo.
- Dr. William Walker, a scientist representing an industrial group.
- Ernest Kepler, an arms dealer, with his bodyguard Dalton and private secretary Oscar Brown.
- Valery Hind, a Boston lawyer whose allegiances she keeps studiously confidential.
- Aside from the heroes gate-crashing this particular party, there will also be another bidder arriving by the end of the evening, the sinister Mister Sleep.

As the evening progresses, the forces of the Mythos make an appearance and the hotel becomes besieged by horror. The heroes will be in a fight for their own survival, as well as the fate of the disintegrator itself.

Descriptions for the scenario's NPCs can be found in the **Dramatis Personae** section on page 144.

THE DARK AND DEADLY TRUTH

Pelfry's disintegrator is at once a sideshow fake and a deadly reality. The device onlookers see is nothing but a get-up of whirring belts and sparking electrical switches, with no purpose but to crackle, glow, and thunder when the trigger is pressed. The secret at the heart of the machine is concealed within its casing. When the casing's trigger plate is depressed a simple lever mechanism presses a striker into the socketed recess of a strange and twisted metal rod about seven inches long. A rod without seeming mechanism or power source, which through no visible means then unleashes a seeming endless ghostly blast of annihilating force—as if it were the wrath of an exterminating god made manifest.

Pelfry, of course, did not invent this diabolically powerful artifact at all but found it under circumstances he has for very good reason kept secret. It is an artifact of strange aeons long gone and was fashioned by hands not even remotely human. Whatever its true purpose once was—even if it was intended as a weapon—is unknown, but in addition to concentrating more destructive force than mankind has hitherto imagined in a single individual's hand, every time it is activated it unleashes a sun-bright flare of power that is visible far beyond the human world and into the inky depths of space beyond, where inhuman minds perceive it and hunger to know its secrets.

The Discovery

Keeper note: the following information is known only to Pelfry and his wife (in whom he guiltily confided everything). This information may only become available to the heroes after matters have become desperate at the hotel—by way of a grudging explanation by Pelfry or his wife in the hope that it will somehow help.

George Pelfry discovered the artifact he would come to name the "disintegrator" some fourteen months ago during a hunting trip in the Appalachian Mountains with a friend named Bill Sampson, who had been one of Pelfry's closest friends since their college days. During the trip, after accidentally straying from the hunting trail and becoming lost, the pair wandered into a secluded ravine dotted with caves exposed by a very recent landslide. Seeking shelter for the night, the two lost hunters realized that the rough cave in which they sheltered gave way to an eerily regular stone chamber. Within, the air seemed unnaturally hot while the cave walls were studded

with luminous crystalline formations unfamiliar to either man. There the men found a blackened scorch mark of prodigious size at the rear of the chamber, scattered across which were several strange metallic objects of apparently artificial manufacture. The men assumed these objects had been damaged by fire. The largest of the objects was a crooked rod of lustrous metal; about seven inches long, with a pronounced "knot-hole" about half way down its length. Pelfry, having picked up the strange object, accidentally triggered it and unwittingly shone its ghostly light onto his friend. Pelfry's friend laughed at the strange radiance, but within seconds the laughter turned to screaming and Bill Sampson was wiped from the face of the world. In shock, Pelfry fled the cave as it started to crumble and shake—destabilized by the damage he had unwittingly caused in the same discharge that had killed his friend. Outside in the ravine, Pelfry was swept away by tumbling debris as the ravine collapsed in on itself, leaving him stumbling blindly and concussed, the "disintegrator" still locked in his grip.

He was found two days later by a fur trapper and lucky to be alive. Once Pelfry was able to speak, a search party was dispatched and found the area of collapse easily enough. No body could be found and, without any evidence to the contrary, a verdict of death by misadventure was recorded for Bill Sampson. Pelfry's story about the pair making a bid for shelter in some old caves, which then collapsed, was believed. The evident survivor's guilt Pelfry so obviously displayed was noted as a credit to the stricken man by the local coroner who conducted the inquest. At no point did Pelfry mention the impossible metal rod he had found.

Pelfry kept the truth hidden, convinced that he would be convicted of murder if the facts were known; however, the strange artifact obsessed him, slowly growing in his mind until it possessed his every waking moment. Its power was incredible, as he discovered as he tested it again and again in secret. It seemed there was no matter on earth it could not destroy. It remained utterly inscrutable to him; an impossibility in form and function, and he found himself unable to do as much as mar the metal to collect a sample for testing. As his wonder at the thing grew, so did his fear and his paranoia. George's wife, Emmeline, to whom he finally broke down and confessed one night, urged him to cast the thing into the ocean or otherwise get rid of it. Her reaction was not founded entirely on the nameless dread of what the artifact could do, as peculiar and sinister things had already started to shadow their family, from missing pets, unexplained lights seen hovering at night in their neighborhood, to their telephone ringing in the dead of night… even after they had it disconnected.

Emmeline was afraid, but George would have none of it; he had to unlock the disintegrator's secrets for himself and in doing so achieve his lifelong dreams of fame and recognition as an inventor. But then George began to sicken. The diagnosis was a voracious and terminal cancer, deep in the blood and bone, and utterly incurable. George Pelfry would not live to see the year's end. The imminence of his death tore the scales from his eyes and spurred him to the creation of a scheme to repay his family for the love and support they had given him. He would repay them and see them provided for after he was gone. Thus, he began a plan to turn the disintegrator into something a modern eye might more readily accept as a human invention. He reached out through some work contacts to Daniel Wade, a lawyer with a reputation as an unscrupulous and skilled profiteer for hire. Wade would make the ideal front for his planned sale. It was Wade who would be the first outsider to see the disintegrator in action in its new "dressed" form, banishing any scornful doubts the ruthless lawyer had and replacing them with the dollar signs of the fortune to be made. Wade arranged for a further demonstration to be photographed and used this to form the basis of a dossier he distributed to a series of carefully selected potential clients. Those returning an interested were invited to attend the private auction of the prototype device. From this moment onwards the clock was ticking, and in more ways than one.

The Disintegrator: Physical Description

Pelfry's device resembles an overelaborate, electrically powered, tripod-mounted and long-lensed movie camera, with a high forward-pointing metal shark's fin rising where the film reels should be mounted. The camera-like ensemble is connected by a rope of copper cabling to a small gasoline-powered electrical motor, about the size associated with heavy-duty lawn mowers (from which it has in fact been converted). The device weighs about fifty pounds and is extremely sturdy in construction, with the fuelled generator on its cable leash adding another twenty pounds to the overall weight. Any hero with experience of the Great War will likely find the whole arrangement uncomfortably reminiscent of a water-cooled Maxim gun, particularly the firing mechanism, which comprises two handles with a firing push-plate trigger set between them.

Removing all of this elaborate "casing" and "staging" would take quite some time and require specialized tools but, if done, it would reveal at the center a lever system connected to a strangely twisted metal rod.

When the disintegrator is fired, by pressing the trigger plate, a high pitched motorized whining sound and a clattering of spark contacts somewhere within the machine can be heard, while valves set in recesses within the casing light up and a pale beam of light, slowly growing in intensity, is projected otherwise soundlessly from the device's aperture. First appearances would leave the viewer unimpressed, the light (a strangely colorless white-grey) is no brighter than even a conventional battery torch, except for one hugely unsettling factor: the beam of light passes through solid objects out to its length, some ten yards (thirty feet), completely unimpeded by them—the light strikes them, illuminates no more than



at the point of contact, and then passes through on the other side. The action of the beam has no apparent further affect for several seconds, at which point matter through which the beam passes begins to suddenly turn brittle and crumble to powder with a soft crackling noise. Liquids flash freeze during the process before also turning into powder, while volatiles suffer partial ignition or explosion—but even this is swiftly collapsed into silence. Objects caught in a prolonged beam after an initial hole is bored into them suffer a rapid cascade effect throughout their volume: up to about a cubic yard of matter is destroyed, splintering into cold ash as the dancing ghostly light ripples through them.

While the beam is being fired, nearby electrical power (about a half mile around it) is intermittently disrupted. In addition, automobiles stall, active radios blast discordant undulant howls of static, magnets lose their strength, compasses spin wildly, and animals capable of perceiving high frequencies react in a frenzy.

INTRODUCTION: PROFESSOR FINCH'S PROPOSITION

Getting the heroes involved in the scenario is the simple matter of a telegram from an old acquaintance, one Professor Lionel Finch, currently a visiting academic scholar and benefactor at Miskatonic University. If the heroes are already known to each other prior to the adventure, the Keeper should pick the most appropriate one among them to be the telegram's recipient (a character with an academic or journalistic background is ideal). If the heroes aren't necessarily known to each other, should this be the player's first foray into the world of *Pulp Cthulhu*, Finch's acquaintance can serve as a tie to bind disparate characters together in fresh acquaintance.

Finch, although in his seventies and periodically confined to a wheelchair with arthritis, remains as sharp as ever. Having traveled the world in his past, he maintains good connections in academic and journalistic circles. Once a highly influential physical scientist and engineer whose discoveries and patents have made him a wealthy man, since his retirement from active research (about fifteen years ago) he has been involved in exploring and, in some cases debunking, a number of occult and scientific claims and sensations. Consequently, Finch is now known in both academic and print media circles as a respected intellectual, humanist,

and skeptic. He is also renowned for his charitable work in the field of education, including sponsoring several scholarships at Arkham University and the relief of poverty in the inner cities of the East Coast.

It should be relatively easy to fabricate some connection to Finch for almost any hero. The Keeper should feel free to expand upon this and discuss possibilities with the players to add depth to the relationship and the encounter. Finch can, of course, go on to be a source of further adventures or simply a valuable contact in any ongoing campaign starting here.

FINCH'S TELEGRAM

In order to bring the heroes into the affair, Finch sends a telegram to any hero he has dealt with personally, see **Disintegrator Handout 1**.

Meeting Finch

If any of the heroes live outside of Arkham, Finch pays for their first class travel to meet him a week before the expected date of the auction. The briefing takes place in a private office at the Miskatonic University.

Finch is a physically frail but mentally lively and personable man, with old-fashioned good manners and an earnest and authoritative demeanor. He greets the heroes in the wheelchair to which he is increasingly confined due to severe arthritis, with a blanket covering his legs and a dark blue velvet smoking jacket buttoned up tight over an outdoor scarf. He habitually clutches an unlit pipe in woolen-gloved hands. Finch is a genial host, with coffee and cakes on hand, but as soon as the pleasantries are done he gets right down to business. He lays out the facts as he understands them, which are as follows:

- A hitherto all but unknown inventor by the name of George Pelfry claims to have accidently constructed a device which projects a radiant beam of force capable of disintegrating matter with seemingly unlimited potential. If true, this might not simply revolutionize warfare but Finch also fears it has the potential to upset the fragile balance of peace following the Great War—and perhaps plunge the world into a second great war.

THE DISINTEGRATOR: GAME EFFECTS

Perhaps inevitably, the players may want to fire this monstrous device at a target before the scenario is over. In its incarnation as part of Pelfry's disintegrator, the device is somewhat unwieldy but the visible beam and lack of any recoil make it relatively easy to use. The base chance for firing the disintegrator is 35% to hit a moving or small target (stationary targets are simply a matter of shining the ray on them, and so require no roll). Stripped of the fakery and crackling machinery, the twisted metal rod is even easier to use, requiring an Intelligence roll to locate the "on" switch and only two successful Dexterity rolls to hit a target.

Inflicting harm with the disintegrator requires the beam to be held on the target, a fact represented by needing to make two successful DEX rolls in two subsequent rounds. On the first round nothing happens, but on the second round, the target suffers 2D100 CON damage (note this is Constitution not hit points) or, if an inanimate object, the equivalent in hit points. The damage is rolled every round thereafter if the beam continues to shine on the target. Anyone reduced to zero CON is dead, with nothing of their physical form remaining.

The damage stops if the beam is broken or switched off (of course, any item used to break the beam takes damage the following round). The beam affects all matter it passes through, equally up to its length, which is around ten yards (30 feet or just under ten meters). Conventional armor offers no protection, nor does a resistance to energy sources such as fire, radiation, or electricity, as the beam counts in essence as being a magical attack. Creatures entirely incorporeal, outside of time, or simply incomprehensibly vast (such as the Great Old Ones themselves) may be protected against the ray by their very nature or probably simply shrug off its effects like a bee sting—but this is left to the Keeper to fathom.

Using the disintegrator is not something meant for human hands. Every time it is fired for more than a single round, the Keeper should roll 1D6 for each living creature within six feet (2 meters) of the target object: on a roll of 1, each creature suffers 1D10 temporary CON damage from the unknown and unknowable emanations of the device—this loss stacks if exposed to repeated uses—CON lost in this manner is regained at 1D10 points per week thereafter. If CON is temporarily reduced to 25 points or less, those affected must succeed in a CON roll or be rendered comatose for 1D4 hours; in addition, they also suffer the permanent loss of 1D10 CON points. Note that this is not conventional radiation and the likes of lead will do nothing to shield the beam's harmful effects from repeated use.

There are other risks of using the disintegrator of course, not least of which is the notice it attracts by those things with the senses to perceive it—as far away as the outer solar system. Additional environmental concerns, damage to the fabric of reality, and so on, by its repeated use in a confined area and, of course, the possibility that its original makers may return for it, are all left in the Keeper's hands.

Opposite: The Disintegrator by Jonathan Wyke

- Pelfry appears to be in very ill-health and admits to the accidental discovery of a force he does not fully understand and cannot pursue to its full extent of possibility or replication, but claims to possess a working prototype.
- Pelfry wishes to sell the prototype in order to meet his medical expenses and provide for his family should he die, which seems likely, as he is ill. Rather than delay matters, he has enlisted the services of a business lawyer named Daniel Wade to manage a quick sale through a blind auction (which is to say, sealed bids in two rounds in this case). The auction is to be held in one week's time at a private hotel along the coast near Kingsport.
- Wade has privately approached a number of potential buyers, many of whom, according to Finch's information have laughed the matter off as a fraud or hoax.
- Accompanying the sales dossier that Wade has been using to entice would-be purchasers are several photographs of the device in action, including before, during, and after pictures of the ray destroying an oak tree. Finch has had experts examine these and they cannot with any certainty say they have been faked. He has also come to understand through his contacts in industry that at least one major arms company, Ursus Foundries, is also taking the matter seriously and sending a representative to the auction.
- Finch has had some checking done on Pelfry but he can come up with little out of the ordinary, except that he and his family have recently moved out of their home and have

Handout: Disintegrator 1

United States Telegraph Service

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ★ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ★

Arkham, Massachusetts

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	FULL RATE
DAY LETTER	DEFERRED
NIGHT MESSAGE	NIGHT LETTER
NIGHT LETTER	WEEKEND LETTER

PATRONS SHOULD CHECK CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED

CVTY 35 ARKHAM, MAS. TVG 11

= PROFESSOR LIONEL FINCH =

= ARKHAM =

= DEAR FRIEND STOP I WISH TO PREVAIL UPON YOU TO REPRESENT ME IN A MOST URGENT AND DELICATE MATTER STOP I AM STUCK CHAIR-BOUND AGAIN AND NEED HELP TO BE MY EYES AND EARS STOP IT MAY PROVE NOTHING MORE THAN A HOAX BUT IF NOT I FEAR FOR THE FUTURE STOP SORRY FOR LIMITED INFO STOP MATTER CONFIDENTIAL I WILL SPEAK MORE OF THIS IN PERSON STOP PLEASE COME AND SEE ME ASAP I WILL PAY ALL EXPENSES AND GENEROUS FEE STOP PLEASE REPLY BY RETURN MESSAGE PAID STOP =

= L =

been living in a series of hotels in Providence. This, on the surface, seems to be so that Pelfry can be close to medical treatment, but that is as far as Finch's limited investigations have reached.

If questioned as to where Finch has gathered this information from, he informs the heroes that the story and the dossier were put into his hands by a former student of his, a man whose name must remain confidential. The former student obtained it as Wade approached the firm he worked for, a large and famous power company, who also laughed the matter off as a fraud. His former student believed there might be more to the device than meets the eye and, if real, would give much pause for thought, and so privately passed the matter on to Finch. Finch no longer has the dossier as it had to be returned to his former student's employer.

Professor Finch's Goals

Finch's concerns are threefold: one, to find out whether or not the device is, in fact, real and not some kind of elaborate hoax or confidence trick designed simply to extort money from the gullible, and secondly, if it is somehow genuine, find out how it works and, thirdly, either buy the device in order to keep it from the wrong hands or, if this isn't possible, find out who the buyer is and what they intend to do with the device.

To this end, he would like to engage the services of the heroes to "gatecrash" the auction as potential buyers, using Finch's name, if necessary, to do so—he provides a signed statement that specifies the heroes are acting on his behalf and with his marker in the auction. It is Finch's belief that this should get them through the door and into the auction.

Finch impresses upon the heroes the implications of such a device and also that if it is somehow real, that it could have terrible dangers which its inventor is unaware of and that it might also be seriously unstable, perhaps catastrophically so. Finch, if pressed on his feelings, expresses the genuine hope that Pelfry's disintegrator is a fake. If pushed further as to his thinking or reasons to believe the device might be real (requiring a Hard **Persuade** roll), he admits that his own past experiences, which he will not go into, have led him to believe that such a terrible weapon may be possible. Such thoughts have filled him with dread and he is more than willing to expend effort and money in finding out the truth.

Finch offers to pay the heroes' legitimate expenses, as well as a retainer of five hundred dollars each for attending the auction in his name—on the condition that they act in confidence on the matter. He is also willing to realize funds of up to six thousand dollars for the device in the auction—if it proves genuine—by signed transfer from his bank after the deal is made.

Conducting Research Before the Auction

Really, the only available line of research prior to the auction is to look into the personal history of George Pelfry. The following information may be turned-up by inquisitive heroes.

- **Patent office**: (requires a **Library Use** roll). Pelfry has five listed patents to his name, all relating to electric switches or radio components, only one of which, a small valve design intended for commercial radiogram sets, has ever been sold—the rights transferred to a small Canadian radio manufacturer.
- **Newspapers**: (requires a Hard **Library Use** roll, or a **Know** roll—if a journalist with access to a newspaper morgue). It is a matter of public record that some months ago Pelfry was involved in a tragic accident while on a hunting trip in the Appalachians in which his companion, a mister Bill Sampson, died by being crushed in a rock fall. A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded for Sampson. Pelfry seems to have received only mild injuries at the time (although this may have led to his sudden and serious decline in his health as noted by Professor Finch).

THE AUCTION: THE PRICE OF POWER

This part of the scenario deals with the more mundane events surrounding the afternoon and early evening of the auction proceedings at the White Point Hotel. Other than the timetable set out by Wade and Pelfry for the auction itself, there is no set course of activity or investigation the players need to follow during this section. Allow the players to determine how matters go. A narrative timeline of suggested events is included for the Keeper to broadly follow. This narrative is twofold: one is mundane and covers the schedule of the auction as planned out by Wade, while the second, triggered by the demonstration of the disintegrator, represents the strange forces gathering about the White Point Hotel. As the evening progresses, a growing undercurrent of strange events and encounters increases the tension and a sense of gathering menace.

ARRIVAL

Getting admitted to the hotel is as easy as walking through the front doors; whereas getting into the auction requires getting past Wade. As unexpected guests, convincing Wade to let them into the auction requires a **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** success (heroes with a healthy **Credit Rating** may be awarded a bonus die to the roll). Should the heroes fail to impress Wade of their good intentions, showing him or Pelfry the letter from Finch should do the trick. Remember, Pelfry is eager to sell, so

anyone approaching him (even if already refused by Wade) is likely to be asked to join the auction despite Wade's concerns. Once accepted, the heroes are treated as welcome bidders.

The White Point Hotel

The hotel is a sizable three-story building of red brick and white-painted timber in a somewhat showy mid-Victorian style. It is set in its own spacious grounds and close to the small cove which gives it its name. An attendant stable block (now converted into a parking garage) lies nearby and a small boathouse can be found in the cove itself.

The building was originally constructed as the summer residence of the Proctor family, who were Rhode Island shipping magnates with connections to the people and businesses of Kingsport. The building stayed in the Proctor family for some forty years before it became something of an unwanted white elephant and was sold on, seeing reconstruction in the early 1900s as a resort hotel for gentrified vacationers drawn to the scenic Kingsport section of the coast. The hotel's heyday, such as it was, was in the boom years of the early '20s, but since has quickly faded in line with a vanishing moneyed clientele. Now it is something of a demure relic of a departing age unlikely to see out many more years as a going concern in its current form. It is still, however, well maintained and well looked after by its staff on behalf of its absentee owners in Boston. The majority of the staff live locally in Kingsport.

As the heroes encounter it, the White Point Hotel is coming to the end of its season (being closed entirely for the winter months) and, as such, is operating with a reduced number of staff. With only a handful of guests, the unexpected flurry of auction guests is providing the hotel's owners with unexpected and very welcome revenue.

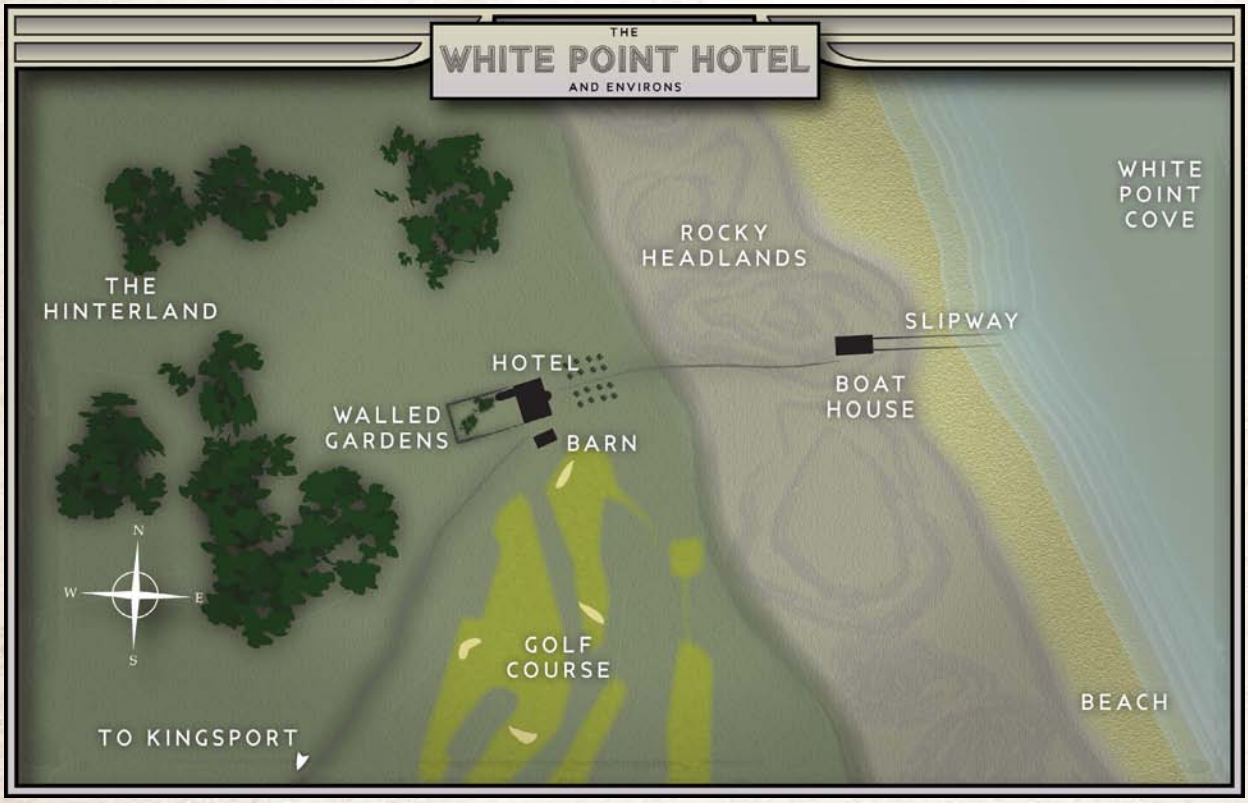
THE SALE

Wade has a timetable planned, see **Disintegrator Handout 2**, and this schedule is given to the heroes once they have persuaded Wade to allow them to attend the auction as potential buyers.

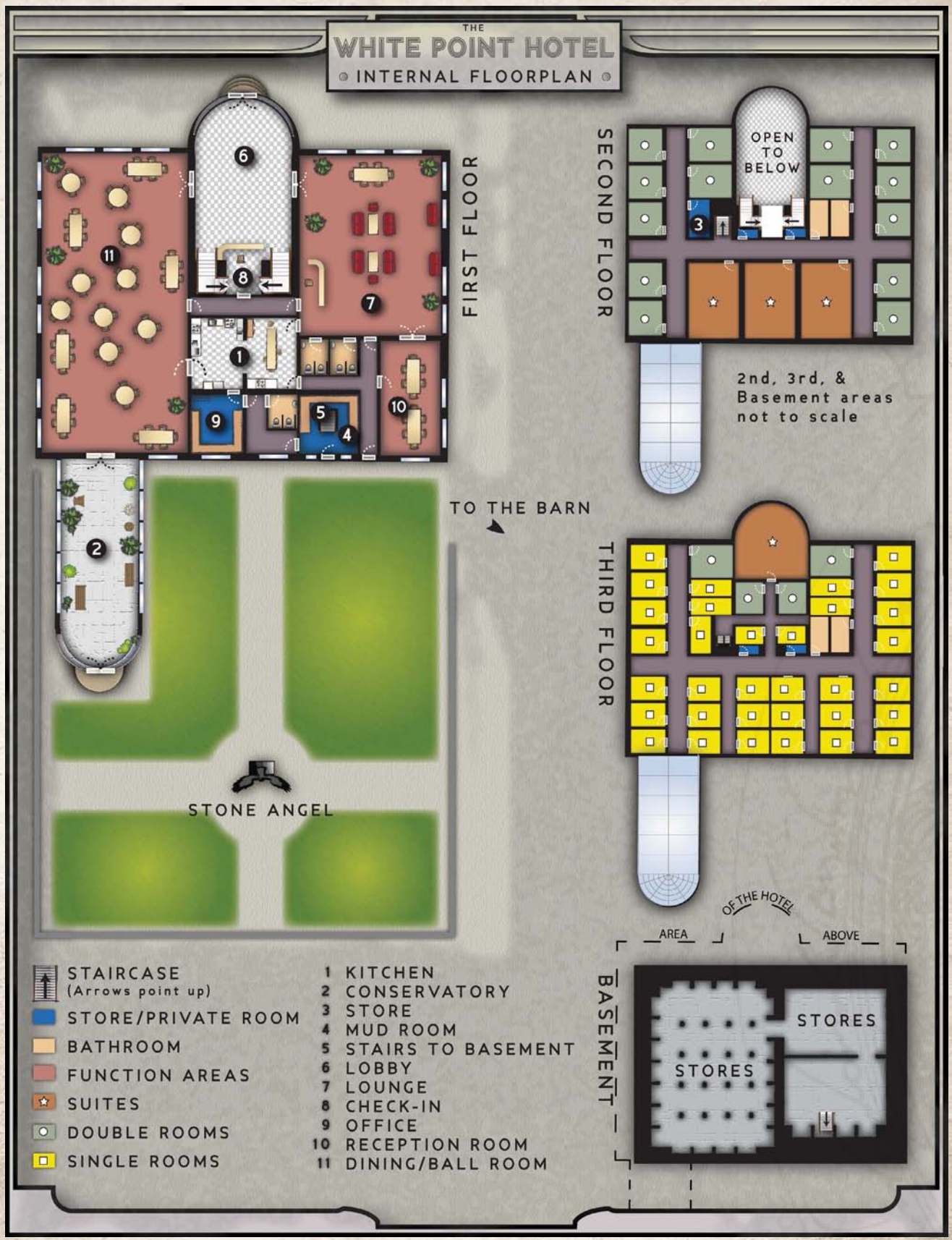
Running the Auction

The Keeper is encouraged to respond to the players' lead from here, with the details of the major personalities and motivations as illustrated in the **Dramatis Personae** section (following) as their guide. The Keeper is free to use as many of the NPCs as needed, fading others into the background simply as scenery dressing to add some verisimilitude for the auction. The core group should consist of the Pelfrys, Daniel Wade, the arms dealer Kepler, and the scientist Dr. Walker, allowing the heroes to interact with these people as the minimum. Other than these, the Keeper should also select one other auction guest (or invent another of their own), to disappear mid-way through the evening (see **Shadows Gather**, page 149, for more about how this fits into the plot).

There is a span of several hours before the demonstration and sometime between dinner and the auction for the heroes



White Point Hotel Maps by Stephanie McAlea


THE
WHITE POINT HOTEL
INTERNAL FLOORPLAN
FIRST FLOOR
SECOND FLOOR
OPEN TO BELOW
2nd, 3rd, & Basement areas not to scale
TO THE BARN
THIRD FLOOR
STONE ANGEL
OF THE HOTEL
AREA
ABOVE
BASEMENT
STORES
STORES
STAIRCASE
(Arrows point up)
STORE/PRIVATE ROOM
BATHROOM
FUNCTION AREAS
SUITES
DOUBLE ROOMS
SINGLE ROOMS
1 KITCHEN
2 CONSERVATORY
3 STORE
4 MUD ROOM
5 STAIRS TO BASEMENT
6 LOBBY
7 LOUNGE
8 CHECK-IN
9 OFFICE
10 RECEPTION ROOM
11 DINING/BALL ROOM

to get involved. Should the heroes wish to pursue lengthy conversations with the other NPCs as their main avenue of approach, let them do so. Likewise, if they are inclined to be perfunctory in this and would rather undertake more covert means of getting to the bottom of things (breaking and entering hotel rooms, bribery of the staff for information on the other guests, trying to sneak a peek at the machine before the demonstration, etc.), this is also a perfectly valid approach but remember the timetable of events (see **Shadows Gather**), which, barring major upset, should progress broadly as stated.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

For ease of reference, statistics for all of the characters in this section can be found in **Appendix A: Characters**, page 154.

George Pelfry, *age 47 (looks 70), desperate inventor*

The architect of the auction and the "inventor" of the disintegrator. The first and lasting impression Pelfry gives is one of sickness and misfortune. Clearly once a hale and handsome man in his early middle age, his flesh is now shrunken to his bones, his skin a pallid waxen hue, with purplish blotches around his neck and eyes, while his hair has begun to come out in clumps. In short, he looks like a strong man caught in the ravages of a sudden and dramatic wasting illness—a man with one foot already in the grave—and that's exactly what he is. His desperation is very real and actually serves as a more than adequate mask for his deception as to the nature of the thing he claims to have created. His desire to leave his wife and children a fortune is genuine, if misguided.

He is evidently clever but presents no great knowledge of science or technology beyond that of what perhaps an average professional teacher or engineer would know, and certainly displays nothing of the genius required to create such as prodigious leap as the disintegrator. He is personable enough, but tires easily in prolonged conversation, becoming wheezy and breathless. After a few basic, but well-meant pleasantries he will attempt to leave all the talking to Daniel Wade. If directly asked a technical question, he is vague and non-committal, and soon excuses himself by having a coughing fit.

It is important to remember when portraying Pelfry (particularly when and if matters at the auction begin to go wrong and lives are threatened), that he is by no means an evil man, but rather a dreamer sunk in desperation and staring death in the face. He has been driven into undertaking a gamble more dangerous than anything he can imagine. Just how far he will go in this is left to the Keeper, but he is not a monster and will not stand idly by and watch innocents killed for his ruse to succeed.

- **Description**: clearly ill, his flesh hangs off his frame, his pallid skin tarnished with purplish blotches around his neck and eyes, and his hair falling out in clumps.
- **Traits**: tires quickly, breathless speech, avoids lengthy conversations.

Emmeline Pelfry, *age 42, troubled wife*

Emmeline is a withdrawn, watchful woman in her early forties. Usually, far more pleasant and gregarious than her fears and troubles have made her by the time the heroes meet her. She is actually a very quick-witted, observant, and strong-minded individual, who gave up a promising career as a commercial artist for home and family. She's no wallflower; she will not

Handout: Disintegrator 2

Auction Schedule

6:00 p.m.	Demonstration of the disintegrator in the hotel's rear gardens.
8:00 p.m.	Dinner is served, with compliments of the auction.
9:00 p.m.	First round of bidding in the dining room. Sealed bids to be handed in by interested parties.
9:30 p.m.	The highest current bid will be declared. If there is an agreement to continue further bidding, a second and final round of sealed bids will be handed in by interested parties.

The highest bidder will take possession of the disintegrator device following the satisfactory exchange of capital as soon as this is made. Payment to be made in full within one day.

simply cower or scream when danger looms. She acts to preserve her husband's safety and that of others before her own. Her husband being the only person alive, other than her children (who are happily safely ensconced elsewhere with her in-laws during the auction), for whom she would willingly lie or do wrong to protect.

She is a strongly moral person at heart and when matters take a turn for the murderous and malign at the end of the auction, she sides with what she believes is right and backs this course of action up with the revolver concealed in her purse—and her own life if needs be.

- **Description**: demurely dressed woman, with shoulder length auburn hair.
- **Traits**: watchful but never timid, strong moral compass, not afraid to do what is right.

Daniel Wade, *age 36, single-minded lawyer*

Slick and easy in his manner, there is something of both the silver-tongued salesmen and the reassuringly forthright businessman about Wade's carefully cultivated façade, which slips only occasionally to reveal the keen-eyed wolf beneath. This lean and well-manicured man, with a carefully neutral New York accent and gray silk suit bespeaking a mixture of success and reassuringly conservative tastes, is underneath it all a strictly amoral materialist, for whom money is the one and only arbiter of success. Any moral or philosophical dimension to what he does for a living is entirely inconsequential. He plans to make a small fortune from the auction's commission and doesn't particularly care where the disintegrator is from and how it works, just that it does work—giving it a potentially unlimited dollar value. He cares even less as to the use its buyer might put it to.

Wade's staunch materialism and carefully cultivated ignorance is likely to take a battering as matters progress through the scenario. He won't handle the events well; veering from outright disbelief to shock and incoherence as things worsen, and may prove a danger to both himself and others because of this.

- **Description**: slim, well manicured and smart in a glossy and showy way.
- **Traits**: opportunist, greedy, and self-centered.

John Dorcas and Matt Kelly, *the hired help*

These two New York stevedores (aged 28 and 36 respectively) are not exactly thugs but they are muscle for hire and don't mind getting their hands dirty for the cash Wade is offering. Whether it's lugging around the "weird machine" (as they've been doing since they picked it up from Pelfry's little workshop in Providence), or discouraging, with strong-arm tactics, anybody who gets too close or tampers with the device. They will be visible when needed but fade into the background when not. There are no illusions that anybody but Wade is calling the shots as far as they are concerned. They also know they're not getting paid to talk.

- **Description**: big men, dressed in anonymous but clean brown overalls, with workmen's clothes underneath.
- **Traits**: brooding and intimidating.

Pietro Morasini, *age 50, avaricious financier*

Genoese by birth and never having lost his accent despite being in America more than thirty years, Morasini revels in standing out from the crowd with vividly colored suits, ostentatious jewelry, and hair perfumed and oiled so that it shimmers. He is a financier, an occasional money-launderer for the mob, a gambler, and venture capitalist. He finds safe investments dull and insufficient to appease his abiding greed. He's a true gambler who revels in the thrill of rolling the dice. Morasini hides none of his character, making him something of a civilized shark, whose manner and appearance lead him to be often underestimated. He has come to the auction in part for diversion (he is between ventures right now and expects to be entertained if nothing else), and in part because this is exactly the kind of outside bet that he knows, if true, could rake in a vast fortune.

Underneath the froth and eccentricity, Morasini is willing to connive, lie, blackmail, victimize, and betray to get what he wants without a second's hesitation or remorse—so long as there is money to be made. Unlike the arms dealer Kepler, Morasini balks at killing unless in self-defense or if the rewards are staggeringly high. He is less the murderer and more the pirate. Self-preservation will always override greed; because of this, if he can be persuaded that co-operation with the heroes will best serve his own survival when things get tough, he could make for an unlikely but clever ally.

- **Description**: a lean, vulpine man, dressed in European-styled hand-tailored finery and conspicuous jewelry. Speaks with an Italian accent.
- **Traits**: risk taker and gambler, hides his true character in plain sight, likes to be underestimated.

Russo, *age 23, Morasini's insolent driver*

A tall, languid man of Italian extraction, Russo is actually a low-ranking member of the New York mob. Morasini has borrowed Russo from his contacts in order to ferry him about on this trip (the two having never previously met). Russo has taken this employment as something of a punishment detail from his usual bosses and not exactly with the best of graces—Morasini treating him like a slave hasn't helped his temperament either. Russo is loyal to a point, more through fear of reprisal from his real masters than anything else, but when the going gets tough, he reverts to "every man for himself" very quickly, particularly if Morasini is killed.
Keeper note: Russo is very fond of a drink and bores easily.

Anyone that plies him with alcohol gains a bonus die for any social interaction roll in dealing with him. He knows secondhand of Morasini's reputation as a moneyman and, of course, of his mob connections. He knows Daniel Wade by reputation as a "slick shyster who would try to sell you back your fingers if they were cut off."

- **Description**: an athletically built, olive-skinned young man, with a wolfish look and a street thug's swagger.
- **Traits**: insolent, arrogant, and wants to be somewhere else. When the going gets tough, it's every man for himself.

Dr. William Walker, *age 58, cowardly and watchful scientist*

Walker is a grey-haired, dark-eyed man, with all the personal warmth and charm of an iced-over brick. A representative of a private mid-western electrical company, he's been sent as an expert witness to Pelfry's "so-called discovery," as he will label it before he sees it in action. He is here solely because he is being paid and, beyond a degree of professional attention he owes his employers, he is here on sufferance, having already pre-judged the disintegrator as an "obvious sham and a hoax." This view changes once the device has been demonstrated and his response will be one of shock, slowly transforming into curiosity, and then into fear of the machine's implications.

Walker's presence in the scenario can serve the function of providing scientific exposition for the Keeper, particularly if such knowledge is lacking with the heroes. Of all those present he is perhaps the most capable of understanding the nightmarish implications for the world if the device became a readily replicable technology. He will be utterly incredulous that it could have been discovered by accident, but he will not act on such knowledge—he is by nature an observer, rather than anything resembling a man of action or having moral purpose.

He reacts with sullen and fearful hand-wringing when crisis looms, following the path of least resistance, cleaving to the group. If anybody suggests the disintegrator may be of alien origin, he readily agrees to the possibility, although it is not a conclusion he is creative enough to arrive at on his own.

- **Description**: a gray-haired and paunchy middle-aged man, dressed in a conservative gray business suit.
- **Traits**: a genuine cold fish, judgmental and unimaginative by nature, a coward when confronted with danger.

Ernest Kepler, *age 47, arms dealer and merchant of death*

A slightly built and thoroughly down-to-earth man, with thinning brown hair, a neatly trimmed walrus mustache, and an easy manner. Kepler is the most dangerous of the buyers who have come via invitation (although it takes a perceptive hero to notice this). A senior partner in the arms firm of Ursus Foundries, Kepler is happy to talk if approached, presenting himself as either a mid-ranking businessman, a merchant of hardware, or a go-between—who may as well be buying and selling auto parts for all that it matters. If questioned about his trade and what he thinks about Pelfry's claims, he'll insist that his clients are businesses and governments, not street hoodlums. Somebody has to keep democracy safe, haven't they? What's more, if it works, Pelfry's disintegrator could be the very tool for keeping everyone safe.

Kepler is attended by two associates, Dalton (a bodyguard) and Brown (a private secretary), neither of whom strays far from his side.

Keeper note: Kepler knows far more than the other auction attendees as he has already had private detectives discreetly following Pelfry ever since he got wind of the auction. What he has learned has made him take the matter seriously enough to attend in person rather than sending a junior. As a result of his probing into Pelfry and his background, he has knowledge that the Pelfry family has been dogged by some strange occurrences of late, and that several months ago Pelfry was the sole survivor of a vacation tragedy that claimed the life of his best friend. Kepler puts all these things down to Pelfry's experiments and his attempts to keep what he has discovered secret—possibly even eliminating a man who knew too much or who perhaps could also have had a claim on the invention (to Kepler, this seems like a perfectly sensible business decision and one he himself would likely have made in Pelfry's place).

Under the charming façade, Kepler is a sociopath of the first water and human lives are to him as utterly disposable as matches spent to light a fire. Power and money are Kepler's gods. As soon as he sees what the disintegrator can do with his own eyes, he will want it at all costs. He will start with money but swiftly move on to sabotage, theft, bribery, coercion, and finally murder to possess it. He will be subtle, though, as he has a position and a place in society to think of. He is a monster, but one that plays by rules, the first of which is not getting caught—an attitude that will last until catastrophe strikes and such things become a moot point. As matters worsen in the scenario, Kepler's gloves come off; he'll seek to escape with the disintegrator, ordering Dalton to gun down anybody that gets in the way.

In the early stages of the auction and the dinner, heroes interacting with Kepler find it hard to see through the man's mask of normality; only an Extreme **Psychology** success uncovers something dreadful and predatory hiding in those gentle eyes.

- **Description**: a small but well-proportioned looking man in his middle age, with a neatly trimmed walrus mustache. Expensively but tastefully dressed.
- **Traits**: outwardly easy-going and charming, inwardly sociopathic, ruthless, greedy for wealth and power.

Dalton and Brown, *Kepler's men*

Ed Dalton (age 30) is a physically imposing and clean-shaven man in an immaculately tailored navy blue suit, with a military air about him. He is largely silent and all but expressionless, speaking only when spoken to by his employer, or when he can't avoid doing otherwise. As unresponsive as a stone, save for the occasional look of contempt he occasionally shoots his colleague Brown behind his back. Serving as bodyguard, driver, and killer (if required by his master), Dalton is a man of violence who keeps his murderous temperament under rigid control until needed but displays a great deal of pleasure in harming others if unleashed.

- **Description**: a powerfully built man, with a stony face and a stiff, military bearing.
- **Traits**: a killer without conscience. Loyal to Kepler unto death.

Oscar Brown (age 33) is Dalton's opposite: an unkempt looking, overweight, and florid man, who all but incessantly fidgets and mutters to himself. He carries a leather-cased legal pad in which he scribbles nervously. He is here primarily because Kepler disdains handling the minutia of business personally, including paying for or signing for anything, and because underneath his jittery façade, Brown is a genuine polymath, with a wide knowledge of finance, economics, the law, and industrial practice. To boot, he has a phenomenal ability to recall facts and figures.

- **Description**: an unhealthy looking, overweight, and skittish man in a crumpled suit with a legal pad constantly in hand.
- **Traits**: nervous, out of shape and out of his depth in social situations. Considerably more competent than he appears.

Valery Hind, *age 35, charming Boston lawyer*

A charming, attractive, and highly intelligent woman. Valery Hind has made her way in the male-dominated profession of corporate law by dint of serious ability and by taking advantage of the fact that many of her opponents are apt to underestimate any woman they encounter professionally. She's present at the auction purely as a hired agent; an intermediary for a Boston investment group that doesn't want its name anywhere near such a potentially risible fraud as Pelfry's disintegrator, and yet who were sufficiently impressed by Wade's pitch to give the matter a second look. Hind has the investment group's marker and she keeps her client's name confidential. Aside from a desire to do due diligence on her clients' behalf, Hind has no personal stake in the proceedings.

She's a rational skeptic by nature and not easily scared, but will err on the side of caution if pressed. If, when matters at the hotel turn deadly, she is presented with competing plans of action, she will be inclined to go with the one she perceives as the most clearly thought out—and the one presented in the least hysterical fashion.

- **Description**: tailored suit, professional demeanor, with long blonde hair.
- **Traits**: highly intelligent, rational, and a keen judge of character. Hard to read, knows how to keep secrets.

Paul Gardiner, *age 67, hotel manager*

Manager of the White Point Hotel, Gardiner is a man clinging to his job. In his late sixties, he is no longer able to physically cope with his job's demands but fears the emptiness of retirement. Gardiner is conscious that his unblemished record and over-obliging submission to his distant employers have allowed him to keep his position and, as a result, he is keen to avoid any hint of trouble or scandal so late in the season (and his career). As such, he was informed of the patent demonstration by the owners with whom Wade has arranged matters and is determined that everything will go without a hitch. He tends towards a painful obsequiousness to anybody he deems his social superior, particularly if trouble raises its head.

Gardiner has been in the hotel trade his whole adult life, first as a young man in Providence and now here, outside of Kingsport. He thinks he's seen it all. Something of a puritan and a prude, he disapproves of women traveling alone without a chaperone, talking back to your "betters," and other terrors, such as telephones in guest rooms and other modern developments.

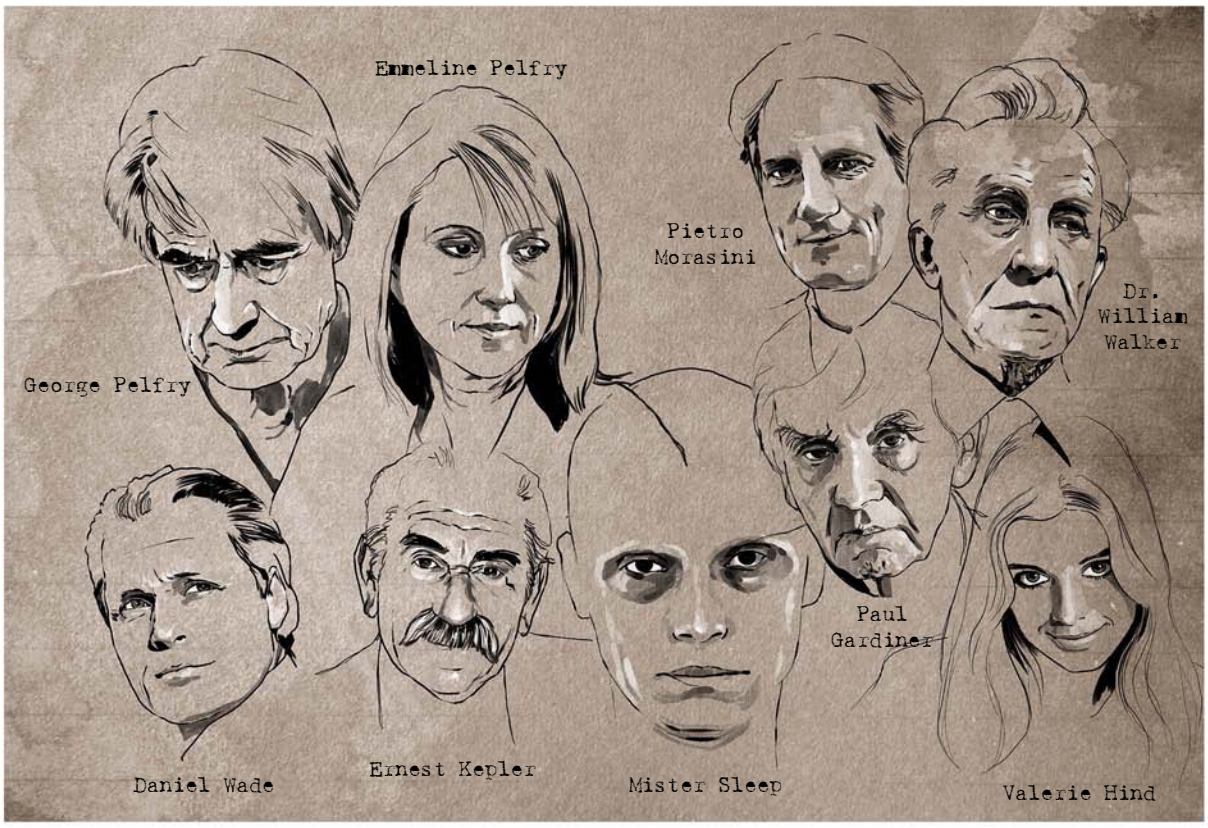
Keeper note: if subject to severe physical stress or sudden severe Sanity loss, make a Hard CON test for Gardiner: if failed, he suffers a cardiac arrest and will likely expire within ten minutes or so without medical attention.

- **Description**: tall, whitish-haired, and tired-looking man in an old-fashioned black tailcoat and white tie.
- **Traits**: stuffy and old fashioned, afraid of scandal, obsequious to his perceived "betters."

Mister Sleep, *the uninvited guest*

A late arrival at the auction, Mister Sleep is a gaunt, scarecrow-thin figure of prodigious height and slender countenance. Standing nearly seven feet tall in a black suit, black tie, and black hat, he is as somber as an undertaker. His skin is pale as milk and he seems almost completely hairless; his features drawn and smooth. He appears to be around 35 years-of-age. His voice is liquid honey, at turns as soothing and as forceful as a tent-revival preacher, filled with life and guarded amusement. He is here for the auction of the "Most remarkable device," and will offer a bag of gold coins to an astonished Wade as his credentials. Wade's greed will do the rest.

If questioned, Sleep offers that he has left his car back on the road because of the gathering fog, feeling it safer to walk the last of the way because the mist had grown so thick. From that point onwards he hovers about the proceedings like a spectral crow, eating nothing, drinking nothing, and watching all with a kind of detached amusement; unafraid



The Disintegrator NPC Portraits by Joanthan Wyke

and strangely sure of everybody and everything. This includes the disintegrator, and even though his late arrival means he misses the demonstration, he knows "that it works, very fine."

Although Sleep is, without doubt, a deeply sinister and extremely unnerving figure, who puts all present on edge—particularly Emmeline Pelfry, who stares at him as though a hungry tiger was sat in their midst—he will remain physically passive, stay within the main dining room, and offer no overt threat. He behaves entirely cordially and meets any threat or aggression directed against him with infuriatingly wry amusement. If the heroes engage him in conversation, he evades all questions about himself and of whom he represents—going so far as to wink theatrically and hold a finger to his lips, blow a hush, and whisper, "it's a secret!" He will also seek to steer any private discourse to what the heroes know about the other bidders, and what they really know about Pelfry and his "discovery"—a word he deliberately inflects with an amused mockery. He remains as a passive, if disturbing observer, right until the mi-go are directly heard from. From this point his behavior changes and his nightmarish intentions are made plain; see **Making a Deal with the Devil**, page 152, for more details.

Keeper note: Mister Sleep is a shoggoth lord, a malformed and twisted example of his ancient kind, sent up from the lightless caverns beneath the earth as the emissary of a hellish coterie of unwholesome life that has dwelt there since before mankind evolved. In their dim and alien recollections, the stench of the power unleashed by Pelfry is remembered—and not kindly—as a weapon turned on their ancient masters by nameless others from the far beyond, which the elder things looked upon with fear and horror. To the shoggoth lord, the disintegrator is a blasphemous relic of an aeons-old atrocity and one its kind would see disposed of in the lightless deeps far away from the hands of ignorant vermin-humanity—or anything else (the interfering mi-go included), who might tamper with it, and in doing so bring the return of the entities, terrible beyond imagining, that created it. For Mister Sleep, acquiring the disintegrator is a foregone conclusion and "he" believes there is nothing the humans can do to prevent this outcome. Sleep takes a malicious amusement in seeing the vermin bicker and fight among themselves; a game he allows to continue until matters take a more serious turn in the shape of the mi-go intervention, which he contests with open force if he needs to, or, more amusingly, set the humans against them first and see how they run.

- **Description**: strikingly tall and scarecrow-thin, pale, and hairless, with a sonorous and melodic voice, and an old-fashioned manner of speech.

- **Traits**: at once polite and mocking; beneath the façade, a nightmarish and inhuman creature who delights in suffering and will stand no opposition.

Other Hotel Staff and Guests

The hotel is running with a short staff, the season is coming to a close and there are only a handful other guests in residence on the night of the auction. None of the other guests play a major part, except perhaps as monster-fodder towards the end of the scenario. As such, aside from a useful list of potential names and roles presented here, it has been left up to the Keeper to fill in the blanks and flesh out the roster, as they require for their game.

Other Hotel Staff and Guests

Name	Role
Gabe Dyer	Hotel porter/driver
Lucas Stockman	Hotel janitor
Andy Gilman	Hotel bellhop/boot boy
Ambrose King	Hotel barman
Sara Mullins, Mazy Tulle	Hotel maids
Peggy Peartree	Hotel cook
Rachel Josusha	Hotel kitchen maid
DeWitt Kruger	Guest: elderly Birdwatcher (age 71), from Providence
Lucile and Holly Duane	Guests: holidaying spinsters (ages 60 and 64) from Bolton
James Gilroy	Guest: well-to-do young graduate student (age 21) in the area while visiting relatives in Kingsport and Dean's Corners

THE DEMONSTRATION

For the demonstration, the device is wheeled out on a trolley of the kind used to transport baggage at a station. It is covered with a heavy tarpaulin before and after use. The target of the device's ray is a battered, life-size marble statue of a funereal angel, procured for the purpose and placed on a gravel circle in the rear gardens of the hotel. The bidders are invited to examine the statue for trickery before the disintegrator is used, but are not allowed near the machine while Pelfry operates it. The statue is summarily destroyed and Pelfry invites the bidders to provide any object they wish as a secondary demonstration. If the heroes suggest no alternative, one of the other bidders randomly selects a small dining table, and after some consternation from the hotel manager, this also is wiped from existence—as will anything else suggested—up to a limit of two or three things, after which Pelfry calls an end to it, eyeing the gathering mists and leaving everyone in shocked silence in his wake. The disintegrator is turned off and covered, and wheeled back into the hotel conservatory under guard by Wade's hired help.

SHADOWS GATHER

As the night goes on, strange things begin to happen around the hotel, worsening with the arrival of the sinister Mister Sleep and the disappearance of a guest before the second round of sealed bidding. Events culminate with direct contact with the inhuman mi-go, who have an offer to make of their own. The course of these events is shown on the timeline that follows. Use this to move events forward. Further detail and consequences are provided following the timeline.

Timeline

4:00 p.m. Nominal time for the last of the guests, including the heroes, to arrive at the hotel.

5:00 p.m. A heavy mist begins to creep up from the cove towards the hotel.

6:00 p.m. The disintegrator is demonstrated in the hotel's rear gardens.

- After the disintegrator is fired, the hotel phone and telegraph lines stop working.

8:00 p.m., Dinner is served.

- One of the guests, as chosen by the Keeper, does not appear for dinner, no answer from their door.
- The mist grows thicker; there are hints of strange flickering lights in the distance. The Pelfrys grow extremely nervous.

9:00 p.m. Auction is carried out in the dining room; the first sealed bids are handed in.

- When the missing guest still doesn't appear, Wade sends a staff member to seek them out (if the heroes don't first). Detecting a cold draft from under the door, they use a passkey to enter. Inside, the room is empty with no signs of a struggle but no guest either, aside from their belongings, which remain as if recently laid out for use. The window is wide open and the door locked from the inside. Wade is dismissive of this, although the hotel manager insists a search is carried out in case the guest fell from the window. Pelfry and Wade both



The Demonstration s by Jonathan Wyke

call for the auction to continue, as will several of the other would-be bidders. Any talk of contacting of the police is delayed. The hotel manager sends several members of his staff out to search with electric lanterns in case the missing person has "wandered off in a daze after falling."

- During the first round of the sealed bids, a tall dark figure appears at the glass windows of the dining room, knocking rhythmically to be allowed in, alarming everybody. The figure's silhouette is clearly not that of the missing guest, nor any of the lantern bearers. When allowed in, he introduces himself as Mister Sleep and claims he represents a party interested in the item, showing a purse of Revolutionary-era gold coins as proof of his seriousness. Wade's greed wins sway and Sleep is allowed to bid.

9:30 p.m. The highest bid is declared and it is agreed that a second and final round of sealed bidding will take place.

- The searchers have still not returned.
- There is a tying bid declared, both at twenty-five thousand dollars, and the second round of bidding is called for.
- Just after the bids are declared, a woman's screams are heard from within the building and (if the matter is not immediately followed up by the heroes) moments later one of the maids runs in distraught and delivers the following information: the cook, having stepped outside the kitchen for a cigarette, has seen something like a "Giant Bat or horrible moth" in the fog and has been temporarily overcome with fright (see **Things in the Mist**, on the following page).
- As general confusion and argument reign as what's to be done next and who is responsible, Wade goes through with the auction regardless. He exclaims in shock over a discovery he has made while going through the sealed bids in the envelopes. There is one bid envelope more than there should be. It is unmarked and unattributed. It offers only one thing for the disintegrator, reading, "YOUR LIVES." At this, general recrimination and argument ensue, made more heated by the rising tension.
- Shortly afterward, a car is seen driving with its headlamps on towards the hotel. Any member of staff on hand notes this is the hotel porter bringing the automobile around to give those members of staff going back to Kingsport tonight a lift back into town. The car, however, stops abruptly mid-way, surrounded by a thickening fog, while strange lights seem to dance behind it. Responses to this event range from mild panic to casual and over-rationalized dismissal ("…fool's just stalled it," etc.) by the other attendees and staff, although no one voluntarily wishes to go out to see what's wrong.

Things in the Mist

As the night progresses, inhuman forces gather in the shape of an expeditionary clutch of mi-go—aliens from beyond Earth who are encircling and observing the proceedings at hand. It is they who have dogged Pelfry and his family's steps since the disintegrator fell into his possession. Their outposts on Earth have detected the incomprehensible energies unleashed each time the device has been triggered, with increasing alarm, and the information relayed with considerable urgency to their colony on Yuggoth in the outer solar system. The mi-go have dispatched three of their kind, outfitted with bodies specialized in observation and investigation, but have been doing so extremely cautiously as the phenomena itself, the device, and its origin are completely unknown to them and represent a paradigm of power beyond that even the mi-go possess. However, matters have now forced their hand as they have detected the interference and presence of another non-human form of life, although they cannot single out exactly what and where this is (which makes them even more wary).

It is not the mi-go who have brought up the fog to swamp the hotel and grounds, though they are using it to their own advantage, and they are keenly aware it is no natural occurrence and is of unknown origin. Having abducted one of the auction guests from their hotel room earlier, they have quickly removed and rifled through the unlucky guest's brain and gained a working knowledge of the auction and have determined to intervene to acquire the disintegrator for themselves. Their alien logic has determined that the safest way to do this is simply to get the humans to hand the device over to them, but if this is thwarted, they are prepared to resort to force despite remaining cautious as they remain unaware of what other forces may be present.

The mi-go have, within hours of the auction's start, taken up a temporary base of operations in the disused hayloft above the hotel's stable block (which now serves as its parking garage). Masked by their alien arts, they are all but undetectable and silent. Here they have taken the bodies of the stolen guest and the two hotel workers sent out to search for the missing guest, trepanned them, removed their brains, and rifled through their minds for information by hooking them up to a canister-like device. They also have a number of bio-organic machines, looking like leprous, tendril-draped trilobites, which they can use to animate the cadavers to use as servants.

Hovering in the air of the hayloft is a strange, glowing crystalline sphere, around four feet in dimeter—this is actually a Gate, the mi-go's means of rapid interplanetary travel. If the mi-go are slain, it departs in a howling gale of white light, removing all physical trace of their presence with it.

Going Out to the Stalled Car

Eventually, someone may have to go out to the stalled automobile. If the heroes are not keen on doing so and refrain from stepping out of the hotel, after a few minutes lapse, a plaintive slurred voice calls out from the fog, crying for one of the heroes by name (the most outspoken one thus far by choice) and asking for help.

Approaching the side of the fog-shrouded car, the driver's side door is open and a figure is standing beside it. The voice that issues is slurred and strangely inflected but recognizable by anybody that has talked to him previously (this includes just about anybody who checked-in bags or ordered anything from reception) as that of the hotel porter, Gabe Dyer. As they draw within speaking distance, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"I have a message for you. You are in grave danger. Death. The spatial annihilation device is not of you, not within your knowledge to control… Give it to us… Give it to us. Do not trust those within... You will be spared. You will live. Your existence…will… continue. Danger. Non-primate life has been detected…within. Danger. Death."

After this is spoken, something is seen shifting in the mist and darkness behind Dyer, rising up above him. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals enough of the inhuman mi-go's glistening form to provoke a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss). Further questioning of the Dyer/mi-go thing leads only to a garbled repeating of what it has already said. If the heroes react with violence or draw close, the mi-go departs swiftly on its wings into the foggy air, retracting a blood-soaked tendril from the hollow cavity at the back of Dyer's head.

Examination of Dyer's body reveals that the back third of his skull has been neatly removed, as if by a surgeon. Dyer's brain (down to the stem), eyes, and optic nerves are completely absent. The body is still somehow warm, with a fading respiration and a sluggish pulse that ceases within a few moments. Any close examination, or contact with the matter remaining within the skull, is causes the body to produce mangled, piteous sounds and jerk like a puppet upon tangled strings. Such close inspection of the body is worth a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss), even for medical professionals who will be fully aware of just how horrifically impossible all of this is.

The auction in any realistic sense is now over but the night's events are not.

RESOLUTION: THE DEVIL'S DUE

With the auction now having taken a rather dramatic and deadly turn towards the unexplained, the heroes and the NPCs now have some decisions to make. The resolution of this scenario has deliberately been left as an open-ended framework for the Keeper of possible courses of action and consequences that may follow on from the actions of the heroes.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This very much depends on how the heroes have handled the meeting with the mi-go and whether or not other NPCs witnessed those events. Do the heroes keep what the Dyer/mi-go thing said a secret? Do they tell the others, and if so what?

The crux of the matter is of course: what will happen to the disintegrator? Regardless of how the heroes view the things, the motivations of the other forces and individuals involved will drag everyone back to this single question. At this juncture, it's up to the Keeper to depict how the surviving NPCs react. Here are some suggested guidelines.

- **George Pelfry:** wants the gamble to succeed but ultimately his own life means nothing as long as his wife and children's lives are provided for. He will also have an immediate crisis of conscience if it is revealed innocents have died because of what he has brought about. He is willing, ultimately, to give up his device if its ends the killing.
- **Daniel Wade:** refuses any suggestion of a crisis or notions of the unnatural, and attempts to complete the sale, right up to the point where he has a psychotic breakdown if confronted with the mi-go or Mister Sleep's true form.
- **Emmeline Pelfry**: a woman of conscience, only her love for her husband has kept her silent thus far. If confronted by death and the preternatural, she will act, even against her husband if needs be, to try and put things right; turning to the heroes for help if they have been in any way civil or helpful to her and her husband. She is also armed, a fact not known even to Wade or her husband, and knows how to shoot. If it comes to it, she willingly puts a bullet into the disintegrator's gas tank, Mister Sleep, or anybody else if she feels it is warranted—once everything has come to a head and the mi-go's visitation has occurred.
- **Ernest Kepler**: his greed is his potential undoing (and potentially deadly to those around him). The strange goings on and the revelation that inhuman forces are involved only drives him further in the conviction that the disintegrator must be his at any price—even if this includes using the thing to obliterate the entire hotel and anything else that stands in his way. He speaks vehemently against any attempt to hand it over to the "moth-things" outside and counters any words by Mister Sleep with the promises of earthly riches. Yet, if the talk fails, he resorts to gunpoint extortion to take the device by force.
- **Doctor Walker**: confronted by the strange and terrible events, Walker grows timid and passive. He can be convinced by gentle persuasion to go along with a plan to dismantle or destroy the device, but never acts to do so independently.

MAKING A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

If the heroes make the mi-go's offer plain to the others or if matters begin to drag on without resolution (the heroes taking too long to reach a consensus), Mister Sleep, tiring of these games, forces the issue himself. He approaches either the heroes (if they have clearly taken charge) or George Pelfry (who takes a position, waiting by the disintegrator) and makes the following pronouncement, which can be read aloud or paraphrased.

"I'm afraid, my friends, that the hour draws late and I must away home. Those things out there in the fog—and rest assured they ***are*** *waiting for you—in the dark, waiting to slice you up and splay you open like meat on a butcher's slab—they want this pretty toy, but they won't let any of you live if they get it. I, however, am in a more generous mood. I'm going to save you. Walk with me, if any of you are brave enough. Bring that pretty toy for me and the rest of you can live. What's more, you'll have gold, so much gold. Walk out into the dark and fear not. The rest they won't care about, not if you don't have the machine, and I'll take care of them, be sure. Think on it, but don't take too long."*

Having said his piece, unless met with immediate violence, Mister Sleep retreats to the bar, smirking and whistling tunelessly while the "primate vermin" make up their minds. He is supremely confident they will do as he requests.

The heroes now have four options: a devil's bargain with Mister Sleep, a shouted plea to the mi-go to come and take the disintegrator, deny both and try to either hold onto the device, or destroy it themselves.

Spitting in the Eye of the Monsters

"Pulp" does not necessarily mean heroic, in terms of the genre, but there is the opportunity for genuine heroism here on the part of the heroes, and perhaps also redemption for George and Emmeline Pelfry. This means the heroes fight, not simply to survive but also to defend the numerous inhabitants of the hotel, innocent (and some not so innocent) from the danger within, be it human (in the form of Kepler and his minions), or monstrous (in the form of Mister Sleep), as well as from without (in the shape of the trio of lurking mi-go and their meat puppets). It is likely to be a bloody and desperate struggle, but they have some means at their disposal and some potential allies in the other NPCs as well.

Last Man Standing

One of the key tactics the heroes can employ (and if so inclined, the Keeper can facilitate through opportunity or happenstance) is to set the different enemies they face against one another, with the heroes perhaps having to then tackle whichever proves the stronger. Such a confrontation is easily arranged by a hero shouting out into the fog for the mi-go to "come and get it," or perhaps more effectively by sending

out a surreptitious emissary into the dark—if they are feeling brave enough.

Fighting Sleep

If injured in any way, Sleep's true form is partly revealed and he savagely attacks anybody with the temerity to try and harm him. Sleep is incredibly dangerous (and the Keeper is advised to let a few NPCs get in the way first to demonstrate this fact to the players) and terrifically hard to stop by conventional means. But for all this, he is also stymied: he will not willingly touch the disintegrator, even in its fake "ray machine guise," as merely being with a few feet of it gives him intense pain owing to its constant emanations—a thing he is utterly unaccustomed to and profoundly phobic of. The disintegrator is also fully capable of easily destroying him; a thing he is also fully aware of and so attempts to conceal this fear from everyone. Thus, he needs two or more humans to carry the device away for him. Sleep will lead his helpers into the darkness, to a dark crack in the earth some half-mile away, where Sleep, the machine, and whoever carries it for him will never be seen again—if the shoggoth lord gets his way. To this end, he seeks to bribe, threaten, or otherwise force the heroes (or some of the NPCs to help). Therefore, he must, no matter how provoked, leave some of the humans alive and intact.

For Sleep, the mi-go provide an additional complication, as he is unsure whether or not they constitute a threat (they do, but the fight will be a hard one, even with their alien weapons).

The Mi-Go Attack

If they believe the humans are preparing to fight them, mass violence breaks out within the hotel, or Mister Sleep emerges (or is driven) from the Hotel, the mi-go observers conclude that the humans have chosen not to co-operate and so put into effect a plan of attack. They use their flesh-puppets to storm the hotel via the back doors to provide a distraction. Once this is underway, two mi-go attack the conservatory from the air, shattering the glass from above. Once inside, they attempt first to deal with any immediate threats and then manually retrieve the disintegrator and make off with it. The third mi-go hovers above the hotel as an observer, to report back if they are met with superior force, but may also enter via the upper story windows and attempt to outflank any defenders if the attack hangs in the balance.

If two of the mi-go are slain, the third retreats to the stable block and within minutes activates a destructive departure from the Earth that will level the stable block in a firestorm; the blast wave of which also severely damages the hotel and strikes anybody on the facing side as if they were caught in the blast of a hand grenade. The blast delivers 4D10 damage to



Spitting in the Eyes of Monsters by Richard Pace

those within 3 yards, 2D10 to those within 6 yards, and 1D10 to those within 9 yards at the Keeper's discretion.

A Decision to Make

If the heroes survive the scenario with the disintegrator in their hands, they have a decision to make about what to do with the deadly device. If Emmeline or Pelfry survives, they no longer desire to sell it and now wish only to destroy or dispose of it somehow. Pelfry, in particular, will be for returning it whence it came and burying it in another rockslide. If the heroes decide or maneuver to keep hold of it, there will be many interested parties wishing to acquire the device, from the government and private business to otherworldly horrors (be it the mi-go, awakened serpent people, or worse). Capturing the disintegrator is only the start of the heroes' problems, but that's up for the Keeper to determine!

Outcomes and Rewards

If the scenario ends with the disintegrator in the hands of the mi-go or Mister Sleep, the heroes should suffer –1D6 points of Sanity loss, the result doubled if they voluntarily let one of their colleagues or an innocent NPC walk to their deaths with Mister Sleep. Likewise, if Kepler, Morasini, or even the government make off with the disintegrator by some means, this is also good cause to fear the future, resulting in a loss of –1D6 Sanity points.

If the heroes manage to dispose of the disintegrator it is a victory, although depending on the level of bloodshed and damage involved, the reward can range between –1D4 Sanity point loss if only smoldering ruins and corpses remain, to +1D6 or +1D8 if lives were saved (particularly those of the innocent bystanders and Emmeline Pelfry).

Heroes who took the fight to the mi-go and/or Mister Sleep and who prevailed may be awarded +1D6 Sanity points for seeing-off the mi-go, and +1D20 points for dealing with Sleep.

As appropriate, more conventional consequences may involve criminal investigation into the aftermath, accusations, and recriminations, but somewhere along the line "anarchists" or "foreign agents" will be called upon as saner answers than the actual truth—the facts watered down and covered up. Professor Finch's influence and money will help, as will the long arm and power of Ursus Foundries and its military contacts (who have no taste for scandal themselves). There will be no jail or trial for any of the survivors, but both the federal government and other, darker forces will have taken note.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

GEORGE PELFRY, *desperate inventor*

STR 30*	**CON** 28*	**SIZ** 52	**DEX** 40	**INT** 75
APP 42*	**POW** 60	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 42*	**HP** 8
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 4*	**MP:**12	**Luck:** —

**Pelfry's terminal ill health and experiences have left him with reduced Sanity and a failing body.*

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3–1
Disintegrator	55% (27/11) (see page 139)
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Appraise 30%, Credit Rating 30%, Electrical Repair 69%, Mechanical Repair 74%, Natural World 40%, Persuade 38%, Psychology 33%, Sciences (Physics 55%, Chemistry 42%, Metallurgy 30%, Structural Engineering 66%).

EMMELINE PELFRY, *troubled wife*

STR 50	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 65
APP 65	**POW** 70	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 70	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
.38 revolver	52% (26/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 23%, Art/Craft (Painting/Sketching) 67%, Charm 30%, Drive Auto 45%, First Aid 55%, Language (French) 30%, Listen 40%, Medicine 25%, Natural World 35%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 38%, Ride 50%, Spot Hidden 37%, Stealth 35%, Tracking 22%.

DANIEL WADE, single-minded lawyer

STR 60	**CON** 55	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 50	**INT** 70
APP 70	**POW** 50	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 50	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Accounting 40%, Appraise 60%, Credit Rating 55%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 50%, Intimidate 35%, Law 76%, Library Use 40%, Listen 55%, Persuade 66%, Psychology 52%.

JOHN DORCAS and MATT KELLY, *the hired help*

STR 70 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 70 **DEX** 50 **INT** 55
APP 55 **POW** 50 **EDU** 50 **SAN** 50 **HP** 13
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 10 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or billy club, damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 40%, Drive Auto 40%, Intimidate 40%, Listen 35%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Psychology 30%, Stealth 40%, Throw 30%.

PIETRO MORASINI, *avaricious financier*

STR 55 **CON** 65 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 50 **INT** 70
APP 60 **POW** 65 **EDU** 85 **SAN** 65 **HP** 12
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** —

Combaty

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
.45 Derringer 48% (24/9), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Accounting 49%, Appraise 70%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 30%, Art/Craft (Games of Chance) 65%, Charm 60%, Credit Rating 80%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 58%, History 38%, Intimidate 40%, Law 50%, Languages (Italian 80%, Latin 35%, Creole 30%), Library Use 45%, Listen 60%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 62%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 45%.

RUSSO, *Morasini's insolent driver*

STR 65 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 70 **DEX** 70 **INT** 60
APP 70 **POW** 50 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 50 **HP** 14
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 10 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
Switchblade*65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4
Switchblade (thrown) 75% (37/15), damage 1D6+1D2
Handgun* 50% (25/10)
Dodge 60% (30/12)

**Russo carries three switchblades concealed about his person. The handgun is kept in the car.*

Skills

Appraise 30%, Charm 37%, Climb 40%, Drive Auto 70%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 55%, Law 25%, Language (Italian) 50%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Psychology 30%, Throw 75%, Psychology 36%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 50%.

DR. WILLIAM WALKER, *cowardly scientist*

STR 50 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 65 **DEX** 40 **INT** 80
APP 40 **POW** 40 **EDU** 90 **SAN** 40 **HP** 11
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 5 **MP:** 8 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Accounting 60%, Appraise 65%, Credit Rating 68%, Electrical Repair 70%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 30%, Sciences (Physics 75%, Chemistry 67%, Engineering 70%).

ERNEST KEPLER, *merchant of death*

STR 45 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 50 **DEX** 50 **INT** 90
APP 60 **POW** 70 **EDU** 90 **SAN** 70 **HP** 12
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 14 **Luck:** 40

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3
.32 auto 50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Accounting 70%, Appraise 75%, Art/Craft (Gunsmith) 50%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 95%, Electrical Repair 40%, History 52%, Intimidate 50%, Law 63%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Persuade 78%, Politics 60%, Psychology 60%, Psychoanalysis 25%, Sciences (Physics 50%, Chemistry 60%), Sleight of Hand 45%, Spot Hidden 42%.

Pulp Talents

- **Resilient**: spend 10 Luck to shrug off up to 5 points of Sanity loss.
- **Strong Willed**: spend 10 Luck to gain a bonus die when making POW rolls.

ED DALTON, Kepler's man

STR 85 **CON** 75 **SIZ** 85 **DEX** 65 **INT** 60
APP 50 **POW** 60 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 60 **HP** 16
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** 30

Combat

Brawl 76% (38/15), damage 1D3+1D6
Custom Mauser* 80% (40/16), damage 1D10
Dodge 50% (20/8)

**Fires Burst 3 (like a submachine gun) and has a 12-round magazine.*

Skills

Climb 60%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 68%, Explosives 38%, Jump 53%, Intimidate 65%, Law 25%, Listen 68%, Mechanical Repair 42%, Navigate (Land) 60%, Psychology 36%, Spot Hidden 68%, Stealth 74%, Throw 42%, Track 40%.

Pulp Talents

- **Tough Guy**: spend 10 Luck to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
- **Fleet Footed**: spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.

Armor: 1-point concealed bulletproof vest.

OSCAR BROWN, Kepler's other man

STR 45	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 50	**INT** 95
APP 55	**POW** 40	**EDU** 95	**SAN** 40	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Accounting 80%, Appraise 70%, Credit Rating 38%, Law 70%, Listen 33%, Persuade 25%, Psychology 40%, Science (Keeper's choice) 80%, Stealth 30%.

Pulp Talents

Oscar has a phenomenal mimetic recall, allowing him to remember verbatim almost anything he has read; giving him a Bonus die on any Know or mental skill roll where this may come into play.

VALARIE HIND, *charming Boston lawyer*

STR 50	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 80
APP 80	**POW** 55	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 55	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
.25 auto*	38% (18/7), damage 1D6
Dodge	40% (20/8)

**This weapon is kept a vanity case in her room rather than habitually carried on her person—unless things get threatening.*

Skills

Accounting 54%, Appraise 60%, Charm 68%, Credit Rating 65%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 42%, Intimidate 40%, Law 80%, Library Use 65%, Listen 55%, Persuade 60%, Politics 40%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Swim 50%.

PAUL GARDINER, *hotel manager*

STR 50	**CON** 35	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 50	**INT** 60
APP 50	**POW** 45	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 45	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 4	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	42% (21/8), damage 1D3
20-g shotgun*	45% (22/9), damage 2D6/1D6/1D3
Dodge	25% (12/5)

**Actually part of the hotel groundskeeper's gear, and kept in a locked storeroom bellow stairs.*

Skills

Accounting 40%, Charm 45%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 50%, Guest Etiquette 65%, History 35%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 35%, Sleight of Hand 35%, Spot Hidden 50%.

MISTER SLEEP, *shoggoth lord*

Human Form

STR 75	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 75	**DEX** 50	**INT** 95
APP 40	**POW** 75	**EDU** 70	**SAN** —	**HP** 13*
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 15	**Luck:** —

**If reduced to zero hit points, Sleep immediately reverts to a shoggoth.*

Shoggoth Form

STR 120	**CON** 180	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 50	**INT** 95
APP —	**POW** 75	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 24
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 10	**MP:** 15	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (2 crushing blows/hits with pseudopods, or 1 seize)

Fighting	90% (45/18), damage 1D6+2 + DB appropriate to its present form
Engulf	(mnvr), damage 1D6 per round (acid) until victim is dead (opposed **STR** to break free)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

(In human form) Charm 70%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 60%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 65%.

Armor: none, but (1) fire and electrical attacks do only half damage; (2) physical weapons do only 1 point of damage per hit; (3) regenerates 2 hit points per round.
Spells: Cloud Memory, Wrack.
Sanity loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see a shoggoth lord in its true form. Keepers may add 1/1D3 Sanity point loss for those witnessing the monster changing from human to shoggoth form.

MI-GO OBSERVERS, *inhuman scientists on a mission*

Nominally there are three mi-go observers present at the White Point Hotel; however, if the heroes represent a particularly large or combat-capable party, the Keeper may wish to increase this number or the number of mi-go flesh-puppets at their disposal to maintain a sufficient challenge for the players.

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 70	**INT** 85
APP —	**POW** 65	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7/13*	**MP:** 13	**Luck:** —

**Flying.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (2 claws, or 1 seize, or 1 barb caster)

Fighting	45% (22/9), 1D6
Seize	(mnvr) can carry away beings of equal Build or smaller (see Bio-mechanical Augmentation, following)
Barb caster*	60%, (30/12), special (see following)
Dodge	35% (17/7)

**Barb Caster: this strange crustacean-like device is actually a ballistic weapon, which when fired soundlessly releases a glass-like barbed dart. If a dart strikes a victim they suffer 1D8 damage, and if 3 or more points of damage are inflicted, the barb remains caught in the victim's flesh. If not removed (requiring a DEX roll), the embedded barb inflicts an additional 1D3 damage regardless of whether or not the test is successful), then 1D4+1 rounds later, the glass-like substance of the dart breaks down into a highly corrosive liquid, inflicting at additional 1D10 damage each round for three rounds. The weapon carries 20 darts internally and has a base range of 30 yards.*

Special Abilities

- **Hypnosis:** the mi-go's buzzing can put humans listening to it into a trance state. Those within forty feet must succeed in an opposed POW roll or become incapable of action. Mi-go can speak telepathically to humans, which costs 1 magic point per 5 rounds. The human can resist the communication with an opposed POW roll.
- **Void Light:** creates a sink from which photons will not emerge. The mi-go must spend 1 magic point for every cubic yard of blackness desired. No light can escape the affected area. The darkness may be like a sheet or a spherical volume.
- **Bio-mechanical Augmentation:** their bodies customized for their tasks with strange sensory apparatus and vine-like prehensile limbs to clutch and grasp, the mi-go observer gains a Bonus die to any skill roll to sense, track, or use its Seize maneuver. It can also "see" heat, radiation, radio waves, and electrical fields up to 100' away (unless blocked by at least 1 yard of brick, stone, or other suitable dense material), allowing it to perceive humans inside buildings and so on. The mi-go can boost this passive ability by expending 1 magic point, quadrupling the range but at the cost of a display of flickering pale lights in its vicinity as its "scan" takes effect.

Skills

Listen 75%, Spot Hidden 75%, Stealth 50%, Track 75%

Armor: none, however, their resonating extra-terrene body causes all piercing weapons (bullets included) to do the minimum damage.
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a mi-go.

MI-GO FLESH-PUPPETS, *mutilated human slave creatures*

STR 90	**CON** 100	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 30	**INT** 20
APP —	**POW** 10	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 16 (3*)
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 5	**MP:** 2	**Luck:** —

**Hit points of the controlling parasite.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	65% (32/13), damage 1D4+1D4
Dodge	15% (7/3)

Special Powers

- **Brain parasite**: these unfortunates are now little more than half-alive "vehicles" piloted by trilobite-like bio-mechanical devices attached to their opened brainstems. Incapable of pain, they are inured to injury and capable of prodigious of strength, but are also clumsy and cannot perform sophisticated acts of co-ordination, like running or swimming. The parasite itself may be attacked, but only from behind (attacks targeting the parasite suffer a penalty die due to its small size). Inflicting 3 or more points of damage in this fashion destroys the unwholesome thing, causing the flesh-puppet to collapse, reeling and flailing until expiring a few moments later. Unless the parasite is destroyed, the animated flesh continues to be controlled and directed.

Skills

Climb 30%, Listen 30%, Relentless 90%.

Armor: incapable of pain and driven on by the brain parasite's alien influence, the flesh-puppet counts as having 4 points of armor, except against attacks which target the parasite directly (see Brain parasite).
Spells: none
Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a flesh-puppet—note that this test should only be triggered when the empty skull and parasite are seen, or the creature suffers harm and does not bleed.

CHAPTER 11

WAITING FOR THE HURRICANE

Waiting for the Hurricane takes place in Key West as the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 strikes the Florida Keys. This scenario is very action-oriented, with the heroes fighting a cult running amok through the city as the hurricane descends on the island.

State Road 4A connecting Key West to other islands in the lower Keys has collapsed into the sea. Stranded on the island, the heroes prepare to ride out the storm in the Grand Hotel but soon find themselves exposed to a cult that wishes to use the storm to cover their sinister plans. The fate of the city rests in the hands of the heroes.

While the events are described in a fairly linear fashion, encouraging the heroes to follow a pre-determined path through the scenario, the Keeper should feel free to adjust the sequence of events and avenues through the plot in reaction to their players. In short, if the players don't go looking for the action, let the action come to them.

KEEPER INFORMATION

It is Monday, 2nd September 1935. Seven years ago the US government raided the coastal town of Innsmouth, Massachusetts. Douglas Whiting, a deep one hybrid and member of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, was one of the few to escape. Fearing that the Order was not strong enough to withstand the attack, he abandoned his brethren and fled into the night. He took with him what artifacts he could lest they fall into human hands.

Whiting's transformation was not yet complete, so he could still pass for human. He traveled down the coast to Florida, ultimately arriving in Key West. Here, he eventually made contact with the denizens of Rha'thylla, a deep one city in the Puerto Rico Trench. While it was only a matter of time until his transformation into a full deep one was complete, he yearned to join his brethren in the depths.

The deep one elders of Rha'thylla had heard of the fate of Innsmouth and they questioned how Whiting had been able to escape when so many had not. When they learned the truth, they branded Whiting a coward and exiled him from deep one society. He would not be permitted entry into Rha'thylla until he had made reparations to his race and their god, Great Cthulhu.

Over the following years, Whiting used the gold artifacts he had stolen from Innsmouth to buy his way into the circles of the rich and powerful. Identifying men with the most greed in their hearts, he approached them with tempting offers of vast quantities of gold. From their ranks he formed a new cult of the Esoteric Order of Dagon. The cult met with the deep ones and made offerings to them in exchange for gold. While they accepted meetings with the humans, they still treated Whiting as a pariah.

In their devotions to Great Cthulhu, the cult received a vision from the "Sleeper" that a mighty storm was approaching (the Labor Day Hurricane of September 1935). The chance Whiting had been waiting for was at hand. He and his cult made plans to perform a ceremony that would offer the lives of everyone in Key West to Great Cthulhu through the casting of the Wave Of Oblivion spell to wipe out the city. Everyone would blame the destruction on the hurricane. With this offering, Whiting would be able to appease his god, and the denizens of Rha'thylla would welcome him with open arms. However, it was not going to be that easy.

Hector Mendez operated a successful fishing business out of the Key West harbor. Mendez had joined the cult as he welcomed the prospect of easy riches promised by Whiting. When he learned the truth about the cult he was horrified but too scared to run in case they tracked him down and offered him to the deep ones as a sacrifice. Fearful for his life, he kept silent. In time, he experienced the vision from Great Cthulhu along with the rest of the cult, and learned of Whiting's plan for the destruction of Key West. It was too

much; Mendez would not be an accomplice to mass murder. He decided to take his chances and run while also disrupting the cult's plans as much as possible.

As the cult began to prepare for the ritual, Mendez stole a gold tablet from the temple of the Esoteric Order of Dagon. Whiting always used this tablet to summon the deep ones from Rha'thylla—Whiting's plan was to call the deep ones shortly before the Wave Of Oblivion was due to hit so that he and the cult could be transported to the safety of Rha'thylla. Without the tablet, the deep ones might refuse the summons and request for sanctuary; Whiting and his cult would not be able to escape the storm and the great wave and they would die with all the other souls as sacrifices to Great Cthulhu. Unfortunately for Mendez, while he had taken the tablet, the storm had already disrupted transport out of the city and he was trapped in Key West.

Discovering that the tablet had been stolen and that Mendez was the only member of the cult unaccounted for, Whiting deduced who was responsible. He ordered his cultists to tear the city apart to find Mendez and recover the tablet. Meanwhile, they would proceed as planned, gathering the necessary sacrifices to dedicate the oncoming slaughter to Great Cthulhu and the power the spell. Whiting would cast the spell and deep ones would come, tablet or no tablet. Thus, if everything goes according to Whiting's plan, at sunset Key West will be no more. The heroes are the only ones who can stop what is about to unfold—but the clock is ticking.

HERO INFORMATION

The scenario begins with the heroes staying at the Grand Hotel in Key West. The Keeper should consider what has brought the heroes to the city. Are they visiting friends or family in the area, or on a business trip? Perhaps they are already on a case that has brought them to the area—in which case, this scenario provides an unexpected and sudden detour. Alternatively, they could be on holiday, sightseeing, perhaps looking to enjoy some of the fishing available nearby or maybe stopping briefly on their way to the Caribbean. This scenario is easily moved to another coast area if doing so would better fit with your ongoing campaign.

If the players are creating new heroes, they could be residents of Key West. As such, they could be employed at the hotel as permanent staff or hired to help prepare for the storm (nailing shut doors and windows, and so on). Alternatively, they could be staying in the hotel for a few nights as it is one of the more stable buildings in the area, and thus they are safer here in the storm than at home.

If the scenario is being run for an existing group and there are any psychics or heroes with the ability to cast spells, the Keeper might wish to grant these heroes weird echoes of the dreams sent to the cult by Cthulhu. Likewise, any that have been touched by the machinations of Great Cthulhu in previous adventures might be sensitive to the Great Old One's dreams and catch the periphery of the message intended for the cultists in Key West. As such, these heroes might receive fragmentary images in their dreams foreshadowing the devastation destined for the city—the oncoming hurricane, people screaming as they are carried away by water, the Wave Of Oblivion being cast—perhaps they recognize elements and realize the dreams are set in Key West. Thus, forewarned with dream premonitions, they are compelled to travel to the Keys in an effort to stop the disaster from happening.

THE GRAND HOTEL: SETTING THE SCENE

It is mid-afternoon on Monday, 2nd September 1935. The wind is rising and rain is falling from a cloud-covered sky that is gray from one horizon to the next. The streets are as good as deserted as everyone battens down the hatches at home. Only the occasional vehicle passes by, carrying wooden beams destined for securing windows elsewhere. Strong winds buffet the vehicles as they snake along the road—a warning to those who might try to drive later.

The Grand Hotel is a three-story structure that lives up to its name. It overlooks the sandy far-western end of Smathers Beach. Surrounding the main building is a series of stand-alone, single-floor apartments for higher-paying guests. The upper floors of the main building have balconies and large shutters across the windows; these are currently being nailed shut by hotel staff. A few of the guests stand in the foyer, looking out to sea, almost mesmerized by the growing savageness of the waves crashing on the shore.

The Keeper should ascertain where the heroes are at the beginning of the scenario. The best location would be in the hotel's bar and restaurant adjacent to the lobby. Here, the heroes have a good view of what is about to unfold.

A police patrol car pulls up outside and two officers walk into the lobby. They talk quietly with the receptionist and then go into the manager's (Vincent Lloyd's) office. A few minutes later, they come out of the office, followed by Lloyd. While the officers head to their car outside, Lloyd addresses the guests assembled in the lobby and the bar, explaining that the police officers have informed him that State Road 4A (connecting Stock Island to the east with Boca Chica Key) has collapsed due to storm damage. Furthermore, the hurricane has hit the Upper Keys. There is no way out now until the storm passes.

THE CULTISTS ARRIVE

The heroes notice three men (Leon Doyle, the cult's assassin, and two other cultists) coming in from the storm through the main lobby. They are dressed in practical, black, outdoor

clothing. The two cultists carry gym bags that are closed but look like they contain something long and heavy (shotguns and other weaponry). They shake off the rain and enter the elevator at the far end of the lobby. If the heroes make a Hard **Spot Hidden** roll, they notice one of the men (Doyle) has a pistol showing from his shoulder holster as he turns into the elevator. The light above the door indicates that the elevator goes up to the second floor and stops. If the heroes rolled an Extreme success for the Spot Hidden roll, they also notice that a bellboy behind the reception desk closes the guest book on the counter and swiftly takes it as he leaves the lobby and heads up the staircase (to the second floor).

Doyle and the cultists wait outside Room 202 on the second floor for the bellboy (Tommy Jacobs) to let them in with a master key. Any heroes that have chosen to stay in their rooms at the beginning of the scenario might be conveniently located near to Room 202 to hear the events unfolding there (requiring a successful **Listen** roll).

Once inside room 202, Tommy hands over the guestbook and Doyle hands him $20. Tommy believes the men are private detectives, here to perform surveillance on an undisclosed individual in the hotel. Doyle takes the guestbook and, once he has confirmed it contains what he requires (guest names, room numbers, and importantly dates of birth), he stabs Tommy in the abdomen and leaves him to die. A successful **Listen** roll means nearby heroes hear a sharp cry from Tommy. Doyle tears three pages from the guestbook that contain the details of their next targets—Jennifer Flint (star sign: Cancer); Eleanor Harris (star sign: Leo); and Richard Lowrie (star sign: Virgo)—hands two of the pages to the other cultists and discards the bloodstained book in the hall. The men then leave Room 202 to seek out their targets for abduction.

Heroes on the second floor who failed the Listen roll may be surprised to hear Tommy banging on their door, desperate for their help. Otherwise, if the heroes are downstairs in the lobby or the bar, Tommy descends in the elevator. He falls through the door into the lobby and the scream of a guest probably attracts the heroes' attention. Tommy's face is pale and blood soaks out from between his fingers that try to cover the awful stab wound—call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss).

The heroes get one chance to make a successful **First Aid** roll immediately after this occurs, otherwise, Tommy dies. If the heroes succeed, they stabilize him, giving him a few moments to talk breathlessly before he passes out from the pain. He relates what happened in broken sentences—that he was paid to give the men the guestbook—they stabbed him—they said they were private detectives but it looks like they're here to kill someone, etc. At that moment, the sound of a shotgun blast can be heard upstairs, and another one from outside.

Outside, one cultist has headed to one of the hotel's detached apartment buildings that border the rear garden and pool area. Breaking down the door, he finds Jennifer Flint with her newly married husband Paul. The two had come to Key



The Grand Hotel Maps by Stephanie McAlea


THE GRAND HOTEL
INTERNAL FLOORPLAN
FIRE ESCAPE
PANTRY
SERVICE ELEVATOR
LAUNDRY
CONCIERGE OFFICE
STAFF ROOM
FIRE ESCAPE
OFFICES
KITCHEN
STORES
LOCKERS
RESTAURANT
LOBBY
SOCIAL ROOM
FIRST FLOOR
FIRE ESCAPE
SINGLE ROOM
SERVICE ELEVATOR
GRAND SUITE
SINGLE ROOM
FIRE ESCAPE
DOUBLE SUITE
DOUBLE SUITE
STORES
STORES
STORES
SINGLE OCCUPANCY ROOMS
SECOND FLOOR
DUMB WAITER
STAIRCASE
ELEVATOR
PRIVATE AREAS IN ORANGE
PUBLIC AREAS IN GREEN

West from New York on their honeymoon. Paul attempts to defend Jennifer but is mercilessly gunned down by the cultist. The cultist then knocks Jennifer unconscious and marks her forehead (using her husband's blood) with the zodiac symbol of Cancer.

On the third floor, the other cultist goes to the room of Richard Lowrie. Lowrie is alone and in town to visit his family for the Labor Day holiday. The cultist breaks down the door and knocks Lowrie unconscious. He is carrying Lowrie out of the room when a maid sees what is happening, screams, and is shot dead. Lowrie's head is also marked with the symbol of Virgo (using the maid's blood).

Meanwhile, Doyle goes to a room on the far side of the second floor and breaks into Eleanor Harris's room. Doyle takes her unconscious body down the far fire escape to a truck parked a short way from the hotel on Bertha Street.

HERO INTERVENTION

The objective of the cultists is to kidnap anyone that matches the star signs they are looking for (this group is looking for a Cancer, a Leo, and a Virgo). Once they have been found, they are to be taken back to the cult's temple on Wisteria Island, northwest of Key West.

The cultists attempt to gun down anyone that gets in their way, including the heroes. If the heroes notice that the cultists are armed and go looking for the police officers, they can be found in their patrol car outside, just about to leave. Should the officers be convinced to go looking for the cultists in the hotel, they will be the first to be gunned down, leaving it to the heroes to stop the cultists.

Whereas the other two cultists will fight to the death, Doyle is more sensible. He knows he will be able to find other sacrifices elsewhere, so will drop his intended victim, if needed, in order to escape. Doyle initially defends himself with his handgun but, if a hero successfully injures him, he retaliates by casting the Breath Of The Deep spell at them (see page 173). As the hero drowns, Doyle uses this as a distraction to escape.

Should the heroes examine the bloody symbols on the victims' foreheads, call for a **Know** roll. Success means the heroes realize that they are signs of the zodiac. If two of the symbols are seen, the heroes may deduce and that they are consecutive signs of the zodiac and that the three men appear to be abducting people due to their birth signs. By the time they have realized this, if no one has already decided to search the hotel for the third man (Doyle), then they are too late. Doyle has escaped with Eleanor Harris and is on his way to the harbor.

Statistics for Doyle and the other cultists can be found in **Appendix A: Characters**.

Aftermath

If the heroes are able to capture any of the cultists alive, little information can be obtained. They have been driven mad from their contact with Great Cthulhu; each one babbles about how they will soon join the "Sleeper in the Depths," and how they will be honored to give their lives to him in the "coming sacrifice." As they have failed him in life, they will serve him with their deaths. Each laughs wildly and continues to cackle insanely.

If Doyle has been captured, he is a little more restrained and just glares at the heroes scornfully. If forced to talk (requiring a Hard **Intimidate** roll), he only imparts the following cryptic phrase: "As the star signs encapsulate the heavens, so shall those born under them encapsulate all who are fated to give their lives to the Sleeper. Through them, we dedicate this place to our master, for the time is at hand. We will all join him shortly." Doyle ends his statement by offering himself up as a sacrifice to his master, casting Breath Of The Deep upon himself. He promptly drowns in front of the heroes who are powerless to stop this—**Sanity** roll (1/1D3 loss).

Note: the cult is gathering twelve sacrifices (one of each star sign), meant to represent the whole population. These unfortunate folk will be sacrificed to power the ritual creating the Wave Of Oblivion.

CALLING THE POLICE

With the sound of gunfire at the hotel, it is understandable that someone would call the police. However, they will soon find that the police are having an even worse time than the hotel guests.

When things have wrapped up at the hotel—the cultists have been killed, detained, have escaped, or the heroes have departed to search for Doyle (if he has escaped with his victim)—the heroes may become aware of the situation unfolding at the police station. Here are some ways things could happen:

- If the two officers who came to the hotel are still alive, they call in the incident at the hotel via the radio in their patrol car. When they get no response, they suspect something has gone wrong and drive off at high speed—possibly attracting the attention of the heroes.
- If the heroes or hotel manager try calling the police station, they find the telephone just rings out. No one is picking up at the station—something is clearly wrong.

DATES OF THE ZODIAC

As the heroes may also be guests at the Grand Hotel, their birth dates will also be in the guest register. One or more of them could, in theory, be valid targets for the cultists. If you want to land the heroes right in the action at the start of the scenario, make at least one of them a target for the cultists.

To determine a hero's birth sign either ask the player to choose or roll 1D12:

1.	Aquarius	21 January to 19 February
2.	Pisces	20 February to 20 March
3.	Aries	21 March to 20 April
4.	Taurus	21 April to 21 May
5.	Gemini	22 May to 21 June
6.	Cancer	22 June to 22 July
7.	Leo	23 July to 22 August
8.	Virgo	23 August to 23 September
9.	Libra	24 September to 23 October
10.	Scorpio	24 October to 22 November
11.	Sagittarius	23 November to 21 December
12.	Capricorn	22 December to 20 January

THE POLICE STATION: THE CULT ATTACKS

At the same time that the three cultists enter the Grand Hotel, others are moving across the city and collecting more sacrifices. Whiting correctly assumes that the police will become aware of this, sooner or later, so a group of cultists is sent to attack the police station.

While there is a military base stationed at Fort Zachary Taylor (at the far west end of the island), the army does not concern themselves with civilian issues, plus the public would naturally call the police for help rather than the military—thus, the military are removed from the picture in terms of the scenario.

The majority of the police force is at the police station when the cult attack, with only a handful of other officers scattered across the city. The cult moves in from the front and the rear of the building, gunning down twenty officers before they have a chance to defend themselves. Not all are killed, but many of the badly injured are left for dead. The Chief of Police is among the dead.

With no one to stop them, the cultists raid the armory, taking what they desire. They then move to the cells at the rear of the building to look for more potential sacrifices. They find: Joe Marshall (pulled in for vagrancy) and Dick Hodges (waking from a night in the drunk tank). From the log sheet, the cultists determine that Hodges is a Scorpio and so take him with them when they depart. Luckily for Marshall, he's a Virgo (on a different group's "shopping list") and so is left where he is—if the heroes catch up with him, he can describe the events that took place.

The Heroes Arrive

The best way for the heroes to reach the police station is by car. Even though it is only a mile to the northwest of the Grand Hotel (on the north side of the island) the weather makes it unadvisable to travel on foot. The Keeper should emphasize the severity of the weather. The heroes are the only people to be seen out on the street. Rain is now falling practically horizontally from the dark gray sky. The wind screams and buffets walkers; some may get knocked down (see **Travel in a Hurricane**). Unsecured shutters frantically bang against windows and garbage rolls through the air like tumbleweed. It looks as though Key West has become a ghost town.

Once the heroes get to the police station, they find a patrol car standing outside the front entrance. The driver's side door is wide open and the front entrance is also ajar. Inside, an officer is tending to the wounded. Many need urgent medical treatment, so those still capable are helping get the seriously wounded to the hospital using the one remaining van, currently parked behind the station.

The scene inside is carnage, with officers shot repeatedly, some at close range, blood sprayed across walls and desks, and so on. A phone rings occasionally from one desk or another, but no one has time to answer it. No one stops the heroes from entering. Should the heroes pick up any of the ringing telephones, go to **Answering the Phones** (following).

Witnessing the horror of the aftermath of the cult's attack calls for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D4 loss). Should the heroes assist by tending to the wounded and helping to carry people to the van, make a note to award them +1D4 Sanity points at the scenario's conclusion.

Inside, the heroes can find Joe Marshall in his cell. He is scared, panicking, and wants to be set free. If the heroes promise to let him out of the cell, he can describe what happened to Hodges, as well as the men gunning the police down. If they foolishly free him from the cell before questioning him, he will simply try and make a run for it.

The surviving officers are recalling all remaining police cars, but it will take some time for them to regroup. The police department has never suffered this kind of attack. In fact, only one police officer had died in the course of duty in the city up until now, back in 1904. The police are in no state to stop the cult from this point forward.

TRAVEL IN A HURRICANE

The high winds push an average car all over the road. Thankfully, oncoming lanes are almost always deserted. A successful **Drive Auto** roll is required to reach a destination safely. Failure means the driver and passengers are violently thrown about and suffer 1 damage; a fumbled roll means that the wind causes the vehicle to veer into a lamp post, wall, or some other journey-stopping protuberance—anyone in the car suffers 1D4+1 hit points damage.

If the heroes decide to travel on foot, each must pass a **DEX** roll for the journey: failure means that they are struck by flying debris and suffer 1D3 damage; a fumbled roll may mean the hero has not only been hit by flying debris but also has been blown off their feet, causing an additional 1D4 damage as they are violently thrown onto the hard pavement.

Answering the Phones

If the heroes pick up any of the ringing phones in the police station they find themselves talking to people from various hotels and boarding houses across the city where the cult has hit. The story is the same in each case: the cult entered, looking for people with specific birth dates and killed anyone that got in their way. However, one of the calls is from Hector Mendez. After finding the bridge has collapsed, he does not dare to escape by sea, fearing that the deep ones will get him. He figures that his only hope for survival is to fight the cult and so is calling the police in the hope they can help.

Assuming he is talking to one of the heroes, Mendez begs for their help. Otherwise, a wounded police officer, clearly struggling, asks the nearest hero to take the call, saying, "This guy says he knows what's going on," before collapsing from pain.

Mendez claims to know what the cult is doing and why they are doing it but says he will only give up the information for a guarantee of protection. If offered protection, Mendez says he will meet them in fifteen minutes at the Key West Cemetery, half a mile west of the police station. He specifies the corner of Third Avenue and Violet Street, in the heart of the cemetery.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

If the heroes do not go the police station and so do not speak to Mendez on the telephone, the Keeper needs to bring the heroes to the cemetery via other means. Here are some possible options. The key is to ensure Mendez crosses the heroes' path, ideally leading them to the cemetery and the chase encounter.

- The heroes decide to head out onto the streets looking for the cultists.
- A surviving police officer asks them to help out by going onto the streets to ensure the local citizens remain in their homes—or they could just be told to go back to their hotel for their own safety.
- The heroes offer to ferry wounded police officers to the hospital.

However the heroes end up on the streets, Mendez's car runs straight across their path at a junction. He is pursued by another car in which figures dressed in black are leaning out of the window and shooting. Mendez had been driving to the police station to seek help but was spotted by the cultists who pursue him to the cemetery. Arriving at the cemetery, Mendez crashes his car and heads in on foot chased by the cultists. Ideally, the heroes take the bait and follow.

The Chase

Key West Cemetery is located slightly to the north of the center of Old Key West. It was established in 1847 following the devastation of another hurricane in 1846 that washed away the previous cemetery. It is estimated more people are buried here than the current population of the city (which is approximately 13,000 in 1935). The cemetery is characterized by white stone grave markers, with some of the newer graves being in above-ground vaults (reminiscent of those found in New Orleans) due to the lack of available space. Palm trees are dotted throughout. Few of the grave markers are large—exceptions being a couple of angel statues and monoliths—allowing for a good line of sight across many of the plots.

The following assumes the heroes go to the cemetery to meet with Mendez; however, if they are instead pursuing Mendez who is, in turn, being pursued by the cultists, adjust matters accordingly.

Pathways crisscross the cemetery. Although the corner of Third Avenue and Violet Street is easy to find, the heroes still must contend with the awful weather. Call for a **DEX** roll as the heroes make their way through the cemetery to avoid being struck by flying debris (1D4 damage if failed).

As they reach the rendezvous point, a gunshot is heard from the west end of Third Avenue. Mendez is being pursued on foot by four cultists (two with shotguns, two with handguns). They fire wildly towards Mendez, the shots impacting on grave markers, sending fragments of stone up into the howling wind. Mendez veers off from the heroes while still at a distance—from this distance he cannot tell if they are also cult members. He's not going to take any chances.

A chase begins when the heroes pursue Mendez and/or the cultists. Mendez is considered one location ahead of the cultists (MOV 9, CON 70, DEX 65), and the heroes are one location behind the cultists (MOV 9, CON 50, DEX 50). The Keeper is encouraged to describe different locations

featuring in the chase. A map is not provided, as the Keeper is encouraged to freeform the chase based upon the heroes' actions. Elements in the cemetery to draw upon, as well as barriers and hazards, include: running down the open roadways, jumping over rows of gravestones, negotiating around large vaults, trees, railings, and (of course) freshly dug graves half-filled with rain water. For the full chase rules, see Chapter 8: Chases, *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*.

If the heroes reach the cultists, two of them stop to shoot or fight, while the other two continue after Mendez. Heroes not caught up in combat may follow the other cultists and continue the chase. If they feel the heroes are catching up with them, they intermittently turn and shoot at the heroes (apply at least one penalty die for such wild shots), slowing them down even further. Should they reach Mendez, they will attack him, but will only inflict cosmetic damage. When confronted, the cultists release Mendez and fight the heroes until dead or incapacitated.

Statistics for the cultists and Mendez can be found in **Appendix A: Characters**.

Interrogating Mendez

Once the cultists have been dealt with, Mendez can explain a great deal. He can describe the cult's ritual, the strange and awful fish-men who live in the ocean, and how the cult intends to kill everyone in the city as a dedication and sacrifice to "Great Cthulhu" at sunset today. He also says that they must go to the cult's temple on Wisteria Island to stop the ritual—it's the only chance to stop the great wave from destroying Key West. Lastly, he will mention the gold tablet he stole, saying that he hoped stealing it would stop Whiting but it seems Whiting is going ahead with the plan anyway. Any hero making a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll can verify Mendez's apparent ramblings; otherwise, the heroes have to decide if they take his word at face value.

Mendez does not know of Whiting's motivation to reach Rha'thylla. He stresses that while he was a member of the cult, he was only in it for the money and how he thinks he is the only one left whose mind was not shattered by contact with the "Sleeper." He cries that he does not want to have the blood of any more innocents on his hands. If asked about the tablet, fearing he might be captured, Mendez hid it in his house on Whitehead Street (half a mile west of the cemetery). If the heroes decide to go to the house, see **Mendez's House** (following).

A successful **Psychology** roll reveals Mendez is telling the truth. He has a conscience. He joined the cult out of greed but did not have the guts to back out when he learned the truth. He feels forced to attack the cult, as destroying Whiting is the only way he can save himself now that escape from Key West is impossible. Can he be trusted? That is for the heroes to decide.

What the heroes decide to do with Mendez is up to them. He will want to stay with the heroes for protection. He can pilot the boat to Wisteria Island should the heroes lack the necessary **Pilot (Boat)** skill—a fact he will jump upon if he thinks the heroes are about to leave him behind.

Mendez's House

Mendez's house is at the north end of Whitehead Street, only a short walk away from the harbor. The wind makes the trees lining the road shiver and shake, while the darkening sky seems to close in, making for an eerie and unnerving atmosphere. The front door is open and bangs in the wind, as do several of the window shutters.

Inside, someone has clearly ransacked the place. There are signs that the house has been recently searched. Furniture is torn apart, the contents of cupboards lie scattered about, and wardrobes have been emptied. The hatch to the attic has been ripped open and sections of the interior walls have had holes knocked into them to access the crawlspaces within.

If Mendez is with the heroes, he runs upstairs to the bedroom to find the golden tablet is missing. A chest of drawers is tipped over and emptied, and floorboards beneath have been torn up. Carved into the wall are the words "DIE TRAITOR." Now that the cult has regained the tablet, Mendez knows Whiting is likely to call the deep ones, telling the heroes that there will be "greater resistance at the temple now."

The only option left is to go to the temple and stop the cult performing the spell. Mendez expects they will be transporting the kidnapped people to the island from the harbor. While he explains this, or as the heroes make the deduction, the sound of an explosion carries over the howling wind from the direction of the harbor. It is now late in the afternoon.

Complications

The scenario assumes Mendez is the person who reveals Whiting's plan to the heroes, pointing them to the cult's temple on Wisteria Island and explaining that they must stop the ritual that will summon a great wave to destroy Key West. What happens if the heroes somehow manage to avoid meeting him altogether?

Be prepared to use a different character to convey the plot information. Have a different cultist, one perhaps captured by the heroes or one about to die, relay the necessary information. Something like, "Ha! You'll never stop us. At sunset, my brothers on Wisteria Island will sacrifice those we have taken to Great Cthulhu! Our lord will send the ocean to obliterate Key West," which helps the heroes to get back on track.

At some suitable point, the heroes could come upon a cultist who has caught Mendez and is perhaps about to kill him. Saving Mendez in this way means he sees the heroes as his saviors, explaining to them that he needs their help to save Key West. Having Mendez with the heroes is important if none of them possess the Pilot (Boat/Yacht) skill, as he will be needed to pilot a boat to Wisteria Island later in the scenario. If Mendez dies before this point, then be ready to have a different NPC with the Pilot (Boat) skill on hand to help out the heroes.

THE HARBOR

The harbor is at the far western end of Key West. The only boats that could potentially sail during the hurricane are docked here. Cultists are in the process of dynamiting all the boats; in their madness, they fear that some people might try escaping the coming devastation. With the police neutralized and everyone else locked away in their homes, the cultists believe they can take their time. Thus, by the time the heroes arrive, they will still be laying charges in the boats.

At the main entrance, by the Harbor Master's Office (the door to which is open), are four pick-up trucks, vacant and abandoned in the road—used by the cult to transport their intended sacrifices. In his office, the harbormaster may be found impaled against the wall with a whaling harpoon (taken from a broken display case nearby). He has subsequently been disemboweled—call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 loss).

The Harbor Master's Office is decorated with plenty of seafaring paraphernalia. Those looking for weapons find four harpoons (uses the Throw skill, damage 1D10+DB) and two flare guns with six shots apiece (Handgun skill, damage 1D10+1D3 burn).

As the heroes proceed along the line of jetties, they notice a trail of smoke billowing up into the ever-darkening sky. The smoke is coming from a large yacht, on fire and sinking below the waves of the harbor. Seconds later, another explosion can be heard. A flash of flame is spotted from further down the harbor, and a column of smoke rises as another yacht burns.

Observing from the jetty, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll notices a fishing boat heading out to the ocean; otherwise, Mendez can point this out (it is actually his fishing boat). Onboard are the twelve sacrifices, bound and drugged, each marked with a zodiac symbol upon their forehead.

There are still a handful of boats remaining that could get the heroes across to Wisteria Island. One or two might even be quick enough to intercept Mendez's stolen fishing boat before it arrives at the island. Six cultists remain at the harbor, setting up explosives to destroy the remaining larger vessels. They are all armed with handguns, although at the Keeper's discretion, the two cultists planting the dynamite can throw single sticks at the heroes—failing their Throw rolls means the dynamite flies into the waters of the harbor and simply showers the heroes in a sudden burst of water. A fumble results in the cultist blowing themselves up, along with the rest of their explosives and the boat they are upon.

Cautious heroes might use **Spot Hidden** and **Listen** to detect and watch the six cultists so that they can quickly determine a plan of action whether to use **Stealth** to steal past and snatch a boat, or use force to claim a boat before the cultists blow them all up.

Observant heroes may discover two crates of dynamite (with fuses) on one of the jetties, near one of the last remaining yachts that could make it through the turbulent sea. Two of the cultists are watching over the crates while the other four come and go to fetch individual sticks and fuses to plant on the remaining boats. The heroes might find a use for the dynamite in the temple on Wisteria Island. If using Stealth to get to a boat, a kindly Keeper might allow a **Spot Hidden** roll to notice the dynamite crates.

Statistics for the cultists can be found in **Appendix A: Characters**.

DYNAMITE!

Use the Throw skill if throwing dynamite sticks at an opponent.

Range is STR divided by 5 in yards.

Damage:

3D10 damage	If within 3 yards
2D10 damage	If within 6 yards
1D10 damage	If within 9 yards

The **Demolitions** skill is used for those working with dynamite, setting charges and so on. As required, a Hard Know (**EDU**) roll may be substituted in place of Demolitions.

BOARDING A BOAT

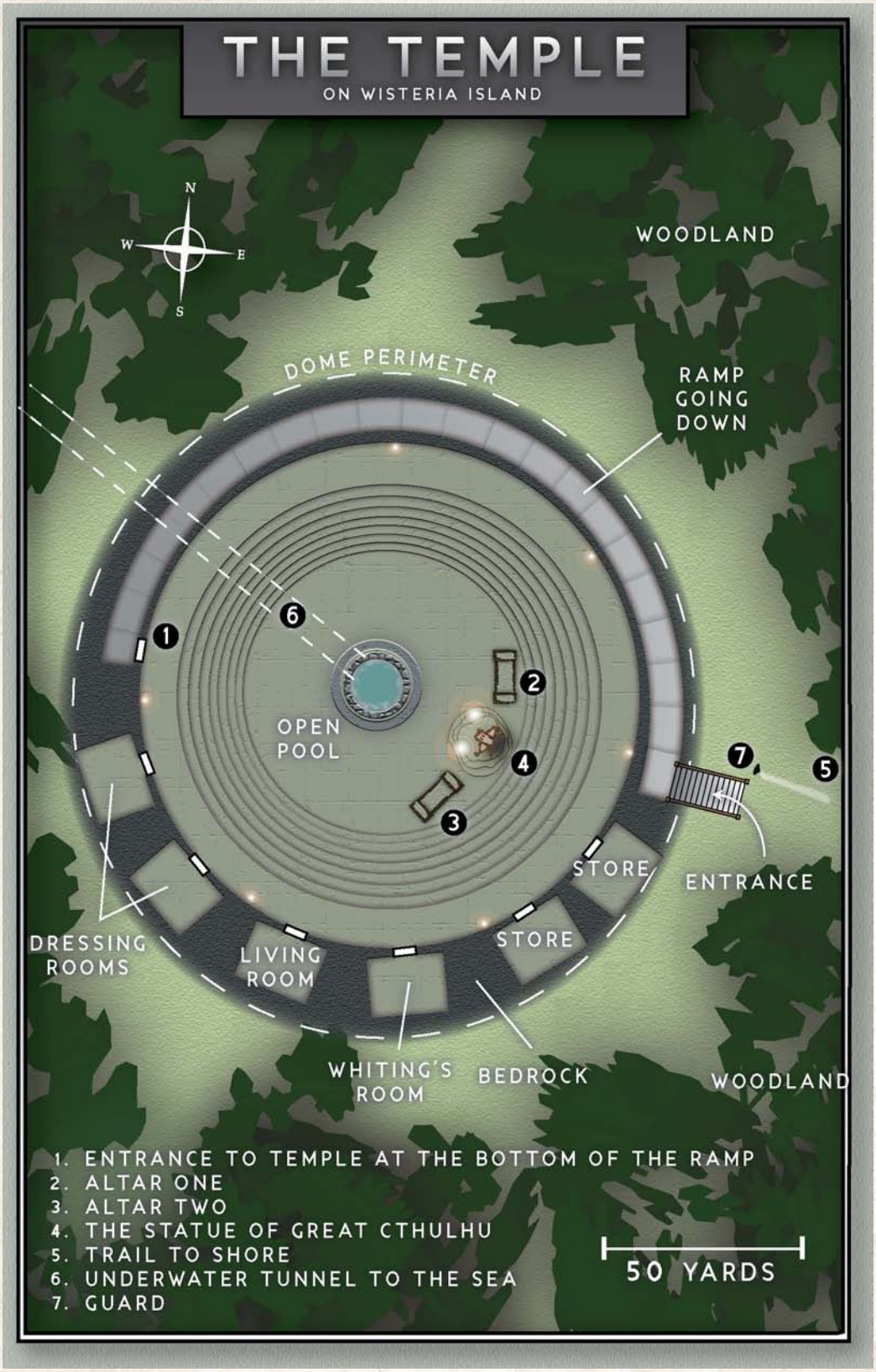
Once on a boat and away from the harbor, the heroes can see Mendez's fishing boat moving north, passing Tank Island to the west and continuing on to Wisteria Island. If the heroes do not have the **Pilot (Boat)** skill, then Mendez (if with them) can pilot the yacht. The heroes' vessel is of sufficient speed that it can potentially catch up with the fishing boat.

As the boats draw near to the island, a large wave suddenly hits the sides of vessels. This is a larger wave than any of the others that the storm has so far thrown at them. Both vessels tilt precariously in the water before finally righting themselves. A Hard **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that the wave was generated by something huge, under the water, passing to the west of Tank Island and heading north, towards Wisteria Island (this is a star-spawn of Cthulhu, the deep ones from Rha'thylla riding on its back to the temple, where they will meet with Whiting).

The Keeper may treat this scene as a vehicle chase, with the heroes having the chance to take shots at Doyle who is piloting the fishing boat from a raised wheelhouse platform. A second cultist, keeping watch over the



Wisteria Island Map by Stephanie McAlea



The Temple Map by Stephanie McAlea

sacrifices, may also fire back at them. If Doyle has already been taken care of earlier at the Grand Hotel, it is a generic cultist piloting the boat. If the Keeper chooses to run this section as a chase, it is recommended that a player rolls for Mendez (Pilot (Boat) 80%), as well as performing whatever actions their hero desires. This way, the Keeper need only worry about making rolls for Doyle (Pilot (Boat) 60%). The fishing boats both have MOV 14 and Build 3, begin the chase with the two boats 2 locations apart.

Alternatively, the Keeper could resolve the chase with a single opposed **Pilot (Boat)** roll between the heroes and Doyle. If Doyle wins, the cultists' boat reaches the island before the heroes can catch up. If the heroes win, their boat pulls alongside the cultist's boat and the heroes can jump onboard to confront Doyle and the second cultists in close combat. Doyle will initially defend himself with his knife, but will target anyone that successfully injures him with the Breath Of The Deep spell, and then move on to the next attacker. Both he and the other cultist will fight to the death. Those fighting on board the fishing boat will need to take care to avoid injuring the bound and drugged kidnapped sacrifices laying on the deck.

If searching the fishing boat, the heroes find no trace of the golden tablet as this was taken to the island as soon as it was found. Whiting has already used it to summon the deep ones and is awaiting their imminent arrival.

WISTERIA ISLAND

The southern shore of Wisteria Island is just over a half-mile north of the Key West harbor. The island was created around the turn of the century when the US Navy dredged Key West harbor and deposited large amounts of sediment to the north, creating Tank Island. Subsequent dredging created Wisteria Island, named after a steamer that sank there.

Joseph Reese, second in command of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, was a real estate developer with a considerable amount of influence in Key West. He paid Monroe County a small fortune to buy a plot of land on the otherwise uninhabited island so that he could build a temple, hidden from prying eyes by the many Australian pine trees that cover the island. Over the past year, Whiting has resided in the temple as his transformation into a deep one has eroded his human appearance and his ability to engage with human society.

As the heroes approach, the sun is nearing the horizon. A number of yachts have run aground on the shore. There are no signs of life. No one is there to notice the heroes arrive at the island. A nearby trail through the trees leads approximately 60 yards to a clearing. Mendez offers to look after the sacrifices (presuming they were rescued) on the boat while the heroes' head into the island.

Following the trail to the clearing, the heroes see the domed roof of the sunken temple rising no more than a couple of feet above the ground. Nearby, an entrance tunnel descends around the circumference of the circular temple, entering the interior underground on the far side. A single cultist, armed with a shotgun, idly stands guard.

Echoing up from below, the heroes can hear the terrible chanting of the cultists. The heroes can easily see the guard through the trees before they themselves are spotted. A successful **Stealth** roll is required to get to the guard without being seen and fired upon (which raises the alarm for the cultists inside). Quickly incapacitating or killing the guard means he cannot sound the alarm and warn the others.

If the alarm is raised, two deep ones bound up the tunnel, foreshadowed by their inhuman cries. They subsequently engage the heroes in combat (armed with tridents). If the heroes manage to quietly defeat the guard and prevent the alarm being raised, these two deep ones are encountered at the bottom of the ramp upon entering the main chamber of the temple.

The interior of the temple is comprised of a single circular chamber, lit by flaming torches and braziers. Six smaller rooms lead off from the main chamber, used for dressing rooms, storage, and living areas for Whiting. The main chamber is like an amphitheater, with large steps leading down on all sides to a central area. There are two large altars here, each with six sacrifices laid upon them (unless they have already been rescued). Between the altars is a human-sized statue of Cthulhu made from a dark green stone of indeterminate origin. In front of the statue, a water-filled hole opens to a tunnel leading to the ocean. It is through here that the deep ones emerge when they are called.

THE RITUAL

Inside the temple, Whiting leads the cult in chanting to cast the Wave Of Oblivion spell. Watching the ritual is a deep one elder from Rha'thylla, who wears an ornate golden crown, flanked by two deep one guards armed with tridents.

There are twenty human cultists present, all chanting. Only half of these will leave the chanting at any one time to engage in combating any heroes who try to disrupt the ceremony. The others form a ring around the lowest level of the amphitheater overlooking the altars, forming a physical barrier to the twelve sacrifices within.

Joseph Reese, Whiting's second in command, assists by ritually sacrificing the victims laid on the two altars. Positioned close together, a single swooping motion slits all the throats of the victims on a single altar per round. Thus, two rounds after the alarm has been raised, all the victims will be dead—unless he is stopped. If the sacrifices were previously rescued, twelve members of the cult (each born under the differing zodiac signs) take their place to provide Whiting with the power needed to create the Wave Of Oblivion—this consequently

reduces the opposition the heroes face in the temple.

The statue drains and magnifies the sacrifice in powering the Wave Of Oblivion spell. Thus, through arcane magic, the twelve sacrifices plus the contribution of the attendant cultists and deep ones generates over 12,000 magic points to power the devastating spell.

Once all of the sacrifices have been made, Whiting requires a further round for the statue to magnify the gathered energy. With this, the chanting of the cultists is complete and the spell is ready to be triggered. Whiting must be in sight of his target (Key West) while also being in the ocean to complete the casting of the spell. He dives into the pool in the center of the temple, followed by the deep one elder and its guards. The group swims down to meet the waiting star-spawn of Cthulhu, which then rises from the ocean, lifting Whiting and the deep ones from the water to face Key West.

STOPPING THE CULT

In the face of what could be quite a large number of cultists, the dynamite from the harbor might be useful. If successfully thrown at a cluster of cultists, 1D6 are caught in the blast and killed, which should reduce numbers quickly. Otherwise, taking the cult on one at a time might be a lengthy process, meaning the heroes do not reach the altar before all of the sacrifices are made.

There are a few ways that the ritual can be halted:

- **Destroying the statue:** requires 20 points of damage to be inflicted upon it. Anyone physically touching the statue or delivering the blow that destroys it, must make an Extreme **POW** roll. Failure means their mind touches that of Great Cthulhu—seeing visions of him and R'lyeh—and provoking a **Sanity** roll (1D10/1D100 loss).
- **Killing Whiting:** the heroes can best achieve this before he dives into the tunnel with the deep ones. Once in the tunnel, collapsing it with dynamite is an option. Adventurous heroes can dive in and follow, but risk drowning in underwater combat with the deep ones. Otherwise, Whiting can be intercepted as he breaks the surface and rides the star-spawn (seeing the star-spawn requires a **Sanity** roll (1D6/1D20 loss)).
- **Attacking the deep one elder:** in such an event, the elder attempts to escape (protected by its two guards) back into the ocean. The guards only attack those who threaten the elder, while the elder does not attack anyone, apart from in self-defense. Their sudden departure panics Whiting to the point where he loses concentration on the ritual. Furthermore, his lack of concentration results in the energy flowing into the statue being lost.
- **Saving the sacrifices:** rescuing the sacrifices means stopping Reese. The Keeper should note that Reese has 80 Luck available to use (as he is a major villain) making this a very dangerous encounter. If Reese is slain, Whiting (70 Luck) will attempt to continue the sacrifice, slicing throats with his claws. It is recommended that both NPCs should use their Luck points to modify their defense rolls and/or gain extra attacks against the heroes.

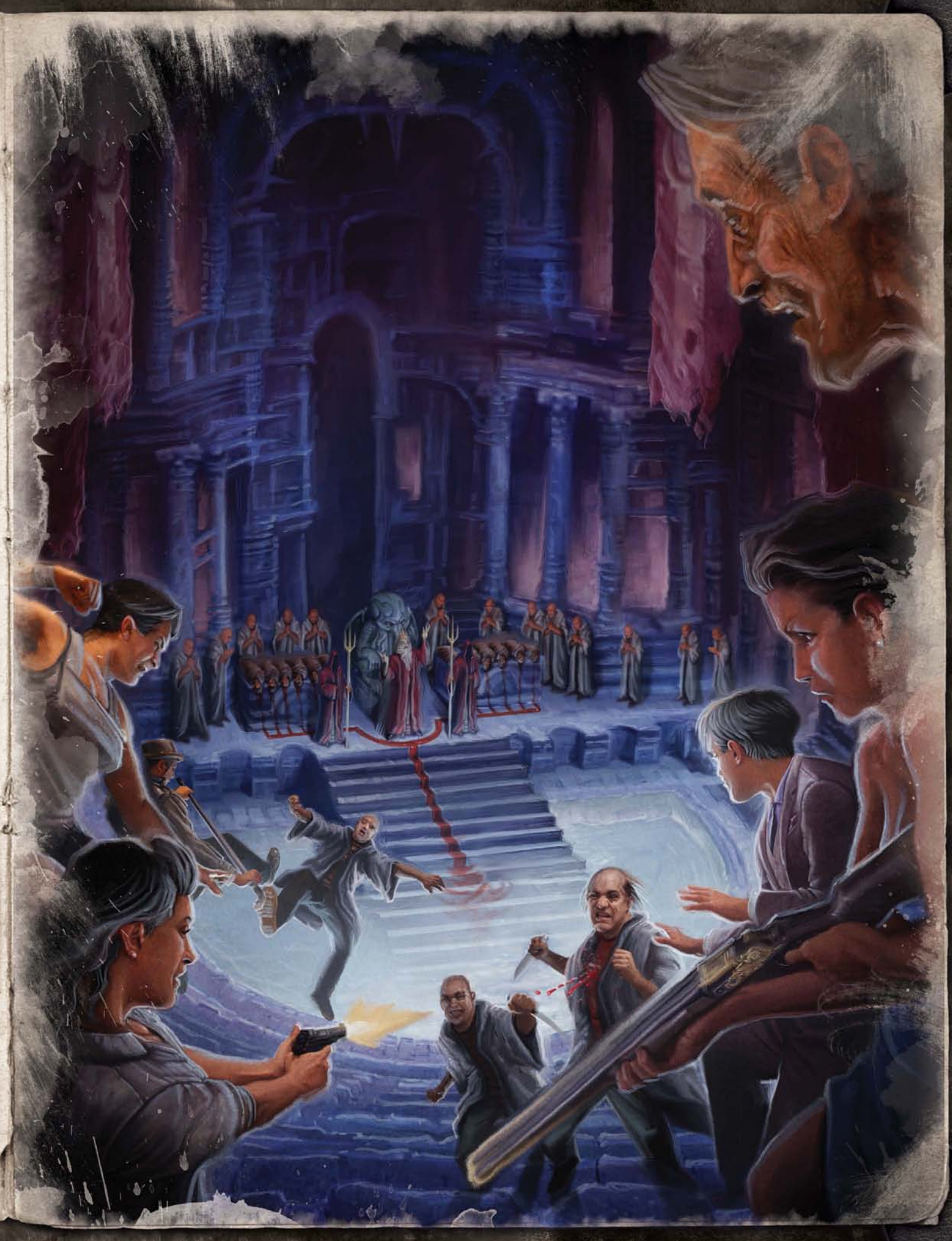
THE RITUAL: ROUND BY ROUND

Round	Result
Round 0	Alarm is raised, cultists move into position.
Round 1	Reese sacrifices all victims on the first altar.
Round 2	Reese sacrifices all victims on the second altar.
Round 3	The statue of Cthulhu magnifies the gathered energy.
Round 4	Whiting and the deep ones dive into the pool leading to the underwater tunnel.
Round 8	Whiting and the deep ones enter the open ocean and climb upon the star-spawn.
Round 10	The Wave Of Oblivion is cast as Key West comes into view.

Note: Whiting will continue to try and cast the Wave Of Oblivion spell even if there is not enough power (i.e., if some of the sacrifices have been saved). This may result in Key West still being damaged to a lesser degree if the wave is large enough.

- **Blow things up:** the heroes, suspecting there are no innocent victims inside as they already saved the sacrifices on the boat, can set dynamite around the domed roof of the temple without having to venture inside. With a successful **Demolitions** roll or Hard **Know** roll, the entire roof gives way and falls on all below. All the cultists are instantly slain, however, Whiting and Reese could, in theory, use their remaining Luck to avoid death (if the Keeper wishes to have them appear again in a future scenario). A group **Luck** roll determines whether the deep one elder dives into the underwater tunnel in time and escapes death.

Stopping the Ritual by Victor Manuel Leza Moreno



Note: should the heroes have attacked the deep one elder in the temple (or blown up the roof), the elder takes immediate revenge by commanding the star-spawn to rise from the water and attack. If the heroes are inside, the monster smashes through the temple roof at a suitable moment. The heroes must dive for cover from falling debris (requiring a Hard **Dodge** roll) or suffer 6D6 damage. If they are outside, they must face direct attacks from the beast. Silhouetted against the light of the setting sun is the titanic figure of the star-spawn—**Sanity** roll (1D6/1D20 loss). The star-spawn will press its attack until it believes all of the little humans are dead—cunning heroes might find a way to sneak away; otherwise, they must defeat the star-spawn. Inflicting significant damage to the star-spawn with dynamite, Extreme combat successes*, or magical attacks causes the monster to submerge beneath the sea and slink back to wherever it came from. Award heroic effort as appropriate.

**Using Luck points to achieve Extreme success is advised.*

AFTERMATH

If the heroes fail to stop the Wave Of Oblivion from being cast, things go rapidly downhill. Whiting receives the blessing of Cthulhu and completes his transformation into a fully developed deep one. Due to the intervention of the heroes, the deep ones have no intention of spending the time needed to cast the necessary rites on the human cultists to allow them to survive the journey to Rha'thylla. The deep ones and Whiting depart on the star-spawn, while the human cultists flee in confusion, as the mighty wave begins to build.

If the heroes remain in the temple, the structure protects them from the wave's impact (although **Swim** rolls might be in order as the water comes racing in through the open ramp. When they emerge, they find Key West destroyed with thousands of lives lost. Hopefully, they find some wreckage floating in the ocean on which to wait until rescued. When the rescue teams finally reach the city, everything is blamed on the hurricane, which also claims hundreds of lives further up the Keys. It will be years before the city is rebuilt.

If the heroes manage to stop the ritual, the city rides out the hurricane, but others are not as fortunate further up the Keys where the full force of the storm is felt. The Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 goes down in history as the most intense to make landfall in the United States in recorded history.

If alive, Mendez returns the heroes to Key West and attempts to disappear to start a new life elsewhere—if the heroes let him.

Any subsequent investigation of the cult's temple reveals a journal kept by Whiting that documents his backstory and motivation behind casting the Wave Of Oblivion. Reading the journal grants +3 points of Cthulhu Mythos and costs 1D6 Sanity points.

CONCLUSION

Sanity gains and losses for the conclusion of *Waiting for the Hurricane*:

- Saving the lives of ritual sacrifices: +1 Sanity point per survivor (maximum of 6 points).
- Killing Esoteric Order of Dagon cultists: +1 Sanity point per cultist (maximum of 6 points).
- Successfully preventing the ritual to cast Wave Of Oblivion: +1D8 Sanity points.
- Destroying the Temple of the Esoteric Order of Dagon: +1D4 Sanity points.
- Destroying the statue of Great Cthulhu: +1D4 Sanity points.
- Defeating the star-spawn of Cthulhu: +1D20 Sanity points.
- Witnessing the death of a sacrifice: –1 Sanity point per victim (maximum of –6 points).
- Failing to stop the Wave Of Oblivion and the destruction of Key West: –1D20 Sanity points.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

Only the relevant and necessary statistics are presented. The Keeper should feel free to modify or expand these as they wish.

DOUGLAS WHITING, *age 42, deep one hybrid*

Whiting has not fully completed his transformation into a deep one. He can breathe unaided underwater, but only for short periods, as his gills have yet to fully form. He hides his disturbing visage under his ceremonial robes in preparation for calling his brethren from Rha'thylla.

Description: from a distance, he appears as a large, hunched figure. Only when the heroes come close enough will they be able to see the horror that lurks under the hood of his robes.

STR 65	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 65	**INT** 60
APP 20	**POW** 70	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 70

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw).

Fighting	55% (27/11), damage 1D6+DB
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales.
Spells: Breath Of The Deep (see box), Contact Cthulhu, Summon Deep Ones*, Wave Of Oblivion (see box).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see Whiting.
** Does not include Binding spell, and requires the gold tablet to cast the spell.*

JOSEPH REESE, *age 39, second in command*

A consummate businessman, driven by wealth and greed, he was blinded by the lure of gold. Now he has been driven mad by the dreams of Great Cthulhu. He believes he will live forever as a deep one in Rha'thylla, surrounded by more gold than he ever dreamed could have existed. He will not allow anyone to stand in his way.

Description: immaculately tidy appearance. Expensive, pinstriped business suit, piercing blue eyes and malevolent smile, with combed-back jet-black hair.

STR 40	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 65	**INT** 90
APP 60	**POW** 80	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** 80

Combat

Fighting	35% (17/7), damage 1D3+DB
.38 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Credit Rating 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 65%.

Spells: Breath Of The Deep (see box), Contact Cthulhu.

LEON DOYLE, *age 31, the cult's assassin*

A man hired by the rich and powerful to do their dirty work; he is a career criminal with no hope of redemption. He was brought into the cult by Reese to remove any who would oppose the will of Great Cthulhu. The dreams of the Sleeper drove him insane. He revels in the thought of becoming a deep one. Humanity is all but a distant memory for him, even though he has yet to be turned.

Description: cold, gray eyes. Dressed all in black, practical outdoor clothing. Wild, dark brown hair, well built and muscular.

STR 65	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 75	**INT** 70
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 00	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 50

Combat

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4, or by weapon (knife, 1D4+2+1D4)
.38 auto	60% (30/12), damage 1D10
12-g shotgun	70% (35/14), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	65% (32/13)

SPELL: BREATH OF THE DEEP

- Cost: 8 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- Casting time: 1 round

The target's lungs fill with seawater, potentially causing an unpleasant death by drowning. The caster must be able to see the target. After mentally intoning the spell for a round, the caster must win an opposed POW roll with the target. If the caster wins, the target begins to drown—the target falls to the floor, choking on seawater and taking 1D8 damage each round. The target should make an Extreme CON roll after taking damage each round; if the roll is successful the water has been expelled and the effects of the spell cease.

SPELL: WAVE OF OBLIVION

- Cost: 30 magic points; 1D8 Sanity points
- Casting time: 1 hour

Causes a powerful ocean wave to smash down at the caster's direction. The caster must be able to see the intended target and sufficient quantities of salt water must be present to create the wave. The wave volume is 3,000 cubic feet, enough to swamp or capsize a small sloop. Needless to say, people swallowed up by such waves vanish forever below the surface. Others can contribute magic points to the spell to create vast waves. At a minimum of 30 magic points, the wave is ten feet long, ten feet wide and thirty feet high. Each additional magic point adds a foot to the length and width of the wave.

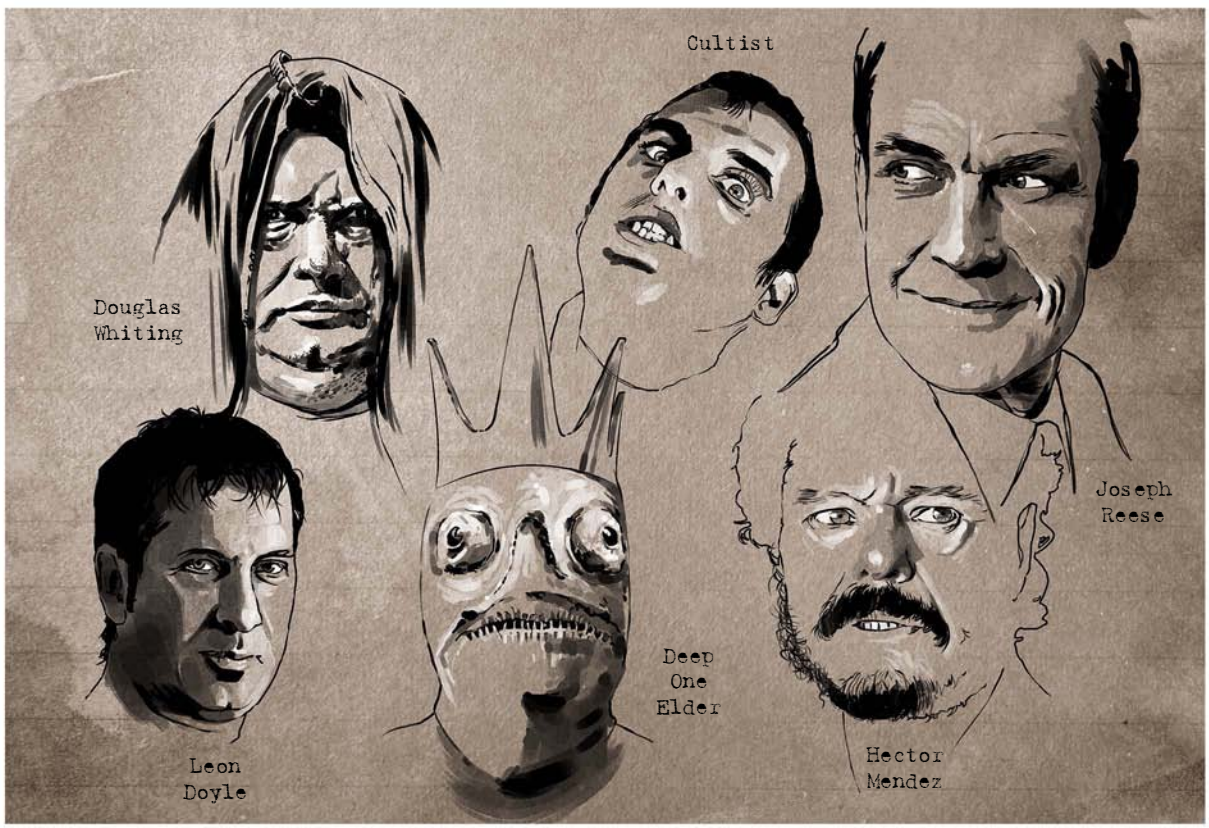
Skills

Climb 40%, Jump 40%, Listen 65%, Pilot (Boat) 60%, Spot Hidden 70%, Stealth 60%.

Spells: Breath Of The Deep (see box).

HECTOR MENDEZ, *age 33, traitor to the cult*

Mendez joined the cult to get rich but was too scared to back out when he learned the truth. Now that he knows the cult plan, he has found a conscience and no longer wishes to be an accomplice to mass murder. But if he is going to escape, he might as well get rich in the process. He is always looking out for number one. A coward who is likely to fall foul of his own greed.



Description: native to Cuba, he speaks near-perfect English. Short and curly brown hair, rugged face, narrow eyes, dressed in practical sailors clothing.

STR 60	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 65	**INT** 55
APP 45	**POW** 80	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** —

Combat

Fighting	55% (27/11), damage 1D3
Dodge	35 (17/7)

Skills

Climb 50%, Jump 45%, Language (English) 70%, Listen 50%, Pilot (Boat) 80%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 50%.

ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON CULTISTS, *mortal servants of the Sleeper*

Use for all other cultists

Description: dressed in black, practical clothing. Some carry weapons in gym bags, others openly brandish shotguns or blades. Each stares with wide, deranged eyes, and will respond to any threat with violence.

STR 60	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 55	**POW** 50	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 1D3, or by weapon (e.g. knife, 1D4+2)
.38 auto	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
12-g shotgun	50% (25/10), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 30%.

DEEP ONE ELDER, *priest of Great Cthulhu*

STR 85	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 85	**DEX** 70	**INT** 80
APP —	**POW** 80	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 16
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D6, or by weapon (e.g. spear, 1D8+1D6)
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Special Abilities

Breathe underwater: requires no exterior help to breathe underwater, and is equally capable of breathing on land.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales.
Spells: Breath Of The Deep (see box), Contact Cthulhu, Summon/Bind Star Spawn of Cthulhu, Wave Of Oblivion (see box).
Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one.

DEEP ONES, *monstrous servants of Great Cthulhu*

STR 70	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 55	**INT** 65
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4 or by weapon (e.g. spear, 1D8+1D4)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Special Abilities

Breathe underwater: requires no exterior help to breathe underwater, and is equally capable of breathing on land.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales.
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one.

STAR-SPAWN OF CTHULHU, *offspring of the Sleeper*

STR 350	**CON** 265	**SIZ** 525	**DEX** 50	**INT** 105
APP —	**POW** 105	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 79
DB: +10D6	**Build:** 11	**Move:** 15	**MP:** 21	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 4 (may attack with tentacles or with claws to cause damage or to seize people).

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 10D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Armor: 10-point hide and blubber; regenerates 3 hit points per round.
Spells: 3D6 spells at Keeper's discretion.
Sanity loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see a star-spawn.



Deep One by Loïc Muzy

CHAPTER 12

PANDORA'S BOX

A fabled artifact comes to a big city nightclub. At first, it seems like just a publicity stunt but bad luck follows the device and all who chance upon it. The heroes must navigate through a range of interested parties, some less desirable than others, in the search for a missing man whose past has been catching up with him.

OVERVIEW

This scenario is very flexible in terms of place and date, the number and type of heroes. It can be set at any time in the 1930s, though 1933 to 1934 would be most appropriate, and can be set in any major city in the USA big enough to support large-scale nightclubs. New York and Chicago are prime candidates, but San Francisco, Boston, Miami, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Detroit, or even Atlantic City are all viable alternatives. A key point is that the scenario should ideally take place in a city that the heroes do not know well.

The scenario is somewhat a sandbox in format, presenting key personalities, locations, and motivations, along with a series of three crime scenes.

The premise is that an artifact, known as Pandora's Box, has become an attraction at a nightclub and, while that in itself is unlikely to get the heroes involved, a mysterious and sudden disappearance and the subsequent events should. This is a pulp premise but the pulpiness is adjustable: the possibilities of the artifact can be scaled to the capabilities, experience, and play style of your group—from a single monster to multiple monsters, and ultimately to apocalyptic disaster.

OUTLINE OF THE SCENARIO

The relic known as Pandora's Box is an ancient Hyperborean artifact that reached America a few years ago in the unsuspecting hands of an Englishman named John Drummond. He has a vague idea of the box's gruesome history; just enough to laughingly refer to the ancient heirloom as "Pandora's Box." Unaware of the box's role in the death of his beloved wife, Drummond has nonetheless been drinking himself into oblivion. A chance encounter with the nightclub hostess, Pandora Moulin, has brought about this ballyhoo, and the belief that it may be the "real" Pandora's Box of legend. Drummond has agreed to Moulin's wishes for the box to be the centerpiece of her revamped nightclub, Pandora's Palace. Drummond is hoping the publicity can help the box sell at auction when it has finished its exhibition at the club. These plans are halted when, the day after the club's re-launch, the club's ex-gangster operator, Vern Bailey, goes missing along with the box itself. Is this a case of temptation getting the better of a bad man or another incident in a long line of murky events in the history of this artifact?

The heroes can be drawn in through their interest in the mysterious and the occult, be they roving reporters, debunking authors, open-minded parapsychologists, or skeptical antiquarians. Alternatively, because Drummond and the club want to milk the publicity, they have arranged for the artifact to be authenticated by reputable scholars, allowing college professors and their agents (graduate students, and so forth) from all manner of associated disciplines to become involved. Academic heroes should feel inclined to pursue and recover the missing relic to prevent their names—and by association, their faculty and university—from becoming embroiled in a scandal. Getting the matter resolved should be paramount if they are also to prevent "academia" from frowning upon their association with show business and "tawdry" nightclubs.

Heroes-for-hire may be contacted by John Drummond, Pandora Moulin, or Connie Bailey to find out what has happened to the artifact and/or to Vern Bailey. For these purposes, the possible clients may well trust somebody from out of town to cut through local concerns.

What Really Happened

Vern Bailey's criminal associations (in his past and present) were causing him considerable stress and danger, however, it was the toxic combination of Pandora's Box and a minor acquaintance that caused his disappearance. Bailey saw an old criminal associate, Leo Carpozi, recently out of jail and down on his luck, outside the club on the first day of the box going on display. Bailey tossed Carpozi a few bucks with a firm request to stay away, but when he saw Carpozi inside the club later in a rented tux he guessed (rightly) that Carpozi was sizing up customers for the purposes of robbing them. Bailey had Carpozi thrown out.

Carpozi, never one to let a grudge fester, decided to pay Bailey back by stealing the box that very night. Carpozi managed to sneak back inside and cracked open Bailey's safe. Carpozi was opening the box when Bailey caught him in the act. As Carpozi reached for his gun, a monster suddenly appeared (a dimensional shambler) and grabbed Bailey. Within a moment, both monster and Bailey faded away into nothingness. Rationalizing this as the fates "helping" him, Carpozi closed the box and walked out of the building with it in a briefcase.

What Happens Next

The events of the scenario are driven by Leo Carpozi's attempts to realize a profit on the artifact he has stolen. Events can occur as quickly as the Keeper determines is plausible and fair in terms of giving the heroes a chance to investigate.

While the heroes try to get a fix on Bailey and the history of the box, Carpozi contacts a local fence, Lester Conklin, to see what he can get for the artifact. Conklin stalls Carpozi at his pawnshop while he contacts the city's leading criminal organization, known as the "Syndicate," about what Carpozi has for sale, knowing that they will be interested in the item. Realizing he is being set-up, Carpozi opens the box, causing the gruesome death of Conklin, and escapes just as the mob arrive. See **Crime Scene Two** for more details (page 189).

With the Syndicate on the lookout for him, Carpozi realizes he needs to find different buyers. He remembers a private eye, called Himes, whom he worked for before his last prison stretch. Himes had hired Carpozi to steal a book from a lodge on the Northside of the city; Carpozi got it out of the creepy place and was well paid. Carpozi thinks that whoever hired Himes to get that book might also pay well for the box. Carpozi soon finds that Himes is dead but discovers a forwarding address for Elliott Gaskell (the book's buyer) at Hime's office. Gaskell, a debunker of phony spiritualists, and his butler, Richards, soon become Carpozi's next victims (with Carpozi rifling Gaskell's safe for cash while Gaskell and his manservant are killed by summoned monsters). See **Crime Scene Three** for more details (page 190).

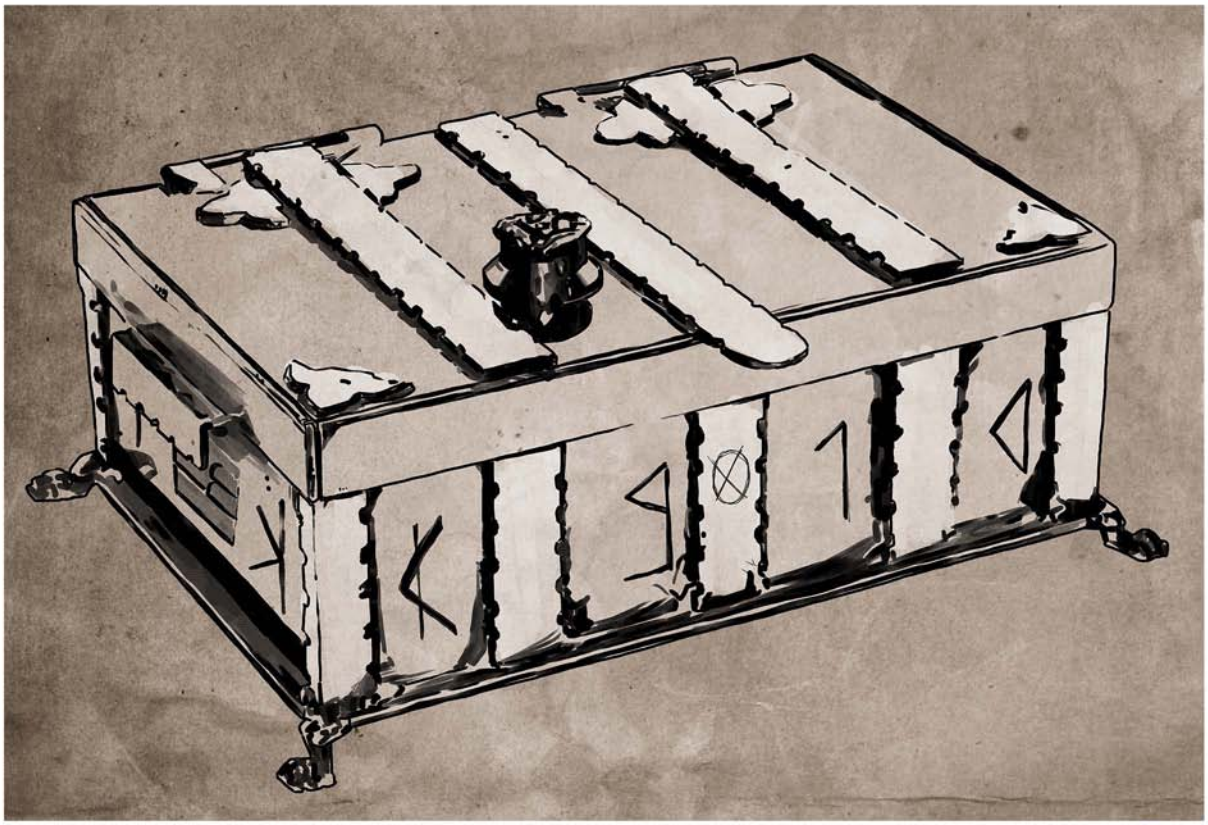
It dawns on Carpozi as he is about to blow town that the lodge he robbed for Himes on Gaskell's behalf is probably full of people who would pay for the box. Indeed, it is. The Seekers of Eternal Wisdom who operate from the lodge are just the kind of people who would be interested. This is his final sales pitch, however. The leader of the group, Klaus Sauerfeld, can't believe his luck since he's been pursuing information about the box through his minions ever since he heard it was coming to his city. Sauerfeld hypnotizes Carpozi, capturing him and the box. Before Carpozi knows what's happening, Sauerfeld has him playing the leading role in an experiment to find out exactly what happens if the box is opened. The end result, if the heroes do not interfere, is that Sauerfeld and his coven will have possession of a powerful magical artifact and, through their harebrained experiment, unwittingly unleash all manner of monsters into the city. See **The Seekers of Eternal Wisdom** for more details (page 191).

PANDORA'S BOX

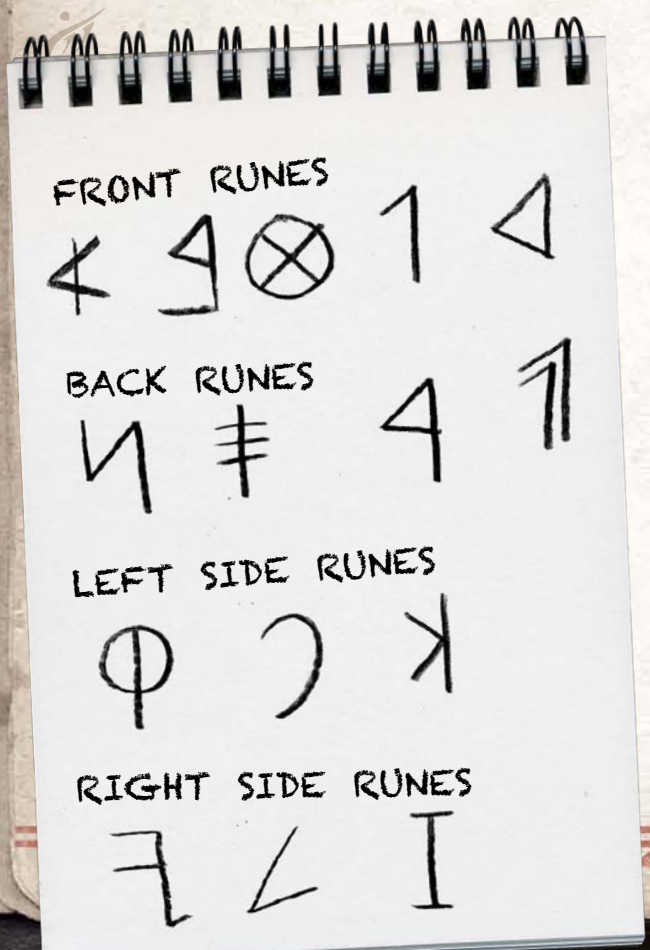
The artifact is brass but with carefully inlaid panels of silver, gold, and copper, each forming a catch to hold the lid. The panels have runes pressed into them (see following). It is not a simple operation to open the box and the order in which one loosens the catches (3 each side, 4 at back, 5 at the front) offers 60 possible combinations; thousands if re-locking becomes a possibility. The lure is that some combinations are said to be safe (even rewarding) while others are dangerous or fatal.

The box operates as one end of a magical Gate; the location of the other end is determined by various reference points (time, location on earth, phase of the moon, position of key planets, and constellations) which are impossible for most humans to compute. The box works as if it were a searchlight casting around for likely subjects. Opening the artifact drains 10 magic points from the person holding it. The scents and atmosphere of Earth are attractive to many otherworldly creatures and they may visit (and return) in a way impossible for any human. In short, monsters can travel through the box but humans can't. The type of creature summoned is determined by the number of seconds the box is left open. A rough rule of thumb suggests that briefly opening the box is the least dangerous option, as the longer the box stays open the bigger and deadlier the monsters that appear!

Box Open For	Monster(s) Appearing
17-18 seconds	Byakhee
19-20 seconds	Dimensional Shambler
20-21 seconds	Moon Beast
28-30 seconds	Star Vampire
40 seconds	Hunting Horror
50 seconds	Shantak
60 seconds	Gug
90 seconds	Shoggoth
10 minutes	Dhole



Handout: Pandora's Box 4



For low pulp games, the device might only disgorge a single monster type, such as a gug, or perhaps work less frequently. It is also up to the Keeper whether the creature stays in this world permanently, for a limited duration, or simply as long as the box is open (some monsters, like dimensional shamblers may depart at will of course). Quick-reference statistics for all these monsters can be found in **Appendix A**, although Keepers are recommended to read their entries (where applicable) in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*.

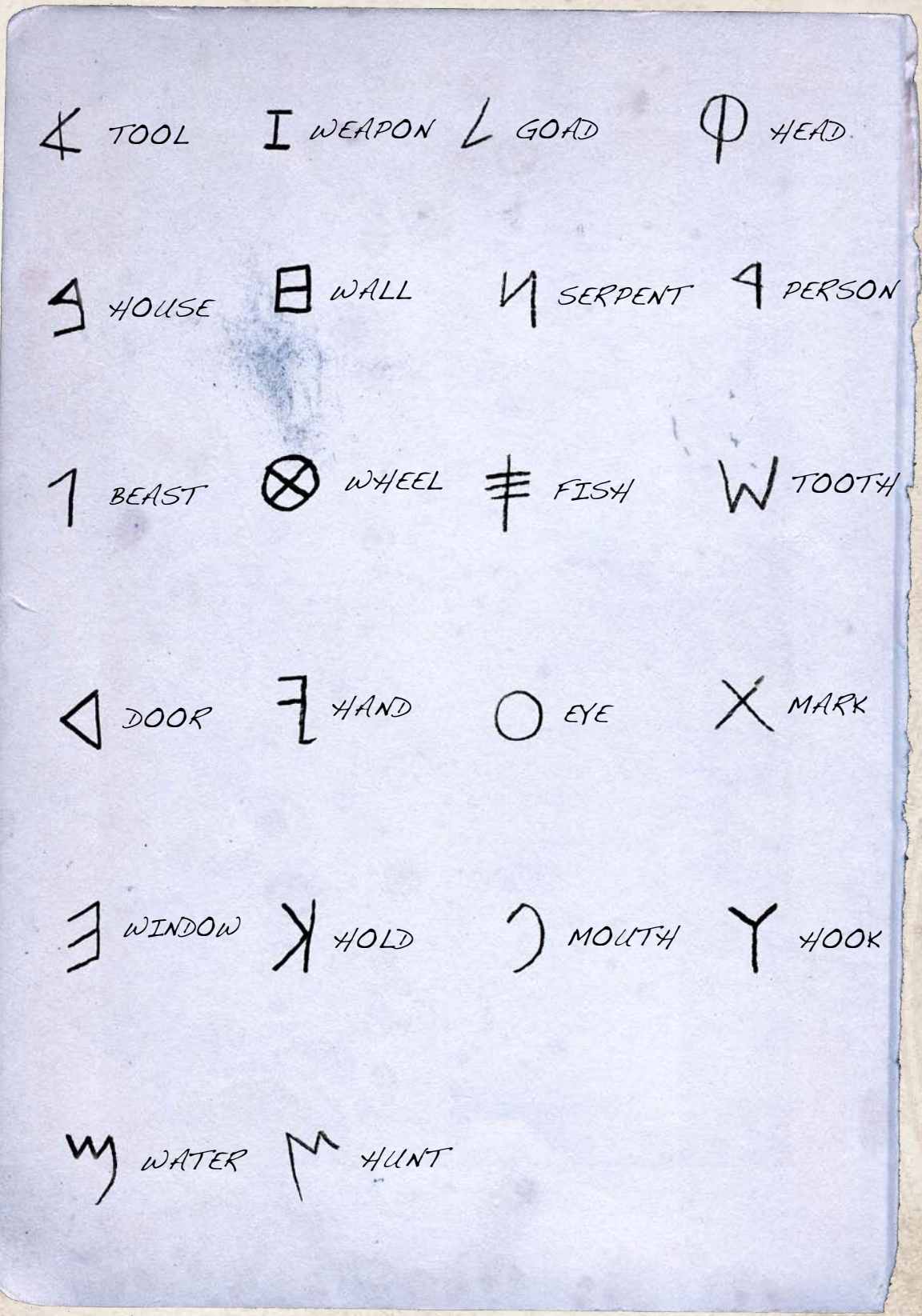
The Box's Runes

The runes on the box are possibly later additions, made in an attempt to codify and control the device. They partially warn of the box's powers.

Heroes who see the box may be able to identify the runes. Rough sketches of the box's runes can be found in **Pandora Handout 4**. In order to decode these the heroes need to make a successful **Language (Phoenician)** roll or, more likely, succeed in a Hard **Library Use** to find regular translations from Phoenician—see **Pandora Handout 5**. Likewise, heroes with an academic background or suitable connections will be able to find someone able to translate the runes for a small fee or a favor.

The front symbols translate as: "Tool House Wheel Beast Door," which is a description of what it is—a device containing random monsters. The runes on the back of the box translate

Handout: Pandora's Box 5



as: "Serpent Fish Person [double] Beast," and warn of the sort of monster that comes out. The left side ("Head Mouth Hold") warns it should be used only with protective spells at the ready. The right side ("Hand Goad Weapon") suggests some weapons are advisable, further intimating the contents are hostile. The runes can be read in any direction and ancient languages experts will begin a considered translation by inserting 'and/or' between each element rather than trying to make coherent sentences.

Handout: Pandora 6

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

In Greek mythology, Pandora was the first woman, created by Zeus using water and earth. The gods endowed her with gifts: Athena clothed her, Aphrodite gave her beauty, Apollo gave her musical ability, and Hermes gave her speech. When Prometheus stole fire from heaven to give to humanity, Zeus punished him by presenting Pandora to his brother, but the revenge went further. Pandora was given a large and beautiful jar as a wedding gift, with instructions never to open it. Impelled by her curiosity (also given to her by the gods), Pandora opened it, allowing all the evils contained inside to spread over the earth. Only one thing remained inside—the Spirit of Hope. Pandora feared Zeus' wrath for her disobedience but there was no further punishment other than living in a world where all these evils were free. The etymology of the "box" is problematic since the original Greek word was "pithos," a large jar.

Mythos History of the Box

The box is the eons-old work of an insane serpent man wizard named Ss'an-eth. Envisaged as a kind of ultimate weapon, the box proved to be unpredictable, causing unintended calamity and ultimately the death of its creator.

The device is mentioned in some Mythos tomes, though seldom as a "box," and never as having belonged to a woman called Pandora. Any such references describe it as a receptacle, a container of monsters, or a cursed chest. A few accounts hint of Hyperborean manufacture. The runes inscribed on the box are sometimes reproduced, partially and often inaccurately. The box has been called a number of names, including: the casket of evil, the Devil's toy, and the Hyperborean trap.

Historically, the box was found in Greenland in the late Middle Ages and eventually made its way to Denmark, which then administered that territory. The discoveries of dismembered bodies in a Danish castle were evidence of the danger the box possessed. In the mid-1700s, a Russian Orthodox Bishop (a collector of icons and reliquaries) mysteriously disappeared after he was said to have purchased the box. In 1800, a Turkish Governor in Sofia was found drained of blood (an incident that may have contributed to the Dracula legends), while in 1888 the entire household of a Serbian noble was bloodily slaughtered. The history of the box has always been soaked in blood and death.

In 1910, the artifact came into the possession of Sir Martin Fotheringham, British Ambassador to the tiny Montenegrin court in Cetinje. After his retirement in 1912, Fotheringham disappeared from his stately home. Four years later (1916) when his grandson mysteriously disappeared and his son died during an artillery barrage in Flanders, there was talk of an antique box bringing a curse upon the family. It was due to these circumstances that the box became to be known as "Pandora's Box." At this point, a more official history begins.

As the Fotheringham estate was distributed, the box was placed in a local museum by the inheritor, a cousin to the extinct Fotheringham line. It was described as "antique brass box 12" by 6" with pewter, silver, copper, and gold clasps. Possibly Phoenician." It was found on the desk of the gruesomely murdered curator Theophilus Carney (the still unsolved murder is famous as a "locked room mystery"). A

decade later, the cousin, Roland Lembrace, was found crushed in the ruins of a collapsed stone folly on his Devonshire estate, only shortly after the box was returned to him from the bank vault in which he had previously had it stored. By repute, the box was found near him, slightly dented. The box next came into the possession of an impecunious relative, John Drummond, who subsequently married an American heiress and moved to the USA in 1929. She died of a heart ailment no more than a year later (actually, a heart attack caused by the appearance of a creature from the box). Rumored to be short of funds, Drummond was persuaded by the blandishments of Pandora Moulin to let her display the box at Pandora's Palace—her recent nightclub venture. Common speculation agrees that Drummond intends to auction off the box following its appearance at the nightclub.

RESEARCHING THE BOX

While pulp heroes might fight shy of spending long periods in libraries, there is material to be harvested with some research and a successful **Library Use** roll. Success is, however, determined by the sources those searching have access to. If the heroes were to hire an NPC researcher (ideally at Miskatonic University), his or her findings could be communicated by telephone, post, or wire. If the researcher has access to Mythos tomes, they eventually find several references at some cost to their sanity; see **Pandora Handouts 9, 10,** and **11** (each costing 0/1 Sanity loss). If not, only **Pandora Handouts 6**, **7**, and **8** can be found.

PANDORA HANDOUT 7 SUMMARY OF STANDARD OCCULT SOURCES

Occult books, from Fraser's *Golden Bough* to rarer examples, can be mined for information about Pandora's Box. All sources agree that such a box would be a dangerous thing to have around as no known remedy or defense is available to deal with all eventualities of what may be brought forth from inside the receptacle. Most scholars agree that a wise man should shun the box. One source suggests that attempts to destroy the box may be disastrous and potentially apocalyptic.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Key non-player characters (NPCs) are described below. Statistics for each can be found in **Appendix A**.

Vern Bailey, *nightclub promoter (A.K.A. Eddie "The Killer" Bartlett)*

Never to be seen again, Bailey exists only in people's memories, unless of course the Keeper wants to begin the scenario earlier (for this reason his statistics are provided at the end of the scenario). If the heroes ask about Bailey they learn he is tall, wears spectacles, and has graying hair.

If starting the scenario before Bailey's disappearance, the heroes may get a chance to meet him. Encountering Bailey, observers (Hard **Spot Hidden** roll) may see his glasses are in fact clear glass. Others may note that there are small scars on his face and fingertips that speak of the crude plastic surgery he once underwent to disguise his identity. This information can also be relayed via any of the people who work at Pandora's Palace.

Bailey's reputation as a nightclub promoter is simultaneously respectable and shady, successful and tainted by the past. Cops and occasionally crime reporters remind the public of his past as Eddie "The killer" Bartlett and mention (unproven) rumors of his involvement in bank robberies and gangland assassinations. He was doing his best to shed these dark associations, despite having to continue a relationship with the Syndicate (page 185).

In recent times, Bailey had been seeing a woman called Lilly (**Lilith Chalmers**, page 193). Chalmers is a member of the Seekers of Eternal Wisdom (page 191) and had taken her new beau along to the Seekers' Lodge a few times for some evening socials, with the intention of perhaps recruiting him to the group.

- **Description**: tall, bespectacled, dapper.
- **Traits**: tough, scheming, honorable.

Connie Bailey, *concerned wife of Vern*

Connie married Vern Bailey twenty years ago when he was still Eddie Bartlett and has seen him in jail, on the run, and in danger. Connie is desperate for Vern to be found because she fears the worst, knowing better than anyone the pressures he was suffering. Under her influence, Vern wanted to become legitimate and to get out of the gangs. He has legitimate business interests now (shares in a brewery, in a trucking company, and in the printers who used to print their phony alcohol labels). Unfortunately, Connie is now being chiseled out of these interests by Vern's front men and partners.

- **Description**: attractive, well-dressed housewife.
- **Traits**: talkative, intense, determined.

PANDORA HANDOUT 8
MEMOIRS OF SIR WILLIAM CRAKE

In Service of the Empire (1925), the memoirs of Sir William Crake, mentions the artifact specifically. Crake was British Ambassador to Turkey in the early twentieth century. He illustrates his policy of receiving gifts skeptically with the anecdote below.

Handout: Pandora 8

IN SERVICE OF THE EMPIRE **63**

My junior colleague Sir Martin Fotheringham at the Montenegrin court, in their tiny mountain capital of Cetinje, was more trusting. In 1910, a certain local noble thanked him profusely for his sympathy on hearing of the unfortunate deaths of a whole branch of his family in one of the sudden outbreaks of violence they often experience there, and gifted the ambassador with a box made of precious metals. It was performed with great respect and with the proviso that local custom dictated the box never be opened, "In respect of the dead." I let Fotheringham know by return that I thought he had been handed the very cause of the trouble, a veritable Pandora's Box, but he had already shipped back and chose to ignore my warning. Within five years not only he but also his young grandson had vanished without a trace. With the death of his promising son in the war, the whole Fotheringham line was extinguished. I always say that it's not just Trojans bearing gifts one has to beware of.

PANDORA HANDOUT 9
FROM AN ANNOTATED EDITION OF THE LIBER IVONIS

Liber Ivonis, printed 1662, Latin, reputed to be a 10th century translation of an even earlier work. The book speaks of a land called Hyperborea somewhere in the north (possibly Greenland) and the activities of a sorcerer named Eibon. Apparently a rival wizard, Ssaneth, created "*a casket of evil for the production of monsters to send against his enemies. This receptacle of evil caused great trouble for Ssaneth and his race of snake folk. The device was entombed by the Queen of Pangaea before the coming of the Cold Times. By repute, the casket has entered into the legends of men through seafarers.*"

Pandora Moulin, *nightclub hostess (A.K.A. Pansy Mullins)*

Pandora is the front person for the nightclub and its licensee. She has been around the block, so to speak, and maintains an upbeat front almost constantly (however appalled she is by what seems to have happened). It doesn't make sense to her that Vern would steal the box or run away. She trusts him and knows he wanted the club to work so that he could, eventually, become legit.

If the heroes are not actually working for Pandora, they should meet her early on and, ideally, impress her with their trustworthiness.

If they ask about their relationship, Pandora insists she and Vern were never an item and reiterates that he was devoted to his wife Connie. A successful **Psychology** roll may spot real concern for Bailey; a failed roll suggests that she's lying. What she doesn't want to say is that Vern recently did have another woman in his life, a mysterious brunette called Lilly. That sort of complication was the last thing he needed. Pandora got the impression that Lilly was a high-class dame slumming it, "That type always take a powder when things get tough."

If asked about the Syndicate she guardedly admits there is a connection. The way Vern explained it there was capital and there was protection. With the Syndicate out of the booze business they use their power over the unions to extort fees for contractors, cleaners, etc., and still want their cut of the profits. They were naturally suspicious about the way Vern was running things and put Bob Quinn, a no-good with some nightclub experience, in place to spy on him.

Ultimately, Pandora is worried about Vern and worried about the future of her club.

PANDORA HANDOUT 10
FROM CULTES DES GOULES

Cultes des Goules, c.1702, by the Comte D'Erlette, comments on the scandalous murders in the Danish Castle of Count Magnus De la Gardie (around 1660) and wonders, "*What it was that the creature that came from the Count's cursed box harvested from its victims? Did such harvesting assist its escape? Or is it another evil this Pandora's Box has loosed upon the world?*"

PANDORA HANDOUT 11
FROM UNAUSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN

Unausprechlichen Kulten, c. 1839, by Von Junzt, has an aside in Chapter 6 during Junzt's visit to Russia regarding an incident where an Orthodox Bishop, who collected reliquaries, mysteriously disappeared from his study one evening:

Handout: Pandora 11

91 ~ Unausprechlichen Kulten

The hermit spoke of hearing a rumo
that the man had been sold the origina
Pandora's Box and that it had accounte
for him as it had so many others since i
creation in ancient times. He had wishe
the device for himself to summon his fou
god rather than use the Aklo scripts, despit
his acknowledgment that the box seldo
delivered what the opener desired. When
inquired as to the fate of the bishop and th
box, the hermit said the bishop had bee
consumed by the box and that the box ha
been sold to a Turk.

- **Description**: striking redhead, flamboyant, fashionable flapper.
- **Traits**: friendly, flirtatious, fiery,

John Drummond, *alcoholic box owner*

After a relatively uneventful life as a British Civil Servant, Drummond was lifted into a higher social status by an unexpected inheritance from an unknown distant relative, Roland Lembrace. In these new circles, he met American heiress Callie Murcheson and married her. The sudden death of his wife drove him to alcoholism. He has been pursuing Pandora but, now realizing she has no romantic interest in him, has gone back to the bottle with a vengeance.

Drummond can be found propping up the bar at Pandora's Palace when it is open, but he may (in due course) fall out with the management as he presses for his property to be found. At other times, he can be found in his hotel (the most expensive in town). He usually lives in a palatial mansion in Rhode Island.

The stock market crash of 1929 damaged his wife's financial wealth and his decisions following this have been even more disastrous. He's willing to sell the box for what he can get after its appearance at the nightclub. Six-figure sums have been mentioned in the press, though no serious reputable bidder seems to want to tip their hand. In preparation for the auction, there is a requirement to authenticate the box. Professor Theodore Culler of Brown University has already snubbed Drummond's first inquiry in this direction (see **Pandora Handout 1**). If Drummond thinks the heroes can help him authenticate the box he pursues them to do so, offering them payment once the box has been sold.

- **Description**: stiff, trim mustache, very English.
- **Traits**: affable, disappointed, depressed.

Questioning John Drummond:

- Asked if he has ever opened the box, he honestly replies, "No." This or a question as to why not, prompts him into garbled but gruesome details of Theophilus Carey's injuries, and the extent to which his cousin, Roland Lembrace was crushed (see **The Mythos History of the Box**, page 180).
- Asked if he thinks his wife opened the box, he says it was in the great hall (where it was normally kept) where she was found dead. He can't bear to think she did open it. They always said that if they were to open it, they would do so together.
- If asked about the circumstances in which his wife was found, or other such tactless inquiries, he becomes troubled, saying, "Of course she looked distressed in death. A heart attack is dying of pain, isn't it?"
- If asked why other people should not be allowed to open the box, he snaps, "They shouldn't. All the evil in the world? Isn't there enough already? Who wants more?"
- If asked about the sale of the box, he simply says the time has come. He intimates that six-figure sums have been mentioned, though no serious bidder has yet come forward. He also notes that in preparation for the auction there is a requirement to authenticate the box. That can't happen, of course, until the box is found.

Carey Hooper, *nightclub entertainer*

Hooper is a 37-year-old bisexual male lead of the floorshow at Pandora's Palace. Friends with everyone, except Bob Quinn, he is observant and smart. He noted Carpozi and also Vern having Carpozi thrown out.

Carey can explain a lot about the set up of the club, he knows everyone here as well as everyone at the two local rival clubs (the big Chez Paree and the up-and-coming smaller Sky High Club). If the heroes listen to him, they may see that, despite talking all the time, he is hiding something (**Psychology** roll). Asked directly, he admits he's torn by the knowledge that Vern was having an affair with a woman called Lilith Chalmers. Carey is actually a member of the same coven as Lilith but isn't as yet connecting the coven and its members to the theft of the box. When it appears at the coven's lodge he may have qualms and might, if the heroes are floundering, give them a call for help.

- **Description**: well dressed in a suit, slicked-back hair.
- **Traits**: observant, welcoming, friendly.

Bob Quinn, *nightclub manager, and Syndicate spy*

The club's new manager, aged 49. A nasty piece of work with a thin veneer of charm, Quinn hasn't really got the smarts to do what Vern Bailey was doing but thinks he has. This will get him eventually killed. He told Vern whenever he was required to attend a Syndicate meeting but more often simply conveyed their demands (as instructed by Jimmy Bandello). Vern would be angry about the Syndicate's diktats but knew he had to make the nightclub a success. If the heroes earn Bob's enmity (easy to do) they soon find themselves followed by Syndicate mobsters.

- **Description**: slightly overweight, a little short, dark greasy hair, pencil-thin mustache.
- **Traits**: mean, thin veneer of charm, not too bright.

Denny McDaid, *nightclub security, Bailey's bodyguard*

McDaid is the head bouncer and Bailey's bodyguard when necessary. A big comforting presence, McDaid previously did a lot of what Bob Quinn now does in the organizing of the club. If the heroes shy away from helping Connie Bailey, McDaid might be drawn in to help her and, consequently, disappear—in the traditional "concrete overshoes" sense.

Bailey ensured that McDaid knew nothing about his fling with Lilith Chalmers, as he knew McDaid was sweet on Connie and could cause trouble in the future if things soured between them.

- **Description**: big, ungainly in a tight fitting suit, big smile.
- **Traits**: warm-hearted, comforting to those he likes.

Charles "Jeff" Jefferson, *devoted chauffeur*

Jefferson is the Baileys' chauffeur. He was a mechanic who used to work in a mob garage. Vern Bailey took him on because he learned how tough Jefferson was under interrogation. He's devoted to Bailey and protects Connie as the next best thing he can do. Heroes will have to show they have the Baileys' interests or reputation close to their hearts before Jefferson speaks or acts to assist them. He is generally cynical about everyone but Bailey, Connie, and Miss Pandora.

Jefferson can recall that Bailey had a short romance with a woman called Lilly (Lilith Chalmers) who was a member of some "voodoo" club on the Northside.

Jefferson witnessed one interaction between Carpozi and Bailey: "*Another one looking to scrounge some money was waiting for him outside the club when we arrived in the morning. Sounded like he was fresh out of jail. The boss gave him a 10-spot. Called him Leo and sent him on his way.*"

- **Description**: muscular, well turned-out.
- **Traits**: tough, cynical, devoted to Vern and Connie Bailey.

Leo Carpozi, *second-story burglar and opportunist*

Leo Carpozi, burglar and opportunist, has a lot to answer for in this scenario. He's a thief, an accidental and later intentional killer, and a man willing to deliver, for the right price, a really dangerous Mythos artifact to exactly the sort of people who will want to put it to use—just so long as they pay him well.

Fresh out of jail, Carpozi had a plan to draw on the success of old acquaintances. Bailey, however, had been taking a lot of heat from the cops (shakedowns, etc.) on the basis of old crimes he didn't do. Bailey thought Carpozi—who was around in the old days and seems to have got out of jail early—might have been the source of these beefs. He was wrong. Carpozi was only at Bailey's club to size up a mark to rob. When Bailey had him thrown out, Carpozi was upset and set about stealing Pandora's Box to avenge the slight. In the course of the robbery Carpozi, thinking that something valuable was stored inside, opened the box. He was interrupted by Bailey at 5:00 am and, consequently, was fixed to the spot when a dimensional shambler appeared. Bailey took a shot at the monster but it seized and spirited him away to another dimension. Carpozi, unsure of what just happened, yet breathing a sigh of relief, closed the box and sneaked out. Clearly Carpozi's sanity has been affected and he's under the delusion that Pandora's Box actually protects him. If threatened, he will open the box.

- **Description**: lean, wiry, with blond hair and a perpetual grin.
- **Traits**: ruthless, vengeful, scheming.

THE SYNDICATE

The Syndicate is the largest criminal organization in the city. It has political clout to burn and can all upon many foot soldiers if needed.

Carlo Stompanato is the 37-year-old Syndicate boss. He is energetic, prone to needling people, and impromptu rages. Not quite bright enough—he is constantly surprised by people not conforming to his expectations.

Vern Bailey, who always seemed to be successful, had become (in Stompanato's mind) a potential threat and Stompanato isn't sorry to see him go. The club and its interests are, however, big money spinners. Stompanato wants the box back on show and to be sure Bailey is out of the picture for good.

Carlo Stompanato:

- **Description**: bulky, overdressed, gorilla in a business suit.
- **Traits**: false friendliness, suspicious, prone to bursts of anger.

Stompanato's crew consists of Jimmy "The Bastard" Bandello, his lieutenant, who is always scheming away; Phil "The Mountain" Montana, a huge man who acts as an enforcer; Ralph "The Dog" Canino, an aging mobster constantly tasked with smaller jobs. If Stompanato wants someone following, Canino and a mook called Tony Porello will be sent. If he wants someone killing, he would rather rely on Bandello and Montana. If things are likely to get messy, all four may be sent, with Stompanato accompanying and personally carrying a submachine gun.

Jimmy "The Bastard" Bandello:

- **Description**: wild eyes, permanent sneer, black suit.
- **Traits**: scheming, enjoys inflicting pain.

Phil "The Mountain" Montana:

- **Description**: hulking, very broad shoulders, massive hands.
- **Traits**: a little slow to catch-up, tends not to think for himself.

Ralph "The Dog" Canino:

- **Description**: aging, lined face, weary eyes.
- **Traits**: prefers to take the easy route, happy to let others do the work.

The Old Gang

Vern Bailey has been a good friend to his former bank-robbing buddies and recently got them some payout for stolen bonds they were stuck with. As long as they didn't commit crimes in his town, relations were always fairly amicable (though Connie never liked having them around). Now that Bailey is clearly in trouble, "Old Nick" Lammas and "Toad" Bukowsky want to help him out. The pair may be found keeping an eye on Connie's place, even asking Pandora for news. They might start following the heroes if they can't figure out their role. If they learn or think they learn, someone is responsible for Bailey's death they are likely to attempt to kill them; ideally luring them to some lonely place first.

If the heroes talk to Bailey's old gang about Leo Carpozi, they remember him as a burglar specializing in stealing jewels. If they learn he may be responsible for Bailey's disappearance they will certainly be gunning for Carpozi.

The pair drives around in a powerful Ford V8, with their heavier weapons under a blanket on the back seat. Of the two, Lammas affects to be a chummy old-timer while Bukowsky's role is to be grim and menacing.

Neville "Old Nick" Lammas:

- **Description**: aging, balding, thin eyes.
- **Traits**: chummy, materialistic, cautious.

Herman "The Toad" Bukowsky:

- **Description**: bulbous face, fat cheeks, fat.
- **Traits**: grim, menacing, overbearing.

The Wild Card: The Whitlock Gang

A former minor member of the Old Gang, Lawrence Whitlock now has a national reputation after the botched kidnapping of a millionaire's daughter, the murder of several witnesses, and a bloody escape from federal agents. Everyone, from the FBI to most of the rest of the criminal community, is out to get him. He is in the city looking to sponge from Bailey's success. He believes Bailey's disappearance is a cowardly attempt to duck him. He will try to tempt Connie

Handout: Pandora's Box 1

CLUB OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

SPECIAL REPORT BY MARION ALDEN

In a unique event and for a limited time only Pandora's Palace, the north side nightclub run by Pandora Moulin, will exhibit the famed historical artifact known as Pandora's Box. Made by the Greek gods and said to contain all the ills of the world, poor beautiful Pandora opened it and let them out and only hope was left inside! The artifact will be displayed in the center of the 1,000 person capacity nightclub, restaurant, and casino complex.

This is the first time Pandora's Box has been publicly exhibited and the owner, Mr. John Drummond of Providence, Rhode Island, has previously fended off inquiries about the relic from museums around the world. Mr. Drummond is quoted as saying that Pandora Moulin persuaded him her new nightclub was the perfect venue to showcase the artifact—even if some visiting gamblers might be spooked by the legendary bad luck surrounding the box!

Pandora's Box has allegedly been associated with a string of mysterious deaths and disappearances in England at the beginning of the century. The box in question is described as being made of antique brass and other precious metals. Mr. Drummond recounted how one of the box's previous owners, Theophilus Carney, was found gruesomely murdered in an as-yet-unsolved locked-room-mystery. While in 1927, the box's former owner was found crushed in the ruins of a collapsed building. Mr. Drummond inherited the box from a distant relative in England. Unfortunately, Mr. Drummond seems to have found no better luck with the box than its previous owners, as his wife, heiress of the Rhode Island Murcheson family, died suddenly of a heart ailment the following year.

Mr. Drummond says he hopes the exhibition of Pandora's Box will be a success as he is considering offering the artifact for sale. Given the box's history and apparent curse, Mr. Drummond has stipulated the box remain closed throughout its display at Pandora's Palace.

DEFINITELY NOT THE REAL THING

Professor Theodore Culler of Brown University has claimed the box presented as Pandora's Box cannot possibly be the Pandora's Box of legend. Says the Professor, "Simply because an item has an unfortunate history, like the Hope Diamond, it does not make it a container for all the ills of the world. The original texts of the legend speak of a jar, not a box, I'm afraid. This is not an item for serious archaeological study."

This reporter put the Professor's comments to Pandora Moulin herself, who replied: "What does he know? He can't even rumba!"

Nightclub-goers will have to make up their own minds as to whether the ancient box is cursed.

Bailey and/or Pandora into his clutches so he can hold them hostage to force Bailey to come out from hiding and pay him some cash. A small entourage has gathered around him, including his despondent 18-year-old wife, Minnie, as well as "Slim" Mattix and Edwin "Jitters" Lonergan.

Lawrence Whitlock:

- **Description**: slovenly thug attempting to be a snappy dresser.
- **Traits**: psychopathic, vindictive, impulsive murderer.

Minnie Whitlock:

- **Description**: alluring, pretty, sassy.
- **Traits**: greedy, hedonist.

"Slim" Mattix and Edwin "Jitters" Lonergan:

- **Description**: uncouth, scruffy, menacing.
- **Traits**: cruel, malicious.

Seekers of Eternal Wisdom

Led by Klaus Sauerfeld, the Seekers of Eternal Wisdom are an occult society composed of a cross-section of the city's elite. They meet at the Lodge, up in the hills, a short drive out of the city.

Lilith Chalmers ("Lilly") had been seeing Vern Bailey in an attempt to recruit him to join the Seekers. Bailey attended a few of the Seeker's gatherings but it really wasn't his type of scene. The affair was more or less secret and had all but fizzled out by the time the scenario begins.

Leo Carpozi may approach the Seekers as potential buyers of the box. Once Sauerfeld learns of the artifact, he and the Seekers will be very keen to get their hands on it. While they are fascinated by the possibilities, they are also cautious and may attempt to lure Carpozi to them with talk of easy money, in order to capture him and the box. Things may end up with the Seekers using Carpozi in an experiment to open the box.

A full list of the Seekers' membership can be found starting on page 192.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The heroes are introduced to the presence of a fabled artifact by newspaper articles (see **Pandora Handouts 1** and **2**). Either this piques their interest or Pandora Moulin (or John Drummond) engages them in investigating the item and what subsequently happened to the club's joint-owner, Vern Bailey. Alternatively, Connie Bailey may employ the heroes to look into her husband's disappearance.

Handout: Pandora's Box 2

PANDORA'S PALACE NIGHTCLUB

The nightclub is large, able to accommodate a few hundred guests. It features a lobby and coat check, toilets and powder rooms, bars, restaurant, a floorshow, band stage, and dance floor. There are, off-limits to customers, offices, kitchens, and dressing rooms.

The actual display for Pandora's Box is within the main entertainment area, flanked with fake pillars and (before its theft) two guards in straining tuxedos (use the statistics for **Denny McDaid,** see page 196). The box sat on a podium and rested inside a larger glass box for protection. The two guards had the job of carrying the box to and from Vern Bailey's office for storage in the safe. Bailey's office is described in **The First Crime Scene** (following).

THE FIRST CRIME SCENE

This is Vern Bailey's office in the nightclub. It has heavy wooden paneling and a vast desk in art deco style. Vern Bailey disappeared on the morning after the grand re-launch of the club with Pandora's Box on show. He was last seen by the staff around 4:30 a.m. People close to Bailey, especially his wife, were concerned about not knowing where he was by lunchtime the following day. There is no evidence of his whereabouts, no evidence he has made a bolt for it, or been abducted. His overcoat still hangs on the back of his office door. As days go by, there are numerous spurious witness sightings of him from increasingly far-flung places.

Pandora's Box has gone too, but should be stored in the manager's office overnight (4:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). At 4:00 p.m., Bob Quinn was called in to open the safe. The Box was missing, the safe empty. John Drummond insisted on calling the police to investigate as soon as he learned of the box being absent.

A detailed search of the nightclub discovered evidence that the roof access has been forced. Police assume the roof was accessed by the fire escape from the street and also believe a professional safecracker was involved.

What has not yet been discovered is a single .38 shell casing under Bailey's desk, ejected from Vern's automatic pistol. The heroes may detect this if they conduct a search of Bailey's (now Bob Quinn's) office.

VISITING CONNIE BAILEY

The Bailey residence is situated in a suburban area not far from the city center. Connie is initially wary of strangers but if the heroes can demonstrate their good intentions, she invites them inside and quickly begins to tell them whatever she can to help. She is desperate to have Vern back or, at least, to know what's become of him.

PANDORA'S BOX STOLEN: VERN BAILEY MISSING

SPECIAL REPORT BY MARION ALDEN

The artifact known as "Pandora's Box" has been stolen from Pandora's Palace nightclub after making just one appearance for the paying public. Suspicion has fallen on Mr. Vern Bailey, an associate of Pandora Moulin, the nightclub's hostess, who has an office at the Club. Bailey has not been seen since the fabled box was placed in his safe at 4:00 a.m. after its successful debut showing.

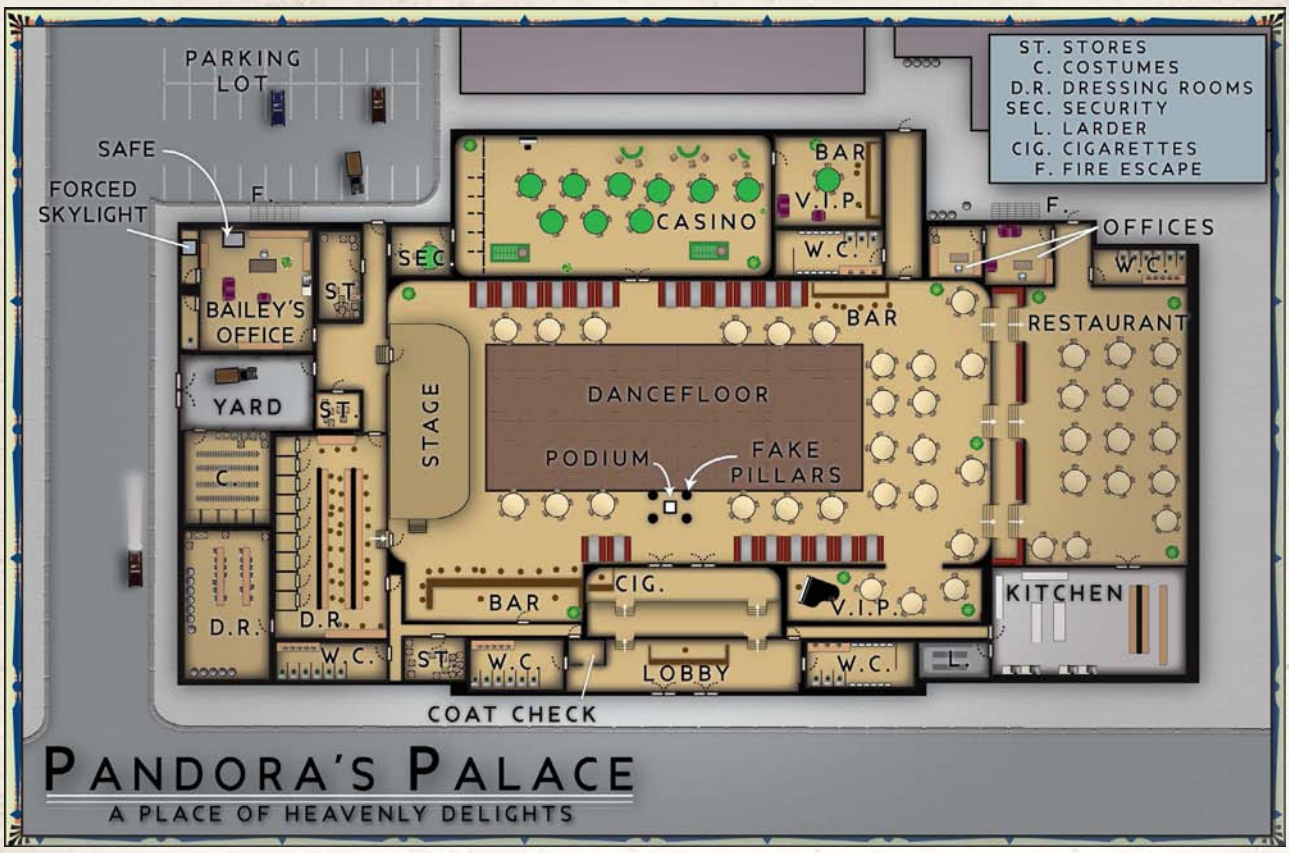
Club staff first began to notice Bailey's absence around noon yesterday after several calls from his wife, Mrs. Connie Bailey, asking for him. Later that same afternoon, when Pandora's Box was due to return to its heavily guarded podium, Mr. Bob Quinn, the club's manager discovered the box was missing from Mr. Bailey's security safe.

The police were called by Mr. John Drummond, the owner of Pandora's Box, insisting something be done to effect the return of his property. Initial police comments indicate the thief may have used the roof to gain entry to the premises. The investigation is ongoing.

It is not yet clear if the absence of Mr. Bailey and the disappearance of Pandora's Box are linked. Rumors and accusations about Mr. Bailey have long circulated without refutation. The current incident can only lend strength to such accusations. One source, who refused to be named out of fear of retaliation, claims Vern Bailey is none other than Eddie "The Killer" Bartlett, the notorious bank robber and suspected gangland assassin, although no proof has yet been presented to this effect. Mr. Bailey's numerous friends no doubt will say that, whatever his shady past, he should be judged on what he does next. Others may say Mr. Bailey's biggest mistake was getting too close to Pandora's Box, the notoriously cursed artifact that brings trouble to anyone who opens it!

If the heroes gain her confidence she tells them about the particular pressures she knows about in incriminating detail, gradually slipping into alternating between calling her husband "Vern" and "Eddie."

The Syndicate: years back, under "Spaghetti" Mike Petrosini, Vern/Eddie was welcomed into the organization for his expertise. Now he and other non-Italians are not trusted. The Syndicate keeps interfering and has put Bob Quinn into the nightclub to oversee the business. If something bad has happened to Vern then it's ten-to-one that Bob set him up for the fall, hoping to step into his role. They think Vern has been stiffing them on the money, but that's because *that's*



Pandora's Palace Map by Stephanie McAlea

what they would do if positions were reversed. She's worried they have taken Vern/Eddie to be killed or are holding him because someone else has stolen the box.

She wants to speak to someone in the Syndicate and will try and enlist the heroes to help her. If they agree, her method is alarmingly direct. She goes to the house of mob boss Carlo Stompanato and asks him face-to-face what he knows about Vern. Stompanato knows Connie socially and will try to get her away from the heroes ("these strangers") to ask her questions about what's going on. At the very least this encounter should earn the heroes a mob tail. If the heroes leave her to her fate, she may not be seen again. But in the course of "joining her husband," she is likely to confess that she has already revealed Syndicate information to the heroes—making the heroes persons of interest to Stompanato and his crew.

The Old Gang: Vern/Eddie used to be involved with some bank robbers back in the Kansas City days. He settled down; they've carried on, in and out of jail, with reckless schemes. He would usually help them out so as to avoid further trouble. In an armored car robbery, his buddies recently got hold of a lot of high-value stock and bond certificates, which they were finding hard to move. High-class contacts in the banking field are usually needed to move such items and the old gang figured Vern was well placed to find them those contacts. He said no but realized, no matter what he said, these fellows were going to try and use the club and people around him to shift these bonds—Pandora or Carey Hooper for example, and it could really damage those people if they were arrested, let alone bring trouble down on the club. So Vern offered to negotiate directly with representatives of the insurance company of the armored car company. Connie doesn't know whether that transaction was successfully completed or whether the old gang might still be after Vern/Eddie. She doesn't know the name of the insurance company. It wouldn't be a good idea to start asking the police or the FBI about it, so perhaps the heroes could find where Old Nick Lammas and Toad Bukowsky are and see if they know where Vern/Eddie is. See **The Old Gang** (page 185) for details on Bailey's old criminal pals.

A friend in need: Larry Whitlock, "the Tri-State Terror," is in town on the run after a horribly failed child kidnap. No one from the old days wanted anything to do with him after this crime. But Whitlock's pathetic-sounding wife has been ringing over the past week trying to arrange meetings. Connie couldn't figure whether it was a real request or a trap—an attempt to assassinate Vern/Eddie by former friends (the Old Gang or the Syndicate). Connie worries Vern/Eddie was contacted and went to meet with Whitlock. Even stranger, this Mrs. Whitlock rang again asking Connie to come and meet with her. Could it be a message from Vern? Connie can write down the location she was told to go to, but it's in a bad part of town. Perhaps

the heroes can go and look on her behalf? See **The Wild Card** (page 185) for details should the heroes' take up Connie's request.

CRIME SCENE ONE: LOOKING FOR SUSPECTS

Witnesses at Pandora's Palace

Asking around at Pandora's Palace, everyone is pretty much clueless as to who could be behind Bailey's disappearance, however, Carey Hooper and Denny McDaid can recall one individual who Bailey took an instant dislike to:

Carey Hooper: "I was just having a word with Vern when he saw someone through the curtain who he said was scouting the crowd for ice, you know, diamonds. Vern got me to send Denny over. Then told Denny to throw him out. I didn't get a good look at him, but he looked lean and wiry, and had blond hair."

Denny McDaid: "There were always the usual drunks, but that night there was one nasty piece of work. Smelled of prison. Lean and wiry, with this big grin on his face like you'd wanna smack it. Vern told me to throw him out. He swore revenge on Vern, out of earshot, of course. I wouldn't put it past this guy to have been the one. It's clear he and Vern had history."

CRIME SCENE TWO

On the day the robbery is discovered, Carpozi seeks to sell the box quickly. He visits Lester Conklin, a pawnbroker and fence, after hours to see what he can get for the box. Conklin immediately recognizes the artifact from the recent publicity and spins a story about a French antiques collector who's leaving town tonight who might give him a good offer—if Carpozi will take a down payment, he'll get the rest after the deal.

GOOD COP, BAD COP

In the course of the scenario there are two significant police officers the heroes may come into contact with:

Detective Sergeant Glenn Bannion: is assigned to the Bailey case and isn't interested in handing it over to the robbery detectives. Reserved but dogged, he is deep down tough and not afraid of anyone. He doesn't go along with Dobringhaus (see following) or his methods.

Bannion may provide assistance and information to the heroes if they can get on his good side.

- **Description:** obviously a plain-clothes detective.
- **Traits:** stern, tough, honest.

Detective Lieutenant Emil Dobringhaus: a large, hard-faced dirty cop with a thin veneer of respectability. He dominates the city's Robbery Squad and is known throughout the underworld as bad news. If a passing criminal fails to tip his hat to him he may dish out a casual beating.

Dobringhaus, wanting the Bailey case, takes any opportunity to question the heroes to find out what they know so he can turn it to his advantage.

- **Description:** hulking, odorous, untidy.
- **Traits:** aggressive, untrustworthy, bullying.

The heroes may contact the police looking for information on burglars or jewel thieves, perhaps those recently released from jail, and so on. Unless the Keeper wants to make things easy for them, they find they can't make direct headway except by visiting the Robbery Squad downtown, where they may meet Lieutenant Dobringhaus.

If balked by an investigator when asking a question, Dobringhaus might respond with the following warning, "Listen, let's get something straight. I'm the one with the badge. That means I don't have to take crap from any citizen, whoever they are. Get smart with me and you'll spend a night in the cells. Annoy me and we'll see what you might have stashed about your person that the courts wouldn't like. Cut up rough and you'll get acquainted with a rubber hose, see. Now say that again but smile while you're saying it."

Dobringhaus knows exactly who and what Leo Carpozi is. Dobringhaus actually put him away for ten years in 1923. Under what circumstances or inducements Dobringhaus reveals this, however, are up to the Keeper and should require clear thinking or successful skill rolls by the heroes. It is possible that, if asked specifically about Carpozi, he may send the heroes on a wild goose chase while he finds Carpozi himself and claims the reward (although a successful **Psychology** roll might perceive Dobringhaus' intentions)—this is likely to make him an additional victim of Carpozi and the box.

Handout: Pandora's Box 3

EXPLOSION AT PAWNBROKER'S

Late yesterday afternoon a violent explosion ripped through Conklin's Pawnbrokers. The front window and bars of the shop were blown out and the owner, Lester Conklin, aged 53, was found dead on a rooftop opposite. Mr. Conklin appears to have taken the full force of the blast, which carried him through the air to the nearby rooftop. Thankfully, property damage in the area was minimal.

Police and Fire Department teams are investigating the cause of the explosion. Speculation is rife about a gangland connection due to the late Mr. Conklin's indictments for receiving stolen goods, which were dismissed by the courts last year. Police would like to talk to a man with blond hair seen by witnesses in the area prior to the explosion.

Of course, Carpozi has to stay with the box, waiting for the Frenchman at Conklin's place. However, this is all a ruse. Conklin actually phones mobster Jimmy Bandello who immediately sends two of his crew over to Conklin's store to pick up the box, which he knows is stolen from a Syndicate-protected club.

Carpozi figures it's a set-up just in time. He opens the box and something (a byakhee) flies out, dragging Conklin through the barred windows of his store. The monster flies up into the air as the mobsters pull up in their car. The byakhee drops Conklin's body onto the roof of the building opposite before disappearing as Carpozi closes the lid. The mob guys are, naturally, staggered by what they see and, in the commotion, Carpozi slips out the back of the store.

There are enough witnesses to lead the police to Conklin's mangled body, but they can't agree whether it was a giant bird that carried him or an explosion that blew him up there. One witness, at least, mentions that "big black car pulled up just as it happened and the men that went inside, rushed out again and drove away." One or two witnesses also state they saw a slim, blond haired man hanging around the store.

The one thing the gangsters retrieved was today's page of Conklin's ledger with "Leo Carpozi" written on it. The Syndicate, therefore, knows about Carpozi from this point forward. Consequently, heroes seeking Carpozi will be of great interest to the Syndicate mobsters and are likely to be followed.

The following day, the incident at Conklin's pawnshop is reported in the newspaper (see **Pandora Handout 3**).

CRIME SCENE THREE

The heroes may get to this crime scene before the police by means of an envelope slipped into one of their pockets. The envelope contains a key to the house of Elliott Gaskell, a dilettante investigator of supernatural phenomena. On the outside of the envelope is Gaskell's address (in one of the city's most upmarket residential neighborhoods). The anonymous source of the note is **Sylvia Fane** (see page 194), Gaskell's former lover and a member of the Seekers of Eternal Wisdom. Fane came to visit Gaskell, discovered the murders and fled from the house. Fearing the police cannot join the dots, Fane places her trust in heroes from out of town if she encounters them prior to the police becoming cognizant of the deaths. Otherwise, the heroes can learn of the murders through the press or the police.

Gaskell's house is a large, Victorian gothic mansion. The mailbox out front gives the name "Gaskell." If heroes research readily available sources or ask around, they learn Gaskell inherited a fortune (made in the textile business) and has since devoted his time to exposing spiritualist charlatanism, supposed poltergeist manifestations, and hauntings.

The key from the envelope fits the front door. Inside, only one room is of particular interest to the investigation—the study. The house is empty and dark and shows no untoward signs until the ground floor study is opened. Inside is a horrific scene. Two men lie dead, victims of Carpozi's greed and paranoia. Bound horribly tightly with telephone cables and bell pulls, both men have been tortured to death by a moon-beast while Carpozi tested his skill on Gaskell's floor safe. Elliot Gaskell has been hung upside down from the wall and impaled with large shards of splintered furniture, chair legs and so forth, while his butler, Richards, has been trussed and hung horizontally from the large mantelpiece and roasted over a fire set in the coal scuttle. The scene calls for **Sanity** rolls (1/1D6 loss; lessened to 1/1D3 if they arrive while the police are there).

If the heroes visit before or even during the police inspection they may notice Gaskell's diaries (**Spot Hidden**) in the study. The current diary is on his desk; the older ones are on a shelf nearby. All look to be part of a set as they share the same orange and tan leather bindings. If they manage to only get a quick look, they probably only find **Handout 12**. If they have time to look through the older diaries, then they also find **Handout 13**. The Keeper should decide if the police take the diaries or if they are left in the house for the heroes to find. If in police possession, and if the investigators on good terms with Detective Sergeant Bannion, they may be allowed to read the diaries at the police station.

Keeper note: as Gaskell was an investigator of the supernatural, his diaries could provide a wealth of leads for future adventures for the heroes, if the Keeper so chooses.

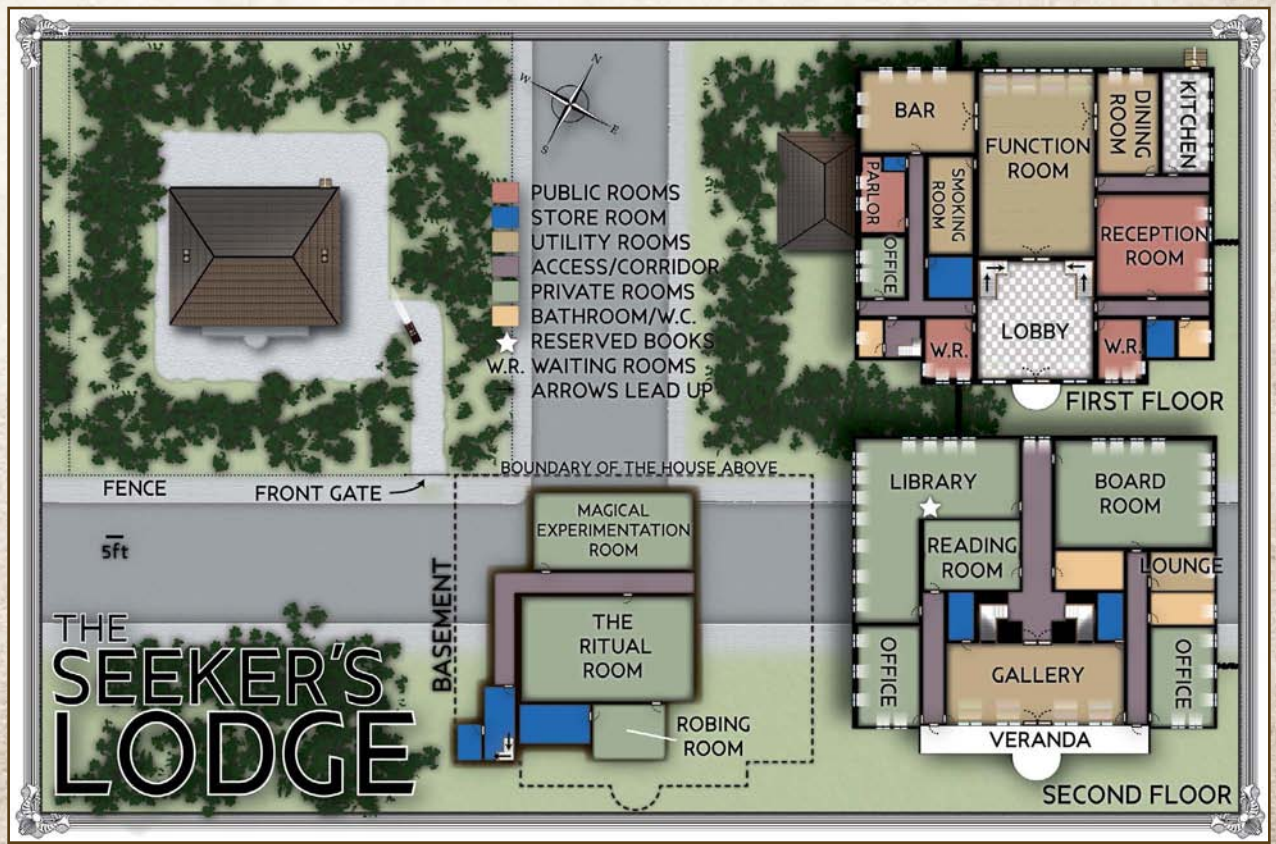
Handout: Pandora's Box 12

THE SEEKERS OF ETERNAL WISDOM

The local telephone directory has a listing for The Seekers of Eternal Wisdom. The heroes may become aware of the group through Elliot Gaskell's diaries, as well as through conversations with Sylvia Fane, Lilith Chalmers, Charles Jefferson, or even the police.

The home of the Seekers is the Lodge, built in 1910 by the Knights of St. Jerome (defunct 1917) and acquired by the group around 1920. Ephraim Frosch, a 40-year-old land agent and realtor of German-American origin, established the Seekers in 1885. The group's activities (and those of its members) have only become public on a few occasions. In 1905/6, there was some public debate in letters to a newspaper over the induction of female members. In 1909, there was a minor scandal when Frosch's wife divorced him over liaisons with a 19-year-old shop girl called Lilith Chalmers. Obituary records show Frosch died in 1919 but a new, unnamed, benefactor appeared to secure their new meeting place—the Lodge. Three hours and

CONTACTED BY A MAN OF ITALIAN BACKGROUND, GIVING A PATENTLY FALSE NAME, OFFERING AN OCCULT ITEM HE BELIEVES I WILL BE INTERESTED IN. IMMEDIATELY SUSPECT THE ITEM IS STOLEN BUT INTRIGUED ENOUGH TO TAKE A LOOK. SUSPECT THE ITALIAN IS LEO CARPOZI. HIMES' MAN FROM '23 WHO HAS SOMEHOW TRACKED ME DOWN. POSSIBLY MADE AN ERROR IN LEAVING A FORWARDING ADDRESS AT HIMES' FORMER PLACE OF BUSINESS. SAYS HE WILL DEMONSTRATE THE ITEM TONIGHT. WONDER IF THE SEEKERS ARE AWARE?



Seeker's Lodge Map by Stephanie McAlea

Handout: Pandora's Box 13

APRIL 30TH 1923: FROSCH AUCTION. MY AGENT, HIMES, FAILED TO ACQUIRE DE VERMIS MYSTERIIS. HIMES WAS ABLE TO SURREPTITIOUSLY ACQUIRE THE ADDRESS OF THE BUYER FROM THE AUCTIONEER, SO ALL MAY NOT BE LOST! APPARENTLY THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE SEEKERS OF ETERNAL WISDOM. WHATEVER NEXT? THE SEEKERS HAVE A LODGE AT 1575 N.7TH AVENUE. HIMES IS GOING TO INQUIRE IF THEY'D BE WILLING TO SELL THE BOOK, AT A PROFIT.

MAY 10TH 1923: THE LODGE REFUSED TO SELL THE BOOK. ALTHOUGH HIMES MANAGED TO ARRANGE ANOTHER WAY TO ACQUIRE IT (HE'S A VERY HANDY MAN!) ALL WENT WITHOUT A HITCH. BOOK NOW IN MY POSSESSION AND SAFELY LOCKED AWAY IN MY SAFE. GOOD FORTUNE SMILES UPON THE BRAVE!

JUNE 18TH 1923: HIMES INFORMED ME HIS MAN, LEO CARPOZI HAS BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH OTHER ROBBERIES AND THINKS HE MAY BE NAMED IF CARPOZI WANTS TO PLEA BARGAIN. HIMES ASSURED ME MY NAME WOULD NEVER BE MENTIONED.

a successful **Library Use** roll at any archive holding the city's main newspapers finds as much of the above information as the Keeper thinks useful.

The Lodge is set back from the road in its own grounds and is a large two-story red brick building with stained glass windows. A 10-foot high, iron railing fence surrounds the property. Doors and windows are sturdy (STR 80 and 40 respectively). Inside can be found a function room, bar, reception room, library, and various offices. In the cellar is a magical workspace, as well as housing storage and supply rooms. Meetings are generally held in the evenings from 8:00 p.m. onwards, although members, especially Sauerfeld, can occasionally be found there during the daytime.

The library is well stocked with a range of esoteric and occult lore, as well as one or two Mythos tomes (to be determined by the Keeper). Any particularly valuable tomes are kept in locked cabinets within the library—such mundane defenses are compounded by magical wards placed upon the books by the Seekers. Whether or not these "magical wards" actually work is also left to the Keeper: if appropriate, such wards might trigger if the hero in question fails a Hard **POW** roll, and include any of the following: 24-hours of bad luck (a penalty die is taken with all Luck rolls); a terrifying hallucination (the hero loses 1D8 Sanity points unless they succeed in a reality check (**Sanity** roll); struck dumb (the hero cannot speak for 1D10 hours); boiling blood (causing 1D10+1 hit points damage). These are just examples, feel free to develop your own.

The Seekers' membership is listed below. Vern Bailey had attended recent meetings as a guest of Lilith Chalmers (his signature can be found in the guest book).

Klaus Sauerfeld: businessman and unquestioned leader of the Lodge. Sauerfeld is German and very persuasive. He knows a lot about commercial telephony and wireless technology, but is also a ruthless occultist in search of power. If he can get any hero to say "yes" three times and to acknowledge something is "important" within the same conversation, he can subsequently hypnotize them immediately and get them to obey any reasonable, non-murderous (single) request without need for an opposed POW roll.

- **Description:** goatee beard, arching eyebrows, bald, neat.

- **Traits:** power hungry, manipulative, persuasive.

Siegfried Mecklenburg: a professional assassin and ex-Great War sniper. If Sauerfeld needs someone killed he engages Mecklenburg. The assassin is keen to establish a reputation in the U.S. If hired to kill Carpozi, and successful, Mecklenburg may well use the body as a calling card with the Syndicate, having heard of the underworld hunt for Carpozi.

- **Description:** tall, regular build, nondescript face, scar on left cheek.
- **Traits:** cold, honorable, ambitious.

Harris Doll: Sauerfeld's personal bodyguard and doorman when the Lodge is in session.

- **Description:** robust, large, flabby, suit has seen better days.
- **Traits:** polite to strangers, loyal to Sauerfeld.

Lilith Chalmers: owner of Lillith's, a fashion boutique. She is priestess and the chief recruiter for the group. She was having a fling with Vern Bailey in the hopes of recruiting him before he went and disappeared.

- **Description:** sophisticated, attractive, brunette, elegant fashion sense.
- **Traits:** loyal to Sauerfeld, cunning.

Hugo Wittering: accountant and devoted follower of Sauerfeld and Chalmers. Heroes may be treated to the ridiculous sight of him playing the tough guy: a large gun in his small hand, his eyes obscured by thick spectacles, glittering with malice.

- **Description:** small hands, thick spectacles, eyes twinkle with malice.
- **Traits:** devoted to Sauerfeld and Chalmers, tries to play the tough guy.

Armand De Soto: a Cuban gigolo frequently found at Pandora's Palace. He is good-looking but poisonous.

- **Description:** good-looking, wolfish, slim.
- **Traits:** poisonous, vicious.

Wilson Ives: restaurateur and connoisseur. Recognized in his chosen field, he most enjoys the debauched feasts he arranges for the Seekers.

JULY 2ND 1923: WELL, THINGS TURNED OUT PEACHY FOR HIMES AFTER ALL. CARPOZI DIDN'T SQUEAL AND RAT HIM OUT. SO I THINK I'M SAFE ENOUGH NOW. CARPOZI EARNED HIMSELF A TEN-YEAR STRETCH.

JULY 25TH 1923: SHOCKING NEWS! HIMES KILLED IN A STREET ACCIDENT. APPARENTLY HE WAS RUN OVER BY A TRAM. THE BODY WAS IN AWFUL STATE—DISMEMBERED! ACCORDING TO THE CORONER, HIMES FELL UNDER A STREET CAR AND WAS THEN HIT BY SEVERAL VEHICLES. THEY ARE SAYING HE FELL AWKWARDLY WHILE STEPPING OFF A MOVING TRAM, BUT HE COULD EQUALLY HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF A HIT AND RUN. PERHAPS IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. PERHAPS NOT?

AUGUST 8TH 1923: WITH HIMES HAVING NO FAMILY I HAVE ARRANGED FOR HIS FUNERAL AND HAD RICHARDS CLEAR HIS PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HIS OFFICE AND APARTMENT. FELT IT WAS PRUDENT TO MAKE CERTAIN NOTHING COULD LEAD INQUISITIVE TYPES TO ME, AS WELL AS IT BEING THE DECENT THING TO DO.

- **Description:** chubby, hardy, awkward.
- **Traits:** glutton, cowardly.

Sylvia Fane: a well-known maverick in upper-class city society; the lady who won't settle down, get married and play Bridge—in other words, a dilettante. Sylvia joined the Seekers in 1923, intending to get a particular book for Elliott Gaskell, as he was so cut-up when his man Himes couldn't secure it at auction. However, Gaskell was too impatient and had Himes break in and steal the book from the Lodge before Fane could sneak it away. She knows the Seekers soon found out, or guessed, it was Himes. She didn't believe their curses cast upon Himes were anything but mumbo-jumbo until he was found dead in the street outside his office. After that, she felt both guilty and afraid. The Seekers' oaths of initiation promised a similar fate would befall any who left the group. She wants to leave and for the group to be broken up but dare not act directly herself. She is shocked and appalled by Gaskell's death (upon discovering the grisly scene), and believes Sauerfeld may have murdered Gaskell, so has decided to get the heroes to uncover the truth. To do this, she drops an envelope containing a key to Gaskell's house and his address into one of the heroes' pockets at the first opportunity (see **Crime Scene Three**).

- **Description:** serene, slender, very well-dressed.
- **Traits:** maverick, wishes to leave the Seekers (may ask for the heroes' help).

Other members include:

Victor Charnley: an author and scholar of the occult. Has published dull scholarly tomes about esoteric study and ancient religions. He is respected within the group.

Robert Heath: tax official, poet, and dreamer. Has joined the Seekers to counteract the numbing of the senses caused by his very boring job.

Maurice Denning: antiquarian and oldest member. He remembers times before Sauerfeld and even before Lilith. He lives for this group.

Ginette Polk: perfumier and astrologist. Polk takes the occult and the group's work very seriously.

Zelda Green: a beautiful free spirit and salon owner; as scatty as Ginette Polk is serious, and prone to flings with the men.

Marion Alden: a local newspaper correspondent and witch. Strongly believes the group has power and believes such power should be used. She wrote the article about Pandora's Box and is a regular at the Palace.

CLIMAX

There are many ways things could end up, given the sandbox nature of the scenario. Nevertheless, a couple of possibilities present themselves.

One is that the heroes find Carpozi and secure the box, but are pursued or besieged by various interested parties (the Syndicate, the Old Gang, and the Seekers). While they might stave off one attack, it may function as a diversion for another group's purposes.

Another possibility is for the heroes to be caught up in the Seekers' plans, which may involve testing out the box they (may) have acquired. One way to do this is for the Seekers to place the box inside a warded area and contrive a way to open it from outside. If the heroes have made a nuisance of themselves, perhaps some of them are tricked inside the pentagram ward and induced to open the box through threats and/or coercion. If not, perhaps Carpozi is captured by the Seekers and ordered to perform in the group's ghastly experiment. The question becomes whether the Seekers' occult magic has any power over Mythos beings. And if not, what level of disaster does this portend? Whatever happens, the heroes should be drawn to the Seekers and forced to take action if the box is opened.

If the heroes beat all comers for ownership of the box, they may wish to destroy it rather than let it fall into the hands of evil or plain ignorant users. Safety deposit boxes, deep burials, throwing it off the side of an ocean-going liner are plausible, if not foolproof, means of doing so. If dropping it into the ocean seems to get everyone's votes then the Keeper may wish to have the heroes book passage on the *SS President Coolidge* and then play through the scenario entitled *A Slow Boat to China* (see page 205).

Attempts to physically destroy the box are risky. Roll 1D100: 1-10 indicates a safe outcome, with each cumulative 10% thereafter producing a monster of the next magnitude (see **Pandora's Box**, page 177). A fumble of 96-00 means the box is in effect locked open and continues to spit out creatures at whatever rate the Keeper thinks most entertaining—perhaps the heroes must strike a deal with one of the Seekers who has survived the events so far, or someone or something far worse, to enact magic to seal the box shut. Perhaps a monster can be tricked into eating the box?

However, news carries fast within the occult (and Mythos) underworlds and, even if already disposed of, ownership of the box could bring the heroes to the attention of a number of undesirables and provide fuel for further exploits in the future.

SUGGESTED SANITY REWARDS

- Saving the life of a possible victim: +10 Sanity points.
- Engineer the death of enemy: –5 Sanity points.
- Defeat or dispel a monster from box: award the maximum Sanity loss for the monster as a positive Sanity point award.
- Render Pandora's Box safe from use: +20 Sanity points.



APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

THE VILLAIN

LEO CARPOZI, *opportunist*

STR 70 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 65 **DEX** 80 **INT** 50
APP 55 **POW** 65 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 50* **HP** 12
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** 65
**lowers by 5 for every manifestation from the box witnessed.*

Combat

Brawl 70% (35/15), damage 1D3+1D4, or blackjack 1D8+1D4
.32 revolver 30% (15/6), damage 1D8
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Appraise (Jewelry) 40%, Climb 60%, Fast Talk 30%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 45%, Listen 35%, Locksmith 70%, Mechanical Repair 55%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 80%.

Pulp Talents

- **Fleet Footed:** may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.
- **Tough Guy:** soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.

PANDORA'S PALACE PEOPLE

VERN BAILEY, *missing nightclub promoter*

STR 65 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 65 **DEX** 60 **INT** 65
APP 45 **POW** 80 **EDU** 55 **SAN** 80 **HP** 12
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 16 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 auto 60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG 55% (27/11), damage 1D10+2

Skills

Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 75%, Jump 30%, Occult 20%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 35%.

PANDORA MOULIN, *nightclub hostess*

STR 60 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 75 **INT** 50
APP 65 **POW** 65 **EDU** 55 **SAN** 65 **HP** 10
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4+1
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Dance) 80%, Charm 70%, Credit Rating 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Jump 40%, Occult 10%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%, Throw 30%.

CAREY HOOPER, *entertainer*

STR 65 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 80 **INT** 60
APP 75 **POW** 55 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 55 **HP** 11
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 11 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3
.32 revolver 40% (20/8), damage 1D8
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Dance) 40%, Art/Craft (Sing) 50%, Art/Craft (Comedian) 70%, Charm 55%, Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 50%, Stealth 35%.

BOB QUINN, *Syndicate spy*

STR 75 **CON** 65 **SIZ** 60 **DEX** 55 **INT** 45
APP 50 **POW** 65 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 65 **HP** 12
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4, or blackjack 1D8+1D4
.38 revolver 35% (17/7), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 35%, Intimidate 55%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 25%.

DENNY MCDAID, *nightclub security*

STR 80 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 75 **INT** 60
APP 75 **POW** 70 **EDU** 50 **SAN** 70 **HP** 14
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 14 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 65% (33/13), damage 1D3+1D4, or blackjack 1D8+1D4
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 40%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 30%, Intimidate 65%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 50%.

JOHN DRUMMOND, *box owner*

STR 50	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 55	**INT** 65
APP 65	**POW** 60	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 60	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Appear Sober 45%, Credit Rating 50%, Lament Life 65%, Order Drinks 75%.

CONSTANCE "CONNIE" BAILEY, *concerned wife*

STR 45	**CON** 55	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 50	**INT** 70
APP 75	**POW** 50	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 50	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Credit Rating 30%, Fast Talk 40%, Listen 45%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 40%, Stealth 30%.

CHARLES "JEFF" JEFFERSON, *devoted chauffeur*

STR 60	**CON** 90	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 60	**INT** 55
APP 55	**POW** 55	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 55	**HP** 11
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or club 1D8+1D4
.38 revolver	35% (18/7), damage 1D10
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Drive Auto 70%, Fast Talk 30%, Locksmith 30%, Mechanical Repair 55%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 30%, Throw 35%.

THE SYNDICATE

CARLO STOMPANATO, *Syndicate boss and nightclub "partner"*

STR 80	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 65	**INT** 60
APP 55	**POW** 70	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 70	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 70

Combat

Brawl	75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4; with brass knuckles +1D3+1+1D4
.45 revolver	45% (23/9), damage 1D10+2
Thompson SMG	30% (15/6), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Fast Talk 45%, Intimidate 75%, Locksmith 30%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 20%, Stealth 60%.

Pulp Talents

- **Tough Guy:** soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
- **Quick Draw:** does not need to have their firearm "readied" to gain +50 DEX when determining position in the DEX order for combat.

JIMMY "THE BASTARD" BANDELLO, *Syndicate lieutenant*

STR 60	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 45	**POW** 70	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 70	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 35

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3; with brass knuckles 1D3+1, or club 1D6
.38 auto	60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG	35% (17/7), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Demolitions 45%, Fast Talk 35%, Intimidate 60%, Spot Hidden 25%, Stealth 50%.

Pulp Talent

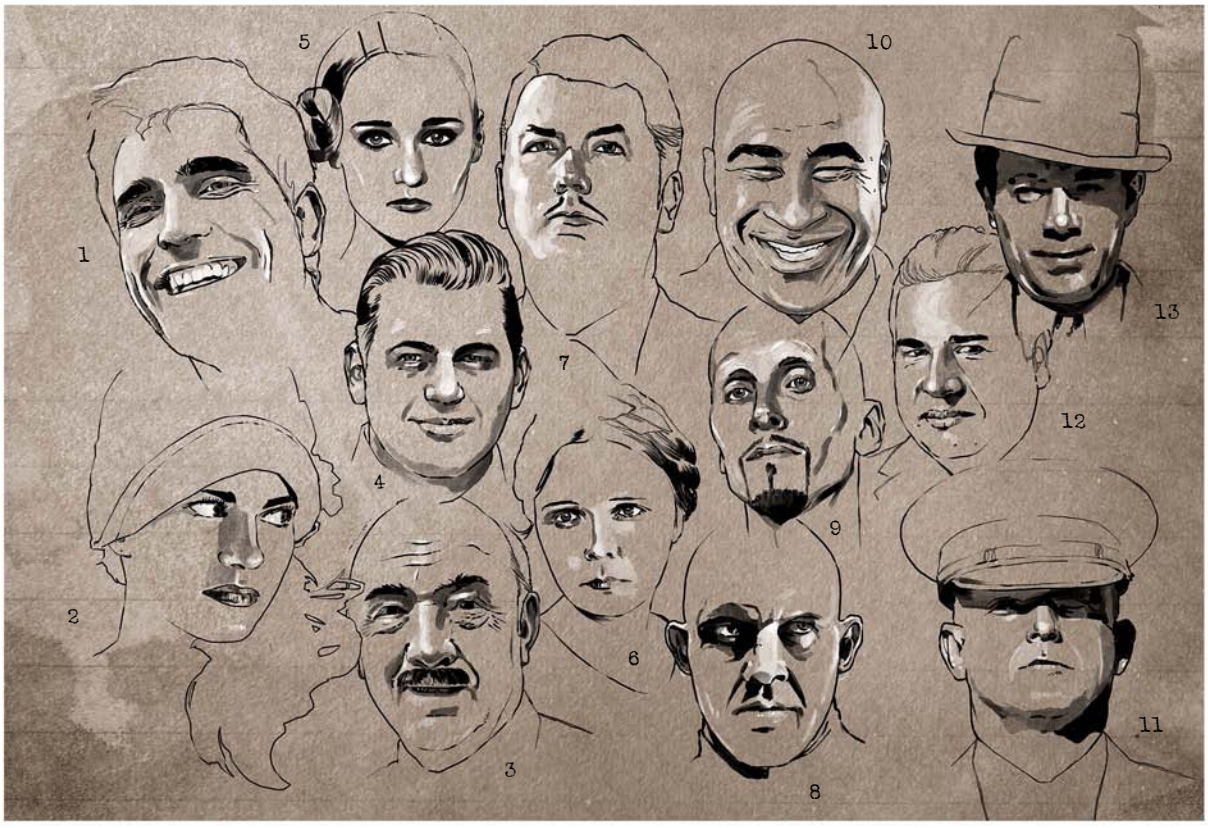
- **Tough Guy:** soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.

PHIL "THE MOUNTAIN" MONTANA, *Syndicate enforcer*

STR 85	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 90	**DEX** 65	**INT** 45
APP 50	**POW** 50	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 50	**HP** 15
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6; with brass knuckles 1D3+1+1D6
.45 auto	45% (23/9), damage 1D10+2
Sawed-off shotgun (2B)	60% (30/12), damage 4D6/1D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)



KEY

1. Leo Carpozi
2. Pandora Moulin
3. John Drummond
4. Carey Hooper
5. Lilith Chalmers
6. Constance "Connie" Bailey
7. Bob Quinn
8. Carlo Stompanato
9. Klaus Sauerfeld
10. Denny McDaid
11. Charles "Jeff" Jefferson
12. Lieutenant Emil Dobringhaus
13. Detective Sergeant Glenn Bannion

Skills

Drive Auto 45%, Intimidate 75%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 40%.

RALPH "THE DOG" CANINO, *syndicate mobster (mook)*

STR 60	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 50	**INT** 50
APP 40	**POW** 55	**EDU** 45	**SAN** 55	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3; with brass knuckles 1D3+1, or blackjack 1D8
.38 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Drive Auto 55%, Fast Talk 30%, Intimidate 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%.

TONY PORELLO, *generic Syndicate thug (mook)*

STR 60	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 40
APP 50	**POW** 40	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 40	**HP** 10

DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 8 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3; or brass knuckles, 1D3+1, or blackjack 1D8
.38 revolver 50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Drive Auto 40%, Hotwire Car 35%, Locksmith 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 40%.

INDEPENDENT CROOKS

NEVILLE "OLD NICK" LAMMAS, *independent bank robber*

STR 60 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 70 **DEX** 80 **INT** 70
APP 65 **POW** 70 **EDU** 40 **SAN** 70 **HP** 11
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 14 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
Gun butt (club) 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4
.45 auto 70% (35/14), damage 1D10+2
Browning auto rifle 40% (20/8), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Drive Auto 65%, Escape Handcuffs 40%, Fast Talk 56%, Locksmith 35%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 20%.

HERMAN "THE TOAD" BUKOWSKY, *independent bank robber and assassin*

STR 70 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 65 **INT** 50
APP 50 **POW** 60 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 60 **HP** 14
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4, or large knife 1D8+1D4
.44 revolver 45% (23/9), damage 1D10+2
Pump-action shotgun 65% (33/13), damage 4D6/ 2D6/1D6
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Drive Auto 65%, Intimidate 65%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 35%.

WHITLOCK GANG

LAWRENCE WHITLOCK, *outcast kidnapper, (aka The Tri-State Terror)*

STR 65 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 60 **DEX** 55 **INT** 40
APP 45 **POW** 65 **EDU** 40 **SAN** 65 **HP** 13
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 14 **Luck:** 65

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or large knife 1D8+1D4
Gun butt (club) 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4
.45 auto 60% (30/12), damage 1D10+2
Thompson SMG 50% (25/10), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 55%, Drive Auto 55%, Fast Talk 35%, Intimidate 70%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%.

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further attack in a single combat round.
- **Nimble:** does not lose next action when diving for cover versus firearms.

"SLIM" MATTIX & EDWIN "JITTERS" LONERGAN, *Whitlock gang (mooks)*

STR 60 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 60 **INT** 40
APP 55 **POW** 50 **EDU** 40 **SAN** 50 **HP** 11
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 10 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3, or club 1D8
.38 revolver 30% (15/6), damage 1D10
.30-06 rifle 30% (15/6), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Drive Auto 40%, Intimidate 30%, Stealth 40%, Throw 30%.

MINNIE WHITLOCK, *Whitlock gang moll*

STR 50 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 50 **DEX** 65 **INT** 50
APP 55 **POW** 45 **EDU** 35 **SAN** 45 **HP** 11
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 9 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3
.38 revolver 30% (15/6), damage 1D10
.30-06 rifle 25% (13/5), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills
Drive Auto 30%, Scream 50%, Spot Hidden 40%.

THE POLICE

DETECTIVE SERGEANT GLENN BANNION, *tough but fair good cop*

STR 60 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 60 **DEX** 55 **INT** 70
APP 60 **POW** 75 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 75 **HP** 10
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 15 **Luck:** —

Combat
Brawl 80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 revolver 60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6

Skills
Drive Auto 60%, Intimidate 65%, Persuade 40%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 35%.

DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT EMIL DOBRINGHAUS, *maverick bad cop*

STR 85 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 60 **INT** 70
APP 55 **POW** 80 **EDU** 65 **SAN** 80 **HP** 14
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 16 **Luck:** 30

Combat
Brawl 90% (45/18), damage 1D3+1D6; with brass knuckles 1D3+1+1D6
Blackjack 90% (45/18), damage 1D8+1D6
.38 revolver 60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG 30% (15/6), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills
Drive Auto 50%, Intimidate 80%, Persuade 35%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 35%.

Pulp Talent
- **Quick Draw:** does not need to have firearm readied to gain +50 DEX when determining DEX order for combat.

THE SEEKERS

KLAUS SAUERFELD, *businessman and unquestioned coven leader*

STR 65 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 85 **DEX** 55 **INT** 80
APP 50 **POW** 80 **EDU** 95 **SAN** 64 **HP** 14
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 16 **Luck:** 45

Combat
Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
Sword 55% (28/11) damage 1D6+1+1D6
.38 auto 25% (13/5), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills
Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Drive Auto 40%, History 45%, Law 45%, Occult 75%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 50%.
Languages: German 95%, English 80%, Latin 40%, Phoenician 35%.

Pulp Talent
- **Strong Willed:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die when making POW rolls.

Spells: Cloud Memory, Dominate, Shrivelling, more if the Keeper desires.

LILITH CHALMERS, *boutique owner, coven member, and femme fatale*

STR 55 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 65 **INT** 65
APP 85 **POW** 70 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 61 **HP** 9
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 14 **Luck:** —

Combat
Brawl 55% (28/11), damage 1D3
.22 short auto 30% (15/6), damage 1D6
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills
Credit Rating 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Dance 35%, Dress to Kill 65%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 40%, Occult 60%, Persuade 55%, Stealth 25%.
Spells: Cloud Memory.

HUGO WITTERING, *accountant and devoted coven member*

STR 50 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 45 **DEX** 55 **INT** 60
APP 35 **POW** 45 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 39 **HP** 8
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 9 **Luck:** —

Combat
Brawl 45% (23/9), damage 1D3, or small knife 1D4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills
Accountancy 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Occult 50%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 35%.

ARMAND DE SOTO, *gigolo, coven member, and homme fatale*

STR 65 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 65 **INT** 50
APP 75 **POW** 60 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 56 **HP** 10
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 55% (28/11), damage 1D3, or small knife 1D4
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Dance) 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 2%, Fast Talk 30%, Flirt 40%, Occult 30%, Stealth 35%.

WILSON IVES, *chef, restaurateur, and coven member*

STR 70 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 65 **DEX** 55 **INT** 55
APP 45 **POW** 65 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 61 **HP** 13
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or medium knife 1D6+1D4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Accountancy 50%, Art/Craft (Cook) 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Occult 35%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 35%.

SYLVIA FANE, *dilettante, trainee pilot, and disaffected coven member*

STR 55 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 50 **DEX** 55 **INT** 85
APP 60 **POW** 60 **EDU** 85 **SAN** 56 **HP** 9
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3
.32 auto 35% (18/7), damage 1D8
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Drive Auto 65%, Listen 35%, Occult 50%, Pilot (Airplane) 30%, Ride 50%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%.
Languages: English 85%, French 55%, Latin 30%.

HARRIS DOLL, *Sauerfeld's bodyguard and stand-in coven member*

STR 90 **CON** 75 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 65 **INT** 55
APP 65 **POW** 60 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 58 **HP** 15
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 90% (45/18), damage 1D3+1D6, or club 1D6+1D6
.38 auto 50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 60%, Occult 20%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 30%.

SIEGFRIED MECKLENBURG, *Sauerfeld's hired assassin*

STR 90 **CON** 75 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 65 **INT** 65
APP 40 **POW** 60 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 53 **HP** 15
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6, or medium knife 1D6+1D6
.38 auto 55% (25/10), damage 1D10
.30-06 rifle 70% (35/14), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Disguise 75%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 25%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 45%.
Languages: English 45%, French 40%, German 80%.

GENERIC COVEN MEMBERS, *otherwise respectable individuals (mooks)*

STR 55 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 50 **INT** 65
APP 60 **POW** 60 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 58 **HP** 10
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 12 **Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3, or small knife 1D4
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Drive Auto 25%, Listen 35%, Occult 30%, Spot Hidden 25%, Stealth 20%.

MONSTER SELECTION

A quick-reference selection of monsters that may appear out of the box; Keepers are advised to refer to the entries in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* as noted in parenthesis, otherwise descriptions are provided.

BYAKHEE (page 283, *Keeper's Rulebook*)

STR 90 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 90 **DEX** 65 **INT** 50
APP — **POW** 50 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 14
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 5/16 **MP:** 10 **Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

Fighting	55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D6
Bite/Hold	(mnvr), damage 1D6 + 3D10 STR drain
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Armor: 2
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 1/1D6 to see a byakhee.

DIMENSIONAL SHAMBLER (page 290)

STR 95	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 95	**DEX** 50	**INT** 35
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 17
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D6
Grab	(mnvr), held for 1 round, then disappears
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Armor: 3
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 0/1D10 to see a dimensional shambler.

DHOLE (page 289)

STR 2525	**CON** 755	**SIZ** 2775	**DEX** 10	**INT** 35
APP —	**POW** 170	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 353
DB: +64D6	**Build:** 65	**Move:** 15	**MP:** 34	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage death
Spit goo	50% (25/10), covers area 27 feet across; damage 1 per round + stunned + drowning (Extreme STR roll to climb out)
Engulf	80% (40/16), damage swallowed
Dodge	6% (3/1)

Armor: 34
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 1D4/1D20 to see a dhole.

GUG

It was a paw, fully two feet and a half across, and equipped with formidable talons. After it came another paw, and after that a great black-furred arm to which both of the paws were attached by short forearms. Then two pink eyes shone, and the head of the awakened Gug sentry, large as a barrel, wobbled into view. The eyes jutted two inches from each side, shaded by bony protuberances overgrown by coarse hairs. But the head was chiefly terrible because of the mouth. That mouth had great yellow fangs and ran from the top to the bottom of the head, opening vertically instead of horizontally.
— H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

Existing only within the Dreamlands, gugs are hideous giant monsters of nightmare that delight in devouring anything or anyone who crosses their path.

STR 225	**CON** 140	**SIZ** 285	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 42
DB: +5D6	**Build:** 6	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (each arm extends into two forearms)

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+5D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Armor: 8
Spells: 10% chance of knowing 1D10 spells.
Sanity loss: 0/1D8 to see a gug.

HUNTING HORROR (page 299)

STR 145	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 205	**DEX** 65	**INT** 75
APP —	**POW** 105	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 25
DB: +3D6	**Build:** 4	**Move:** 7/11	**MP:** 21	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

Fighting	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+3D6
Grasp	(mnvr), tail wraps victim, who is unable to move (may oppose **STR** next round to try and break free)
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Armor: 9
Spells: 25% chance of knowing 2D10 spells.
Sanity loss: 0/1D10 to see a hunting horror.

MOON-BEAST

Great greyish-white slippery things which could expand and contract at will, and whose principle shape—though it often changed—was that of a sort of toad without any eyes, but with a curious vibrating mass of short pink tentacles on the end of its blunt, vague snout.
—H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

The moon-beasts are an alien race encountered primarily in the Dreamlands. They serve Nyarlathotep for his favor and enslave other races, including the diabolical men of Leng. If sadism has any meaning for a race so alien, it can be said that these beings are monstrously cruel, frequently torturing members of other races that fall into their paws.

STR 80	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 100	**DEX** 50	**INT** 80
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 16
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (may use weapons, e.g. spear)

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D6, or spear 1D10+1+1D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Armor: none, however missile/bullets deal minimum damage.
Spells: 1D3 spells.
Sanity loss: 0/1D8 to see a moon-beast.

SHANTAK (page 306)

STR 170	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 250	**DEX** 50	**INT** 15
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 31
DB: +4D6	**Build:** 5	**Move:** 6/18	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+4D6
Bite/Hold	(mnvr), held, damage 2D6+2, 1D6 per round thereafter
Bite	Automatic (if seized), damage 3D10 STR drain per round
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Armor: 9
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 1/1D6 to see a shantak.

SHOGGOTH (page 306)

STR 315	**CON** 210	**SIZ** 420	**DEX** 15	**INT** 35
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 63
DB: +8D6	**Build:** 9	**Move:** 10	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+5D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Special: those hit may be engulfed, make opposed STR roll or be sucked apart; if multiple targets engulfed, divide shoggoth's STR amongst all engulfed. Those held may attack back only on rounds where they make a STR roll. Each round held, victim loses 8D6 damage).

Armor: none, but fire and electrical attacks do minimum damage; weapons (inc. bullets) do 1 point of damage per hit; a shoggoth regenerates 2 hit points per round.
Spells: none.
Sanity loss: 1D6/1D20 to see a shoggoth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The factual book *Al Capone and his American Boys: Memoirs of a Mobster's Wife* by Georgette Winkeler (written in 1934, but edited for first publication in 2011 by William J. Helmer), suggested much of the non-Mythos background to this scenario. My thanks to polite but reckless playtesters Simon Barton, Andrew Folkard and Micaela Schoop, and to Mike Mason for both the opportunity and advice.

STAR VAMPIRE (page 308)

STR 130	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 130	**DEX** 40	**INT** 50
APP —	**POW** 75	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 19
DB: +2D6	**Build:** 3	**Move:** 6/9	**MP:** 15	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 3

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+2D6
Seize	(mnvr), held, may bite next round
Bite	Automatic (if seized), damage 3D10 **STR** drain per round
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Special: invisible (penalty die to hit); after feeding it is visible for 6 rounds.

Armor: 4, bullets do half damage.
Spells: 30% chance of knowing 1D3 spells.
Sanity loss: 1/1D10 to see a star vampire.



CHAPTER 13

A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA

I'd love to get you on a slow boat to China,
All to myself alone. Get you to keep you in my arms evermore,
Leave all your lovers (lovelies) weeping on the faraway shore.

Out on the briny with the moon big and shiny,
Melting your heart of stone. I'd love to get you
On a slow boat to China, All to myself alone.

—Frank Loesser, *On a Slow Boat to China*

A voyage from San Francisco to Shanghai promises rest and relaxation, but an evil intent on controlling powers from beyond ensures this trip will be anything but restful.

OVERVIEW

This scenario takes place aboard a luxury cruise liner during 1931 but could easily be transported to a later date if desired, with some minor alteration by the Keeper. The heroes are onboard the ship for no particular reason and consequently, the scenario could take place whenever the heroes are traveling between continents.

Throughout the text, various ideas are presented for increasing the level of pulp this scenario can provide. The Keeper should consider such suggestions and include or reject them based on the preferred level of pulpiness of your games. If you want a very high level of pulp, the climax of the scenario could see the ship filled with the walking dead, crazed tcho-tcho, and multiple Mythos monsters attacking the ship. Of course, for more restrained play, ignore such over-the-top antics and concentrate on the plot as written, adjusting as you see fit.

BACKGROUND

A crawling one, once named Senor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan, seeks power to furnish its own selfish ends. It has devised and built a great summoning device to call down elder beings so it may control and possess their power.

Two years ago, in a fusion of science and ancient mysteries, the crawling one's plans came together as it undertook a great work of occult engineering to construct an aetheric energy device. The device, much like a grand pipe organ, is capable of summoning creatures and energies from beyond the stars through mechanical means. The device's blueprints and some of its components (the pipes) were sent to distant Oregon, where a pipe organ company and a small electrical firm have worked in isolation and ignorance to construct the device.

The crawling one believes the device will grant access to divine energies equivalent to those of the Outer Gods, providing the wriggling sorcerer with a well of Mythos power unmatched on Earth.

The Pipes of Leng

The crawling one's goal is to build a mechanized set of enchanted pipes, referred to variously as either the "Pipes of Leng" or the "aetheric energy device." The device is intended to summon Mythos entities mechanically and trap them, allowing the user to siphon their knowledge and power.

The pipes were bought, stolen, and plundered from various Tibetan, Nepalese, and other Himalayan sources, and finally brought to San Francisco two years ago by the crawling one's agents. It was here that the various pipes and components were combined and tuned to otherworldly harmonics. A pipe organ company in Portland was hired to place the entire set of pipes into a machine that automates their play. The resulting aetheric energy machine is somewhat like a piano—turning the device on and playing it summons energies and draws the attention of things from beyond, like bees to honey.

At the start of the scenario, the device is on board the *SS President Coolidge*. The crawling one intends to fully

Opposite: The Pipes of Leng by Jonathan Wyke

activate the device while at sea, using the passengers and crew to power the device, and allowing the crawling one to draw forth otherworldly energies from summoned Mythos entities.

Getting Started

If the heroes need a reason for travel, they might be taking a well-earned "rest cure" to Shanghai. Alternately, they might be invited to visit Shanghai to see the opening of an important new exhibit in the Institut Orientale in the French Concession, which is showing "Le Monde Mystérieux de l'Indo-Chine" (The Mysterious World of Indo-China), said to include a set of extremely rare occult scrolls (of possible Mythos interest), as well as a crude and ancient statue identified as "Çahoqua," a black toad-icon of the early Mongol period.

If the group is generating new characters for this scenario the best option, for ease of play, is probably to have them all have tickets for the same class of accommodation.

If the players have an existing set of pulp heroes, the Keeper may need to jump the action between the upper decks (First Class and Special Class) and the lower decks (Third Class and Steerage); dividing the action of the players into separate groups while aboard ship. Having one investigator be a member of the ship's crew is not recommended.

The heroes travel to Shanghai by ship, departing Saturday, December 5th, 1931 from San Francisco. The *SS President Coolidge* travels from San Francisco to Shanghai (with a stop in Honolulu). The leg from San Francisco to Honolulu takes five days, arriving December 10th. The section from Honolulu to Shanghai takes a further nine days, arriving on Saturday December 19th.

ACROSS THE PACIFIC IN STYLE

The Dollar Line *SS President Coolidge* departs San Francisco with a near-full complement of 678 passengers and 315 crew. It sails from Pier 42 just after 11:00 a.m. on December 5th 1931, and then glides under foggy conditions to the sound of foghorns and clanking bells.

The *SS President Coolidge* is the largest passenger ship ever built in the United States—but it's not all that big by European standards. It is 654 feet long, 81 feet wide, and 34 feet tall, and displaces about 31,000 tons. It was built by the Newport News Shipping Company in Newport News, Virginia, and was completed in August 1931—just four months ago. The ship is new, modern, and opulent.

PASSENGERS

The ship is divided into four classes: First Class, Special Class, Third Class, and Steerage Class. Accommodations vary in quality even within a single class.

Between 214 and 307 First Class passengers are housed in outside cabins and suites along the upper decks and at the front of the ship. First Class passengers have the run of the upper levels of the ship; the cabins are all on the Boat Deck, A Deck, B Deck, and C Deck. The First Class dining room is on C Deck in the middle of the ship, with a private dining room off the main hall for private functions. Four of the First Class suites have their own bath and toilet; 32 of the staterooms share a bath. Most of the remainders are single cabins with a private bath, though the cheapest First Class tickets are twin cabins with a shared shower and toilet. A few of the rooms have settees; none have bunk beds. All First Class cabins have their own private heaters, full carpeting, and lavish light fixtures, paintings, and furnishings.

The 133 Special Class rooms are lower down, on B Deck; just behind the First Class accommodations. These cabins are somewhat smaller, with shared bathrooms, but are used as First Class cabins when demand warrants it. The cabins sleep either three or four people (23 staterooms for three, 16 for four). The twin beds are singles with fold out bunks over one or both of them. The Special Class dining room is on C Deck, a little further toward the stern than the First Class hall.

The 170 Third Class accommodations are lower and even further toward the stern; they are on C Deck at the stern. None are exterior cabins. Third Class have Spartan 3-bunk or 4-bunk cabins, sleeping either six or eight per room; the bunks are fixed rather than folding. Each cabin has a mirror, toilet, and washbasin, but shares a communal bathroom. The Third Class dining room is right at the stern on C Deck.

Steerage accommodates up to 380 people and is located (not surprisingly) at the rear of the ship, by the noisy engines that move the rudder and near the turbo-electric engines that power the propellers. Steerage is entirely on D Deck at the stern and it doubles as cargo space from time to time. It consists of six large rooms, each with 60 berths and no privacy. Steerage uses the Third Class dining room, after Third Class has been fed.

Dining facilities are largely segregated, as are some social halls, reading rooms, and cigar salons, as well as some of the promenade decks. Steerage is rougher in heavy seas because it is furthest away from the center of balance of the ship; every wave tosses steerage further up and down than the other classes (except for some First Class passengers near the bow of the ship).

CREW

The crew of 350 includes:

- Captain Henry Nelson.
- First Officer Hugo Schramm.
- Two navigators, two senior mates, nine radio and telegraph operators led by Chief Radioman Marco Borrely.

- Chief Engineer Oliver Grossmann.
- Engineer's Mate Wilhelm Schubert.
- Ship's Doctor Erik Hartman.
- Twenty Junior Engineers, such as Fireman Robert Reid.
- Head Chef Anthony Deplace.
- Two Senior Chefs, and 10 Sous Chefs, a Wine Steward named Phillipe d'Alsace.
- Chief Purser Martin Dungass—dead and consumed by the crawling one at the start of the scenario.

In addition, there are four Junior Pursers, thirty-seven Ship's Stewards, such as Martin Aimesworthy, forty Seamen First Class, including Albert Hallander, and 187 Able-Bodied Seamen (ABS), such as Hank Henson, who serve to keep doors closed and noses out of others' business. The ABS serve at various times as twenty-galley crew, fifty-four waiters (led by Arthur Benedict Carmel), four elevator operators, eighty-two cabin cleaners, and nineteen janitors. Drop these crewmembers in whenever needed and repeat familiar ones so the players get to know at least a few of the regulars.

The service staff includes two soda jerks, seven bartenders (led by wisecracking Ephraim "Fizzy" Walters), three social directors, three barbers, and four dealers for Casino Night. Not forgetting the forty-four musicians and musical conductor—Raymond Hickler and His Pacific Jazz Orchestra, and the Presidential Dance Orchestra.

Meals

Dining is segregated by class; consequently, the quality of the fare varies somewhat. A typical dinner seats at least 200 at a time (reservations are expected). Lobster, pheasant, and veal are limited to First Class dining, but even the Third Class eats better than many would eat ashore. Steerage is rather plain fare.

A First Class dinner involves, first of all, a walk down the ornate grand stairwell leading into the First Class Dining Room, past a large mural depicting countries served by Dollar Line ships. The meal includes a full seven courses: starting with hors d'oeuvres and oysters, going to a choice of consommé Olga or cream of barley soup, followed by salmon with mousseline sauce and cucumber, then a choice of filet mignon, sautéed chicken Lyonnaise, or fresh vegetables. A second course of lamb in mint sauce, roast duckling in apple sauce, or medallions of beef then follows, accompanied by green peas, boiled rice, creamed carrots, boiled new potatoes, and potatoes Parmentier. Next comes a punch romaine, roast squab and crepes, cold asparagus vinaigrette, pâté de fois gras, and celery. For dessert, passengers may choose from Waldorf pudding, peaches in Chartreuse jelly, chocolate and vanilla éclairs, or French ice cream. The Presidential Dance Orchestra plays for the First Class Saloon each night from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and they take requests.

ENFORCING SHIP SEGREGATION

The ship is very publicly and thoroughly divided by class: First, Special, Third, and Steerage hardly, if ever, mix. Getting from one deck to another is possible when going from a higher class to a lower one (though stewards discourage "slumming"). Going in the opposite direction is much more difficult, as access is restricted at the stairwells (all watched by ship's stewards) and the three electrical lifts (one for cargo into the kitchen and two for passengers which have crewmen as elevator operators).

It is possible for the crew to move between classes without too much difficulty (although First Class has special crewmen who guard their privileges jealously). For passengers, it requires an invitation, a bribe to a corrupt crewmember, or a successful **Intimidate, Charm, Persuade,** or **Fast Talk** roll to walk up a deck. The more dangerous course is to attempt to climb up (a Hard **Climb** roll without a rope, Regular difficulty with one). Failure means falling overboard or, when climbing certain sections of the hull to First Class, falling onto the deck 30 feet below and suffering 3D6 damage (a kind Keeper may allow a successful **Jump** roll to halve the damage).

First and Special Class passengers caught in the wrong section of the ship are politely removed by the crew and discouraged from returning (firmly but politely). Third Class passengers are handled more roughly, and Steerage passengers may be shackled to their beds if they repeatedly sneak away to off-limits areas of the ship.

A Special Class dinner might be consommé, baked haddock in a spicy sauce, a choice of curried chicken, spring lamb in mint sauce, or roast turkey with cranberry, plus green peas, puree turnips, boiled rice, boiled and roast potatoes. Desserts include, plum pudding, wine jelly, a coconut sandwich, or American ice cream, plus assorted nuts, fresh fruit, cheese, biscuits, and coffee. The Pacific Jazz Orchestra plays for Special Class on alternate nights from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

A typical Third Class dinner includes a rice soup, corned beef and cabbage, boiled potatoes, biscuits, fresh bread and butter, plus stewed apples and rice for dessert. Coffee is served with dessert. Menus change daily, but the meal itself is fixed for each day and served from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Steerage dinner includes rather watery corned beef and cabbage, boiled carrots, boiled potatoes, and rice pudding for dessert. The Steerage menu rarely changes; green beans sometimes appear, or bacon in a potato salad, or rice instead of potatoes. Steerage dinner is served from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m., when the Third Class diners are done.

Entertainment

Entertainment varies from "do it yourself" to professionally polished performances. At the low end, it includes the pianos, harp, and other instruments of the Music Room on B Deck, as well as shuffleboard, costume parties, and poker, canasta, and bridge in the Smoking Rooms on A Deck and B Deck. Raymond Hickler and His Pacific Jazz Orchestra entertain in the Grand Salon each night; the Presidential Dance Orchestra plays in the ballroom each night at 9:00 p.m. sharp. The jazz and cabaret singers include Rebecca McCormick and Antonio Portaluppi.

Two newsreels and two films (a romance called *The Persian Pasha* and Chaplin's *City Lights*) play in the Continental Lounge (First Class) on Friday and Saturday on the way to Honolulu. The Continental Lounge has a glorious dome of 3,000 pieces of glass, and large seats upholstered in blue velvet. After Honolulu, cartoon shorts like *The Fox Hunt* and *Baby Be Good* replace the newsreels; the new feature films are *At the Kentucky Derby* and *It Pays to Advertise*, starring Louise Brooks.

The First Class Library and Writing Room on A Deck contains a beautiful mural of deep-sea marine life. The room holds roughly 4,000 volumes, well mixed between fiction, historical materials, business, and humanities reference works, as well as periodicals.

The two swimming pools are available from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with a lifeguard on duty at both the First Class and open-air pools. The Special and Third Class pool over Hold 6 is only opened when the *President Coolidge* arrives in warmer waters near Hawaii.

One custom worth mentioning is the use of the onboard printing press to announce events, parties, special dinners, and occasions. The First and Special Class heroes may expect to get not just telegrams from shore stations but also freshly printed invites to St. Nicholas Night (December 6th), Casino Night (December 7th), the Tahitian Ball (December 9th), and Sunday Mass (mornings of December 6th, 13th, 20th) in the mail.

Other amenities include a gymnasium, a barbershop, a soda fountain, two electric lifts, and a darkroom for photographers. The entire ship is air-conditioned (unusual for the time).

Smoking and Drinking

The *SS President Coolidge* has two full bars, a finer one in the Continental Lounge on A Deck and a coarser one in the Hawaiian Saloon on C Deck. Both are well stocked with liquor, champagne, wines (including saké), and San Francisco and Yokohama beer.

The ship's two smoking rooms are likewise split by class; the First Class Smoking Room has a tapestry of Rip Van Winkle, walnut armchairs, green upholstered settees, game tables for cards and dice, a floor of green and reddish rubber tiles, and a green marble fireplace with an electric fire. Above the fireplace is a stained glass image called the "Lady and the Unicorn" in a steel frame. The Special Class Smoking Room on B Deck has a painting of the Sierra Nevada as well as a portrait of President Coolidge himself. It has maroon upholstered chairs and a set of basic wooden card tables, with recessed holders for drinks and built-in glass ashtrays. Elsewhere, smoking indoors is not prohibited. Third Class and Steerage are expected to smoke outside on C Deck, under the watchful eye of stewards who fear cigarettes, pipes, and cigars as fire hazards.

THE CRAWLING ONE

In life, the crawling one's original name was Luis Fernando de la Montoyo, master of a cult devoted to Azathoth. His life magically extended, he lived into the time of the Spanish conquest, where his foul deeds were uncovered and he was sentenced to be hanged by the Spanish governor of Sonora, Señor Guiterrez de Almacan. The sentence was carried out and Montoyo's corpse was buried; however, his consciousness passed to the cockroaches, scorpions, flies, and grave-vermin which devoured the corpse, enabling it to continue its evil work beyond its "mortal" span.

Despite its ghastly appearance, the crawling one is not undead, for the worms that compose its form are living creatures. While the injuries it suffers may kill individual roaches or spiders, this merely inconveniences the creature, as over time the vermin breed replacements. It is a creature of many forms and disguises and has learned caution over the centuries, often disguising itself when it must walk among humans. It may take the form of any human that it kills and consumes (using the Consume Likeness spell).

In its unnatural life, the crawling one has consumed the following people (so far):

- The Spanish governor of Sonora, Señor Guiterrez de Almacan.
- A Navaho teenage girl named Haseye Adikai.
- A scarred and elderly Chinese woman named Du Zeming.
- Martin Dungass (Chief Purser)
- Chad Peterson (wealthy fiancé to Virginia Ridley)

It can speak in any of these human forms although when taking a newly consumed form, it takes 48 hours for it to fully develop a vocal capability. The crawling one understands Navaho, an antiquated and courtly Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, modern Wu Chinese, and modern American English. In its true form, it cannot speak or indeed make any kind of sound and must rely on written messages to convey its wishes (telegrams are typical). The creature can also switch between forms at will in a single combat round.

If gravely threatened, it can disintegrate at will, simply falling into a pile of individual insects that quickly slither away, making their escape through floorboards or the like.

SS PRESIDENT COOLIDGE STATISTICS

Built in August 1931 at the Newport News shipyard for the Dollar Line.

Size

Length:	654 feet
Beam:	81 feet
Draft (Depth):	34 feet
Gross Tonnage:	21,936 tons
Displacement:	30,924 tons
Levels:	Three above the deck, five below

Cargo

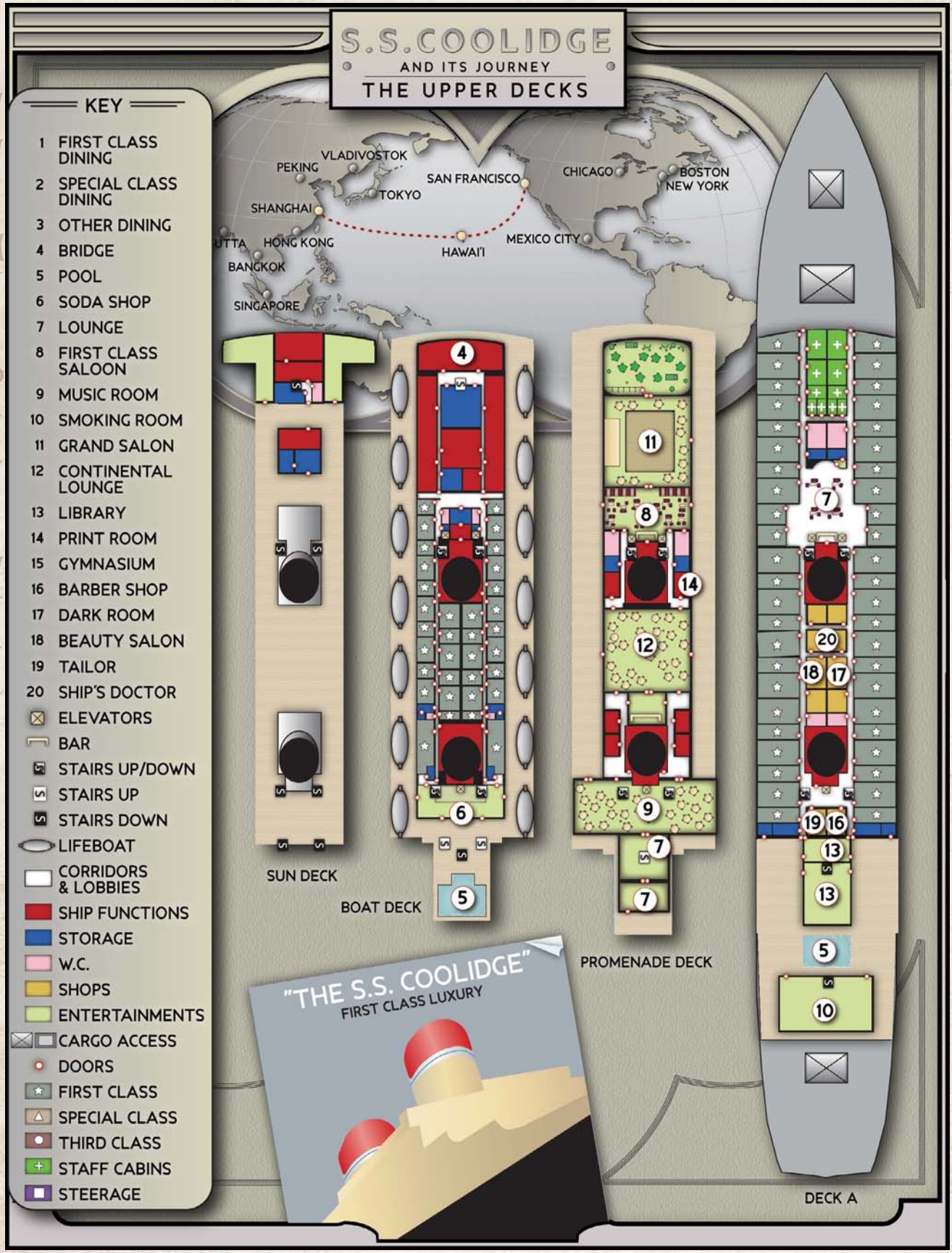
Cargo Capacity:	608,850 cubic feet
Cargo Holds:	Seven total, four accessible from deck
Car Space:	100 vehicles in Hold 4
Winches:	18 35 hp cargo winches, lift 3,000 lbs. direct at 340 feet rope/minute, Six Welin McLachlan gravity davits for lifeboats, Two boat winches of 25 hp for tenders and supply boats, Six American Engineering Company capstan winches
Refrigerated:	70,000 cubic feet in Hold 6
Weapons:	A supply of small arms, rifles, and shotguns (for skeet shooting) are kept locked in Cargo Hold 7. The Captain keeps a revolver locked in his cabin.

Engines

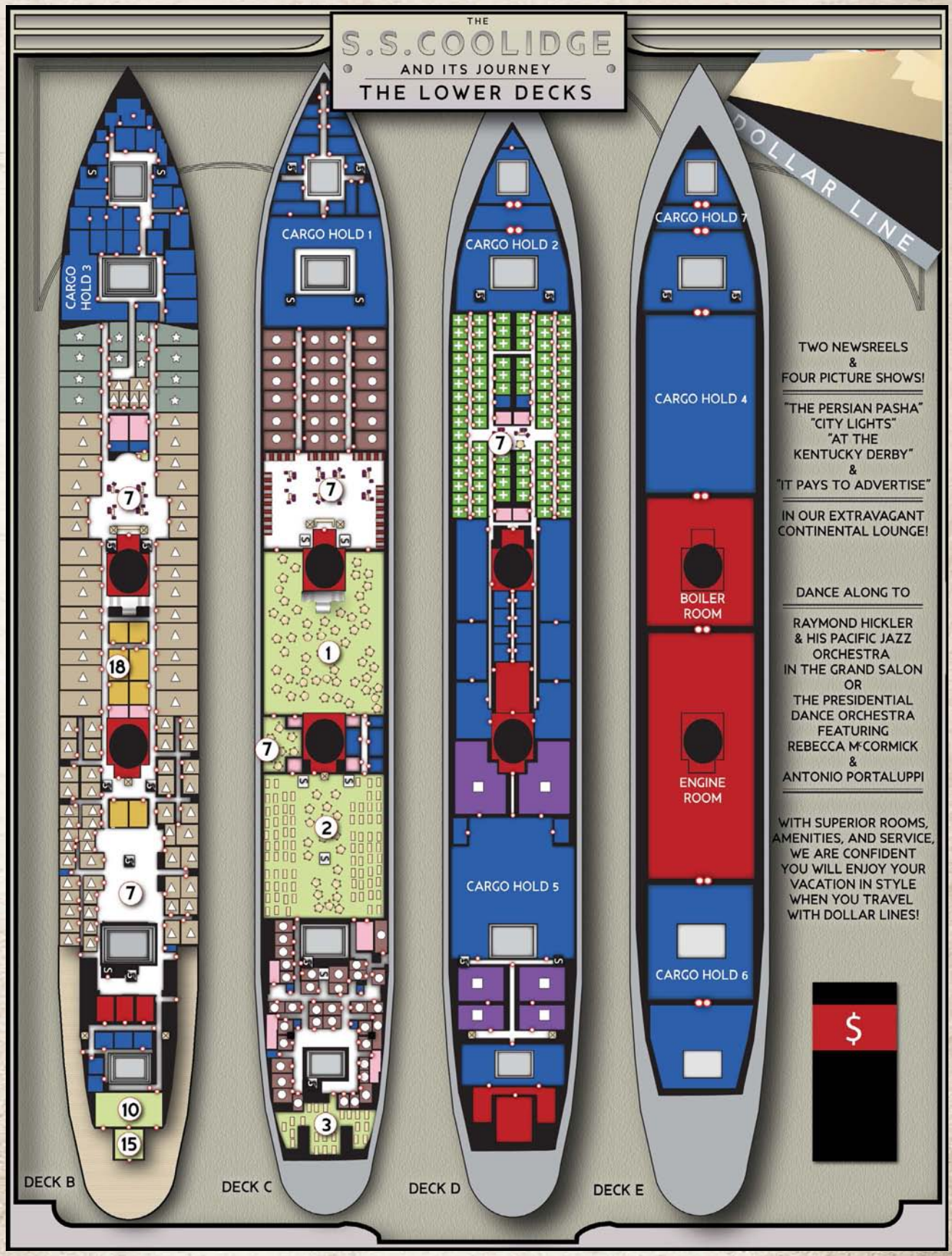
Engines:	Two 13,250 hp Westinghouse turbo-electric
Boilers:	12 Babcock and Wilcox high-pressure fuel oil
Steam Pressure:	300 psi
Boiler Temperature:	620° F
Turbines:	Two 14,000 bhp
Propellers:	Two
Prop Speed:	133 rpm at 22.2 knots
Top Speed:	22.2 knots
Cruising Speed:	20 knots
Fuel Storage:	6,240 tons
Range:	19,500 nautical miles at cruising speed 14,500 nautical miles at full speed

Amenities

Maximum Passengers:	990
Required Crew:	324
Maximum Aboard:	1,314
Fresh Water:	2,320 tons
Lighting:	Four 500 kw 240/120 Volt auxiliary turbine-generators
Swimming Pools:	Two, one first class and one removal canvas over Hold 6



S.S. Coolidge Maps by Stephanie McAlea


THE
S.S.COOLIDGE
AND ITS JOURNEY
THE LOWER DECKS
DOLLAR LINE
CARGO HOLD 3
CARGO HOLD 1
CARGO HOLD 2
CARGO HOLD 7
CARGO HOLD 4
BOILER ROOM
ENGINE ROOM
CARGO HOLD 5
CARGO HOLD 6
DECK B
DECK C
DECK D
DECK E
TWO NEWSREELS
&
FOUR PICTURE SHOWS!
"THE PERSIAN PASHA"
"CITY LIGHTS"
"AT THE KENTUCKY DERBY"
&
"IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE"
IN OUR EXTRAVAGANT CONTINENTAL LOUNGE!
DANCE ALONG TO
RAYMOND HICKLER & HIS PACIFIC JAZZ ORCHESTRA
IN THE GRAND SALON
OR
THE PRESIDENTIAL DANCE ORCHESTRA
FEATURING
REBECCA McCORMICK
&
ANTONIO PORTALUPPI
WITH SUPERIOR ROOMS, AMENITIES, AND SERVICE, WE ARE CONFIDENT YOU WILL ENJOY YOUR VACATION IN STYLE WHEN YOU TRAVEL WITH DOLLAR LINES!
$

Weak in physical combat, the crawling one prefers to rely upon spells, allowing its minions to handle mundane matters.

The crawling one boards the ship in San Francisco in vermin form, concealed inside the aetheric energy device in Hold 7 (see **Cargo Hold 7**, page 225). Once safely onboard, it transforms into Senor Guiterrez de Almacan and takes possession of a vacant cabin—one that was not listed on the passenger manifest, arousing the suspicions of the Chief Purser, Martin Dungass. When Dungass comes to confront the unlisted passenger, he is murdered and consumed. The crawling one, realizing it can dispose of a single annoying crewman but not the entire crew, chooses to take the place of a legitimate passenger. Immediately after leaving San Francisco, it finds and consumes Chad Peterson, transforming into his likeness. The crawling one quickly discovers his new form comes with a fiancé, Virginia Ridley, who expects it to speak; something the crawling one can't immediately do, as its vocal chords are still forming. Thus, it is forced to abandon the form of Peterson to escape discovery.

For the most part, the crawling one's cover persona is that of Señor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan, a reclusive Spanish nobleman. Almacan tends to keeps to his cabin, although he can be seen promenading the deck on some evenings. During the voyage, the crawling one may take any of the forms mentioned above, plus anyone else it murders and consumes while onboard. Finding the crawling one should be a game of cat and mouse.

Statistics for the crawling one can be found in **Appendix A**.

The Crawling One's Plan

Years of work and preparation have brought the crawling one to this point. It believes the Pipes of Leng will allow it to mechanically summon and contain Mythos entities, allowing their knowledge and power to be siphoned off and consumed. Despite an almost megalomaniacal sense of authority and power, the crawling one is not stupid and aims to test the Pipes of Leng in an out-of-the-way place in relative safety—on board the *SS President Coolidge* in the middle of the ocean—well away from prying eyes and meddlesome authorities.

Over the years, the crawling one has established connections with other wizards and cults around the world, notably the Eight Fortunes Mutual Aid Society, a Mythos cult with tendrils across China. The crawling one plans to join the cult and has arranged to transport itself, along with the Pipes of Leng, through a magical Gate directly from the ship once it has performed a full test of the aetheric energy device.

SHIPBOARD TIMELINE

Events and dates can be adjusted or rearranged to suit the heroes' actions, but typically the Pacific crossing can play out as described here:

Saturday, December 5th

- Depart San Francisco (see **Up the Gangway**, page 217, and **Cabin Mates**, page 218).

Sunday, December 6th

- Chief Purser Martin Dungass goes missing, consumed by the crawling one (see **Anyone Seen the Purser?** page 219).
- Albert Hallander, a thieving sailor, breaks into Chad Peterson's cabin only to find his "empty clothes" and a mass of cockroaches. A few minutes later, Virginia Ridley finds Chad Petersen's "empty clothes" (see **The Empty Suit**, page 218).
- Sunday Mass in the ship's chapel.
- St. Nicholas Night for all First, Special, and Third Class children in the ballroom.

Monday, December 7th

- Crawling one resumes the form of Chad Peterson and dominates the gangster Bunny Bates.
- *Tome of Red Jade* stolen from Dr. Soong. Wang Ma is killed. Dr. Soon may ask the heroes for their help (see **The Stolen Book**, page 220, and **Dr. Soong Requests Help**, page 222).
- Casino Night for First Class and Special Class passengers.

Tuesday, December 8th

- Peterson Memorial Service in ship's chapel, 11:00 a.m. (see **Passenger Reactions**, page 220).
- Father Alvarez buries Wang Ma in a short ceremony at stern at 3:00 p.m. (see **The Stolen Book**, page 220).

Wednesday, December 9th

- Virginia Ridley shoots skeet off the stern deck.
- Tahitian Ball for First and Special Class passengers.

Thursday, December 10th

- Phyllis Barnes performs in the Music Room.
- Arrive at Honolulu (see **Honolulu and Beyond**, page 221).
- Takishi Suroda disappears (see **Missing People**, page 222).

Friday, December 11th

- Honolulu police declare Peterson's death a suicide (see **Honolulu and Beyond**, page 221).
- Depart Honolulu.

Saturday, December 12th
- Ship crosses the International Date Line (gain a day*).
- Journalist Miles Hardaway of *Chronicle* disappears (see **Missing People**, page 222).

**timeline/scenario dates are kept to US dates for ease of reference.*

Sunday, December 13th
- Father Alvarez celebrates Sunday Mass in the Chapel.
- Rumors of strange music heard about the ship (see **Distant Music**, page 223).
- Phyllis Barnes disappears along with a crewmember (see **Missing People**, page 222).

Monday, December 14th
- Strange music is heard around the ship (see **Distant Music**, page 223).

Tuesday and Wednesday, December 15th and 16th
- One further disappearance (see **Missing People**, page 222).

Thursday, December 17th
- Bunny Bates (free from crawling one's domination) confesses to Father Alvarez (or one of the heroes), (see **Stuart "Bunny" Bates**, page 216).

Friday, December 18th
- Foul weather (successful **CON** roll or seasick).

Saturday, December 19th
- Big waves and rain all morning (successful **CON** roll or seasick), clear in the afternoon.
- Bunny Bates takes a passenger hostage (see **Bunny Takes a Hostage**, page 227).
- While everyone is distracted by Bates, the crawling one plays the Pipes of Leng, causing a flying polyp to appear and attack the ship.

Sunday, December 20th
- Ship due to arrive in Shanghai at 6:00 a.m.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Once strange events and bodies start appearing aboard, the heroes are likely to want to start asking questions. Remember that the other passengers have almost nothing better to do, and most won't mind gabbing and speculating to pass the time. Here is an overview of some of the key non-player characters (NPCs).

The following NPCs include some of the ship's authorities, as well as those who may fall under suspicion later in the voyage. Some entries include notes on what the characters may say when interviewed by the heroes. Remember that there are many passengers onboard ship, so the Keeper should feel free to devise additional NPCs as required. Statistics for the NPCs can be found in **Appendix A**.

A WORD ABOUT PACING

This scenario unfolds over a number of days, allowing the Keeper to build up to the climax, but also meaning that the Keeper must hustle the time to keep the days moving along. Players often want to use every hour of every day in their investigations; they must be discouraged from this by forcing the pace. Focus on the action, maintain pace, and "red line" the story—simply tell the players that you are fast-forwarding to the important stuff. Allow the players time to explore and talk to the various non-player characters (NPCs) but be prepared to throw situations, questions, and scenes at them to ensure the game keeps moving.

CREW

Henry Nelson, *Captain*

Captain Nelson is relentless and efficient. His voice is warm and tinged with a strange accent; he is Norwegian but grew up in the French colony of Martinique, so he speaks excellent colonial French, as well as English.

The Captain is an avid poker player, knows how to bluff, and can sense when he is being bluffed—very little escapes his attention (he has a Psychology skill of 70%, and Fast Talk 95%)—Heroes attempting to fool him with Fast Talk and shady facts may find themselves discreetly followed by stewards.

- **Description:** stark white hair, well-groomed mustache, very firm handshake.
- **Traits:** cunning, shrewd, and well mannered.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Good evening. I trust you are enjoying the voyage?*"
  - "*What the devil is going on here!*"

Hugo Schramm, *First Officer*

Schramm is kept busy with his duties, which includes dealing with passenger issues and attending various ship functions on behalf of the Captain. When it all gets too much, he often retreats to his office and pretends he's not there.

- **Description:** light brown hair, with a thin face and pencil-thin mustache.

- **Traits:** smiles and nods his head a lot.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Of course, I'll see to it once.*"
  - "*Sorry, didn't hear you out there!*"

Albert Hallander, *Seaman First Class*

Hallander is an Indonesian-born man of Dutch parentage, with a penchant for petty thievery. He breaks into Chad Peterson's cabin only to find a mass of cockroaches and insects.

- **Description:** blond and strong, with green eyes.
- **Traits:** sneaky, pompous, pretty good liar.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*I vas passing by, I should have ignored it.*"
  - "*I don't know anything, I swear to you.*"

Martin Aimesworthy, *First Class Steward*

Aimesworthy attends to First Class passenger needs. He is a reliable, honest, and dutiful member of the crew. If befriended, he may share whatever suspicions he has with the heroes.

Note: if Bunny Bates is somehow captured or killed, the crawling one casts Dominate on Aimesworthy and uses him in place of Bates.

- **Description:** tall, blond hair, and clean-shaven.
- **Traits:** loyal and attentive.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*It's no bother at all. Let me take care of that.*"
  - "*Well, it's a right palaver!*"

PASSENGERS

First Class Passengers

Virginia Ridley, *dilettante and flapper (Chad Peterson's fiancée)*

Virginia was born in Shanghai, raised by an amah (Chinese nanny), and has lived in the States since her 15th birthday. In New York, she is a notorious flapper and dilettante, though her family has lost a great deal in the Crash. She convinced Chad Peterson, her newfound wealthy lover, to visit China with her this year. She is eager to arrive in time for Chinese New Year and show Peterson the city of her childhood.

- **Description:** chestnut hair, curvy, and a dangerous strut.
- **Traits:** flirty, enjoys guns and thrills, great dancer.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*I finally got the big lug to come to China and he skips out on me!*"
  - "*You'll find him, won't you? You've got to find him.*"

Notes: Virginia and Peterson have separate cabins on the Presidential Deck. She has not spoken to Peterson since they dined together around 7:00 p.m. on December 5th (she later saw the crawling one in its assumed form as Peterson). She found a lovely (genuine) note from her lover (morning of December 6th)—it reads: "Virginia, every day I know I made the right choice. Come sail with me! Your Loving Chad."

She saw Chad along the hall on the evening of December 5th, around 9:30 p.m., after they had dinner, and something about Peterson bothered her; perhaps his walk or his clothes—he seemed distraught or unhappy. Even though she feels it is just "woman's intuition," she's eager to share this information with the heroes if she is approached.

Following Peterson's disappearance, she takes to shooting skeet off the stern of the ship as a way of relieving her tension and anxiety. At some point, the ship's stewards ask her to stop, as the sound of gunshots disturbs the other passengers.

Charles Astor, *rich businessman*

Charles Winston Astor is one of the "New York Astors," and he rarely lets anyone forget it. He made his money the old-fashioned way—he inherited it. He graduated solidly in the middle of his class from Yale in 1895. Since then, he's been running the family manufacturing concerns in Massachusetts and along the Hudson, and overseeing shipping from New York and Newark.

Astor is a friend of Chad Peterson, the two having been acquainted through business dealings over the years.

Astor is traveling in the President's Suite, the largest and finest cabin aboard. He shoots skeet occasionally off the stern deck with his son James (age 25), and his butler, Walker (age 38). His daughter, Elizabeth Anne (age 19), is expected to socialize with the First Class ladies, and to attend music lessons with Miss Barnes.

- **Description:** good teeth, sharp chin, with graying hair.
- **Traits:** assertive, phony, tells a fine dirty joke, and can shoot and hunt.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Chip (Peterson) was a great friend of mine, a close friend, and he would never do something like this.*"
  - "*I don't understand it. I just don't.*"

Notes: Astor is perfectly friendly; he is enjoying his First Class voyage and not especially fond of making friends below Special Class. If the heroes do befriend him, he can potentially put in a good word for them with the Captain (should they run into difficulties).

Astor can confirm the missing Chad Peterson is engaged to Virginia Ridley. He's very upset that his young friend has gone missing, telling anyone who will listen that "Chip" Peterson was a very close friend of his and not the type to throw himself out a porthole. Astor believes Peterson was surely pushed and,

after Honolulu, Astor's protestations are backed up by the offer of a $1,000 cash reward for anyone with useful information.

Alex Hubbard, *big game hunter*

Hubbard has gained some renown as a big game hunter, with a reputation for tracking down and killing anything that's worth a trip across the ocean. His current target is the black pygmy rhino of Siam, which few Westerners have ever seen and even fewer have stuffed and mounted in their smoking room. Hubbard intends to fix this little problem as quickly as possible.

Hubbard is traveling in First Class without much of a plan other than scheduled stops in Yokohama, Shanghai, and Macao before reaching Bangkok (the "fleshpots of Asia" tour, as he calls it). Within his luggage can be found a Winchester rifle and scope, a skeet-shooting over-and-under shotgun (with birdshot ammunition), and a copy of *Baedeker's Guide to Siam and Indochina*.

- **Description:** overweight, balding, muscular.
- **Traits:** ruthless, raconteur, chatty, territorial.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*A man who doesn't hunt isn't much of a man.*"
  - (After a few drinks) "*Sure, I'd like to mount her in my trophy case.*"

Notes: in addition to the pygmy rhino, Hubbard has his sights firmly set on Virginia Ridley, and attempts to console her in the hopes that he can draw her affections.

Dr. Soong, *occult and mythos researcher*

Dr. Soong is a self-confident, elderly Chinese man, comfortable in traditional or Western dress, and willing to discuss herbal remedies, Taoism, or religion with equal pleasure. He is over 70 years old and was an ardent communist until fairly recently, serving the workers of Shanghai as both a traditional Chinese doctor and as a confidant and collaborator. Despite his communist leanings, he has decided to travel in style, taking a First Class cabin on the Boat Deck.

Born in Shanghai, his native language is Wu Chinese rather than Mandarin Chinese. He does speak some broken Mandarin due to his years spent in Peking; however, his English is much better.

Soong struggled for years against the opium trade, Western exploitation, and Nationalist propaganda. He made some unsavory friends and acquired a taste for opium himself, though he never fell into deep addiction. In 1927, Nationalist thugs murdered his wife and two of his three sons. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Soong left for the United States with his surviving son and daughter, and expanded his occult and Mythos researches into a full-time occupation.

- **Description:** white hair and beard, frail, and slightly stooped.
- **Traits:** serious, scholarly, morbid, and very, very smart.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*This is my servant, Wang Ma. He will answer your questions. Please excuse me.*"
  - "*The incident is most unfortunate. Regrettable and unfortunate.*"

Notes: following the stolen book incident on December 7th (see **Scene 3: The Stolen Book**, page 220), Dr. Soong mentions that he saw Chad Peterson leaving his cabin—after his supposed suicide (around 6:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 6th).

Soong may approach the heroes to ask for help to find and retrieve his stolen book. He also provides a potential ally and source of Mythos information for the heroes. Try to avoid using Soong to answer all of the heroes' questions, or having him save the day. He is old and frail; use him to point the heroes in the right direction and, if they are floundering, have him provide a suitable piece of information to get them moving again.

Dr. Soong's Manservant

His rather unsavory manservant, Wang Ma, always accompanies Dr. Soong. Wang is a short, ugly man who takes care of the doctor's clothes, his chest of herbal medicines, and his protection and personal safety. Wang Ma and his small clan of tcho-tcho perform such tasks for Dr. Soong in order to fulfill a debt—the details of which are left to the Keeper to determine (something along the lines of Dr. Soong having saved the lives of a number of tcho-tcho, for example).

Wang Ma is the leader of a small band of tcho-tcho (booked in Steerage Class) who are in the retinue of Dr. Soong. After Wang Ma's death on December 7th, he is replaced by Lo Mai (use the same statistics). If Lo Mai also dies, additional tcho-tcho take their successive places by the doctor's side as needed. For further information, see **The Tcho-Tcho**, page 226.

- **Description:** broad chest, pallid skin, and a wicked grin.
- **Traits:** steady, brave, suspicious.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Master Soong say, no.*"
  - "*Master Soong not say.*"

Special Class Passengers

Phyllis Barnes, *music teacher and good egg*

Phyllis plays piano, organ, harp, and flute, and she can sing with a smooth alto. She gives impromptu musical performances almost every day, either at lunch or at dinner, and teaches music to the wealthier children aboard (including Wendy and James, the children of Charles Astor). She also does some charity work among the steerage passengers, teaching music, mathematics, and rudimentary German to young children.

Phyllis is an old maid, yet young at heart; robustly built but not in the best of health. Her reddish hair and bright smile are her best features. She's a bit of a nosy parker, always asking personal questions and making introductions between young men and women.

Despite her outward charm, Phyllis is a racist, acting in a xenophobic fashion especially around Chinese people. She claims to have seen "Violent fights among the Chinamen" on more than one occasion—a lie she tells to make herself a little more interesting.

- **Description:** heavyset physique, hair in a bun, twinkle in her eyes, and short fingernails.
- **Traits:** racist, xenophobic, as well as a devout Christian.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*I'll be in the music room if anyone needs me.*"
  - "*Well, I'm happy to help but I'm not sure there's much I can do.*"

Notes: if asked, she claims that Chad Peterson behaved strangely—she had gotten along with him and Virginia Ripley on the first night out (December 5th) yet on the following morning he seemed to have no idea who she was. Phyllis claims that Peterson's suicide is all "hogwash," as she has subsequently seen Mr. Peterson several times aboard ship.

Stuart "Bunny" Bates, *dominated gangster*

Bates worked with the Capone Gang for three years in Chicago before the heat got to be too much. To avoid hard time in the Joliet State Penitentiary, he retreated to the Wabasha Street Caves in St. Paul, Minnesota, for a year. These caves are still widely used by fugitives from Minneapolis and St. Paul—just as speakeasies used them only a few years ago.

While he laid low, he paid bribes to the St. Paul Police Chief; as long as Bates kept his nose clean, he could hide out in St. Paul without any trouble. But hiding out in the caves drove him a little crazy and, consequently, he's been spoiling for some action and aims to get it on this trip.

With prohibition over, Bates is looking to maximize profits—or, at least, find a good supply of opium in Shanghai. His big plans are all going to hell in a hurry. On December 7th, the crawling one assumes the form of Chad Peterson and soon after casts the Dominate spell on Bates. During the voyage, the crawling one uses Bates as its lackey to serve its needs, be that causing a distraction or doing away with anyone who gets too close to the truth.

- **Description:** chestnut hair, big hands, and a nose that has been broken a few times.
- **Traits:** determined, ambitious, cynical.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Why am I goin' ta Japan? Mind yer own business.*"
  - "*God Almighty, whaddaya take me for, a snitch? Mind yer own business.*"

Notes: the strain of prolonged domination by the crawling one drives Bates into paranoid insanity (and he isn't that sane to begin with). On December 17th, Bates temporarily breaks free of the crawling one's domination and, in his confusion and madness, seeks out Father Alvarez (or one of the heroes, if they are a priest) and asks to give confession. He admits to the theft of the book stolen from Dr. Soong, to the murder of Wang Ma (see **The Stolen Book**, page 220), and to any other shipboard crimes he can think of. He believes he is going crazy and speaks of "voices" that "made him do it," and so his confession may be cause for some alarm. His stories are not consistent and his mental condition deteriorates. After confessing, he flees and is again dominated by the crawling one and later used to cause a distraction (see **Bunny Takes a Hostage**, page 227) when the crawling one wishes to perform a full test of the Pipes of Leng.

By the time the heroes catch up with Bunny, he is either suffering a mental breakdown (so that matters are largely beyond his ability to comprehend) or completely under the control of the crawling one.

Takishi Suroda, *nosey businessman*

It is possible that one of the male heroes will be sharing a cabin with Suroda in Special class. He is onboard until Thursday, December 10th, when he disembarks at Honolulu.

Suroda has been conducting a business deal in San Francisco and is now on his way to Honolulu to for a vacation (he deals in jewelry). His business venture appears to have gone well and he is making the most of his time onboard to relax and enjoy the trip.

- **Description:** muscular yet slight frame, wide smile, and excited eyes.
- **Traits:** likes to know everyone else's business, bit of a gossip.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Hey, what's that you've got there?*"
  - "*Hey, I've been looking for you! Where you been hiding?*"

Notes: Suroda is a pretty much a blank slate for the Keeper to use: he can provide aid and assistance, or hinder the heroes (perhaps by inadvertently getting in their way, providing red herrings, and generally being a nuisance). His details have been left purposefully vague to allow Keepers to shape him as they see fit.



Third Class Passengers

Father Alvarez, *missionary priest*

Father Raphael Alvarez is a Jesuit missionary, originally from Mexico, with a good track record of investigating the paranormal on behalf of Rome. He has been reassigned to Peking to investigate the current status of Christians in the Chinese capital—and secretly to search for information regarding ancient fertility cults of the Mongolian deserts. He knows a little of the Cthulhu Mythos (enough to have nightmares) but prefers to say very little unless directly confronted with proof of Mythos minions and their activities. He tends to ask more questions than provide answers.

Father Alvarez is happy to give confession, lead Sunday Mass, minister to anyone aboard, and generally listen. What he doesn't do is talk about himself or his orders from Rome.

- **Description:** black hair and mustache, rough skin and callused hands from years in the church gardens.
- **Traits:** kind, logical, curious, perceptive, haunted.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*I would investigate the sailors; if the suicide is, in fact, a murder, they might be responsible.*"
  - "*Bless you, my child. Bless us all.*"

Notes: if asked about his recent comings and goings, he is somewhat evasive, only saying that authorities in Rome have assigned him to move from San Francisco to Peking. He has spent the last few weeks teaching himself Chinese from a book (and with some hands-on tutoring from various stewards onboard ship)—his grasp of the language is becoming very good.

After he hears Bunny Bates' confession on December 17th, he approaches the Captain and may come to the attention of the heroes. Father Alvarez provides a potential ally or replacement player character.

Miles Hardaway, pushy reporter

Hardaway is a reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He's onboard to write a story about the voyage and also to cover the business and trade opportunities between the U.S. and China.

- **Description:** greased-back hair, slight stature, with piercing eyes.
- **Traits:** nosey, a gossip, and rather pushy.
- **Sample phrases:**
  - "*Say, tell me about yourself.*"
  - "*Can I get a quote?*"

Notes: Hardaway can either be a nuisance or simply fade into the background. He goes missing over the weekend of December 12th and 13th (sacrificed by the crawling one); see **Missing People**, page 222.

Other Passengers

Following are some possible names for NPC passengers, allowing the Keeper to drop names as required, also to further develop as necessary.

- **First Class:** Xin Yú, Yan Zōu, Sissy McPatrick, Neal Westner, Deliah Conningway, Rupert Cocksure.
- **Special Class:** Ru Lî, Shen Liú, Arthur Sellkirk, Maud Rendox, Jasper Conway, Lottie Unser.
- **Third Class:** Peng Chén, Fu Wang, Lan Wú, Daiyu Táng, Billy Royston, Ethel Rind, Paul Scott.

EVENTS

The following scenes outline the various key events taking place onboard ship. While it is likely these will follow in a logical fashion, Keepers may need to adapt the timing of each dependent on the actions of the heroes.

UP THE GANGWAY

Saturday, December 5th

The scenario begins when the heroes arrive at Pier 42 on December 5th, check their baggage, and are greeted by a Dollar Line steward and some of the *SS President Coolidge*'s officers at the gangplank. Passengers board by class: First Class and Special Class passengers boarding at the front, with helpful stewards and the First Officer Hugo Schramm to welcome them aboard; 3rd Class passengers at a gangway near the middle of the ship with a number of ABS to help them aboard; Steerage Class boarding under their own power at the rear of the vessel.

The heroes should meet (or bump into) Chad Peterson and his fiancée, Virginia Ridley, on the gangway. Peterson is impeccably dressed but drunk, asking the officers on the gangplank to provide champagne to his room. He greets anyone he stumbles into with, "Chad Peterson from New York, delighted to make your acquaintance." The stewards fawn over him but also take him firmly in hand in order to get him to his cabin in First Class on Deck A. Virginia Ridley is annoyed by Peterson's antics but keeps her lips shut. If addressed, she gives a patently forced smile and begs off as soon as she can, saying, "Please excuse me. I must get ready for dinner."

Dr. Soong, in a dark Western-style suit and tie, with a bowler hat and a small doctor's bag, can be seen with his manservant, Wang Ma, accompanying him. Dr. Soong introduces himself though he will not introduce Wang Ma by name. If Wang Ma is spoken to, he grunts unintelligible replies—Dr. Soong explains the man is, "A little reserved."

Anyone traveling Steerage Class meets the dockworkers, and one of Dr. Soong's laborer (tcho-tcho) servants, Lo

Mai, who is overseeing the stowage of fifty barrels of herbs, medical specimens, and other botanicals (labeled "Hawaiian Botanical Specimens"). Other items being loaded include three new 1931 Packard sedans, a 1930 Hudson touring car, a Bugatti racer, a small herd of twenty dairy cows, a dozen barrels of French cognac, a truckload of mail bags, a dozen Oliver tractors, and a massive crate containing a complete 50-pipe organ from the "Wm. Wood Pipe Organ Co., Inc. of Portland, Oregon." In addition, a 6-foot tall green metal box arrives with an armed guard. Passenger baggage includes hundreds of trunks, sea chests, suitcases, and a parrot, not to mention gun cases and musical instruments. Anyone in the area who makes a successful **Spot Hidden** roll also notices a large crate marked "Funeral Supplies." This contains the body of a tcho-tcho who died in San Francisco and who is being repatriated to Burma at Dr. Soong's expense.

The ship sails just after 11:00 a.m., passing the island of Alcatraz on its way out to the Pacific.

CABIN MATES

Saturday, December 5th

Give the heroes a little time to settle into their staterooms, berths, or shared quarters. In some cases, the heroes may have cabin mates.

Anyone booked in Steerage is in the same dormitory as a family of seven Hawaiian missionaries (the Castors), four young Irish men (hired as policemen on a contract with the Shanghai Municipal police), thirteen Americans (four men, nine women, all hoping to strike it rich in China), three Japanese brewers returning to Tokyo, a group of Filipino jazz musicians (who hoped to make it big in San Francisco—and didn't), three nannies traveling steerage while their employers travel First Class, six of Dr. Soong's tcho-tcho laborers (led by a spokesman named Lo Mai), and ten Chinese rail workers and shopkeepers returning to China.

Those traveling Third Class are in the same 4-bunk, 8-bed shared cabin with two Chinese brothers named Po Liang and Po Hau (dealers of Pai Gow—a gambling game involving Chinese dominos—hired on for Casino Night), and US Navy crewman Olaf Gustavsen from the minesweeper Abilene (currently returning from extended family leave to his station at Pearl Harbor). The other berths are available for the heroes. Note that statistics are not provided for Liang Po, Hau Po, and Olaf Gustavsen.

On the upper decks, anyone in Special Class is likely to be sharing a cabin with Takishi Suroda (page 216) for male characters, or Phyllis Barnes (page 215) for female characters. The upper bunks don't need to be folded down.

Those in First Class on Deck A may have the Spanish nobleman, Señor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan (page 208), for a neighbor (just one cabin down), or be situated near to Virginia Ridley (page 214) or Chad Peterson (page 208). If housed on the Boat Deck, Dr. Soong (page 215) and his manservant, Wang Ma, may be neighbors. The heroes may also meet Virginia Ridley (page 214) or Chad Peterson (page 208) in an elevator on their way to dinner, or catch the young couple holding hands at the bow on the Promenade deck.

Once the heroes have unpacked, explored the Promenade deck, the ship's music room, or bar, dined in the various dining salons for the separate classes, they can settle into their cabins for the night. Nothing unusual happens the first night aboard for the heroes; however, the same cannot be said for poor Chad Peterson, who is devoured in his cabin by the crawling one.

THE EMPTY SUIT

Sunday, December 6th

Ask any early birds who go exploring to make a **Listen** roll; success indicates they hear a disturbance on an upper deck where the First Class cabins are located.

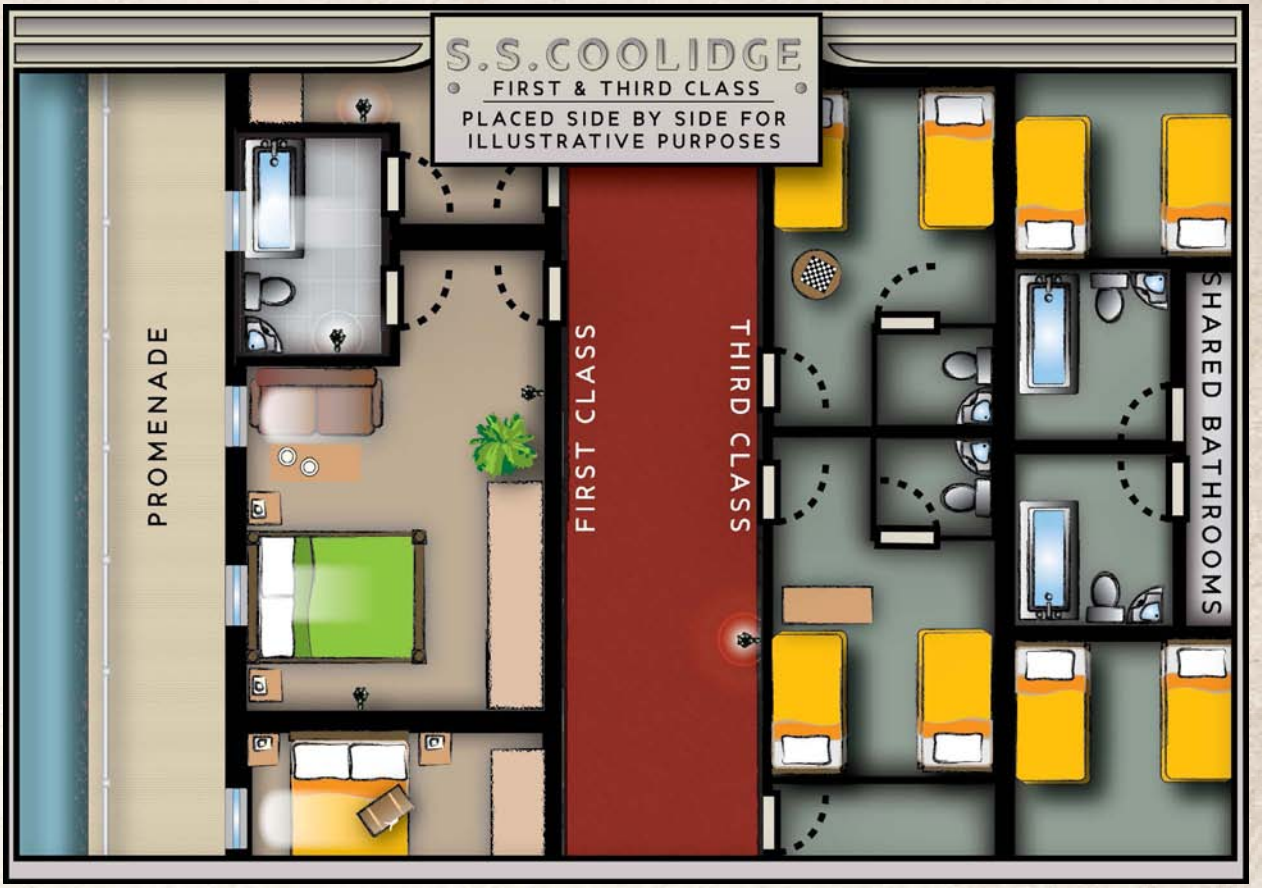
The disturbance starts just after 9:45 a.m. with a scream in the First Class hallway on Deck A, towards the stern (near to the barber shop and tailors). After changing for a late breakfast, Virginia Ridley goes to Peterson's room and finds the door unlocked, an empty suit of clothes, plus a strange, bad smell. The clothes are slumped in a chair, socks and shoes on the floor in front of a suit, vest, shirt, and undershirt—all placed within one another like a Russian doll—as if the body within had simply melted away.

First Class and possibly Special Class heroes may meet in the small crowd of spectators in the hallway (if not already acquainted). They have no official access to the cabin, but they can try to bribe or talk their way in, or could choose to break in later, if so inclined.

Those in the hallway during this scene include the following characters—although, only Albert Hallander and Virginia Ridley must be present at the moment of discovery.

- Albert Hallander, sailor, who broke into the cabin to rob it, only to find a mass of cockroaches (this occurred a few minutes before Virginia Ridley appeared, so he is nearby).
- Virginia Ridley, Peterson's distraught fiancée.
- Charles Astor, a truly obnoxious Captain of industry, who just happens to be in the corridor at the time.

Albert Hallander: as a member of the crew, he really had no business visiting Chad Peterson's cabin, but if pressed, claims to have heard a noise and then entered by an unlocked door—he's lying. He heard no noise and the door was locked. He picked the lock and aimed to rob the place. When he entered the cabin, thousands of cockroaches skittered away from the chair and he let out a yell of fear. He's still shaken; a successful **Psychology** roll notices he's somewhat shocked,



S.S. Coolidge First and Third Class Lodging Map by Stephanie McAlea

while a successful **Intimidate** or **Persuade** roll encourages Hallander to talk. A second successful **Psychology** roll detects Hallander's lies. It's unlikely he will come clean at this point, preferring to confuse matters so that he may disappear and avoid the truth of his attempted theft coming to light, but, a concerted effort by the heroes may cause him to confess and consequently be apprehended by the ship's officers.

Rumors quickly begin to circulate that Peterson was a "jumper." Seaman Hank Henson keeps the cabin door firmly shut until the ship's doctor, Erik Hartman, and First Officer Hugo Schramm have had a chance to examine the scene.

Searching the Cabin

The ship's crew wants to keep things quiet to avoid alarming the passengers; they investigate the situation but keep the results to themselves. If the heroes manage to bribe or bluff their way in, they can search the cabin. If any of the heroes are First Class passengers, or if Virginia Ridley makes a fuss, Seaman Henson relents and lets them in. Likewise, the cabin can be broken into later, once Seaman Henson is directed back to his usual duties, with a successful **Locksmith** or **Mechanical Repair** roll.

Inside the cabin, Peterson's clothes can be seen lying in the chair. Nothing else looks out of place. A suicide note can be found on the desk until that evening, when the ship's Steward, Martin Aimesworthy, takes it as evidence—see **Slow Boat Handout 1**.

The note is totally at odds with Peterson's happy-going public face, his rough and tumble life, and his known signature (he always signed himself as "Charles Chadwick Peterson," "Charles Peterson," or "C. C. P.," but never simply as "Chad.") The handwriting matches reasonably well—requiring an **Art/Craft (Calligraphy or similar)** roll or a Hard **Spot Hidden** roll to note any differences when compared to a known sample of his writing—perhaps obtained from Virginia Ridley, or if Charles Astor is shown the note.

The "hollow millionaire" term refers to those wealthy scions who lost almost everything in the Crash of 1929—but in the case of Peterson, it's not true, as his family managed to escape the worst of the economic fallout.

ANYONE SEEN THE PURSER?

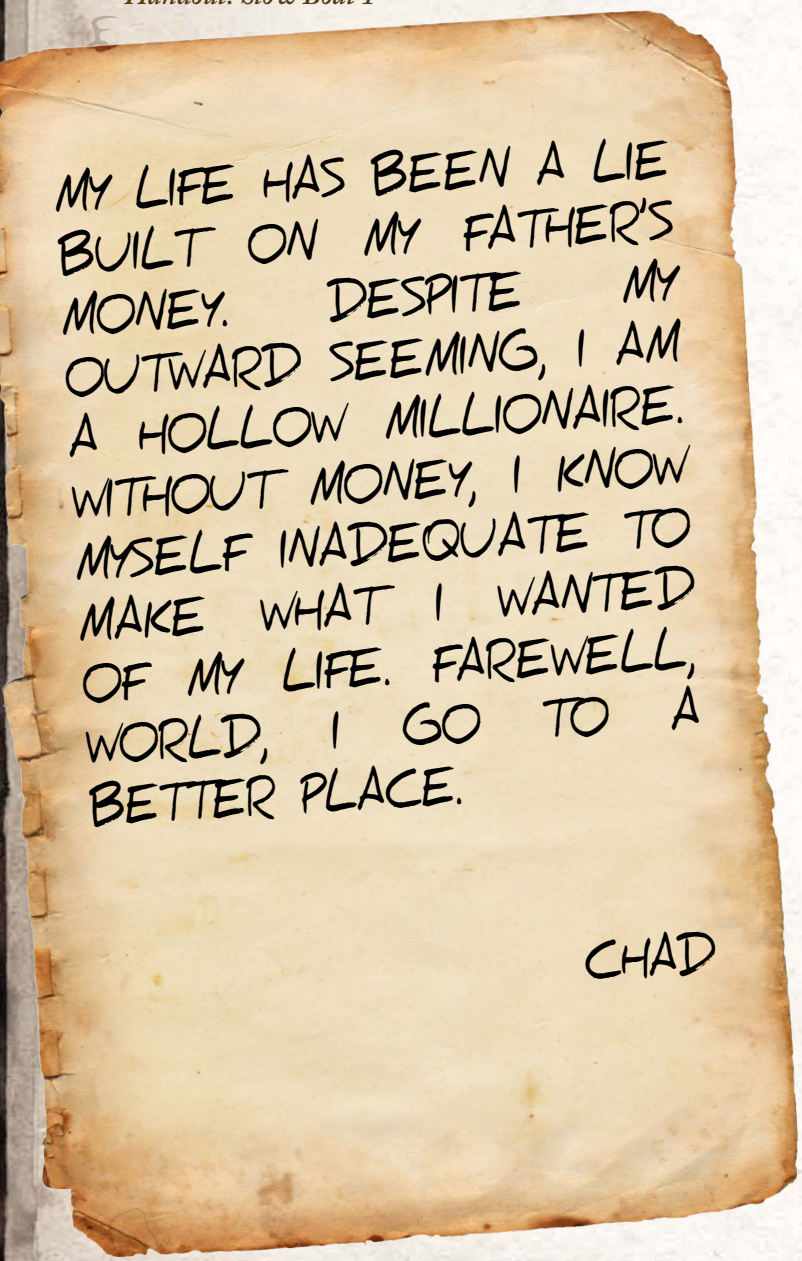
Sunday, December 6th

While in the corridor, inside Peterson's cabin, or sometime later that day, the heroes may overhear a conversation between some of the ship's crew—requiring a successful **Listen** roll. The crewmembers can be heard talking about the ship's Chief Purser, Martin Dungass, who apparently has not been seen

since last evening when he was "doing his rounds." Throughout the day, the same conversation can be heard around the ship, leading to the general opinion that Dungass, like Peterson, has gone missing.

In fact, when Dungass went to investigate the unlisted passenger, Señor Guiterrez de Almacan, he was killed and consumed by the crawling one. Note that heroes checking the ship's manifest (requiring a Hard **Persuade** roll) find Señor Guiterrez de Almacan is not listed anywhere among the paying passengers, First Class, or otherwise.

Handout: Slow Boat 1



Passenger Reactions

Miles Hardaway from the *San Francisco Chronicle* makes much of the case, emphasizing the "locked room" nature of it, and playing it as a "real-life Sherlock Holmes mystery!" Hardaway sends a fair bit of speculation to the newspaper's offices over the shipboard wireless. The shipboard newspaper, the *Pacific Current*, makes no mention of the disappearances of Chad Peterson or the Chief Purser.

A few of the women in First Class cabins seem to take the news badly, taking Virginia Ridley under their wing in a mood of barely suppressed panic. Charles Astor stomps around the ship, demanding, "Something must be done." Most others take the news better. During the next 24 hours, a number of telegrams arrive from New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles expressing condolences and regrets. Father Alvarez announces he is arranging a memorial service for Chad Peterson in the ship's chapel on Monday, December 7th.

First Officer Hugo Schramm is mystified but is under orders to keep the disappearances secret. Those heroes able to befriend a crewman may discover that the general consensus is that Chief Purser Dungass must have hit the bottle and gone and hid below decks (rumors abound about him having difficulties with his wife). It is assumed he will turn up sooner or later, and that the Captain will have words to say to him when he does finally show his face.

THE STOLEN BOOK

Monday, December 7th

During the morning, the crawling one, while in the form of Señor Guiterrez de Almacan, overhears a conversation between Dr. Soong and Wang Ma that suggests the doctor owns a copy of the *Tome of Red Jade* (taken by the doctor from a gang of San Francisco cultists, which the crawling one believe is in fact the very copy of the tome it once owned). The crawling one is determined to recover its book. To do so, sometime after midnight, it reassumes the form of Chad Peterson, steals a crewman's clothes, and takes the book from Dr. Soong's cabin (while the doctor is out walking the deck), killing Wang Ma in the process.

If the heroes are in First Class (especially if housed on the Boat Deck), they may be nearby when the theft takes place. They could hear the doctor's cry for help with a successful **Listen** roll, as well as the sound of someone running (actually, the crawling one as Chad Peterson in a steward's uniform bursting through the doorway and running to the side of the ship, between the lifeboats).

If the heroes attempt to intervene, they have their work cut out for them. It's nighttime and there is little light and plenty of dark corners, shadows, and so forth to hide in. The crawling one runs for the ship's exterior, carrying the tome, leaps over a railing from the Boat Deck to the

Promenade Deck below, and keeps running without missing a beat—those who follow should make a **Jump** roll or suffer 1D6+3 damage from the fall onto a hard, wooden deck below.

Anyone directly in the crawling one's path may suffer a **Mindblast** spell. The spell requires an opposed **POW** roll (crawling one's POW 100): if the crawling one wins, the spell's target sees the crawling one for a moment as a hollow, eyeless creature, with dark energies frothing within. The victim loses 5 Sanity points and suffers an immediate bout of madness. If the hero succeeds in winning the opposed roll, there is no effect. The crawling one should make good on its escape no matter the outcome of the spell; even if about to be cornered, it leaps into a dark recess and instantly falls into a mass of insects, which scatter and disappear (although the book may be left behind). See **An Optional Difficulty** (nearby) for additional complications.

Looking for Bunny Bates

The heroes may well have spotted Bunny Bates during **The Stolen Book** (page 220) or during the course of their shipboard exploits and decide to search for him. Whether the heroes find Bates is determined by the Keeper and how resourceful they are in seeking him.

Bates lies low most of the time in either the crawling one's cabin or in the cargo holds. If the heroes do manage to catch up with him, he fights desperately to avoid capture and attempts to escape at the first opportunity. If captured, he babbles about "the voice within," and how "the choir of angels has commanded me." There is little the heroes can get out of him while the crawling one's Dominate spell is in effect. Note that the crawling one needs to recast the Dominate spell each night to remain in control of Bates (requiring an opposed POW roll). If the heroes can somehow bolster Bates' willpower (a Hard **Persuade** roll, or a Hard **Psychoanalysis** roll, for example) then allow Bates a bonus die to oppose the crawling one.

On December 17th, Bates briefly defies the crawling one's dominion, seeking out Father Alvarez (or one of the heroes) to confess his crimes. Within an hour of the confession, Bates' mind snaps and he descends into complete madness. Soon thereafter, the crawling one is able to regain permanent dominance over Bates (who is no longer able to resist the Dominate spell).

AN OPTIONAL DIFFICULTY

Keepers can have the dominated Bunny Bates (in a stolen crew uniform) cover the crawling one's escape from a suitable vantage point. Bates has a .32 revolver, but could use his Tommy gun if the Keeper wishes to really put the pressure on the heroes. Ensconced in darkness, Bates may be hard to see in the midst of the action.

If Bates is captured alive at this point he absolutely refuses to talk. If Bates is killed or otherwise imprisoned in the brig, the crawling one finds another person to dominate, such as the Steward, Martin Aimesworthy (the Keeper will need to replace Bates with Aimesworthy in the following scenes).

If Bates can hold the heroes off, the crawling one takes the book back to the cabin of Señor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan.

Option: as Bates plays a key role in some of the following scenes, Keepers wishing for a simpler version of events, could have the crawling one cast the Dominate spell on another NPC, directing them to attack and/or hinder the heroes, thereby ensuring that the heroes do not have the chance to capture or kill Bates too early in the scenario.

HONOLULU AND BEYOND

Thursday, December 10th

The *SS President Coolidge* arrives in Honolulu early on December 10th, but the passengers are not allowed to disembark and no ship tenders are brought alongside. Instead, the ship is kept under quarantine while a team of policemen comes aboard to investigate the apparent suicide of Chad Peterson and the disappearance of the Chief Purser (as well as the murder of Wang Ma, if that has been reported to the crew). In addition, Takishi Suroda disappears; if any of the heroes were sharing a cabin with Suroda they find his bed has not been slept in and recall that the last time they saw him was yesterday, around dinner time (see **Missing People**, following).

Several passengers and crew are interviewed by the police: in particular Dr. Soong, Martin Aimesworthy, and Virginia Ridley. The police also conduct a search through Steerage Class (looking for Wang Ma's killer). If Suroda's disappearance is mentioned, the police take statements and search his cabin, but find nothing untoward. After about two hours, they leave the ship.

The Honolulu police conclude, after a hasty investigation, that the suicide note is genuine and that Peterson probably jumped from his suite's small balcony into the Pacific. The empty clothes are a coincidence—the detective, William Ranta, prefers to leave such details aside in a bid to close the case quickly. Ranta declares that Peterson drank too much and was obviously suffering from "dark thoughts." Heroes trying to explain that they have seen Peterson since his "death" are quickly dismissed. Likewise, Chief Purser Martin Dungass' disappearance is presented as a case of accidental death, Ranta saying that he

became drunk and was somehow swept overboard. The detective also concludes that Wang Ma's killer must have jumped ship on arrival at Honolulu. The police will look into the matter and wire the Captain if any information arises.

If the police are aware of Suroda's disappearance, Ranta believes he has jumped ship and may have some connection to the murder of Wang Ma. Ranta assures all concerned that he will track down Suroda.

MISSING PEOPLE

The crawling one must energize the Pipes of Leng by sacrificing five people, allowing their blood to run into the pipe organ. It is not important who the sacrifices are. During the voyage, it uses Bunny Bates to capture suitable sacrifices, taking the unfortunate individuals to Cargo Hold 7 where they are killed and their blood collected and poured into the pipes. There are no witnesses to any of the killings (although if the heroes are floundering, the Keeper could have a bleary-eyed passenger report having seen something strange). Those sacrificed include the following characters; the Keeper should adjust the dates as needed.

Takishi Suroda (December 10th): Bates finds Suroda wandering after dinner and quickly overpowers him, and then takes him to Cargo Hold 7 where the crawling one is waiting. After being drained, Suroda's body is tossed out of a porthole.

Miles Hardaway (December 12th): the nosy reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle* is lured to the cabin of Señor Almacan. Once inside, Bates strikes Hardaway from behind, rendering him unconscious. Hardaway's body is thrown out of a porthole after being drained.

Phyllis Barnes and Crew Member (December 13th): the music teacher hears the crawling one testing the aetheric pipes, whose sound echoes through the ventilation shafts. On going to investigate, she finds her way into the hatches to the cargo holds, only to come across Bunny Bates knocking one of the crewmembers unconscious (the sailor was on his rounds, checking that the hatches to the cargo areas were secure). Bates also clobbers the poor music teacher and takes her and the crewman down to the crawling one to be drained. A little later, Bates throws the crewman off of the ship but is prevented in doing the same with Barnes as other crewmembers are wandering the decks. The crawling one orders Bates to dump her body in one of the ballast water tanks; it will likely be discovered within a week (when the smell of decay becomes obvious).

December 15th or 16th: the crawling one requires one further sacrifice to fully energize the Pipes of Leng. Who the last sacrifice is, is left to the Keeper to determine. It could be a nameless passenger or crewmember, or (more advisably) someone who the heroes have come to know—possibly Dr. Soong, Virginia Ridley, or Father Alvarez. If suitable, one of the heroes could be targeted.

There are numerous ways for the heroes find out about the various disappearances:

- The heroes could go looking for one of the victims, only to discover no one has seen the passenger for a while and that their cabin is empty.
- A crying child could be heard to say that her music lesson with Ms. Barnes has been canceled and that the music teacher is nowhere to be seen.
- Another passenger could ask the heroes if they have recently seen one of the missing people.

As the days, pass the disappearances continue. If the situation is brought to the attention of the senior crew, they conduct an investigation, but initially conclude that the person in question is simply elsewhere on the ship and that they'll no doubt turn up at dinnertime. It's down to the heroes to investigate.

Dr. Soong Requests Help

If the Keeper needs to further motivate the heroes, and if Dr. Soong has not yet approached them to aid him finding and returning his stolen book, he can approach them soon after the ship departs Honolulu. Most likely, he requests their company in one of the smoking rooms or the First Class Library.

Dr. Soong is worried that something evil is afoot, something beyond a simple suicide or murder, and wants the heroes' help to uncover the mystery. He believes the missing people, deaths, and his stolen book are somehow all connected. He may also

TROUBLESOME HEROES

If the heroes are making life difficult for the crawling one, or if the Keeper simply wishes to keep the action moving, Bunny Bates can be used to spring a surprise attack—especially if the heroes are getting close to the cabin of Señor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan, or if they are nosing around the entrances to the cargo holds. Bates might suddenly appear at a hero's cabin or jump out while they are in the ship's hold.

Keepers wishing to give the heroes a seriously hard time could instead have the crawling one summon a hunting horror to seek out and kill the heroes. Such an event most likely draws a great deal of attention, so the crawling one will try to time such an attack to minimize witnesses.

THE BOOK OF RED JADE

A debauched work of Mythos knowledge, the *Book of Red Jade* provokes shudders among all good Confucians and students of the Classics. It blasphemes not just the work of Lao Tzu, but Taoism, the Emperor, and the entire divine status of the Manchu dynasty.

Description: long and narrow, comprising a bound set of 344 woodblock-printed pages, written in courtly Mandarin Chinese. The total size is small, just 6 inches wide and 12 inches tall. The ink used is a bright, ox-blood red, with marginal notes and woodcut illustrations in black ink. The volumes have blue silk endpapers that display a disquieting shimmer under light, and three bound-in, intricately knotted red silk bookmarks about 3/8 of an inch wide. The cover is calfskin over thin but extremely hard wooden boards; the leather itself has been coated with a slightly gritty, waterproof varnish (said to resemble tarnished copper or dark green soapstone). A brass, three-clawed dragon, with a single eye decorates each cover, affixed beneath the varnish.

Only thirty-three copies are believed to have been produced; the Chinese authorities likely destroyed most of these in the 1830s. Several copies are believed to have gone to the Philippines and the United States with immigrant Chinese cultists, and one copy is believed to have been acquired by the British Museum.

History: the work was written either in prison or under duress during the Manchu dynasty and its authorship is widely attributed to Zhou Lo Wei, the Warlord of One Hundred Masteries. Zhou is a rather shadowy figure who first appears in Chinese records as an alchemist from the Mongolian provinces in the 1830s. He is better known after his arrival in Peking in 1847 when he became an opium addict and a scholar of the Classics. At this time, he attracted a small sect of sycophants and reformers, who referred to themselves as the "Sevenfold Hidden Path Clan." Known as anti-religious zealots, extortionists, and educated criminals, the group terrified the capital for several years. It's entirely possible, even likely, that Zhou and the crawling one are one and the same.

Zhou somehow attained a position at the Imperial Court in 1850, grossly abusing his position and authority until 1861. He was seized, imprisoned, and tried for trespass against the Imperial city, witchcraft, and crimes against public order. Most of his followers scattered south to Nanking, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other large cities. It is thought that before his trial, Zhou smuggled the contents of the *Book of Red Jade* to his estranged wife and she arranged the printing after his death. He was beheaded in Peking in 1862. Accounts of his burial are confused—it may be that another body was substituted or that he dissolved into insects at the execution ground.

Mythos Knowledge: *The Book of Red Jade* describes the process of ghoul transformation, summoning and binding a flying polyp, the history of the Mongols and Manchus with respect to the star vampires and the mi-go, and a dream sequence that seems to make direct reference to Azathoth and Nyarlathotep. It also paraphrases material found in the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*.

The Book of Red Jade: Mandarin Chinese; Sanity loss 1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +4/+8; Mythos Rating 36; 11 weeks for full study. An initial (skim) reading takes 6 hours. Suggested spells: Cause/Cure Blindness, Consume Likeness, Dominate, Flesh Ward, Powder Of Ibn-Ghazi, Summon/Bind Flying Polyp, Words Of Power.

Note: heroes lacking Mandarin Chinese as a language skill might, if recovering the book for Dr. Soong, persuade the good doctor to translate sections or teach them a spell as a reward.

mention the strange music (see **Distant Music**, following) being heard about the ship at night.

Soong wishes to know whether the heroes will help him. While he is too old and frail to go searching, he offers to send his servants (the tcho-tcho) to search Steerage, while the heroes search the engine room and the ship's holds.

DISTANT MUSIC

December 13th onwards

Rumors begin to circulate amongst the passengers of strange music being heard in the dead of night. Most can't seem to agree on what the music actually sounds like: some refer to it as "a haunting opera," others say it sounds like "a dirge from hell." No one can pinpoint where the noise is coming from. If

approached, some of the crewmembers may also acknowledge that they too have heard it and have been unable to place the sound. One crewman might say it's the siren's song of myth, drawing sailors to their doom.

If any of the heroes are out wandering the ship late at night call for a **Listen** roll; with success, a distant, muffled music can be heard. It's reminiscent of church music, haunting, and downright melancholy. Checking out the music room reveals it to be empty. With a Hard **Listen** roll, it appears the sound is coming from the lower decks.

The crawling one is testing the aetheric energy machine down in Cargo Hold 7. With each new sacrifice, the sound grows a little louder and clearer. The Keeper is advised to initially drop hints or subtle references about the music through the various passengers ("I had a strange dream, filled with unearthly music"), building the accounts as each day passes until the heroes hear it for themselves.

MEETING THE CAPTAIN

While some of the heroes work quietly without drawing undue attention to themselves, others may conduct themselves more cinematically. Anyone who makes a nuisance of themself by bothering other passengers or crew will, at some point, be confronted by Captain Henry Nelson. After all, the heroes have most probably been seen hanging around most of the "crime" scenes. The Captain questions the heroes individually or in small groups as appropriate. Interviews should be quick and direct.

The Captain has no particular reason to trust the heroes, but he also has a darkening situation onboard the ship, what with the disappearances, thefts, and deaths. Anyone already under suspicion (such as anyone brandishing weapons, getting into fights, lurking in places they shouldn't be) may also find that their cabin has been searched while they were being questioned. Heroes who outright attack others for no good cause may also be confined to their cabins unless they can give good accounts of themselves.

If the heroes are able to convince the Captain of their good intentions (possibly requiring a **Charm** or **Persuade** roll at Hard difficulty), they may gain the Captain's trust. Particularly insightful and honorable heroes could end up being deputized by the Captain to help solve the mystery before they dock at Shanghai.

SEARCHING THE SHIP

At some point during the voyage, the heroes may desire to search the ship's hold, perhaps in an attempt to seek out the stolen book, the strange music, or the missing people. Several clues may lead the heroes down below the Third Class deck into the realm of the engine compartment (24 diesel boilers, located directly amidships), or the cargo holds (located in the lowest decks, with access from a passageway along the keel of the ship, and from four sealed cargo hatches on the Third Class deck).

The heroes may investigate the bilges, cargo, and boilers, but doing so without the approval of Captain Nelson or his crew may get them into serious trouble—passengers are not allowed to wander about in the cargo holds without good reason and are clearly forbidden from entering the engine rooms unescorted. Without the Captain's permission, the heroes have to use **Stealth**, bribery (**Charm**, **Psychology**, or **Persuade**), or **Fast Talk** to get past the crewmen on duty (Second Mate Gustav Knutsen during the day, Junior Engineer Barry O'Rourke at night).

The doors of the holds are all locked with watertight hatches, meant to prevent flooding in the case of emergency, and all but impossible to force open (Extreme **STR** roll)—using a crowbar makes things a little easier (Hard **STR** roll). Picking the locks requires a **Locksmith** roll.

Don't forget that the hold and bilges are great places for the heroes to be ambushed, either by Bunny Bates (or another Dominated person), a monster summoned by the crawling one, or by magic.

While inside the holds, call for a **Spot Hidden** roll: with a success, a strange rat pelt is found, entirely intact and pliable. The flesh and organs are all missing from the skin, which appears perfectly tanned and soft to the touch. There are no holes or wounds in the skin, other than natural ones (like eyes and mouth). Small bones rattle within. Those with **Science (Biology or Zoology)**, or **Art/Craft (Leatherwork or similar)** know that it is impossible to skin an animal this way. Furthermore, if the animal had just rotted, the leather would be either stiff or rotten as well. It looks as if it was somehow eaten from the inside out.

The skin is, of course, the result of the crawling one's feeding; the creature's insect form leaves behind only inedible skin, hair, and fragments of bone. Progressively larger animals could be found mysteriously skinned and tanned. A pet dog, then perhaps the skin of a stowaway could be next. Lay these clues to draw the heroes forward and call for **Sanity** rolls as appropriate.

Bilges

The bilges contain ballast water, huge fuel tanks full of diesel oil, and little else. Rats and other shipboard vermin are the extent of the creepiness available; however, if the crawling one is forced to take refuge in his vermin form, he'll hide out here.

Boilers

The engine room and boilers are an inferno, worked by a crew of 45 men in 24-hour shifts of 15 each. They regulate the engines, repair the turbines and boilers, and manually open and close the complex piping that feeds diesel oil to the boilers and electricity to the turbo-electric engines.

Heroes entering the engine room will be confronted unless successful **Stealth** rolls have been made, or if they have somehow convinced a crewmember to give them a tour. The engine crew attempts to remove anyone who is not supposed to be there, notifying the senior crew, and holding interlopers until the Captain can attend to them. Only an Extreme **Fast Talk** or **Persuade** roll convinces the engineers that the heroes have the Captain's permission to be wandering alone down below.

Cargo Hold 1

This hold is near the bow of the ship and it is always unlocked. The bow hold is the meeting place of the tcho-tcho for their private gatherings, away from the noise of Steerage (see **The Tcho-Tcho**, page 226). Anyone searching here may find two items of interest, requiring a successful **Spot Hidden** roll:

- The remains of a small fire made from broken crates. The fire is, at least, 24 hours old. The ashes are cold and seem to contain some charred bits of bone (the remnants of an impromptu tcho-tcho meal).
- The spent ashes of an opium pipe (**Know** or **Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy)** roll to identify).

Heroes who search here at night may encounter the tcho-tcho, who don't take kindly to this intrusion unless the heroes can demonstrate they are working with Dr. Soong.

Cargo Hold 2

This hold is for passenger luggage and is locked. It contains well over 2,700 articles, including steamer trunks, lockers, safes, heavy satchels, and boxes wrapped in brown paper and twine, as well as hat cases, carefully-crated urns and glassware, two dozen cases of French wine, and even a set of musical instruments—enough for a small symphony orchestra. Passenger weapons and guns are also stored in this hold.

Cargo Hold 3

This is the refrigerated hold and is locked by a handle that can easily be turned and opened. Inside are perishables, such as meat, fruit, milk, and other foodstuffs, as well as items requiring preservation, such as flowers, scientific samples, and medical supplies. The cooks often visit here to resupply their pantries.

Cargo Hold 4

The hold is unlocked and filled with more than 2,000 wooden crates, footlockers, and shipping trunks. A number of ballast tanks can also be found within. If the tanks are opened, the heroes may find the decomposing remains of Phyllis Barnes (see **Missing People**, page 222). Opening the upper hatch of the tank releases a cloud of incredibly vile gas; the opener must make a **CON** roll or vomit from the reek. Discovery of the body calls for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D2 loss).

Cargo Hold 5

This is the kennels and livestock section and is always kept heated, staffed, and unlocked. The entire hold smells of animals. The livestock includes 20 seasick cattle, five thoroughbred horses (and Arthur Pendury, their groom, who visits them three times a day, and sometimes sleeps here rather than in Steerage), as well as more than 30 dogs, and 14 cats. All of them are watched over by James Hawthorne (aged 17) the kennel boy.

If Hawthorne is observed or spoken to, it's clear something is wrong. He is skittish and his eyes constantly look around him to the floor, as if searching for something. He mumbles and it's hard to understand what he is saying. A **Psychology** roll suggests he is very scared and quite possibly insane. If he sees a spider or cockroach, he shrieks and runs into his little den. Time spent calming Hawthorne or a **Psychoanalysis** roll allows the heroes to understand what he is saying, which is something about the "creepy crawlies." Hawthorne relates that he's seen creepy crawlies coming and going, marching like an army. He can hear them scurrying about the ship and he's certain they are coming to eat him.

The unfortunate kennel boy saw the crawling one dissolve into a crawling mass of wriggling horrors in the hold and the sight has driven him indefinitely insane. Note that, if the heroes do not venture into the holds until later in the journey, it is highly likely that Hawthorne will no longer be there—having been taken by Bates or the crawling one and sacrificed to the Pipes of Leng.

Cargo Hold 6

Three brand-new Packard sedans, a Hudson touring car, a Bugatti racer, and a dozen Oliver tractors are strapped down to the deck inside this unlocked hold. Large containers hold what appear to be hundreds if not thousands of mailbags. Nearby can be found a dozen barrels of French cognac and fifty barrels labeled as Hawaiian Botanical Specimens (it is left to the Keeper to decide if that is true or whether the Hawaiian barrels actually contain something illegal, stowed by the tcho-tcho, such as drugs or worse—see **The Tcho-Tcho**, page 226).

A large crate marked "Funeral Supplies" contains the body of a tcho-tcho who died in San Francisco and who is being repatriated to his homeland at Dr. Soong's expense.

Cargo Hold 7

This hold contains a number of valuables and is double locked with a padlock (**Locksmith** roll) and a deadbolt lock in the hatchway (Hard **Locksmith** roll). The valuables include twenty-two oil paintings (all in crates), four bronze and four marble statues (also crated), an enormous shipment of redwood planks and timbers, and sixteen large glass carboys of hazardous chemicals (such as ether and hydrochloric acid). Here, also, is the green metal box possibly seen being loaded onto the ship at the docks in San Francisco (see **Up the**

Gangway, page 217), as well as a huge wooden crate bearing a label stating it contains a 50-pipe organ from the "Wm. Wood Pipe Organ Co., Inc. of Portland, Oregon." In addition, there is a locker containing the ship's supply of small arms and rifles.

The 6-foot tall green metal box is locked (requiring a Hard **Locksmith** roll or a Hard **STR** roll to force it open). Inside are engineering diagrams (for the aetheric energy device), plus notes on assembly, materials, costs, and construction plans. Despite the numerous strange and occult-looking symbols hand-written onto the plans, understanding that they are blueprints is reasonably straightforward (a **Mechanical Repair** or **Science (Engineering)** roll), but understanding that the device is meant to summon eldritch horrors from beyond the stars through mechanical means in order to capture their essences is somewhat more difficult, requiring a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll and at least two hours of examination.

If the heroes have not brought a light source with them, call for a Hard **Spot Hidden** roll should the huge wooden crate containing the pipe organ from Portland be examined (if they have a light, then reduce the difficulty of the roll to Regular): success indicates that blood stains can be seen on the wooden panel at the left-hand side of the crate (a slight spillage of blood from the sacrifices used to power the device). Further examination detects that the side panel has been recently opened, as the screws holding it in place look to have been repeatedly unscrewed numerous times. Opening or smashing the crate open is relatively easy, revealing the Pipes of Leng. While ostensibly the device looks like a church pipe organ, it has numerous additional wires, fuse-valves, tubes, and weird-looking nodules covering it. Blood (dried or fresh, depending on the heroes' timing) also covers much of the device. Standing close to the aetheric energy device, one can detect an ominous, whispery humming sound.

The crawling one does not take kindly to its prized artifact being discovered or manhandled, and it does all in its power to remove the threat to its plans. A single hero might be subject to one of the crawling one's spells (such as Mindblast, Dominate, or Mental Suggestion). A group of heroes might cause the crawling one to summon a hunting horror to dispose of them.

Try to have the crawling one distract the heroes away from the device so as to avoid a confrontation too early; however, if you are nearing a suitable conclusion point, then dive into a grand confrontation and climax! While the crawling one prepares and casts spells, it uses Bunny Bates (or someone closer at hand, like one of the heroes, Dominated to its will) to draw attention away and inflict harm. If things go badly for the crawling one, it will discorporate, aiming to return to the machine later to conduct its full test of the device. If the heroes manage to destroy the Pipes of Leng (see **The Final Test**, on the following page), the crawling one sets its sights firmly on revenge.

THE TCHO-TCHO

The role of the tcho-tcho in this scenario (and their debt to Dr. Soong) is to serve as a red herring meant to lead suspicious heroes to the wrong conclusion. They are presented as mostly neutral to the events onboard ship and they could potentially (via Dr. Soong) aid the heroes. However, if the Keeper wishes the tcho-tcho to play a more menacing role, they could change allegiance from Dr. Soong to the crawling one during the voyage, providing their new master a small team of henchmen ready to do his will—which could include anything from staging misdirection, theft, or murder. Following are some possibilities, should the Keeper wish to play the tcho-tcho as downright nasty and evil.

The tcho-tcho are said to be cannibals and the fifty barrels in Cargo Hold 6 (labeled as Hawaiian Botanical Specimens) could, in fact, contain human corpses, providing unsavory delicacies for the tcho-tcho. If the heroes stake out Cargo Hold 6 or follow the tcho-tcho there, allowing them to observe one of the tcho-tcho secret meetings, they see the group opening one of the barrels and cooking and eating its ghastly contents; provoking a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).

The heroes might also witness the figure of Chad Peterson (the crawling one in disguise) meeting with the tcho-tcho in Cargo Hold 6. If they watch and wait, the heroes may hear Peterson offering some form of deal for the tcho-tcho to come and work for him ("protection, and all the meat you can eat"). The conversation can go either way, dependent on the Keeper:

- If the tcho-tcho side with the crawling one and the heroes then intervene, Peterson runs at the first sign of trouble (perhaps its newfound allies attack the heroes, providing the crawling one cover to escape). If cornered, Peterson disintegrates into a thousand insects and the crawling one makes good an escape (a wave of cockroaches and other creepy crawlies swarm over and around the heroes, causing 1D4 damage). Witnessing the crawling one's change calls for a **Sanity** roll (1D3/2D6 loss).
- If the tcho-tcho refuse Peterson's offer, the crawling one immediately summons a hunting horror to attack and kill the tcho-tcho. If the heroes don't intervene then the tcho-tcho are all killed. If the heroes do manage to repel or kill the monster, then the tcho-tcho are grateful—if there is but a single survivor, he bows and declares, "Sheng Tsin, your servant now and always." Sheng Tsin believes he owes a life debt to the heroes and accompanies them, serving as their general assistant, cook, translator, and most devoted assistant. How this might play out is left to the Keeper and the players to decide. Sheng Tsin could eventually become a replacement character

BUNNY TAKES A HOSTAGE

December 19th

While Bunny Bates causes a distraction, the crawling one conducts a full test of the aetheric energy device (see **The Final Test**, following). Bates arrives in the First Class dining hall and takes the first person he sees hostage (this can be an unimportant background NPC, someone the heroes have already come into contact with, or even one of the heroes). Bates rants and shouts about the voices in his head and how they made him do it. He threatens that if he isn't let off the boat immediately he will kill his hostage. He's clearly homicidal and deranged. He'll have to be taken down by force or by clever negotiation (an Extreme **Persuade** or **Fast Talk** roll, or a Hard **Psychoanalysis** roll).

Play this scene to its conclusion, with Bates either dead or captured. If the heroes can be distracted long enough, then the first they hear of the crawling one's final test is the appearance of a great whirlpool in the ocean, as a flying polyp rises from the depths to attack the ship and destroy the Pipes of Leng.

THE FINAL TEST

December 19th

As Bunny Bates takes a hostage in the First Class dining hall, the crawling one is in Cargo Hold 7 undertaking its full test of the aetheric energy device.

The aetheric energy machine is a device combining the blood of sacrificial victims and the inhuman harmonics of Mythos-enchanted metal pipes tuned to otherworldly frequencies. Once the crawling one begins to play on the device's keyboard, the inhuman harmonics immediately begin to attract Mythos entities, as well as affecting all those within 100 feet of the pipes as per the **Pipes of Madness** spell (see page 234). After a few moments of playing, the crawling one can leave the machine to play itself.

Unfortunately for the crawling one, the device does not work as fully intended. The aethyric energy device does send out waves of energy and music that draw nearby Mythos entities, but it does not contain or hold them. The crawling one had aimed to extract unspeakable knowledge and power from the creatures summoned but instead, all the device does is enrage them, causing them to seek out the aetheric energy device to destroy it.

Not long after the crawling one begins to play, a flying polyp is summoned from the bottom of the ocean. As it rises, it creates a vast whirlpool, causing the ship to veer and the crew and passengers to panic. Soon it launches itself at the ship, tearing through the hull to reach Cargo Hold 7 to destroy the device. The monster takes 10 rounds to tear and smash its way through the hull to reach Cargo Hold 7 unless stopped by the heroes.

If the pipes stop playing, the monster turns around and returns to whence it came, leaving a trail of destruction behind. If the pipes continue to play it lays waste to the ship. The flying polyp attacks with utter ferocity when enraged by the pipes. At close-quarters, its extruded tentacles brush passengers and crew, dealing damage resembling desiccation or extreme windburn. Its wind-based attacks cause glass to shatter and furniture to hurtle across rooms. Due to its absolute rage, the polyp remains visible, provoking **Sanity** rolls from all aboard (1D3/1D20 loss).

OPTIONAL: ADDITIONAL MAYHEM AND HORROR

For Keepers wishing to play this scenario in a high pulp style, the crawling one could make use of its Graveyard Kiss spell to create a number of zombies to ensure shipboard mayhem and horror.

In this case, rather than throwing the bodies of those sacrificed to the Pipes of Leng off the ship, the crawling one has been directing Bates to hide them around Cargo Hold 7 as extra insurance against anyone meddling in its affairs. At the first sign of trouble, the crawling one activates the zombies, causing them to hunt down the nearest living humans. This could mean zombies climbing up from the below decks to harass and endanger the lives of everyone onboard. The zombies also make a great replacement for Bunny Bates in the **Bunny Takes a Hostage** scene (see page 227), should Bates already have been disposed of in the sequence of events.

As written, the crawling one has five zombies (having killed and sacrificed five people); if using this option, however it is recommended to increase that number as regular zombies provide little challenge for the average *Pulp Cthulhu* hero. One way to do this is to have each zombie infect and create new zombies. The crawling one's spell (a variation on the standard Graveyard Kiss spell) requires it to place part of its insect mass into the mouth of the corpse in order to awaken it. Awakened zombies can then create more zombies when insects jump from their mouths into the mouths of passengers they have slain, the unnatural insects causing the bodies to rise under the control and direction of the crawling one. In theory, a full-on zombie apocalypse could take place on the ship! While the zombies begin to take over the ship around them, the heroes are faced with an even bigger challenge—the appearance of a flying polyp (see **The Final Test**, nearby).

The crawling one, realizing the danger of the situation, attempts to cast a Gate spell to Shanghai unless stopped by the heroes. In its hurry to escape, it leaves the pipe machine running and playing.

If the Flying Polyp reaches Cargo Hold 7, it uses its wind blast attack to destroy the pipes, effectively blowing them apart, as well as the crawling one and anyone else in the vicinity (5D6 damage). Once the source of the music is stopped, the polyp may disappear back into the ocean, causing a mighty wave to hit the ship. Of course, if the Keeper wishes, the polyp can stick around for a few extra few rounds, allowing time for the heroes to try and defeat it. If the heroes are having a bad time of it, the Keeper can simply have the polyp retreat and disappear whenever required.

Dealing with the Polyp

Destroying the Pipes of Leng stops the machine playing and allows the flying polyp to depart. To do so requires inflicting 50 points of damage to the device, which has an armor rating of 3. Explosives would help, but there aren't any onboard the ship. When the pipes stop playing, the polyp may take a few rounds to realize the antagonizing noise has ceased, meaning that it will continue its assault for as long as the Keeper desires. At a suitable point, the monster suddenly stops, turns, and flies upwards before shooting down into the depths of the ocean.

Heroes in possession of *The Book of Red Jade* might attempt to use the Bind Flying Polyp spell to halt the monster's progress. For the spell to take effect the caster (who cannot be in combat with the creature, and who must be within 100 yards) must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the polyp (POW 80); this roll cannot be pushed. The spell costs 1 Sanity point. One option open to the caster is to invest a number of magic points equal to one-fifth of the monster's POW (16 magic points) to gain a bonus die on the opposed POW roll to bind the monster (of course, the hero will not know the POW of the creature, thus, he or she must take a gamble on how many magic points to sacrifice); a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll deduces the correct number of magic points required. If bound, the polyp falls under the caster's command and can be directed to depart back to the ocean's depths.

Tackling the monster through combat is probably the most difficult option. Despite its 4-point armor and the fact that it only suffers minimum damage from physical weapons, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility for the heroes to succeed. Note that enchanted weapons deliver full damage, as do fire and electrical attacks. Clever use of the hydrochloric acid to be found in Cargo Hold 7 might also cause some serious damage to the monster (1D10 per round, negating armor). For high pulp action, quick-thinking heroes with a military bent may try to call in help from nearby British, American, or Japanese warships anchored offshore to shoot at the polyp. A battery of warship guns causes 10D10 damage—a single salvo or two should destroy the polyp or wound it grievously enough to make it retreat into the ocean. If the polyp is somehow destroyed, its body smashes onto the ship with a heavy crunch and almost immediately begins to decay. Within minutes, all that is left of the thing is greasy liquid and a bad smell.

In any event, the damage caused to the ship by the polyp is tremendous. The great hole in the full means the ship is taking on water and listing to the side. It won't be long before the ship sinks. Ask the heroes what they want to do: do they run for the lifeboats, thinking only of themselves? Or do they help save as many people as they can, marshaling their forces to find and rescue trapped passengers, help with getting women and children onto the lifeboats, and so on? Play out this conclusion as necessary.

CONCLUSION

The scenario most likely ends with the *SS President Coolidge* sinking into the ocean, somewhere off the coast of Japan or China. The crawling one and its faulty Pipes of Leng are destroyed (probably by the flying polyp, but possibly by the heroes). Hopefully, the heroes managed to help some of the passengers and crew into lifeboats, as well as themselves.

Survivors are rescued in a few hours and many questions are asked about what took place. In time, newspapers report a freak wave sinking the ship, but those who survived know better.

If the crawling one manages to cast the Gate spell it arrives in Shanghai and joins its associates in the Eight Fortunes Mutual Aid Society. Over the next few months or years, it begins to plot its revenge on those who had a hand in its downfall. In this case, the crawling one provides the Keeper with the potential for an ongoing master villain, who seeks out the heroes to extract a deadly revenge.

Apply the following Sanity awards:

- The heroes prevent Bunny Bates from killing the hostage: +1D6 Sanity points.
- The heroes destroy the aetheric energy device: +1D4 Sanity points.
- The heroes capture or kill the crawling one: +2D6 Sanity points.
- Allowing the crawling one to escape: –1D6 Sanity points.
- The heroes defeat the flying polyp: +1D20 Sanity points.
- The heroes attempt to save as many people as they can from drowning: +1D10 Sanity points.
- The heroes leave the ship without regard for others: –1D10+2 Sanity points.

Opposite: The Final Text by Richard Pace



APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

HENRY NELSON, *age 54, Captain*

STR 75	**CON** 85	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 45	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 55	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 50	**HP** 16
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 5	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 revolver 60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Music) 20%, Charm 40%, Intimidate 60%, Law 95%, Listen 30%, Other Language (English) 80%, Other Language (French) 60%, Other Language (Japanese) 15%, Own Language (Norwegian) 80%, Persuade 50%, Pilot (Ship) 80%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 65%, Swim 60%.

HUGO SCHRAMM, *age 46, First Officer*

STR 55	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 80	**POW** 50	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 50	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 revolver 40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Painting) 40%, Charm 80%, Law 75%, Listen 40%, Other Language (French) 70%, Other Language (Japanese) 30%, Own Language (English) 75%, Persuade 40%, Pilot (Ship) 70%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 65%, Swim 70%.

MARTIN AIMESWORTHY, *age 38, First Class Steward*

STR 45	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 70	**INT** 70
APP 60	**POW** 40	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 40	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Sowing) 40%, Charm 70%, Fast Talk 40%, Law 35%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Other Language (French) 40%, Other Language (Japanese) 10%, Own Language (English) 65%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 45%, Swim 40%.

DR. ERIK HARTMANN, *age 56, Ship's Doctor*

STR 50	**CON** 35	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 40	**INT** 75
APP 55	**POW** 85	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 85	**HP** 8
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 17	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge 20% (10/4)

Skills

Charm 60%, First Aid 70%, Law 40%, Listen 40%, Medicine 60%, Other Language (German) 45%, Other Language (English) 80%, Own Language (Danish) 80%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 45%, Science (Biology) 50%, Science (Chemistry) 30%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Spot Hidden 50%.

ALBERT HALLANDER, *age 28, Seaman First Class*

Use these characteristics for the average crewmember.

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 65
APP 50	**POW** 45	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 45	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4, or billy club 1D6+1D4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Electrical Repair 40%, Fast Talk 40%, Marine Engineering 20%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigation 40%, Pilot (Ship) 20%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 45%.

VIRGINIA RIDLEY, *age 26, dilettante*

STR 35	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 60	**INT** 55
APP 70	**POW** 45	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 45	**HP** 8
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
12-g shotgun (pump) 75% (37/15), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Piano) 20%, Lore (New York City) 80%, Lore (Shanghai) 60%, Credit Rating 70%, Fast Talk 60%, Listen 40%, Other Language (Chinese) 20%, Other Language (French) 40%, Ride 60%, Stealth 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 70%.

CHARLES WINSTON ASTOR, *age 58, tycoon*

STR 45	**CON** 40	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 60	**INT** 65
APP 50	**POW** 55	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 55	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 5	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3
.303 rifle	60% (30/12), damage 2D6+4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 50%, Credit Rating 90%, Drive Auto 30%, Intimidate 50%, Law 25%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 20%, Other Language (French) 20%, Persuade 40%, Pilot (Motorboat) 30%, Psychology 45%, Ride 35%, Spot Hidden 40%, Swim 45%.

ALEX HUBBARD, *age 41, big game hunter*

STR 80	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 65	**INT** 50
APP 60	**POW** 65	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 65	**HP** 12
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 13	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4, or hunting knife 1D8+1D4
.45 rifle	80% (40/16), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
.44 revolver	65% (32/13), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 45%, First Aid 55%, Intimidate 60%, Jump 20%, Listen 75%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Navigate 50%, Occult 40%, Other Language (Afrikaans) 30%, Stealth 90%, Spot Hidden 75%, Swim 50%, Track 55%.

DR. YUNG YAO SOONG, *age 78, herbalist and scholar*

STR 40	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 70	**INT** 80
APP 55	**POW** 95	**EDU** 95	**SAN** 56	**HP** 11
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 4	**MP:** 19	**Luck:** 35

Combat

Brawl	55% (27/11), damage 1D3–1, or nunchaku 1D8–1
Dodge	40% (20/8); **with fan 80% (40/16)

Skills

Art (Music) 20%, Charm 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, History 60%, Library Use 60%, Medicine (Chinese) 70%, Natural World 70%, Occult 60%, Other Language (English) 50%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 95%, Other Language (Tcho-Tcho) 40%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Stealth 50%, Spot Hidden 45%.

Pulp Talents

- **Stout Constitution:** spend 10 Luck to reduce poison or disease effects by half.
- **Outmaneuver:** Build is considered to be 1 higher when initiating maneuvers.

Spells: Cloud Memory, Enchant Knife, Flesh Ward, Wrack.

***Magical Item:** *Harmonic Reflecting Fan, a silk fan with lacquered leaves that shine with the rainbow sheen of oil on water. The fan provides +40% to the user's Dodge skill.*

WANG MA/LO MAI, *age 34, tcho-tcho servant to Dr. Soong*

Use these characteristics for Sheng Tsin and the other tcho-tcho.

STR 60	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 75	**INT** 65
APP 30	**POW** 50	**EDU** 95	**SAN** —	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3, or hunting knife 1D8
Blowgun	45% (22/0), damage 1D2 + poison (CON roll to avoid paralysis for 1D4 rounds)
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Cooking) 10%, Intimidate 40%, Jump 60%, Listen 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Stealth 60%, Swim 45%, Track 50%, Throw 35%.

Sanity loss: zero for Wang Ma/Lo Mai/Sheng Tsin; 0/1D3 for other tcho-tcho.

PHYLLIS BARNES, *age 58, music teacher*

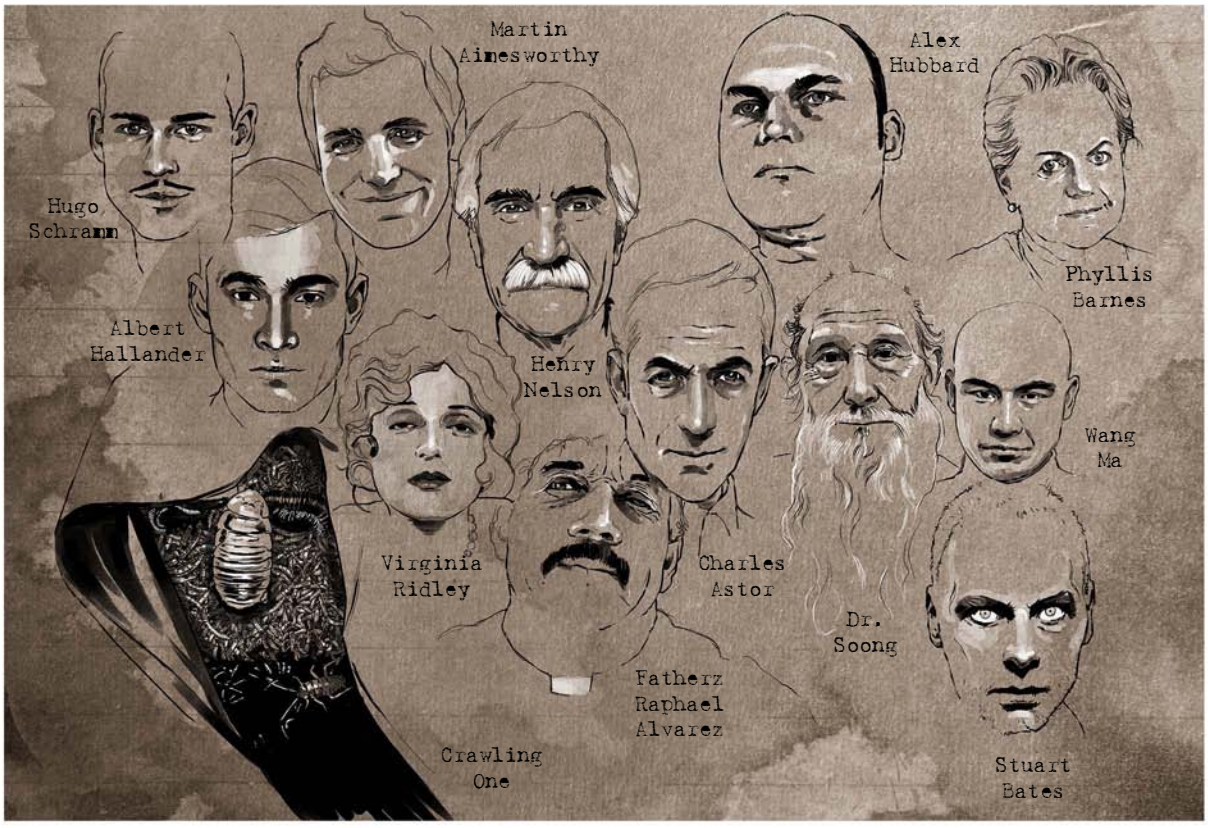
STR 40	**CON** 40	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 70	**INT** 75
APP 55	**POW** 45	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 45	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Piano) 80%, Charm 50%, First Aid 50%, History 40%, Intimidate 35%, Listen 85%, Science (Mathematics) 45%, Other Language (German) 60%, Spot Hidden 55%.



Slow Boat to China NPC Portraits by Jonathan Wyke

FATHER RAPHAEL ALVAREZ, *age 31, Jesuit priest*

STR 70	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 40	**INT** 85
APP 70	**POW** 70	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 70	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Art/Craft (Poetry) 50%, Charm 40%, First Aid 50%, History 60%, Library Use 40%, Listen 30%, Other Language (French) 20%, Other Language (Latin) 35%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 15%, Other Language (English) 40%, Own Language (Spanish) 85%, Persuade 70%, Psychoanalysis 50%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 45%, Swim 30%.

TAKISHI SURODA, *age 33, nosey businessman*

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 50	**POW** 55	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 55	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 60%, Credit Rating 55%, Fast Talk 50%, Law 30%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 50%, Other Language (English) 60%, Own Language (Japanese) 70%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 45%, Swim 50%.

MILES HARDAWAY, *age 37, pushy reporter*

STR 50	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 50	**INT** 75
APP 65	**POW** 45	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 45	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** 0

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 20%, Fast Talk 65%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 20%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 45%, Swim 35%.

STUART "BUNNY" BATES, *age 32, dominated gangster*

STR 85	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 85	**DEX** 65	**INT** 55
APP 45	**POW** 45	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 34	**HP** 16
DB: +1D6	**Build:** 2	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** 45

Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6, or knife 1D4+1
.32 auto	45% (22/9), damage
Thompson SMG	65% (32/13), damage
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 50%, Fast Talk 65%, Jump 50%, Listen 65%, Locksmith 70%, Stealth 80%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Pulp Talents

- **Tough Guy:** spend 10 Luck to shrug-off 5 hit points damage in a round.
- **Rapid Fire:** ignores penalty die for multiple handgun shots.

THE CRAWLING ONE *(AKA Señor Diego Guiterrez de Almacan)*

STR 60	**CON** 90	**SIZ** 85	**DEX** 60	**INT** 90
APP —	**POW** 90	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 17
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 18	**Luck:** 90

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (by weapon or spell)

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4, or large knife 1D8+1D4
.45 auto	40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 80%, Jump 80%, Listen 50%, Science (Mathematics) 90%, Science (Physics) 90%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 80%.

Pulp Talents

- **Weird Science.**
- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.

Armor: none, however due to the soft and resilient quality of its body mass, normal weapons do minimal damage and bullets only cause a single point of damage (although shotgun pellets do minimum damage).
Spells: Consume Likeness, Create Gate, Create Mist of R'lyeh, Dominate (alternate version, allows the crawling one to dominate one person over a distance of up to 1 mile and for 1 day per magic point spent), Enchant Pipes, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Graveyard Kiss (variant), Mental Suggestion, Mindblast, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror (alternate version, allows the horror to be summoned wherever the crawling one wishes).
Sanity loss: 1D3/2D6 Sanity points to see a crawling one.

HUNTING HORROR

STR 145	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 200	**DEX** 80	**INT** 70
APP —	**POW** 100	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 26
DB: +3D6	**Build:** 4	**Move:** 7/11*	**MP:** 20	**Luck:** —

**Flying*

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

A hunting horror may attack with its bite, its crushing bulk, and its tail tentacle attacks.

Grasp (mnvr): the tail can be used to wrap around the victim, preventing movement. The hunting horror may then fly off with its victim or keep fighting. The victim can only break loose as the result of a successful opposed STR roll. When a victim is caught in the tail, the hunting horror may only make a bite attack, nibbling at the dangling victim with a bonus die to hit since the victim's arms are usually pinioned.

Fighting	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+3D6
Grasp	(mnvr) target immobile and must win an opposed STR roll to escape
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Armor: 9-point skin.
Spells: Hunting horrors have a 25% chance of knowing 2D10 spells.
Sanity loss: 0/1D10 Sanity points to see a hunting horror.

ZOMBIE

STR 80	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 35	**INT** 00
APP —	**POW** 05	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 1	**Luck:** —

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D3 (or weapon damage) + 1D4
Dodge	Lacking volition, this is not an option

Armor: wounds causing half of the zombie's total hit points result in loss of a limb. Otherwise, ignore damage except to the head (one penalty die on rolls to target the head).
Sanity loss: 0/1D8 Sanity points to see a zombie.

FLYING POLYP, *horror from below*

STR 250 **CON** 125 **SIZ** 250 **DEX** 65 **INT** 70
APP — **POW** 80 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 37
DB: +5D6 **Build:** 6 **Move:** 8 /12***MP:** 16 **Luck:** —
**Flying.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 2D6 (each round, roll 2D6 to determine how many tentacles form); may use only one wind-based attack per round.

Fighting Attacks: polyps continually form and dissolve tentacles from their bodies. Tentacle damage is always 1D10. Because of the partially nonmaterial nature of these entities, the tentacle's damage is done directly to the target's hit points, ignoring any body armor. The wound takes the form of a windburn or desiccation of tissue.

Note: each of the polypoid wind abilities costs 1 magic point per round to use.

Wind Blast: the wind blast has a base range of 20 yards and a 10-yard-diameter cylinder of effect emanating from the polyp, doing damage equal to the polyp's damage bonus. The cylindrical blast can extend further than 20 yards, but loses 1D6 damage for each multiple of the base distance—thus a target at 39 yards would take 4D6 (damage bonus minus 1D6), and a target at 41 yards would take 3D6 damage. Victims of the wind blast literally have their flesh stripped from their bones and their skin dehydrated and wind-burned, and are blown backward for a number of yards equal to the hit points they have lost.

Fixing Attack: this is a mysterious method for capturing prey. In this mode, the wind attack has a range of 1,000 yards and can blow without diminishment around corners or up through winding corridors. Although the wind emanates from the polyp, it has a peculiar sucking effect on the target, slowing down him or her and forcing the target to make an opposed STR roll versus the polyp's POW. Beyond 200 yards this becomes less effective and one bonus die is granted to the target. If the polyp wins, the victim cannot move away that round. If the target wins, he or she may move normally. The flying polyp can move at full speed while using this ability, so it may be both chasing interesting prey and slowing it. This technique may be used on multiple targets within 30 yards of one another. Each other target gains one bonus die on the STR roll to oppose the polyp. The polyp may choose its targets.

PIPES OF MADNESS

- **Cost:** 5 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 5 rounds

Those hearing these unearthly tunes risk insanity. All within earshot of the strange melody should make a Sanity roll: failure causes the loss of 5 Sanity points and an immediate bout of madness (the listener going temporarily insane); if the Sanity roll is successful, the listener loses 1D3 Sanity points (and ordinarily does not go insane). Listeners should make a Sanity roll for every 5 rounds that the pipes are played and heard (losses being cumulative). As a spell, it must be cast with an enchanted bone pipe. The caster plays a specific weird melody on the pipes and sacrifices the necessary costs.

Fighting	85% (42/17), damage 1D10
Wind blast	70% (35/14), damage bonus (lowered by 1D6 per 20 yards distance)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

SPECIAL POWERS

- **Invisibility:** by spending 1 magic point per round, a polyp can turn totally invisible. It still can be roughly located by the constant, nauseating piping sound that always accompanies it. Anyone trying to hit an invisible polyp must make a successful Listen roll to tell where it is, and if located, any rolls to hit it are made with one penalty die. Polyps naturally phase in and out of visibility, so a Luck roll must be made with each attack made upon it. If the Luck roll is failed the Polyp phases just at that moment and the attack is made with one penalty die. When a polyp is invisible, it does not attack with its tentacles, but may still use one of the wind attacks or cast spells.

Armor: 4 points. The extra-terrene polyp takes only minimum damage from physical weapons, which is reduced again by 4 points due to the monster's skin armor. Enchanted weapons do full normal damage, as do forces such as heat or electricity.
Spells: Polyps have a 70% chance of knowing 1D10 spells.
Sanity loss: 1D3/1D20 Sanity points to see a flying polyp.

CHAPTER 14

COLLECTED HANDOUTS

Handout: Disintegrator 1

United States Telegraph Service

Arkham, Massachusetts

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	FULL RATE
DAY LETTER	DEFERRED
NIGHT MESSAGE	NIGHT LETTER
NIGHT LETTER	WEEKEND LETTER

PATRONS SHOULD CHECK CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED

CVTY 35 ARKHAM, MAS. TVG 11

= PROFESSOR LIONEL FINCH =

= ARKHAM =

= DEAR FRIEND STOP I WISH TO PREVAIL UPON YOU TO REPRESENT ME IN A MOST URGENT AND DELICATE MATTER STOP I AM STUCK CHAIR-BOUND AGAIN AND NEED HELP TO BE MY EYES AND EARS STOP IT MAY PROVE NOTHING MORE THAN A HOAX BUT IF NOT I FEAR FOR THE FUTURE STOP SORRY FOR LIMITED INFO STOP MATTER CONFIDENTIAL I WILL SPEAK MORE OF THIS IN PERSON STOP PLEASE COME AND SEE ME ASAP I WILL PAY ALL EXPENSES AND GENEROUS FEE STOP PLEASE REPLY BY RETURN MESSAGE PAID STOP =

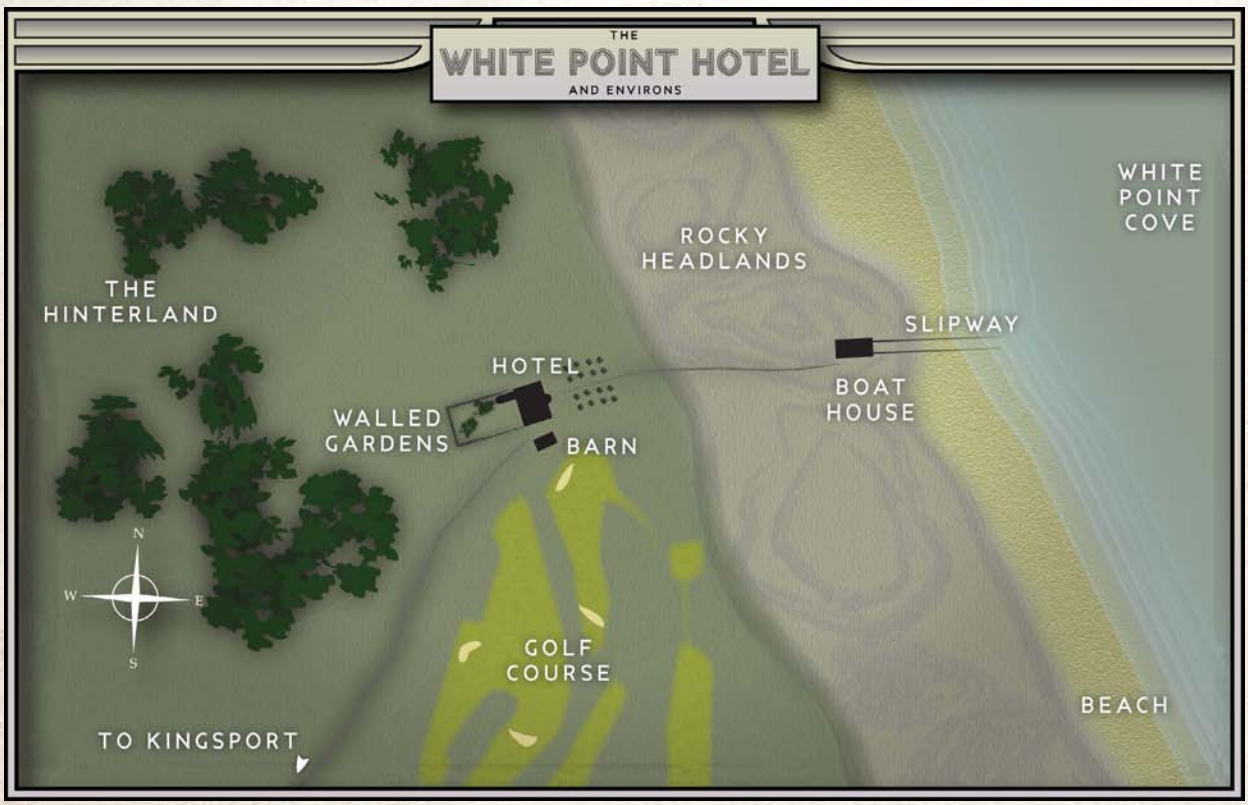
= L =

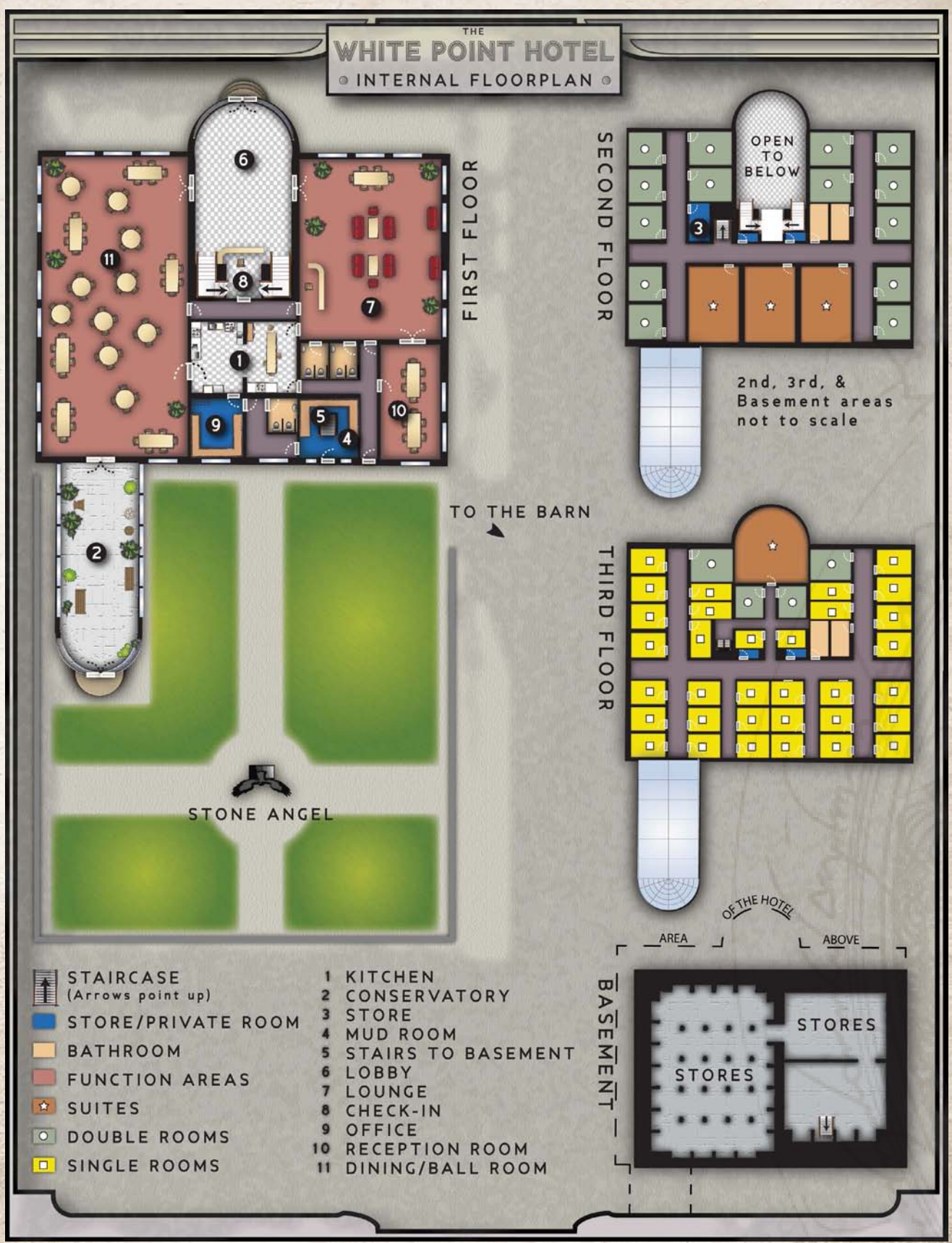
Handout: Disintegrator 2

Auction Schedule

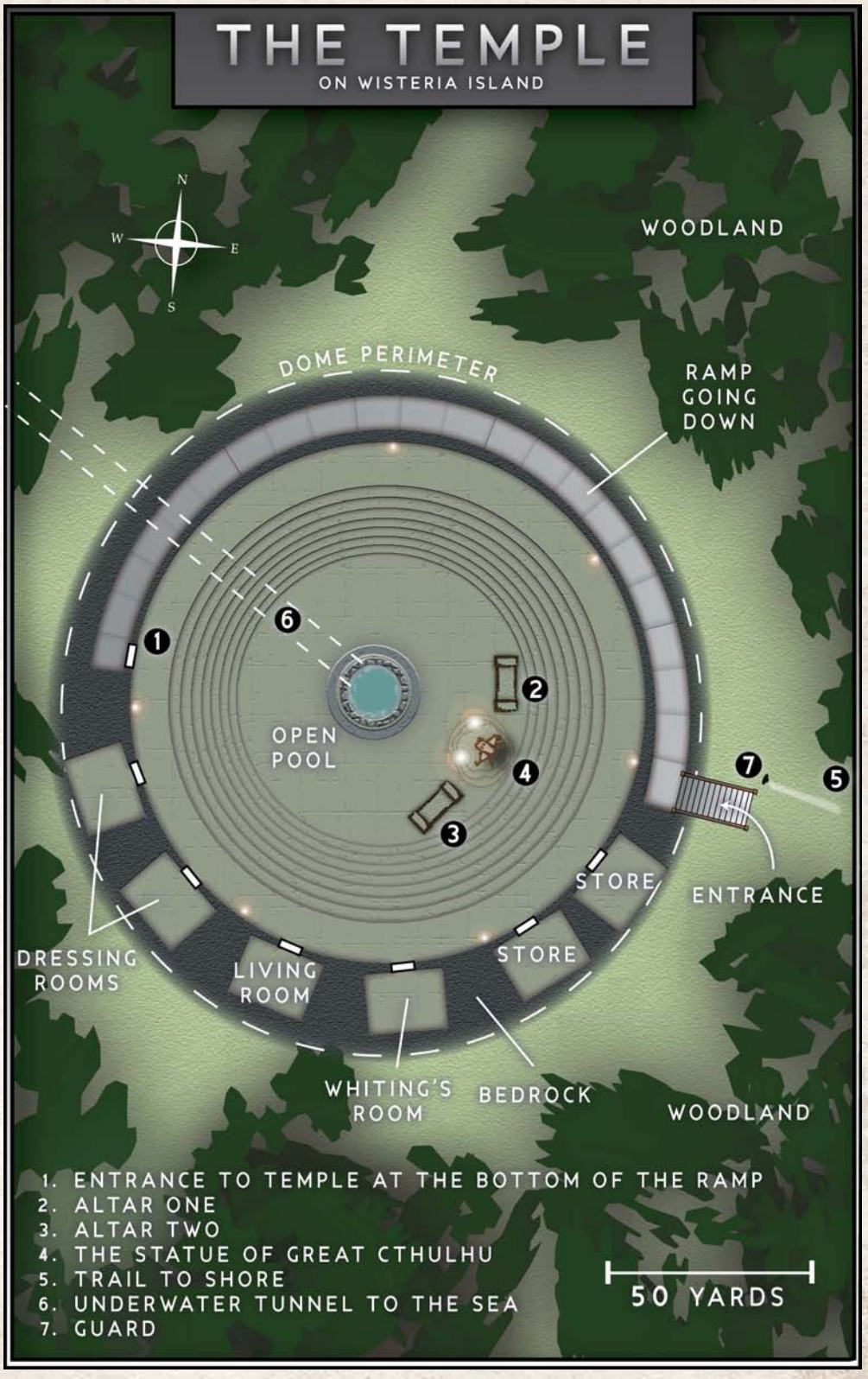
6:00 p.m.	Demonstration of the disintegrator in the hotel's rear gardens.
8:00 p.m.	Dinner is served, with compliments of the auction.
9:00 p.m.	First round of bidding in the dining room. Sealed bids to be handed in by interested parties.
9:30 p.m.	The highest current bid will be declared. If there is an agreement to continue further bidding, a second and final round of sealed bids will be handed in by interested parties.

The highest bidder will take possession of the disintegrator device following the satisfactory exchange of capital as soon as this is made. Payment to be made in full within one day.



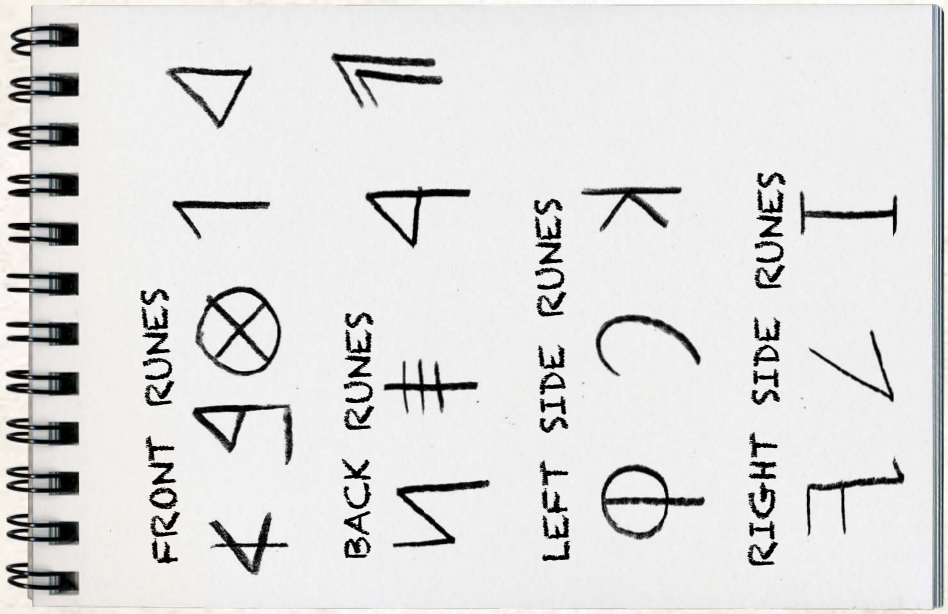

THE
WHITE POINT HOTEL
INTERNAL FLOORPLAN
FIRST FLOOR
SECOND FLOOR
OPEN TO BELOW
2nd, 3rd, & Basement areas not to scale
TO THE BARN
THIRD FLOOR
STONE ANGEL
OF THE HOTEL
AREA
ABOVE
BASEMENT
STORES
STORES
STAIRCASE
(Arrows point up)
STORE/PRIVATE ROOM
BATHROOM
FUNCTION AREAS
SUITES
DOUBLE ROOMS
SINGLE ROOMS
1 KITCHEN
2 CONSERVATORY
3 STORE
4 MUD ROOM
5 STAIRS TO BASEMENT
6 LOBBY
7 LOUNGE
8 CHECK-IN
9 OFFICE
10 RECEPTION ROOM
11 DINING/BALL ROOM


WISTERIA ISLAND
WHERE DARK RITES ARE PERFORMED
N
W
E
S
WOODLAND
TEMPLE DOME
PATH THROUGH WOODS
BEACHED YACHT
WOODLAND
100 YARDS
TANK ISLAND
(SUNSET KEY)
KEY WEST


THE TEMPLE
ON WISTERIA ISLAND
N
W
E
S
WOODLAND
DOME PERIMETER
RAMP GOING DOWN
OPEN POOL
STORE
ENTRANCE
DRESSING ROOMS
LIVING ROOM
STORE
WHITING'S ROOM
BEDROCK
WOODLAND
1. ENTRANCE TO TEMPLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RAMP
2. ALTAR ONE
3. ALTAR TWO
4. THE STATUE OF GREAT CTHULHU
5. TRAIL TO SHORE
6. UNDERWATER TUNNEL TO THE SEA
7. GUARD
50 YARDS



Handout: Pandora's Box 4




THE GRAND HOTEL
INTERNAL FLOORPLAN
FIRE ESCAPE
PANTRY
SERVICE ELEVATOR
LAUNDRY
CONCIERGE OFFICE
STAFF ROOM
FIRE ESCAPE
OFFICES
KITCHEN
STORES
LOCKERS
RESTAURANT
LOBBY
SOCIAL ROOM
FIRST FLOOR
FIRE ESCAPE
SINGLE ROOM
SERVICE ELEVATOR
GRAND SUITE
SINGLE ROOM
FIRE ESCAPE
DOUBLE SUITE
DOUBLE SUITE
STORES
STORES
STORES
SINGLE OCCUPANCY ROOMS
SECOND FLOOR
DUMB WAITER
STAIRCASE
ELEVATOR
PRIVATE AREAS IN ORANGE
PUBLIC AREAS IN GREEN

PANDORA HANDOUT 7
SUMMARY OF STANDARD OCCULT SOURCES

Occult books, from Fraser's Golden Bough to rarer examples, can be mined for information about Pandora's Box. All sources agree that such a box would be a dangerous thing to have around as no known remedy or defense is available to deal with all eventualities of what may be brought forth from inside the receptacle. Most scholars agree that a wise man should shun the box. One source suggests that attempts to destroy the box may be disastrous and potentially apocalyptic.

PANDORA HANDOUT 8
MEMOIRS OF SIR WILLIAM CRAKE

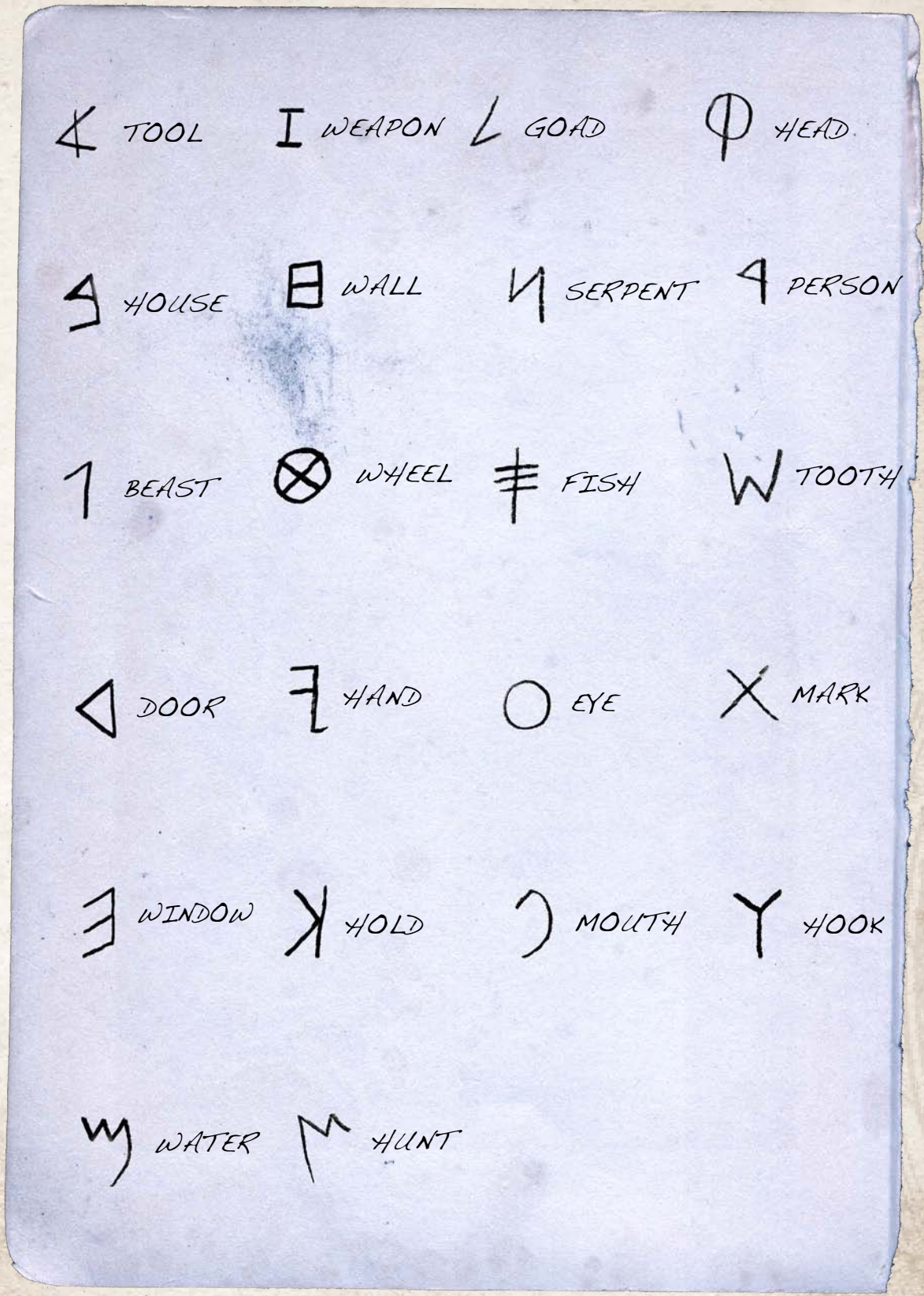
In Service of the Empire (1925), the memoirs of Sir William Crake, mentions the artifact specifically. Crake was British Ambassador to Turkey in the early twentieth century. He illustrates his policy of receiving gifts skeptically with the anecdote on page 244:

Handout: Pandora 6

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

In Greek mythology, Pandora was the first woman, created by Zeus using water and earth. The gods endowed her with gifts: Athena clothed her, Aphrodite gave her beauty, Apollo gave her musical ability, and Hermes gave her speech. When Prometheus stole fire from heaven to give to humanity, Zeus punished him by presenting Pandora to his brother, but the revenge went further. Pandora was given a large and beautiful jar as a wedding gift, with instructions never to open it. Impelled by her curiosity (also given to her by the gods), Pandora opened it, allowing all the evils contained inside to spread over the earth. Only one thing remained inside—the Spirit of Hope. Pandora feared Zeus' wrath for her disobedience but there was no further punishment other than living in a world where all these evils were free. The etymology of the "box" is problematic since the original Greek word was "pithos," a large jar.

Handout: Pandora's Box 5



PANDORA HANDOUT 9
FROM AN ANNOTATED EDITION OF THE LIBER IVONIS

Liber Ivonis, printed 1662, Latin, reputed to be a 10th century translation of an even earlier work. The book speaks of a land called Hyperborea somewhere in the north (possibly Greenland) and the activities of a sorcerer named Eibon. Apparently a rival wizard, Ssaneth, created "*a casket of evil for the production of monsters to send against his enemies. This receptacle of evil caused great trouble for Ssaneth and his race of snake folk. The device was entombed by the Queen of Pangaea before the coming of the Cold Times. By repute, the casket has entered into the legends of men through seafarers.*"

PANDORA HANDOUT 10
FROM CULTES DES GOULES

Cultes des Goules, c.1702, by the Comte D'Erlette, comments on the scandalous murders in the Danish Castle of Count Magnus De la Gardie (around 1660) and wonders, "*What it was that the creature that came from the Count's cursed box harvested from its victims? Did such harvesting assist its escape? Or is it another evil this Pandora's Box has loosed upon the world?*"

Handout: Pandora 8

My junior colleague Sir Martin Fotheringham at the Montenegrin court in their tiny mountain capital of Cetinje, was more trusting. In 1910, a certain local noble thanked him profusely for his sympathy on hearing of the unfortunate deaths of a whole branch of his family in one of the sudden outbreaks of violence they often experience there, and gifted the ambassador with a box made of precious metals. It was performed with great respect and with the proviso that local custom dictated the box never be opened, "In respect of the dead." I let Fotheringham know by return that I thought he had been handed the very cause of the trouble, a veritable Pandora's Box, but he had already shipped back and chose to ignore my warning. Within five years not only he but also his young grandson had vanished without trace. With the death of his promising son in the war, the whole Fotheringham line was extinguished. I always say that it's not just Trojans bearing gifts one has to beware of.

PANDORA HANDOUT II
FROM UNAUSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN

Unausprechlichen Kulten, c. 1839, by Von Junzt, has an aside in Chapter 6 during Junzt's visit to Russia regarding an incident where an Orthodox Bishop, who collected reliquaries, mysteriously disappeared from his study one evening:

91 ~ Unausprechlichen Kulten

The hermit spoke of hearing a rumor that the man had been sold the original Pandora's Box and that it had accounted for him as it had so many others since its creation in ancient times. He had wished the device for himself to summon his foul god rather than use the Aklo scripts, despite his acknowledgement that the box seldom delivered what the opener desired. When I inquired as to the fate of the bishop and the box, the hermit said the bishop had been consumed by the box and that the box had been sold to a Turk.

CLUB OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

SPECIAL REPORT BY MARION ALDEN

In a unique event and for a limited time only Pandora's Palace, the north side nightclub run by Pandora Moulin, will exhibit the famed historical artifact known as Pandora's Box. Made by the Greek gods and said to contain all the ills of the world, poor beautiful Pandora opened it and let them out and only hope was left inside! The artifact will be displayed in the center of the 1,000 person capacity nightclub, restaurant, and casino complex.

This is the first time Pandora's Box has been publicly exhibited and the owner, Mr. John Drummond of Providence, Rhode Island, has previously fended off inquiries about the relic from museums around the world. Mr. Drummond is quoted as saying that Pandora Moulin persuaded him her new nightclub was the perfect venue to showcase the artifact—even if some visiting gamblers might be spooked by the legendary bad luck surrounding the box!

Pandora's Box has allegedly been associated with a string of mysterious deaths and disappearances in England at the beginning of the century. The box in question is described as being made of antique brass and other precious metals. Mr. Drummond recounted how one of the box's previous owners, Theophilus Carney, was found gruesomely murdered in an as-yet-unsolved locked-room-mystery. While in 1927, the box's former owner was found crushed in the ruins of a collapsed building. Mr. Drummond inherited the box from a distant relative in England. Unfortunately, Mr. Drummond seems to have found no better luck with the box than its previous owners, as his wife, heiress of the Rhode Island Murcheson family, died suddenly of a heart ailment the following year.

Mr. Drummond says he hopes the exhibition of Pandora's Box will be a success as he is considering offering the artifact for sale. Given the box's history and apparent curse, Mr. Drummond has stipulated the box remain closed throughout its display at Pandora's Palace.

DEFINITELY NOT THE REAL THING

Professor Theodore Culler of Brown University has claimed the box presented as Pandora's Box cannot possibly be the Pandora's Box of legend. Says the Professor, "Simply because an item has an unfortunate history, like the Hope Diamond, it does not make it a container for all the ills of the world. The original texts of the legend speak of a jar, not a box, I'm afraid. This is not an item for serious archaeological study."

This reporter put the Professor's comments to Pandora Moulin herself, who replied: "What does he know? He can't even rumba!"

Nightclub-goers will have to make up their own minds as to whether the ancient box is cursed.

Handout: Pandora's Box 2

PANDORA'S BOX STOLEN: VERN BAILEY MISSING

SPECIAL REPORT BY MARION ALDEN

The artifact known as "Pandora's Box" has been stolen from Pandora's Palace nightclub after making just one appearance for the paying public. Suspicion has fallen on Mr. Vern Bailey, an associate of Pandora Moulin, the nightclub's hostess, who has an office at the Club. Bailey has not been seen since the fabled box was placed in his safe at 4:00 a.m. after its successful debut showing.

Club staff first began to notice Bailey's absence around noon yesterday after several calls from his wife, Mrs. Connie Bailey, asking for him. Later that same afternoon, when Pandora's Box was due to return to its heavily guarded podium, Mr. Bob Quinn, the club's manager discovered the box was missing from Mr. Bailey's security safe.

The police were called by Mr. John Drummond, the owner of Pandora's Box, insisting something be done to effect the return of his property. Initial police comments indicate the thief may have used the roof to gain entry to the premises. The investigation is ongoing.

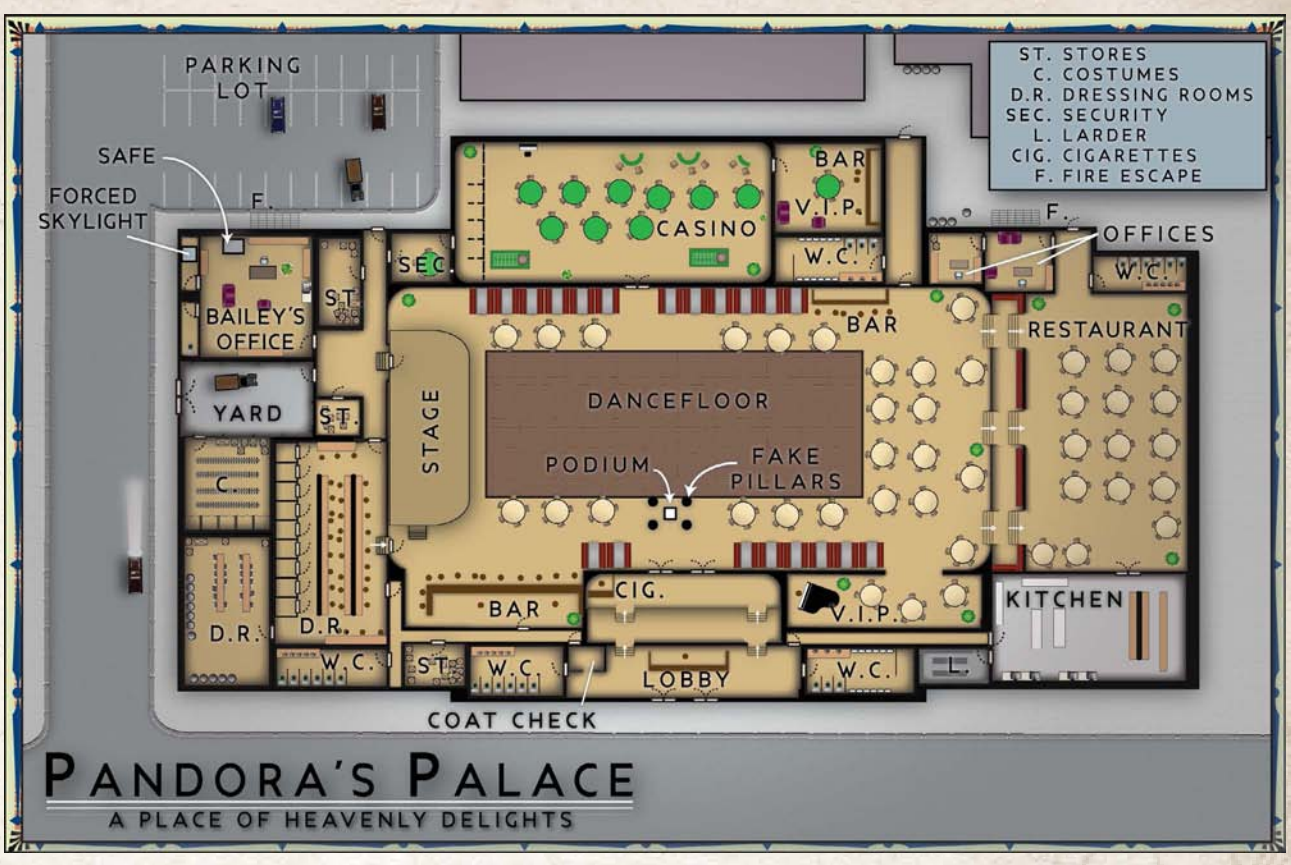
It is not yet clear if the absence of Mr. Bailey and the disappearance of Pandora's Box are linked. Rumors and accusations about Mr. Bailey have long circulated without refutation. The current incident can only lend strength to such accusations. One source, who refused to be named out of fear of retaliation, claims Vern Bailey is none other than Eddie "The Killer" Bartlett, the notorious bank robber and suspected gangland assassin, although no proof has yet been presented to this effect. Mr. Bailey's numerous friends no doubt will say that, whatever his shady past, he should be judged on what he does next. Others may say Mr. Bailey's biggest mistake was getting too close to Pandora's Box, the notoriously cursed artifact that brings trouble to anyone who opens it!

Handout: Pandora's Box 3

EXPLOSION AT PAWNBROKER'S

Late yesterday afternoon a violent explosion ripped through Conklin's Pawnbrokers. The front window and bars of the shop were blown out and the owner, Lester Conklin, aged 53, was found dead on a rooftop opposite. Mr. Conklin appears to have taken the full force of the blast, which carried him through the air to the nearby rooftop. Thankfully, property damage in the area was minimal.

Police and Fire Department teams are investigating the cause of the explosion. Speculation is rife about a gangland connection due to the late Mr. Conklin's indictments for receiving stolen goods, which were dismissed by the courts last year. Police would like to talk to a man with blond hair seen by witnesses in the area prior to the explosion.



Handout: Pandora's Box 12

CONTACTED BY A MAN OF ITALIAN BACKGROUND, GIVING A PATENTLY FALSE NAME, OFFERING AN OCCULT ITEM HE BELIEVES I WILL BE INTERESTED IN. IMMEDIATELY SUSPECT THE ITEM IS STOLEN BUT INTRIGUED ENOUGH TO TAKE A LOOK. SUSPECT THE ITALIAN IS LEO CARPOZI, HIMES' MAN FROM '23 WHO HAS SOMEHOW TRACKED ME DOWN. POSSIBLY MADE AN ERROR IN LEAVING A FORWARDING ADDRESS AT HIMES' FORMER PLACE OF BUSINESS. SAYS HE WILL DEMONSTRATE THE ITEM TONIGHT. WONDER IF THE SEEKERS ARE AWARE?

Handout: Pandora's Box 13

APRIL 30TH 1923: FROSCH AUCTION. MY AGENT, HIMES, FAILED TO ACQUIRE DE VERMIS MYSTERIIS. HIMES WAS ABLE TO SURREPTITIOUSLY ACQUIRE THE ADDRESS OF THE BUYER FROM THE AUCTIONEER, SO ALL MAY NOT BE LOST! APPARENTLY THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE SEEKERS OF ETERNAL WISDOM. WHATEVER NEXT? THE SEEKERS HAVE A LODGE IS AT 1575 N.7TH AVENUE. HIMES IS GOING TO INQUIRE IF THEY'D BE WILLING TO SELL THE BOOK, AT A PROFIT.

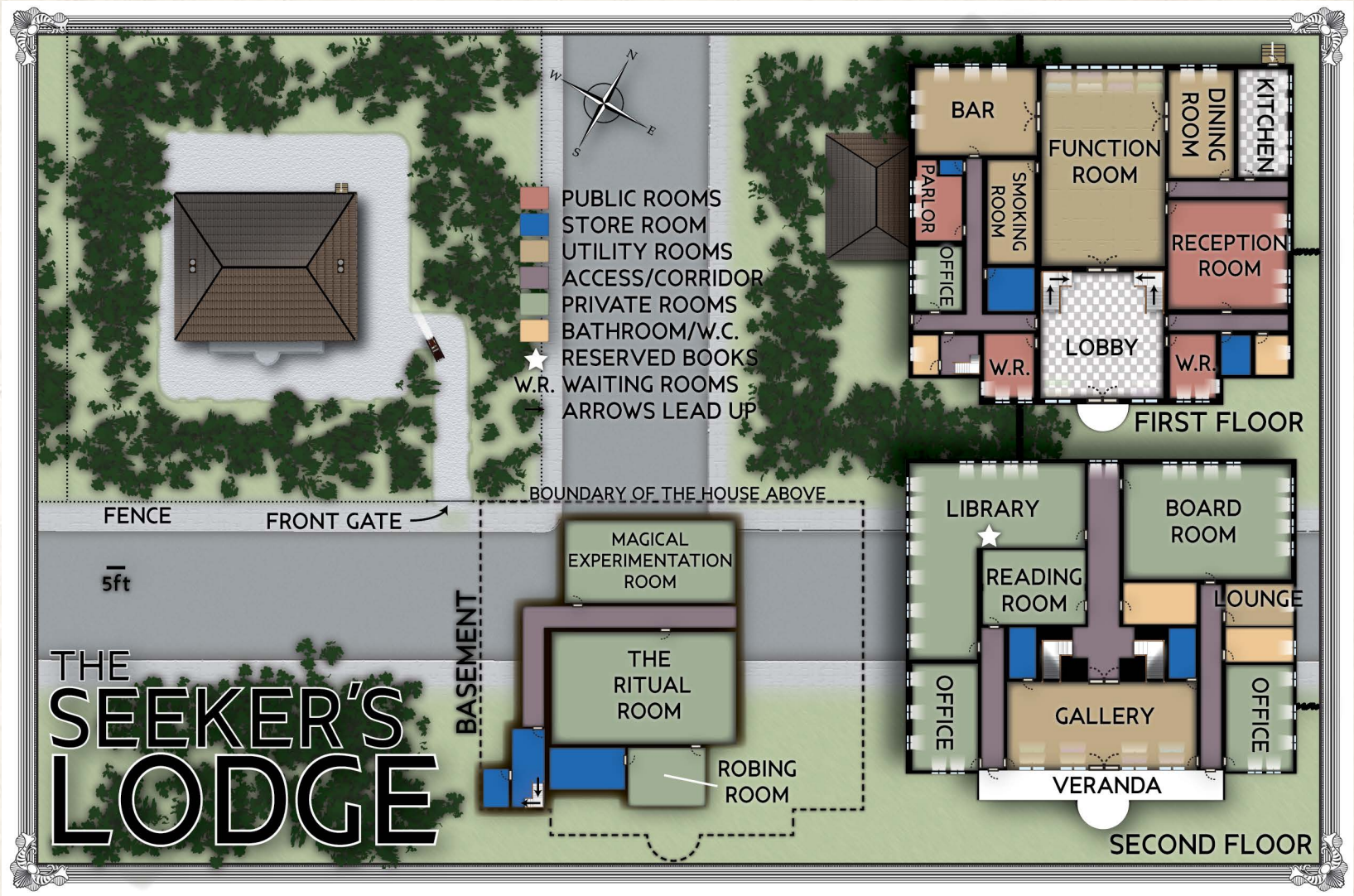
MAY 10TH 1923: THE LODGE REFUSED TO SELL THE BOOK. ALTHOUGH HIMES MANAGED TO ARRANGE ANOTHER WAY TO ACQUIRE IT (HE'S A VERY HANDY MAN!) ALL WENT WITHOUT A HITCH. BOOK NOW IN MY POSSESSION AND SAFELY LOCKED AWAY IN MY SAFE. GOOD FORTUNE SMILES UPON THE BRAVE!

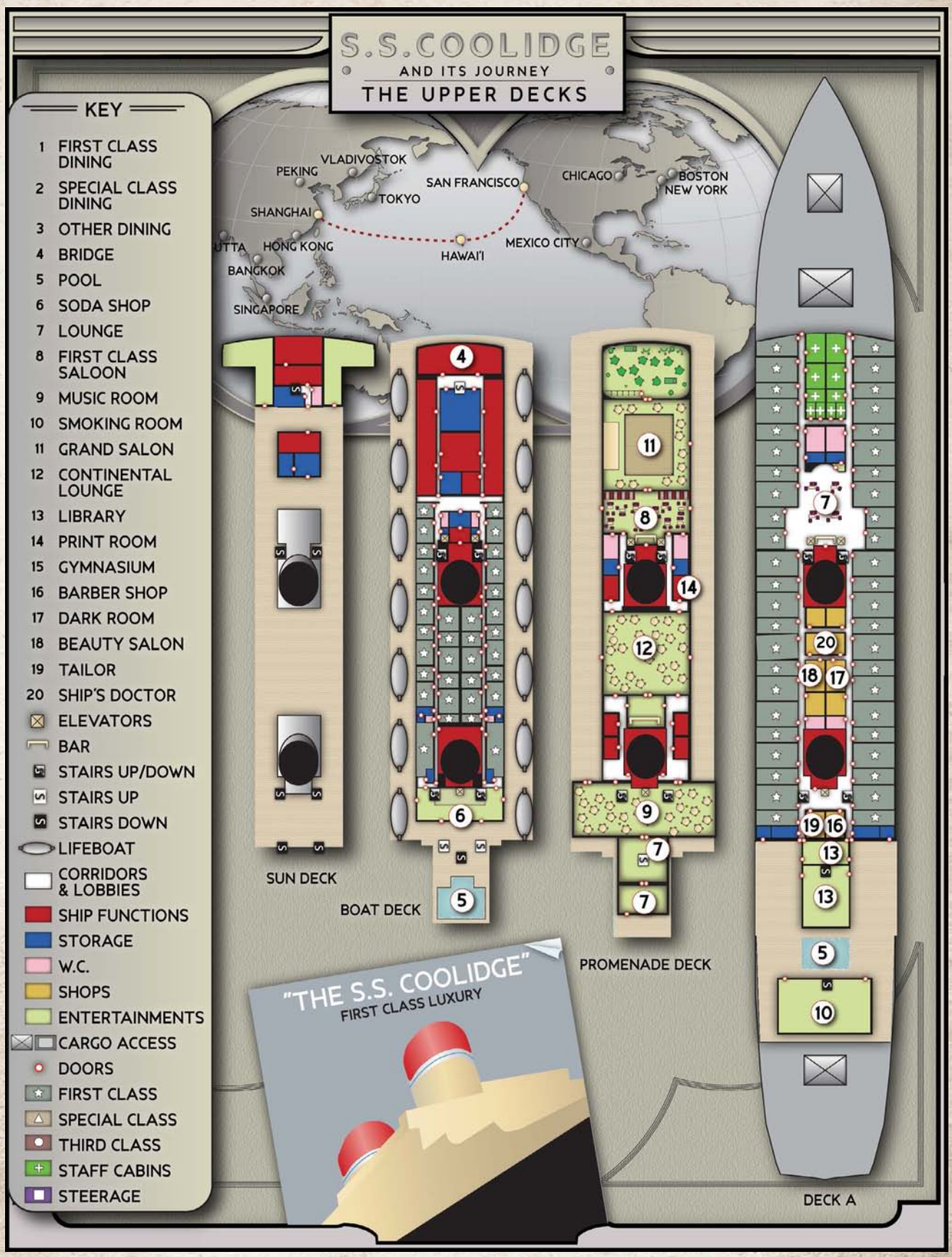
JUNE 18TH 1923: HIMES INFORMED ME HIS MAN, LEO CARPOZI HAS BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH OTHER ROBBERIES AND THINKS HE MAY BE NAMED IF CARPOZI WANTS TO PLEA BARGAIN. HIMES ASSURED ME MY NAME WOULD NEVER BE MENTIONED.

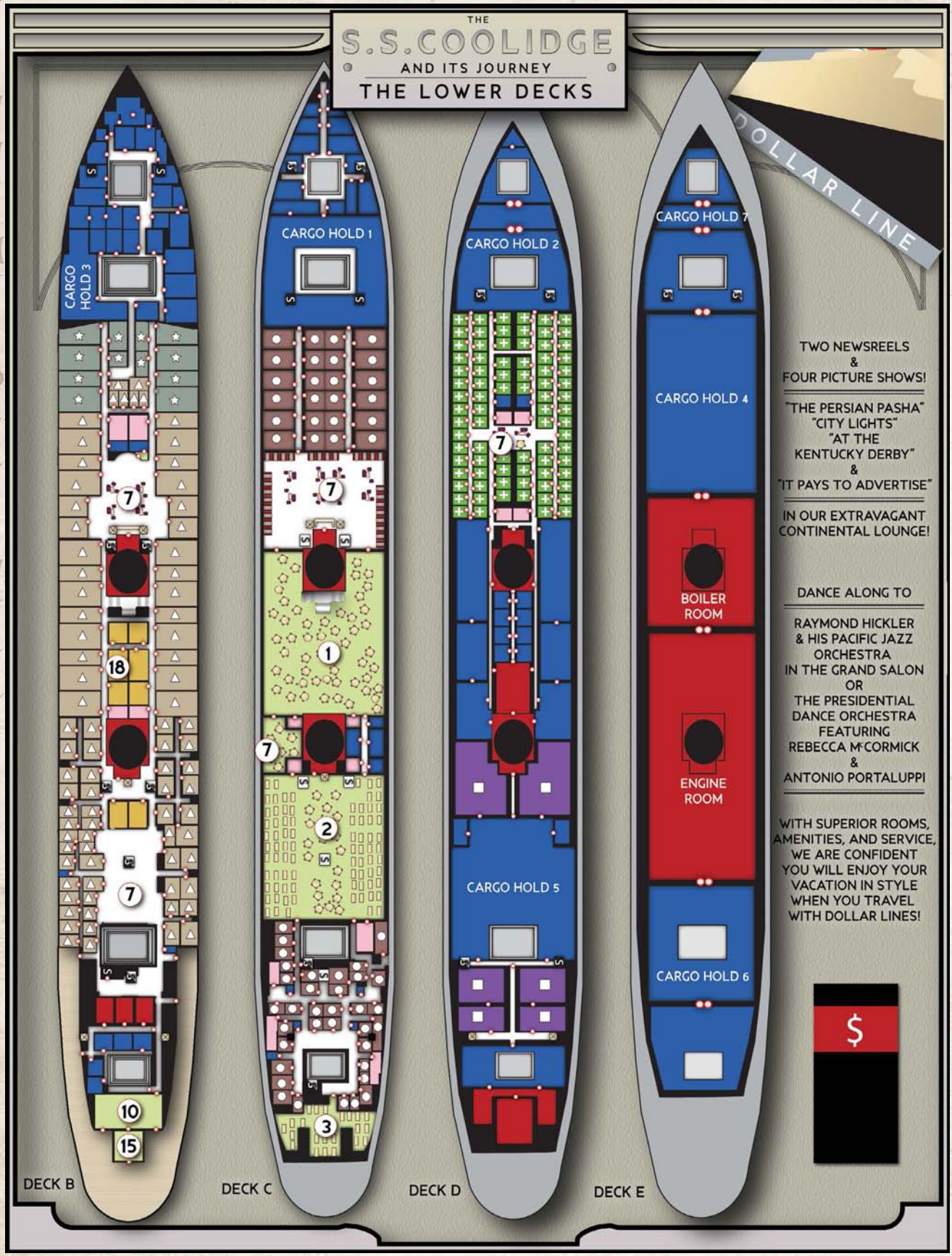
JULY 2ND 1923: WELL, THINGS TURNED OUT PEACHY FOR HIMES AFTER ALL. CARPOZI DIDN'T SQUEAL AND RAT HIM OUT. SO I THINK I'M SAFE ENOUGH NOW. CARPOZI EARNED HIMSELF A TEN-YEAR STRETCH.

JULY 25TH 1923: SHOCKING NEWS! HIMES KILLED IN A STREET ACCIDENT. APPARENTLY HE WAS RUN OVER BY A TRAM. THE BODY WAS IN AWFUL STATE—DISMEMBERED! ACCORDING TO THE CORONER, HIMES MAY HAVE BEEN HIT BY SEVERAL VEHICLES BEFORE FALLING UNDER THE STREET CAR. THEY ARE SAYING HE FELL AWKWARDLY WHILE STEPPING OFF A MOVING TRAM. BUT HE COULD EQUALLY HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF A HIT AND RUN. PERHAPS IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. PERHAPS NOT?

AUGUST 8TH 1923: WITH HIMES HAVING NO FAMILY I HAVE ARRANGED FOR HIS FUNERAL AND HAD RICHARDS CLEAR HIS PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HIS OFFICE AND APARTMENT. FELT IT WAS PRUDENT TO MAKE CERTAIN NOTHING COULD LEAD INQUISITIVE TYPES TO ME. AS WELL AS IT BEING THE DECENT THING TO DO.


THE SEEKER'S LODGE
PUBLIC ROOMS
STORE ROOM
UTILITY ROOMS
ACCESS/CORRIDOR
PRIVATE ROOMS
BATHROOM/W.C.
RESERVED BOOKS
W.R. WAITING ROOMS
ARROWS LEAD UP
FENCE
FRONT GATE
5ft
BOUNDARY OF THE HOUSE ABOVE
BASEMENT
MAGICAL EXPERIMENTATION ROOM
THE RITUAL ROOM
ROBING ROOM
BAR
FUNCTION ROOM
DINING ROOM
KITCHEN
PARLOR
SMOKING ROOM
OFFICE
RECEPTION ROOM
W.R.
LOBBY
W.R.
FIRST FLOOR
LIBRARY
BOARD ROOM
READING ROOM
LOUNGE
OFFICE
GALLERY
OFFICE
VERANDA
SECOND FLOOR

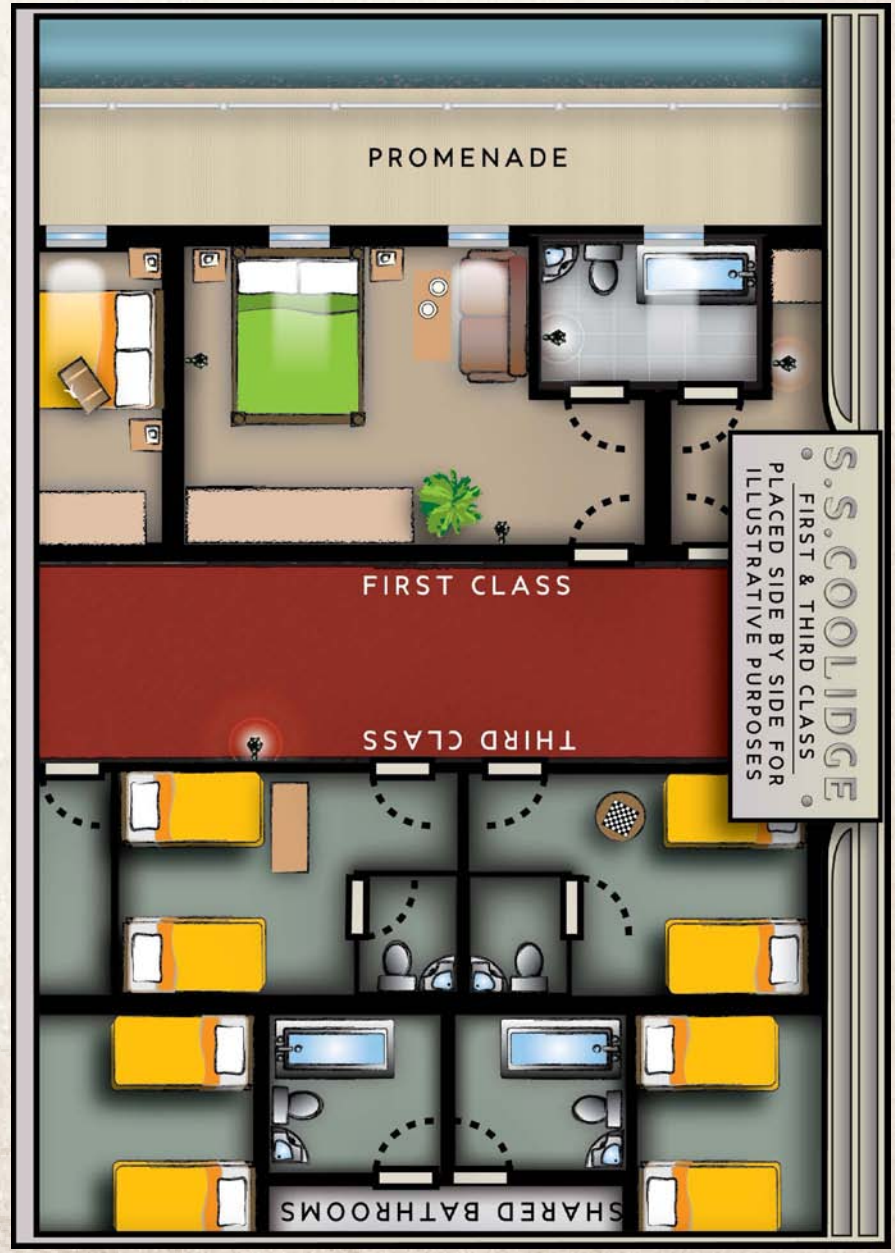

S.S.COOLIDGE
AND ITS JOURNEY
THE UPPER DECKS
KEY
1 FIRST CLASS DINING
2 SPECIAL CLASS DINING
3 OTHER DINING
4 BRIDGE
5 POOL
6 SODA SHOP
7 LOUNGE
8 FIRST CLASS SALOON
9 MUSIC ROOM
10 SMOKING ROOM
11 GRAND SALON
12 CONTINENTAL LOUNGE
13 LIBRARY
14 PRINT ROOM
15 GYMNASIUM
16 BARBER SHOP
17 DARK ROOM
18 BEAUTY SALON
19 TAILOR
20 SHIP'S DOCTOR
ELEVATORS
BAR
STAIRS UP/DOWN
STAIRS UP
STAIRS DOWN
LIFEBOAT
CORRIDORS & LOBBIES
SHIP FUNCTIONS
STORAGE
W.C.
SHOPS
ENTERTAINMENTS
CARGO ACCESS
DOORS
FIRST CLASS
SPECIAL CLASS
THIRD CLASS
STAFF CABINS
STEERAGE
VLADIVOSTOK
PEKING
SAN FRANCISCO
CHICAGO
BOSTON
NEW YORK
TOKYO
SHANGHAI
HONG KONG
UTTA
BANGKOK
SINGAPORE
HAWAI'I
MEXICO CITY
SUN DECK
BOAT DECK
PROMENADE DECK
DECK A
"THE S.S. COOLIDGE"
FIRST CLASS LUXURY


THE
S.S.COOLIDGE
AND ITS JOURNEY
THE LOWER DECKS
DOLLAR LINE
CARGO HOLD 3
CARGO HOLD 1
CARGO HOLD 2
CARGO HOLD 7
CARGO HOLD 4
BOILER ROOM
ENGINE ROOM
CARGO HOLD 5
CARGO HOLD 6
TWO NEWSREELS & FOUR PICTURE SHOWS!
"THE PERSIAN PASHA"
"CITY LIGHTS"
"AT THE KENTUCKY DERBY"
&
"IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE"
IN OUR EXTRAVAGANT CONTINENTAL LOUNGE!
DANCE ALONG TO
RAYMOND HICKLER & HIS PACIFIC JAZZ ORCHESTRA IN THE GRAND SALON
OR
THE PRESIDENTIAL DANCE ORCHESTRA FEATURING REBECCA McCORMICK & ANTONIO PORTALUPPI
WITH SUPERIOR ROOMS, AMENITIES, AND SERVICE, WE ARE CONFIDENT YOU WILL ENJOY YOUR VACATION IN STYLE WHEN YOU TRAVEL WITH DOLLAR LINES!
$
DECK B
DECK C
DECK D
DECK E

Handout: Slow Boat 1

MY LIFE HAS BEEN A LIE BUILT ON MY FATHER'S MONEY. DESPITE MY OUTWARD SEEMING, I AM A HOLLOW MILLIONAIRE. WITHOUT MONEY, I KNOW MYSELF INADEQUATE TO MAKE WHAT I WANTED OF MY LIFE. FAREWELL, WORLD, I GO TO A BETTER PLACE.

CHAD



CHAPTER 15

REFERENCES

EQUIPMENT

All 1930s costs are for an average item unless stated otherwise. Prices vary due to scarcity and demand—Keepers may decrease or increase costs accordingly.

CLOTHING FOR MEN

Tuxedo	$25.00
Golf suit	$20.00
Overcoat	$11.00
Wool suit	$10.50
Shoes	$4.00
Trousers	$2.00
Sweater	$2.00
Shirt	50¢
Leather gloves	$1.00
Hat, Stetson	$4.00
Hat, golf cap	89¢

CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

Mink coat	$600.00
Leopard coat	$100.00
Cloth coat	$7.00
Wool suit	$4.00
Raincoat	$2.75
Dress, good quality	$10.00
Wool dress	$2.00
Wool sweater	$1.75
Silk stockings	75¢

FOR YOUR POCKET

Kodak Box Brownie	$2.50
Briefcase	$1.00
Fountain pen	$1.00
Cigarette lighter	40¢
Pack of cigarettes	15¢

OUT AND ABOUT

Aviator/motorcycle goggles	$5.00
Backpack	$2.00
Backpack, leather	$6.00
Holster	$1.00
Watch, good quality	$20.00
Watch, average quality	$5.00
Camera, Bantam field model	$110.00
Movie camera, 8mm	$29.50
Roller skates	$1.25
Sled	$1.45
Gas mask	$8.00

INVESTIGATION

Microscope (x425)	$16.00
Typewriter	$37.00
Safe, fireproof	$12.00
Handcuffs	$5.00
Archaeology kit	$20.00+
Carpentry tools	$5.00-10.00
Lockpick set	$5.00-10.00
Mechanics tools	$25.00
Medical kit	$10.00+
Binoculars (x5)	$12.00

FOR YOUR HOME

Grand piano	$400.00
Console radio	$50.00
Electric washing machine	$50.00
3-piece bedroom set	$50.00
8-piece dining room set	$45.00
Wing chair	$40.00
Gas stove	$25.00
Vacuum cleaner	$20.00
Double bed w/ box spring	$15.00
Silverware set	$5.00
Electric iron	$2.00
Wool blanket	$1.00

SOMETHING TO EAT

Ham	31¢
Sirloin steak	29¢
Butter	28¢
Coffee	26¢
Cheese	24¢
Chicken	22¢
Pork chops	20¢
Bananas	07¢
Rice	06¢
Sugar	05¢
Onions	03¢
Potatoes	02¢
Whiskey (per qt.)	$1.50 (after 1932)

AT THE RESTAURANT (NEW YORK PRICES)

Large pork chops (3)	30¢
Ham or bacon and eggs	20¢
Yankee pot roast	20¢
Hamburger steak with onions	15¢
Eggs, potatoes, and coffee	10¢
Soup with bread	5¢

HOMES

New house (1930 average)	$7,145.00
New house (1939 average)	$11,945.00
Farm and six room house	$4,250.00
Sears kit home	$2,800.00
Apartment	$15.00 per month
Rented house	$22.50 per month
Hotel, high quality	$5.00-10.00 per night
Tent	$5.00-$25.00

TRANSPORT

New car (1930 average)	$640.00
New car (1939 average)	$700.00
Auburn 1931	$945.00
Auburn 1931, convertible	$1045.00
Buick 1932	$995.00
Cadillac 1936	$1900.00
Chevrolet Six 1930	$555.00
Chevrolet Standard 1935	$465.00
Chrysler Coupe 1932	$1925.00
Chrysler Custom Roadster	$2995.00
Dodge 1935	$645.00
Ford Sedan 1932	$500.00
Ford V8 1935	$510.00
Plymouth Sedan 1938	$685.00
Silver Cloud Travel Trailer	$695.00
Bicycle	$7.00

TRAVEL

Air, New York to Chicago rtn	$86.31
Air, Chicago to L.A. rtn	$207.00
Rail, Chicago to San Francisco rtn	$80.50
Rail, 50 mile pass	$10.39
Sea, European cruise	$495.00
Sea, Bermuda cruise	$110.00
Sea, around the world	$749.00
Sea, New York to San Francisco rtn	$220.00
Hindenburg, transatlantic rtn	$720.00



WEAPON LISTS

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Bow and Arrows	Firearms (Bow)	1D6 + ½ DB	30 yards	1	1	$5	97
Brass Knuckles	Fighting (Brawl)	1D3+1+DB	Touch	1	—	$1	—
Bullwhip	Fighting (Whip)	1D3 + ½ DB	10 feet	1	—	$6	—
Burning Torch	Fighting (Brawl)	1D6 + burn	Touch	1	—	$0.05	—
Club (blackjack, cosh, life-preserver)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D8+DB	Touch	1	—	$1	—
Club, large (baseball, cricket bat, poker)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D8+DB	Touch	1	—	$3	—
Club, small (nightstick)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D6+DB	Touch	1	—	$2	—
Crossbow (i)	Firearms (Bow)	1D8 +2	50 yards	1/2	1	$15	96
Garrote* (i)	Fighting (Garrote)	1D6+DB	Touch	1	—	$0.50	—
Hatchet/ Sickle	Fighting (Axe)	1D6+1+DB	Touch	1	—	$3	—
Knife, Large (machete, bayonet, *etc.*) (i)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D8+DB	Touch	1	—	$4	—
Knife, Medium (carving knife, *etc.*) (i)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D4+2+DB	Touch	1	—	$2	—

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Knife, Small (switchblade, etc.) (i)	Fighting (Brawl)	1D4+DB	Touch	1	—	$1	—
Nunchaku	Fighting (Flail)	1D8+DB	Touch	1	—	$1	—
Rock, Thrown	Throw	1D4 + ½ DB	STR/5 yards	1	—	—	—
Shuriken (i)	Throw	1D3 + ½ DB	STR/5 yards	2	One use	$0.50	00
Spear (cavalry lance)* (i)	Fighting (Spear)	1D8+1	Touch	1	—	$30	—
Spear, Thrown (i)	Throw	1D8+1 + ½ DB	STR/5 yards	1	—	$1	—
Sword, heavy (cavalry sabre) (i)	Fighting (Sword)	1D8+1+DB	Touch	1	—	$30	—
Sword, medium (rapier, heavy epee) (i)	Fighting (Sword)	1D6+1+DB	Touch	1	—	$20	—
Sword, light (sharpened fencing foil, sword cane) (i)	Fighting (Sword)	1D6+DB	Touch	1	—	$30	—
War Boomerang	Throw	1D8 + ½ DB	STR/5 yards	1	—	$2	—
Wood Axe	Fighting (Axe)	1D8+2+DB	Touch	1	—	$5	—

Handguns (i)	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Flintlock Handgun	Firearms (HG)	1D6+1	10 yards	1/4	1	$35	95
.22 Short Automatic	Firearms (HG)	1D6	10 yards	1 (3)	6	$30	100
.25 Derringer (1B)	Firearms (HG)	1D6	3 yards	1	1	$20	100
.32 or 7.65mm Revolver	Firearms (HG)	1D8	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$20	100
.32 or 7.65mm Automatic	Firearms (HG)	1D8	15 yards	1 (3)	8	$25	99
.38 or 9mm Revolver	Firearms (HG)	1D10	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$30	100
.38 Automatic	Firearms (HG)	1D10	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$30	99
Mauser C96	Firearms (HG)	1D10+1	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$40	99
.41 Revolver	Firearms (HG)	1D10	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$30	100
.44 Revolver	Firearms (HG)	1D10+2	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$35	100
.45 Revolver	Firearms (HG)	1D10+2	15 yards	1 (3)	6	$35	100
.45 Automatic	Firearms (HG)	1D10+2	15 yards	1 (3)	7	$40	100

Rifles (i)	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
.58 Springfield Rifle Musket	Firearms (R/S)	1D10+4	60 yards	1/4	1	$40	95
.22 Bolt-Action Rifle	Firearms (R/S)	1D6+1	30 yards	1	6	$20	99
.30 Lever-Action Carbine	Firearms (R/S)	2D6	50 yards	1	6	$20	98
.45 Martini-Henry Rifle	Firearms (R/S)	1D8+1D6+3	80 yards	1/3	1	$25	100

Rifles (i)	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Col. Moran's Air Rifle*	Firearms (R/S)	2D6+1	20 yards	1/3	1	$200	88
Garand M1, M2 Rifle	Firearms (R/S)	2D6+4	110 yards	1	8	$400	100
.303 Lee-Enfield	Firearms (R/S)	2D6+4	110 yards	1	10	$60	100
.30-06 Bolt-Action Rifle	Firearms (R/S)	2D6+4	110 yards	1	10	$45	100
Elephant Gun (2B)	Firearms (R/S)	3D6+4	100 yards	1 or 2	2	$400	100

Shotguns*	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
20-gauge Shotgun (2B)	Firearms (R/S)	2D6/ 1D6/ 1D3	10/20/50 yards	1 or 2	2	$20	100
16-gauge Shotgun (2B)	Firearms (R/S)	2D6+2/ 1D6+1/ 1D4	10/20/50 yards	1 or 2	2	$20	100
12-gauge Shotgun (2B)	Firearms (R/S)	4D6/ 2D6/ 1D6	10/20/50 yards	1	2	$20	100
12-gauge Shotgun (pump)	Firearms (R/S)	4D6/ 2D6/ 1D6	10/20/50 yards	1	5	$25	0
12-gauge Shotgun (semi-auto)	Firearms (R/S)	4D6/ 2D6/ 1D6	10/20/50 yards	2	5	$30	100
12-gauge Shotgun (2B, sawed off)	Firearms (R/S)	4D6/1D6	5/10 yards	1 or 2	2	N/A	100
10-gauge Shotgun (2B)	Firearms (R/S)	4D6+2/ 2D6+1/ 1D6	10/20/50 yards	1 or 2	2	$300	100

Submachine guns*	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Beretta 1938A	Firearms (SMG)	1D10	20 yards	1 or Full auto	10/20/ 30/40	$200	95
MP18	Firearms (SMG)	1D10	20 yards	Full auto	32	$200	95
MP-28/II	Firearms (SMG)	1D10+2	20 yards	1 or Full auto	20/32	$200	96
Thompson	Firearms (SMG)	1D10+2	20 yards	1 or Full auto	20/30/ 50	$225	96

Machine guns*	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Model 1882 Gatling Gun	Firearms (MG)	2D6+4	100 yards	Full auto	200	$2,000	96
Browning Auto Rifle M1918	Firearms (MG)	2D6+4	90 yards	1 (2) or Full auto	20	$800	100
.30 Browning M1917A1, belt-fed	Firearms (MG)	2D6+4	150 yards	Full auto	250	$3,000	96
Lewis Gun MK I	Firearms (MG)	2D6+4	110 yards	Full auto	27/97	$1,000	96
Lewis Gun MK VI	Firearms (MG)	2D6+4	140 yards	Full auto	47	$1,500	97

Explosives, Heavy Weapons, misc.	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Molotov Cocktail (improvised incendiary device)	Throw	2D6 + Burn	STR/5 yards	1/2	1 only	N/A	95
Signal Handgun (Flare Gun)	Firearms (HG)	1D10+1D3 Burn	10	1/2	1	$20	100
Dynamite Stick*	Throw	4D10/ 3 yards	STR/5 yards	1/2	1 only	$2	99
Blasting Cap	Electrical Repair	2D10/ 1 yard	N/A	N/A	One use	$20/ box	100

Explosives, Heavy Weapons, misc.	Skill	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Bullets in Gun (Mag)	Cost 1930s	Malfunction (MAL)
Pipe Bomb	Demolitions	1D10 / 3 yards	In place	One use	1 only	N/A	95
Hand Grenade*	Throw	4D10 / 3 yards	STR/5 yards	1/2	1 only	N/A	99
75mm Field Gun	Artillery	10D10 / 2 yards	500 yards	1/4	Separate	$1,500	99
Anti-Personnel Mine	Demolitions	4D10 / 5 yards	In place	In place	One use	N/A	99
Flamethrower	Firearms (Flame-thrower)	2D6+burn	25 yards	1	At least 10	N/A	93

KEY:

Acronyms:

- (HG): Handgun
- (R/S): Rifle/Shotgun
- (SMG): Submachine Gun
- (MG): Machine Gun

Skill: character skill required to use the weapon.

Damage: roll the dice indicated to determine weapon's damage. When an Extreme success is achieved with an attack roll the damage is increased. For the purpose of determining increased damage weapons are divided into two groups: impaling and non-impaling. Non-impaling weapons deliver maximum damage (plus maximum damage bonus if applicable). It is important to note that only those initiating an attack deal greater damage with an Extreme success; any successful attacks made as a result of fighting back do not deal increased damage, even on an Extreme success.

(i): Indicates a weapon category or specific weapon which can impale. On an Extreme level of success an impale has been inflicted: maximum damage (plus maximum damage bonus for melee weapons) and add a damage roll for the weapon. Impales are not applied as a result of fighting back. At very long range, when only an Extreme success will hit the target, an impale only occurs with a critical hit (a roll of "01").

Base Range: standard distance of weapon's attack.

Uses per Round: number of attacks that can be initiated per combat round (does not affect number of times a character may fight back with a melee weapon). Most firearms may fire one bullet without penalty; more bullets up to the maximum (shown by the number in brackets) may be fired, but each shot is taken with a penalty die. Some weapons have burst or full auto capability, when using this, use the automatic fire rules. For shotguns firing twice at the same target, no penalty is taken for the second shot, but if the second shot targets a different opponent, that shot is made with a penalty.

Bullets in Gun (Magazine): there may be multiple options depending on the size of magazine or drum used.

1930s Cost: May reflect availability, increase for blackmarket.

+DB: plus damage bonus, which varies by individual.

Burn: target must roll Luck to avoid catching on fire. Take minimum damage (1) on following round. Double this each round until extinguished (providing target is flammable).

Burst/Full Auto: some automatic weapons can be switched to fire burst or full auto, such firearms are usually unavailable to civilians; prices reflect black-market.

1B, 2B: 1 barrel, 2 barrels.

1/2, 1/3: can be accurately fired every second/third round.

1 or 2: one or two barrels can be fired in same round.

NA: not available (in auto-fire configuration or at all).

Malfunction (Mal): with any attack die roll result equal to or higher than the firing weapon's malfunction number, the shooter does not merely miss—his or her weapon does not fire. Mechanical Repair roll or Firearm skill roll required.

2 yards, 3 yards, etc.: damage radius of explosion in yards; at up to double the range, the damage is halved. At up to triple the range, the damage is quartered. Beyond that damage is ignored.

*** See note below:**

Chainsaw: very awkward to use as a weapon; double the user's chance of a fumble. Chainsaw fumbles are horrible and cause 2D8 harm to the user, as the chainsaw is likely to buck up towards the user's head or shoulder, or cut down towards their legs or feet. Alternatively, the chain can break and connect with the user's body (2D8 damage). A malfunction causes the engine to stall or the chain to jam or become displaced. A major wound from a chainsaw severs a random limb.

Col. Moran's Air Rifle: uses compressed air rather than explosive propellant, achieving relatively silent operation.

Dynamite stick and Hand grenade: each delivers 4D10 damage to those within 3 yards, 2D10 to those within 6 yards, and 1D10 to those within 9 yards.

Garrote: requires the victim to make a Fighting Maneuver to escape or suffer 1D6 damage per round. Effective only against human (or similar) opponents.

Handguns: if firing more than one shot per round all rolls are made with one penalty die. Number in brackets denotes maximum number of shots that may be fired in one round.

Rifles: all rifles except .45 Martini-Henry Rifle and Col. Moran's Air Rifle fire 1 shot per round. Reloading is what takes the time, not chambering the round.

Shotguns: do three levels of damage depending on their range, written as "short range/medium range/long range." Rifles and handguns can impale, however shotguns, which fire a mass of smaller shot, cannot impale (although a shotgun loaded with slugs instead of pellets could impale). This is not so say that shotguns are not deadly; an extreme level of success with a shotgun blast at close range will do 24 damage!

Shotgun solid slugs: 10-gauge 1D10+7, 12-gauge 1D10+6, 16-gauge 1D10+5, 20-gauge 1D10+4; base ranges 50 yards. May impale.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

The 1930s

Allen, Frederick Lewis. *Since Yesterday: The Nineteen-Thirties in America*. New York: Bantam. 1939.

This Fabulous Century. Vol. IV (1930-1940). New York: Time-Life Books. 1969.

Gibson, Campbell. *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990.*

Encyclopædia Britannica web site at www.britannica.com

The Greatest Films web site (Tim Dirks) at www.filmsite.org

Oklahombres Online Research Forum web site at www.oklahombres.org

U.S. Census Bureau web site at www.census.gov

www.airships.net

The Pulps

Trombetta, Jim. *The Horror! The Horror! Comic Books The Government Didn't Want You To Read*. Abrams ComicArts, New York. 2010.

The Pulp Magazines Project web site at www.pulpmags.org

The Vintage Library webs site at www.vintagelibrary.com

The Pulp Net web site at www.thepulp.net

The Pulp Rack web site at www.pulprack.com

The Pulp Gallery web site at http://home.comcast.net/~pulpgallery/welcome.html

Popular Culture

Where to start? There are so many great films in a pulp vein, here's just a handful…

Angels with Dirty Faces, Michael Curtiz (Director), 1938.

The Maltese Falcon, John Huston (Director), 1941.

Big Trouble In Little China, John Carpenter (Director), 1986.

Raiders of the Lost Ark, Steven Spielberg (Director), 1981.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Steven Spielberg (Director), 1984.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Steven Spielberg (Director), 1989.

King Kong, Merian C. Cooper (Director uncredited), Ernest B. Schoedsack (Director uncredited), 1933.

Planet Terror, Robert Rodriguez, (Director), 2007.

Rocketeer, Joe Johnston (Director), 1991.

She, Robert Day (Director), 1965.

The Mummy, Stephen Sommers (Director), 1999.

The Mummy Returns, Stephen Sommers (Director), 2001.

They Live, John Carpenter (Director), 1988.

Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze, Michael Anderson (Director), 1975.

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai, W. D. Richter (Director), 1984.

Dick Tracy, Warren Beatty (Director), 1990.

The Phantom, Simon Wincer (Director), 1996.

The Shadow, Russel Mulcahy (Director), 1994.

Public Enemies, Michael Mann (Director), 2009.

CHAPTER 16

INDEX

A

Actor 24
Adjusting Skill or Characteristic Rolls 60
Adventurer 15
Age 23
Agency Detective 24
Airships 115
Alcohol 72
Alert 25, 121
Ambrosia Foundation 52, 53, 54, 55, 130
Animal Companion 26
Arcane Insight 25
Archaeologist 26
Archetype 15, 34
Archetype Skills 34
Arizona Clark Barker 106
Artist 26
Athlete 26
Augmented Skill Suggestions . . . 80
Author 26
Auto Lock-Pick 87
Aviator 27
Avoiding Certain Death . . 8, 61, 70
Avoiding Unconsciousness 61

B

Backstory 38, 41
Bank Robber 27
Bartender 27
Beady Eye 25, 121
Beat Cop 27, 131
Beefcake 16
Big Game Hunter 27
Bind Enemy 128
Black Thursday 99
Blaze of Glory 69
Bonnie and Clyde 101, 106
Bon Vivant 16
Bounty Hunter 27
Boxer 27
Brain Enhancer 88
Butler 27, 109

C

Caduceus 50
Caleb Lusk 55, 57, 121, 131
Caravaggio Heavy 122
Cash and Assets 41
Cat Burglar 28
Characteristics 23
Charles Floyd 106
Chauffeur 28
Circle of Nausea 128
Civilian Conservation Corps . . 102, 103
Clairvoyance 25, 84
Cliffhanger 98
Cloak of Fire 128
Cold Blooded 16
Combat Talents 24, 25
Computer Use 35, 87
Confidence Trickster 28
Credit Rating 35, 41, 42, 70
Criminal 28, 106
Critical Success Benefits 72
Critical Successes and Fumbles . . 62
Cthulhu Mythos 26, 34, 36, 38, 69, 72, 74, 78, 79, 81, 87
Cthulhu Mythos Points 72
Cult Leader 28

D

Death Ray 88
Death's Door 61, 67
Deflect Harm 129
Department 29 49
Development Phase 69, 72
Dilettante 28
Divination 25, 84, 122
Doctor of Medicine 28
Dodging 63, 70
Dreamer 17
Drifter 28
Dual-Wielding 71
Dust Bowl 101, 106, 111
Dying and Death 66, 67

E

Effects of Insanity 74
Egghead 17, 86
Elder Sign Bullets 88
Elected Official 29
Endurance 24, 121
Engineer 29
Entertainer 16, 19, 20, 22, 29
Escaping Close Combat 63
Exorcist 29
Explorer 29

F

Faster Recovery 66
Fast Load 25
FBI 49, 50, 53, 58, 106, 107, 108
Federal Agent 29
Femme Fatale 18
Feng Wang 123
Fine-Tuning Luck 70
First Aid 37, 38, 66
Fleet Footed 25, 121

G

Gadget 26, 86, 87
Gambler 29
Gangster 29
Gentleman 30
George Kelly 106
Get-Away Drive 30
Ghost Detector 88
Goop, The 125
Gray Tigers 55, 56, 57
Grave Robber, The 126
Grease Monkey 19, 86
Great Depression 13, 99, 101, 102, 105-108
Gun Moll 30

H

Handy 26
Hard Boiled 19
Hardened 25
Harlequin 19
Hazards 94
Heavy Hitter 25, 121
Hero 15, 23, 44
Hired Muscle 30
Hit Man 30
Hit Points 23, 65, 66, 121
Hobo 30, 110
Hooker 30
Hooverville 104, 110
Hunter 19, 27
Hypnosis 37, 38

I

Indefinite Insanity 69, 72
Inheritors, The 57
Insane Talent 74, 75, 76, 77, 78
Intern 33
Investigative Journalist 30
Iron Liver 24
Itinerant Worker . . 16, 18, 19, 20, 30
It's Only a Scratch! 61

J

J. Edgar Hoover 49, 106, 108
Jade Emperor, The 122
Jet Pack 88
John Dillinger 106

K

Keen Hearing 24
Keen Vision 24
Knockout 65

L

Laborer 31
Lady 30
Librarian 31
Lindbergh Baby 107
Linguist 25, 88
Linguistaphone 88
Living Standards 35
Look Out Master! 63
Lore 25
Luck 8, 23, 26, 41, 60, 61, 62, 63, 67, 69, 70, 98
Lucky 26

M

Macguffin 93
Macguffin Generator 93
Magic 81
Magic Points 23
Major Wounds 66
Malevolent Spirit 133
Master of Disguise 26
Mechanical Repair 80, 87, 95
Medicine 38, 66, 80
Medium 25, 84, 122
Mental Talents 24, 25
Military Officer 31
Miscellaneous Talents 24, 26
Missionary 16, 18, 22, 31
Mook 63
Musician 31
Mystic 20, 83, 86
Mythos Books 81
Mythos Knowledge 26
Mythos Science 87

N

National Firearms Act 107
National Guard 132
National Recovery Agency . 102, 103
New Deal 101, 102, 105, 109
Night Vision 24, 121
Nimble 25, 121
Nosy Journalist 132
Nurse 31

O

Oakies 112
Occultist 31, 83, 86

Occupations. 24
Occupation Skills 34
Optional Rules 3, 4, 42, 70, 83
Organizations 44
Outsider 20

P

Parapsychologist 32
Permanent Insanity 74
Personal Interests. 34
Photographer. 32
Photographic Memory 25
Physical Talents 24
Plots 90
Plot Twists. 95
Police Detective. 32, 131
Portable Telephony 88
Possession 85, 86
Power Lifter 24
Priest 32
Private Investigator 32
Professor 32
Professor Cobalt 124
Prohibition . . . 49, 101, 104, 106, 107
Prone 65
Psychic Attacks and Possession. . . 85, 86
Psychic Powers. 8, 25, 37, 83
Psychic Skills 84
Psychoanalysis 38
Psychometry 25, 84, 122
Public Works Administration . . . 104
Pulp Heroes. 8, 15
Pulp Themes 91

Q

Quick Draw. 25, 121
Quick-Fire Hero Creation 41
Quick Healer. 24, 66
Quick Reference Chart 43
Quick Study 25

R

Ranger 32
Rapid Attack 25, 121
Rapid Fire 25, 121
Raven, The 129
Red Lining 92
Regaining Sanity 69
Reporter 32
Resilient. 25, 61, 70, 121
Resourceful 26
Rewards. 69, 98
Robot. 134
Rogue 20

S

Sailor 32
Sanity Loss . 61, 62, 66, 70, 72, 73, 98
Scarlet Arachnis 126
Scary 26
Scenario Hooks 92
Scholar. 20
Scientist. 33
Secretary 33
Seeker 21
Shadow 26
Shard, The 53, 130
Sharp Witted. 25
Shooting at a Target through Cover 65
Sidekick. 21
Silas Carvaggio 122
Siren's Song 129
Smooth Talker. 24
Soldier 33
Spell. 81, 82, 83, 128, 129
Spell Casting 82, 83
Spending Level 42
Spy. 33
Steadfast 22
Stout Constitution. 24, 121
Street Punk 33
Strong Willed 25, 121
Student 33
Summary of Hero Development . . 70
Suppressing Fire 65
Swashbuckler. 22

T

Talent, Pulp 8, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 42, 69, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 121, 122
Telekinesis 25, 84, 85, 122
Thrill Seeker 22
Tougher Opponents 96
Tough Guy 24, 121
Traps 91, 95
Tribe Member 33
Two-Fisted 22, 91
Tyrannosaurus Rex 132

U

Unemployment 108
Union Activist 33

V

Vanguard Club, The 44
Vanish 129
Velociraptor 133
Voice Mimicking 87

W

Waitress 27
Weird Science 8, 26, 35, 80, 86
Works Progress Administration . 104
Wounds and Healing. 65, 66
Wrestler 27

Y

Yogi 34, 83, 86
Y'ssiss 127

Z

Zealot 34

THE DISINTEGRATOR

A

Ambrose King 149
Andy Gilman. 149
Arkham 139
Auction 136, 141, 142, 144, 149

B

Bill Sampson 136, 137, 141

D

Daniel Wade 136, 137, 140, 142, 144, 145, 146, 148, 152, 154
Demonstration 144, 149, 150
Disintegrator 135, 137, 139, 140, 142, 144, 148, 154
Disintegrator Handout 1. 140
Disintegrator Handout 2. 144
Dramatis Personae. 144

E

Ed Dalton 147, 155
Emmeline Pelfry . 144, 148, 152, 154
Ernest Kepler . . . 136, 146, 148, 152, 155

G

Gabe Dyer. 149, 151
George Pelfry 135, 136, 137, 139, 141, 144, 148, 152, 154

H

Hotel Staff and Guests 149

J

James Gilroy 149
John Dorcas. 145, 155

K

Kingsport. 136, 140, 142, 147, 149, 150

L

Lucas Stockman 149

M

Matt Kelly 145, 155
Mazy Tulle. 149
Mi-Go. 151, 152, 153, 157
Mi-Go Flesh Puppets 157
Miskatonic University 138, 139
Mister Sleep 136, 147, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156

O

Oscar Brown 136, 147, 156

P

Paul Gardiner 147, 156
Peggy Peartree 149
Pietro Morasini . . 136, 145, 148, 155
Professor 135, 138, 141, 154
Professor Lionel Finch 135, 138

R

Research 141
Resilient. 155
Rewards. 154
Russo. 136, 145, 155

S

Sara Mullins 149

T

Timeline 149

V

Valery Hind. 136, 147, 156

W

White Point Hotel 136, 141, 142, 147, 157
William Walker . . 135, 136, 146, 155

WAITING FOR THE HURRICANE

B

Bertha Street 162
Boca Chica Key. 159
Breath of the Deep 173

C

Cemetery. 164
Chase. 164, 165

D

Deep One 172, 174, 175
Dick Hodges 163
Douglas Whiting 158, 159, 163, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172
Dynamite. 166

E

Eleanor Harris. 160, 162
Esoteric Order of Dagon. 158, 159, 169, 172, 174

F

Fort Zachary Taylor. 163

G

Grand Hotel .158, 159, 160, 163, 169
Great Cthulhu. 158, 159, 162, 165, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175

H

Harbor. 166
Harbor Master. 166
Hector Mendez 158, 159, 163, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172

I

Innsmouth 158

J

Jennifer Flint 160
Joe Marshall 163
Joseph Reese 169, 170, 173

K

Key West 158, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172

L

Labor Day Hurricane 158, 172
Leon Doyle . 159, 160, 162, 166, 169, 173

P

Police 162, 163
Puerto Rico Trench 158

R

Rha'thylla 158, 159, 165, 166, 169, 172, 173
Richard Lowrie 160, 162
Ritual 169, 170

S

Smathers Beach 159
Star-Spawn of Cthulhu 166, 170, 172, 175
State Road 4A 158, 159

T

Tank Island 166, 169
Third Avenue 164
Tommy Jacobs 160

V

Vincent Lloyd 159
Violet Street 164

W

Wave of Oblivion 173
Wisteria Island 162, 165, 166, 167, 169

Z

Zodiac 163

PANDORA'S BOX

A

Armand de Soto 193, 200

B

Bob Quinn 182, 184, 187, 196
Byakhee 177, 201

C

Carey Hooper . . . 184, 188, 189, 198
Carlo Stompanato 185, 188, 197
Charles Jefferson 184, 191, 197
Chez Paree 184
Connie Bailey 176, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 197

D

Denny McDaid . . 184, 187, 189, 196
Dhole 177, 202
Dimensional Shambler 177, 202
Dramatis Personae 181

E

Elliott Gaskell 177, 190, 194
Ephraim Frosch 191

F

FBI 185, 188

G

Ginette Polk 194
Gug 177, 202

H

Harris Doll 193, 201
Herman Bukowsky . . . 185, 188, 199
Himes 177, 191, 192, 193, 194
Hugo Wittering 193, 200
Hunting Horror 177, 202
Hyperborean 176, 180

J

Jimmy Bandello . . 184, 185, 190, 197
John Drummond 176, 181, 183, 184, 186, 187, 197

K

Klaus Sauerfeld 177, 186, 192, 193, 194, 200
Knights of St. Jerome 191

L

Lawrence Whitlock . . 185, 186, 188, 199
Leo Carpozi 177, 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 194, 196
Lester Conklin 177, 189
Lieutenant Dobringhaus 189
Lilith Chalmers 181, 184, 186, 191, 192, 193, 200

M

Marion Alden 194
Maurice Denning 194
Mike Petrosini 187
Minnie Whitlock 186, 188, 199
Miskatonic University 181
Moon-Beast 177, 202

N

Neville Lammas 185, 188, 199

P

Pandora Handout 1 186
Pandora Handout 2 187
Pandora Handout 3 190
Pandora Handout 4 178
Pandora Handout 5 179
Pandora Handout 6 180
Pandora Handout 7 181
Pandora Handout 8 182
Pandora Handout 9 182

Pandora Handout 10 183
Pandora Handout 11 183
Pandora Handout 12 191
Pandora Handout 13 . . . . . 192, 193
Pandora Moulin 176, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 196
Pandora's Box. 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 198
Pandora's Palace. 176, 181, 183, 184, 187, 188, 189, 193, 194, 196
Phil Montana 185, 197
Police. 189, 190, 200

R

Ralph Canino 185, 198
Rewards. 194
Richards. 177, 190, 193
Robert Heath 194
Roland Lembrace 181, 183, 184

S

Seekers of Eternal Wisdom. 177, 181, 186, 190, 191, 192
Shantak 177, 202
Shoggoth. 177, 202
Siegfried Mecklenburg 193, 201
Sir Martin Fotheringham . . 180, 182
Sky High Club 184
Ss'an-eth 180
Star Vampire 177, 202
Sylvia Fane 190, 191, 194, 201
Syndicate 177, 181, 182, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190, 193, 194, 196, 197, 198

T

Theophilus Carney. 180
Tony Porello 185, 198

V

Vern Bailey 176, 177, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 192, 193, 194
Victor Charnley. 194

W

Whitlock Gang 185, 199
Wilson Ives 194, 201

Z

Zelda Green 194

A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA

A

Able-Bodied Seamen 207
Albert Hallander 207, 212, 214, 218, 230
Alex Hubbard 215, 231
Anthony Deplace. 207
Arthur Benedict Carmel 207
Arthur Pendury 225
Azathoth 208, 223

B

Bilges. 224
Boat Deck 206, 215, 218, 220
Boilers 209, 224
Book of Red Jade. 223, 228

C

Cargo Hold 1 225
Cargo Hold 2 225
Cargo Hold 3 225
Cargo Hold 4 225
Cargo Hold 5 225
Cargo Hold 6 . . . . . 225, 226
Cargo Hold 7 . . . . . 209, 222, 224, 225, 227, 228
Chad Peterson 208, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 226
Charles Astor 214, 216, 218, 219, 220, 231
China. 205, 206, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 228, 232
Crawling One 205, 206, 207, 208, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 233
Crew 206, 209, 213, 222

D

Deck A 217, 218
Dining. 206, 207
Dollar Line 206, 207, 209, 217
Dramatis Personae. 213
Dr. Soong 212, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 231

E

Entertainment. 208
Erik Hartman 207, 219, 230

F

Father Alvarez. 212, 213, 216, 217, 220, 221, 222, 232
First Class 206, 207, 208, 212, 214, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 222, 227, 230
First Class Library. 208, 222
Flying Polyp .213, 223, 227, 228, 234

G

Gate. 212, 228, 233
Gustav Knutsen. 224

H

Hank Henson 207, 219
Hawaiian Botanical Specimens 218, 225, 226
Henry Nelson . . . 206, 213, 224, 230
Honolulu. 206, 208, 212, 215, 216, 221, 222
Hugo Schramm. 206, 213, 217, 219, 220, 230
Hunting Horror. 222, 226, 233

I

Institut Orientale. 206

J

James Hawthorne 225

L

Lo Mai 215, 217, 218, 231

M

Marco Borrely 206

Martin Aimesworthy 207, 214, 219, 221, 230

Martin Dungass 207, 208, 212, 219, 221

Miles Hardaway 213, 217, 220, 222, 232

Music Room 208, 212

N

Nyarlathotep 223

O

Oliver Grossman 207

Oregon 205, 218, 226

P

Passengers . . .206, 209, 214, 215, 217

Phillipe d'Alsace 207

Phyllis Barnes 212, 213, 215, 218, 222, 225, 231

Pipes of Leng 205, 212, 213, 216, 222, 225, 226, 227, 228

Pipes of Madness 227, 234

Promenade Deck 220

R

Robert Reid 207

S

San Francisco 205, 206, 208, 212, 216, 217, 218, 220, 222, 225

San Francisco Chronicle 217, 220, 222

Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan . . 223

Shanghai 205, 206, 213, 214, 215, 216, 218, 223, 224, 228, 230

Shipboard Timeline 212

Slow Boat Handout 1 219

Smoking Rooms 208

Special Class 206, 207, 208, 212, 214, 215, 217, 218

SS President Coolidge 205, 206, 208, 209, 212, 217, 221, 228

Steerage Class . . . 206, 215, 217, 221

Stuart "Bunny" Bates 212, 213, 214, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 233

T

Takishi Suroda 212, 216, 218, 221, 222, 232

Tcho-Tcho 215, 225, 226, 231

Third Class 206, 207, 208, 212, 217, 218, 219, 224

V

Virginia Ridley 208, 212, 214, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 230

W

Wang Ma 212, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 231

Wilhelm Schubert 207

William Ranta 221

Z

Zombie 227, 233

PULP HERO!

Name _____
Player _____
Occupation _____
Age _____ Sex _____
Archetype _____
Residence _____
Birthplace _____

CHARACTERISTICS

STR		DEX		INT (Idea)	
CON		APP		POW	
SIZ		EDU (Know)		Move Rate	



Dying ☐ Max HP

HIT POINTS

00	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	32	33	34
35	36	37	38	39	40	41

Temp. Insane ☐ Indef. Insane ☐ Start Max

SANITY

Insane	01	02	03	04	05	06	07																	
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53		
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76		
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99		

PULP CTHULHU

Max MP

MAGIC POINTS

00	01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24

LUCK

Out of Luck	01	02	03	04	05	06	07																	
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53		
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76		
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99		

HERO SKILLS

☐ Accounting (05%)	☐ Elec. Repair (10%)	☐ Language (Own) (EDU) _____	☐ Read Lips (01%)
☐ Appraise (05%)	☐ Fast Talk (05%)	☐ Law (05%)	☐ Ride (05%)
☐ Archaeology (01%)	☐ Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	☐ Library Use (20%)	☐ Science (01%) _____
☐ Art / Craft (05%) _____	☐ _____	☐ Listen (20%)	☐ _____
☐ _____	☐ _____	☐ Locksmith (01%)	☐ Sleight of Hand (10%)
☐ Charm (15%)	☐ Firearms (Handgun) (20%)	☐ Mech. Repair (10%)	☐ Spot Hidden (25%)
☐ Climb (20%)	☐ Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)	☐ Medicine (01%)	☐ Stealth (20%)
☐ Computer Use (00%)	☐ Firearms (SMG) (15%)	☐ Natural World (10%)	☐ Survival (10%) _____
Credit Rating (00%)	☐ _____	☐ Navigate (10%)	☐ Swim (20%)
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)	☐ First Aid (30%)	☐ Occult (05%)	☐ Throw (20%)
☐ Demolitions (01%)	☐ History (05%)	☐ Op. Hv. Machine (01%)	☐ Track (10%)
☐ Disguise (05%)	☐ Intimidate (15%)	☐ Persuade (10%)	☐ _____
☐ Diving (01%)	☐ Jump (20%)	☐ Pilot (01%) _____	☐ _____
☐ Dodge (half DEX)	☐ Language (Other) (01%) _____	☐ Psychoanalysis (01%)	☐ _____
☐ Drive Auto (20%)	☐ _____	☐ Psychology (10%)	☐ _____

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed				1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

COMBAT

Damage Bonus

Build

Dodge

BACKSTORY



Personal Description

Traits

Ideology/Beliefs

Injuries & Scars

Significant People

Phobias & Manias

Meaningful Locations

Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts

Treasured Possessions

Encounters with Strange Entities

GEAR & POSSESSIONS

CASH & ASSETS

Spending Level

Cash

Assets

TALENTS

QUICK REFERENCE RULES

Skill & Characteristic Rolls

Levels of Success:	Fumble	Fail	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Critical
	100 / 96+	> skill	≤ skill	½ skill	⅕ skill	01

Pushing Rolls: Must justify reroll; Cannot Push Combat or Sanity Rolls

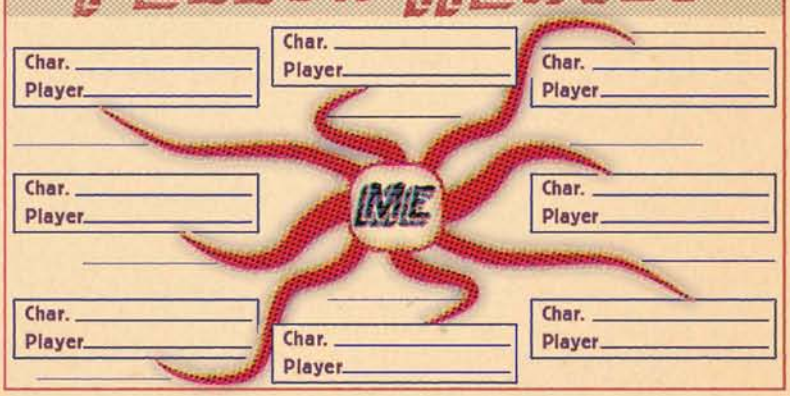
Using Luck

Adjust skill rolls (1 Luck per skill point); **Avoid malfunction/melee fumble** (10 Luck).
Halve SAN loss (SAN loss x 2 Luck); **Stay conscious** (1 Luck, double per round after).
Avoid Death (all Luck points spent; requires Luck ≥ 30).

Healing

Natural healing: +2 HP per day.
First Aid: +1D4 HP.
Medicine: +1D4 HP.

FELLOW HEROES



23107

Pulp Cthulhu

Two-fisted action and adventure against the Mythos

Calling All Heroes! It's Time To Take The Fight to Cthulhu!

Pulp Cthulhu is a game of two-fisted adventure, weird science, dark deeds, and brave heroes. With this book, some roleplaying dice, and the Call of Cthulhu Rulebook, you have everything you need to adventure and explore games set in the pulp genre.

Tired of your investigators dying in quick succession when jaunting around the world in a desperate bid to save humanity? Wishing that sometimes your investigator could make a stand instead of hiding and waiting for the eldritch horror to pass? Pulp Cthulhu ups the ante and provides you with tougher, more capable heroes—ready to take on the villainous machinations of the Cthulhu Mythos!

Here you will find an adapted character generation system, rules for psychic powers, sanity, augmented skills, and weird science, as well as tips for Keepers on developing and running pulp-style games. Also, you will find information on "the Pulps" themselves and the 1930s era, when America was in the grip of the Great Depression and on the road to World War II. A collection of pulp villains and monsters, and a range of pulp organizations provide the Keeper with a firm basis for running pulp style scenarios and campaigns. Four action-packed scenarios round out the book, getting your Pulp Cthulhu games started with a bang.

The guidance in this book means that you can apply the Pulp Cthulhu rules to any setting and time period, enabling Keepers to bring the flavor and action of pulp to the classic 1920s or modern-day eras, as well as anywhere they see fit.

A Time For Heroes And A Time For Adventure!

For Call of Cthulhu 7th edition. You must have a copy of the Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook to use this supplement.

ISBN-13: 978-1568820910
54495
9 781568 820910

For more information about Chaosium and Chaosium publications, please see our website at www.chaosium.com
Printed in China

Chaosium® Inc.