

Snows of an Early Winter

CALL of
Cthulhu



Louis Agresta

Snows of an Early Winter

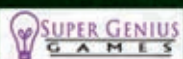
It's the holiday season in an election year. New Yorkers prepare to celebrate with masked revels and parades, while the city's powerful hold fund raisers and give speeches. Business as usual in the Modern Gomorrah, but when someone or something hunts New York's streets, eviscerating stray animals, slaying the homeless where they huddle, and stealing women from shelters – it threatens a councilwoman's reelection bid.

Dangerous occult texts missing from the massive 5th Avenue Public Library, mad politicians hiding in their posh Park Avenue apartments and a new Egyptian exhibit premiering at the Metropolitan Museum this holiday season embroil the investigators in a secret war for access to the halls of power. From New York's high society to her mean streets, stalked beneath Times Square's busy lights by *Things Man Was Not Meant to Know*, the investigators must swiftly unravel a bloody skein of occult clues and confront the power behind the killings – or this holiday season may prove their last.

Snows of an Early Winter is a stand-alone *Call of Cthulhu* adventure set in modern day New York City.

It contains everything a group needs for a few evenings of investigation and horror, including the scenario, pre-generated characters, and hand outs.

It is the latest in the innovative line of officially licensed *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios and supplements from *Super Genius Games*.



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CALL of CTHULHU

Snows of an Early Winter

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Introduction

October Surprise!

It's Halloween in an election year. New Yorkers prepare to celebrate with masked revels and parades, while the city's powerful hold fund raisers. Business as usual in the Modern Gomorrah, but when someone or something hunts New York's streets, eviscerating animals, slaying the homeless, and stealing women from disability housing – only the Investigators can put it right.

Embroided in a secret war for access to the halls of power, the Investigators must swiftly unravel a bloody skein of occult clues and confront the power behind the killings – or this Halloween season may prove their last.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Snows of an Early Winter is an adventure for four to eight Investigators. Most groups will be able to resolve the dark challenges in one to three evening's worth of play (about 6–10 hours of game time) and roughly four days of in-game, imaginary time.

In case your players do not have characters of their own, we provided pre-generated Investigators on the final pages of this book. The events are described as occurring today, but could take place around Halloween in any year from the last decades of the 20th century or the beginning of the 21st. For Keepers who prefer to set games during other eras, consult the “Changing Eras” sidebar on page 4.

In the encounter, each detailed personality also includes up to four conversational ‘categories’: Volunteered, Friendly, Confrontation and Physical. These represent the actions or postures Investigators need to take to elicit the particular information under each heading. For example, to learn information under a personality's Friendly heading, Investigators must act Friendly to them. Generally, details in the Confrontation or

Physical categories always require a Skill check to learn, while information Volunteered by a personality does not. Each heading explains Skill Check requirements as needed. Keepers should not feel obligated to reveal everything a personality knows; instead, they should release information as seems appropriate.

BACKGROUND

Elmore Job Hastings, a vinegary little librarian, craved political power. He studied the occult for years, hunting shortcuts to the political spotlight. Eventually, he found a corrupted copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis* in the New York Public Library's rare books division. When E.J.'s boss, Alfred Varage, loaned the book – against library policy – to a museum curator, Hastings saw his chance. He murdered the curator and seized the tome for himself.

Long a haunter of the City's occult scene, E.J. spent most weekends at *Marlowe's Malted Minds*, a coffee house and esoteric supply store. There he met Stephanas Darkblood (aka Steve Feldman from Patchogue, Long Island), a self-proclaimed spiritual leader and con-artist with a quirk for power. Together, they experimented with E.J.'s crumbling tome, building a cult for Stephanas blackmailing E.J. into politics. Today, the office of Public Advocate lies within Hasting's grasp.

Yet blackmail alone will not secure the Public Advocacy, just a heartbeat from the mayor's chair, and the two schemers know it. Without occult enhancement, the nebbish Elmore simply lacks the stuff of leadership. In response, the two pour through their grimoire seeking the secret of Yothic Resin, an artifact of the Serpent People, which legend holds Adolf Hitler once imbibed.

According to the *De Vermis*, when “world-walls grow thin” and the practitioner channels “the light of the shadowed orb” *through* a biology infused with the Resin, it enhances the charisma of the infused beyond all reason. However, someone tore a crucial half-page from E.J. and Stephanas' corrupt *De Vermis*; and they do not know the final step to activate the Resin.

The duo compacts with ever stranger and more alien forces, desperate to discover the lost technique for wielding Yothic Resin. Their inquests require sacrifices, starting with a horde of murdered chickens in Brooklyn, proceeding to dogs and cats in shelters, and culminating with humans. Tainting and twisting themselves, they eventually discover that Professor Johanna Oddmuth, a Park Avenue antiquities collector and occultist, holds the half-page missing from their book.

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Different Eras

Snows of an Early Winter is presented as an adventure to be played in the modern era (“modern” being loosely defined as any time from about 1980 up to the early years of the 21st century). But with a few adjustments, a Keeper can use it in practically any era.

Gaslight

The main changes to make *Transfigured* work for games set in the 1890s revolve around the evolution of the American metropolis. Suggestions below specify New York but apply to most major Midwestern and Eastern seaboard cities of the era.

General

New York in the 1890s lies under the heavy grip of Tammany Hall. This is the heyday of immigration. The Statue of Liberty was dedicated in 1886, and the city is a hotbed of tenements packed with cheap foreign labor, anarchists and old world criminal organizations – all exploited and oppressed by the upper classes. Anyone trying to organize for their own betterment faced heavy-handed, violent opposition funded by someone in a tuxedo. Consider watching the movie *Gangs of New York* to soak in the feel of the time.

E.J. Hastings

Considering Tammany’s political dominance, it makes sense for E.J. Hastings to be of Irish descent, or pretending to be Irish. Otherwise, no amount of magic would help him succeed in local politics. A background of ethnic or political injustice for E.J. also fits the tenor of the times. Additionally, consider having E.J. work for the Lennox library on 70th and Fifth, as the main branch of the New York Public library did not open until 1911.

Brooklyn

Brooklyn was an independent city up until 1898, when Manhattan consolidated with outlying areas. Be aware of this transition when speaking of Brooklyn as part of New York.

Marconi’s Malted Minds

Consider making Marlowe’s an absinthe bar on the outskirts of Little Italy and renaming it, simply, *Marconi’s*. They would sell “herbs” at the back. Mama Marconi, reputedly a striga, might brew a mean espresso and keep an “old world” book room.

Dr. Atterman and the Met

The Metropolitan Museum of Art building undergoes renovations in the 1890s. Consider conveying an atmosphere of construction and expansion. Professor Atterman is likely a Greek historian, rather than a curator for the nascent Egyptian collection. The largest challenge is Dr. Atterman's friendship with Old Man Cuba. For example, he could have published no books on Santeria.

Instead, consider introducing a journal in which Dr. Atterman discusses his fascination with the religion of an ex-slave and house servant, known as the Old Man of the Park. Mention an introduction through his own house servant, as well as the thrill he feels sneaking into Prospect Park at night to meet the Old Man.

Prospect Park and Santeria

While it is still possible for Old Man Cuba to be a Santeros, he would more likely have been an African American house worker – a footman or butler – than of Latin or South American descent. Moreover, he or any of his fellows would not have been welcomed in Prospect Park during the day. Instead, Old Man would have to sneak in at night, avoiding police. The oppression and exploitation of minorities is a sad, disreputable fact of American history and an unavoidable feature of the times.

Conversely, as Brooklyn has traditionally housed a large Jewish population, consider ditching Santeria entirely and substituting Old Man Herschel, a rogue Cabbalist. Either way, encounters in the Park should take place at night.

Shelly Atterman

As a woman, Shelly cannot be a member of the local community board. Consider making her a concerned citizen and suffragist who sits with other upper class men and women on a local committee for improving Brooklyn. Appalled to discover chicken corpses in the park while strolling, she proceeds to vilify non-Christians in Brooklyn, and the attention she draws targets her for replacement. E.J. replaces her on her committee as a *social* stepping stone to politics.

The adventure still works if Shelly lives in the Gowanus, but the area is not abandoned. Cargo vessels ply the canal. This is a bustling, nasty industrial district, replete with tanneries, stone fabricators, and paint, ink, soap, and chemical factories. Perhaps Shelly's growing madness disrupted her engagement, and she became a worker in a boot factory, holing up in her dangerous, rickety tenement when not slaving on the factory floor.

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Animal Shelters and Security Cameras

Private animal shelters of the type posited in the adventure did not exist in the 1890s; however Henry Bergh founded the ASPCA in New York City in 1866, operating an ambulance service for injured horses as early as 1867. Consider making the shelters in *Transfigured* ASPCA shelters, and add pigeons and horses to the protected animals.

Obviously, there were no gaslight security cameras. Consider giving the animal shelter low windows through which local children frequently watch the animals. Investigators may learn all the information on the security tape by questioning one of these children.

Chickens and the Chicken Depot

Freshly killed chickens are plentiful in New York City in this era, especially in Brooklyn. The Chicken Depot should receive a less modern name, like Han Sung's House of Chickens, and become *a* place that the lower classes purchase chickens in bulk, but not *the* place. It remains plausible for Chinese people to own and run the House of Chickens, but abattoir equipment would not be automated. This limits Chigwai's ability to cause a distraction.

Skyscrapers and Women's Clinics

Skyscrapers were rare in the gaslight era. The first was built in Chicago in 1885, and others were just appearing in New York at the end of the 19th century. Before these, few buildings stretched over six stories. Adjust the WDHP accordingly.

Additionally, nothing like the modern psychology clinic existed in this era; although the city did have shelters for women, usually under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Consider making the Stacey Spencer Clinic and the WDHP into an annex of the New York Sister's of Mercy's Foundling Hospital, an orphanage which doubled as a place for prostitutes and other unmarried women to receive care.

The New York Public Library

While they announced the plan to create a central library system in 1895, the main branch of the New York Public library did not open until 1911. As mentioned earlier, E.J. needs to work for either the Astor or the Lennox libraries. The Astor supported research, while the Lennox held James Lennox's collection of rare books. The Astor library was built in the East Village in 1854, and the Lennox stood on 70th and Fifth Ave. Scholars visiting the Lennox required admission tickets to view rare books.

The King and the NY Subway

Alfred Ely Beach built the first prototype subway, the Beach Pneumatic Transit, in 1869 and demonstrated the concept through 1873. The first true subway in New York opened in 1904, although construction – trenches cut into city streets then covered over – was underway for some years prior. While Beach's tunnel only ran 312', a long tradition of urban legend transforms this tunnel into a "secret subway" system. Consider placing The King in the "secret" Pneumatic Transit tunnels, accessed by first slipping into an open construction ditch.

Additionally, consider transforming the King to ape another famous dead or vanished figure of the time, like the Comte St. Germain, or simply paint him a generic vagabond.

Old Soldiers

Keepers must select a different war which the Central Park veterans survived. Consider making them former Union soldiers from the Civil War.

The Climax

At the adventure's climax, the fact that the Temple of Dendur arrived at the Met in the early 1970s is the Keeper's largest challenge. Consider a traveling exhibition of tombs and sarcophagi from the British Museum as a solution. Any temple arch will do.

1920's

Almost every issue facing a 1920s version of *Transfigured* has already been addressed in the gaslight notes. However, *Marlowe's/Marconi's* could become a speakeasy. Consider turning the Central Park veterans into WWI survivors, and, since the Metropolitan Museum conducted its own Egyptian excavations as early as 1906, any recently arrived artifacts should do for the climax.

Even with a private cult to do their bidding, battling this potent Park Avenue foe requires greater occult power than they have yet dared command. In response, E.J. and Stephanas target a group of homeless in Central Park for murder, planning to harness the potent energies released by their massacre.

However, the two sorcerers hardly count as criminal masterminds. E.J. and Stephanas made mistakes in their ascent to power. Murdering the museum curator was a mistake. They also killed a homeless bystander who accidentally witnessed one of their rituals in Prospect Park. Moreover,

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the duo handled E.J.'s launch into politics crudely, ousting a Brooklyn community board member by driving her mad. Finally, their own growing insanity left clues that put the Investigators onto their trail.

To top it off, no occult doings as intense as these pass unnoticed. Strange creatures, dripping with slime from the Hudson River, stalk the city, sniffing after all involved. They seek to steal the Resin and any related artifacts away to their home beneath the waves.

Synopsis

Initially, the adventure embroils the characters through one of four hooks, each tied to a specific opening investigation. Following, these, *Snows of an Early Winter* breaks into stages. The stages in order are:

Spooky Stage Tense Stage Transitions Dangerous Stage Climax

Investigations proceed non-linearly, with characters visiting multiple encounters at each stage before moving to the next stage.

She of the Creatures

Throughout their investigations, the party also uncovers evidence of *something* shadowing them. Early on they find shed snake skins. Then scrabbling and slithering noises plague them. Later they spot a hump-backed creature, and finally they encounter a subtly alien, limping woman who whispers warnings. This is She of the Creatures, emissary and agent provocateur of the Creatures from the Deep, slowly transforming from underwater snake thing into thing-human-enough-to-attend-a-Halloween-ball. A mere sideline in spooky until closer to the adventure's climax, She and her brood add a layer of the strange to the adventure.

The King

The King is an enigmatic figure, known to the abandoned, the mad, and the lost of the city. He is, quite literally, their king and protector. He reigns from the quasi-mythical 'forgotten' subway system rumored to exist

Designer's Note:

Non-Linear Investigations and Horror Pacing

As the Investigators move through the stages toward the climax, tensions rise, options shrink, and fear increases. However, because the encounters themselves are non-linear, nothing determines how many encounters the Investigators visit or how much time they spend at each. This may create pacing challenges for Keepers, should the Investigators dawdle too long at one encounter. Consider this solution if the adventure drags: introduce brief, spiking moments of fear followed by anti-climax. Think of this as that point in the horror movie when the protagonist *thinks* a monster lurks in the kitchen, moves to investigate, tensions mount, then – WHAM – it's just the cat with its head in the garbage. Additionally, consider encouraging regular returns to *Marlowe's Maltered Minds* to vary the pace.

beneath New York, always surrounded by his court. The King is mystically connected to the community of homeless in the world above. What they see, he sees. What they know, he knows. The King even speaks through his insane subjects; however, their madnesses always shapes his words, which emerge from their lips riding whatever metaphors such broken minds still access. The King's messengers speak in pop culture phrases and by repeating snippets of overhead conversations. The King himself phases through dimensions at will, nearly impossible to catch or harm. He is a mytho-poetic figure, a modern Fisher King. An archetype and a Power in his own right.

The King is also Elvis.

EJ and Stephanas' murders of the homeless attract the King's attention, and he strives to protect his people by gathering them in the subway tunnels.

The Daily Headlines

Each game day, pass around the next headline handout. (See Player's Handouts starting on page 104.) A new stage of the adventure corresponds, roughly, to a day of game time; consequently, Keepers frequently distribute newspaper handouts at the start of a new stage. Additionally, encounters' CONSEQUENCES sections often note how Investigator actions might make the papers. After distributing these handouts, please communicate additional headlines verbally, as appropriate.

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STARTING THE INVESTIGATION

Starting the adventure turns on enticing Investigators to one of four opening encounters. Keepers should feel free to modify the following hooks or invent their own. As a fallback, Keepers can always consider making an Investigator the friend or relative of a murdered or missing person from the adventure.

Hook #1

An anonymous call begs the players to investigate the murder of a museum curator. “The police gave up. I got your names from a...a friend at *Marlowe's*. Professor Atterman was always good to the community. They thought you'd help.” The anonymous caller is Cheryl Kody. This hook sends the Investigators to Encounter #1.

Hook #2

An old army buddy calls one of the Investigators about a shared friend named Richie. Perhaps the three even served in Vietnam together. “Long time no see, bud. Long time, right? ... They killed Richie, man. Killed him. All the gooks in Vietnam couldn't frag his ass, but they did him in Prospect Park. In Brooklyn, man! They cut off his head in Brooklyn! And no one cares. Do you still care? Do you? Can you check it out? I heard you got some pull these days, not like me.” If Investigators respond to this line of role play, Keepers might insert the old army buddy among the homeless men in Encounter #11. This hook sends Investigators to Encounter #2.

Hook #3

A psychic known to the Investigators contacts them. “Hey. Listen. You know I live in Brooklyn, right? Well I've been picking something up near the Gowanus. Something—alien. And a woman. A woman in pain. I can't sleep anymore, it's driving me crazy. Can you check it out? Please? My dreams are filled with bloody chicken heads and snakes. Squawking and slithering all night long. It's maddening. I caught a piece of an address last night. I think it's...” This hook sends Investigators to Encounter #3.

Hook #4

An acquaintance from *Marlowe's* contacts the Investigators in tears. “My cat, Rollins. He's...he's dead! Gone. Missing. SOB! I don't know. I went away, just a little vacation. I...I came back and then Angie and Steve SOB! They're the kennel owners. They said...they said SOB! Someone MURDERED

all the animals! Including Roll..Roll..including SOB! Killed them and drew circles and stuff. And you know the kind of stuff. It's...THEY KILLED ROLLINS! I...I've got money. I'll pay you to find who did this SOB! And bring them to justice!" This hook sends Investigators to Encounter #4.

Marlowe's Malted Minds

Horror generally proves more potent when measured against the normal, so the adventure introduces *Marlowe's Malted Minds*, a coffee house and occult supply store that serves the City's occult community – Wiccans, psychics, new agers and Investigators – as a watering hole. Here the Investigators find rumors and good cheer late into the night.

We want players to breathe a sigh of relief when their characters step inside *Marlowe's*: the clink of cups; the murmur and hubbub; hand waves and hellos from across the room. The earthy smell of roasting beans. All should reassure.

Consider assuming friendships between the Investigators and specific *Marlowe's* personalities. When the Investigators arrive, even though the *players* are visiting for the first time, have patrons greet their *characters* as if they were regulars. *Marlowe's* should be the place "where everybody knows your name..."

Here are a few sample personalities to kick things off:

Jamal Ramses, Age 32, Systems Analyst/Amateur Egyptologist

Most frequently encountered: at lunch, after normal business hours, or Sunday afternoons.

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 15 POW 17 DEX 13 APP 13
EDU 17 SAN 85 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Accounting 42%, Archeology 56%, Bargain 55%, Computer Use 86%, Credit Rating 74%, Drive/Bicycle 63%, Electronics 32%, History 63%, Library Use 66%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Navigate 24%, Persuade 44%

Always smiling, always with a word of advice, Jamal takes almost nothing seriously – a trait that has helped him climb the corporate IT ladder – except Egyptology. A cycling fanatic, Jamal frequently bikes from Brooklyn to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the latest addition to the Egyptian collection. He'll chat your ear off about technology or Lance Armstrong, but he'll settle in for hours to discuss the priesthood of ancient Egypt.

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Sandy "Kentucky" Belles, Age 24, Waitress/Psychic

Most frequently encountered: weekdays, all day and evening.

STR 9 CON 16 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 17 DEX 13 APP 12
EDU 11 SAN 85 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Accounting 36%, Art (Acting) 44%, Bargain 65%, Credit Rating 34%, Disguise 34%, Fast Talk 57%, First Aid 60%, Listen 72%, Occult 50%, Psychology 30%

With a wink and a southern accent, petite Sandy knows what you want before you do, and she never forgets a preference for chai, latte, or tea. Sandy also knows when occult forces or the fates loom near. She never reveals her foreknowledge directly, but patrons swiftly learn to mind Sandy's casual suggestions. "Best stay home for that cold tomorrow!" or "You've been riding that bike lot lately, haven't you? Best take a break before you strain something." A waitress and single mom by day, but a struggling actress by night, Sandy often plays off-off-off-Broadway shows on the weekends. She permits only her favorites to fraternize with her daughter Lucy or to call her "Kentucky".

Mindy Herstand, Age 48, Bodybuilder/Necrophotographer

Most frequently encountered: weekday evenings, weekend all day.

STR 17 CON 17 SIZ 18 INT 12 POW 14 DEX 12 APP 13
EDU 11 SAN 61 HP 18

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Bargain 43%, Biology 51%, Credit Rating 48%, First Aid 40%, Fist/Punch 67%, Head Butt 49%, Jump 62%, Kick 45%, Occult 22%, Photography 78%, Swim 80%, Throw 54%

Tough, short haired and ripped, Mindy talks street and always speaks her mind. Friendly but gruff, patrons only notice her soften when she talks to her life partner, Karen. Mindy frequently wins local and state-body building championships and has enjoyed some success promoting her own line of nutritional products. An aspiring art photographer in her twenties – early critical success included a Times Square study acquired by the New York Museum – Mindy soon realized her photos often captured dead people and gave up art for athletics. She rarely speaks of her strange ability, but bluntly inserts herself into any conversation about the afterlife. Mindy despises John Edwards.

Encourage warm and friendly interactions at *Marlowe's*, toss flirtations and praise at the Investigators. Consider role-playing the day to day as well as the esoteric: the ex-girlfriend turned friend, the person who owes the investigator money and pays it back, the enthusiast gushing over a new Lucid Dreaming book.

This way, when Keepers snuff the place and brutally murder everyone in it, they devastate the Investigators. Alternately, if the Investigators protect *Marlowe's* and save their friends, their own heroism uplifts them.

As the adventure progresses, Keepers might choose to reflect the stage or tension level of the adventure in the behavior and emotions of *Marlowe's* patrons. Consider using "As above so below" or "As on the streets so inside *Marlowe's*" as a guiding rule of thumb. For example, when it's tense for the Investigators, *Marlowe's* patrons are anxious and full of questions. When matters prove dangerous to the Investigators, the patrons are frightened.

Marlowe's also serves a functional role. This is where the Investigators pick up rumors, glean tidbits about personalities, or even conduct research. Keepers should consider putting rumors, hints, or any other information they wish to convey into the mouths of *Marlowe's* patrons. The following examples may facilitate the adventure.

Factoids

1. Santeria requires animal sacrifice but this fact is unchallenged in US law and protected by the Constitution.
2. Santeria is a syncretic religion arising from the enslaved Yoruba peoples' need to hide their religion from Catholic masters. The term 'Santeria' is derogatory in origin, applied dismissively when owners thought their Yoruba slaves too enamored of the Catholic saints.
3. The present day New York City council was established in 1938, before that it was called the Board of Aldermans.

Personalities

Alfred Varage

1. Frequently met his friend Robert Atterman at *Marlowe's* for chai.
2. Is a known dealer in black market knowledge. Looking for a grimoire? Everyone knows to ask Alfred.
3. Some of Alfred's clients are a little dodgy and have included: Johanna Oddmuth, Stephanas Darkblood, and E.J. Hastings

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E.J. Hastings

1. He used to frequent Marlowe's but not after he angered Sandy
2. Hasting angered Sandy by paying too much attention to her 11 year old daughter
3. Most people at Marlowe's dislike E.J., as he makes them uncomfortable

Professor Johanna Oddmuth

1. Most folks find her arrogant, but tolerable
2. She doesn't come around frequently
3. When she does come by, she usually brings boxes of esoteric books and leaves them in the store's "leave a book, take a book" room. Some people like her for this

Stephanas Darkblood

1. Most haven't seen him around in a while
2. Most considered him a real braggart, always trying to use his 'occult' knowledge to get laid
3. He hasn't been by in a while
4. His real name is Steven Feldman, and he's from Patchogue, L.I.

Tammy, a Goth girl

1. The Goth girl? She used to come by every other weekend or so Stephanas kept chatting her up
2. She hasn't been by in a while

Rumors

1. Santeria is big around Prospect Park, but I heard they've been having trouble about the sacrifice thing
2. I heard Mel Torune, the "Psychic to the Broadway Stars" skipped town. So did Madame Rushinko, which is scarier.
3. Have you noticed all the homeless guys are gone? No one had tried to hold a door open for me in days. What's up with that?

Triggers

While hunting evidence, Investigators may unwittingly leave behind their own clues and draw unexpected attention. Too much attention 'triggers' a response from interested Personalities.

Use the chart below to track how much attention the Investigators garner and from whom. Whenever the text instructs – or when the Keeper

OCTOBER SURPRISE

deems appropriate – add or erase a mark beside a listed Personality. Each mark denotes increasing awareness of the Investigators by the Personality. The numbers to the right of the marks indicate how many marks trigger an event or action, and which event or action they trigger.

Personality	Marks	This many marks trigger that event or action...	
E.J. and Stephanas		3	Trigger 1: Through the Looking Glass
		5	Trigger 2: Snake in the Grass
		6	Trigger 3: All Cult Bulletin
The King		3	Trigger 4: Eyes and the Ears <i>Special:</i> Use these marks at the end of the Tense Stage to determine if The King contacts the Investigators.
Professor Johanna Oddmuth			<i>Special:</i> Use these marks at the end of the Tense Stage to determine if Dr. Oddmuth contacts the Investigators.
She of the Creatures Every time Investigators cast a spell, place a mark next to She of the Creatures.			<i>Special:</i> Use these marks to determine if She and her brood follow the Investigators to a meeting with The King <i>Special:</i> Use these marks in Encounter #12 to determine if She warns the Investigators to leave.

For example, when the adventure prompts the Keeper to place a third mark in the Marks column next to E.J. and Stephanas, this activates Trigger 1: Through the Looking Glass. The Keeper then reads the description of Trigger 1: Through the Looking Glass and incorporates the result into the game accordingly.

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Keepers should not feel obligated to follow these Trigger rules to the letter. For example, if it will be fun to throw a Sacred Snake of Yig in an Investigator's toilet, regardless of the number of marks next to E.J. and Stephanas names, do it! Or if Keepers feel it will improve the adventure, they should simply ignore the marks next to She of the Creatures and have her follow the Investigators to meet The King.

Trigger 1: Through the Looking Glass

E.J. casts a version of the *Mirror of Tarkhun Atep* and appears in the next mirrored surface into which an Investigator looks, even though E.J. may never have seen the Investigator. After E.J. appears, read or paraphrase the following.

"So, you're the one poking where it's none of your business? Well I'm not an unreasonable man. Leave off, and we can call it a day. What's in it for you any way? Buzz off and stop making such a nuisance, or you'll force me to send my slender pet your way. Clear?"

E.J. might bandy additional threats with the Investigators, but he lacks the time or patience to negotiate. The Investigators either agree to stop investigating or not and... E.J. breaks their link.

Trigger 2: Snake in the Grass

The Investigators' persistence angers E.J. He summons a Sacred Snake of Yig (see Encounter #11 for statistics) and sets it on them. When the Investigators are alone and feeling safe – settling down to sleep or to discuss events, for example – spring the Snake on them. Consider slipping it into their toilet, or under the covers, or wrapped around the stand beneath their dinner table.

Trigger 3: All Cult Bulletin

E.J. and Stephanas place a price on the Investigator's heads. In all clashes between Investigators and Darkblood Cultists, grant the Cultists an IDEA check to recognize the Investigators. Any cultists who recognize them stop whatever they are doing and try to kill an Investigator.

Trigger 4: Eyes and Ears

The homeless of the City are the eyes and ears of The King. So long as three or more marks remain on the Trigger Tracker next to his name, The King likes the Investigators. Up until the end of the Tense stage, consider sending random homeless people to provide cryptic hints whenever the Investigators seem stuck or the pace drags.

OPENING ENCOUNTERS (SPOOKY STAGE)

The investigation proceeds non-linearly, players choosing whatever hints they'd like to pursue; however, the Investigators only progress by confronting Personalities and uncovering clues at a minimum of three of the four opening encounters. Clues at each spooky-stage encounter point to the other three spooky-stage encounters, while hinting at further complexity. Investigators also uncover the first clues necessary to unraveling the larger mystery: that politics are involved and, possibly, the names E.J. Hastings or Stephanas Darkblood. Finally they pick up hints that something supernatural shadows them.

The opening encounters are:

1. The office of a murdered Metropolitan Museum of Art curator, weeks dead, to whom a librarian friend lent a rare book. The book is missing. Initiated by Hook #1.
2. The crime scene of a murdered homeless man, whose death in Prospect Park near a known Santeria circle remains uninvestigated by authorities. Initiated by Hook #2.
3. A Gowanus tenement, the home of a recluse social worker and former member of the local community board. Initiated by Hook #3.
4. An animal shelter, one of three owned by Steve and Angie Barloo. Someone broke in and ritually murdered the animals at two of their locations. The owners fear for the third. Initiated by Hook #4.

Encounter 1: Murdered Curator's Office, Metropolitan Museum

When E.J. Hastings tried to steal the *De Vermiis* from Professor Robert Atterman, he lured the professor to Prospect Park, by pretending to sell him the grimoire's missing half-page. Expecting the professor to leave the *De Vermiis* behind, E.J. slipped into his office before closing. Professor Atterman, however, took both the book and his faithful lapdog, Pogo, to the Park.

When the curator returned, he and Pogo surprised Hastings. In the ensuing struggle, E.J. killed the professor with a glass paper weight and stole the *De Vermiis*. A terrified Pogo fled the office and hid behind a suit of armor once owned by Henry II of France.

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The encounter opens in the museum lobby, a week after Professor Atterman's murder and turns on the Investigators searching the Professor's office.

If the Investigators try to **FAST TALK** their way past a museum staffer and fail, the staffer sends for Cheryl Kody, Atterman's former secretary. Meeting Cheryl, while not necessary, proves useful. Alternately, they might **SNEAK** past the security guards into the administrative area. If so, allow them to find Professor Atterman's office. It is the only door draped in yellow police tape. The door is locked, although a successful **LOCKSMITH** check bypasses it.

When the Investigators enter Professor Atterman's office, read or paraphrase the following:

Books dominate Dr. Atterman's office. Floor to ceiling, shelf after shelf. Scattered on chairs, piled on the radiator, they almost bury his desk. A metal utilitarian bulk, it holds a softly humming computer, an answering machine – one red light blinking slowly – crumpled papers, stale bagel crumbs, a faded coffee cup and, on the floor, an overflowing trash pail. All the detritus of a life interrupted. On one corner of the desk the Professor grins from a framed photo, squeezing an old, wrinkled man in South American dress. Another smaller frame displays a small brown pug with a pink bow on its collar, tongue lolling and eyes bugging, so alive it looks ready to bark.

LAYOUT

The office is small, a single room lined with bookshelf after bookshelf.

ACTION

As the Investigator's search the office, two museum employees may interrupt them. If she did not accompany them, Cheryl Kody stops by soon after the Investigators enter. She pokes her cheery head inside and offers to help: "Hey, what's up? You need something?"

Later, when the Keeper deems appropriate, an anxious Professor Surro unlocks the office and peers inside.

INVESTIGATION

Desk

The desk's center drawer is locked. If the Investigators **FAST TALK** the key out of Cheryl or make a successful **LOCKSMITH** check to pick it, inside they find hundreds of snake skins and around thirty of the dead curator's business cards. Some skins stretch nearly six feet. Investigators find the desk's larger side drawers unlocked and empty.

Computer

The computer is password protected. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** locates the password, #parkmagic01, taped underneath the locked desk drawer. Alternately, a successful **COMPUTER USE** check at -30% allows the Investigators to hack the password entry, while a successful **FAST TALK** at -20% teases the password out of Cheryl. Once the investigators login they find two interesting things: an appointment in Professor Atterman's electronic calendar and an email from Professor Johanna Oddmuth. (Player's Handout #5 on pages 108-109)

Garbage

Rummaging in the garbage or a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** discovers a second, clearly labeled coffee cup. Both the cup on the desk and the one in the garbage come from *Marlowe's Malted Minds*.

Answering Machine

Professor Atterman's answering machine contains a message, dated two days before the adventure begins, from the Eastside Animal Shelter: "BEEEEP Professor Atterman? This is Angie Barloo, from the Eastside Animal Shelter? We really, really need you to come pick up Pogo. Please? We have to close the shelter for a while and any animals we can't return, we have to send to a euthanizing shelter. None of us want that for Pogo. Please call us back at..."

Books

Books on the Santeria religion fill Professor Atterman's shelves. Titles include, *Santeria: Living Religion, Ancient Roots, Syncretic American Voodoo, Folk Religion of Modern Caribe Peoples* and *Living Santeria*. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices Professor Atterman's name on the spine of *Living Santeria*. The dust jacket shows him smiling, arm about an ancient fellow in colorful clothes labeled 'Old Man Cuba of Prospect Park'. The same photo, framed, sits on his desk.

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PERSONALITIES

Cheryl Kody, Age 23, Administrative Assistant

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 13 DEX 12 APP 14
EDU 17 SAN 65 HP 10 MP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Accounting 32%, Archeology 11%, Computer Use 66%, Credit Rating 14%, History 43%, Library Use 66%

Cheryl is a freckled twenty-three year old who clutches a clipboard and constantly pushes her glasses back up her nose. Friendly, naïve, and prone to peppy unrelenting monologue, Cheryl gossips constantly – a trait useful to the Investigators. Cheryl holds the keys to Professor Atterman's office and desk, and she knows his computer password. A successful **FAST TALK** at -20% wangles the keys, the password, or both out of her.

Volunteered

About her murdered boss: "Oh I really miss Professor Atterman. He was the best. Really, really smart and well read. And nice. And a great boss. And I can't believe what happened to him. It gave me nightmares! And that poor doggie."

Her new boss: "Professor Surro is a pain. Really, really critical and picky and tries to make everyone else do his work. And he's hard to understand. And I never heard of him before this. And I don't think he even knows what he's doing. And if he keeps it up, I'll probably find another job."

Friendly

Cheryl proves informative should the Investigators befriend, flatter, or encourage her. A successful **FAST TALK** – or some male attention from an Investigator with APP over 13 – and she chatters about the following:

Asking about Professor Atterman's books, publications or reading habits: "Oh, he was such a reader! Always writing or reading something. Sometimes it seemed he'd be gone for weeks, and I'd start to worry, and he was just at the library, researching his latest article! Professor Surro is the same way. That's why I wasn't so worried when he wasn't in first thing, Professor Atterman, I mean. That's why I didn't open the door and find him. I told the police that. Oh the poor man! Can you imagine if I'd found him, though?! That would have been awful!"

The Police investigation or the circumstances of Professor Atterman's death: Oh it was terrible! There was blood everywhere! And mud too. Someone had hit him something terrible and that poor little dog. His little footprints were all in the blood, that's what they said anyway. I have a friend over at police headquarters, Minnie, and Minnie says they found other stuff with the body. Weird stuff. Stuff stuck on his shoes. Stuff like that."

Professor Atterman's dog: They found Pogo hiding in the museum, behind a suit of armor! Barking and whining. That's how we knew to open the office, because his dog was running around. He'd never leave his dog around! Poor thing. I feel so bad for him. Pogo, that is. His sister, the professor's I mean – I don't think Pogo has any brothers or sisters – was pretty upset too. I feel so sorry for her. The police took Pogo to a shelter, I think."

About Professor Atterman's sister: "Shelly? She used to come around a lot. Not so much anymore." A successful **IDEA** or **PSYCHOLOGY** roll recognizes Cheryl is uncharacteristically abrupt when answering this question.

Confrontation

Pressing Cheryl for additional information about Shelly requires a successful **FAST TALK** check at -10% or a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check. These push Cheryl to admit she often snuck Professor Atterman's sister into the office, where she tried to find evidence to galvanize the flagging police investigation.

About Shelly Atterman: "Shelly stopped coming by though. All of a sudden. I used to sneak her in, when Professor Surro wasn't around, to find things to call the police about or to pack the doctor's stuff. Things like that."

Professor Jonas Surro, Age 48, Acting Curator

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 7 APP 9
EDU 23 SAN 22 HP 10 MP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Anthropology 69%, Archeology 26%, Conceal 47%, Credit Rating 72%, Cthulu Mythos 6%, Fast Talk 34%, History 35%, Library Use 42%, Listen 51%, Occult 5%, Oth.L. (French) 63%, Persuade 58%, Psychology 33%, Sneak 54%, Spot Hidden 30%

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E.J. and Stephanas inducted Professor Surro into their Darkblood cult months ago. Using magic, they secured his appointment as acting curator. Barely qualified for his position, Professor Surro's real job is to prevent anyone from investigating Professor Atterman's death. A high strung, compulsive person, Surro checks Atterman's locked office over five times daily. When he finds the Investigators in the room, Surro questions them harshly, demanding to know their purpose.

Volunteered

To the Investigators: "Who are you? Why are you here? Out this instance or I'll call security!"

To Cheryl: "Miss Kody, did you let these people in? I've told again and again – allow no one into this room! The police may need to see it again. Consider yourself on probation. I may have to fire you!"

Confrontation

If the Investigators confront Professor Surro – accusing him of benefitting from Atterman's death, for example – a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** roll elicits this response:

About Atterman's death: "Well if he hadn't associated with the wrong people and just conducted his research with proper clinical detachment – from his desk like any decent academician – then I'm sure none of this would have happened. I insist you leave immediately."

Physical

If the Investigators threaten violence or rough Surro up for more than 2 points of damage, the acting curator admits these details:

1. The police said the night he died Professor Atterman took a taxi from Prospect Park to the museum.
2. The police kept asking if any books were missing from Professor Atterman's office, because his shelves were ransacked.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators reveal to Professor Surro that they are investigating Professor Atterman's murder, then Surro mentions the Investigators to E.J. and Stephanas. Place a mark next to E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators remove any snake skins from the office, it alerts She of the Creatures. Place a mark next to She of the Creatures on the Trigger Tracker.

If any Investigator says Professor Oddmuth's name aloud while in the office, this alerts her. Place a mark next to Professor Oddmuth on the Trigger Tracker.

Research

If the Investigators pursue their own contacts at the police department, with the press, dig up newspapers from around the time of the murder, or conduct other appropriate research they learn the police also found chicken feathers stuck to Professor Atterman's shoes.

No amount of research, by anyone, successfully identifies the species of snake which shed the skins.

2. Crime Scene, Prospect Park

A conflict recently split the Santeria community of Prospect Park. On one side stands Old Man Cuba, the traditional spiritual leader of the Latino-Caribe community and a long-time friend of Professor Atterman's. Old Man Cuba favors openness about Santeria and insists on his religion's right to sacrifice chickens in the park at night. The Old Man's opponent, Samuel "Sammy" Guerva, despises outsiders, prefers black magic and intimidation for dealing with unbelievers, and insists on his religion's right to sacrifice any animal available.

Sammy reports to E.J. and Stephanas. He helped the duo conduct a massive animal sacrifice, months ago, slaying hundreds of chickens in the park. When discovered, public outrage at the 'Chicken Massacre' pitted Shelly Atterman, a community board member and sister to Professor Atterman, against the Santeros of Prospect Park.

In response to Sammy's request for help, E.J. and Stephanas drove Shelly mad, using a ritual involving human sacrifice. E.J. then supplanted her on the community board. Today, having exhausted the live chicken supply, the duo provides Sammy with other animals to sacrifice, animals they steal from shelters and kennels.

As the Investigators approach the park, they pass a homeless man crouched atop a concrete wall flanking the entrance. Once their backs are to him, he screeches: "DEATH! DEATH! In the rumbledark of rattle spark-sucking in DEATH! Electric out commander! We all do it! Just do it! Sneakers sneak-knee sneak ha! Doesn't work does it?" He cackles and grins,

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revealing missing teeth and old food. If the Investigators interrogate him, he merely cackles, “You’ll see! You’ll see! Fisher fishfish. King of the world!” and cackles some more. If the Investigators rough him up, he starts to cry and flees.

Inside the park, anyone they approach easily directs the Investigators to the site of the Chicken Massacre or “that place they found that dead homeless dude with his head cut off.” The two locations are the same: a clearing beneath a copse of copper beech trees. Over twenty feet around, invisible from outside the trees, everyone avoids the copse.

The encounter turns on the Investigators exploring the sacrificial circle beneath the copper beeches and on their interactions with Old Man Cuba, who interrupts them while they search.

Once the Investigators locate the sacrificial site, read or paraphrase the following:

Stooping beneath the black and copper leaves of the looming beeches, sound suspends. As if stepping through a hermetic seal or into another world, the outside muffles. No beer bottles or wrappers, no empty sandwich boxes or cigarette butts litter the clearing. Instead, thick dark mud, smoothed to a near perfect, twenty foot circle stretches before you. All about the edge, the grass grows knee-high, untouched by the weekly trimming Park Services inflict on the rest of the grounds.

LAYOUT

A twenty foot clearing at the top of a small rise, underneath concealing branches.

ACTION

Shortly after the Investigators reach the murder scene, Old Man Cuba and his grandson, Tito, arrive. The Old Man smiles, waves, chatters at some length in an obscure Nicaraguan mountain dialect, and ends on a gap-toothed grin. After a pause his grandson translates: “He says...get the fuck out of here.” In the subsequent conversation, Old Man Cuba either grows more or less hostile. Handled properly, the Investigators extract useful tidbits from him.

Mid-conversation, a third party intervenes. Sammy Guerva and three tattooed tough guys slip into the clearing. An argument erupts between the Old Man and Sammy. Everyone shouts. Old Man Cuba makes unmistakably obscene gestures with his cane. Tito tenses for a fight. Guerva’s thugs crack their knuckles.

The Investigators must decide whether to involve themselves in this conflict. Either the players withdraw, intervene verbally, or take physical action.

INVESTIGATION

Chicken Heads

Digging around the clearing, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** uncovers a desiccated chicken head and three cardboard boxes.

The Clearing

A successful **OCCULT** check understands this clearing is a sacrificial circle for capturing power.

A successful **IDEA** or **GEOLOGY** check suggests the clearing's dirt possesses an unusual clay-like consistency. A follow-up **IDEA** or **BIOLOGY** check concludes the clay-like consistency stems from the ungodly amount of blood congealed in the soil.

Investigators willing to rub the bloody soil between their fingers, to smell or taste it, may, with another successful **BIOLOGY** roll, learn both human and animal blood stain the soil.

The Boxes

Examining the boxes with a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notes shreds of silver duct tape, dog hair, and the stink of cat urine. A second successful **SPOT HIDDEN** finds a poop stained packing slip beneath a cardboard flap. The slip reads: Eastside Animal Shelter, 64th and 1st Ave.

PERSONALITIES

Random Park-Goer

Generally, people in the park like to gossip.

Friendly

Asking about the murdered homeless man: "Oh yeah, that homeless dude who got his head whacked off. Fucked up, man! It happened over there. My cousin's friend heard there's some animal loose that comes out at night. From the zoo, only they ain't admitting they messed up like that, and it got the homeless guy. Ripped his head clean off."

About rituals or cults in the park: "Oh yeah, sure. They do all these creepy rituals and shit at night." Shrug. "That's their god and stuff, so what's to say? This is America. Still, not too many people go into that part of the park at night."

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Old Man Cuba, Age 78, Ifá Priest

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 8 INT 18 POW 17 DEX 9 APP 8
EDU 7 SAN 65 HP 10 MP 17

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: Sword Cane 55%, damage 1d6

Spells: Contact Deity/Eshu, Contact Diety/Orunmila, Create Self-Ward, Enchant Cane, Enchant Candle, Evil Eye

Key Skills: Art (Folk) 72%, Astronomy 41%, Bargain 35%, Cthulu Mythos 14%, Fast Talk 11%, Head Butt 42%, History 24%, Kick 31%, Law 22%, Natural History 36%, Occult 44%, Oth.L. (Nicaraguan dialect) 69%, Oth.L. (Spanish) 60%, Persuade 37%, Pharmacy 67%, Psychology 13%, Small Knife 51%, Sword 55%

Old Man Cuba is not from Cuba. He slurs in a heavily accented, obscure Nicaraguan mountain dialect and is an Ifá, the highest level of Santeria priest. He carries a thick cane, capped with a pewter rooster head. Old Man Cuba was a close friend of Professor Atterman, whom he called Robert (pronounced Ro-bear), and appears in many of the late curator's publications.

While an Investigator might understand or speaks his tongue, it is unlikely. However, any Investigator who successfully converses with the old man in his Nicaraguan mountain dialect instantly wins the priest's trust. Alternately, if the Investigators proffer one of Professor Atterman's business cards and claim to be friends, Old Man Cuba also grows friendly.

When friendly, Old Man Cuba shares more information. He "*Volunteers*" previously "*Friendly*" information. When asked he instantly shares "*Confrontation*" facts, and he only hesitates to discuss what the Investigators would previously have needed to beat out of him.

Volunteered

"Leave. This is a sacred space and dangerous for people like you. I do not need more death on my hands."

Friendly

If the Investigators befriend Old Man Cuba, he speaks freely about these topics, but also urges his new friends to leave before they get hurt.

About the murdered homeless man: "Ah, I think the poor man wandered in when he'd have better walked elsewhere. So too my dear friend Robert, who often wandered where he should not."

OCTOBER SURPRISE

Pointing out a chicken head or asking about chickens: "Ah. They don't want us to do this, see? They think it is bad for the health, but it is not. And we must, anyway. So this woman says we cannot and she makes a big, bad



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stink. Lots of press. Lots of noise. Many people grow upset because they do not understand the saints and the way we worship. She would not be quiet, and I admit I am glad she is gone. They leave us in peace now. I admit this too.”

Confrontation

The Investigators won't need to bully Old Man Cuba or his grandson, especially if they befriend the old Santeros. However, they may need to push for additional information. A successful **PSYCHOLOGY** or **FAST TALK** check extracts the following:

About his friend, Robert Atterman: “Ah, I cannot prove it, but my guts they tell me, he died from this place too. Always about books and missing pages and getting over on that Oddmuth lady. That was Robert. A good man, a big man. Just unwise.”

More about Robert: “He worked for the big museum. The one that steals from everyone all over the world. Robert was here the night he died, you know. Visiting. Waiting for someone who never came. I went to bed without saying goodbye. I regret that.”

Pushing about the woman who opposed sacrificing chickens: “Sammy, he did it. Black magic. Very bad prayer. I did not think the saints would answer him, but they did. He should not have done that. Robert said he would talk to her, and I'm sure it would have helped. His own sister, after all. I had dinner with her once, you know. A good cook. Very sad. Bah – you want to know more? You go to Gowanus, ask her yourself.”

Pushing about sacrificing chickens: “Gah! It ruins everything! They have used them all up, and now we get no more. A disgrace! A blasphemy. Sammy uses cats? How can you sacrifice cats?! This is not pleasing to the saints. Enough is enough. I will fix this, but these are my troubles. Not yours.”

About Sammy: He spits. “Bah. Child. Stupid child. He meddles and does harm. It will come back to him threefold. Threefold, I say!”

Tito (Old Man Cuba's Grandson), Age 25, Local

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 10 DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 9
SAN 50 HP 12 MP 10

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Small knife 46%, damage 1d4+1d4

Key Skills: Art (Folk) 71%, Astronomy 43%, Bargain 36%, Climb 66%, Fast Talk 12%, Fist/Punch 78%, Grapple 53%, Jump 51%, Kick 33%, Listen 44%, Occult 12%, Oth.L. (Nicaraguan dialect) 54%, Oth.L. (Spanish) 66%, Small Knife 46%

American born and a Brooklyn native, tattooed Tito proves more reticent and distrustful than Old Man Cuba. Tito is deeply concerned his stubborn grandfather will push Sammy Guerva to violence. He fears Guerva, but willingly risks his life for the Old Man if necessary.

Volunteered

"You should really go. My grandpop is no one to mess with. Mind your business and just leave, man."

Friendly

It takes more than speaking an obscure dialect to befriend Tito. Physically defending Old Man Cuba from Guerva wins him over; otherwise, Tito never warms to the Investigators and does not reveal "*Friendly*" information, even if threatened or attacked. However, if the Investigators befriend him, Tito proves more informative than his grandfather.

About his grandfather's friend, Robert: "Oh yeah, I met him a few times. Nice guy. Worked at the Metropolitan Museum, I think. Always asking grandpop about this or that."

About Robert Atterman's sister, Shelly: "That bitch? She was a social worker on the community board. Made a lot of trouble for grandpop. She went crazy. Now she lives alone in some old tenement building. Her replacement, this little guy with glasses, got the police off our backs, and we can practice our religion again. But people around here thank Sammy, not grandpop, like they should."

More about Professor Robert Atterman: "I saw him the night he died. He was all excited. He told grandpop some dude was going to sell him the missing half-page from a book some friend 'gave' him. Said he was going to steal a march on a chick named Oddmuth. I think he maybe stole that book. He had the look when he talked about it. Old looking thing, too. All moldy. I didn't like it. I don't think grandpop did either. Hey, don't tell grandpop I called his friend a thief, ok?"

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Confrontation

Investigators only learn “*Confrontation*” information after Tito becomes Friendly. Even when friendly, the young man remains uncomfortable discussing sacrifice and black magic. Investigators must push with a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check to elicit responses like the following:

More about Shelly Atterman: “Guerva got rid of her. I don’t know how, he just did. Hey – you talk to the saints, anything can happen, right? I’m sorry she went all crazy and shit, but I can’t say I’m not glad she’s off our backs. Sammy’s been a pain ever since. She lives in this tenement in the Gowanus, by the canal.”

Shelly’s replacement, the little guy with glasses: “Don’t know him. Only saw him once. He’s not on the community board any more, I know that. Creepy, dude. Grandpop didn’t like him either.”

Samuel “Sammy” Guerva, Age 26, Santeros

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 11 APP 15
EDU 8 SAN 50
HP 12 MP 10

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Steel rebar 50%, damage 1d8+1d4

Spells: Contact Deity/Ogun-Peter, Enchant Candle

Key Skills: Astronomy 37%, Bargain 59%, Climb 62%, Club 48%, Cthulu

• Mythos 15%, Fast Talk 47%, Fist/Punch 63%, Grapple 49%, Jump 61%, Kick 27%, Occult 38%, Oth.L. (Spanish) 61%, Persuade 62%, Psychology 33%, Small Knife 45%

The prideful Samuel has long felt the Prospect Park community should shop at his religious supply store and take his advice – not Old Man Cuba’s. One night, months ago, he surprised E.J. and Stephanas in the park, preparing a ritual. By the end of the night, the three entered a compact wherein Sammy pledged to secure a secret, sacrificial place for the two outsider occultists and they, in turn, agreed to support Guerva’s bid for local preeminence.

In the course of their dealings, E.J. and Stephanas slaughtered over a hundred chickens in one night. Press coverage of the carnage panicked the local chicken wholesaler, who responded by refusing to sell any more birds to the Santeria religious community. After Sammy complained, E.J. and Stephanas began shipping him boxes of pets and strays, stolen from local animal shelters.

Sammy Guerva vs. Old Man Cuba:

Keepers should consider allowing the Investigators to converse with Old Man Cuba long enough for a relationship to develop, but before they conclude their discussion, have Guerva interrupt.

This part of the encounter turns on tension between the two Santeros boiling over into violence, unless – or perhaps because – the Investigators intervene. While Keepers should orchestrate the conflict between Old Man Cuba and Sammy however they like, the following sample exchanges between the two may prove useful:

Local Politics

1. Sammy accuses Old Man Cuba of attracting too much attention from outsiders.
2. Old Man Cuba responds that Santeria is a legitimate religion and only exposure will gain acceptance from the community.
3. Sammy rejoins: “And that went well didn’t it?”

On Black Magic

1. Old Man Cuba accuses Sammy of drawing unwanted attention by dabbling with dark powers.
2. Sammy replies, “Well I got rid of the bitch, didn’t I?!”

On Chickens

1. Old Man Cuba accuses Sammy of depriving the saints.
2. Sammy rejoins: “They get all they need, just not in white feathers. You’re a squeamish old fool.”
3. Old Man Cuba sputters: “We’re not Wiccans! We don’t sacrifice cats! The orisha don’t like it! What should we use? PIGEONS?!”
4. Sammy rejoins: “I tell you what they don’t like. They don’t like you and your gum mumbling nonsense, or they’d help you like they help me!”

In Response to Threats

1. Old Man Cuba: “The soldiers, they come to my village. High in the mountains. They throw me down and cut me open and pull out my guts. Throw them down in front of me – my own guts! Right there, and then they stomp on them. Squish squish. Right in the mud. And you think I’m afraid of you?! YOU?! Bah!”
2. Sammy: “Oh, so you want some?” He pulls out a piece of steel rebar.

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As the only practitioner with access to sacrifices, patronage of Guerva increased. Now, like an addict, Sammy depends on E.J. and Stephanas to supply him. Sammy likes to tell himself he is their ally, but in truth they control him.

Volunteered

To Old Man Cuba: "Screwing around with outsiders again, old man? Showing them our sacred places? Didn't that mess you up enough already?"

To the Investigators: "Hey effe! Get the fuck out of here and take toothless and his wet nurse with you!"

Confrontation

Sammy is confrontational from the start; however, Investigator's taunts or threats combined with a successful **Psychology** check, trick him into spitting out more than he should:

Bringing up E.J. or Stephanas: "That little guy is some serious bad brujo. You want to be shutting up about him."

Shelly Atterman: "I don't know what or how, but they said they'd get rid of that bitch, and they did. So it was worth it."

On the chicken massacre: "Yeah. OK. So we kill chickens. Weren't no more than a Purdue factory or a KFC every damn day. I can't believe that little fuck won't sell us any more. What's your point?"

On murdering the homeless man: *pause* "Get the fuck out of my park!"

Physical

Some matters Sammy refuses to discuss unless the Investigators first defeat his goons then either inflict 3 or more points of damage while interrogating him or succeed at a successful **FAST TALK** check at -20%.

The murdered homeless man: "It was payment, man. I needed help to get that Atterman bitch off our backs, they need to take care of a guy in the wrong place at the wrong time. Who cares? I'd do it again. It was just some bum."

Pushing about his alliance with E.J. and Stephanas: "They got power, man. Real power. You just see if one of them don't wind up mayor or something one day! So they say jump, I say sure. So long as I'm the king of Brooklyn. You're gonna regret this, man. You really will."

On the animals E.J. and Stephanas supply: “Dogs, cats. Parrots. Whatever. Never snakes or lizards. I asked, but they said no. I don’t care where he gets them. They just drop them off in a box.”

Sammy glances into the nearby grass. If the Investigators haven’t located the old boxes already, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **IDEA** check follows Sammy’s glance and finds them.

Guerva’s Muscle

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	POW	DEX	SAN	HP
Rico	13	12	12	9	10	10	40	12
Carlos	13	15	15	10	11	11	45	14
John	14	12	12	8	11	8	40	13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Small knife 35%, damage 1d4+1d4

Key Skills: Fist/Punch 85%, Grapple 42%

Impressed by his occult power, these young men follow Sammy slavishly. They are ignorant of their guru’s plans and connections.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators leave Old Man Cuba to his fate, Sammy breaks the Old Man’s hip, snaps his ribs, and puts him and Tito in the hospital. Sammy becomes the de facto *Santeros* for the Prospect Park area, granting E.J. and Stephanas access to Guerva’s thugs.

If anyone speaks Professor Oddmuth’s name aloud, this alerts her. Make a mark next to her name on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators specifically punish Sammy for helping kill the homeless man, The King knows. Place two marks beside The King on the Trigger Tracker.

The King knows what the homeless know. If the Investigators conversed with the crazy man on their way to the park, place a mark next to The King on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators harassed or harmed this homeless man, erase a mark next to The King.

If the Investigators stop Sammy from hurting Old Man Cuba, it angers the young *Santeros*. He mentions it to E.J. or Stephanas. Place a mark next to E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators damage Sammy, even in self defense, then he complains to E.J. and Stephanas. Make two marks next to E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker.

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Research

Digging into the death of the Prospect Park homeless man, local papers reveal his killers decapitated him.

Old newspapers contain a picture of Shelly Atterman's tenement on the Gowanus canal, including a street sign. They also mention her brother, Professor Robert Atterman. The photo lets Investigators locate Shelly's tenement.

A Yellow Pages advertises Brooklyn's one-and-only live chicken abattoir, The Brooklyn Chicken Depot, on Degraw Street at the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (the BQE).

3. Abandoned Tenement, Gowanus Brooklyn

Shelly Atterman lives on the fifth floor of this abandoned, six-floor tenement. Surprisingly, the intercom works. Shelly answers anyone who rings her apartment, but refuses access unless they mention either her brother, Robert, or Cheryl Kody.

Even then, Shelly only buzzes the Investigators into the foyer. She insists they leave watches, rings, and earrings in the mailboxes. The broken mailbox doors hang from their hinges forlornly, but Shelly does not care. She does not want "them" listening through the recording devices "they" embed in jewelry. If the Investigators do not comply, Shelly does not unlock the door into the building. A successful **LOCKSMITH** check or well-placed bullet bypasses the problem.

Electricity sputters within this health hazard and fire trap. The stairs sag, the banisters wobble, and the entire structure tilts toward the canal. In Shelly's tenement, a dropped ball always rolls across the floor.

On the third floor landing, mold covers the walls, which stink of piss. A homeless man rocks and mumbles to himself, head down. If the Investigators speak to him, he snaps up and stares, pauses, and in a perfectly modulated, news announcer voice declaims: "Apartment 5a, of course." He says nothing else until the Investigators leave. Then he adds, "The lizards like to tickle me!" He resumes his head-down rocking.

If the Investigators dropped Cheryl's name or mentioned Robert Atterman, they find Shelly's door open and Shelly at the kitchen table clasp a pair of scissors. Otherwise, they must force her door with a successful **STRENGTH** or **LOCKSMITH** check. As the Investigators force Shelly's front door, she hides under her bed.

When the Investigator's enter Shelly's apartment, read or paraphrase the following:

OCTOBER SURPRISE

Newspapers everywhere: on the ground, piled on the furniture, pushed up against the round kitchen table. Taped across the windows, denying the sunlight. No one walks through this apartment without trudging through newsprint thick like fallen snow. Somewhere beneath all those words meat... or fruit – or both – rots. The stench overwhelms. In the corner a TV hisses static, while an older woman, barefoot in a faded, grease-brown sundress, paws feebly at the screen. She turns as you enter, black hair dangling in long thick, spaghetti clumps and smiles a gap-toothed grin.

LAYOUT

The building's front door is locked and opens into a foyer filled with busted mailboxes. Another door leads from the foyer into the building proper.

Shelly's 600 sqft. apartment contains a living room, an eat-in kitchen, a bathroom and a bedroom. Her front door opens into the living room. The kitchen sits directly to the right, while the bedroom and bathroom occupy the back of the apartment.

ACTION

As they explore Shelly's place or question her, Investigators not otherwise engaged hear a shussing-rustle. They spot something wiggling beneath the sea of newspapers, a cat or maybe a squirrel. Whenever they try to track the disturbance, it stops.

Any Investigator who succeeds on a **LISTEN** check while in Shelly's apartment hears clucking noises from her bedroom.

INVESTIGATION

Newspapers

Scattered pages from local newspapers cover most of Shelly's apartment. Investigators who read one find an innocuous article about Prospect Park. A successful **IDEA** or **SPOT HIDDEN** prompts Investigators to read another article. All the pages tossed about Shelly's apartment contain articles on Prospect Park, some as old as a decade.

Allow another **SPOT HIDDEN** to Investigators who persist in rooting through the newspapers. A success uncovers up to three headless rat corpses. The corpses are a few days old.

The Kitchen Table

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices stacks of cuttings clipped together and hidden beneath a napkin on Shelly's kitchen table. A thick magic

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marker lies beside them. Investigators who read the clippings find an article about the retirement of local community board member, Shelly Atterman. It explains how a librarian named E.J. Hastings replaced her. The article contains a partial photo of E.J. (Please see Player's Handout #6 on page 110)

Shelly's Bedroom

If the Investigators try to enter Shelly's bedroom, she protests. If they persist, she attacks with her oversized scissors. Use the statistics for a steak knife from the core rulebook. If they enter the locked bedroom despite Shelly, they find chicken scat everywhere. Seven scrawny white chickens strut about the room, nest on her bed, or peck at her clothes. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices a hospital gown wadded in a corner. A label inside it reads, Stacey Spencer Clinic, WDHP, Houston and 4th Ave.

A more indepth look around the room and an additional **SPOT HIDDEN** picks out a scrap of tag around a chicken's leg. The scrap displays part of an address: "—epot Degraw and BQE, Brooklyn, 112—".

PERSONALITIES

Shelly Atterman MSW. Age 25. Insane Social Worker

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 5 DEX 11 APP 10
EDU 19 SAN 06 HP 10 MP 5

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Art (Folk) 55%, Conceal 25%, Craft (Baskets) 35%, Fist/Punch 55%, Grapple 32%, Hide 22%, Kick 37%, Law 24%, Listen 33%, Medicine 13%, Psychoanalysis 12%, Psychology 17%, Sneak 45%

The younger sister of the late curator, Professor Robert Atterman, Shelly Atterman was a politically active social worker and a member of her local community board until she angered E.J. and Stephanas. The duo drove Shelly mad and stole her spot on the community board.

In her paranoia, she refuses to leave her apartment and tries to ignore anyone who speaks to her. In response to gentle questions, she hums, whistles, and avoids eye contact. Persistent friendliness provokes her to abruptly grab her questioner, bring her unwashed mouth close and hiss. She reacts to threats and warnings, but intermittently interrupts to shout and point at the static on her TV, "There! Did you see that! Hah! I knew it!"

Volunteered

Through the intercom: "Who are you? Did they follow you? Are the helicopters out there?"

Randomly: “He did it, you know.” She stands, gyrates slightly, bunches and rubs her sweat-stained sundress across her belly. “I can feel his eyes licking every inch of me.” Her bare feet twist the newspapers, tearing them.

Randomly: “I couldn’t take care of a dog, you know. What about my pretties? No. No. Couldn’t, could I? Do you think they know? Do they care? Slither fat slide down my leg and makey splat!”

Randomly: “I miss him. I miss him. My poor brother, I miss him so.” She weeps.

Confrontation

Her murdered brother: “They murdered him, you know. In the Museum, because of that stupid book and its stolen stupid page.”

About the newspapers scattered everywhere: “The park was *my* issue. Making it safe, especially at night. *My* issue. Not a place for killing animals. How can people do that? Such a health violation!”

The newspaper clippings on the table: “They all started turning on me! Like magic!”

The things rustling beneath the newspapers: “What? I don’t hear anything.” Shelly remains oblivious, her mind literally unable to register the phenomena.

Visiting the Community Board or Borough President

Investigators may decide to visit the Community Board or the office of the Borough President. Allow the attempt; however the Community Board has no office. It meets monthly in a rotating public venue – a school auditorium, for example – and does not meet again this month. Locating the Borough President’s office proves equally fruitless. E.J. does not keep an office. He keeps an answering service. Should the Investigators call and leave a number, they attract E.J.’s attention. Place a mark next to E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker. Consider having E.J. call the Investigators back to warn them off or to threaten them.

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Physical

Only a successful **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check, rolled at -10%, or smacking Shelly around elicits intelligible responses. One answer per successful **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check or per **1 POINT OF DAMAGE**. As indicated, she continues to lie about her bedroom.

About her bedroom or the clucking noise: “Huh? What? Hmmm hmmm.”

Finding rat corpses under newspapers: Shelly grows sly. She simpers and bats her eyes, then grins, “Hm. Ho. They’re for the friends inside, silly.”

Asking about the Women’s Disability Housing Project or the hospital scrubs: “I ran away from there. They were coming for me. Would you stay?”

Inquiring after her brother’s dog: “It’s in the shelter. The Eastside Animal Shelter. It’s safe there, isn’t it? That’s why they call it a shelter. Safe, isn’t it? ISN’T IT?”

Why the chickens: “My pretties? I saved them from the Park. Some of them, anyway. I had to, didn’t I? You’re not going to take them away, are you? ARE YOU?!”

About her brother’s book or the missing half-page: “He said he was meeting Professor Oddmuth. Maybe. Maybe.” She rocks, screams suddenly, “BUT WHY WOULD SHE CHASE POGO AWAY?!” and bursts into tears.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators talk to the mumbling homeless man on the landing, the King knows. Place a mark next to The King on the Trigger Tracker. Conversely, remove a mark if they harmed or terrified the man.

If anyone in the apartment, including Shelly, says Professor Oddmuth’s name aloud, this alerts her. Place a mark next to Professor Oddmuth on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators spent more than two rounds hunting the source of rustling beneath Shelly’s newspapers, place a mark next to She of the Creatures.

Research

Looking up old newspapers may uncover additional facts:

1. E.J.'s last name is Hastings. Before he joined the Brooklyn community board, he worked at the New York Public library's Manhattan branch for a reference librarian named Alfred Varage.
2. An E.J. Hastings is currently Brooklyn's borough president.

4. Eastside Animal Shelter, 64th and 1st Ave.

This is one of three private shelters owned by Angie and Steve Barloo. Someone broke into their other two locations and stole or brutally slaughtered the animals. These violations deeply distressed Angie and Steve, who are inveterate animal lovers. In response, they closed their Eastside location and seek homes for their surviving animals, desperate lest tragedy strike again.

Unbeknownst to the Barloos, their most trusted employee, Relly, entered the Darkblood cult months ago. He now answers to E.J. and Stephanas, and he let them into the other two locations. In fact, E.J. and Stephanas left the Eastside Animal Shelter earlier today. Relly helped the two steal many of the shelter's animals then turned to killing the rest.

During this slaughter, Pogo bit Relly and escaped beneath a cage. Relly has been after him with a fire axe for the better part of an hour when the Investigators, and possibly the Barloos, arrive.

If the Investigators arrive without first contacting the Barloos, either they need to break-in or convince Relly to open the doors. Relly refuses entry unless a successful **FAST TALK** convinces him the Investigators are fellow cultists.

Alternately, the Investigators might contact the shelter owners. The owners never question Investigators who mention the Attermans; instead, the Barloos leap to the conclusion the Investigators want Pogo, and they willingly, almost embarrassingly, rush to the shelter to hand over the dog.

If the Investigators convince Relly to buzz them in, read or paraphrase this:

The door swings open. A huge, hulking man in a green hospital gown blocks the way. Black blood stains his top in paint bucket swathes. A transparent plastic cap covers his hair, and he clenches a fire axe in one bandaged hand. Its blade drips thick blood onto the linoleum.

He glances past you, left right, steps back, and nods you in, "Hurry up." Without waiting for you, he turns his back and heads inside.

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• If the Investigators enter the shelter with the Barloos, read or paraphrase this:

With a click the front door unlocks, and the owner ushers you inside. Fluorescent bulbs flicker to life, lighting up a waiting room. Beyond that, an office with the usual accoutrements: printers, wall mounted fire extinguishers, phones, computers, garbage pails. To the right, a red sign beside a stairwell proclaims "Kennels" in white letters, and an arrow points down. Across from it a thin metal door hangs open, revealing a tan fire hose. The room hums with electricity and smells like old animal hair and unfinished paperwork.

LAYOUT

The shelter consists of a foyer, a reception room, a back office and a set of stairs down to three large kennels: one for dogs, one for cats and one for miscellaneous animals. Each kennel holds a stainless steel examination and washing table.

ACTION

The Investigators either break-in with a successful **LOCKSMITH** or **STRENGTH** check, enter the shelter with the Barloos, or they convince Relly to open the doors.

Breaking-in or entering with the Barloos, when they go down to the kennels, they surprise a blood bespattered Relly chopping puppies and kittens into pieces. The huge, hulking employee charges them with his fire axe, striking for the Barloos first.

At the end of the encounter, the Investigators must decide whether to take Pogo the pug when they leave.

INVESTIGATION

Security Cameras

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or merely asking the Barloos notices the security cameras. A successful **IDEA** check prompts Investigators to review the tape.

Security Tape

If the Investigators review the security tape, a successful **IDEA**, **ELECTRONICS** or **COMPUTER USE** check helps them zero-in on the right recording. Read or paraphrase the following:

The tape, in black and white, shows Relly unlocking the front door for three people: a tubby, bespectacled fellow carrying flattened cardboard boxes; a tall, thin man sporting a short pony tail; and, led by a rope about her wrists, a wild-haired woman in hospital scrubs. The woman balances a stack of books in her upturned palms. The camera clearly displays the woman's haggard face, but static obscures the men's features. Passing the front desk, the woman places her books down. The scene cuts to all four in the dog kennel.

Tubby hands his cardboard boxes to Relly who assembles them. Tubby then she draws a large chalk circle around the steel examining table. Thin Man unties the woman. She removes her jacket and drops it, then circles the room, opening cages and removing animals. Some she tosses, yowling, into cardboard boxes, which Thin Man closes and duct-tapes shut. Others she tosses to Relly, who hacks them in half on the table.

Tubby turns directly to the camera, his face obscured by static. He gestures to Thin Man, gestures back at the camera – snap. The image goes black. Electric snow.

Poking Around

In the miscellaneous animal kennel, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **IDEA** check reveals someone or something exsanguinated all the reptiles *inside* their cages.

Four library books sit atop the reception desk. They were checked out by Letia Marsh, Library Card number #994378. Their titles are: *Houdini The Great*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *1066: The Battle of Hastings*, *Building Midtown: An Architectural History of the Skyscraper*. Investigators find the desk's center drawer unlocked and packed with thick, gray snake skins, much like the desk from Encounter 1 – only these skins stretch to ten feet in length when removed.

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or deliberate search in the canine kennel locates the big-haired woman's discarded hospital jacket. The label inside it reads Letia Marsh, WDHP #14E, Houston and 4th Ave.

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PERSONALITIES

Angie and Steve Barloo. Age 47. Business Owners

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 10 INT 17 POW 13 DEX 16 APP 11
EDU 20 SAN 65 HP 12 MP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Art (Beaded Jewelry) 35%, Bargain 74%, Credit Rating 77%, Drive (Auto) 45%, Fast Talk 37%, History 29%, Law 32%, Library Use 39%, Mech Repair 23%, Medicine (Veterinary) 34%, Pharmacy 26%

Both Barloos wear John Lennon glasses and braid their long grey hair. They drive a hybrid. Angie favors brightly colored linen skirts, chunky homemade jewelry, and sandals. Steve prefers leather vests, thick sandals over white socks, and jeans.

Aging hippies and vegetarians, Angie and Steve own three animal shelters that double as kennels. Grief stricken by their failure to protect the creatures in their care and terrified of a repeat at their third shelter, the couple frantically pushes Pogo on the Investigators. Angie and Steve repeatedly blame the police for failing to catch the criminals, yammering incessantly while unlocking the shelter.

Volunteered

“So glad you’re here. Picking up a stray, too, or just one of our kennel guests? Dog or cat? How about both, right? Believe it or not, some dogs and cats get on right well. Just goes to show we’re all the same under the skin, right?”

“Damn pigs. Good for nothing but smacking decent folks with truncheons. Where were they when our little ones needed us? Nowhere, that’s where. Eating doughnuts, I bet!”

Friendly

A little effort easily convinces the Barloos the Investigators are their friends. All **FAST TALK** checks to befriend the Barloos receive +15%.

About the kennel: “We’ve only one non-rescue dog left. Little Pogo owns a human over at the Metropolitan Museum. Or did, rather. Horrible tragedy. We’ve tried to send Pogo to the surviving relative, but we can’t reach

the woman! No one answers the phone. Our letters come back, and when I called the other day it said her phone was canceled.”

Mentioning Pogo: “Poor thing! The police brought him to us. We’re just glad to find him a home. I’m sorry for your loss, by the way. Are you keeping him yourself or returning him to Ms. Atterman?”

Noticing security cameras: “Cameras? Yeah, we have them everywhere. Motion sensitive. Alarms. The whole deal. Installed them after the first time they hit us. Fat lot of good it did. Useless technology. Planet-poisoning electronic trash. Waste of my money and worse than cell phones.”

Confrontation

Angie and Steve are non-confrontational people, but some topics make them uncomfortable. Investigators must succeed at a **PSYCHOLOGY** check to elicit information on the following topics:

Asking for Shelly Atterman’s address: “You don’t know it? Oh. Well, we can’t really give that kind of information out. Personal privacy, you know. Some of the only good laws our government passed!” An additional **FAST TALK** or **PSYCHOLOGY** check elicits Shelly Atterman’s Gowanus address.

About attacks on their shelters: Steve – “Oh, you heard about that? Awful. Really awful. People kill animals all the time in this city. It’s cruel and vicious and uncaring and typical, but this! This *sniff* is worse. This—“ Steve sobs uncontrollably. Angie picks up, “It’s like...like all those headless chickens in Prospect Park, senseless, only worse!” Angie sobs too.

On chickens in Prospect Park: Angie, waving her hand, “Oh I read about it in the paper. I mean, I respect everyone’s right to practice their religion, but that’s just awful!”

Requesting the security tape: “I’m not so sure that’s a good idea. If there is anything on it, wouldn’t that be tampering with evidence or something?” An additional **FAST TALK** or **PSYCHOLOGY** check secures the tape.

Physical

Violence or the threat of it instantly compels the Barloo’s cooperation. Forcing them to hand over the security tape, for example. However, once threatened or hurt by the Investigators, Steve ends every sentence addressed to him or his wife with “...fascist!”

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Call of Cthulhu

Relly "Big Stuff" Jackson, Age 32, Insane Darkblood Cultist

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 17 DEX 14 APP 9
EDU 13 SAN 05 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fire Axe 65%, damage 1d8+2+1d4

Key Skills: Biology 24%, Dodge 38%, Grapple 44%, Hide 29%, Medicine (Veterinary) 14%, Operate Heavy Machinery 35%, Sneak 37%, Spot Hidden 48%

For nearly seven years, Relly worked for Steve and Angie as a janitor, animal handler and general assistant. He kept all three shelters clean and cared for the animals – at minimum wage without a raise.

With just a little magic, E.J. and Stephanas turned the slow, lumbering man's resentment to their own ends. Once recruited, the murderous tasks they demanded drove Relly a little mad. Today, Relly is wholly their creature, but he grows increasingly unstable and prone to sudden, violent outbursts.

Relly does not talk. He grunts. So long as Relly believes the Investigators work for the Darkbloods, he waves, grunts something that sounds like "Whatever," and calmly returns to hacking up kittens with his fire axe. If the Investigators let slip they don't work for his bosses, Relly attacks. Grant Relly an **Idea** roll whenever the Investigators say something out of keeping with their role as fellow Darkbloods. Success triggers an attack. When Relly sees the Barloos, he tries to kill them.

Physical

If captured, Relly sinks into sullen silence. Threats prove useless. A successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check made at -20% or 2 points of physical damage elicits one of these responses:

Who are the people on the security tape: "Dark the Blood of my Masters!"

Pushing for more on the people on the tape: "Masters. My gods. YOUR DEATH!" Relly spits at the nearest Investigator and tries to bite his own tongue. Left alone, he reduces it to bloody shreds, rendering him incapable of speech. A successful **FIRST AID** check prevents this.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators leave Relly alive in Angie and Steve's custody, Relly kills the two hippies and escapes before the police arrive. He flees to E.J. and Stephanas and reports on the Investigators. Place two marks beside E.J.

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and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker. Consider mentioning the murder in the next day's newspaper.

If the Investigators take any snake skins with them, place a mark next to She of the Creatures.

Research

Old newspapers reveal an article on the "Chicken Head Massacre" (See Player's Handout #7 on page 111) wherein police arrested Prospect Park Santeria practitioners for violating health codes. The article notes Shelly Atterman of Gowanus, a community board member, speaking out against Santeria worship in Prospect Park. The White Pages list Shelly's address.

Investigators who succeed on an **IDEA** or **LIBRARY USE** check while accessing old newspapers note the attacks on the animal shelters started after the Chicken Massacre.

A successful **OCCULT** check identifies the chalk circle in the security tape as part of a Power raising ritual.

A successful **COMPUTER USE** check at -20% hacks the New York Public Library's computer system and reveals that Letia Marsh, owner of library card #994738, lives at the WDHP, #14E, Houston and 4th Avenue.

Concluding the Spooky Stage

Keepers should avoid moving to the *Tense* encounters until the Investigators have finished three of the four encounters at this stage.

Remember to check the Trigger Tracker to see if key Personalities take action against the Investigators.

EARLY INVESTIGATIONS (TENSE STAGE)

Each of the Opening Encounters points to at least two encounters at the Tense stage. Here, supernatural involvement rises. This stage culminates in at least one deliberate, ostensibly mundane attack on the Investigators. Along the way, they have unsettling encounters with She of the Creatures and her mysterious brood.

Investigators must collect clues at a minimum of two locations before proceeding to the next stage. It won't matter which encounters the Investigators select. If they successfully navigate each encounter's dangers, they also learn more about the larger mystery: background information and possibly descriptions for E.J. and Stephanas, that a grimoire is involved, that a page is missing, and that potent occult forces are in play.

5. The Brooklyn Chicken Depot, Brooklyn

The Depot appears closed, its front windows boarded over. A successful **LOCKSMITH** or **STRENGTH** check forces the door. Inside, the manager of the Chicken Depot, Chigwai, hides from customers. Whether or not the Investigators capture Chigwai – and in what condition – determines how much information they learn.

Around back, a garage attaches to the building. Investigators who make a successful **CLIMB** check and reach the garage roof locate an unlocked window into the second floor of the abattoir.

The front door opens into a huge warehouse. The smell of old blood and the high orangey stink of rotting chicken rolls over like an avalanche. Immediately to the right, a small desk topped with a cash register sits, surrounded by a few scattered folding chairs. Beyond the desk, the shadowy outlines of strange machines tower over a concrete floor, creating a maze of unwashed, blood stained steel slabs, conveyor belts, hooks, blades, and wires. Somewhere in the shadows, a faucet drips.

LAYOUT

The Brooklyn Chicken Depot occupies a windowless, open warehouse, with offices and a few cramped rooms above. Poultry slaughter equipment lines the downstairs in crowded, complex rows. The dim light and looming equipment disorient, casting shadows and impeding movement. A stair at the back leads up. The second floor contains an office, a bathroom, a file room, a small kitchen, a storage closet and a bedroom. Chigwai lives in the bedroom, whose window drops to the garage roof.

ACTION

Unless they make a successful **SNEAK** check, Chigwai hears the Investigators entering. He hides behind the equipment, walking only when the Investigators walk, trying to **SNEAK** for the back stair.

A **SPOT HIDDEN** or **LISTEN**, opposed on the resistance table, notices Chigwai as a dark, hulking shadow lurking among the blood-stained equipment. If the Investigators call out to him or spread out to trap him, Chigwai activates the slaughter equipment and bolts. The noise and activity add **-20% TO ALL CHECKS** to locate Chigwai as he flees.

Unless the Investigators succeed at the better of an **IDEA**, **SPOT HIDDEN** or **LISTEN** check versus his **SNEAK**, Chigwai reaches the bottom of the stairs unnoticed. Should the Investigators fail at a second **IDEA**, **SPOT HIDDEN** or **LISTEN** check, he slips upstairs and out his bedroom window, also unnoticed.

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Investigators who locate Chigwai and chase him do so across blood-slick, moldy floors, cut with concrete troughs. If they (or Chigwai) fail a **DODGE** check during the chase, they slip and fall. If they (or Chigwai) also fail a **LUCK** check after falling, they slam into one of the many dangerous pieces of abattoir equipment, injuring themselves for **1D6+4 DAMAGE**.

INVESTIGATION

Paying for Chickens

Grant an **IDEA** check to players who mention the cash register or discuss the act of buying chickens. If successful, they wonder about receipts. Searching the upstairs filing cabinets, they locate a credit card receipt for two hundred chickens dated a few days before the Prospect Park Chicken Massacre. The receipt names Steve Feldman, c/o The Darkblood Foundation, Kenning Building, 17th Fl, 51st and 3rd as the buyer. All other receipts average fifteen chickens.

Upstairs

At the top of the stairs, Investigators find differently sized, mismatched toddler shoes, a pair of sneakers for a five-year-old, and two pre-teen sandals. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** on the footwear finds nickel-sized scales inside of each.

Upstairs Desk

In an unlocked drawer of the reception desk, Investigators locate E.J. Hastings library card (see Player's Handout #8 on page 112). It expired over two months ago, and shows he worked in the New York Public Library's rare books division.

PERSONALITIES

Chigwai the Chicken Killer, Age 29, Chicken Killer

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 8 DEX 14 APP 11
EDU 9 SAN 16 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Bargain 45%, Dodge 62%, Fist/Punch 57%, Hide 63%, Jump 44%, Kick 34%, Listen 76%, Oth.L. (Cantonese) 79%, Sneak 64%, Spot Hidden 72%

Chigwai lives above the abattoir. Ever since he refused to sell more chickens to E.J., Stephanas, or the Brooklyn Santeria community, their collective curses assault his mind. Haunted and fearful, Chigwai allowed the abattoir operation to collapse. His bosses, currently on vacation, will undoubtedly fire Chigwai on their return.



Chigwai wears a blood-crusted, yellow t-shirt. It shows a chicken grasping its own head under one wing. Above the image it reads: “Chicken Killer” and below, “Qu’est-ce que c’est?” Chigwai has not washed for weeks and stinks of stale sweat, rotting blood and garlic. He clutches Investigators close when making a point, staining their clothes and gasping at them.

Volunteered

The Investigators must catch Chigwai before he says anything.

Once cornered, he wails: “No no! Don’t hit me! I can’t. I can’t sell you any! I don’t have any more. I don’t! Leave me alone!”

Confrontation

Chigwai pretends not to understand English when asked complex questions. After the Investigators make a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check, he abandons this strategy. Instead he weeps and moans to avoid answering anything. He fears E.J. and Stephanas’ retribution. While not a Darkblood cultist or a servitor, the two sorcerers terrify him.

A successful **PSYCHOLOGY** or **FAST TALK** check overcomes his resistance. If an Investigator asks questions in Cantonese, add +10% to the above checks.

About chickens or the lack thereof: “I ran out after I sold them all those birds. Then a new order came in but overnight they were all dead. Something **BIT THEIR HEADS OFF IN THE CAGES!**”

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• **About E.J., Stephanas and Santeria:** “I’d been supplying them on the side for a while. But why did they need so many birds? AND THEN IT GOT INTO THE PAPERS!”

More on E.J. and Stephanas: “Hahha. Hhahahhahhha. Hoohoo. They cursed me you know. *sob* Cursed a guy who kills chickens and lives in an abattoir. That’s, that’s...HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO GET A DATE WHEN YOU LIVE IN A SLAUGHTER HOUSE?!”

The curse: “Oh no. If I talk about it, it’ll come. This little cloaked midget, humping in, sliding around. Chewing. GRISTLY WET SNAPPING SOUNDS. *EATING*. *whispered* What if it wants *my* head?”

Physical

Chigwai also resists discussing E.J. or Stephanas. A successful **FAST TALK** or **PSYCHOLOGY** check, both at -20%, secures his cooperation. So does beating him up for 3 points of damage then threatening him with more violence.

Chickens, always the chickens: “Yeah, they came back for more. They said they only wanted the *deformed* chickens, this time. The ones missing a wing or born without an eye, that sort. We get those. So I sold them those, but I don’t any more. Not any more, I swear! You have to believe me. DON’T LET THE MIDGET EAT MY HEAD!”

! **Why he isn’t selling chickens any more:** “Well, the press coverage stank, but then it said not too. It jumped into my room and whispered, “Sell no more.” That’s what it said. Then it bit a chicken head off and SPIT IT AT ME!”

Details on E.J. or Stephanas: “One of them dropped his wallet while they were arguing about what to do to me. A card fell out. It’s upstairs, in the desk drawer. I was going to call. I WAS!”

About anyone else he saw with E.J. and Stephanas: “They...they had this worn out creepy woman with big hair with them. She wore strange clothes, like hospital scrubs. I know because my cousin is a nurse. They had a rope around her hands. It was kind of kinky so I tried to chat her up, but she just kept muttering this address. Houston and 4th. Houston and 4th. Over and over.”

Anything else he overheard E.J and Stephanas discussing: “Once they mentioned a middle floor. Putting chickens on the middle floor so no one would hear them. The short one complained, too. He said my chickens

weren't doing the trick any more. That they might need a bigger harvest, and unless I wanted to get reaped, I'd keep my big mouth shut. OH GOD DON'T LET HIM KILL ME!"

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

Chigwai more than half belongs to The King already. If the Investigators ask him more than three questions, the King notices. Place a mark next to The King on the Trigger Tracker.

If Investigators take the scales with them, place a mark next to She of the Creatures.

Research

A successful **OCCULT** or **LIBRARY USE** check reveals that sorcerers often use the blood of deformed animals in lycanthropy and other transformation spells.

6. Women's Disability Housing Project, Houston and 4th Avenue

The Stacey Spencer Clinic occupies the ground floor of the eighteen story Women's Disability Housing Project. The clinic both qualifies individuals for housing at the WDHP and provides treatment to its residents. Having suborned the manager of the clinic, Stephanas intermittently raids the WDHP for female victims.

When the Investigators arrive, they find a construction crew busy replacing the door to the residential complex, swapping glass for steel. The crew wears t-shirts that read "Feldman Construction, 11-11 Electric St. Patchogue L.I., 516-555-5555". Two off-duty policemen oversee the work, requesting identification from any who would enter.

LAYOUT

Two entrances, side by side, open onto the street. The clinic entrance, on the left, leads to a waiting room divided by a bullet-proof glass partition. Nurses buzz patients through a thick, steel door into a hallway. Treatment rooms line this corridor.

The entrance to the housing complex, on the right, opens into a foyer dominated by a massive buzzer panel and a set of locked, double doors. Residents buzz visitors through the double doors into the building. Beyond the foyer, the narrow lobby holds an elevator, a storage closet, and fluorescent-lit stairs leading up to all eighteen stories.

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ACTION

Nurses and psychologists staff the clinic. Applicants and patients crowd the waiting room. Attempts to force their way past reception result in nurses calling the off-duty police officers. Soon after, the patrol cars arrive. Should Investigators slip through reception – by posing as patients, making a successful **SNEAK AT -30%**, or by some other subterfuge – a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices a muddy footprint leading to treatment room five.

Treatment room five contains a walk-in storage closet, and another **SPOT HIDDEN** or a successful **IDEA** check reveals a false panel inside the closet. Behind the panel, Investigators find a crawl space. The crawl space leads to the janitorial closet in the WDHP lobby, to the left of the elevator. Once inside the WDHP building, no one questions the Investigators.

When the Investigators reach the fourteenth floor, read or paraphrase the following:

Gray industrial carpet stretches down a dim, paint-flecked passage punctuated by four putty-colored metal doors. At the very end of the corridor, the fifth apartment stands wide open. Warm yellow light streams out, invitingly, and within, the faint strains of melodic jazz echo.

As they proceed toward cheery, wide open 14E, the Investigators disrupt the psychic flux of the floor, disturbing residents. In response, as the Investigators pass, some of the floor's mentally ill inhabitants flip open their doors, expostulate, and retreat.

Use the following narrations to spook the Investigators, though Keepers should feel free to innovate:

On the left, a woman cracks her door and slips her shaggy gray head out and hisses an old tune: "Hey, the King is calling! Ride baby ride on this mystery trip!" She slams the door. Clacking locks echo in the still hallway.

And...

You feel watched. The door on your right lacks a peephole. An unblinking bloodshot eye presses against it, flicking about, tracking your progress – as if the door itself had grown an eye.

And...

Designer's Note: Elevator? Are You Mad?

Some Investigators will refuse to take the elevator. This shouldn't mean they miss the fun. If the group insists on taking the stairs when they leave, then between floors consider having the fluorescent lights click off, and a red emergency light turn on. The doors off the stairs lock of their own accord and nothing opens them. Substitute ventilation grates in the wall for the elevator hatch, and play out the same action.

A door swings open, and a short, disheveled woman in a bathrobe leans out. She licks her lips and gestures you close: "Pssst! Come here." She puts one hand to the side of her mouth, "It crawls into our rooms at night, you know," and waggles her eyebrows suggestively. "I want it to have me!" She sticks out her tongue then retreats and slams her door.

When the Investigators peer inside apartment 14E, read or paraphrase the following:

The apartment is clean, well lit, and homey with woven reed carpets and walls decorated with engaging prints. Books line shelves, thick volumes neatly arranged in size order, but a faint rot mixes with the light jazz on the stereo, as if someone left their garbage out too long.

Nothing stops the Investigators from poking around this apartment. While they do, the fourth door opens and its occupant, Mara, slips into 14E behind them. Barefoot, she moves with unnatural quiet and likely surprises the Investigators. Only a lookout or an **IMPALE ON A LISTEN CHECK**, detects her before she speaks. Mara also has a key to 14E and lets herself in if the Investigators shut the door. She casually discusses the apartment with the Investigators.

When the Investigators leave the building, a successful **LISTEN** check hears flappy, padding noises within the walls, echoing their steps. She of the Creatures trails them.

If the Investigators ride the elevator when leaving, the conveyance screeches to an abrupt halt between floors. The lights go out. A red lamp clicks on, and then – nothing. The emergency phone crackles useless static. After an appropriate pause or when the Investigators consider the grate in the elevator ceiling, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices wet, amber

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eyes glaring through the mesh from outside the elevator. Their pupils slit vertically.

The eyes do nothing but stare. After a while, or if Investigators either attack or try to remove the grate, the eyes vanish. Flappy sounds pound the elevator ceiling, and, after another pause, the lights return and descent resumes.

INVESTIGATION

The Stacey Spencer Clinic

Investigators might think to steal patient records for Shelly Atterman or Letia Marsh, from the clinic. If successful, the paperwork reveals the clinic diagnosed both women as suffering “undifferentiated schizophrenia with paranoid and disorganized features.” Her file lists Shelly’s Gowanus address.

A successful **IDEA** check suggests rifling the clinic’s financial records. If the Investigators manage to steal the files, they learn the “Darkblood Foundation” wrote the clinic multiple six-figure checks. The file holds copies, signed by Steven Feldman. Additionally, the checks display the address of the Darkblood Foundation: The Kenning Building, 17th floor, 51st and 3rd Avenue.

Apartment 14E, General

While inside apartment 14E, a successful **IDEA** check confirms there are no signs of a struggle.

Tracing the rotting stink to the kitchen, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices white chicken feathers stuck under the refrigerator. Opening the garbage, Investigators find a headless, rotting chicken. A band around the chicken’s leg reads “Brooklyn Chicken Depot” and provides an address: Degraw and the BQE.

A second **SPOT HIDDEN**, **IDEA** or **LUCK** check notices a business card (see Player’s Handout #9 on page 113) affixed to the refrigerator. It proclaims in fine script: Professor Johanna Oddmuth, Collector. A Park Avenue address follows.

Apartment 14E, Bedroom

Investigators who enter the apartment’s bedroom find a purse. The purse holds odds and ends, keys to the apartment, and work ID for Letia Marsh. The ID depicts a big haired woman who worked as a part time librarian at the New York Public Library, rare books division.

Apartment 14E, Bookshelves

Digging through the apartment's bookshelves, the Investigators discover many library books with their plastic covers and electronic tags removed. They also find a copy of *The Darkblood Revelations: A Fellow Traveler's Guide to Peace and Personal Fulfillment* from Darkblood Publishing, the Kenning Building, 18th floor, 51st and 3rd.

PERSONALITIES**Steve and Jamie, Age 34, Off-Duty Police Officers**

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 13 DEX 16 APP 12
EDU 11 SAN 65 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: 9mm Revolver 40%, damage 1d10

Tonfa 40%, damage 1d6+1d4

Fist/Punch 40%, damage 1d3+1d4

Mara Jenkins, Age 36, Insane Resident

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 8 DEX 13 APP 12
EDU 12 SAN 16 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Fist/Punch 52%, Hide 43%, Listen 56%, Sneak 74%

A resident of the WDHP, Mara counted Letia Marsh among her close friends. Until recently she also suffered heroin addiction. She no longer craves the drug because she allows She of the Creatures to feed from her arm regularly. Mara calls She of the Creatures her "Joy Girl" or her "Sweet Hiss" and credits the Creature with helping her beat heroin.

The feeding from She is numbing Mara's emotions, blunting her affect. This leads her to stroke inanimate objects softly and repeatedly. Investigators who succeed at a **SPOT HIDDEN**, **FIRST AID** or **MEDICINE** check when assessing Mara notice track marks on her arm. A second successful check notes that more recent, unhealed marks resemble bites, likely from a snake.

Volunteered

Mara tends to wander from topic to topic, trailing her fingers delicately across nearby furniture. She appears uninterested and distracted, as if seeing those around her from far away. This changes if anyone touches her. She hates to be touched and screams until let go, at which point she returns to her dreamy meandering as if nothing happened.

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• **Looking about the apartment:** “No one comes in here no, you know. Ever since the tall man left it unlocked.”

Trailing fingers across Letia's books: “She was always reading. I think she used to work at the library.”

Friendly

Speaking softly and kindly befriends Mara, after which she willingly answers questions like these:

Mentioning Shelly Atterman: “I saw her sometimes. She got out. Sweet Hisser used to visit her, but then she ran away. Why do that?”

About “Sweet Hisser”: She smiles beatifically, “My Joy Girl,” and taps her arm, revealing track marks, old and new.

Confrontation

Some topics, Mara prefers to ignore. Harsh talk and a successful PSYCHOLOGY check force her to respond:

Demanding to know about the tall man: “Ever since the tall man took Letia, Joy Girl visits more often.”

About Joy Girl: A frown crosses her face. “Sometimes she won't love me. Sometimes she just stares.”

• **More about the tall man or Letia:** “The tall man walked out with her, on a rope. He walked out with a lot of women, but not me.”

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators harass any of the crazy women on Mara's floor, the King hears about it and is not happy. Remove one mark from beside The King on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators cause a scene or someone catches them stealing from the Clinic, E.J. and Stephanas hear about it. Place a mark next to E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker.

Research

Digging up newspaper articles on the NY Public Library uncovers a robbery from the Library's rare book division. It mentions Alfred Varage, the division director. Alfred was E.J.'s boss. Another article, one week later, mentions the police no longer suspect Alfred, but the robbery remains unsolved.

Digging into business directories or simply googling Professor Johanna Oddmuth reveals she is a prominent antiquities dealer who lives at a well-known apartment building on Park Ave.

If Investigators call Feldman Construction, an odd conversation ensues. An older, gum-chewing woman with a heavy Long Island accent answers the phone. Any mention of Manhattan, construction at the clinic, the Darkblood Foundation, or a related topic generates a response like this:

“Oh, you must be my boy Stevie’s friend. How is he? Is he alright? He never calls his mother. Tell him he never calls his mother. He’s not still hanging out with that no good Hastings boy, is he? My son always had a problem picking friends...”

The garrulous Mrs. Feldman answers any questions about her son at length, but has not spoken with Stephanas in months.

7. New York Public Library

If the Investigators visit the library merely to conduct research, do not automatically start this encounter. However, if Investigators visit intent on ferreting out library-specific clues, this encounter involves a confrontation with Alfred Varage, Chief Reference Librarian for the rare books division.

Alfred is not a happy man. The police recently investigated him for suspected theft of the *De Vermiis*. Although cleared, he fears the investigation threatens both his job and his black market dealings. Moreover someone murdered his friend Professor Atterman, to whom he *did* lend that book. Finally, Professor Johanna Oddmuth, a sometime client, hounds him for the *De Vermiis* as well.

Professor Oddmuth refuses to believe Alfred does not know who holds the book. Alfred suspects E.J. Hastings of both Professor Atterman’s death and theft of the *De Vermiis*, but dares not share this suspicion. After all, E.J. demonstrated an unhealthy interest in the grimoire, quit shortly after the museum murder, and has since demanded Varage hand over the missing half-page. Alfred does not have the half-page, although he knows Oddmuth does.

Finally, Alfred Varage feels haunted. Whenever he walks the stacks alone, something that flaps and hisses follows him. Convinced this sending portends a threat from E.J. or Professor Oddmuth, Alfred fears what might beset him next.

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LAYOUT

Alfred Varage keeps a small but richly appointed office, dominated by a large mahogany desk. The desk holds a computer, an answering machine, and a brass banker's lamp.

ACTION

If Investigators ask after the rare books division, the desk clerk informs them it is closed to the public, but asks if they are scholars. If they respond yes and use **FAST TALK** to convince the clerk, the man hands them a Visiting Scholar Application for Access. The application lists Chief Reference Librarian, Alfred Varage, rare books division in the masthead.

If the Investigators ask about the theft of a rare book, mention E.J. Hastings, or pose as journalists, the clerk calls Alfred Varage.

Alfred ushers the Investigators into his office. The door shuts behind them, and Alfred adopts a tough-guy stance. He tries to ask aggressive questions.

Mid-discussion, Varage's phone rings. A successful **LISTEN** check catches a few words "...found...must have...employee...drop it in..." Alfred pales as he takes this call and quickly hangs up.

Either the Brooklyn Chicken Depot or the Women's Disability Housing Project called Alfred, Keeper's choice or whichever the Investigators have not yet visited. In both cases, the call reports finding an employee library card: E.J.s from the Brooklyn Chicken Depot or Letia's from the Women's Disability Housing Project. Keepers should decide to which of the two encounters they wish to lure Investigators next.

INVESTIGATION

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices a coffee cup from *Marlowe's* on Alfred's desk.

Dialing *69 on Alfred's phone retrieves the phone number of either the Women's Disability Housing Project or the Brooklyn Chicken Depot (Keeper's choice). A reverse phone number lookup, on a computer or in a paper directory, learns the business's name and address. Alternately Alfred's inbox contains a message written by his secretary indicating one of the two places called regarding a missing library card.

Alfred's rolodex contains the address of Stephanas Darkblood's midtown skyscraper, the Kenning Building at 51st and 3rd. Alfred wrote "E.J.?" on the card and circled it.

PERSONALITIES

Alfred Varage, Age 52, Chief Reference Librarian

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 18 POW 17 DEX 9 APP 9
EDU 21 SAN 35 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Aramaic 56%, Bargain 45%, Conceal 77%, Coptic 43%, Cthulu Mythos 25%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide 43%, History 58%, Law 54%, Library Use 84%, Listen 66%, Occult 75%, Oth.L. (Latin) 67%, Sneak 64%, Spot Hidden 45%

Alfred is a criminal who sells pages from rare books to people he meets at *Marlowe's*. He confronts the Investigators in his office and tries to determine if they work for E.J., for Professor Oddmuth, or for the police. If he discovers they are independents, he may implore them to protect him from his enemy's occult sending. If he learns the Investigators hunt for the *De Vermiis* or its missing half-page, he clams up and tries to kick them out.

Volunteered

"Who are you? What do you want? What makes you think you can just barge in here like this? Now they're sending people to scare me? It won't work. I demand answers!"

Friendly

A successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check persuades Varage the Investigators are on his side.

Noticing the *Marlowe's* cup: "Ah, fellow...coffee drinkers? Humph. Well. What can I do for you?"

About someone threatening him: "You think I don't know that...that **thing** is supposed to scare me?"

Claiming to be on his side or independent: "Oh. Do you...do you think you can do something about that...that thing?"

About the thing in the stacks: "I don't really know. I've never actually *seen* it, you see. It's always on the other side of the stack. It's short. Hooded. It has a hump on its back, and it makes these awful flapping sounds. It's never *done* anything to me – not yet, but... Can you get rid of it?"

Confrontation

Aggression plus a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** or **FAST TALK** check elicits responses like these:

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• **About the stolen book:** “I didn’t do it. I...I lent the book. To a friend. To my friend Robert Atterman.”

More about the book: “An old grimoire. All stuff and nonsense, really. Corrupt and useless like most such, but interesting to the right people.”

Inquiring about a missing half-page: “Who do you work for? You know damn well I don’t have it!”

More about the missing half-page: “Go ask Oddmuth. She has it. She keeps calling me about the book, too. That book has been nothing but trouble.” A successful **IDEA** or **PSYCHOLOGY** check suggests Alfred still hides something.

Physical

Another successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check rolled at -20% or smacking Alfred around for at least 1 point of damage convinces him the Investigators mean business. He now answers these sorts of questions:

About who stole the grimoire: “If I had to guess? Elmore Job Hastings. E.J. He used to work for me, and he scares me. I think he killed Robert.”

Really pushing about the missing half-page: “Fine. FINE. I tore it out. That’s what I do. I tore it out, and I sold it to Professor Oddmuth. But I didn’t sell the book! I don’t do that. I just...lent it to Robert.”

• **What’s on the missing half-page:** “Oh some corrupt transformation formula. Changing by moonlight or some such. Could have been a fashion guide for all I know. My early Coptic stinks.”

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators decide to hunt the flapping creature in the library stacks, Varage lets them inside the rare book room. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** catches sight of a small, hump-backed creature before it vanishes down a ventilation shaft too small for the Investigators. It spins and stares at them before vanishing. A second **SPOT HIDDEN** notes its eyes are yellow and slit vertically. If the Investigators already encountered She of the Creatures in the WDHP elevator, an **IDEA** roll recognizes this as the same or similar creature.

If anyone speaks Professor Oddmuth's name, she knows. Place two marks next to her name on the Trigger Tracker.

If the Investigators attack her, this offends She of the Creatures. Place two marks next to her name on the Trigger Tracker.

Concluding the Tense Stage

Keepers should prolong this stage until Investigators finish two of the three encounters. Once they have, tally the marks on the Trigger Tracker next to the King and Professor Oddmuth. The person with more marks requests a meeting. In the case of a tie (or of Keeper preference), consider sending messengers from both.

Regardless of the marks on the Trigger Tracker, if the Investigators seriously harmed or killed a homeless person, the King does not ask for their help.

If the King contacts the Investigators, read or paraphrase the following:

A man in rags and fingerless gloves shuffles your way. A wave of acrid body odor washes over you. He grins a mouthful of yellow teeth, enjoying your reaction to his stink, and rasps like a rusted hinge, "The King wants to see you." The man pulls a broad-faced security flashlight from somewhere and waves it at you, dirty knuckles wrapped around its thick handle, "Follow Barge. Barge'll get you there. Heb."

Barge leads the Investigators to a subway station. The stop is curiously empty. He shuffles down to the end of the vacant platform, looks left and right, and then leaps onto the tracks. "Come on," floats up from below. His flashlight flickers on and wobbles away into the dark.

Barge does not answer questions put to him by the Investigators; instead, he mumbles "Ask The King. I just fetch." If the Investigators attack Barge, he flees.

If Professor Johanna Oddmuth contacts the Investigators, she does so through the public phones. Every public phone the Investigators pass rings as they pass it. Should they walk down a line of phones, each one might ring exactly once, precisely as they pass, while any phone they stop near rings incessantly. Once the Investigators answer a ringing phone, read or paraphrase the following:

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"Hello. So sorry to disturb you. My employer, Dr. Johanna Oddmuth requests the pleasure of your company at her residence. Would you join her today, at your convenience, to discuss a matter of mutual interest?"

The servant cannot provide details on the "matter of mutual interest" as "I'm afraid Dr. Oddmuth does not confide such details to me, sir. However I've been instructed to inform you the meeting will be brief, and well worth your time." The servant provides Johanna's Park Avenue address when Investigators agree to meet her.

From this point forward, the Investigators spot no homeless people about the city. With the exception of the group in Encounter #11, the King collected every last person underground.

TRANSITIONS

By now the Investigators likely suspect someone used magic to ascend the local political ladder. They may have placed E.J. Hastings at the top of their suspect list. They also know they are not the only ones interested in these events.

As described in Concluding the Tense Stage, one of two people contacts the Investigators. Either, "The King" invites them down into New York City's abandoned subway tunnels, or Dr. Oddmuth, a wealthy antiquities collector invites them to Park Avenue. Alternately, both may contact the Investigators, who might split up in response. However, players may not

Followed by She of the Creatures:

If there are three or more marks next to She of the Creatures on the Trigger Tracker, then She and her brood follow the group to their meeting with The King. She keeps well back, tracking the party. The Investigators only notice on an Impale **LISTEN** check.

Tracking the Investigators to The King changes matters for She. She overhears that E.J. plans to kill the homeless, but She doesn't understand which homeless. Instead, She erroneously concludes that killing The King's homeless, right there in the subway tunnels, will deny E.J. his kill. Consequently, she attacks as described in this encounter.

In the event the Investigators become aware of their stalkers and turn to confront them, She and her brood retreat to the surface. This eliminates the attack described in this encounter.

attend both meetings sequentially, nor may the group change its mind once they reject a meeting. Either they take both meetings simultaneously, by splitting up, or they choose one.

The adventure works even if the Investigators reject both meetings, as they should have collected enough clues to zero-in on E.J. and Stephanas' cult headquarters in midtown.

8. The King, Subway Tunnels

The encounter centers on a meeting, in the abandoned subway tunnels deep beneath the city, between the Investigators and an enigmatic figure known only as "The King". To reach The King, the group must decide whether to follow his emissary, Barge. If they balk, Barge eventually leaves them on a subway platform and the group loses its chance to meet The King. The adventure works whether or not the Investigators follow Barge.

"The King" is New York City's secret beggar king. Recently, dark visions visited The King foretelling a threat to his people. In response he gathered most of the homeless into his tunnels. However, one group failed to heed his call, huddling in a Central Park underpass, and The King foresees their imminent murder. He wants the Investigators to pose as homeless, join this group, and protect them.

If the Investigators leave the safety of the platform and venture after Barge, read or paraphrase the following:

The darkness is thick like fog, broken only by the bobbing, rolling flash of Barge's light. Something squeals underfoot then splashes away. Sticking close to Barge is all that keeps you from walking into one of the steel stanchions lining the track. In the irregular shine of his flashlight, you catch glimpses of graffiti on the beams: "Mungo 79", "9942 Carriage Lords" or "Clown Face 3→" sprayed in white paint. Barge takes a sudden turn off the tracks, steps over the third rail, and heads through a crack in the tunnel wall. The darkness deepens and the temperature drops.

It proves extremely difficult not to get turned around when following Barge. Unless they succeed on a **NAVIGATE** or related check, the Investigators lose their way and do not remember how to return to the surface, unguided. Furthermore, as they follow Barge, their light sources flicker out and die, one after another, until only Barge's light leads the way..

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• Eventually, Barge stops. As the Investigators collect about him he shines the flashlight jack-o-lantern style beneath his chin, smiles and clicks it off. Darkness slams down like a hammer. Barge is gone. After a pause, read or paraphrase the following:

A dim light seems to emanate from everywhere and nowhere, slowly illuminating the junction in which you stand. Five tunnels come together here, wooden rails leading down all of them. Thick white tile covers every surface and a chandelier dangles thirty feet above you. Slowly, the chandelier flickers to life.

One moment you are alone, the next you are not. He's there. The King, walking as if in his own spotlight. Heavyset, dark sunglasses covering his eyes, he wears rags that might once have been white and that every now and then, for just a moment, seem to glitter. He tosses a thick bundle wrapped with newspapers and twine at your feet. His lip curls, "Thank you. Thank you very much for coming." He raises his arms. "I need—" "Homeless men and women, filthy and forlorn, file silently toward you from all five tunnels. He points one arm at the ground and snaps his head to the side, "—your help."

LAYOUT

The subway tunnels of old New York are a damp, amorphous maze punctuated by old train cars and stacks of rusted track.

ACTION

• The King offers to exchange information if the Investigators protect a group of his people who refuse to come below ground.

In the normal course of events, the Investigators either accept or refuse this offer, and The King's people conduct them back to the surface.

However, if She of the Creatures followed the Investigators, She and her brood attack The King's entourage just as the Investigators conclude their negotiations. If they attack, The King vanishes, taking his ambient light with him, plunging everyone into darkness. One round later, the Investigators lights (if they have any) flicker on, just in time for the screaming.

If She followed the Investigators, read or paraphrase this when they attack:



A bearded man, feet wrapped in rags pads beside you. Abruptly he freezes, surprise crosses his face. As if a mighty vacuum suctioned him from behind, something pulls him off his feet into the air, ...folds him half..., and whisks him wide-eyed into the darkness. Gone. Then the screams and the chewing start.

If attacked, allow the Investigators an **IDEA** check to realize the messages scrawled on the steel support beams indicated a way back to the surface. It takes seven rounds to run back to a functioning subway platform.

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As the Investigators flee, three Larval Degenerates give chase, always attacking the slowest Investigator first.

Neither She nor her brood follows anyone into populated areas.

Larval Degenerates of Tsathoggua (7)

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 8 INT 9 POW 9 DEX 17 MV 11 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Whip 55%, damage 1d4

Claws 45%, damage 1d4

Armor: 3 point skin

Spells: none

Sanity loss: 1/1d6 to see a Larval Degenerate

PERSONALITIES

The King

STR 21 CON 33 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 13 APP 17
EDU 10 SAN36 HP 22

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons: Brass Knuckles 1d6+1d6

Key Skills: Art (Singing) 98%, Art (Guitar) 84%, Bargain 68%, Disguise 82%, Drive 76%, Fast Talk 66%, Fist/Punch 88%, Hide 73%, Listen 96%, Mechanical Repair 72%, Occult 65%, Pharmacy 95%, Sneak 94%

• **Armor:** 3 point rhinestone studded rags.

Spells: Shift dimensions at will.

Sanity Loss: 0/1 to recognize The King.

Larger than life, The King is a modern archetypal figure. Threatened by violence, he fades into another dimension.

Volunteered

The King will not share important information unless the Investigators agree to help him. The King does not know E.J. or Stephanas' names, nor does he know why they want to murder his homeless followers, but he will share the following:

About the threat to the homeless: "They're some kind of people, all right. Not nice people. They started killing animals, which is ugly enough. What kind of man kills a dog for no reason? Then they went and killed one of mine. They're building to something big, something that needs a mighty power, so a powerful big killing is coming. I've seen it."

Explaining who ‘they’ are: “They’ve got themselves a cult, you know. A bunch of sad people, some halfway to being mine. A right shame, but we see them. All my people see them. You may not see us, but we see you. We’re not blind by half, though everyone is blind to us.”

Friendly

Once they agree to help, The King willingly shares what he knows in response to the group’s questions:

1. A librarian and a con artist, working together, sit at the heart of things.
2. They two share a book of power that one of them killed to acquire, but it lacks half a page.
3. A rich woman has the half-page, up on Park Ave.
4. If no Investigators went to the meeting with Professor Oddmuth, the King adds, “She’s dead now. The con artist and the librarian have the half-page. Now they need a sacrifice. Something big.”
5. All this occult activity attracted the notice of something that doesn’t belong in the City. Something that lives beneath the waves.
6. The librarian used the book to become the Brooklyn borough president. Who knows what’s next?
7. The librarian and the con artist have a headquarters in midtown, at the Kenning Building, at 51st and 3rd.

9. Professor Johanna Oddmuth’s Apartment, Park Avenue

Professor Oddmuth acquired the half-page from the *De Vermiis* from Alfred Varage long before the underhanded librarian lent the book to his friend Robert Atterman. Intrigued, she hoped to buy the entire book after Robert Atterman returned it, but E.J. killed him and stole it first.

In the face of E.J. and Stephanas growing power, holding the half-page is dangerous. Unwilling to threaten her own connections or associates, Professor Oddmuth decides to pass the half-page to the Investigators, hoping to distract E.J. and Stephanas until she can reach an accommodation with them.

If E.J. and Stephanas succumb to the Investigators, she plans to retrieve the half-page from the party. If the Investigators lose, she can suck up to the duo and claim that, at the time, handing the Investigators the half-page seemed the safest way for her to deliver it to the them.

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As the events of this encounter show, Professor Oddmuth's byzantine plotting fails her.

Just before the Investigators arrive, the Darkblood Cult replace Oddmuth's Park Avenue building staff with their own members. They plan to kill Professor Oddmuth and seize the missing half-page.

Allow the Investigators an **IDEA** roll to notice that the doorman and porter stare at them a little too intently. If confronted, these cultists-posing-as-building-staff, back down.

When the Investigators enter Professor Oddmuth's twentieth floor penthouse, read or paraphrase the following:

Persian rugs cover the parquet floors. Tastefully gilded art hangs along the halls: here a Dali, there a Picasso or an O'Keeffe. Everything is teak and stone, and smells of citrus. Dr. Oddmuth, an empty tumbler in one hand, waves a droopy silk sleeve in your direction. Her pants swish and her heels click as she turns without looking back, and strolls up to a small brass-railed bar: "Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you taking time from your...hm...active schedules. A drink?" She pours golden whiskey into a tumbler and slides it toward you.

When the niceties are done, Johanna lounges on a nearby sofa, one leg draped over another. As the discussion begins in earnest, read or paraphrase this and have Player's Handout #10 (on page 114) ready:

"We're all...hm...knowledgeable people, so I see no reason to dissemble. Some rather...hm...ridiculous types have fallen in way over their heads and acted...hm...irresponsibly with powers best left to...hm...more capable hands. They've attracted...hm...special attention, if you follow me."

I've managed to keep them at bay, hamstrung as I am by...hm...a need for decorum. Still, they found me, like a pack of sniffing dogs. They want this—" She whips out half a page of torn parchment from her shirt. "And they must never touch it. I want you to...hm...help me keep it safe. For a while...hm?" The woman extends her hand, holding the parchment out to you.

ACTION

As the Investigators converse with Professor Oddmuth, the Darkblood cultists attack. Some simply unlock the front door and walk in, while others creep through the balcony windows. Occult powers – and possibly the

Investigators – grant Professor Oddmuth some advance warning, but most likely not enough.

Darkblood cultists want the half-page and are willing to kill anyone holding it. Keepers should consider timing the attack for dramatic impact or launch it whenever Johanna has trouble handling the Investigator's questions.

INVESTIGATION

Investigators who search dead or disabled Darkbloods find a drivers license and a laundry ticket with the address of Stephanas' midtown skyscraper, the Kenning Building, at 51st and 3rd.

Investigators who search dead or disabled Darkbloods and make a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** also find one featureless, putty-colored electronic keycard. This keycard allows the elevator in Encounter #10 to stop at the 17th floor. The adventure does not require that Investigators find this card.

PERSONALITIES

Darkblood Cultists (7)

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 7 DEX 15 APP 10
EDU 11 SAN 09 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: .45 Automatic, Silenced, 55%, damage 1d10 + 2

Key Skills: Climb 60%, Disguise 40%, Drive Auto35%, Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 30%, Hide 30%, Listen 30%, Occult 15%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 35%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d10 SAN check no longer affects the cultist.

Fanatics on a mission, they neither fear nor retreat.

Professor Johanna Oddmuth, Age 40, Antiquities Collector

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 18 POW 17 DEX 14 APP 13
EDU 21 SAN 40 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

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Weapons: .38 revolver 65%, damage 1d10

Spells: Banishment of Yde Etad, Chant of Thoth, Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Enchant Painting, Mesmerize, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Seal of Isis, Steal Life, Voice of Ra, Voorish Sign

Key Skills: Accounting 35%, Alchemy 40%, Anthropology 30%, Bargain 75%, Blackmail 72%, Conceal 65%, Credit Rating 85%, Cthulu Mythos 17%, Drive (Auto) 45%, Fast Talk 63%, Hide 35%, History 68%, Interrogate 46%, Library Use 63%, Occult 60%, Oth.L. (Greek) 74%, Oth.L. (Hieroglyphics, Egyptian) 63%, Oth.L. (Latin) 57%, Persuade 73%, Psychology 48%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 37%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d8 SAN check no longer affects Johanna Oddmuth.

Arrogant and presumptuous, Professor Oddmuth is a behind-the-scenes, occult power broker. A patron of the arts, she subtly influences city politics to support her wealth. Professor Oddmuth lives to acquire occult artifacts and knowledge. Everything else is as an annoying distraction.

Friendly

By inclination and training, Professor Oddmuth collects secrets. In her favorite scenario the Investigators take the half-page, leave, and feel they owe her a favor. If, instead, Investigators prove crass enough to take the half-page but keep talking, Professor Oddmuth will answer a few questions. Anything to get them out the door and doing what they should be doing – her bidding.

What is it all about? What's on this page? “Hm...it is difficult to explain to the...hm...uninitiated. Let me du—er...boil it down. It is the last step in an occult recipe. More precisely, how to activate a recipe, if you follow me?”

No. We don't follow you. What's on this page? “Hm...no matter. Don't worry about it. It is enough that your enemies want it, no?”

Confrontation

To overcome her inclination to dissemble, Investigators must make a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** or **FAST TALK** roll. Learning each of the following facts increases an Investigators **CTHULU MYTHOS** by 1% per topic.

Destroying the Half-Page:

If the Investigators suggest destroying the half-page, they irritate Professor Oddmuth, although she quickly covers it up. A **PSYCHOLOGY** check notices this play of emotions. If she cannot dissuade them, Professor Oddmuth tries to reclaim the half-page.

On destroying the half-page: “It will not do any good. I have read it. They will just come for me, and right now, they are feeling...hm... hostile. If I am dead, they will raise my spirit. No, you must take them on a chase. It is the only way.”

What good is a chase? “A body cannot bear Yothic Resin indefinitely...if not activated it will...hm...denature. Whoever ingested it ate a ticking bomb. They must activate it or...hm...expire. Just keep this out of their hands long enough, you see?”

The hole in Professor Oddmuth’s argument is that both she and the half-page contain the information E.J. and Stephanas require. Obviously, then, she has a way to hide from the two. However, she thinks she will be safer if she keeps E.J. and Stephanas busy chasing someone else, so she wants the Investigators to take the half-page. All her planning comes unraveled when the cultists attack.

Investigators who hear all three facts require a 0/1 SAN check as their heads swim with the implications.

Enough dancing. What does this page let them do? “Hm...it is more what it lets them finish. I suspect E.J. or Stephanas (or both I suppose) have prepared the Yothic Resin...hm...a potent compound that suffuses the initiate for weeks after imbibing it. This page...hm...well, this page teaches how, at certain times of the year, one may concentrate the “light of the shadowed world” through a suffused person. It...hm...uses the body as a sort of lens...hm...like shining sunlight through a magnifying glass. Only, the person’s body is the glass and their insides, blood, organs, all that... hm...that’s the ant.”

About ‘light of the shadowed world’ and concentrating it: “Hm... typically, that phrase refers to moonlight at special times of the year. Like Halloween, or near it anyway. Typically. In Yothic texts, that is. How it is concentrated? I have not a clue, though clearly it uses this device.” She taps

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the paper, “whatever it is. And it is not enough to merely drink a potion and shine some moonlight on yourself. You need to fuel the resin within you first...hm...usually by sacrificing something...or someone.”

What do E.J. and Stephanas hope to gain? “Transfiguration of some sort. Hm...if I had to guess, the power to command. Charisma, maybe. It’s hard to make out. But at a guess the moonlight, directed by this device, through the lens of Resin-infused flesh, unleashes the Resin within the body...hm...transforming it. Legend says the last person to have performed this ritual successfully was...hm...Adolph Hitler. An apocryphal tale, but...hm...illustrative.”

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

The adventure proceeds best if the raiding Darkblood cultists capture the half-page, capture Professor Oddmuth herself, or simply hold a whispered exchange with Oddmuth at gunpoint. If, in the course of the cultists’ raid, someone destroys the half-page and kills Professor Oddmuth, the plot still works. Professor Oddmuth hid a copy (and \$50,000 dollars) in a secret wall safe. Should the Investigators find the safe with a **SPOT**

E.J.’s Revenge:

If the Investigators block E.J. from activating the Yothic Resin surging through his blood, Hastings goes on a rampage of revenge. First, the ex-librarian massacres everyone at *Marlowe’s*. Then E.J. tracks the Investigators down with the following folks in tow (provided none died earlier in the adventure):

- Any surviving cultists (minimum of 10)
- Relly
- Stephanas
- Charles Ratchet
- Sammy Guerva
- Sammy’s three thugs: Carlos, Rico and John
- Professor Jonas Surro
- Adam Squires
- A Fate Spawn
- A Sacred Snake of Yig

HIDDEN IMPALE, crack it with a **LOCKSMITH** check at -30% and *also* destroy the copy, then they successfully stop E.J. and Stephanas. The climax, Encounter #12, never occurs; instead, a dying E.J. hunts the Investigators for revenge. See *Concluding the Transitions*, below, for additional details.

Concluding the Transitions

For the adventure to climax at E.J.'s gala, the sorcerer must accomplish two things: he must kill a bunch of people, energizing his Yothic Resin, and he must learn what is on the grimoire's missing half-page. After the Transitions, the adventure advances to one of four possible junctures:

1. The Investigators met with and agreed to help The King, therefore...

While defending the homeless in Central Park, Darkblood cultists slew Professor Oddmuth and acquired the missing half-page. This slaying makes the news as "Terrorist Attack on Park Ave!" If the Investigators prevent E.J. from killing sufficient homeless people to 'charge' the Resin within him, he slays enough patrons at *Marlowe's* to complete his ritual. If the Investigator's also protected *Marlowe's* – by evacuating it early in the adventure, for example – he decides to poison the champagne at his own gala. E.J. is ready to proceed.

2. The Investigators met Professor Oddmuth, but not The King, therefore...

While the Investigators met with Oddmuth, E.J. and Stephanas' goons slew the homeless in Central Park. This massacre makes the headlines as "Mass Killing Shocks Park!" The news media highlight the murder of a fifteen year old girl named Tammy, found among the homeless.

If the Investigators stop the Darkbloods who assault Oddmuth from learning what's on the missing half-page, then on another day, E.J. tears Oddmuth's apartment apart and finds the copy. This makes the papers as "Park Avenue Crime Scene Violated!" Alternately, E.J. hunts whomever he thinks read the scrap, including Oddmuth, and squeezes the knowledge from them. This might make the papers as "Park Avenue Collector Slain!"

If the Investigators block all possibility of E.J. learning the contents of the missing half-page, the Investigators win, and E.J. hunts them for revenge. Otherwise, E.J. is ready to proceed.

3. They Investigators split up to meet both The King and Professor Oddmuth, therefore...

The events of Encounter #8 and Encounter #9 occur simultaneously. The Investigators have time to regroup and reach Central Park before the

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• events of Encounter #11, but only if they head directly to that encounter. If the Investigators take any other significant action – heading to Encounter #10, for example – they are absent when Darkblood cultists slay the Central Park homeless. Handle the results of Investigator actions as described in 1 and 2, above.

4. The Investigators talk to neither The King, nor Professor Oddmuth, therefore...

At a time the Keeper deems most dramatic, but not long after Encounter 10, a news report informs the Investigators someone slew the homeless in Central Park, including a fifteen year old girl named Tammy. Additionally, unknown assailants attacked and murdered Professor Oddmuth, a renowned antiquities collector, in her Park Avenue home. E.J. secured the half-page and ‘charged’ the Yothic Resin. He is ready to proceed.

HOT ON THE TRAIL (DANGEROUS)

By now the Investigators are onto the bad guys, but circumstances likely force them to choose one of two encounters. Either they disguise themselves as homeless people and head for Central Park, or they travel to the suspected midtown headquarters of a violent cult.

At both these encounters, blatant supernatural horror rears its head. • Additionally, the Investigators have the opportunity for heroism. At the midtown skyscraper, they might rescue a kidnapped woman from a loathsome sorcerer’s twisted lusts; while at the underpass, they might successfully defend homeless veterans from a murder squad.

Both encounters point the Investigators to E.J.’s fall fundraising gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

10. Darkblood Cult Headquarters, The Kenning Building, 51st and 3rd

The building housing the Darkblood cult’s headquarters is an active, bustling structure. As with many New York skyscrapers, unless visitors possess valid work identification or someone within the building signs them inside, security guards refuse entry.

Stephanas’ cult rents the 16th and 18th floors for the Darkblood Foundation, legitimately. The Darkblood Foundation publishes self-help books. However, they use the 17th floor illegally. Stephanas suborned the building manager, Gabriel Sanders, who gave him keys to the unrented

Business in the Building:

Many skyscrapers host multiple businesses and prominently display their names on a directory in the lobby. For example:

Abrams, Dewey and Howe, LLP...14th floor.

Abrams, Dewey and Howe, Mailroom...15th floor

Billibong Barber...3rd floor

Children's Medical Practice...1st floor

Quickfeed Happy Cafeteria...3rd floor

Starbucks...3rd floor

Trumpled Property Management...19th floor

In this building, the directory shows the 16th floor belongs to the Darkblood Foundation and the 18th floor to Darkblood Publishing. It does not list the 17th floor.

Consider adding businesses to the directory that match Investigator occupations. For example, if one of the Investigators is a stock broker or a journalist, consider adding a brokerage house or small newspaper. This grants the Investigators an opportunity to pose as a member of another business, leveraging their occupations and contacts to pass security.

17th floor and keeps this raw space off the radar. The encounter turns on exploring the 17th floor.

The Investigators arrive the day of E.J.'s gala. Inside, only a few cult members stand guard. Most remaining cultists already provide security at the Metropolitan Museum. However, Stephanas reclines on the 17th floor with a crony, dressed for the gala and indulging in his favorite recreation. Outside, a limousine waits to take him to the ball.

If the Investigators try to **FAST TALK** their way past building security, it fails. To pass the front desk and enter the building, they will need one of four things: a work ID; a person already inside the building whom they call from the security desk; a successful **SNEAK** check (at -30%); or some other plan.

Once past security, Investigators discover no elevator stops at the 17th floor without either an electronic key – built into the work ID of Darkblood cultists – or a master elevator key, held by Gabriel Sanders and every building security guard. However a successful **ELECTRONICS** check at

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• 15% will rig the elevator to stop wherever desired.

When the Investigators finally enter the 17th floor and, read or paraphrase the following:

The doors open onto a construction site. Half-finished walls obstruct the view. Stacks of sheetrock clog the floors. Plastic tarps droop from the walls and ceiling, while empty paint buckets teeter in corners, an open conduit sprays from unfinished sockets. The only lights shine from work lamps on extension cords draped like Christmas bulbs across the ceiling. Through the maze of materials you gaze through the far glass wall on a city that shines and bustles.

To your left you spot a room so different it startles. A windowless box slapped onto the center of the floor, built so its open door faces you. The clutter and dirt stop abruptly at its threshold, as if someone threw a switch or drew a line beyond which the dust dare not drift.

Inside, two men in tuxedos lounge on matching leather sofa-chairs. Thick patterned rugs beneath their feet, silk cushions tossed about, they smoke rope tobacco from a tall bubbling water pipe, chuckling and chatting amiably.

At their feet, a gagged woman strains and screams through duct tape, eyes wide in pain and terror. Her lower torso vanishes inside a thick, moist black slug, something like a sea cucumber but as large as a St. Bernard. The slick amorphous tube squirms up her torso, slowly sucking her down its maw. With every undulating tug, she slips a few inches deeper, thrashing. Her struggles weaken as you watch.

LAYOUT

The 16th floor contains generic office space: a reception desk, cubicles, corner offices, file cabinets, and conference rooms. The 18th floor holds a printing press and warehouses the latest edition of Stephanas' book, *The Darkblood Revelations: A Fellow Traveler's Guide to Peace and Personal Fulfillment*. The 17th floor contains raw, undeveloped space: one massive room, divided by random, half-finished walls, draped with electrical conduit and plastic painter's sheets. Stephanas has finished one room on the far left of the floor. This room has no windows.

ACTION

The Investigators slip through the debris of the 17th floor and approach Stephanas and his crony unnoticed. The two lounge in their luxuriously appointed blackout room preparing to indulge in Stephanas' favorite pastime: sexually violating a humanoid Fate Spawn. I will take two rounds for the Fate Spawn to finish devouring its prey and a third to transform into its idealized image.

If the Investigators attack, Stephanas calls the Fate Spawn to his defense, and his armed crony joins the fray. They must capture or kill the crony, Stephanas, and the Fate Spawn to learn the details of E.J.'s gala.

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** notices Stephanas wears a strange iron sigil beneath his shirt. If the Investigators destroy this necklace, it frees the Fate Spawn, which immediately turns on Stephanas.

INVESTIGATION

Digging around Stephanas' pleasure room the Investigators find the following:

1. Two invitations to E.J.'s fundraising gala. (See page 115)
2. A rubber pig mask and a rubber Nixon mask
3. The spell *Summon/Bind Fate Spawn*, copied into a marble notebook
4. A strange iron device on a silk cord beneath Stephanas' shirt. A successful **OCCULT** or **CTHULU MYTHOS** check tells Investigators the iron sigil allows them to either dismiss or command the Fate Spawn. The sigil wielder loses 1 point of Sanity every time they command or dismiss Stephanas' Fate Spawn. (See page 116)
5. Stephanas' wallet, which confirms his real name is Steven Feldman
6. Work ID for accessing the building and this floor



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PERSONALITIES

Steven Feldman (aka Stephanas Darkblood), Age 32, Cult Leader

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 18 POW 16 DEX 15 APP 14
EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: .45 Automatic, Silenced, 35%, damage 1d10 + 2

Spells: Bless Blade, Contact Diety/Yig, Create Plutonian Drug, Enchant Sacrificial Dagger, Enthrall Victim, Keenness of Two Alike, Lamp of Alhazred, Summon/Bind Fate Spawn, Voorish Sign, Wrack

Key Skills: Bargain 75%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulu Mythos 28%, Fast Talk 79%, Library Use 41%, Occult 58%, Persuade 64%, Sneak 22%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d10 SAN check no longer affects Stephanas.

Stephanas enjoys kidnapping women whose lives have taken a detour into disaster: battered woman, drug addicts, the homeless. He feeds them to his slave, the Fate Spawn, a creature he acquired on his climb to occult power. In mindless reflex, the Fate Spawn devours the offered woman and assumes the victim's form, but not merely her form. It assumes the form of the woman *she would have been*, had her life taken all the best turns and none of the worst. Stephanas then violates and degrades this idealized version of his victim, excited at desecrating the image of her highest potential. He is sharing this "pleasure" with his crony when the Investigators arrive.

Physical

Stephanas has nothing to offer the Investigators. However, if they threaten his life, make a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check at -30%, or capture him and inflict 4 points of damage, he answers all questions, filling in the blanks on his and E.J.'s plans. Stephanas knows that E.J. plans to dress as Robin the Boy Wonder for the gala.

Charles Ratchet, Age 36, Dilettante and Crony

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 8 DEX 12 APP 14 EDU 19
SAN 15 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Art (appreciation) 54%, Bargain 56%, Credit Rating 85%, Cthulu Mythos 8%, Fast Talk 59%, Fist/Punch 32%, Occult 28%, Oth.L. (French) 60%, Persuade 54%, Ride 63%

Fate Spawn of N'Kai

STR 17 CON 11 SIZ 16 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 19 HP 14

Move: 12**Damage Bonus:** +1D6**Weapons:** Bite 30%, damage *special*

Bludgeon 20%, damage 1d6

Tentacle 60%, damage 1d6, may strike 1d3 foes/rnd; may skip damage and grapple instead; range 16 yards

Armor: Immune to all physical weapons, even enchanted ones, and such wounds simply snap closed once inflicted. Spells affect them, as does fire, chemicals or other forces.**Sanity Loss:** 1/1d10 Sanity points to see it in its non-humaniform state, plus 2/1d10 additional Sanity points to watch a Fate Spawn devour a victim.**Fate Spawn (Humaniform)**

STR 17 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 16 HP 12

Move: 10**Damage Bonus:** +1D6**Weapons:** Bite 60%, 1d4+1d6

Tentacle 60% (bursting from its rigs), damage 1d6, may strike 1d4 foes/rnd; may skip damage and grapple instead; range 7 yards

Armor: 4 points of extremely dense flesh**Sanity Loss:** 1/1d10 Sanity points to witness a Fate Spawn transform into the victim it just devoured.

Slaying a Fate Spawn in Humaniform does not kill it; instead the Fate Spawn transmogrifies back to its original state. This abrupt transformation paralyzes the Fate Spawn for two rounds.

CONSEQUENCES**If...Then**

If the Investigators feed Stephanas, alive or dead, to his Fate Spawn while wearing the iron sigil of control, the Fate Spawn assumes Stephanas' form and obeys them for three hours. After three hours it reverts to its native shape, but remains obedient to the sigil wearer. Three hours should put the Investigators smack in the middle of E.J.'s gala. If the Investigators take this tack, don't forget the sanity checks for seeing the Fate Spawn, watching it devour a victim, and then watching it transmogrify!

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11. Homeless Massacre, Central Park

E.J.'s strike team seeks to murder at least nine people from among the sixteen homeless men and one teenager huddled in a Central Park underpass. Each murder transmits sacrificial energy to E.J., and nine deaths fully "charge" the Yothic Resin in his blood. Adam Squires, one of the Darkblood cult's middle managers oversees the operation from a nearby limousine.

The encounter turns on the Investigators joining the homeless beneath the underpass, but this only works if they wear the rags The King gave them or succeed at a **DISGUISE** check. If the Investigators approach while well-dressed or, worse yet, clean, the men they hope to save try to drive them away.

When the Investigators arrive at the underpass, read or paraphrase the following:

The park walkway leads to a short, dim tunnel. People, at least ten but maybe twenty, bed down inside, mumbling and tossing on the bare, damp ground. The sides of the walkway slope up, thick with shrubs and trees. As you approach a bearded man sticks his head from behind a bush, above you. "Hey there, why don't you tell old Sarge, here, where you think you're going?" The man swings his head back and forth, listening for your response, eyes closed.

ACTION

Even wearing The King's rags or otherwise disguised, the Investigators must convince the band's leader to let them join. To persuade Sarge – a blind man who has forgotten his own name and believes Central Park is Vietnam – the Investigators must play to his delusions and succeed at a **FAST TALK** or **PSYCHOLOGY** check.

Once accepted, the Investigators soon realize nothing they say will convince Sarge or his group to leave the underpass. The Investigators must prepare to defeat an attack by Darkblood cultists. They soon encounter Tammy, Sarge's fifteen-year-old daughter, "visiting" her father for the weekend.

Should the Investigators take the time to question those they have set themselves to protect, they discover most are army veterans. Armed with this knowledge, they might just rally the men in time to defend against the coming slaughter.

Tammy proves mythos-touched. If the Investigators tell her of the coming attack, she scratches sigils into both walls of the underpass. These signs prevent occult forces from touching those standing between them and offer some protection against bullets.

Rallying the Troops:

Any attempt to rouse these men depends on Sarge, the only man who can lead them. The Investigators must think to cure Sarge of his blindness, which stems from his mental illness. A successful **IDEA** check helps the Investigators suspect this, while a successful **MEDICINE** check confirms it. A **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check at -20% cures Sarge's blindness; although, he still believes Central Park is Vietnam. Able to see, Sarge can lead his men – if only the Investigators rally them.

Helping these veterans reclaim enough of their past to fight the cultists requires repeated use of **PSYCHOANALYSIS**. One successful **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check rallies one homeless man, who then takes direction from Sarge. Each check takes one round and, initially, Investigators suffer a -40% to their rolls. Once the Investigators start using **PSYCHOANALYSIS** to rouse the vets, consider beginning a 20 round countdown. At the end of the 20 rounds, the Darkblood cultists arrive.

The following improve Investigators' chances to succeed at **PSYCHOANALYSIS** checks on the veterans:

- Each previous veteran rallied with a successful **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check, +5%. Maximum +30%
- Cured Sarge's blindness, +15%.
- Involve a sighted Sarge in the rally attempt, +5%.
- A second successful **PSYCHOANALYSIS** check by an assisting Investigator, +10%.
- Invoking the veteran's military unit or issuing a call to duty during a rally attempt, +10%.
- Any Impales on a **PSYCHOANALYSIS** rally roll add +5% to all future checks.
- Calling on the veteran to protect Tammy, +5%.

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Designer's Note: Conducting a Battle

Battles can overwhelm even the most experienced Keeper, dragging down a session's pacing. Consider not playing out each individual struggle. Instead, allow the many combatants to occupy each other, merely narrating the fight. Only punctuate events with formal combat rolls when the Investigators act.

When the Darkblood cultists arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

A limousine pulls up on the road above, followed by two black SUVs. The doors slide open and men pour out, scanning the area. They circle around to the left and right headed down slope to the walkway, automatic weapons at the ready. A few remain with the vehicles, keeping watch. The others proceed grimly toward the underpass entrance.

If the Investigators did not rally the homeless vets, the men panic. Defending panicked people is not easy. Without an inventive approach, Investigators can only bodily shield two men each.

Unless the Investigators intervene or the rallied vets successfully ambush the cultists, the battle slays at least one unarmed man every round. Each round of the firefight, roll on the table below. Allow each result only once and reroll as necessary. Investigators have only the same round in which to counter the effect listed, or a man dies, regardless of specific damage inflicted.

Alternately, Investigators may declare they 'take the damage' from the attack. This personal sacrifice always succeeds. When Investigators 'take the damage', the attack automatically hits the defender (no roll required), inflicts half normal damage, and the protected man lives.

Roll d10

1. A cultist saunters up, places a foot on a cringing man, and a .45 automatic toward his head.
2. A filthy hobo, beard thick and crusty, grins and gives you the victory sign. In the distance, a cultist takes aim at him and fires.
3. Two homeless men take a cultist apart with a can opener and a Swiss army knife, but two other cultists aim AK-47s at all three.
4. A homeless man stumbles into the dark underpass, a cultist stalking relentlessly behind. Gunfire from the cultist's suppressed AK-47 lights the short tunnel.

5. A homeless man jumps onto a cultist's back and tries to sink his blunted, broken teeth into the foe's neck. The flailing Darkblood slips his gun's muzzle backwards, under the brave veteran's chin.
6. Two cultists pin a struggling vet, while a third prepares to gut the helpless man with a commando knife.
7. A veteran pins a cultist to the ground. Perched on his enemy's stomach, he chokes the life from his foe, barehanded, but the cultist grasps for the fallen .45 automatic just inches to his right.
8. Two cultists raise their AK-47s at four men backed in terror against the underpass wall. They cock their guns to fire. Tammy stands paralyzed between the cultists and their prey.
9. Guns forgotten, a vet and a cultist roll through the dirt each trying to ram a knife in the other.
10. Taking advantage of a jam in a cultist's AK-47, a bold vet flings himself on his foe. The gun unjams and the cultist swings the muzzle up.

If the Investigators and their allies start to win, E.J.'s man on the scene, Adam Squires, steps from his limousine and releases a 6-foot long, 3-inch thick mystic rattlesnake from the limo's trunk. It joins the fray to bloody effect.

However they do it, the Investigators must defeat the cultists before they slay nine people. Once nine die, the Darkbloods retreat, their task accomplished. If the Investigators defeat their foes before nine die, they earn the gratitude of The King and force E.J. to claim his victims elsewhere.

INVESTIGATION

If any Investigator studies Sarge, a successful **IDEA** or **MEDICINE** roll notices he sometimes picks up or avoids objects a genuinely blind person could not find or avoid.

A successful **SPOT HIDDEN**, **IDEA**, or **HISTORY** check realizes many of the men in the underpass wear worn and filthy military jackets. At least eleven of them display the same patch: 187th Infantry, Delta Company.

Searching the limousine, Investigators find three invitations to E.J.'s gala. Use Handout #11 from Encounter #10. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** also finds one featureless, putty-colored electronic keycard. This keycard allows the elevator in Encounter #10 to stop at the 17th floor. The adventure does not require that Investigators find this card.

SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

PERSONALITIES

Jude Jenkins (aka Sarge). Age 66. Insane Homeless Ex-Soldier

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 15 POW 14 DEX 11 APP 11
EDU 13 SAN 09 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: None

Key Skills: Accounting 24%, Bargain 35%, Climb 66%, Conceal 30%, Electronics 24%, First Aid 44%, Fist/Punch 72%, Grapple 48%, Handgun 57%, Hide 83%, History 36%, Jungle Survival 74%, Listen 69%, Machine Gun 65%, Martial Arts 31%, Mechanical Repair 44%, Navigate 70%, Oth.L. (Vietnamese) 52%, Operate Heavy Machinery 32%, Pharmacy 26%, Rifle 73%, Shotgun 50%, Small Unit Tactics 70%, Sneak 89%, Spot Hidden 67%, Sub Machine Gun 60%, Swim 60%, Throw 63%.

As implied by his nickname, Sarge was a sergeant in the 187th Infantry, and served two tours in Vietnam. Despite his best efforts, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder ruined his marriage and eventually drove him homeless, where his mind snapped. Sarge believes he is still in Vietnam and calls his daughter Ta Mei, after a girl he may have fathered overseas.

While there is nothing mechanically wrong with Sarge's eyes, he is nonetheless blind, an effect of his insanity. This rare form of blindness allows him to successfully navigate a hallway of obstacles, while genuinely unaware of what he is doing. If asked about the obstacles he sidestepped,

• Sarge sincerely replies, "What obstacles?"

Friendly

Once he accepts the Investigators into his homeless band, Sarge happily chats about the following:

About the girl: "My daughter. Ta Mei. Always drawing and scratching at things, that kid. And reading. I don't know how I'm going to get her or her mother back to the states."

About staying in the underpass: "The 187th wears the colors. And these colors don't run, son! We'll hold here. It's what we do."

About the men: "They're good men. A little tired is all. Been tough since we lost the lieutenant."

About the coming attack: “Attack? Here? Not against the base, son. You got a little jungle fever, huh? No enemies getting through, not with the Cobras covering. We’re fine, here. Just fine. Get yourself some grub and bunk down. Rumor says there’s some grass in Alpha company, but you didn’t hear it from me.”

Confrontation

Yelling at Sarge like a superior officer gets his attention and prompts a few of the other men to peer at the Investigators – before they lay back down to nap. No amount of yelling or posturing convinces Sarge to abandon ‘his post’.

Ordering Sarge to leave: “Sir, yes sir. I’d like to, sir, but we have our orders.”

Physical

Any attempt to manhandle Sarge and he screams “Gook spy!” then tries to wrestle the Investigator to the ground. Once he knocks an Investigator down, Sarge lets go and wanders off.

Tammy Jenkins, Age 15, Suburbanite

STR 8 CON 9 SIZ 8 INT 16 POW 13 DEX 13 APP 15
EDU 10 SAN 54 HP 9

Damage Bonus: -1d4

Weapons: Butcher knife, damage 1d6-1d4

Spells: Create Barrier of Naach-Tith (50 foot diameter)

Key Skills: Bargain 55%, Climb 50%, Computer Use 64%, Cthulu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 25%, Head Butt 20%, Occult 35%, Sneak 32%

Tammy is fifteen years old, pierced and Goth. She visits her dad on weekends. Her mother does not know that Sarge, her father, is crazy and homeless. Busy with her own life, Tammy’s mother simply allows her daughter to meet Jude ‘in the City’. Tammy lies to her mother about their time together, spinning tales of the father she wishes she had.

Drawn to the occult like many teenagers, Tammy had the misfortune to meet Stephanas at *Marlowe’s*. He introduced her to the mythos. As a result, she learned just enough to endanger her sanity, and the Darkbloods learned of Sarge’s wandering pack.

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Friendly

Even when she likes you, Tammy's sounds glum and clipped, except when discussing her dad. She desperately wants her father to regain his sanity.

About the sigils she draws: Just something I learned in a book.

More about the sigils or the book: A book some guy showed me, ok? Look, I...I just have a hunch. So I'm drawing them. I draw a lot, ok?

About Sarge's blindness: It's weird. The doctors at the VA say there's nothing wrong with his eyes, but he really can't see. They put him on some drugs, but the drugs just made him all dopey and...even less my dad. He doesn't take them anymore.

About her presence in the underpass: I'm visiting. He and mom divorced. Don't tell her you saw him like this, please?!

Confrontation

Speaking sharply to Tammy grabs her attention. Her eyes well up, not quite to the edge of tears, but a successful **PSYCHOLOGY** check pulls answers from her.

Who taught you these sigils: "I told you. Some guy I met at a place called *Marlowe's*. It's sort of a coffee place, ok? So he lent me a book. He was kind of cute. He said he knew some really cool stuff, but I never saw him again."

About the book: "No. I don't have it with me. It's at home."

Where's home? "Connecticut."

Sarge's Men, Ages 58-70, Homeless Veterans (15)

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 11 POW 10 DEX 11 APP 9
EDU 10 SAN 39 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Large Club 65%, damage 1d8+1d4

Key Skills: Climb 46%, Conceal 25%, **First Aid** 24%, Fist/Punch 52%, Grapple 38%, Handgun 37%, Hide 63%, Jungle Survival 54%, **Listen** 59%, Machine Gun 60%, Martial Arts 30%, Navigate 60%, Oth.L. (Vietnamese) 18%, Rifle 83%, Shotgun 55%, Small Unit Tactics 56%, **Sneak** 69%, **Spot Hidden** 57%, Sub Machine Gun 65%, Swim 49%, Throw 57%.

Friendly

These men are exhausted, hungry and apathetic. Many suffer drug addictions. When spoken to, they stare morosely at the Investigators. Unless roused as described in the sidebar, Rallying the Troops, they frequently fall asleep in the middle of Investigator questions.

Adam Squires, Age 26, Senior Darkblood Cultist

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 13 DEX 12 APP 11
EDU 15 SAN 13 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Ingram MAC-11 (Suppressed) 35%, damage 1d8

Key Skills: Accounting 34%, Bargain 55%, Computer Use 60%, Conceal 34%, Credit Rating 46%, Cthulu Mythos 3%, Fast Talk 71%, Hide 23%, Law 66%, Machine Gun 35%, Occult 24%, Psychology 20%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d8 SAN check no longer affects Adam.

Adam is a childish, evil man in a tuxedo. As the Darkblood cultists slay the homeless, he eats bento box sushi and reads the sports pages in his limousine. Eager to complete his task and attend E.J.'s gala, Adam relies on his driver to inform him if anything goes wrong with the massacre.

Volunteered

When cornered by the Investigators: "Oh you think you've got it all nailed, I bet. Well you don't. You're wasting time here with these bums, while my master prepares to transform. Hah on you! Losers!"

Confrontation

Adam claims to know nothing, but when threatened he spills all the information shared by Professor Oddmuth in Encounter #9. He punctuates his fearful explanations with almost masturbatory groans of praise for E.J. and frequent "You'll get yours!" threats.

About what E.J. hopes to gain: "Everyone will see him as I do! He'll be like the next Gandhi or Hitler – or Bono, even! It'll be awesome. Then he'll crush you!"

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• **Limo Driver and Hit Squad. Ages 20-40. Darkblood Cultists (II)**

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 7 DEX 15 APP 10
EDU 11 SAN 09 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: .45 Automatic (Silenced) 55%, damage 1d10 + 2

AK-47 (Suppressed) 35%, damage 2d6+1

Key Skills: Climb 60%, Disguise 40%, Drive Auto 35%, Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 30%, Hide 30%, Listen 30%, Occult 15%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 35%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d10 SAN check no longer affects the cultist.

Thing in the Trunk (Sacred Snake of Yig)

STR 23 CON 13 SIZ 17 POW 10 DEX 13 HP 15

Move: 6

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Bite 45%, damage 1d6+1d6+poison

Armor: 2-point glistening skin

Skills: Move Quietly 60%, Hide 70%

Sanity Loss: 1/1d6 Sanity points to see it.

Poison Bite: Foes must dodge to avoid being bitten. Once bitten, no anti-venom saves victims. They always die after a few minutes of agony.

A six-foot long rattler, three inches around, with fangs like index fingers. Released, it attacks the nearest non-cultist.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators and their homeless allies kill or disable five cultists, Adam's driver alerts him. On the following round, Adam releases the Thing in the Trunk.

Should the Investigators drive off the attacking Darkbloods and save the homeless, E.J. still requires victims to power his Yothic Resin. If the Keeper placed more than six marks beside E.J. and Stephanas on the Trigger Tracker, then E.J. singles out the Investigators by massacring their friends at *Marlowe's*. If the Keeper placed fewer than six marks, or if the Investigators protect both the homeless and *Marlowe's*, this forces E.J. to murder some of his own gala guests, as described in Encounter #12's *Poisoned Bubbly* sidebar.

If the Investigators complete this encounter and then head to

Designer's Notes:

Halloween

As written, the adventure does not require E.J.'s gala take place exactly on Halloween. The Halloween season alone justifies both a masked ball and fulfills Hastings' occult requirements. Keepers should decide how Halloween flavored they wish the event to feel and adjust descriptions accordingly.

Being of Immense Charisma

Should E.J. succeed in his evil plans, he emanates a permanent *Sekhmenkenhep's Words*, affecting everyone with whom he converses. He also contracts megalomania. The transformation sucks away the rest of his sanity over the next seven years, just as it did to Hitler. Though I'm fairly certain the Nazi dictator had the *Skin of the Sedefkar* too.

Encounter #10, delay E.J.'s gala until after they deal with Stephanas.

If the Investigators kill the Sacred Snake of Yig place two marks next to She of the Creatures.

Concluding the Dangerous Stage

This stage concludes once the Investigators unveil the general shape of E.J.'s plans and learn the location of his costume ball. While the adventure does not require the Investigators know all these details, the more they understand what is at stake, the higher their investment in stopping E.J. Consider helping the Investigators piece the puzzle together before proceeding to the climax in Encounter #12. Likewise, if E.J. fueled the Yothic Resin by massacring *Marlowe's* patrons, consider revealing this as the Investigators travel to the gala. For example, on a taxicab radio or a television in a store window.

DO OR DIE (CLIMAX)

Events now point the party to the climax, a black tie, costumed fund raising ball at the Temple of Dendur in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian wing. Here, E.J. plans to magically invest himself with charisma sufficient to beglamour New York's elite and then run for Public Advocate. While the Investigators struggle to find the ex-librarian among his four hundred costumed guests, She of the Creatures plans to trap everyone in

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the hall and kill them. The adventure ends in a glass walled ballroom, lit by yellow moonlight, surrounded by Egyptian relics, masked revelers, New York elegance, monsters, blood and screams. The Investigators must fight – or flee – for their lives.

12. Fall Gala, Metropolitan Museum of Art

At moonrise, he plans to stand at his podium, with a large mirror positioned to shine moonlight through the temple arch onto his back. The moonlight will ignite the sacrifice-fueled Resin within him and transform E.J. into a being of immense charisma. E.J. will then implore his invitees for campaign contributions. In the meantime, Hastings circulates among his masked guests dressed as Robin the Boy Wonder.

Armed Darkblood cultists with radio headsets guard the main entrances. They check invitations and require guests to walk through metal detectors before entering.

She of the Creatures also attends, her brood hiding throughout the hall. When E.J. reveals himself, She plans to seal the Egyptian wing, slay everyone inside, and drain the Resin from E.J.'s body.

If the Investigators prevented E.J. from murdering the homeless in Central Park and from harvesting patrons at *Marlowe's*, he plans to poison some of the champagne, a situation the characters may stumble upon.

Poison Bubbly:

If E.J. still needs to charge the Yothic Resin, he poisons eighteen flutes of bubbly with venom from a Sacred Snake of Yig. E.J. only needs to murder nine people, but he recognizes poisoning the champagne as a risky gambit: people drop glasses, decide not to drink, chance intervenes. He believes it better to be safe than sorry. Consequently, there is a 4% chance Investigators who imbibe champagne around this time sip from a poisoned glass. If an Investigator receives death-champagne allow them a **LUCK**, **IDEA** or **MEDICINE** roll to suspect poison. Any who drink poisoned champagne first grow faint, then burst into a sweat. Unless victims benefit from a successful **FIRST AID** or **MEDICINE** check (both rolled at -25%), or resist against POT 24, they die four minutes later.

When the adventurer's enter the gala, read or paraphrase the following:

Hundreds of costumed guests circulate, feast and dance in this glass vaulted hall of Egyptian artifacts. A jack-o-lantern in a tuxedo swings a cat-woman into a waltz, her pearls glinting under the low, yellow moon on the horizon. The clatter of plates mixes with conversation as waiters, dressed like Hollywood Egyptians, wend through the crowd delivering hors d'oeuvres and drinks. At the outer edges of the gala security guards watch the entrances, while over it all the Temple of Dendur stands testament, like a sandstone monument to extravagance. A wooden platform topped by an empty speaking podium rests before the temple's main arch, while beyond the glass under a moon-drenched eve, the snows of an early winter fall.

LAYOUT

The Egyptian curatorial hall is L-shaped. The Temple of Dendur stands at one end of an open hall, the ceiling and one wall of which are constructed entirely from glass. The hall hosts 400 guests for dinner and dancing. Caterers stage the food and champagne around a corner, out of sight.

ACTION

Nearly everyone wears a mask. Some sport simple black eye pieces or feathers on a stick, while others wear elaborate gorilla heads or full costumes.

She of the Creatures likely knows the Investigators by sight. If the Keeper placed four or more marks beside her name on the Trigger Tracker and the Investigators never attacked her, then ten minutes before E.J.'s speech She warns them off. Read or paraphrase the following:

A tall woman in a long brown cloak limps toward you. Her costume obscures her face, but raven locks peek from the folds of her hood. She pokes out an olive-skinned hand, its two-inch fingernails glint at you. She hisses, "Leave. While you can." For the barest moment, yellow slit eyes shine within darkness. She swirls into the crowd and vanishes.

The Investigators arrive approximately thirty minutes before the moon completely rises and must seek out E.J.; although, curiously, none of the guests recall speaking with their host. The Investigators most likely fail to find him.

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Five minutes before E.J.'s speech (at moonrise), servers circulate a special round of champagne to all 400 guests. If E.J. still needs to charge the Yothic Resin with sacrifice, he poisoned some of these drinks.

Just before moonrise, the lights dim and E.J. climbs the podium. Beneath a spotlight, he introduces himself.

Simultaneously, She of the Creatures and her brood lock the exits and prepare to attack. Read or paraphrase the following:

A short, tubby man dressed as Robin the Boy Wonder steps up to the podium beneath a low spotlight, removes his mask, and dons spectacles. The temple arch looms behind him and, through the glass ceiling, the moon sits above his shoulder. "There. Much better." He taps the mike and it squeals, "Is this thing on? Good. Good. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to—"

That is as all he says before a snakey-headed flying thing launches over a nearby table and slams him from the podium. More things pour from the temple, from inside sarcophagi, from behind obelisks. Slapping like darts into the crowd, they upend tables and tackle guests. Screams and gunfire erupt. You spot one bejeweled woman jerk round, the white tablecloth behind her abruptly wet and red. Then, all the lights go out. Panicked screams redouble and everyone runs blindly about as the yellow moon climbs higher.

Once She of the Creatures and her brood attack, they try to kill everyone, Investigators included. In the dark, amidst the panic, escaping the hall proves difficult. Seven Larval Degenerates target anyone attempting to reach the exits. Moreover, a single bullet will not shatter the structural glass encasing the hall; it merely pokes holes in it. However, three shotgun blasts or a grenade smashes an opening through which guests may escape.

Locating E.J. after She attacks also proves difficult. All checks to locate Hastings in the mayhem suffer -60%, although Pogo still provides a +30% bonus (see below for details).

INVESTIGATION

Allow Investigators a **SPOT HIDDEN**, **TRACK** or **LUCK** check to find E.J. before his speech, but at -50%. However if they have Pogo with them, the yappy, angry dog bristles whenever it smells E.J., increasing their checks by +30%. If the Investigators learned about E.J.'s costume from Stephanas, add an additional +10% to these checks. Each attempt takes 10 minutes to complete.



Circulating through the hall, a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **IDEA** roll notices a large mirror placed behind the Temple, as well as four cultists guarding it. An additional **SPOT HIDDEN** notices a Larval Degenerate wrapped around an obelisk and another glued beneath a dinner table.

If E.J. poisoned the punch and the Investigators visit the catering area, allow them a **SPOT HIDDEN** or **LUCK** roll to stumble across a Darkblood cultist, posing as a waiter, and injecting champagne bottles through their corks.

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PERSONALITIES

She of the Creatures

STR 22 CON 25 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 20 DEX 18 APP 14
EDU 7 HP 19

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons: Claws (fingernails) 65%, damage 2d4+1d6

Bite 45%, damage 1d4+1d6 + poison POT 25

Armor: 1 point hide, immune to all spells that do not cause physical harm

Key Skills: Climb 82%, Disguise 54%, Fist/Punch 64%, Grapple 73%,
Hide 70%, Jump 68%, Listen 70%, Sneak 67%, Spot Hidden 55%, Swim
90%, Track 98%

Aside from possibly warning the Investigators to leave, She does not engage them in conversation. She simply circulates, sniffing unsuccessfully for Hastings. Should She spot E.J. on his podium before moonrise, She attacks early.

E.J. Hastings

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 19 POW 20 DEX 14 APP 10
EDU 21 SAN 05 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: 7.65mm automatic 35%, damage 1d8

Spells: Chant of Thoth, Contact Diety/Yig, Cloud Memory, Conjure Glass of Mortlan, Create Yothic Resin, Enchant Brazier, Curse of the Stone,

• Hands of Colubra, Implant Fear, Mirror of Tarkhun Atep, Summon/Bind Child of Yig

Key Skills: Accounting 15%, Alchemy 55%, Astrology 34%, Conceal 62%,
Credit Rating 50%, Cthulu Mythos 31%, Disguise 74%, Fast Talk 64%,
Fist/Punch 34%, Hide 52%, History 60%, Library Us 80%, Occult 52%,
Persuade 67%, Psychology 70%, Sneak 35%

If cornered by the Investigators before his speech, E.J. attempts to recruit them. Failing this, he calls for security to remove them. If the Investigators start a fight, E.J. flees for his podium, and his guards call the police. E.J. fights removal from his podium with all the resources at his command, including gunfire and magic.

Larval Degenerates of Tsathoggua (40)

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 8 INT 9 POW 9 DEX 17 HP 13

Move: 11

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Whip 55%, damage 1d4

Claws 45%, damage 1d4

Armor: 3 point skin

Spells: none

Sanity loss: 1/1d6 to see a Larval Degenerate

Darkblood Cultists, Ages 20-40, Security (20)

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 7 DEX 15 APP 10

EDU 11 SAN 09 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: .45 Automatic, Silenced, 55%, damage 1d10 + 2

Key Skills: Climb 60%, Disguise 40%, Drive Auto35%, Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 30%, Hide 30%, Listen 30%, Occult 15%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 35%

Inured to Horror: Any sight requiring less than a 1d10 SAN check no longer affects the cultist.

CONSEQUENCES

If...Then

If the Investigators stop E.J. from ascending the podium before moonrise, he does not achieve the transformation.

If they locate E.J. before his speech and try to remove him from the hall, She of the Creatures locks up the hall and attacks early.

Whenever the lights die, She and five Larval Degenerates hunt Hastings. If they find the sorcerer in the Investigator's custody, they attack everyone, but if the Investigators immediately relinquish E.J. and back away, She and her Degenerates ignore the players and spend three rounds devouring the would-be demagogue. Three rounds in which the Investigators may try to escape.

If the Investigators have not captured E.J. by moonrise, Keepers should decide whether they wish the foul little sorcerer to escape during the mayhem. If not, consider having She of the Creatures capture Hastings and read or paraphrase the following:

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They descend on him like a pileup in football. His arms flail, but leathery gray backs soon obscure the view. Blood sprays amid a high-pitched slurping, grinding sound. One shoeless foot, sock stained red, beats a lively tattoo on the floor then falls still.

Aftermath

Assuming the Investigators survive, events may leave them in a number of situations. Here are three interesting twists that might result from this adventure:

If E.J. massacred the patrons at *Marlowe's* and the Investigators befriended the shop's owner, consider allowing one or more Investigator to inherit the store. They might not even know they know the original owner, as part of the establishment's legend is the mystery surrounding its proprietor. In addition to inheriting the store, they inherit its police investigation and its debts.

If the Investigators left the Eastside Animal Shelter security tape with the Barloos, they may have a problem. After all, the tape also shows the Investigators battling Relly, possibly killing him. If the police saw this tape, they will want to ask questions, possibly posting an APB or warrant for the Investigators' arrests.

If E.J. survived and transformed, the Investigators have a foe for life. A wealthy, powerful, politically influential, *sorcerer* foe. Moreover, E.J. likely wins the post of Public Advocate. If the mayor dies, the Public Advocate succeeds him.

NEW CREATURES

FATE SPAWN OF N'KAI

LESSER SERVITOR RACE

A subspecies of the Formless Spawn, these viscous, shapeless slime priests of Tsathoggua resonate with fate itself, ranging through time and scouring the lifelines of their victims as they devour them.

In its native state, the Fate Spawn is a protean black ooze, constantly elongating, shrinking, and randomly shifting form. A Fate Spawn devours its victim and assumes the victim's form, but not merely its form. It assumes the form of who or what the victim *would have been* had its life taken all the best turns and none of the worst. It becomes, for a time, the idealization of the victim it devours.

STR 17 CON 11 SIZ 16 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 19 HP 14

Move: 12

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Bite 30%, damage *special*

Bludgeon 20%, damage 1d6

Tentacle 60%, damage 1d6, may strike 1d3 foes/rnd; may skip damage and grapple instead; range 16 yards

Armor: Immune to all physical weapons, even enchanted ones, and such wounds simply snap closed once inflicted. Spells affect them, as do fire, chemicals or other forces.

Sanity Loss: 1/1d10 Sanity points to see it in its non-humanoform state, plus 2/1d10 additional Sanity points to watch a Fate Spawn devour a victim.

Fate Spawn of N'Kai (Humanoform)

A Fate Spawn enters the Humanoform state after it devours a human.

STR 17 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 16 HP 12

Move: 10

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Bite 60%, 1d4+1d6

Tentacle 60% (bursting from its rigs), damage 1d6, may strike 1d4 foes/rnd; may skip damage and grapple instead; range 7 yards

Armor: 4 points of extremely dense flesh

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• **Sanity Loss:** 1/1d10 Sanity points to witness a Fate Spawn transform into the victim it just devoured.

Slaying a Fate Spawn in Humaniform does not kill it; instead the Fate Spawn transmogrifies back to its original state. This abrupt transformation paralyzes the Fate Spawn for two rounds.

A Fate Spawn takes two rounds to devour a victim and one round to transform into the humaniform version of that victim's perfect self. Once transformed, a Fate Spawn remains in the humaniform state for three hours.

LARVAL DEGENERATES OF TSATHOGGUA

LESSER SERVITOR RACE

"They hunched like leathery rugby balls, and we only noticed their tiny claws. Foolishly, we did not fear them, and then they sensed us. Long, sinuous necks unfurled. Their tongues unrolled, snapping straight out like obscene antennae that vibrated at us. Their whole bodies swelled, displaying pulsating, suppurated belly suckers. Then they sprouted wings like obscene flying squirrels and came for us."

– *Journey to the Deeps*, the notebooks of Dr. Erasmus Lynch, 1902

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 8 INT 9 POW 9 DEX 17 HP 13

Move: 11

Damage Bonus: +1D4

• **Weapons:** Whip 55%, damage 1d4

Claws 45%, damage 1d4

Armor: 3 point skin

Spells: none

Sanity loss: 1/1d6 to see a Larval Degenerate

The underside of a larval degenerate's belly extrudes rotating suckers with which it slides along walls or ceilings as easily as on floors. Intermittently Larval Degenerates can use a round to bunch up, like inchworms, then propel themselves into the air. Airborne Larval Degenerates can glide on stubby wings for up to three rounds, at movement 20, before landing.

THE CREATURES FROM THE DEEP

LESSER INDEPENDENT RACE

"They start as worms or maybe snakes. I don't know how they leave the water, but once on shore they feed. And grow. And change. In the end, they take human form. That's perhaps the most frightening thing, that you could meet one, date it, or even marry it. Something that started out like a grub or a maggot."

– *The Secret Diaries of Dr. Dee.*

STR 22 CON 25 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 20 DEX 18 APP 14
EDU 7 HP 19

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons: Claws (fingernails) 65%, damage 2d4+1d6

Bite 45%, damage 1d4+1d6 + poison POT 25

Aarmor: 1 point hide

Key Skills: Climb 82%, Disguise 54%, Fist/Punch 64%, Grapple 73%,
Hide 70%, Jump 68%, Listen 70%, Sneak 67%, Spot Hidden 55%, Swim
90%, Track 98%

A rare species, they hide from other, more potent races, in the deep ocean. No one knows if their slug-like forms are their true bodies or protective coloration. What is known is they slip intermittently to the surface, always attracted to artifacts of techno-occult power. Some speculate the Creatures hoard these artifacts against a Day of Emergence, when their stolen power will finally permit them to defy the greater races openly.

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Dr. Elgin Juarez, Professor of Egyptology

STR 10	Dmg Bonus +0
CON 9	Hit Points: 10
SIZ 10	Magic Points: 16
INT 17	Idea Roll 85%
POW 16	Luck Roll 80%
DEX 7	
APP 9	
EDU 23	Know Roll 99%
SAN 80	



Key Skills

Anthropology 50%, Archeology 65%, Astronomy 30%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 01%, Drive (Auto) 50%, First Aid 30%, History 90%, Law 35%, Library Use 75%, Listen 30%, Natural History 40%, Occult 60%, Owl L. 95%, Oth.L (French) 45%, Oth.L (German) 35%, Oth.L. (Hieroglyphics, Egyptian) 55%, Psychology 55%, Shotgun 38%, Spot Hidden 30%

Gear

Cell phone, notebook, other items as appropriate.

Background

A bitter divorcé and mediocre teacher, Dr. Jaurez lives in a state of petty jealousy and petulance, always looking to put down the intellect of others. An expert in his field, Elgin spends more and more of his time at *Marlowe's*, hoping to impress younger girls with his knowledge of Egyptology. Much to his surprise, these extracurricular pursuits have led to a genuine and budding friendship with Jamal Ramses.

Judith Kimee, Exotic Dancer/Psychic/ Student

STR 15	Dmg Bonus +1d4
CON 16	Hit Points: 15
SIZ 12	Magic Points: 14
INT 14	Idea Roll 70%
POW 14	Luck Roll 70%
DEX 14	
APP 16	
EDU 14	Know Roll 70%
SAN 70	

Key Skills

Art (Dance) 78%, Astronomy 62%, Climb 75%, Disguise 44%, Electronics 67%, Handgun 67%, Jump 72%, Kick 80%, Library Use 44%, Occult 52%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 35%

Gear

Large backpack filled with basic supplies (change of clothing, energy snacks, makeup, a spare thong, tooth brush, hair gel, portable speakers), MP3 player, cell phone, oversize purse, .38 automatic, plenty of cash, a wrench, a taser, mace, an electronics repair kit, other items as appropriate.

Background

Kimee works her way through trade school as an exotic dancer. She's studying to be an electrician at the Bevree Institute and hopes to join the union one day. In the meantime a tendency to shop when stressed keeps Kimee working private parties for extra cash. Her profession sometimes puts her at risk, so Kimee practices daily with her handgun and always keeps the mace and taser near. Kimee is also psychic, intermittently picking up on others' strong emotions despite her best efforts to resist. Her empathy has fostered a lifetime interest in the occult, and she spends many afternoons reading about psychic powers at *Marlowe's*. Kimee is friends with Mindy Herstand, with whom she enjoys discussing the relationship between Dance and Photography as modes of personal expression.



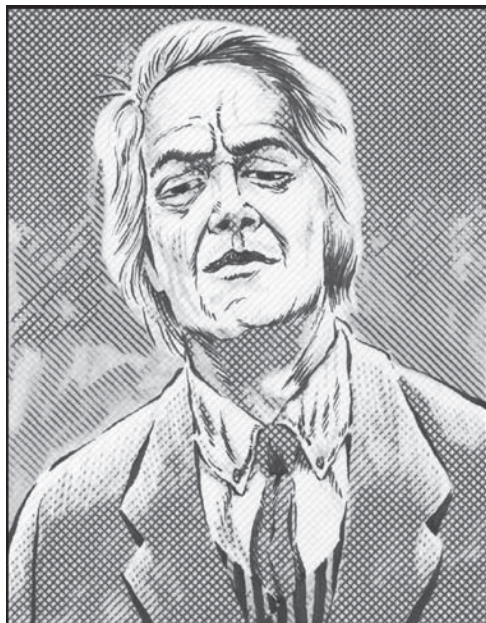
SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Henry Urgrin, Advertising Executive/Veteran

STR 13 Dmg Bonus: +1d4
CON 12 Hit Points: 14
SIZ 15 Magic Points: 13
INT 16 Idea Roll 80%
POW 13 Luck Roll 65%
DEX 14
APP 11
EDU 18 Know Roll 90%
SAN 80

Key Skills

Accounting 45%, Art (New Media) 76%, Bargain 80%, Credit Rating 79%, Drive (Motorcycle) 74%, Fast Talk 68%, First Aid 72%, Fist/Punch 54%, Grapple 64%, Handgun 50%, Hide 60%, Listen 40%, Machine Gun 60%, Medicine 30%, Navigate 35%, Oth.L (Vietnamese) 42%, Persuade 55%, Photography 33%, Psychology 65%, Rifle 80%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 60%



Gear

BMW 1200R Motorcycle, fountain pen, iPod, iPhone, Macintosh notebook, plenty of credit cards, other items as appropriate.

Background

Henry fought as a combat medic in Vietnam, one tour. He does not talk about it much, preferring to work hard, drink hard and womanize, but he still has nightmares. To escape the loneliness of his bachelor life and the lingering trauma of his wartime experience, Henry throws himself into his career, successfully fighting his way up the ladder at the world famous advertising firm of ENC&C. Still, his dreams haunt him, worse each year. Nightly visions of those he killed or couldn't save haunt him, and no amount of therapy seems to help. Out of desperation, Henry has taken to visiting a Dream Specialist at *Marlowe's* after work. Henry has made no friends, but Sandy pities him.

Pat Reynolds, Pet Sitter/Ex-Con

STR 13	Dmg Bonus: +1d4
CON 12	Hit Points: 14
SIZ 15	Magic Points: 13
INT 19	Idea Roll 95%
POW 13	Luck Roll 65%
DEX 12	
APP 11	
EDU 13	Know Roll 65%
SAN 95	



Key Skills

Bargain 55%, Climb 82%, Computer Use 85%, Conceal 64%, Disguise 44%, Fast Talk 62%, Fist/Punch 58%, Grapple 72%, Handgun 65%, Head Butt 60%, Hide 66%, Law 54%, Locksmith 81%, Psychology 66%, Psychoanalysis 67%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 69%

Gear

Small backpack filled with basic supplies (clothing, energy snacks), novel, cell phone, .45 automatic, police radio, laptop computer, plenty of cash, other items as seem appropriate.

Background

A practiced cat burglar as a teen, Pat spent nearly a decade in prison. There, he learned a variety of skills, including computer communications and locks. Mellowed and led to self-reflection while imprisoned, Pat read every book on psychology he could find and questioned the prison therapist relentlessly. Today, Pat most wishes he could work as a therapist, but instead relies on his love of animals and an intermittent pet sitting job to see him through hard times. Pat rarely discusses his jail time with anyone. He lives hand to mouth and enjoys spending his free time reading and sipping coffee at Marlowe's, unaware of the esoteric world around him.

THE NEW YORK EXAMINER

Vol. 52

New York, Wednesday October 28, 2009

75 cents

President Visits Mayor

In a move evoking surprise in national political circles, the President announced his intention to spend the coming weekend at Gracie Mansion, sources in Washington told reporters. Mayor Bloominfield was not available for comment, although aides to the Mayor said the visit was more than social. Authorities will close the FDR near the Port Authority Heliport from...

Metropolitan Museum Announces

Halloween Exhibit

By Jack Savage

The Metropolitan Museum of Art today announced their long-awaited exhibition of Egyptian temple art. Earlier this month the museum canceled the exhibition, citing insufficient funding and a staff in mourning over the tragic murder of the Egyptian wing curator, Professor Robert Atterman.

"Private donors who wish to remain anonymous, have made the staging of the exhibition possible," Professor Surro, acting curator told reporters. "Robert would have wanted us to move forward. He was very keen on the Halloween show, given the connection between the Egyptian mummy and this holiday in the public consciousness."

The exhibit will showcase the finest collection of Egyptian temple art from around the world...

Pet Killer Strikes Again

by Ben Wellborn

The so-called Pet Killer struck again last night, turning another private animal shelter into a slaughterhouse.

"I can't believe anyone would do this to defenseless animals!" Steve Barloo, owner of the Westside Animal Shelter told reporters. "The police are clueless! They think its animals so it doesn't matter. But it does!"

The killings are the second to befall a shelter owned by the Barloo family, who announced their intention to shut down their remaining shelters. Police were...

Players Handout #2
Daily Paper, Day 2

THE NEW YORK EXAMINER

Vol. 52

New York, Thursday October 29, 2009

75 cents

Mayor To Run For Relection

In a surprise announcement Mayor Bloominfield, backed by an endorsement from President Obama, announced his intention to run for a third term. This completely contradicts the Mayor's many statements earlier this year rejecting the possibility of a third bid.

"Given the city's current fiscal crisis, the mayor feels it would be the height of irresponsibility to remove such a competent management team from the city's helm at this important juncture," the mayor's press secretary stated at a press conference earlier today.

Halloween Parade Protest

By Henry Hatch

Demonstrators hit the streets by the thousands to protest the city's decision to rescind parade permits for the annual Greenwich Village Halloween Parade.

"We're not going to stand for it!" shouted one protester.

Anger erupted when city officials, citing increased security due to the visit of President Obama, rescinded the permits.

Riot In Thompson Square Park

by Anne Mainord

A riot erupted in Thompson Square Park when police attempted to arrest more than fifty vagrants thought to be using the park as their place of residence. According to a police spokesperson, the officers were placing as many of the vagrants as possible to homeless shelters and taking the rest into protective custody. The motivation behind this move appears to be the recent spate of murders among the homeless in the park.

While not as extreme as the actions that sparked the 1988 riots, the site of police in riot gear evoked unhappy memories for the eastside community.

"I was there in '88. The cops started beating anybody and everybody," recalled Eddie Anarts.

In the wake of those events nearly 100 complaints of police brutality filed. Anarts claims an officer on horseback kicked him to the ground: "I've been an activist since the '60s, and I've never seen anything like it."

THE NEW YORK EXAMINER

Vol. 52

New York, Friday October 30, 2009

75 cents



Rapper TJ Raid

the mayor's office was unavailable for comment. Bouied by the news, Event Organizers have pledged for this year's parade to be the most extravagant in a generation.

New Stadium Proposed

by Jack Savage

"We are actively seeking a public-private partnership to build the borough a new stadium," the office of the Brooklyn Borough President told reporters. "No final decisions have been made, but we're investigating the possibility of exercising eminent domain over the semi-abandoned rail yard."

Proponents claim a stadium will bring much needed income to an area in desperate need of renovation and development. Opponents...

Parade Protest Resolved

In response to community pressure and rapper TJ Raid's offer—some say threat—to hold a free concert if the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade was canceled, city officials announced that the previously issued permits for the annual extravaganza would be honored and respected. The

Stock Market Slumps

by Don Thurber

Responding to continued bad housing and unemployment numbers, stocks on Wall Street tumbled three-and-a-quarter percent today, leading to yet another down week for the markets.

Players Handout #4
Daily Paper, Day 4

THE NEW YORK EXAMINER

Vol. 52

New York, Saturday October 31, 2009

75 cents

Mayor To Attend Costumed Gala

Society Beat reports Mayor Bloominfield will attend a masked ball hosted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Sackler Wing. The mayor's attendance has sparked political speculation his office may retire key staff members in the coming election bid, as well-known aspirant to higher office, Brooklyn Borough President...

Mayor Declares Homeless Problem Solved

By Emily Perdomo

A report released today from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development revealed that there has been a recent and dramatic decrease in the number of homeless living on New York City's streets.

"This marked decrease is the direct result of the Mayor's policies with regard to the city's homeless problems," the mayor's public relations head said at the daily press briefing. "We're thankful to the HUD for identifying and shining a light on this important improvement to the quality of life here in the Big Apple."

However, Mark Smythal of the Federated Shelter Project is concerned. He told reporters that "regulars have just stopped showing up. Usually if they get jobs or some other opportunities, they come back and tell us about it. But this time I haven't heard anything like that at all."

Market Rallies, Wall Street Relieved

By Don Thurber

In response to better than expected inflation numbers and a fed official announcing he'd been "having a good day," the market rallied. Jumping a massive five-and-a-half percent, stocks...

SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Player's Handout #5 Dr. Atterman's Computer Records

Calendar - Microsoft Outlook

File Edit View Go Tools Actions Help

View Search address books Today

Calendar

July 2009

5 M T W T F S

26 27 28 29 30 31

August 2009

5 M T W T F S

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12 13 14 15

16 17 18 19 20 21 22

23 24 25 26 27 28 29

30 31

September 2009

5 M T W T F S

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30 1 2 3

4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My Calendars

All Calendar Items

How to Share Calendars

Send a Calendar via E-mail...

Publish My Calendar...

Add New Group

7 Items

Day Week Month

July 27 - 31, 2009

Search Calendar

Type a question for help

27 Monday

28 Tuesday

29 Wednesday

30 Thursday

31 Friday

Pick up Pogo from Vet

Gym - getting lat

Dinner with Shelly

Gym

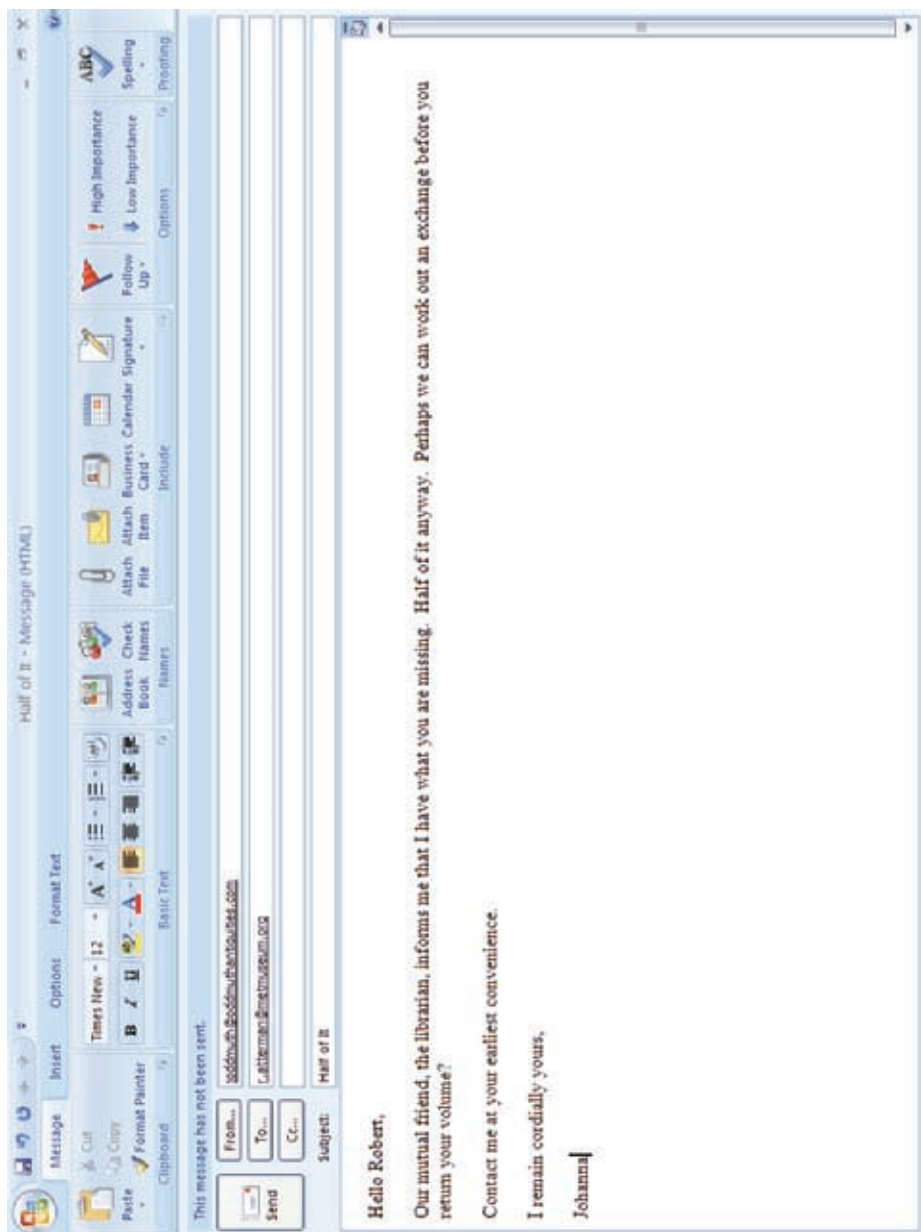
Prospect Park Exchange

Finish draft for Editor. Got to get this damn book done!

Prep next weeks symposium materials

Tasks: 0 Active tasks, 0 Completed tasks

Player's Handout #5 - Cont.
Dr. Atterman's Computer Records



SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Player's Handout #6

Librarian Joins Community Board

By Ben Wellborn

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nibh el ullupte... er alit iusti... mumsa ndipsum iliquisi.
... gnibh el dolor... feuis nonsed tatis euisit
... my nonsent vel iurem do dui tin ex elit
... n eum ... replaces Shelly Atterman as.
... e pledges to meet with local Santeros
... cum... olesequatue dolorer sim
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... uptatinci bla facipissim
... onigum etuero dignim vulland
... m... exercillam et landreet,
... te... eum... strud esecte
... vel ut endre

HATE YOU!!!

Player's Handout #7

Chicken Sting!

by Jack Savage

Brooklyn Police arrested Samuel Guerva in Prospect Park today for violating city health ordinances by killing chickens in public, sources reported. "It's an outrage," said Gabriel Aboquez, Guerva's attorney. "My client was practicing his religion. Isn't this America?" Guerva is suspected of involvement in last month's Chicken Head Massacre, which so shocked the community. He is not being charged in connection with that incident at this time, police reported. Shelly Atterman of Gowanus, the local community board member known for her outspoken opposition to Santeria worship in the Park could not be reached for comment..."

SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Players' Handout #8

EJ's Library Card



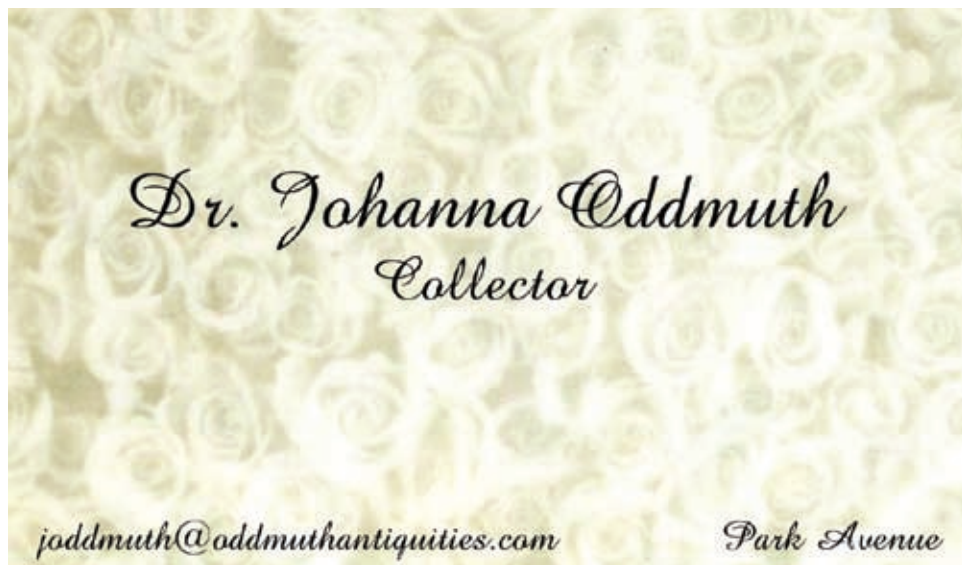
The New York
Public Library



Elmore Job Hastings

Player's Handout #9

Johanna Oddmuth's Business Card



SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Player's Handout #10

Torn Diagram



Player's Handout #11
Event Invention

*King County Borough President
Elmore Job Hastings*

*Requests the Honor of Your Presence
this Halloween Season
at the Metropolitan Museum
of Art Sackler Wing at the
Temple of Dendur for a
Costumed Fall Gala
and Dinner Event*

Black Tie Required

SNOWS OF AN EARLY WINTER

Player's Handout #12

Stephanas' Sigil

