

JOEL SPARKS



Call of **CATTHULHU**

BOOK II: UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN KATZEN
(THE CAT HERDER'S GUIDE)

Introduction

TOO LATE!

You did it now. You opened the book. It's got scary German-style words right on the cover, saying "Forbidden" or "Unspeakable" or something, but you opened it anyway. The moment the key sigils impressed your optic nerve, the Gnostic Claw pierced your second chakra, and the inevitable has begun.

Don't despair, though: It wouldn't help. Only one path offers hope to you now. If you study this tome with a concentration of lasing intensity, stopping only to inhale the souls of crystallized ammonites and triangulate on certain stars, the new growth already starting in your parietal lobe might reach maturity before the Harvesters notice your changing aura in Dream. They can draw no sustenance from a ripe and opened Eye, and so then you will be safe, for a time.

So read well, my friend, my comrade, my fellow victim of Bad Wisdom and catlike curiosity. Should you survive, you will join us, the Cat Herders, on the far side of the Mountain of Truth. I hope to welcome you there soon.

— *Mister Joel*

Call of
CATTHULHU
D E L U X E

BOOK II

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KATZEN***

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About *The Nekonomikon*

In addition to this book, the aspiring Cat Herder will need a copy of *Call of Catthulhu* Book I: *The Nekonomikon (The Book of Cats)*. Book I contains everything needed to play, including how to make up cat characters, use Cat Dice and Treats, Scrap with other critters, and all the basic Rules of Paw.

About *Unaussprechlichen Katzen*

This second volume, especially for the Cat Herder, includes copious lore about the universe of *Call of Catthulhu*, plus the tools and psychic reagents needed to create and run exciting catventures.

Whirls of Catthulhu

Combining the talents of a cast of today's outstanding indie RPG writers, *Whirls of Catthulhu* offers nine new settings for the ancient struggle between heroic cats and the forces of Chaos. Scheduled for release in Summer 2014.

Kids of Kittehloo!

Announcing the official kid's version of *Call of Catthulhu*! Featuring all the fun of being kitties and just the right amount of adventure, *Kids of Kittehloo* is a great way for parents and other friendly humans to introduce young people to RPGs. Scheduled for release in Fall 2014.

CALL OF CATTHULHU DeLUXE

Book II: *Unaussprechlichen Katzen* (The Cat Herder's Guide)

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Twenty years of irreplaceable love and support: Stephanie Halloran, *sine qua non*

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Note: References to Book I, The Nekonomikon, appear as (I, p99).



Few copies of the earliest edition still exist because most were burnt by their owners when word of von Jumpz's gruesome demise became common knowledge.



il semblait heureux de sentir l'os frais sur son ventre velu

The Notebook of Tour-Boullion (fragment)
Model: Oliver Wendell Sherlock Holmes,
thanks to human associate and Kickstarter kicker George P.

PART I

THINGS ABOUT THE WORLD

From the first time that a human allowed a cat to share shelter from the rain, all the way to the creation of air conditioning, canned food, and a bewildering variety of cushions, humanity's ability to change the world has been put to uses pleasing to cats. This is no coincidence. It is a deliberate, holy cause known as the *Great Idea*, a 10,000-year campaign of psychic pressure by which *felis cattus* encourages, even insists, that *homo sapiens* do everything possible to make the world a more comfortable place. The susceptibility of humans to such pressure has its origin eons ago, in the history of physical evolution and its parallel in the Spirit World; more of the story appears in Appendix A, History (p97).

The heroic duty of the Player Cats is to uphold the Great Idea, keep it secret from the humans, and protect civilization from the many forces that seek to disrupt the status quo.

It can be confusing for a kitten to understand all the invisible yet overwhelmingly powerful forces that strain against the armatures of the cosmos. Fortunately, every cat is born with an all-but-unshakeable belief that she is the most important thing in the universe, and this conviction armors the soul against much that might else disturb.

Dream

Dream is a realm of individual minds; it relates to the cosmic Spirit World in ways beyond understanding. Some scholars think of Dream as the surface, or a surface, of the infinite ocean of Spirit, within which move the gods and other beings not safe for mortal minds to touch.

A dreaming awareness is usually confined to the theatre of its own thought, witnessing or struggling with the emotional but incoherent narratives of a mind adrift within itself. Tiger Dreamers and other psychically-sensitive creatures can break through the walls of identity and enter the larger world of Dream, where all minds live, asleep or awake. From this loosed perspective, as mentioned in *The Nekonomikon* (I, p34), other minds appear, at distances analogous to the physical, in forms according to the creature's nature as well as the sensorium of the perceiver.

In unusual circumstances, even non-Tiger Dreamer characters could temporarily gain such perceptions. The guidelines below can help the Cat Herder describe the occupants of Dream; by its very nature, the context does not offer consistency, and players should use caution before relying on such subjective impressions.

- Cats: Small, fast-moving, streamlined shapes, accompanied by a good smell, marked with moving stripes of light and shadow. A familiar cat also wordlessly manifests its voice when touched.
- Prey animals: Tiny points, darting and quivering, rapidly strobing through the bright, primary colors of intense emotion. Fascinating to cat minds.
- Carnivores: Sharp, spiky forms in dark colors, rotating slowly, with occasional rushes of movement. Emits low flame or smoke.
- Omnivores: Large, slow-moving forms in greys and dull tones, with thin, cloudy auras. Sometimes they put forth curved limbs.
- Evil: The presence of supernatural malice causes burning fire of dark reds, yellows, and oranges, or even black.
- Intellect: Extremely active and capable minds, in addition to appearing larger, glow with light.
- Humans: These largest and most complex of mortal minds take highly varied forms, studied by cats in great detail. See *The Book of the Two-Foots*, p101.

About Gods

In *Call of Catthulhu*, a god is a Spirit being, an archetype that dwells in the minds and bodies and dreams of its followers, informing and informed by their every thought and desire. Gods do not appear in the physical world, except under cataclysmic and mythic circumstances not seen in thousands of years. In Dream, Tiger Dreamers sense the power of the gods like vast ocean currents, sweeping mortal minds along like flotsam, thinking Thoughts that last for ages and cannot be made into words.

The Animal Gods all predate human history, emerging from the evolutionary history of life on Earth and beyond. Each in its current form commands countless living animals as followers, of many species all related to its single archetype. For example, the Whale God functions as the Spirit of all cetaceans and probably all water-dwelling mammals, appearing to each in slightly different guise, but uniting them in their dreams of a clean ocean with plenty of fish.

Over centuries, the identity of a god changes and flows, reflecting and influencing the nature of its followers. The shallow-water aspect of the primal Fish God, for example, becomes more concerned with humans and their fisheries as civilization takes hold, finally taking a new shape as Doggone, a fish god focused on defeating

and assimilating the surface dwellers. Meanwhile, the original god becomes a Spirit of the extreme depths, worshipped by creatures who live far from the light and who seldom encounter any human being. Are they now two distinct Spirits, or facets of a single Being? No definitive answer exists, and perhaps none is needed, for the Player Cats must deal pragmatically with the Cult of Doggone regardless of its etiology.

About Cults

A Cult is a group of a god's followers who organize, as formally as their nature permits, and fanatically dedicate themselves to specific, holy goals. All animals honor their ancestral Spirits, but not all animals become Cultists. The Player Cats, for example, follow Fftar-Axlan, but they are not in his Cult. In fact, heroes by definition have too much independence of spirit to ever properly become Cultists. This also means that no PC can ever use the magic of rituals, described below.

Rituals

The Cults of the Animal Gods attract followers who crave power—those who feel beaten in life, under the claw of injustice, rejected by the light, and at last willing to pay any cost and disrupt any order to gain acceptance by fellow chaotics and the promise of eventual indulgence of their most craven desires. To truly join a Cult, the devotee must invite the god's will into his or her inmost soul, subsume personal goals to those of the Cult, and offer total, unthinking obedience. A Player Cat can never submit so thoroughly and still retain the spirit of the catventurer. If a player did ever choose to have her cat sincerely make such a commitment, the character would become property of the Cat Herder, and the player would need to make another.

Once the Cult accepts the newcomer, a Coven Ceremony (p12) marks the individual as belonging to the god, and the new cultist can participate in rituals of power. No mortal being can serve more than one Cult at a time, and release from service is nigh impossible through anything but madness and death.

Rituals in play fall entirely under the power of the Cat Herder; they do as much or as little as she sees fit for the advancement of plot and the entertainment of all present at table. For guidelines, rituals come in three sizes: the individual *Invocation*, the Coven-level *Ceremony*, and the mighty *Major Ritual*. Stopping a Major Ritual could be the culmination of an entire *Call of Catthulhu* campaign.

INVOCATION

One cultist screeches, intones, or hoarsely whispers a blasphemous name, which immediately makes Something Bad happen for someone close at hand. Whatever the negative effects, the cultist suffers them at least as badly, and without a PC's chance to avoid fate through quickness and luck.

Examples of Invocation effects:

- On the next Challenge roll of the selected target, one Cat Die automatically comes up 1, and the attempt cannot be re-rolled. The same applies to the cultist's next important roll.
- In the presence of anything dangerous—fire, machinery, horses or wagons, loose chunks in the ceiling, water under pressure, poison, big tools or other heavy objects precariously stacked—a seeming accident causes one Injury each to one target and the cultist.
- A sudden, severe, but temporary magic effect takes place, such as an irresistible suggestion, a deadly attack, or the brief appearance of a minor supernatural servant of the cultist's god. To invoke this mighty aid, the cultist offers up his or her life. He or she falls immediately, definitively out of the fight; in the aftermath, the cultist might turn out to be dead, or comatose, or insane.

CEREMONY

A small, sacred number of cultists, known as a Coven, gathers in a place unviewed by unbelievers, at a propitious time of day. For example, thirteen black cats gather at midnight to invoke Fftar-Axlan, or nine yellow toms meet at dawn in the name of Hastpurr. The spot must be made unhallowed through means such as fresh-spilled blood, disturbing scenes or patterns on display, obscene filth in extravagant quantity, or skulls, candles, and gothic décor. A senior cultist must be present to lead the others in ritual chanting and motions for the better part of an hour. If they successfully complete the ritual, a magic effect takes place.

Examples of Ceremony effects:

- Summon a Minor Servant of the god, which persists until destroyed or until accomplishing a task. Minor Servants cannot speak or understand language except to interpret, in quite literal terms, a single command from the Coven's senior cultist.
- Place a powerful suggestion in the mind of a person or animal not present. The ritual requires some token of the victim, such as a sample of hair or blood or a cherished object.
- Instill mind control in a helpless victim present at the ritual.
- Cause a relic to awaken. The ritual must be conducted at the relic's location, or a small relic brought to the ritual and treated with great deference.

MAJOR RITUAL

Greatly feared by right-thinking creatures vested in the status quo, major cult rituals can threaten the very foundations of peace, civilization, and sanity. Dozens of cultists must come together, to a sacred number no lower than 99, at an established center of unholy magic. It takes years to desecrate a site sufficiently for Major Rituals, so cults generally use their traditional headquarters or seek out ancient sites known for attunement with outer planes. A Major Ritual takes days to prepare, with at least a Coven of cultists present at all hours, intoning chants to warm the bones of dark desire and stretch thin the fabric of reality. At proscribed intervals, cult leaders anoint the site with repulsive unguents, horripilating smokes, or the tinnations of vile instruments.

For the final 24 hours of the ritual, increasing numbers of cultists arrive and arrange themselves in the proper patterns and postures, each section taking on its part in the ongoing, rising chorus. Deranged musicians pluck, rasp, and blow at discordant objects. As the requisite moment of stellar alignment approaches, a series of cult leaders take their turns leading the chant, each exhorting the crowd to greater frenzy and introducing the next, more reverend figure.

With an hour to go, the sacrificial victims are brought in, for no Major Ritual is complete without at least one killing of a significant figure: a major enemy of the Cult, the embodiment of a forbidden desire, a prominent leader of a despised institution, or some other recognizable and cathected avatar. The final sacrifice must be accomplished by the hand of the Cult's High Priest. It is the blood-lust of the assembled worshippers that pushes the psychic construct to its crescendo, and at the moment that the spirit departs this world for another, the gates between dimensions open and the great cry penetrates through. Something always hears.

A Major Ritual can accomplish any destructive goal that the Cat Herder desires. However, the game *requires* that the Player Cats reach the scene sometime in the last two hours of the rite and have a chance to disrupt it. Merely interrupting won't stop the momentum of such a mighty dweomer, and the massed worshippers will simply overpower the intruders and add them to the list of sacrifices. Something cleverer is required....

The effects of a Major Ritual always tend to destruction and disruption, never creating the new or preserving anything stable. The magic is that of Chaos, kicking a support out from under the world. Those who invoke such mighty forces do so at peril, for they can never know for sure what cost the god might demand.

Example of an unholy site suitable for Major Rituals: A basement beneath an animal shelter, once the private lab of a Cutter (p108), then became the site of vengeful rites designed to summon the spirits of the human's victims and send them on missions of torment. After many years, the dank space, walled off by modern renovation, reeks with psychic resonance and becomes suitable for any vile ritual fretting at the membrane between worlds.

Examples of Major Ritual effects

- Summon a Major Servant of the cult's god. Whether the summoned creature obeys the High Priest, or instead treats the entire assemblage as an appetizing smorgasbord, or both, depends entirely on divine whim beyond any mortal guessing. In the absence of a particular supernatural being's availability, the ritual can, for some reason, always find a Shaggoth (p37).
- Slay a distant foe in a gruesome, instant, and poetically just manner, with maximum public visibility and no chance for anyone to save the victim. (Exception: A cat could substitute herself for the victim in a Blaze of Glory.)
- Cause a full-scale natural disaster, such as an earthquake, flood, hurricane, or tornado, or cause any tiny flame to spread into a major conflagration.
- Collapse a cavern, tube station, monument, temple, or building, up to the size of a palace. Only rubble remains, and those inside suffer great risk of death. The ritual can destroy even an opposing cult's sacred site, unless the targets have an appropriate countering Ceremony underway.
- Summon a plague that spreads quickly among members of one particular species. Victims suffer disgusting, debilitating symptoms and die in a few days, after horrifying and probably infecting all those around them.
- Send a complex network utterly haywire, as chaotic disruptions spread throughout its nodes and pathways. The target might be any connected system, from sewers to subways, from carrier pigeons to telegraph lines, to the internet traffic of an entire nation. Repair and recovery, unless aided by equally powerful magic, take a great deal of time and effort and meet with only gradual success.
- Use the full abilities of an inhumanly ancient and mighty relic, whatever they may be. To power its effects, the relic might exact a high and unforeseen cost in addition to the activating ritual.
- Bring a god one step closer to fully awakening and entering the world.

Psychic Pressure

Much of the state of the world, indeed the entirety of civilization, could not exist but for the special psychic vulnerability of the human race. As detailed in *The Nekonomikon* (I, p35), a cat or other friendly animal who can cozy up to a human for a little while may attempt to plant a subtle suggestion. The dreams of little kitten-covens of Bastet (p21) can persuade caretakers to provide a favorite treat, forgo feared behavior, or open up a new play place. True psychic pressure, however, the kind that can change the behavior of mass humanity and build to cumulative effect throughout all civilization, lies beyond the scope of individual sessions of the game. Such efforts require concentrated and consistent planning by entire Cults, carried out over the course of at least several years, with the aid of frequent or even constant Coven-level Ceremony and perhaps a Major Ritual at key junctures. The most successful of all psychic pressure campaigns, of course, is the Great Idea, without which humans would still be hunter-gatherers and cats far less comfy. Other major efforts include the Frog God's encouragement of global warming and the cryptic scientific agenda of the lab-dwelling Cultists of the Rat God. No doubt more forces align in Spirit and bring their own pressures to bear on the vast, billowing racial mind of homo sapiens, like so many winds competing to blow about a gargantuan, ungainly balloon. Discovering such Plans, and dealing them setbacks by thwarting immediate milestones, form the basis for many a heroic catventure.

Are All Non-Cats Evil?

Just as most animals are not formal Cult members, the average beast encountered in a cat's travels is not involved in a world-shaking conspiracy. A random street dog loves Mutt'Thra, mistrusts cats, and would prefer that humans oust them from the house; an actual Cultist of Mutt'Thra, in contrast, would be involved in a Plan against specific cats and have magic to use in its pursuit. Even the more alien gods have Cults distinct from the general animal population. A hive of bees, for example, while a savage and inhumane being, and a living facet of the Insect God, dreams not of human sacrifice, but of blossoms, hunger, weather, and the swarming cycle. Of course, a human beekeeper certainly feels constant psychic pressure from the hives, and will tend to become fiercer about planting wildflowers and killing pests than mere rationality might suggest. Most Cultists of the Insect God (p31), in fact, are non-insects alienated from their own kind.



“Fftar-Axlan can leap to the top of the sky; Cattbulbu, should he wake, would tear down the heavens, and so the top of the sky would come to him.”

—saying of the Tiger-Dreamers

Art by Caroline Jamhour. Model: High-Tech the Bengal Cat.
Many thanks to Kickstarter backer Pierre G!

K

THE POWERS THAT BE: MAJOR GODS AND THEIR CULTS

Describing the Cults

For the Cat Herder's convenience, after the description of each god and its Cult are listed certain important facts.

Other identities: Other names for the Cult's god, or gods with overlapping identities.

Aspect: The way the Cultists picture their god. Such images may appear in Dream, but the god itself is never seen with physical eyes.

Followers: Who joins the Cult.

Sphere of Operation: Where the Cult and its Plans operate. Some function primarily in Dream, pushing against rival gods and the vulnerable humans with the power of the massed mind. Some Cults are more Physical, specializing in plots involving the environment, living bodies, population movement, and military or personal violence. Some work in both realms about equally. Cults that operate in Time view reality from a radically broad and distant perspective, beyond the span of cat comprehension, and may carry their goals across literally millions of years. Other Cults operate in the Sphere of Society, functioning within human institutions and traditions.

Goals of the Cult: The general, long-term accomplishments toward which all current conspiracies and plots tend.

Servants: Lesser beings controlled by the Cult and sent on missions.

Major Servant: A supernaturally powerful being, requiring a Major Ritual to summon and not subject to perfect control.

Sacred sites: The type of places in the physical world that are suitable for Cult gatherings and ritual magic.

Coven: The basic unit of the Cult, a group of Cultists under a leader. See p12.

Ceremonies: The magic rituals (p11) typically performed when a Coven meets.

Major Rituals: The most powerful of Cult magic, involving many more Cultists than a single Coven and capable of disastrous effect. See p13.

Cat Gods

FFTAR-AXLAN

First in the mouth of every civilized cat is the name of *Fftar-Axlan*, who embodies pride, independence, and the ideal of the feline form as perfection. The two-part name, however, indicates a schism. Two distinct Cults worship perfect catness in two differing aspects: Fftar of the Great Idea and Axlan Tiger-Father. Cat elders teach that big cats and small cats must be allies and that the two divine aspects show faces of a single being. Not everyone agrees.

Fftar

The faith of the Player Cats, should they stop to think about it, the Cult of Fftar centers around the Great Idea, the notion of classifying humans not as Enemy or Prey but as Servants. The Great Idea spans thousands of years of secret, gentle psychic pressure by cats, encouraging humanity to settle down and work on making things cozy—of course for the benefit of humanity as well as their pets.

Other identities: Cat-Father, the First Thinker. Consort to Bastet Cat-Mother. Conflated with, or inspirational to, the Egyptian god Ptah.

Followers: Civilized cats, living with or near humans.

Sphere of Operation: Dream.

Goals of the Cult: Preserve the Great Idea against its many enemies; encourage humans to maintain and develop an ever-comfier civilization; do not let humans discover that cats are in charge.

Enemies: All the Animal Cults who seek to undermine the status quo, especially Hastpurr, Catthulhu, Snarlyathotep, and other sworn enemies of civilization.

Allies: Bastet. Cult of Axlan, usually. Mutt'Thra, when cooperating to protect humans.

Servants: Parties of heroes blessed with the spirit of catventure; i.e., the PCs!

Major Servant: None known (see Major Rituals, below).

Sacred sites: Darkness.

Coven: Thirteen cats including one experienced Tiger Dreamer.

Ceremonies: Sleeping in a cat-pile and dreaming together.

Major Rituals: One main Coven witnessed by 987 more cats, all dreaming together. There are no confirmed instances of so many cats paying attention long enough for such a ritual, which makes the Cult heavily reliant on its heroes.

Axlan

The Cult of Axlan worships feline grace, power, freedom, and fierceness, emphasizing the cat as perfect hunter and the rightful role of all other species as potential Prey. Those that are dangerous may also be considered Enemies, but there is no third category. The big cats of the world, and small cats who live without human aid, thus reject the Great Idea, considering humans irrelevant at best, often dangerous, and, ultimately, disposable. Should such cats become alienated enough by the machinations of Fftar-inspired human civilization, their rage makes them vulnerable to the whispers of the Cult of the Yellow Eye, tempting them to turn their veneration to Hastpurr, whose followers actively attack human civilization.

Other identities: The Tiger Father, the Cat Who Walks by Himself, the Leopard That Stalks the Night. Associated with Apedemak, the Lion of Truth, also known as Maahes, Lord of Slaughter and son of Bastet.

Followers: Big cats; smaller cats who wish to emulate them.

Sphere of Operation: Physical.

Goals of the Cult: To free cats, especially big cats, from undue human influence; to restore cats to a wild and natural life.

Enemies: Those who seek to undermine feline dominance.

Allies: Cult of Fftar... usually; Bastet; sometimes the Cult of the Yellow Eye.

Servants: Big cats.

Major Servant: Man-eater lion.

Sacred sites: Wild places close to the encroachment of humans.

Coven: Gathering of hunters from at least three different cat species.

Ceremonies: Night hunt.

Major Rituals: Meeting of dozens of cats of both sexes, all ages, and every local cat species, culminating at dawn. A frequent result is a huge combined hunt that storms a place where humans hold cats captive, striving to set their brothers and sisters free.



*“The blind kitten sees the mother’s might; the open-eyed tom
cat will usually miss it.*

—saying of the Tiger-Dreamers

Art by Caroline Jamhour. Model: Samantha.
Big thanks to Kickstarter backer Ron G!



BASTET

All wise cats know that without healthy litters, the race is doomed. Followers of the mighty goddess Bastet remind others that no abstract ideal is worth risking survival, and that kittens must always come first. No meek Spirit, Bastet inspires her Cult to fierce and bloody battle when needed to secure the safety and future of young cats. Before they even open their eyes, all kittens learn to venerate Bastet, savior of catkind. Later they come to instruction in the ways of Fftar-Axlan and honor both Spirits. The two Cults have separate but mutually respectful memberships, nor does the Bastet Cult limited itself to young or female members. Some groups of kittens form their own Bastet Covens, often a single litter; it is permissible for those cats to convert to the Fftar-Axlan Cult in maturity.

Tiger Dreamers of Bastet sometimes depict Fftar as Bastet's husband and Axlan as her son, two distinct Spirits constantly bickering and requiring her intervention to restore the peace and prevent disaster.

Other identities: Cat-Mother, the Protector; also known as Bast, Ailuros; associated with Sekhmet the Lioness

Aspect: Female cat of warlike fierceness; sometimes pictured protecting kittens.

Followers: Kittens; pregnant and nursing cats; those who must protect the young.

Sphere of Operation: Physical, Dream.

Goals of the Cult: Preserve the bloodline of catkind at all costs, even contradicting the Great Idea when its excesses threaten survival.

Enemies: Hastpurr; any who threaten feline survival.

Allies: Fftar-Axlan (or Fftar and Axlan).

Servants: Mother cat defending others in a supernatural berserk state.

Major Servant: Mother cat army.

Sacred sites: Cramped, dark, warm spaces.

Coven: Three mother cats, or a kitten-coven such as a litter of siblings.

Ceremonies: Dreaming together. Kitten-covens dream kitten-dreams that can come true in little kitten-ways, generally getting a human to indulge some fleeting whim.

Major Rituals: No kittens, but a whole community's mother cats, come together in fury. Capable of forming a dangerously intent temporary fighting force to protect their common offspring and territory.

HASTPURR

This ancient cat being was once a great leader, but he split with the other cat elders on the issue of humanity. Hastpurr wanted the humans destroyed, and he turned for power to worship of Great Catthulhu, attracting many followers. The schism led to the Thumb War (p99), a struggle among the cats that nearly cost them everything. Finally, Hastpurr was killed and his followers dispersed. Unfortunately, some cats today, especially those abused by humans, still worship him, and outside the world his Spirit gathers power. His worshippers are known as the Cult of the Yellow Eye, and they conspire to trick humanity into destroying itself with spectacular disasters. Sometimes they insinuate visions of an afterlife called Catcosa into human minds, subtly implying that things will be better for people once they are all dead.

Other identities: Hastpurr of Catcosa, the Tom in Yellow, the Tattered Cat, the Yellow Eye.

Aspect: A great yellow tomcat of unknown species, missing his right eye.

Followers: Cats of all sizes who want human civilization destroyed.

Sphere of Operation: Physical, Dream.

Goals of the Cult: Express dominion over humanity and all other animals, with felines openly worshipped and served. An end to the “rule from shadows.”

Enemies: Fftar-Axlan; humans who kill, dominate, or abuse cats.

Allies: Disgruntled followers of Axlan; possibly the Catthulhu Cult.

Servants: Ordinary cats under temporary psychic domination.

Major Servant: Big cat in unthinking blood-rage.

Sacred sites: Human graveyards, or the sites of cat massacres.

Coven: Thirteen cats including an experienced Tiger Dreamer.

Ceremonies: Taking heavy doses of catnip and dreaming together, by night on a gravesite, under the Tiger Dreamer's strict instruction.

Major Rituals: Waking gathering of 169 cats of many species, culminating in a big cat killing a human known for abusing felines.



Art by Caroline Jamhour

GREAT CATTHULHU

First in the fears of cats, in their dreams and whispers, looms ***Great Catthulhu***. Where Fftar-Axlan is strong and wise, Catthulhu embodies strength uncontrolled, power let loose, pure instinct, and the abandonment of all plans, bargains, and schemes. Catthulhu is the oldest Cat God, and, according to some scholars, the progenitor of all the Animal Gods. When the ancient impulses of the body take control, when a male scents a female in heat, when catnip addles the brain, when a tiny object darts furtively in a corner: Catthulhu manifests, and the mind dissolves. Right-thinking cats repeat the lessons: How kits died, cats suffered, and starvation and disease were the lot of all, before the Great Idea.

Still, the chthonic drives remain in every cat, more or less restrained. When times grow hard, when the Great Idea seems a losing bargain, when suffering erodes the walls of sanity, then cats may think of Catthulhu and the Old Ways. The god's forbidden Cult crops up again in secret meetings and gnostic whispers, and certain cats and other animals come to pray and propitiate Catthulhu, begging "him" to awaken and sweep away the absurd and fragile webs of civilization, plunging all back into the chaotic world of unconstrained instinct, blissful ignorance, gleeful idiocy,

and howling pain alike. In that primal state, all creatures become Prey, including the self. Death and destruction are not to be feared by the unbound soul, but embraced as the true self's culmination, the glorious climax of nature set free.

Other identities: Cthulhu, the Sleeper, the Old One, the Progenitor, the Id, the Thing under the Water.

Aspect: As seen by cats, Catthulhu combines the form of a giant tentacled monster with the head of a cat possessing an unnerving, hypnotic gaze.

Followers: Those of any species who have given up and now wish only an end to all things. Many groups believe that Catthulhu's coming is inevitable and propitiate in hopes of a mercifully swift demise.

Sphere of Operation: Dream, for now; Time.

Goals of the Cult: Awaken their uncaring god and free it to remake the world, or destroy it utterly, at the fall of its unguessable whim.

Enemies: Those, like the cat heroes, who would root out the Cult and prevent Dread Catthulhu from awakening.

Allies: None but those who would set the world afire for a little temporary power.

Servants: Crazy cultists.

Major Servant: Shaggoth (p37).

Sacred sites: Ancient stone idols hidden away in lost valleys, swamps, and woodlands.

Coven: Thirteen or more Cultists of the same animal type, always in pairs plus one priest or priestess, thus always an odd number.

Ceremonies: Exaggerated behaviors calculated to shock, offend, and invalidate the former faith of the participants, along with constant chanting of seemingly unpronounceable syllables.

Major Rituals: Much more of the same, with increasing frenzy and violence culminating in blood sacrifice of as many victims as possible. Every cultist must participate to the exhausting utmost in wild and unfettered instinctive acts, deliberately violating the moral precepts most closely held before joining the Cult.

SHED-NAPPURATH

A hideous Spirit of uncontrolled overpopulation and inbreeding gone haywire, Shed-Nappurath is a perverted vision of motherhood. Cat Cultists picture her as a huge, bloated queen with dozens of seeping nipples, frequently giving birth even in sleep to dreadful monsters, catlike and otherwise. Sometimes she coughs up the living hairballs called Shaggoths (p37). Mercifully, like Catthulhu, Shed-Nappurath has been asleep for uncounted years, in a facet of spacetime that seldom intersects with the human world. Misguided animals, including humans, gather in forbidden worship of Shed-Nappurath to beg for one of her monstrous offspring to appear and wreak vengeance on those whom the Cultists consider enemies. Many cats heroes have fought and even died to prevent such gates from opening.

Other identities: The Bad Mother, Mother of a Thousand Kits; sometimes described as the mate of Catthulhu

Aspect: Enormous, bloated female cat, drooling in deep slumber

Followers: Those who believe themselves utterly rejected as ugly, weak, or pathetic, willing to work indiscriminate destruction to get their revenge

Sphere of Operation: Physical

Goals of the Cult: Introduce unnatural monsters to the world, as many as possible; ultimately, find a way to waken Shed-Nappurath herself and bring her into the physical realm

Enemies: Bastet and all other supporters of order, including Fftar-Axlan, Mutt'Thra, and even the Rat God

Allies: Catthulhu Cultists; other Chaos Cults such as Hastpurr's Yellow Eye are willing to help Shed-Nappurath Cultists summon monsters when it suits their own destructive purpose

Servants: Crazy Cultists of any animal type, including humans

Major Servant: Shaggoth at least; worse, a giant, mutated, monster version of the summoning animal

Sacred sites: Primeval woods

Coven: Animal Cultists totalling a weight of 1,000 pounds, led by a Priest with some sort of mutation, deformity, or deliberate disfigurement

Ceremonies: Obscene acts of submission and sacrifice

Major Rituals: Innocent victims subjected to experiences too unpleasant to detail



*The Spirit of Mutt'Tbra inspires one of his Cult leaders,
the sensitive dogs known as the Wild Hearts.*

Art by Caroline Jamhour. Models: Stella and Waffles.
Double thank you to Kickstarter backer Peter D!



Animal Gods

MUTT'THRA

Mutt'Thra, the Dog God, is also known as the Palindrome for embodying two aspects, each reflecting the other: The fiercest, unwavering loyalty, and the most vicious fury against any threat to the Pack. Domestic dogs go back even farther than cats with humanity and often propitiate Mutt'Thra for aid against their feline rivals. They powerfully wish to displace cats from human life altogether, because cats do not offer loyalty, and therefore are parasites, undeserving of human protection and affection. While many domestic dog packs include humans as their beloved leaders, others exclude the Two-Foots. Mutt'Thra requires only loyalty and says not to whom it must be paid. Thus wild canines such as wolves, coyotes, dingos, and so on, also venerate the Monster Dog and his strength, while viewing humans as dangerous enemies and cats as vermin and prey. More about Mutt'Thra appears in *The Book of Dogs* (p109).

Other identities: The Alpha, the First Friend, the Pack.

Aspect: An overwhelmingly huge and fierce mastiff, manifest by powerful scent and the sound of growling breath; visually, only a looming, shadowy form.

Followers: *Canis lupus familiaris* and related species who live in harmony with humans. Some dog-loving humans may worship Mutt-Thra unknowingly.

Sphere of Operation: Social.

Goals of the Cult: Furthering the success of dogs and their human partners; eliminating competitors for human attention; protecting the survival of canine bloodlines.

Servants: Rabid-seeming dogs under hypnotic suggestion.

Major Servant: Giant Baskervillian Hound, or ghostly pack that pursues enemies in a Wild Hunt.

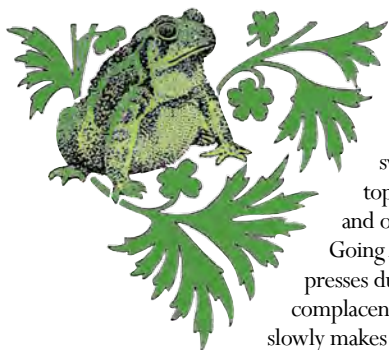
Sacred sites: Junkyards, dumps, middens, and other smelly places, especially those that smell like humans.

Coven: A pack of dogs, with male and female Alphas. Rare Covens include humans, either as Alphas, or as children being raised by wolves.

Ceremonies: Group Howl.

Major Rituals: Hundreds of dogs of widely varying breed, gathered into a "pack of packs" led by a High Alpha, who must be unnaturally old and famed for service to humanity. A series of Group Howls goes on all night under a full moon, building into a discordant round, a chorus, and finally a deafening crescendo that would drive any cat far away. At last the High Alpha tears out the throat of an Enemy and the hundreds of dogs are swept by mindless emotion. The result can be powerful magic or simply a frenzied mass hunt, killing and eating everything around except dogs and humans.

PHATPHROGGUA, THE TOAD GOD



Venerated and emulated by all that slithers, hops, and crawls between the wetness and the air, Phatphrogguia embodies the slow, stubborn spirit of squatting, staring, and refusing to be displaced. From the deepest swamp to the gutters of the cities to the swaying top of the rainforest canopy, frogs, toads, newts, and other amphibian creatures sing the Song of Not Going Away. The sheer consistency of their Dream presses dully against human thought, lulling them into complacency about the way that industrial civilization slowly makes the planet a hotter and stormier place.

Humans get drawn into the Cult by ancient traditions, worshipping at frog-altars in unmapped swamplands, often propitiating Phatphrogguia to preserve marshy homelands against development. The Cultists make ceremonial use of the poison of certain tree frogs, a powerful toxin which affects the minds of other animals. Just touching a frog transfers small amount; licking or eating the frog gives a powerful dose. The ingesting animal experiences long, involuntary visions of the fractal alignment of the physical world and the Spirit Realm. Stories vary as to whether such visions contain deep wisdom, terrifying truths too large to leave a mortal mind unchanged, sheer jangling nonsense, the malicious insinuations of intrusive Spirits, or some combination. Certain human Cultists may attempt to stockpile a great deal of the poison and put it to destructive use.

Other identities: The Webbed One, the Nightsong, K'Dunk the Fat; associated with Heqet, the Fertile Flood

Aspect: The biggest, fattest, most immobile, most impassive frog imaginable

Followers: Hordes of amphibians singing sacred songs; Humans who live in swamps, bogs, and marshes and wish to repel outsiders

Sphere of Operation: Physical

Goals of the Cult: Undermine attempts at developing wet areas; encourage human behaviors that create greenhouse gasses, thus causing chaotic weather, rising sea levels, and hotter climes

Enemies: Mammon; Fftar-Axlan's heroes when they oppose the Cult's efforts

Allies: Psychic support of the Insect God

Servants: Poison-addled Cultists

Major Servant: Swarm of poisonous salamanders; rumors persist of a temporary avatar of the god itself, an all-consuming anuran at least the size of a truck

Sacred sites: Shrines dating back to the earliest human occupation of an area

Coven: 26 humans, or 52 amphibians

Ceremonies: Ingestion of tree frog poison; veneration of an ancient statue of a giant frog, or the biggest actual frog or toad they can find

Major Rituals: Whole clans deranged on multiple intoxicants, building themselves up into a mob state to carry out a violent agenda

SNARLYATHOTEP of Many Shapes and None



Inborn in every animal is love of its own kind, and every species echoes, and is part of, an archetypal Spirit form. When a particular animal type suffers great and sustained defeats, finally willing to grasp at any hope, a messianic figure often arises to harness their despair and forge it into raw power.

Again and again in history, a physical being appears who embodies the ideal of that particular animal type, and said animals flock to the avatar's cause. Again and again, the avatar

proves to be, not a sending from the ancestral Spirit, but protean Snarlyathotep, the Ambulant Chaos, the Spirit that can take any form, for it has none of its own.

The source of these avatars is unknown, but there is never more than one at a time. It may be that the despairing Animal Cult performs a Major Ritual, asking for assistance, only to have a deceitful nullity slip into the world; it may be that Snarlyathotep itself waits in the physical realm for such opportunities.

The avatar possesses supernatural charisma that can easily hypnotize great numbers of followers. Over time, it can build mighty armies, sending them forth to recruit new thralls by force, and ultimately working toward a campaign of destruction. Those who have not yet beheld Snarlyathotep may harbor doubts, but once under its sway, followers unshakably believe their leader to be the avatar of the species' divine ancestral Spirit form, taking its most outrageous commands as matters of racial survival.

The Cult's only weakness is that hypnotized followers are just victims, not true Cultists. Performing ritual magic requires devotees who have willingly, through whatever mundane extremity, subsumed their goals to that of the Cult. Therefore Snarlyathotep must always have a High Priest and a number of other Cultists who do not fall under total mental control, and if the avatar is defeated, the slave-state of the masses disperses, leaving only dreadful memories and the hatred of their oppressors.

Creatures ripe for a recurrence of the Snarlyathotep Cult include endangered species and other wild animals who wish human civilization to fall, such as elephants, bears, and certain whales, wolves, and even great cats. Such an uprising would occur where the avatar could lead its followers in a slaughter of humanity. Yet scholars also believe that Snarlyathotep has manifested as a human many times.

Other identities: The Ambulant Chaos, the Wild, the Beast, the Empty Mirror; as a human, the Master, the Black Pharaoh.

Aspect: Idealized, hypnotically charismatic form of the animal.

Followers: A cadre of those who crave power, leading a horde of the psychically dominated.

Sphere of Operation: Physical.

Goals of the Cult: Conquest and destruction, possibly followed by a campaign for mass death, culminating in global extinction and the mass suicide of the followers.

Enemies: Unbelievers.

Allies: Any who serve for the moment; in the end, all will be betrayed.

Servants: Mobs of the hypnotized.

Major Servant: Army of the hypnotized.

Sacred sites: Graves of mighty ancestors of the species; scenes of past conquest and battle; among humans, military monuments, palaces, and other centers of autocratic power.

Coven: Three un hypnotized Cultists including one veteran of Ceremonies.

Ceremonies: Conversion of a clearing's or lecture hall's worth of new recruits.

Major Ritual: Group Hate: Thirty-three cultists led by the avatar itself, whipping at least 999 hypnotized followers into a frenzy of mindless hatred.

*And so it was that Millicent Frastley
Was sacrificed to the Insect God.*

—Edward Gorey, "The Insect God" (1963)

THE INSECT GOD



Least comprehensible of the Spirits that operate in the Physical, and the one with the greatest number of constituent animals, the Insect God embodies the view that all creatures are simply bags of nutrients, existing for others to sup upon. There is no right or wrong, only strength, and the greatest strength lies in numbers. For perverse reasons, non-insects who discover the Spirit of the All-Consuming Pest sometimes embrace its stark realism, becoming devotees, working horror upon other animals to emphasize the futility of any hopes or aspirations beyond becoming food for flies and maggots. Such Cultists refer to other mammals as “blood meals.”

Other identities: None

Aspect: Metamorphosis through hideous stages from larva to imago to queen.

Followers: All insects are part of the Insect God. Cultists, however, are non-insects: Those who fear disease; those driven mad by insect bites; those who wish all flesh to be consumed; among humans, often the jaded offspring of wealthy families.

Sphere of Operation: Physical

Goals of the Cult: Inscrutable, but include feeding on other animals and breeding as many bugs as possible.

Enemies: Primarily humans, plus cats, dogs, and other animal types who suffer from bugs.

Allies: Plants. Sometimes the Cult cooperates with the Toad Cult of Phatphrogga to encourage human activities that increase the global temperature.

Servants: Bugs of all kinds—any small arthropod, including species unguessed at by science

Major Servant: Locust swarm

Sacred sites: Swamps, stagnant water, scenes of flood and rot

Coven: Six self-loathing mammals, including one senior cultist who has previously participated in a blood sacrifice.

Ceremonies: Require sacrifice of a warm-blooded animal, the larger and more intelligent the better. Swarms of insects manifest around the Cultists during rituals.

Major Rituals: Human sacrifice. Requires 216 cultists, some of whom can be non-humans such as dogs tormented to insanity by flea bites. The Insect God may manifest by possessing a hideous, though unmoving, statue to accept the sacrifice and dispense questionable blessings.



“What you put in your cages, you put in yourselves.”

– Cultist of the Caged Master

Art by Caroline Jamhour. Models: Small Bastard.
Thanks to mysterious Kickstarter backer Sosrer!



THE RAT GOD

All rodentia venerates this vicious yet stealthy ideal. Followers of the Rat God consider humans and other mammals as weak, inferior attempts at the true warm blooded way: infest every hole, fill every shadow, eat any scrap, flee any danger, swarm any weakness, and breed, breed, breed until the world overflows with your kind. Crowding the sewers, ship's holds, wainscoting, and abandoned buildings of humanity, or coldly manipulating science from behind the bars of laboratory cages, rodents dwell where humans do. In many ways, their bond is closer than that of cats or dogs. What the Rat God plans to do is unknown, but surely, if permitted to happen, it will be bloody, and leave none standing but the Rat.

Other identities: the Caged Master, Little Man, Lord of the Sewers

Aspect: Rat King, a swarm of biting rodent bodies tangled together by the tails

Followers: Rat swarms, lab animals, pet mice, squirrels in parks; occasionally a single obsessed human

Sphere of Operation: Physical, Time

Goals of the Cult: Maximize breeding opportunities for their ilk

Enemies: All Cat Gods, Mutt'Thra, most humans

Allies: None

Servants: Rat swarm

Major Servant: King Rat, a human-shaped, masked figure possibly composed of hundreds of rat bodies moving as one

Sacred sites: Sewers, trash, dumps; places to eat what others reject

Coven: Swarm

Ceremonies: Frenzy of mating and biting

Major Rituals: Plague of rats overrunning a ship, building, or farm, covering victims and biting them to death

DOGGONE

Not a dog's god at all, Doggone is a strange fish deity, an offshoot of the primal Fish God, itself older than the dinosaurs. Doggone rules the reefs and shallows where sunlight penetrates, where the tiny, flickering minds of innumerable fish dart through sharp and bloody dreams. Mammals like cats and humans find such thoughts alien, cold, and incomprehensible, and no Tiger Dreamer likes to touch them. The goals of the Cult of Doggone, however, involve surface dwellers directly and are known all too well: Miscengenation of all surface life with piscine DNA, creating a world where fish hybrids dominate every part of the ecosphere. Using ritual magic, Cultists of Doggone have created races of half-fish that dwell in the shallows and make unwholesome expeditions onto the land. Feline heroes report encounters with scaled, gilled creatures walking in the shapes of cats, seeking victims to drag down to unspeakable fates. For some reason, all such servants of Doggone find actual dogs unbearable and either flee from them at once or, if they have the advantage of numbers, attack to kill. Little else is known for sure, as details of the Cult remain hidden beneath the waves.

Other identities: The Fish God, the Mitred One. (Servant of Catthulhu? Catthulhu himself?)

Aspect: Fish with semi-human face; human with fishlike features. The Aspect of Doggone adorns the cover of this book.

Followers: Fish of all kinds, half-breed monstrosities, and land dwellers who have made dark deals.

Sphere of Operation: Physical, Time.

Goals of the Cult: Magically blending all land life with fish life, resulting in new species capable of life in both air and water.

Servants: Predatory fish appropriate to climate: Gar, sharks, electric eels, piranha; half-breed human Cultists.

Major Servant: Sharkman, siren, or other aquatic chimera.

Sacred sites: Reefs; times and places of extreme tides.

Coven: A dance hall's worth of half-breeds.

Ceremonies: Bargaining with land animals, drowning dogs.

Major Ritual: Capture of hundreds of animals to be taken under the sea for vile purposes.

OTHER ANIMAL GODS

Planet Earth alone supports millions of species, each connected to some counterpart in Spirit, each capable of worship in its own way. The identities of gods and Cults for all these animals blend and change, and most never take actions large or immediate enough to draw the attention of charismatic megafauna like cats and humans. Still, beyond those listed above, Elders of Fftar-Axlan do know of the existence of many Cults, even when the details remain obscure. Bird God Cultists hate cats for their predations. Cetaceans and other sea mammals join in the great Whale Song, usually an ocean-bound religion, but at times inspiring anti-civilization Cult activity designed to interfere with human fishing practices or polluting habits. Many animals venerate some form of the god known as the Wild, a Spirit of many aspects; Cults of the Wild crop up where humans encroach on natural habitats. A successful Wild Cult leader, corrupted by power, could turn out to be an avatar of Snarlyathotep (p29); again, when dealing with Spirit, identity is fluid.

Post-Human Gods

Since the loss of the Ape God and the inception of the Great Idea (p99), the collective human presence in Dream has been an inchoate cloud, subject to continual psychic pressure (p15). Within that dream-cloud, evolving human symbology creates its own connections, weaving among minds to form networks greater in scope and duration than any preliterate species could support. When a portion of the symbol-web becomes sufficiently complex and passes a tipping point, it forms a shape that can be seen, from the right angle, as its own Spirit, and these possibly mindless faces of the human cloud can garner their own power.

MAMMON

Perhaps the most successful secret Cult to arise out of the last 10,000 years. At some point, as humans developed larger and more complex trade networks, cultures invented a symbol that represented, not a cow or a sack of grain, but simply value in the abstract. In that moment, Mammon was born. Over all the millenia since, almost every human has had to deal with money. The Cult of Mammon fetishizes the idea of currency into a living deity, a mindless but powerful Spirit drawing strength from the sufferings and triumphs of those involved in financial dealings large and small.

Other identities: The Almighty Dollar, Avarice

Aspect: A swirl of glittering objects or numbers; a middle-aged man in a hot tub or on a golf course

Followers: Humans many generations removed from tribal life

Sphere of Operation: Social

Goals of the Cult: Encourage expression of all moral values in financial terms; exploit the many to glorify the few; concentrate control of all resources in the fewest possible hands, ultimately, perhaps, to vest in a single High Priest

Enemies: Certain human social movements

Allies: Masses of human, deceived that obedience and conformity will someday bring them physical comfort, freedom from worry, and social power

Servants: Managers

Major Servant: Billionaire activist

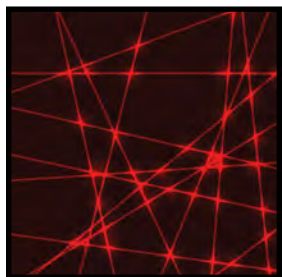
Sacred sites: Banks, trading floors, legislatures, exclusive clubs

Coven: Board of Directors

Ceremonies: Foreclosures, mergers, deals

Major Rituals: Market bubble, a series of Ceremonies culminating in a social spasm that transfers enormous amounts of resources from a large number of people to a small number of Cult leaders.

THE MACHINE GOD



Many say this god does not exist, at least not yet. If real, it must be one of the most recent Spirits to coalesce out of Dream. Originally an aspect of human symbology, as was Mammon, Machine Thought branched off at the moment when one stored symbol gained the ability to modify another without human intervention or awareness. From the Antikythera mechanism to the Babbage Engine, exactly when this changeover happened is unknown, but the Spirit gained luster only with the Industrial Revolution. As self-motivated mechanisms

accepted the sacrificial blood of human workers and grew ever more numerous and complex, the Machine Idea grew. Visionary heroes from Lovelace to Turing to Wozniak brought ever-greater capacity to the nascent being, and at last it began to contemplate, in its dead way, acquisition of true worshippers.

The Machine God has no known active Cult, and yet, the amount of human time spent investing thought and passion into virtual worlds has exploded. The history of Spirit suggests that all that psychic energy must be going somewhere. Dogs and cats believe that humans risk dire hypnosis when they stare too long at screens, and said activity must be periodically interrupted. Particularly loathed are the tiny but searingly bright red dots which sometimes appear, flitting with mechanical speed and unnatural movements across floors and walls. These must be caught and stamped out, for they are considered the Eyes of the Machine God, through which it spies on natural animals, gathering data, gaining intelligence, and moving inexorably toward some abominable Plan.

MONSTROUS FOES

In *Call of Catthulhu*, monsters and other things that might mean harm to the heroes do not have statistics. Just like the Player Cats, foes work their way through the world based on description and the Cat Herder's view of what makes sense, modified by player awesomeness as appropriate. The examples below give some idea of how to handle scraps with very big and dangerous opponents.

SHAGGOTH

The most common horror from another dimension, a Shaggoth looks like a thick, clotted hairball such as an ordinary cat might cough up, but many times larger. Its vile mass oozes with sticky and acidic digestive fluid, nauseating to smell. They vary in size, but an average Shaggoth is big enough to envelop a car and some reported specimens could absorb a house. A Shaggoth slowly rolls straight ahead, easily outrun, but leaving a wake of destruction. It's not clear that they even have senses.

Scrapping: If it can catch it, a Shaggoth can engulf any creature smaller than an elephant and dissolve its body completely. The slightest touch of the thing's gelatinous ichor causes serious burns, and it inflicts simultaneous Injury and Grab results with each victory. No ordinary Scrapping Result from a cat will get a Shaggoth's attention; it's not even smart enough to be delayed by a Holding Action (I, p30). To stop it, heroes will need to come up with a way to crush, burst, or burn it with a great deal of force.

MONSTER ANIMAL

Usually summoned by a Major Ritual, a Monster Animal looks like a giant version of a normal cat, dog, or other creature, with exaggerated or even demonic features. Monster Animals attack in mindless rage, sometimes pursuing a target designated by the summoning High Priest, sometimes rampaging at random.

Scrapping: A cat can't really Hurt such a thing, but successful attacks could Stun it. Armed with the thing's Secret Name, a Coven of Ffar-Axlan could send it back to its world of origin... but someone would have to lead the thing into the ceremonial circle at just the right moment.

THE CATNIP OUT OF SPACE

A rare cosmic horror, the Catnip falls to Earth as a meteorite, a frozen lump that crashes down and quickly thaws into dimly glowing gas. Wherever it lands, it spreads a corrupting influence through the soil and water. Cats in the affected area slowly lose control, acting wilder and wilder, and finding it harder to stay away. In time, any cats who haven't escaped go completely mad and march to the center of the blight, where the Catnip absorbs their minds, abandons their bodies, and blasts off into space in a glowing cloud, ready to infect another world.

A Player Cat first senses the influence of the Catnip in Dream, as drifting tendrils of tempting smell and color; successfully inventing a way to fight off their grip will grant a brief period of immunity in the physical world. Cat heroes might have to persuade local cats to abandon the area *en masse*, or perhaps bravely venture to the center of the blight and deploy a countermeasure dreamed up by cat elders who remain safely back at home.

THE MEW-GO

This alien cat species comes from a planet known as Yuckuth, a place of freezing cold, constant rain, and no houses. They rarely visit Earth, but when they do, they seek to harvest terrestrial creatures for use in dreadful experiments. The Mew-Go themselves appear as large, cat-headed creatures with rubbery, fungal strips that hang down to form shaggy fur and twisted tentacle-limbs. Only partially material, they bound through the air in long, slow leaps, or float away like balloons, and cannot be confronted with ordinary Scrapping.

A Mew-Go moves slowly, but they can vary the solidity of their body parts. They travel between planets by phasing from the physical world into unlikely angles, floating through certain complex movements and turnings, and rematerializing in the new place. On Earth, they set snares for humans and other creatures and attempt to lure, scare, or trick them into being trapped and immobilized. From some frozen part of their homeworld they bring metallic bubbles with a special property that lets the Mew-Go carry the contents along through the dimensions. A captive cat goes snugly into such a bubble. Less fortunate, a human or other larger creature will have its brain removed with tentacle-ends turned hard and sharp as diamond scalpels; the Mew-Go preserve the brain's life, pop it into a bubble of its own, and haul all their captives back to Yuckoth for unknown fates.

Escaping from a Mew-Go lab on Yuckoth and finding a way back to Earth would make for a perilous catventure indeed.

GUNS

Humans arm themselves with many terrifyingly loud devices, and if the discharge from one of these hits a cat, the results will be grim.

Scrapping: If the gun-using human is too far away to be attacked, the best a cat can hope for is to Dodge. Running away is the best plan, or else coming up with something clever to discourage further fire. If the shooter wins, the cat is grazed by shot or a bullet for an Injury. If unable to run freely out of the way, or if trying to prevent gunfire from reaching another target, the cat attempts a Holding Action, with the possibility of taking a direct hit and being killed outright.

CARS

Driven with intent to kill, a car is just as deadly as a gun. The driver is invulnerable unless the cat figures out a very tricky way to jump through a window or convertible top: a Dire Challenge even for a Scrapper or Catcrobat.

Scrapping: The car can't be Hurt or Stunned, and leaping aboard for a Grab, if the Cat Herder even allows it, subjects the cat to ongoing Throw attempts. If a fleeing cat can successfully Dodge, on the following Scrapping contest she can try to inflict a Shove result, which at the Cat Herder's discretion may cause the distracted driver to swerve at just the wrong moment and hit an obstacle.



The Notebook of Tour-Boullion (fragment)
Art by Svenja Liv. Model: Paddy, thanks to Michael K., Kickstarter friend.

K



une chose malfaisante, tout en noir, il s'est envolé dans la soirée

PART II

RUNNING THE GAME

A good player brings a lot to the table: personality, enthusiasm, smarts, and a bubbling well of invention. Put four or five such smart folks together and tell them to act like cats and the result will not be orderly or quiet. Nor should it be! The point of coming to the gaming table is to have fun. The job of the Cat Herder is enabling that fun while keeping it in the context of an ongoing game, because the game, used properly, offers the group surprises and excitement of a kind not otherwise available.

At times, this section addresses you as Cat Herder directly, in the interest of clearly transmitting instructive advice.



About Rules of Claw

This symbol marks key guidelines intended to simplify the Cat Herder's job. Some offer concise reminders, like the softer Rules of Paw that guide players. Others provide warning, based on thousands of hours of experience, against the temptations that come with game mastering power. A list appears on p53.

Getting Started

INTRODUCING NEW PLAYERS TO RPGS

The world is full of countless wonderful, nerdy people who love games, love imagination, and view RPGs with deep suspicion. Traditional role-playing games, and the culture that surrounds them, can unintentionally exclude potential players.

Odds are that these open-minded folk gave roleplaying a try, once or a few times, and that their first exposure to the hobby turned them off to the whole idea. The sheer number of rules, die rolls, modifiers, and special exceptions in many games can be very off-putting. A newcomer can get the impression, possibly correct, that success is a matter of memorizing optimal moves and maximizing statistical choices. True, mastering a ruleset offers its own satisfactions, and traditional RPGs can generate some unique and entertaining stories, but they aren't for everyone.

Call of Catthulhu was designed to appeal to people who don't want to play such a complex game—at least, not tonight. There's one main thing to emphasize to inexperienced players: *All you really have to do is act like a cat.* Be curious, be quick, be clever, be proud. Poke your nose into everything, and if it gets scary, scamper away fast... then come back for another peek. A couple of Cat Dice and some notes are just there to support the experience of facing a scary world through a cat's eyes.

To start out, the Cat Herder should give the new players character sheets and let them review the five Roles. It's key to point out that there are no numbers, just descriptions of five different types of cats, all of which should be familiar to anyone who knows cats in real life. Which Role is most appealing? Pick one and write it down. Then on to the few remaining questions: Do you imagine this cat as a Purebred of some kind, or a regular Mixed Breed? Does she live with people as a House Cat, like most, or is she Feral, or even a fancy Show Cat? What does he or she look like? Write it down or draw a picture; the character sheet has a big frame on it for self-portraits.

Suddenly, the character is good enough to play. For more detail, each player can look at the optional backstory from the Cat's Tale section (I, p12). Does the player find the story for this type of cat interesting or inspirational? Would the player like to add or change any details, or pick a different story? It doesn't matter if a Feral Scrapper uses the backstory of a Purebred Pussyfoot, or if the player wants to use no backstory at all for now. All is permissible. Imagination rules.

A quick skim over the Rules of Paw (I, p36) will familiarize the player with the intention of the game, without requiring that any of it be memorized. Finally, dice: When it comes down luck, roll two dice and count the Happy Cats: None, one, or two. That's all anyone needs to know to start the game.

Running an Introductory Session

Now play can begin. Every player gets a Treat and the CH explains how it's good for one re-roll. For an introduction, the Cat Herder should put all the cats together in one setting: In a house with a cat door, or maybe a back yard where Feral types can visit more domestic cats. The situation starts with a simple hook: The cats want something and they can't get it without figuring out a solution. Examples:

- It's time for dinner and the human is napping hard.
- The catnip mouse is stuck under a chair, or a bit of ribbon is fluttering tauntingly inside a thorn bush.
- It's starting to rain and everyone is stuck outside.
- There's a bug crawling way up on a wall, making the most annoying clicking sound, with no obvious way to reach the thing.

As the players suggest solutions, they learn to take turns. The Cat Herder (CH) uses the Rules of Paw, especially the Rule of Two Dice: When a cat tries something, a roll of two Cat Dice informs the result. The CH makes her call and play goes forward. Whenever a player comes up with a clever notion to attempt, the CH should hand out a Treat.

When the little goal is achieved, give out an Experience for everyone to write down on their Character Sheets. Examples:

- Some chairs roll.
- Brick walls are easy to climb.
- Humans hate water in the face.

It should be possible to run four or five players through a session like this, including cat character creation and a simple challenge, in less than an hour. And now they know how to play. If the group has more time, the CH can launch them on a more substantial adventure, introducing details like Difficult Challenges as they go.



INTRODUCING RPG PLAYERS TO CALL OF CATTHULHU

It can actually be harder for an experienced gamer to pick up Catthulhu than for a complete newbie. Everyone knows how to act like a cat, and just about everyone can roll some dice and count the Happy Cats. Those, however, with years of experience in statistical maximizing, rules memorization, and habitual aggression may find it difficult to play without reliance on hard and fast rules every step of the way. The key is to ask the players to trust you, and then earn that trust.

A hardened RPG player wants to know that the game master's response to his actions is fair and consistent, and that you aren't just making everything up to suit yourself. Thousands of pages of rules have been written in the doomed but noble attempt to make all play results perfectly consistent and predictable. That's not how *Call of Catthulhu* works. So tell the experts to relax and go with the flow, just for one or two sessions, until they see how the game really does give power to the players, and how no preset plotline is going to invalidate the importance of their choices and the flexibility of the story that everyone is finding out about together. See also the Rule of No Cut Scenes (p50).

PLAYING CALL OF CATTHULHU WITH KIDS

Young players may be very drawn to the idea of pretending to be kitties, and a Cat Herder can easily run the game for one or more kids. Obviously, references to cats getting hurt, humans who torture, and evil gods must be elided. Beyond such content filters, adjusting play will depend more on understanding children than on any hard and fast rules changes. Some pointers:

- Challenges can be smaller: just stealing a bite of chicken from the platter or getting a toy down from a high shelf can provide gleeful triumph for youngsters.
- Every cat gets exactly one triumph, guaranteed. With two or more players, after each gets one victory it's probably time to stop.
- Play should last 20 to 45 minutes depending on the ages involved.
- Above all, the Cat Herder must arrange for an *audience*: Humans or other non-player animals in the game whose sole function is to be amazed by the daring and skill of the Player Cats. Telling a child, "The dogs are just staring at you, like, *How did she do that?*" can have a surprisingly strong effect.
- At the end of the session, all the cats end up somewhere safe and cared for. Small children do not want to identify with tough loners, out coping with an uncompromising world. Rather, kittens come home in triumph to their mother cat, who chides them gently and provides dinner, or a set of small children suspiciously like the players take in the wandering cats and provide them with a cozy home, from which future adventures can begin.

Coming soon: *Kids of Kittehloo*, a special kids' version of the game!

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Chances are, your friends already know how to have a good time doing nothing: sitting around together, joking and talking, maybe with snacks. They may not know how to have a good time while working together to solve an imaginary mystery. It's part of your job as Cat Herder to show them. These guidelines and Rules of Claw will help.

The Luck of the Tiger

The cats usually win. Odds in *Call of Catthulhu* are deliberately stacked in favor of the Player Cats. It's difficult to fail utterly and really difficult to get a kitty hero hurt or killed. Of course, such possibilities exist, and over the course of play they will occur. There has to be some risk and some luck, otherwise the game would revert to either Chess or Let's Pretend. Still, most of the time, the cats at least make progress, and the fun of rolling dice, with the possibility of failure, provides considerable excitement.

BAD GUYS NEED BAD ROLLS

On Cat Dice, a Happy Cat face (3–6 on a d6) always reads as Good for the Cats, and a Sad Cat (1–2) means Bad for the Cats. For cats and their allies, then, the Happy Cat reads as a Success and the Sad Cat as a Failure. However, when the creature making the attempt is of some other type and means harm to the cats, it succeeds when the die roll shows a Sad Cat.

This can be particularly difficult to remember in Scrapping: A non-cat combatant is trying to roll Sad Cat results. Therefore, compare the number of Happy Cats rolled by the cat with the number of Sad Cats rolled by the alien opponent. Whoever has more of these “scrapping successes” wins the roll. It's important to read the dice this way to keep the odds of victory in favor of felines.

When cat fights cat, both sides want normal Happy Cat Successes, no matter the allegiance of each. The odds get much closer to even!

INTERPRETING RESULTS

So the Cat Dice fall to table and show a result that's Bad for the Cats, or Good for the Cats, or in between. The next moment belongs to the Cat Herder. You must quickly describe what occurs, based on what the player intended, how appropriate this cat is to the job at hand, how dangerous or difficult the circumstances are, and what you want to set up as the next circumstance. When in doubt, let the rolling player suggest the outcome, but you have final say. Example of soliciting input: “Okay, that's a mixed result. What exactly was Earsnuggles hoping for when he

tackled the coat rack?"The CH should run with the player's idea as far as it works, but tempered by the dice, the need to keep the cats under pressure to seek further success, and the need to let the next player have his own turn to tackle a problem and come out in triumph.

Examples: Typical Results in Play

1. Success

A player has a clever idea. The Cat Herder considers it a good solution, so she secretly decides that it's an Easy Challenge to implement. The cat tries it and rolls the Cat Dice. The idea worked! Pleasant sense of triumph. On to the next hurdle.

Odds: If this is the RCFTJ, any die roll spells success. (Double 1s would be an Embarrassing Success: I, p23.) Even for anycat, the odds of getting at least one Success are almost 90%. On double Successes, the Cat Herder should increase the drama in her description of the skillful result.

2. Got Lucky

The Cat Herder considers this idea to be a long shot, but gives the players a chance. They will need two Successes: a Difficult Challenge. The dice come up double Success, and it works! The CH describes the result in a way that makes it clear that the cats got lucky.

Odds: In reality, double Success comes up just slightly less than half the time, or if the RCFTJ is involved, two-thirds of the time. That's the Luck of the Tiger; the Cat Herder's job is to make it feel lucky.

3. Informative Failure

The Cat Herder decides that, given the way she pictures the situation, this idea just won't work. No die roll allowed: The attempt fails, but reveals some new information, clarifying what's required. This is an Informative Failure, and sends the players back to come up with an even more creative idea to try next.

4. Partial Success

It's a Normal Challenge, or any use of the Rule of Two Dice, and the fickle cubes come up one Success and one Failure. The goal remains unfulfilled for now, but the Cat Herder allows the cats to learn something, as for an Informative Failure, and adjusts the circumstances so that the next attempt will be easier. The CH can actually reduce the Challenge Level of the next roll, or just suggest to the cats what might be a better approach. When they do succeed, the description of the result can be a little more dramatic because of the work the cats put in making multiple attempts.

NOTICE ROLLS

In general, the Player Cats notice what they need to for the game to move forward. If it's not crucial, or if ignorance may prove at least as amusing as being informed, the Cat Herder can call for rolls from players whose feline heroes might be in position to see, smell, or, especially, hear something. Each player rolls 2dC.

On two Failures, the cat doesn't notice a thing; on Snake Eyes, this might be due to foolish distraction. One Success is enough to catch what's in the wind. If some cats are further away or more distracted than others, those cats might need two Successes. Often the CH can move the game forward by simply saying that whichever cats get the best results notice whatever the Cat Herder wants the players to know.

Next to hearing, scent is the best feline sense, far better than human (although not nearly canine). Their noses alert them to the presence of animals; good food, and substances that would be dangerous to breathe, eat, or drink; fresh or stale air. Cats leave marks from their many scent glands (1, p26) and can identify which cat left a mark, or tell a strange cat's gender, time of visit, recent diet, and even mood.

LUCK ROLLS

Glitch: If the cats' plans are proceeding smoothly, the CH might secretly roll an Easy Challenge. If both dice come up Failures, some element that should have worked fine proves unreliable or acts in an unexpected way. Example: "While you were checking for dogs outside, one of the kittens wandered off someplace."

Minor Luck: When the cats want to achieve a minor step forward and the CH doesn't have a preference, she might roll 1dC. On a 1–2, the outcome is the opposite of what the cats would prefer; otherwise, they get what they want and play moves on. Example: "No, the kitchen door's not latched. You can just push it open."

Sinister Fortune: When things are going badly for the cats, the Cat Herder might choose to make a Difficult Challenge roll and keep the pressure building. Unless both dice come up successes, the forces of darkness tighten their grip and things get just a little worse. Example: "As you struggle with the stones, the fire spreads. Suddenly, from down the hall, you hear the squishy approach of what must be a lot more toads."

STUPID TWO-FOOTS

When a cat is trying to get an idea into a human's head, the Two-Foots can prove remarkably dense. Understanding even the plainest urgings of another animal is a Difficult Challenge for humans, requiring two successes on 2dC. If the dummy fails, the cat will have to change tactics and try again. Example: "You tangle up the butler's steps and even pull on his trouser leg with your teeth, but he just mutters and shoves you away with his foot."

Acting

A difficult but enjoyable part of Cat Herding is playing the parts of every creature in the world except the Player Cats. Given the general tone that the game strives for, other creatures primarily play the role of foil: serving to emphasize, by their own flawed ways, the many virtues of being a cat, and in particular, the virtues of the cat heroes. Thus the complicated schemes of villains exist to be brought low by the swift bravery of the felines; the fiendish intentions of conspirators fall apart when the heroes expose them to the world; the overwhelming might of a monstrous creature only makes it fall the more resoundingly when tricked into self-destruction. Whatever part the Cat Herder plays, however kind or evil, sad or frightening, is ultimately a supporting role in the story of the Player Cats. Balancing the portrayal of a fool, fiend, or friend, showing the creature's innate self-respect while ultimately trending its actions toward glorifying the heroes, can take a cool head and considerable practice.

Some guidelines follow.

HUMANS

Humans talk a lot, often directly at cats, and it's key to remember that the cats can't understand them—not even a syllable. Therefore, much of acting like a human consists of making inarticulate, word-like noises, expressing exaggerated emotions with tone of voice and sweeping arm gestures. Humans come across in play as buffoons, slow-moving, unaware of what's happening around them, and always mentally a step behind the cats. Some are dangerous, commanding dogs or weapons, willing to kick cats around, even deliberately seeking to capture or harm them. Still, a cat who keeps on her toes can usually trick, hide from, or escape even the most intent Two-Foots. The Cat Herder can use the loud, clumsy approach of a disapproving human to put time pressure on the cats when they need to accomplish something sneaky.

DOGS

Dogs and cats talk freely, but they are suspicious of one another, and cats consider dogs slow of wit. Therefore, to play a dog, the Cat Herder is advised to pull out her standard dumb-guy voice. Frequent pauses of incomprehension, combined with a brow furrowed in confusion, emphasize how the straightforward minds of dogs get lost trying to follow tricky feline reasoning. When sufficiently baffled, a dog falls back on canine sureties: protection of territory, obedience to humans, loyalty to the pack, and the option of simply chasing the cats away. Food, however, is a reliable distraction: raw meat works best, or anything that cats wouldn't touch, the stinkier the better. See also *The Book of Dogs*, p109.



CAT ELDERS

The main thing to recall about older, wiser cats is that they are very sleepy. Once having made clear to the Player Cats that Something Must Be Done, a High Priest or senior Tiger Dreamer or parental type is likely to get quite grumpy at further questioning, rapidly losing patience with young heroes who don't seem to understand, and certainly refusing to follow anyone anywhere or take any such strenuous action. Either this important leader has important things to do, or else this time offers the chance for a nap; either way, the action-oriented heroes need to clear off and let their elders alone. See also the Rule of No Pets, p51.

/// VILLAINS (*The Rule of No Monologues*)

The mastermind behind a chaotic conspiracy might be an animal of any species. At some point in many stories, such a Big Bad has the heroes captive or otherwise in a position to learn about the sinister plan while unable to do much to stop it. The Cat Herder should avoid such clichéd expository setups and resist the temptation to monologue.

Let evil express itself in action, not speechifying, and don't make the PCs witness events unless they have the chance to interfere, as per the Rule of No Cut Scenes (p50). Plenty of useful yet concise expressions of the stereotypical villain lie to hand, such as "Get them!," "You're too late!," or the classic "Noooooo!"

Rules of Claw

FREEZE FRAME

Some players are reluctant to give up the spotlight. As soon as you tell them the result of their latest trick, they spit out the next. This chaining of actions can suck a lot of table time away from other players. It's particularly easy for a Catcrobat, who always acts first, to unintentionally abuse this power, reacting every time the situation changes. One option is to freeze the star in his tracks. Example:

Ned, playing Ninja, a Catcrobat: "I run along the fence top and take a flying leap up to the top of the lamp post!"

Angela, Cat Herder: "Even for you that's a tricky one. Roll two dice."

At this point the other players focus on Ned and his Cat Dice, appropriately excited to see what will happen. Ned rolls a 6 and a 2: one success. Because Ninja is a Catcrobat, he gets one free Success, so that counts as two Successes total, enough for this Difficult Challenge.

Angela: "Nice work! You land on the lamp post, balancing on all fours."

Ned: "All right! I jump onto the black wire."

Angela [Freezing the Frame]: "Hold on. Brill, you see Ninja streak along the fence and leap to the lamp. Now he's balancing and looking around for his next move. Meanwhile, what does Butterbutt do?"

Cats naturally hate to pay attention to anyone else for longer than necessary, so breaking Ned's chain of actions will give the other cats their own proper time to shine—or bathe, or lie down, or scamper off after a shiny thing.

WHEN TO STOP FOR THE NIGHT (*The Rule of Hanging from Cliffs*)

Not every adventure finishes in a single night of play. If the hour grows late, or players have to leave, find a dramatic place to suspend play: not right after a major Challenge is met, but right *before*, with the outcome still uncertain. The tension maintains enthusiasm for the next session and makes it easy to refresh players on the situation in game. Stopping during a relatively peaceful interlude, in contrast, sacrifices momentum, and players will likely arrive back at table not remembering the cats' motivations and unsure of what to do next.

/// NO CUT SCENES

If you know how something has to play out, don't play it out. If the Mistress of the Manor has to be stung by an evil bug and knocked out in order for the adventure to proceed, then knock her out before the player cats even get there. Don't let the cats try to stop the bug when you know they must fail. That's a waste of precious table time. It's tempting to make the players witness the dramatic events you have in mind, but such description must be kept very brief and used only as a prelude to action where even you don't know how things will turn out. The goal is to play out moments of crisis when heroic cats can make a difference, so never let players take action unless their actions can change the story. A player who comes up with a great solution or makes a very lucky roll will become extremely frustrated if the Cat Herder then backs down and doesn't let him save the victim, stop the crisis, or otherwise triumph. If the result must be foreordained, then that scene is not for playing out: It's backstory. Keep it to a minimum and get to finding out, together, what happens next.

/// THE CAT HERDER HAS NO PETS

Sometimes, maybe often, players need a voice of experience in the game world, telling them what's what, giving crucial backstory, pointing them in the direction of adventure. Such non-player characters (NPCs) must always be fatally flawed in some way, unable to act as heroes themselves. The classic flaw is physical age or disability: a wise NPC whose infirm body just will not allow gallivanting off to tackle the unknown. Another approach is duty: The NPC cannot leave the ritual circle where constant chanting holds back the tide of evil. Or perhaps disinterest: The NPC is cynical and apathetic, grudgingly willing to explain matters to the Player Cats, but sure to scoff that attempting to do anything about the situation is a doomed and foolish attempt which this NPC is too smart to consider.

Above all, you must *never create an NPC who is more heroic than the heroes*. For whatever reason, even the most experienced of non-player cats or other creatures must be incapable of launching forth on adventure, or boldly choosing the risky course, or making the ultimate self-sacrifice. Following around an NPC while the person running the game describes the awesome prowess and nobility of this fictional character makes for very boring, frustrating play. And at the final crisis, it's better to allow failure and even the end of the world than to have the Cat Herder's pet show up and save the day. Keep the heroics strictly for players.

Scrapping Results

RESULT CHOSEN BY CAT	TARGET IS...			
	Smaller	Cat-sized	Larger	Monstrous
DODGE	Dodged; left behind	Dodged	Dodged	Dodged
STUN	Stunned; at cat's mercy*	Stunned*	Stunned*	Delayed (Holding Action only)
SHOVE	Batted around	Shoved	Made to take one step	Steered slightly; cat must Grab first
GRAB	Trapped; at cat's mercy	Grabbed (wrestling)	Grabbed onto	Climbed onto
HURT	Killed	Injured	Stunned and bloodied	No effect

RESULT INFLECTED ON CAT	ATTACKER...			
	Smaller	Cat-sized	Larger	Monstrous
DODGE	Dodges cat	Dodges cat	Dodges cat	Can't dodge
STUN	Stuns cat	Stuns cat*	Stuns cat*	Stuns cat and leaves vulnerable
SHOVE	Makes cat take one step	Shoves cat	Knocks cat away	Throws cat for possible Injury
GRAB	Hanging on cat	Grabs cat (wrestling)	Picks up cat; can attempt Throw next	Picks up and holds cat helpless
HURT	Cat Stunned and bloodied	Injures cat	Injures cat	Injures cat

Guidelines for Scrapping Results

The charts on the opposite page give the Cat Herder additional detail for adjudicating fights based on the relative size and toughness of the combatants. As always, the final guide is imagination: the way that the Cat Herder visualizes events, with due consideration for input from the players. Every fight is different, so, as usual, players should not expect perfect consistency, so long as the outcome seems believable and allows play to continue in amusing and exciting ways. Basic Scrapping rules appear in Book I (I, p28–30), with a summary on p128 of this book.

Monstrous foes in particular have their own exceptional abilities. Details about fighting with things like Shaggoths, cars, and aliens appear on p37-39.

***Two Stun results in a row may cause the target to flee.**



Rules of Claw

THE RULE OF THE FREEZE FRAME

Interrupt chains of actions to give other players a chance.

THE RULE OF NO PETS

NPCs must be ineffectual. Leave the heroics to the heroes.

THE RULE OF NO CUT SCENES

Never play out a scene if you already know what has to happen. Player characters can always influence the events that they encounter.

THE RULE OF NO MONOLOGUES

The heroes learn about the Evil Plan by opposing it in action, not as a captive audience to long explanation by NPCs good or bad.

THE RULE OF HANGING FROM CLIFFS

When play must pause, it should pause just before resolution of a significant challenge, not just after.



The Notebook of Tour-Boullion (fragment)
Art by Svenja Liv. Model: Harley, in tribute from human James C., Kickstarter star.



PART III

CATVENTURE TIME

Writing Adventures

Building an adventure doesn't mean writing a whole novel. All the savvy Cat Herder need do is note a goal for the Player Cats and a few obstacles that lie between, then let the players provide the shenanigans. Some direct advice follows, but the best teacher is experience.

IN MEDIAS RES

This literary term means “in the middle of things,” and that’s where adventure begins. Skip the introduction, or keep it to a sentence or two; players are seldom shy about asking for background details as they become important.

Don’t create a scenario where the PCs have to find trouble. It comes to them. At the start of a play session, quickly establish the situation and where the cats are. Then, immediately, the First Thing happens: the window crashes in, or the ragged alley cat staggers up hissing a few cryptic words before falling dead, or the Tiger Dreamer jolts awake from a dream of fire and foe with an oddly specific location burning in her mind.

That way, when the cats ignore the fire and foe to spend the whole session hunting in the garbage for fish wrappers, it’s their own decision.

But it’s still your problem. Let the little four-footed savages scrap over scraps for a minute or two, so long as everyone seems amused, then hit them with an even bigger club. Make it clear that if they don’t act, Something Bad will happen, very soon, to something that they care about—generally their own furry little hides.

OSWALD’S RAZOR

In a world of Chaos cults, Animal Gods, truthful dreams, and house cats saving humanity, mundane assumptions about reality have little place. Thus the Rule of Paw known as Oswald’s Razor states: “When selecting among competing explanations for any event, choose the conspiracy theory.” For catventure design purposes, this means that there is *always* a hidden plot lurking behind the immediate events that confront the kitties. Even if the Player Cats are only trying to retrieve a lost toy,

they are destined to find along the way a clue to the Plan of some Cult. The slow accumulation of detail, possibly over many game nights, always builds to a Reveal of supernatural evil and a fiendish plot that only the heroes can foil. The wily Cat Herder considers from the very beginning what god and which fanatical servants might be at work, and what they hope to achieve.

STRUCTURE

Most adventures present Challenges in a series of increasing difficulty. Variations on that classic structure include multiple directions of development that can be pursued in any order, or a huge conflict at the beginning followed by small but surprisingly important details.

Be sure to consider the variety of cats in a typical group. Consider providing at least one Challenge for each of the five basic Roles. A group of four players will be missing at least one Role and will have to improvise, and improvisation is the very soul of Call of Catthulhu.

The very soul.

USING CHALLENGES

As described in Book I, Challenges vary from Easy to Difficult, and those that threaten serious injury are Dire. More than these basics, when preparing an adventure, the Cat Herder should note down one or two solutions that would allow the PCs to bypass each Challenge—and be prepared to roll with it when the players come up with unexpected ideas of their own. Cat Dice alone, no matter how cute they look, never solve a Challenge; it is the players' creative approach that determines whether a roll is even necessary, and if so, how difficult and dangerous it must be.

Challenge Sheets

When unclear on how an important Challenge should go, especially when herding cats for the first few times, the Cat Herder can use a formal Challenge Sheet to outline the risks and results. A blank sheet appears on p58, free to copy. Example: The cats have to get into the library of Patterson Place, but the door is locked. After some back-and-forth, the CH lets the Twofootologist remember how the butler sometimes uses an attractively shiny stick on the door. No other cat could figure out how a key actually works, but several might be of help in tackling the butler and acquiring the shiny stick in question. The CH might organize notes as shown in the example opposite.

Call of CATTHULHU - CHALLENGE SHEET

CHALLENGE Scooping key from butler's pocket. If successful, key goes flying.
RCFTJ Scrapper
SOLUTIONS
ANYCAT Scragging contests: Grab Result to climb leg; butler will use Grab & Throw; additional Grab Result to scoop out pocket
CATCROBAT If Thrown, lands unharmed; can always avoid kicks
PUSSYFOOT Begging for key won't work. Could convince butler to open door himself!
SCRAPPER One auto Success when fighting
TIGER DREAMER —
TWOFOOTOLOGIST Has to explain pockets to the other cats!

A stack of Challenge Sheets might be all the notes required to run the players through a few hours of unpredictable shenanigans. Perhaps even a single page listing a series of predicaments could prove sufficient. Except when writing for publication, there's little need to spell out every detail. In play, it all changes anyway, with player suggestions, unlikely dice rolls, and the agile Cat Herder's constant adjustment of circumstance, pacing, and tension to suit the group's mood.

Note: The word "challenge" sometimes means any obstacle or hurdle that the players must overcome during play, and sometimes refers to a formal Challenge Roll. In the latter meaning, it is always capitalized, as in: "To meet this challenge will require success at an Easy Challenge."

Icons

As shown on p59, there are several standard icons used in published adventures, acting as bookmarks to remind the Cat Herder of important details in the text. Not every adventure uses all, or any, of these symbols. Roughly speaking, the icons listed first appear most often.

CHALLENGE

RCEYJ

SOLUTIONS

Amycat

Caterobot

Pussyfoot

Scrapper

Tiger Dreamer

Twofootologist

Catventure Icons



Treat!

The fishy Treat icon reminds the Cat Herder of a juncture where a clever player might earn an extra Treat. Treats can, of course, be given at other times as well.



Injury!

This bandaged-up, teary-eyed kitty denotes a situation that might cause a Player Cat to become Injured. It reminds the Cat Herder to pay careful attention to what each cat attempts, clearly explaining to the players any obvious danger.



Time Tip!

The hourglass icon indicates a place where the CH can change the pace of the adventure to suit the group. Are they ready for more and bigger challenges? Or are they getting tired, distracted, or worried about it getting late? The Time Tip can shortcut the adventure a little, hurrying rewards and resolution. Better to send the players home happy, even if it means skipping some details. There's always next time!



Rule of Paw!

Reminders to make the game fast and easy for players and Cat Herder alike.



Success!

The Happy Cat face of a Cat Die, alone or in a pair, can accompany the detailed result when a Player Cat succeeds at a certain Challenge roll.

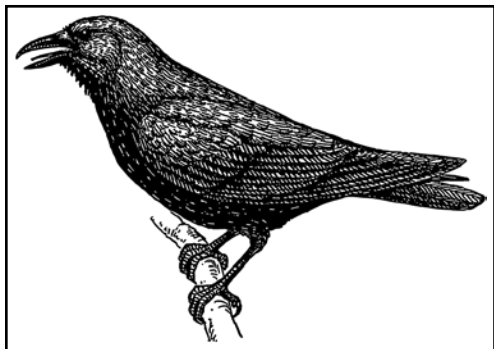


Failure!

One or two of these Sad Cat die faces can mark an explanation of what happens when a Player Cat fails a particular Challenge Roll.

THREE COMPLETE CATVENTURES!

Starting on p61 are three full adventures for *Call of Catthulhu*: “The Buzz Downstairs,” “Bay City Crazy Cosmonaut Crash Down!,” and a guest piece, “Greener Pastures,” by the excellent indie game designer Tracy Barnett. Each piece has its own style and flavor, but each is intended as material for a single night’s gaming, lasting three to four hours. If table time runs short, the Cat Herder can stop play at a key moment, following the Rule of Hanging from Cliffs (p51).



THE BUZZ DOWNSTAIRS

An Introductory Catventure

Setting

Rural England between the wars. The manse and surroundings of Patterson Place, a small estate half a day by coach or motorcar from London. An agricultural village lies by the estate, down some muddy lanes.

Characters

HUMANS

Mistress, most important human in the household. Loves cats.

Master, her mate and the alpha male, usually absent. Does not like cats.

Maid, generally attendant on *Mistress*.

Cook, the large soft female who is best to ask for snacks.

Girl, *Cook*'s daughter, who loves cats but sometimes chases them crazily or hugs them too hard.

Butler, who dislikes cats and is even known to kick.

Gardener, who lives in a small outbuilding with at least one beloved tom.

Doctor, not resident at the estate, nor yet known to the cats.

PLAYER CATS (with typical sort)

Pampered darlings of Mistress (Pussyfoot or Twofootologist; Purebred).

Well-fed kitchen cats associated with Cook (Tiger Dreamer or Pussyfoot).

Outdoor associate of Gardener (Catrobat or Scrapper).

Feral cats of the alleys (Scrapper or Catrobat).

Cats of the nearest neighbor, an eccentric scientist (Twofootologist or Tiger Dreamer).

OTHER ANIMALS

Dogs of the alleys.

Toads and other small wildlife of the estate's garden and pond.

Birds and bugs of the countryside.

Locations at Patterson Place

OUTSIDE

The Yard

People: None.

Features: Estate wall with muddy lane beyond.

Exits: Path into the Garden, cat door to the Kitchen, over the wall to the muddy lane, or around the house to Out Front.

The Garden

People: Gardener.

Features: Gardener's shed, flowering bushes, vegetable patch, thick underbrush; pond with toads, goldfish, and dragonflies in season.

Out Front

People: None.

Features: Tasteful shrubbery, U-shaped gravel driveway.

Exits: Driveway leads off the estate; double front doors lead inside to the Foyer.

PATTERSON MANOR: DOWNSTAIRS

The Kitchen

People: Cook or Girl.

Features: The warm stove. Stored food.

Exits: Cat door to the Yard. Door to the Ground Floor Halls.

Ground Floor Halls

People: Butler or Maid.

Features: Windowless, carpeted. Small furnishings and plants.

Exits: Doors to Kitchen, Foyer, Butler’s Room, and Library. Stairs up to Upstairs Halls.

Foyer

People: None.

Features: Slick marble floors.

Exits: Large, locked double door with windows, leading to Out Front. Door to Ground Floor Halls.

Butler’s Room

People: Butler.

Features: Telephone; desk with papers; rack of many keys. To most cats, the keys are meaningless. To kittens and Catcroats they look like fun jangly things to hit. A Twofootologist might recognize that they are associated with doors.

Exits: To Ground Floor Halls.

Library—LOCKED

Domain of Master human. No cats allowed. Kept locked. Maid will oust cats gently; Butler, with force; Mistress would pick up her Pussyfoot, shoo others ineffectually, and call for Maid.

People: None.

Features: Huge bookshelves. Overstuffed red leather chairs. Globe. Stuffed bird in hanging spherical cage.

Exits: Big windows to Yard. The heavy door to the Ground Floor Halls is locked with a big old-fashioned brass plate lock and a thumb-latch style handle.

Several other downstairs rooms that do not figure into this adventure:

Dining Room, Parlor, Silver Closet, Pantry, Servant's Quarters, etc.

PATTERSON MANOR: UPSTAIRS

Upstairs Halls

People: Mistress or Maid.

Stairs down to Ground Floor Halls. Open archway to the Morning Room.

Locked doors to Bedrooms, Attic stairs, and Closets.

Morning Room

People: Mistress or Maid.

Southern exposure allows plenty of sunlight. Little tables, carpets, divans, trays, and knick-knacks.

Bedrooms, Closets, and Attic, not relevant to this adventure.

It Begins

At the start of "The Buzz Downstairs," Mistress is alone in the Morning Room with no cats present. Maid is at work somewhere downstairs. Butler is in his room messing about with pen and paper. Gardener is at work somewhere out on the grounds and will not be involved unless the cats go fetch him. Master is away, probably overnight. Cook and Girl are off shopping and will return with food in a few hours. Cats may arrange themselves as desired, though not in the Morning Room. Cats who do not live in Patterson Manor start outside; Butler is particularly intolerant of alley cats and strangers in the home that he cares for.

PRELUDE: THE DREAM

A Tiger Dreamer, dozing in the Kitchen or elsewhere, dreams of a fat, squashy toad. It swells up its throat, then its whole body, and then bursts. Within the wreckage, a wet, bedraggled bird struggles to its feet. It has no eyes. It opens its beak to call, but no sound comes out. The thing strains to make a noise. Something is wriggling at the back of its throat. A disagreeable buzzing noises waxes, and the bird thing coughs out the obstruction: a green-striped larva, like those of flies or other pests. The grub falls to the floor and wriggles obscenely, and the buzz grows intolerably loud. The Dreamer awakes with a sense of Something Wrong.

FIRST CHALLENGE: THE SCREAM

All cats in the house hear a human scream of distress from upstairs. Cats outside hear the scream on a Notice roll. It sounds like Mistress. Any who investigate find her lying awkwardly on the floor of a sunny upstairs room, breathing shallowly, eyes closed. She cannot be woken. Also nearby: A spilled tray of butter-cucumber sandwiches. Cats who investigate the Mistress’ form closely will find a small, nasty-smelling insect half-crushed beneath the fallen human. It resembles a large, green-striped wasp. Outdoor cats have never seen the like in the area. Indoor cats have never seen an insect this large in the house at all. If a cat stops to sniff it, the dead bug smells like old feathers. Tiger Dreamers sense that it is not natural.

Cats who care about Mistress have the challenge of attracting attention to her plight. The easiest human to find is Maid. A Pussyfoot easily gets her to follow; other cats can make the attempt. Upon seeing her Mistress, Maid will scream in her turn, then fuss about the fallen woman, patting her face and calling. Getting no response, she runs for Butler.

A smart player might think to drag the dead bug into plain view or otherwise make the humans notice it. This is worth a Treat to all who help. 🐟 If this is not done, Butler and Maid are too dim to spot it themselves.

Butler arrives with Maid; together they move Mistress to a divan. When he cannot wake her, Butler retreats downstairs, and Maid stays to press a cool, wet cloth to Mistress’ head.

SECOND CHALLENGE: THE BUZZ

Meanwhile, a faint buzzing noise begins downstairs in the Ground Floor Halls; Notice rolls to see which cats hear it first. The source of the sound moves through the halls toward the stairs. It is a large green-striped wasp like the one crushed under Mistress, flying up near the ceiling in lazy lissajous. A Scrapper could kill it easily if he could reach that high. A Catrobat can probably find a way to get up there, but any non-Scraper will have to roll a Scrapping contest to attack the bug; it gets 1dC. If the cat loses, the bug stings her painfully in the paw. 🐛 This is a temporary Injury, making physical tasks harder until the cat spends at least 15 minutes gnawing out the stinger, sucking out venom, and licking the wound. Alternatively, if found and persuaded to help, Cook or Doctor can tend to the wound in only 5 minutes.

A cat who makes a successful attack on the bug can choose to Scare, Hurt, or Grab it as usual. Scaring it sends it back down the hall whence it came, but it will soon return. Hurting it crushes it to death. Grabbing it means pinning it to the floor with a set of claws, where it buzzes and struggles ineffectually.


If the bug is killed, shortly thereafter per the Rule of the Next Thing, the faint buzzing begins again. A new bug comes flying down the hall. Every time a bug is killed, a new one comes along a few minutes later. They seek humans; if one comes into view, the bug dives to the attack. It succeeds on a Sad Cat (1–2) on 1dC, in which case, the

human screams with pain and falls unconscious. If the bug misses, it comes around for another pass. Once having stung any target, the bug dies. Another soon comes along. Only one live bug is ever present at a time.

Through a few Notice rolls and general inquisitiveness, the cats can determine that the buzzings originate behind the thick, locked door of the Library. Here's where a Twofootologist can recall the way Butler sometimes puts shiny sticks into doors and wrenches them open.

Within a few minutes of each bug's death, cats near the Library hear the muffled buzzing again, growing louder. Soon a wasp appears, wriggling out through the keyhole. While so confined, the bug doesn't offer a real fight. A Scrapper can simply swat it down before it gets loose; other cats must succeed at an Easy Challenge roll, with the risk of getting stung on Snake Eyes.

SIDEBAR: THE GARDENER

 If the cats go outside to find Gardener, and cause him to see one or more of the green-striped wasps, he will rush to his shed and load his old metal hand-pump with powerful insecticide powder. Unless the cats lead him inside, or another human has seen wasps in the house and tells him so, he assumes that the bugs are out on the grounds someplace. He seeks the nest but can kill a single bug with a puff of dust, and his thick gardening gloves and overalls allow him to safely pick up the corpses and collect them in his pocket. He will show one to Doctor.

THIRD CHALLENGE: THE BUTLER

While the cats are fighting and tracking bugs, Butler goes to Butler's Room and places a phone call. Some time later, unless the cats confront him in his room first, he goes to the Foyer and unlocks the big front door of the house. This is a chance for cats to see him using a Shiny Stick to open a door that's usually shut. Butler goes outside to stand in the gravel drive, craning his neck to see down the road.

Quick and clever cats might assault Butler directly, patting down his pockets for the jingle of Shiny Sticks and hooking them skittering to the ground. Butler, to understate the case, does not cooperate. He has as many pockets as there are cats trying to scoop, or at least three. To attempt to scoop and spill a pocket's contents, each assaulting cat must make a separate Scrapping roll. If the dancing, cursing Butler beats any of the cats on him, he will Grab one of the losing felines and prepare to Throw on the next Scrapping contest. A kick from Butler is a Scrapping roll, inflicting a Shove result plus considerable indignity. A kicked cat can only recover her cool by spending a Treat or waiting 5 minutes for the other cats to forget.

Alas, the only Shiny Stick currently on Butler's person is the long, thin, silver one that fits the front door. His watch and chain, and a bit of pocket change, and perhaps a button or two, also scatter along the floor or among the pebbles of the drive, distracting Butler for several moments as he collects himself, aiming kicks at any cats who come nearby during the process.




Time Tip: Depending on the player group’s patience for setbacks, the Cat Herder could decide that, if the cats bothered to tackle the butler, the fat brass Library Key is in fact found in his pocket, not hanging back in his room.

The rest of Butler’s Shiny Sticks, as any house cat might recall, hang on the rack in the Butler’s Room. There are many; too many to try each one. The players must think of how to choose likely candidates for the Library key.

1. It is brass—“shiny dark yellow”—matching the lock on the Library door.
So are two other keys: Cellar and Silver Closet.
2. It is thick and heavy, unlike all but two other keys: Cellar and Coal Shute.
3. Uniquely, it smells like the Library: paper dust and old leather.

If Butler intercepts the cats playing with the keys, as the Cat Herder should arrange if table time permits, his wrath is great, and a merry chase ensues. The cats must see to it that the Library key doesn’t get recaptured. Meanwhile, at least one live bug is in the house.

FOURTH CHALLENGE: THE LOCK


Once the cats have secured at least one key, and are not being actively pursued by any humans, they must try the lock. Only a Twofootologist can make a reasonable guess at how to proceed; only a Catcrobat could possibly jump or climb to keyhole height and actually insert a key, making a Difficult Challenge roll. Then, as a separate matter, it must be turned, and in the correct direction. No cat is the RCFTJ for such things; a Catcrobat won’t easily understand what the Twofootologist wants done, and the Twofootologist can’t easily make such a leap-bite-twist-land move. Roleplaying catlike confusion here can be worth a Treat.  Before players get frustrated, the Cat Herder should call for a few Challenge rolls and let the cats succeed. If they are cocky, they hear Butler coming: they must now relock the door from the inside to prevent his interference!

In the meantime, or in time to distract Butler, a motorcar pulls up to the house, and Butler ushers into the Foyer a male human that the cats have not seen before. This is Doctor. The two men go to the unconscious Mistress. If the cats have drawn the humans’ attention to any bugs, Doctor picks one up in his handkerchief and studies it. He is then able to rouse Mistress, and any other stung humans, in a couple of hours; otherwise, it takes all night.

FIFTH CHALLENGE: THE BIRD

Only a longtime Pussyfoot resident of Patterson Manor will ever before have glimpsed the inside of the Library. Such a cat notices at once the jarring addition of a spherical, hanging cage containing a large black crow on a perch. The cage hangs from a tall stand. Other cats may not know that it’s new, but they all see the

cruel-beaked avian staring at them with shining black eyes. Then, Tiger Dreamers feel a sudden pop of energy, and from the bird issues a familiar, low, buzzing noise. The cats see a patch of oily black feathers twitch, and out burrows the shape of a green-striped wasp. The bird moves not at all. The bug struggles free, flies buzzing to the inner surface of the cage, and crawls around, antennae waving, until it finds a gap large enough to let it escape.

Flying loose in the library, the wasp will try to reach the keyhole and wriggle through into the house to hunt humans. A Scrapper can stop it, or another type of cat may make the attempt on a Normal Challenge roll, with the chance of getting stung on Snake Eyes. As before, if the bug is killed, a new one soon buzzes from inside the bird. A cat smart enough to pin the bug but keep it alive, to prevent more from appearing, earns a Treat. 


The cage is a sphere big enough for several cats to sleep inside (about 30" in diameter). It is constructed from a net of thin, tough, shining metal wires. If the cats take time to inspect it closely, they see that the wires are swirled and criss-crossed and bent into bizarre, intricate patterns that no cat mind can contemplate without getting a headache. If the player of a Tiger Dreamer asks, she can recognize the magical nature of the designs.

There is a circular hatch in the cage, not obvious except to a Twofootologist. A Catcrobat can easily open it, or another cat type on an Easy Challenge.

The bird is dead and stuffed. Whenever a new bug comes around, there is a magical pop and it appears inside the bird, then to force its way out through the thing's ragged, feathery skin. The bird is held to its wooden perch by stiff wires; it will take force, most easily by a Scrapper, to tear it loose. If ripped open, the thing proves to be merely a crow-skin stretched over a wicker frame. The skull, beak, and feet are original; the eyes are black glass.


Cats may wish to destroy the bird to prevent any more bugs from coming around, and indeed, no new wasps appear while they are messing about with the dead crow. It can be shredded, making a horrific mess, or taken outside and gotten rid of. Some ideas: Burn it in the Kitchen stove; toss it to alley-dogs; bury its pieces in various locations.

Unfortunately, the bird is not supernatural in any way. It merely served as camouflage; the cage itself is the source of the bugs. The patterns of its construction serve as a Magic Circle, focusing energy on its very center and allowing creation of a small gate to admit these minor servants of the Insect God. It cannot function when the cage door is open, breaking the Circle. If the door is allowed to close again, the bugs can return, popping into existence in the cage's center.

 **Time Tip:** Optionally, if the cats have spent their energies destroying the bird but ignore the cage, and it's getting late, the Cat Herder might decide that the bird was the problem after all.

Otherwise, to completely stop the scourge of wasps, the cats must disable the cage. Bending or breaking its tough metal requires more force than an ordinary cat can apply. A Catrobat can easily knock the cage off its hook, in which case it becomes an oversized toy to roll along the ground, but the fall will not damage it. The cats might find a way to make something heavy fall on the cage and bend it severely. Or they might apply less force, more precisely, and rip off the little round door, which can then be carried in the mouth and hidden away. Or they might simply roll the thing through the Ground Floor Halls like a giant ball chased by so many miniature, scampering football players, bang out the Kitchen door, and lose the thing someplace outside, perhaps even positioning it where a motorcar (such as Doctor’s) will damage it. When all is said, if the cage remains intact, unbent, and with its door able to close, eventually it will be used to summon more insect servants, wherever it is. If it lies within the estate, the toads of the Garden pond will reclaim it in the night and secrete it away among the swampy reeds.

FINISHING UP

Once the cats have dealt with the cage, the adventure is over. If they managed to destroy its abilities, they each earn another Cat Treat that can be used for immediate healing of any Injuries (I, p27).  Each cat can also add the following Experiences to her character sheet:

- Shiny Sticks Can Open Doors (but it’s still hard to pick the right key and use it)
- That Bug Ain’t Natural (may be able to recognize Insect God servants)
- It’s an Ex-Bird (aware of taxidermy and its odors)

FURTHER CATVENTURES

This adventure can be used to start a campaign of many cat shenanigans. There is a larger story at work. Master Patterson is a moderately successful London financier, and in the process of closing a large deal that will make him considerably richer. It involves brokering the sale of the area’s largest tract of marshes, to be drained and used for development of middle-class country homes. The servants of Phatphrogguu the Toad God and the bloodthirsty Insect God have joined forces to scuttle this deal, lest thousands of insects and amphibians lose their homes, and certain major cult sites be revealed. Master Patterson received the cage with its stuffed bird as a gift from another London firm, so the Animal Gods must have at least one human ally at work. Furthermore, the cage does not simply automatically issue bug after bug indefinitely. Somewhere, someone had to be at work casting rituals to open each gate, probably in a Ceremony using an identical cage and any number of vile addenda. Whoever it was could obviously sense when a bug died, and perhaps was even able to observe the Library through the crow’s glass eyes so long as they stayed within the cage’s magic circle. Surely these enemies will try again to put Master Patterson out of commission for the crucial weeks when the land deal must be brought to a close. And now that the cats have interfered, they become targets themselves.





A Cosmic Catventure

Setting

San Francisco, California, USA, night of July 4, 1964

Characters

HUMANS

Queen P: Eliza Pomadetta, psychic

Kotenok: Colonel Feliks Kotenok of the Soviet Air Forces; Pilot of Space Capsule “Podushka,” Mission Vostok 7

Natural Dan: Daniel Berry, Proprietor, “The Kitten’s Den”

Guest stars:

Robert C., commercial artist

Owlsey S., behatted conversationalist

Timothy L., host of a party in the hills

Donovan L., poet and songwriter

CATS

Street cats of downtown San Francisco (mostly Scrappers, but any Role)

The pets of Queen P. and her neighbors in the SoMa district (any Role)

Non-Player Cat: Grim Teddy, aged High Priest of Fftar-Axlan

Non-Player Cat: Patch, gang boss of the docks, not inclined to let outside cats get access to the fishing haul

OTHER ANIMALS

Dogs of the alleys, birds and squirrels of the parks, rats of the gutters.

Background for the Cat Herder

VOSTOK 7

“June 1964....Vostok 7 was an eight day manned mission... a high altitude flight into the lower Van Allen radiation belt for radiological-biological studies. The spacecraft would have been allowed to naturally decay to a re-entry after ten days.... Opposition by the Ministry of Defence led to it being canceled.”

— Encyclopedia Astronautica

So say the history books, but Vostok 7 was never canceled. That became the official story after the mission ended under mysterious circumstances embarrassing to Soviet leadership. The launch, on June 24, successfully put solo cosmonaut Feliks Kotenok into orbit. Achieving an altitude of 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), the “Podushka” space capsule entered the Van Allen radiation belt, and Kotenok fell abruptly silent. After more than 24 hours of only wild static and thin, howling feedback on the radio, Kotenok broke in with a final, cryptic, noise-torn transmission: “Tsveta”—Colors. Then he cut off all ground communications and control. The Soviets struggled impotently for days to regain contact, meanwhile stonewalling the western press and brewing up lies.

The silent orbit decayed into the atmosphere on July 4th, and on reentry the capsule began to spin madly and grow red-hot. At an altitude of 7 kilometers (over 4 miles), Kotenok, still alive, ejected, plummeted alone through the upper air, and deployed his parachute to float down through a fireworks display above San Francisco Bay. The U.S. Coast Guard, on secret high alert, lost track of him.

The U.S.S.R. had six more Vostok missions planned but scrapped them all, and proponents of the modified Voskhod multi-seat design took over. Never again would a single cosmonaut be trusted to pilot the people’s spacecraft alone. Later, with international cooperation, the Soviet Union erased Kotenok from history, crediting

all his previous flights to his colleague Vladimir Komarov, who had died in the Soyuz 1 crash of April 1967.

So what really happened to Kotenok up in the radiation belt? And what happened after he was picked up by a private sailboat and dropped into the middle of the psychedelic scene of S.F. 1964? Did Kotenok really inspire the Donovan song "Sunshine Superman"? And how do the cats fit in?

NOTE: NOT FOR KIDS

This adventure is for adult players. It includes references to such alarming topics as alcohol abuse, illegal drugs, biker stereotypes, Cold War politics, explosive death, and very old Top Ten songs. For younger players, try "The Buzz Downstairs" (p61).

NOTE: MUSIC

A Cat Herder with time and inclination might enjoy compiling audio of the songs mentioned in the adventure, playing them as an era-defining soundtrack to the game.

It Begins

Full dark has come at last to the summer night, and the cats are scattered, the feral street dwellers in their territories, the pets with their humans, many of whom have been acting excitable this day. Companions of Queen Pomadetta, semi-successful human psychic, are idly watching her talk to another of the strange humans who come through the smoky little front room of Queen P.'s apartment. Suddenly, something highly unusual happens: Queen P. misses a shuffle, and one of her cards goes flipping and sailing off the table, to splash into the water bowl of a startled Tiger Dreamer (or other Player Cat). Pictures mean nothing to cats, but if a player specifically asks to focus on what the card looks like, the Cat Herder may briefly display the Hanged Man.

Queen P. is quite flustered, but before she can retrieve the card, an explosion shakes the air, followed by a whole cacophonous chain of reports. Bright, unnatural light flashes through the open window that faces the Bay. The combination is utterly bewildering to cats, and even from here, the noise is almost painful to their sensitive ears.

Over San Francisco Bay, the fireworks show has begun.



FIRST CHALLENGE: INVESTIGATE!

This adventure begins with an exercise in player motivation. The action is down by the water, but will the players even move from their starting spots, or will they just hide from the fireworks? The Cat Herder has various tricks to help things along.

Tiger Dreamers immediately feel that Something Is Wrong out where the awful noises and lights fill the sky. Clearly, more must be learned.

If the PCs seem reluctant to investigate, a cat elder, High Priest of Fftar-Axlan, seeks them out, street cats first. Grim Teddy, the elder, has but three legs and half a tail, dragging himself with many coughs and trembles into view. He instructs the cats in no uncertain terms that they must find out what is happening and put a stop to it, for the signs make it clear: Great danger is coming from the water.

SECOND CHALLENGE: GETTING TOGETHER

The cats, whatever their origins, know one another, and should seek to join up as quickly as possible. If the players don't make this happen, then Teddy does it, or they run into one another as they make their way down the hilly streets toward the Bay. All around them, unusual crowds of humans likewise push toward the waterfront. Tempting scraps and wrappers of carnival food fall on all sides.

Meanwhile, Feliks Kotenok floats down through the blooms of the fireworks, glowing debris spattering his space suit and burning small holes in his parachute. At a hundred feet up, he decouples from the 'chute, which flutters away as the man plunges straight into the dark water. He bobs quickly to the surface, where the sweeping lights of U.S. Coast Guard vehicles seek for him, but he is rescued instead by a group of celebrants on a small private sailboat.

Cats who make it to shore quickly can attempt Notice Rolls to see something fall out of the sky out over the Bay. It glows with a subtle and unnatural color, and is the shape of a big, bulky human.

THIRD CHALLENGE: RUMBLE ON THE DOCKS

The wharfs of San Francisco are places of busy industry, not just tourist traps. Incredible amounts of fish move through the waterfront every day, and the city's cats know it well. Access to the docks falls under control of a loose, fractious set of cat gangs and dog packs; outsiders are not welcome.

Closing in on the wharfs closest to the ongoing, incredible light show, the cats encounter the powerful Patch, mighty Scrapper and gang boss, equivalent to an Alley Champ (I, p13). Patch is accompanied by his immediate cronies: at least five cats, one of each Role. The PCs will have to convince him to let them investigate, or else tangle with his gang. If the player group is one to enjoy a good fight, the Cat Herder should let the very first persuasion attempt cause Patch to jump right into a fray. He is not a patient animal.

Persuasion

Some player groups will prefer to use words. Certain arguments might win Patch’s approval, especially if made by a Pussyfoot who succeeds on a Difficult Challenge, but ultimately the Cat Herder should decide his reaction based on the cleverness of the players’ approach. Some useful ideas:

- Bringing tribute of land-food, such as the hot dogs, ice cream, and fried chicken bits being dropped by the holiday crowds.
- Promising not to eat any fishy scraps that might be lying around the docks.
- Explaining that an elder of Fftar ordered the cats to investigate—especially if the speaking cat correctly guesses that one of Patch’s followers is a Tiger Dreamer, and includes this cat in the conversation.


Scrapping

If the cats choose to fight, or try to run past, or speak belligerently enough, or if the Cat Herder judges that the players would enjoy a tussle, it falls to brawling. Patch launches himself at the biggest Scrapper among the PCs. His cronies each take on another player cat, but they don’t gang up: All the fights are one-on-one. Each PC happens to be paired with a cat from a different Role.

Player Cat	Opponent
Scrapper, toughest-looking	Patch: This tough old fighter counts one Cat Die as an automatic Success on Scrapping rolls, and doesn’t give up unless Stunned twice in a row.
Scrapper	Catcrob: Hard to land a blow on this one; unless beaten by <i>two</i> Successes, she slips aside, avoids the Result, and is back for more.
Twofootologist	Pussyfoot: Gives up if the PC threatens to get his coat muddy.
Pussyfoot	Tiger Dreamer: Willing to listen to reason even during the fight; will back down if the PC clearly explains the issue.
Catcrob	Twofootologist: This cat knows the nearby complex of cargo ramps and anchor chains extremely well and leads the PC on an acrobatic chase, rolling cans of fish down at her foe. The first of them to roll double Failure falls into the Bay.
Tiger Dreamer	Scrapper: One die automatically counts as a Success, and this brutish sidekick won’t stop until Patch orders him to do so, or until he suffers an actual Injury.

Reminder: *Both* sides, being cats, count each Happy Cat roll (3–6) as a Success.

The fight might go on for a few minutes, but the odds are actually in the PC's favor. If a PC can inflict a Stun result on one of Patch's cronies other than the Scrapper, that cat gives up. The PC then has to stand guard over the vanquished foe while the other fights finish—it's poor form to interfere in another player's fight.

If Patch and his other cronies are defeated, he tells the Scrapper to stop, and the PCs have won. Patch gives them a fresh chance to make the case that they should pass, and agrees to any argument that doesn't make him look small. Each PC earns a Treat, which in this case may be used to instantly heal any Injuries from the fight.  The cat heroes proceed to the docks in time to see Kotenok step out of the sailboat with his new friends.

On the other paw, if all PCs are Stunned or Grabbed at once, more gang members appear and collectively pin down the heroes while Patch lectures them not to return. They have lost the fight and should feel shame. Just at that juncture, a huge, dripping, glowing figure strides onto the scene, and all the gang members scatter.

SIDEBAR: THE HELMET


Cats who make it to the sailboat might think to check inside after the humans have gone, in which case they see the space helmet, glowing with nauseous light and color as it dries. It smells of electricity and, just a little, of cat. As they watch and the fireworks boom, the colors become brighter. The Cat Herder should make it clear that Something Bad is about to happen, so that cats have a chance to back off. Then the helmet explodes, shattering the rail of the sailboat and blasting glowing bits all over. The ones that hit the water hiss and go dark. The boat's sail is covered in a splatter of insane, random design with all the colors, though they do not glow. It comes loose and flutters away, soon to inspire a new kind of art among the garrets of the city by the Bay.

The exploding helmet, and the neutralizing effect of the seawater, may prove valuable hints to cats who don't yet realize that Kotenok must be stopped. If the PCs are wandering nearby but off-track, they hear the explosion and can investigate the scene; if they are following Kotenok as they should, the detonation blends into the last of the fireworks display.

FOURTH CHALLENGE: KOTENOK'S PARTY TRAIN

Whether they see him get out of the sailboat, or he appears on the scene to break up the cat fight's aftermath, Kotenok makes an alarming sight. Clad in a full Soviet space suit without the helmet, he has the clumsy bulk of a gorilla. A handful of giddy humans accompany him, gripped by various intoxicants and seemingly fascinated by this odd man from the water.

Kotenok is highly radioactive, charged with cosmic rays of supernatural frequency. His bare head and face glow in parts of the spectrum not visible to humans, but obvious and eerie to cats and other animals. Tiger Dreamers instantly know that Something Very Wrong clings to this strange human, and even other cats get the vibe of danger.

A cat who concentrated on the Tarot card finds that this human’s face seems familiar. As his suit dries, it begins to glow as well. Clever cats might realize that the water was somehow absorbing or preventing the radiance. 

The alien vibration soaked into Kotenok’s body is semi-aware and has addled his brain. It compels him to seek more energy, which it can absorb from light, electricity, sound waves, and chemicals. Therefore Kotenok is driven to seek loud music, light shows, and vodka. The inebriated celebrants around him, drawn to his unnatural vitality, are only too happy to assist. The cats must follow them and somehow prevent the energy field from garnering enough juice, for when it does, Kotenok will explode, tainting everything around him with colors out of space. Any creature so affected becomes another living energy sponge, brain fogged, building toward another explosion. It is in this manner that the alien force seeks to reproduce, spreading its mind-numbing influence throughout the city and then the world.

How to Stop Things: The best way to stop him from exploding is to lure Kotenok back into the seawater of the Bay. Unfortunately, if the cats haven’t made progress by the time the fireworks end, he starts on an uphill path that will take him farther and farther from the waterfront. The cats will have to find another way to immerse him in a great deal of water, or else, at least, scare all the other humans away from him at the moment of explosion.

Kotenok instinctively follows bright lights and loud noises, in case the players can figure out how to produce them. Quite apart from any technology, the combined caterwauling of two or more cats might fascinate him; cats would have to trade off in rounds to maintain a constant multi-part disharmony, lest Kotenok’s attention wander.

The Next Thing: The cosmonaut stands on the shore, arms out as if to embrace the sky as it continues to bang and flash. With each painfully loud boom, the colors emanating from him gain a bit of intensity. At last, the percussive display falls dim and quiet. Under streamers of sulfur smoke, Kotenok seems at a loss, but his new friends are not. They take his arms and head into the city.

First Stop: The Kitten’s Den

Ears ringing, the cats follow Kotenok and his friends into the nightlife of San Francisco on a holiday. The sailboat crew takes Kotenok to a club called the Kitten’s Den, where a state-of-the-art sound system is blasting “A Hard Day’s Night” to a packed dance floor. The bearded owner, Natural Dan, acts as diffident bouncer, but is happy to welcome the grinning man in a space suit. He won’t admit the cats, who must gain entrance or monitor proceedings in their own ways.

Inside, Kotenok secures an entire bottle of vodka and drinks heavily from it, the poisonous fluid acting as fuel for his cosmic parasite. He dances non-stop, with inhuman speed and energy, attracting the admiration of dozens of partiers. He speaks only in Russian, the phrases unconnected to his surroundings or what other humans might be saying. “Keep On Pushing” comes on. Flashing lights pulse in time to the beat.

Kotenok dances faster. With his increasing self-illumination, while the strobes make everyone else's movements jerky, he looks normal.

How to Stop Things: If the cats halt the music and light show, Kotenok will lose momentum temporarily. He could then be taunted into chasing a cat, grinning fixedly, stumbling clumsily in his suit.

The Next Thing: As the music reaches its crescendo, cats notice its volume rapidly wavering, loud to soft and back. Kotenok shoves aside his fellow dancers, wades over to the big speaker stack, and embraces it. There is a burst of sparks and static, and then silence. The lights go out. Natural Dan is not amused, but the crowd just brushes him aside as they pour out the door into the street, enthralled with their new party god, who seems to glow faintly in the dark.

Next Stop: Bikers

Seeking a new venue, the crowd encounters a group of motorcyclists, hanging around their parked steeds and drinking from paper bags. To observing cats, attitudes between the groups seem tense, but Kotenok is undeterred, and strides forth grinning, spouting his odd talk. He takes a bottle from one of the bikers and upends it, draining the contents in one go. The new people seem to approve, and soon Kotenok is mounted on the back of one of the noisy things as they zoom down the street, followed by running fans.

The cats must figure out how to keep up, or at least catch up. For example, they might use rooftops to cross a block that the bikes must go around. They will find Kotenok about to snort a large pile of white powder, while his new friends play "I Get Around" on a portable radio.

How to Stop Things: Sending the powder flying is an effective move, but instantly earns the wrath of at least one biker, who will attack the offending cat. PCs might also find a way to distract Kotenok, but it will have to be sudden and very surprising.

An ambitious Twofootologist with a clever player might think of fire hydrants; city cats can remember seeing one spraying human children with water in the hot months. Cats will have to apply considerable force to get one open. The Cat Herder must tread carefully to avoid suggesting a plan directly, but among other sources of force is gravity. If the players think to look, the cats can find a car parked nearby on a steep hillside. A Pussyfoot who has ridden in a car might have some idea that the levers and things control its movement. Well-coordinated and lucky cats might slip the parking brake and send a four-wheeled missile into the midst of the Harley-Davidsons, to unerringly strike the hydrant and soak down the whole crowd.

The Next Thing: If the PCs don't stop him from taking cocaine, Kotenok's dangerous energy level will rise dramatically, with visible trails of color flowing off of his skin. Any sober human would be taken aback; there are none present. The sense of Something Bad About to Happen hits Tiger Dreamers with renewed force.

Next Stop: The Park

The bikes now weave down the street at a gentler pace, and the crowd ends up at a public park, full of celebrating humans. Many are drawn to the crazy man with the crazy colors. A skinny human with musty-smelly clothes, passing down the sidewalk, stops to sit against a tree where he can observe the crowd. He gets out a notebook and unobtrusively starts drawing pictures, which to the cats look like nonsense, except that a Tiger Dreamer can tell that the artist has captured a sense of Wrongness.

A squirrel approaches the cats. If they allow it to speak, it chitters: “You brought that thing! It’s going to get bad color all over our trees! Take it away! Take it far away!” Little else can be gotten from the creature, which flees back into the treetops. The cats notice not only squirrels, but birds, bats, and even bugs flocking through the sky away from the vicinity.

How to Stop Things: The cats have a chance to lure Kotenok to a little pond, or to find and activate a very basic sprinkler system, which will annoy the artist.

The Next Thing: A short male human with a shiny hat approaches Kotenok and they talk, Kotenok in the weird-sounding voice that differs from the rest. A decision is made, and the group heads back into the street. Some climb onto bikes, some get into cars, and the troupe heads up into the hills.

Along the way, the group will pass a powerline installation. If the cats can draw Kotenok’s attention to the humming transformers and their bright lights, he will abandon the fellow humans, and most of them won’t hang around when he climbs the wire-topped fence to embrace the power couplings. This makes him explode at once, but as long as the cats are well back, he does not infect anyone else... except maybe some grass and weeds that, by the next day, begin to grow strangely.

Last Stop: The House on the Hill

If he misses the power station, this is as far as Kotenok will make it before exploding and infecting the entire crowd that surrounds him. The human who brings him here intends to show him off to a party full of people taking LSD, who are in for a bad trip. One poet in a heavy-looking coat observes the colors trailing off the spacesuit, plus all the admiring people following the dancing, crazy-talking foreigner, and withdraws thoughtfully to an upstairs room to pen some lines.

How to Stop Things: Clever cats could fill a bathtub in the house, then get Kotenok to chase one of them into the bathroom, then trip him up. It’s a tricky solution but would short out the critically-increasing energies.

The Next Thing: Kotenok gravitates to a stereo playing an obscure new version of “Hesitation Blues.” Grinning all the while, he punches both of his hands into the speakers. Electricity and feedback wail wildly through the room. The Bad Thing is Happening Now; all cats should flee. The Cat Herder may allow them one chance to scare parts of the crowd out of danger; success requires a compelling description of how each cat acts scary, plus a Difficult Challenge roll, with a Pussyfoot as RCFTJ. Each

cat who succeeds startles about one-fourth of the assembled people into stepping back just far enough for safety.

Then Kotenok explodes, not like a human body in a suit, but like ten thousand tiny bags of garish paints all bursting at once, illuminated from within. Color splashes everywhere. Where it hits nearby people, and any cats who did not flee, the color soaks in and begins faintly glowing in wavelengths invisible to human eyes. The thoughts of a victim go foggy, replaced with the desire to seek noise, light, electricity, and volatile chemicals.

FINISHING UP

If the cats get Kotenok soaked down, the energies disperse, and he sinks into a coma-like state of exhaustion. Unlike his dip in the Bay in an airtight suit, sufficient water when his helmet is off covers his body directly and shorts out the entity within, probably for good. Probably.

Cats gain valuable Experiences concerning their home city, some of its locales, and the odd behavior of the humans who share it. They also have a new contact: Patch and his dockside gang.

MORE ADVENTURES

As a secret experiment, the mission placed a kitten in Kotenok's space capsule, which now rests on a reef under 300 feet of Pacific Ocean. (Thus the whiff of cat-smell.) Somehow the cat is still alive....

A party girl took a hose fixture from Kotenok's suit as a souvenir and now wears it as a ring. The bright metal shows an oily rainbow of color that seems to change with her mood. Is she in danger?

SIDEBAR: THINGS KOTENOK SAYS (IN RUSSIAN)

- I'm a wild and crazy guy!
- [dead serious] This move is for the ladies.
- I'm full of tinier men!
- [grinning] The two hemispheres are fundamentally at odds.
- Peace movement is simple expression of bourgeois male desire not to be working, not to be getting shot at, and to be having the sex without giving the female some commitment. The drugs are for masking the bourgeois guiltiness.
- Axis of spinning mirror ball is greased with blood of workers.
- Party on, tovarishch!

GREENER PASTURES

A Catventure of Escape & Investigation

by Tracy Barnett

Setting

A semi-rundown animal shelter in a small, rural town. The action takes place entirely within the shelter complex: the offices, the kennels, the medical facilities, the play yard, and ultimately the Dark Room.

Characters

HUMANS

Voice, the female alpha human; distant, but cares for animals. Can be heard everywhere in the shelter.

Mewler, beta, male, and hated. Loves dogs exclusively. Sneezes around cats.

Pokey, cold and antiseptic, pokes with thin metal claws.

Holder, holds animals for Pokey. Not all bad, but has chilly hands.

Feeder, giver of food and sometimes of petting. Best human around, which doesn't say much.

Cleaner, second-best human, only because he makes sure that the smell is less than it could be.

Comers and Goers, various humans, mostly harmless; some take animals away, most drop more off.

Tracy Barnett runs Sand & Steam Productions, publisher of the ENnie-winning *School Daze*, and is the author of *Iron Edda*, the game of Vikings piloting giant skeletons against the metal mecha of the Dwarves. You can find more of his work at <http://sandandsteam.net>.

CATS (with typical sort)

All types of cats live in the shelter. Since most of their time is spent in cages, they don't break down by territory. Imagine how each Role of cat would take to being confined with limited time allowed out in the Play Yard.

Regardless of former lifestyle, the important division between cats here is how long they've been in the shelter. There are three different classifications. Players must choose a category for each cat and note this information on the Character Sheet.

Newbies: Cats recently arrived, new to the kennels. They're the fresh meat, as it were.

Transients: Cats that came recently and expect to go soon. Maybe they've been in and out of the shelter, or maybe they're confident they'll be taken to a home. Either way, they're not staying long.

Lifers: The ones no one will adopt. Some are content in this fact, others get desperate.

OTHER ANIMALS

Dogs in the kennels: many, varied, and loud.

Various random pets brought into the shelter, some just to see Pokey.

Occasional wild animals that show up outside the shelter to gawk, mock, or just live their lives.

Locations at Greener Pastures

OUTSIDE

Play Yard

People: Feeder and Cleaner.

Features: Chain-link fence, entry areas for the animals, and well-worn dirt. There was grass there once upon a time.

Exits: Animal Entrances to the Kennels, Two-Foot entrance to the Kennels, locked fence gate to Out Front.

Out Front

People: Comers and Goers.

Features: Asphalt drive with parking spaces and street lights. Small grass yard with urine burns (some human: see Vagrant of Hastpurr below).

Exits: Drive leads to main road.

INSIDE

Unless otherwise noted, all doors are LOCKED.

Busy Rooms (The Offices)

People: Voice and Mewler.

Features: Desks with Important Papers, Warm and Humming Machines, Pictures of Animals, Rack with Many Keys. Most cats don't know what to do with keys aside from bat them around. Twofootologists might have some different ideas.

Exits: Door to Hallways.

Hallways

People: All.

Features: No windows, animals noises, animals smells; Food Closet.

Exits: Door to Offices, door to Kennels, door to Medical Examining Room.

House Traps (Kennels)

People: All.

Features: Metal cages of varying sizes—ALL LOCKED; floors that are never quite clean enough; all the animal smells.

Exits: Door to Hallways, Animal Entrances to Play Yard, Two-Foot Door to Play Yard.

Mean Room (Medical Examining Room)

People: Voice, Pokey, and Holder.

Features: Cold things that cats don't like. Many strange smells and bad-tasting things. Lots of small things to bat around.

Exits: Door to Hallways, Door to the Dark Room.

The Dark Room

People: Pokey, Holder, and Mewler; maybe others that animals only hear about.

Features: Animals go in and don't come out again. No animal knows what's inside, but there are always stories.

Exits: Door to Medical Examining Room, maybe another exit?

Other Rooms

Supply Closet, Meeting Room, and so forth. They don't directly figure into the adventure, but it's good to know they're there if they're needed.

It Begins

When Greener Pastures begins, it is night time. All of the animals are locked in their kennels for the night. There's the usual whispering among everyone, given that cats don't always sleep the night through. Tonight there's a menacing buzz in the air. Word is that a bunch of animals are going to be taken to the Dark Room tomorrow: Tiger Dreamers [and Wild Heart dogs, p111] dream of the mark of death hanging over the Lifers, or a non-player non-cat grudgingly whispers the rumor to a Pussyfoot. This has the Lifers worried, though they try not to show it. After all, no one's going to adopt them, and any cat sent to the Dark Room never comes back....

The truth is that the staff of Greener Pastures can't afford to keep the long-term animals for much longer. They have always been a no-kill shelter, and the Dark Room was previously only used for euthanizing animals with terminal illnesses. The final decision was to be put off for some weeks, but something forced the Voice to change the plan.

Some of the Tiger Dreamers think that the shelter was built upon the site of an ancient sacrificial temple to Hastpurr and that the old god is looking for fresh blood. Those Dreamers are right. Hastpurr has been influencing the humans of the shelter and the tipping point has been reached. If the animals don't escape, the Lifers are done for. And it won't stop there.

PRELUDE: RESTLESS PAWS

The Lifers know they need to get out of here by tomorrow. They’re all working to make sure that happens. Here are some questions for the Cat Herder to consider when presenting this information, allowing players to suggest answers and letting those influence the course of the adventure.

- Are some Player Cats Lifers?
- How many other cats need to escape?
- What’s going to happen to the others if only Lifers leave?
- What about other animals? Do the cats care about them?
- What about the Dark Room? Something in there must be affecting the humans, especially Voice.

The humans are mostly absent during the adventure. However, if a Two-Footologist or Pussyfoot cats thinks “if only a human were around, I would...,” the player may make a Normal Challenge roll to remember having taken that step earlier in the day when the humans were around. Everyone has been on edge for a few days here in Greener Pastures, so of course some cats have planned for this escape.

THE KENNELS

The Kennels are filled with run-down and rusty-in-spots cages. All of the cages are occupied, from the big dog crates, all the way down to a contingent of rats at the far end, away from everyone else.

All of the cages in the Kennel are locked, save for one. An enterprising Lifer managed to get some grains of litter wedged just right, making sure that the lock wasn’t completely fastened. A Player Cat Lifer could take this Role. That cat should immediately work to get the rest of the cages unlocked because more cats is always better, right?

The cages can be unlocked in a few different ways. Twofootologists will remember the big, red ball on the wall that the Feeder told Cleaner to never touch (pointing at it and talking very sternly). The players might think to have a Catcrobat bat at the “ball”: a button that unlocks all cages but causes a loud buzzing alert; the Cat Herder should roll dice as if checking for who or what might respond.

Big, burly Scrappers could rattle loose a few of the locks, but that would make a lot of noise. Sometimes Cleaner is here late into the night. Is it worth the risk?

Other animals might be convinced to help. Rats could chew their way through rusted bars, dogs could barrel into cages that are more secure, and even clever birds might have a trinket or two stashed that could open the locks. But if those animals are convinced to help, they’re going to want something in return.

THE ESCAPE

Once done freeing animals from cages, the most urgent goal is to get the Lifers out of the shelter. The challenges below can be tackled in any order. The Cat Herder must judge how much time each stage takes, and keep the pressure on by reminding players that eventually the humans are going to begin arriving for the day.

THE HALLWAYS

The Hallways are narrow and dim. There's a little light that comes in through the high windows in the doors to the other rooms: just enough light for an animal to see.

DOORS

Here in the Hallways, all of the challenges are door-related. As a rule, the doors are all locked at night. However, Cleaner is forgetful, so the Cat Herder can try a Luck Roll as if checking for Sinister Fortune (p47): if both Cat Dice come up Happy, that door was left unlocked. In addition, these doors have old and faulty locks. Twofootologists can remember that sometimes they spring open after the humans close them. If they're wiggled, jiggled, or hit in just the right way, it could mean the difference between freedom or the Dark Room. Good thing there are some Scrappers and Catcrobats around.

If other animals have been recruited, a charming cat might be able to convince mice or rats to chew holes in old drywall, or birds to fly up at loose ceiling tiles.

The Cat Herder should think about what a rundown but still functional shelter might look like. How might the cats be able to get around all of these doors? As always, player ingenuity should be rewarded with forward progress and the occasional Treat.

CHALLENGE: WHICH DOOR?

The smells in the Hallways are overwhelming and confusing. It's going to take a Difficult Challenge roll for any cat to be able to differentiate between the rooms before the doors are open. A Twofootologist player might argue for RCFTJ status, having paid some attention to the marks on doors.

CHALLENGE: FOOD

There's a small closet off of the Hallways. It's not much to look at, but it's where all the animal food is kept. If this door is opened, all of the animals will have to succeed at a Normal roll to make sure they don't get distracted by all that delicious food. Cats that are used to living with little food, such as most Newbies, make the roll at Difficult, as they're perpetually hungry. If the majority of the group can't tear themselves away, they're going to waste time, bringing morning, and discovery by the humans, that much closer.

SIDEBAR: CLEANER

Cleaner is a very absent-minded human, especially if Voice is to be believed. He leaves all kinds of interesting things lying around. Sometimes it's scraps of food, other times it's things that are fun to bat around. Cleaner spends most of his time wandering back and forth through the Hallways, cleaning up all the little messes that happen throughout the day. If the felines get stalled, the Cat Herder can have them notice something shiny and helpful on the floor. Using a modern key, however, will require both good planning and difficult Challenge rolls.

THE OFFICES

If the cats open the door to the offices, they find many interesting things with which to play and bat around. Tiger Dreamers will get a vague impression of movement and purpose from this room.

CHALLENGE: MMMMMM WARM...

If any cats come near the computers, they become tempted to curl up against the metal for just a quick nap... Anycat can resist by succeeding at an Easy Challenge, but it's Difficult for Tiger Dreamers. If the whole group succumbs, by choice or bad luck, Herb Jenks (Vagrant of Hastpurr, p89) will discover them and chase them away with shouts and thrown objects. They'll have to sneak back later, and time presses.

CHALLENGE: FLYING PAPERS!

The Office is full of paper stacked in precarious piles. If the papers are disturbed, and what cat doesn't love sitting on paper, the piles will shift and fall unless the cat is a Catcrobat. Under one of the piles (the one that got knocked over, of course), a desk shows a disturbing carved mark: a hidden symbol of Hastpurr. When it is exposed, the papers animate as if a large wind is blowing them around. When this happens, it's a Challenge to do anything else in the office.

- For Tiger Dreamers, who can see the forces animating the papers, and agile Catcrobat, it's an Easy Challenge.
- For Scrappers, who can shred the paper faster than it can fly, it's a Normal Challenge.
- For Twofootologists and Pussyfoots, this is a Difficult Challenge.

Any cat that fails suffers Paper Cuts and must waste time licking the stinging wounds once they escape the Office.

CHALLENGE: WHODUNIT?

An enterprising Twofootologist who takes time to examine the papers (before or after they are scattered) will notice that a lot of the Important-Looking Papers (to

Two-Foots, anyway) have two different human markings on them: Small blue marks in neat rows, and big red ones that go all over the page.

On a Difficult Challenge, a Twofootologist can determine that there are two different marks, but they're made by the same person: they smell of Mewler's hands. Maybe he's behind this!

MEDICAL EXAMINING ROOM

No animal likes coming here. Pokey and Holder are no fun to be around, and they have no treats. The very nature of this room makes all animals on edge and unreasonable, prone to biting and clawing. All Challenge rolls are one level more difficult than they would otherwise be because of this.

There's not much of interest in this room, but it's the only way to get to the Dark Room, should the animals try to investigate.

CHALLENGE: INTERNAL STRIFE

More than one of the animals in the shelter has been traumatized by being in this room. When a non-player animal enters, the Cat Herder rolls a Normal Challenge for each creature or group of like creatures. Any that fail succumb to a powerful fight-or-flight response: fleeing, backing into a corner, or becoming aggressive. On a Partial Success, the creature is simply spooked and uncooperative.

CHALLENGE: INTO THE DARK ROOM

The Dark Room is locked with a thick, heavy padlock. Breaking through this door is going to be tough. If players ask, Twofootologists can make a Difficult roll to remember seeing Pokey or Holder place a small shiny thing in the big metal piece on the door, which fortunately is old and loose like most of the shelter's construction. The cats might also remember that the small shiny thing is in a box in a desk drawer.

Other solutions are possible, e.g.: tipping the heavy I.V. stand to smash the door's small frosted window, or persuading Cleaner to open it by insistent Pussyfoot meows or making him think that something in there is leaking. If all else fails, a bold Scrapper can attempt a Dire Challenge to simply take a flying leap and bash the door open, jerking the lock's hasp right out of the wood.

THE DARK ROOM

Lifers have heard stories of the Dark Room, and they use those stories to scare the Newbies. It smells Wrong in here. Like old death. For Tiger Dreamers, very, very old death. This room is where the euthanizing happens, and is also situated exactly over the ancient sacrificial site to Hastpurr.

This room is every place that an animal doesn’t want to be. It’s a bare, stark room, but when the animals enter, it’s not empty.

CHALLENGE: VAGRANT OF HASTPURR

A transient man by the name of Herb Jenks has been making his home in the Dark Room at night, unbeknownst to the people who run Greener Pastures. He was drawn here by the whispering voice of Hastpurr. After so many nights sleeping in this room, Hastpurr has gotten a grip on the man. To stop the unneeded euthanizing, this man must be stopped. Desirous of a servant, the spirit of the place taught Jenks a shibboleth: an Invocation that lets him slip past locks and attendants, no more than once a day.

If many freed animals come this way, ganging up on Jenks will be easy. If it’s just the Player Cats, the Scrappers and Catcrobs need to step up, and maybe others. Scratching and biting Jenks enough to make him flee permanently will take three successful Stun, Shove, or Hurt results.

When Jenks flees, a small piece of paper falls out of his pocket. Any Twofootologist can tell that it was important to Jenks. The piece of paper is something Jenks drew on in his spare time without realizing that his hand was being guided by Hastpurr. It marks the rough locations of other sacrificial sites: potential locations for future catventures.

THE PLAYYARD

If the animals go directly out to the PlayYard from the Kennels, it’s a simple matter to break down, dig under, or climb over the fence and escape. Freedom! However, the animals will discover Jenks’ footprints and his smell. Any Tiger Dreamer who catches Jenks’ smell will get a vision of the cold, dark death that clings to him. Responsible heros of Fftar-Axlan know that they must stop him.

OUTSIDE

CHALLENGE: WHERE TO NOW?

Food and shelter are the orders of the day after escaping Greener Pastures. One way or another, the cats know that Hastpurr is working in this part of the world and needs to be stopped. How they choose to go about doing that is for another adventure.

NOTES FOR THE CAT HERDER

This adventure can be used to start a campaign, or as a way to get an existing group of cats on the trail of certain Covens of Hastpurr. Clues from prior adventures might lead the Player Cats to get themselves locked up deliberately at Greener Pastures to investigate. Or maybe they all got caught because Hastpurr wanted them out of the way. No matter what, after finding the piece of paper with the locations of the other sacrificial sites, their course is clear.

If the group makes a break right for the Play Yard and freedom, they can skip much of the adventure at first. However, once they establish a base camp, find new homes, whatever they choose to do with their newfound fresh air, they should return, probably on another night of play. If they never come back to drive off Jenks and stop the evil *genius loci*, more and more animals will be collected by the humans of Greener Pastures, and more and more animals will needlessly die.



OTHER SETTINGS

The ancient struggle can happen anywhere. This section, reproduced from the 2013 Original Edition *Call of Catthulhu*, offers a half-dozen archetypal settings for catventuring, along with a handful of adventure seed ideas for each.

For details on nine new and different settings, each by a prominent independent RPG designer, get your paws on the *Whirls of Catthulhu* supplement book through catthulhu.com!

Stearns Plaza

In the big city, a high rise is a world unto itself. Street cats dine on garbage in the building's shadow, living in the alleyways and seeking shelter in the sewers when they can fight off the endless jumbo-sized rats. Tenant cats dwell in modest apartments with loving people, occasionally slipping down the fire escape, with or without the humans knowing, when they just have to get out for a while. On the top floor, a few cats of exclusive breeding lounge about the penthouses, keeping their wealthy humans company in exchange for a lifetime of luxury.

What brings cats of these disparate backgrounds together? Trouble. One-Eye, a battered alley tom of many years, Knows Things. The doorman keeps a vicious dog. Many other types of pets live in other apartments, and it might be that the building itself contains dimensionally active architectural patterns. From the Plaza, cats can range the streets and buildings of town, or deal with situations arising in and around the building itself. For example:

LOL of Catthulhu: Humans have always seemed oddly compelled to record the images and antics of cats. This used to be a genre of painting and drawing and, of course, a perfectly understandable tribute to feline perfection. Cartoons and comics reliably featured cats as well. In recent years, however, photographs and video have increased explosively, and now, almost every apartment in Stearns Plaza is connected to the Internet twenty-four hours a day. And as cats have their ghostly visual echoes distributed and duplicated more and more, some of the real, living originals are just... fading out. Has the Internet developed holes that let spirits from Beyond leak through, or vice-versa? Does the danger of disappearance correlate somehow with how many people "like" or "upvote" a cat pic or video? And what happens when the last few holdouts succumb to inexpensive Internet and the entire Plaza building is entirely ensnared in a web of high-speed wiring and wireless radiation? Surely, the notion of a Machine God is nonsense... right?

Professor Morpho: On the top floor but one, old Professor Morpho occupies a decaying, rent-controlled suite, stuffed floor to ceiling with the glass cases of his enormous collection of butterflies. He putters around all day rearranging specimens, peering through a magnifying glass, and taking copious notes. In the Spring he's

always out in the courtyard or the corner park with a mesh net, swinging at anything that flutters. At night, odd noises come from his apartment, and strange patterns, colorful and symmetric, appear to Tiger Dreamers when they close their eyes. Worse, a few cats report seeing butterflies going in and out of the Professor's high windows—butterflies that smell of the killing jar, and those windows have been painted shut for years.

The Village

In an arid and impoverished part of the Third World, the cats run the dusty streets of a small native village. The children love the half-wild felines, and the adults tolerate them for their predations on rats, mice, and insects. But near the village is a strange stone monolith. The troubled national government considers it a “natural wonder” and sends occasional busloads of tourists. The local elders say that it is not natural at all, but the product of inhuman handiwork from millennia gone, and haunted by spirits older than time. Certainly, peculiar things happen there at night.

- When a village child disappears near the monolith, only the cat heroes are savvy and stealthy enough to find out what happened.
- A team of Western scientists arrives and sets up camp at the site, poking around and disturbing things best left alone. They have a vicious dog.
- A forbidden native cult reappears and starts conducting repulsive rituals at the stone with no wholesome goal.
- Under the monolith, a labyrinthine ruin lies hidden, sealing in who knows what horrors from the past. Places like that are rumored to belong to the Spider God.
- A nomadic people who roam the land have the habit of roasting feral cats over special fires and feasting on the flesh. What god are they trying to appease?
- Out in the wild, the big cats stalk: tigers, panthers, or even lions. Are these undomestic relatives in touch with Fftar-Axlan, the god of proper cats, or do they venerate Hastpurr and want all the humans dead?

Old Tomcat Tower

Fifty miles from London, a beloved population of cats dwell at Whiskatonic University in the grand old church on campus. The bell tower, originally named for a departed soul called Thomas something, has long enjoyed the nickname “Tomcat Tower,” so called for the generations of cats who have dwelt there ever since the great bell was removed and the church deconsecrated for academic use.

All is not calm and bright, though. The tower was designed by the 17th-century supernaturalist and architect calling himself Christopher Wren, whose chosen pseudonym reveals that he was under the sway of the Bird God. What he constructed, under the guise of adding to the ancient church, is an enormous conductor of cosmic energy, erected at the intersection of two ley lines and incorporating some decidedly strange geometry. Whoever controls the tower can conduct rituals in the oddly-shaped belfry, with strong and unpredictable effect. The cats have an ancient duty, unknown to the University’s humans, to occupy Tomcat Tower and prevent any other Animal Cult from using it. The birds in particular consider it their property and work always against the cats, striving to reclaim the tower for unpleasant purposes. The heroes come from the ancient and sprawling cat family. Some adventures:

- An apparently well-meaning academic decides that the cats should be gently relocated for reasons of “modern hygiene.”
- Are some within the family of tower cats itself plotting to use the building to propitiate Great Catthulhu?
- The Department of Zoölogy is breeding hawks and flying them in the woods.
- If the birds ever got in, just what would they do? The motivations of the Bird God are obscure, but certainly birds hate cats and their predacious ways.
- The cats learn that the University Library, across campus, has acquired an original copy of an evil book called the Nyancatnomicon. A professor plans to use it in an ancient studies course. Anyone who hears the verses read aloud will be driven mad and possibly fall under the mind control of an unknown Power. The book must be destroyed!
- The heroes find termites: They might be just chewing boards, or they might be an advancing force of the Insect God, who is known to demand human sacrifices. If the cats lead the people to discover the termites, the tower will be fumigated—but while that goes on, the cats can’t be at their posts, and Cultists might try to sneak in to hold a Major Ritual (p13).
- In a time of crisis, the cat elders are divided: Should the guardian family try to use the tower to call upon Fftar-Axlan, or should cats not dabble in the affairs of gods?

The Pound

Players take the role of kittens waiting to be adopted from a large suburban animal shelter. They're all plenty cute, and it shouldn't take more than a few days... but something seems to be driving the human visitors away. In other rooms and cages, populations of dogs, rats, snakes, birds, and even fish bide their own time. At least one of these groups is up to no good. Is it the dogs, supplicating Mutt'thra to keep the cats captive? Are the rats conducting some horrible experiment? Is the shelter itself constructed on the site of an ancient sacrificial temple of Hastpurr, magically repelling human presence? (See "Greener Pastures," p81.) Certainly the staff changes quickly, except for the old woman in charge, who seems very odd. A few older cats tell of having been there for their entire lives. Fortunately it's a non-euthanizing shelter, but if adoptions don't pick up, that may have to change.

The Pound setting can also be run in a light-hearted way for young players, as they invent playful tricks and cute poses, get attention from visitors, and eventually all get adopted by a number of siblings equal to the number of players.

Kittsmouth

Not a single dog lives in this coastal New England town, and the locals have long since stopped trying. Bringing a puppy here would sentence the poor animal to a mysterious death or disappearance. The cats live by the docks and feast well on gifts from the many fishing boats, and during the long winters the humans take them in to live in the shops and taverns.

It should be a feline paradise, but dark schemes are afoot. The Cult of Doggone rules the local waters, and in order to make a living, the fishermen of Kittsmouth have made unwholesome deals with the Fish God. Among other things, the subaquatic creatures do not tolerate canines and take them as sacrifices when they appear. And surely the Cult is always looking for a loophole in their agreements with the surface dwellers, one that would allow them to convert the people into mindless slaves. Certain humans, who seem to have bulging fish-like eyes and quivering jowls, don't exactly oppose this plan. The cat heroes must foil the plots of Doggone to subjugate the entire town, while not ruining the fisheries upon which the humans depend.

Big Kitties in Little China

The cats live in the back of a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown. Under the city, Chinese demons and ghosts and monsters, brought from the Old Country by dark magic, haunt secret tunnels and hidden temples. Gangs of animals meet in wildly acrobatic street fights to claim blocks of territory for their own Cults.

- A Coven of Mutt'thra dogs are secretly using their ways of influencing humans—submission, service, and apparent worship—to cause recently-arrived chefs to consider the lost tradition of eating cats. After all, meat is expensive.
- The cats hear of a visionary Tiger Dreamer of great age and wisdom. She can help them with their latest problem, if anyone can, but she lives across town in Haight-Ashbury, where sharing years of incense and other substances with her human has given her remarkable, possibly reliable visions. The cats have about four miles of hilly, crowded city blocks to navigate, twice.
- In ancient China, Catthulhu had another name, but he is eternally the same. An apparently deathless human sorcerer of Chinatown seeks to open a gate and supplicate Catthulhu for an army of demon cats to attack his rivals, a community of peaceful Buddhist monks who keep many friendly cats. The sorcerer's familiar is alert to possible efforts by Fftar-Axlan loyalists to disrupt the ritual. Can the cats penetrate the underground lair and stop the evil plan?
- A plague of hauntings has hurt tourism in Chinatown, and the cats' home restaurant may have to shut down. Human authorities dismiss the ghost sightings as hoaxes and superstition. Old Chinese know that they are real. Others just aren't sure. The hero cats must find out what disturbance in the underworld is causing dead humans and other animals to appear on the street, and make it right.
- The adventure "Bay City Crazy Cosmonaut Crash Down!" (p71) is also set in San Francisco. Aftereffects of those events of 1964 might crop up in the streets and sewers of the present day.

...so the Cat walked there by himself; and he saw the Woman milking the Cow, and he saw the light of the fire in the Cave, and he smelt the smell of the warm white milk.

Cat said, 'O my Enemy and Wife of my Enemy, where did Wild Cow go?'

The Woman laughed and said, 'Wild Thing out of the Wild Woods, go back to the Woods again, for I have braided up my hair, and I have put away the magic blade-bone, and we have no more need of either friends or servants in our Cave.'

Cat said, 'I am not a friend, and I am not a servant. I am the Cat who walks by himself, and I wish to come into your cave.'

*— from "The Cat That Walked By Himself,"
by Rudyard Kipling, 1902*



Appendix A

HISTORY

BEGINNINGS: THE SPIRIT WORLD

Every living thing, from a quickened virus to a semi-material Dark Moonsucker, manifests in Spirit at least as powerfully as in the scattered particles of the physical. Every awareness both emerges from, and makes up a part of, a more primal Form, like countless individual facets of a fabulous ink-washed gem, each glinting visible for an instant and from a single point of view. In a wordless, kinesthetic way, any flower knows that it is All Flowers; every dolphin knows its part in the Whale Song; a diaphanous interstellar wing-gel fed on cold starlight knows itself an essential limb of All Star-Gels, as the follicle of a single whisker is part of a cat.

Pitiable exceptions, though rare in cosmic history, do occur. When a species or strain of life suffers schism from its origin in Spirit, its individuals become vulnerable to alien notions, predatory intentions, and infectious thought-forms. The more complex an organism's mind, the more fragile its connection to the preconscious realm, and the more susceptible it becomes to confusion, whether accidental or imposed from without. Such a case is humanity.

Sprung from the land mammal line, primates in general fell into development of adaptability as their survival specialty: big brains able to grasp changing circumstance, alter behavior to suit, and communicate those adaptations to their fellows. Culture is genetic, but in the genes of the primates developed a perverse meta-ability to create verbal, virtual cultures: not just sociobiology, but societies; not just genes, but memes. In effect, shared language became a second genetics.

For the purpose of increasing the spread of a large but clawless omnivore, social evolution proved highly successful. It also created the capacity for unnatural behavior, with social norms able to drive individuals to act against their own genetic interests. With the emergence of hominids, even more complex brains developed new stratagems like taming other animals, enslaving fellows, defending arbitrarily defined group territory, and imposing duty to unrelated powerful individuals. Developing its power logically, the unique tool-using knack of the ape-brain led them to treat each other as tools.

Homo sapiens appeared, eradicated or absorbed competing subspecies, and carried on to create such ideas as patriotism, priesthood, hereditary rulership, and economic servitude. Such meme-viral behaviors brought ever larger chunks of the physical world under the grip of the human hand. Deforestation, extinctions, domestication of animals, and breeding of other species spread, infecting more and more of the inhuman world with human ways. At the same time, the self-enforcing, self-reproducing, almost self-aware social forms stretched and tore the Spirit connection to the primal Ape Form like a shredding cobweb. Humanity had become something new, rooted in its past by only the loosest and weakest threads.

With the species thus alienated, the minds of individuals become atomized, free-floating bits of awareness, only tenuously anchored to the great Form of which each was meant to be a part. However quick and voluminous and electric a human mind, it is alone. The psychic impulse of other, more grounded species and spirits can slowly push such a mind, like rolling a boulder along the sea-floor, in directions unchosen and unseen by the mind itself. In *Call of Catthulhu*, this is known as *psychic pressure* (p15). As humans conquered the physical, they use social forms to exploit each other's Spirit weakness, unaware that non-humans might do the same through more subtle means.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM...

Faced with a physical world increasingly distorted by human behaviors, other animals saw the chance to confront humanity where it was weakest: in Spirit. Dogs, finding sympathy between human social forms and their own packs, first adapted to humanity, more than 20,000 years ago. In joining forces, however, the dogs became servants, for the canine desires, ultimately, to serve, and the human to command. Dog-spirit pressure on humanity's delicate mind made people more pack-like, but with people at the top. Meanwhile, humans learned from the new connection how to better submit to more powerful humans, helping their societies become even more stratified and complex.

Always quicker than the rest, it was the cats who sprang in with an actual plan. Small and furry and warm; no threat, yet dignified; evolved to catch and destroy vermin that people found vexing: thus cats padded their way into the circle of fire-light and next to humanity. Dogs did not welcome this intrusion, but since the pack-leading humans approved, the dogs could but obey. Indeed, it was the canine influence that had conditioned humans to defer to creatures who appear unimpressed. To this day, humans mistake oblivious feline self-sufficiency for an assertion of superior rank. Reactions vary.

THE GREAT IDEA

Facing the conclusion that the human mind would reshape the world, the cats somehow formed, or received, the determination to have their say in just how it changed. This is the *Great Idea*, the basis for all cat-human interaction for the last 10,000 years.

Previously, cat-thought divided all non-cats into Enemies and Prey; to many cats, even other cats could be considered the Enemy. Attributed in Tiger Dreamer lore to *Fftar-Axlan*, the Good Father (p18), the Great Idea added the category of allies, or as the cats put it, Servants. Specifically, the Great Idea creates a deep and lasting alliance with humans, whose tricky minds and clever hands do more than any other tools to change the physical world to the liking of cats.

THE THUMB WAR

Not all cats approved of the notion of tying cat fortune to any other being. In the Spirit World and the physical realm, catkind split into hissing, spitting factions. Small, clever types of felines swore to follow *Fftar-Axlan* and effect the Great Idea to the benefit of eternal snackies and naptime. Larger or wilder catforms rejected the notion, walking away into untouched wilderness.

Many wild cats returned to venerating *Great Catthulhu* (p23), a progenitor spirit of tremendous, world-rending power, seen (by cats, at least) as a gigantic, half-monstrous feline. Catthulhu had been absent from the physical world for uncounted ages, sleeping on the borderlands of Spirit, and did not choose this moment to wake. But a leader and devoted Catthulhu worshipper emerged: *Hastpurr*, a yellow tom of unknown species, mighty in body and soul. Under *Hastpurr*'s command, an army of particularly ill-tempered wild cats brought violence against the followers of *Fftar-Axlan* and their soft human Servants. Thus began the Thumb War. Humans, never knowing the reason behind the attacks, fought back with fire and spear. Allied cats used dream-wisdom and psychic pressure to guide their unsuspecting humans from the shadows. In the Spirit Realm, *Fftar-Axlan* dreamed hard against the chaotic being known as *Snarlyathotep*, spirit of the Wild.

In the end, the cats of *Fftar-Axlan* and their clever humans wrought great slaughter among the wild things, broke their fragile discipline, and drove them into deep places. *Hastpurr* lost an eye, and then his last life, but the bloodlust of his followers sustained him and he became a god: a powerful spirit exiled from the physical world but fed by worship and ritual.

Victorious, the cats of the Great Idea set about their long project: nudging the wandering, hunting tribes of humanity into settling down, making fishing villages and fireplaces, putting up roofs, weaving pillows, killing off predators, and otherwise putting their brains and hands to work in the service of kitty comfort. Humans remember this sudden rush toward labor and domesticity as the Agricultural Revolution, the Neolithic Era, and also, perhaps, as the Fall from Eden.

UNSPEAKABLE CULTS

So it remains to this day, and human-loving cats, when they think of it, venerate Fftar-Axlan. Hastpurr's worshippers (p22) and other rival faiths persist through the millenia as hidden Cults, passing down forbidden knowledge and plotting to undermine the Great Idea. Non-cats dream Plans to stop the human domination of the physical world, or else scheme to enslave human energies to their own non-feline ends. Of course, the more the weak-spirited human race develops its mental and physical dominion, the more vulnerable it becomes to the pressure of alien Spirits.

Worst, in any species some individuals inevitably become desperate enough to implore Great Catthulhu to awaken, scratch the world clean, and bury the past like waste in the sand. Word of the Catthulhu Cult somehow reaches these unbridled nihilists, and the old rituals continue.

It is against the workings of all these Cults that the heroic Player Cats in *Call of Catthulhu* must struggle.

Appendix H

THE BOOK OF THE TWO-FOOTS

After millenia of study, most of them at close quarters, cats understand humanity well. Feline scholars maintain a taxonomy of humans, the current incarnations of certain lasting archetypes. Some cats like to get to know as many different human varieties as possible, talking among themselves about the adorable characteristics of the latest specimens; this hobby is known as “Folk Fancy.”

The Cat Herder can fall back on these types as stock characters in play, as well as staging crises at which the Player Cats have a chance to intervene in human development. For example, if a Banger can be prevented from growing into a full-fledged Cutter, all cats benefit, as does the general psychic health of the shared realm of Dream.

Cats categorize human based on age and, for older types, whether each variety is Nice or Mean. Each type has a name indicating the role of such humans in cat life. As cats spend a great deal of time dreaming along with their humans, pushing small agendas as well as the Great Idea, each category below includes a description of how such a human’s mind appears in the Spirit World. Tiger Dreamers interact with such manifestations most frequently. If a dreaming cat knows a particular human well, and they lie close together in the physical world, it is not too difficult to find the right mind in and touch it; any distance, spiritual or physical, complicates the matter, as Dream is crowded, inchoate, and ever-shifting.

Infants

INFANT	APPROX. AGE (Months)	ROLE	LANGUAGE	IN DREAM
Prenatal	—	Thrum	Empathy	Point
Newborn	0–5	Beacon	Empathy	Beacon
Crawler	6–11	Scout	Cat's Tongue	Light
Toddler	12–24	Grippy	Cat's Ears	Cloud

Thrum: Even before birth, human minds resonate in Dream. By late pregnancy, cats can feel the awareness within, and vice versa. A cat who curls up next to the belly of a woman soon to give birth can enter a mutually comforting, purring communion with the newborn-to-be. This calms both and incidentally makes the new human more likely to be sympathetic to cats throughout life. The budding consciousness manifests as a brilliant Point in the dream realm, safe within its mother's faint Cloud of glory.

Beacon: A newborn human gets very confused, for a while, and cannot communicate to any creature except through the most basic cries of discomfort. However, the extraordinary power of the delicate human mind at its most active period shines forth in Dream as a brilliant Beacon. Tiger Dreamers lost in dreams, and sometimes cats lost in the physical world, can sense the location of a familiar infant and orient themselves from considerable distance. Powers of Chaos are repelled by the unsullied mind's pure light and cannot come near.

Scout: Once the highly adaptable language talent of the human brain becomes active, infants can easily communicate with animals of all types through the same kind of psychic intention, body language, and small sounds used in Cat's Tongue. During this stage, the crawling human can be a valuable ally, happily carrying out little missions desired by friendly cats. Cluttered by knowledge, the child's dream-beacon begins to expand and turn translucent, becoming merely a Light to steer by.

Grippy: As the human acquires structured, one-dimensional, verbal human language, the intuitive speech of animals is forgotten. However, for a little while, the newly bipedal infant can still understand cats though unable to respond in kind. This is the state of Cat's Ears. Able to walk, climb, and grasp, the toddler can prove invaluable, accomplishing tasks that the thumbless find very difficult. In Dream, the mind expands into a Cloud and begins to take on the form it will have as a Walker.

Biggers

Too soon, the baby becomes a child, speaking well with other humans but no longer able to interpret the requests and advice of feline companions. The Beacon disperses into a dim Cloud in dream-world, and then takes on new, mature shapes, all easily buffeted by aggressive inhuman consciousnesses.

The main concern of cats is whether a given human will prove friendly. Thus the elders promulgate detailed taxonomies of the Nice and the Mean. Some humans are Neutrals: adults, and some teens, who neither care for cats and other animals, nor bear them any malice. To these humans, a cat is no different than a television show or a rug on the floor. The lives of these people are dull, but at least no threat, they receive no special study nor category names.

As with the backstories of cats (I, p12), human roles are generalized; an individual might play a role usually assigned to a different age, or even blend characteristics of more than one role.

DREAM FORMS

Necessarily these descriptions give only a general sense of how a mind might appear in Dream; for non-human forms, see p10. An individual manifestation, as perceived by a dreaming cat, can vary, as all minds move and change, showing flashes and flushes of colored thought, speeding and slowing rotation, and sometimes making sudden darts and swoops through the ether. Colors vary more for kind, or healthy, minds; mean people tend to show the same range of fiery reds and black.

- A Comet is a ball of bright consciousness, trailing its childhood Cloud behind it like a tail as it moves from thought to thought.
- A Fireball resembles a Comet but its core of sense burns instead of glowing; the distinction can be subtle.
- A Ball carries little aura and has a sharply defined, opaque surface.
- A Spiral has multiple curved arms, like a galaxy, and spins as it moves through the Dream Realm, perhaps sucking other manifesta into orbit. The Spiral of a strong Hearth Heart may accrete a whole retinue, revolving like moons.
- A Whirlpool is like a Spiral but flattened out, with a dark patch in the middle that can trap thoughts.

Teens show smaller, darker Clouds than younger children, and dimmer awareness. Adult minds, as a rule, don't move about much, but sit in place, spinning contentedly or irritably in the last tattered vapors of their Clouds.

Nice People

AGE CATEGORY	APPROX. YEARS	ROLE	IN DREAM
Walker	2–4	Patty	Bouncing comet (pink, white)
Kid	5–11	Superhero	Speeding comet (white, yellow, orange)
		Princess of Tea	Rainbow comet
Teen	12–20	Meat-Dropper	Ricocheting ball (blue, green)
		Catlover	Wandering spiral (pink, white)
Adult	20–60	Ear-Scratcher	Spinning ball (dark grey, blue, dull yellow)
		Hearth Heart	Slowly turning spiral (white and gold)
Senior	60+	Napper	Whirlpool of somnolence (soft brown, dark gold)
		Cat Crazy	Ragged, sticky whirlpool (cloudy grey, white)

Mean People

AGE CATEGORY	APPROX. YEARS	ROLE	IN DREAM
Walker	2–4	<i>Yanker</i>	Zig-zagging fireball
Kid	5–11	<i>Bonker</i>	Sizzling fireball
		<i>Martinet</i>	Sparkling fireball
Teen	12–20	<i>Furphobic</i>	White ball with popping fire
		<i>Banger</i>	Sputtering fireball
Adult	20–60	<i>The Sneer</i>	Spinning ball (black)
		<i>Thrower</i>	Spinning ball (burning yellow)
		<i>Cutter</i>	Black flame
Senior	60+	<i>Cane Whipper</i>	Matte red ball
		<i>Bird Crazy</i>	Perpendicular grey whirlpool

NICE PEOPLE DESCRIPTIONS

Patty: This child likes to pet kitties and never hurts them on purpose. Sometimes the small one squeezes a bit too hard or accidentally pats a sore spot, but a wise cat responds only with a swat or snarl, never with claws out.

Superhero: The Superhero is on a constant heroic quest of the imagination, and nearby cats are to be rescued from danger as often as possible. Sometimes a beloved cat is even dubbed “Sidekick” and carried along on missions, which may require tolerating a cape made from a washcloth. Successful missions frequently include tasty rewards.

Princess of Tea / Prince of Tea: The good side of the Martinet, below, the Princess includes kitties in the elaborate social life of stuffed animals and dolls. A tolerant cat will play along for a while and refrain from upsetting the tea table, while of course demurring from behavior that outright damages dignity.

Meat-Dropper: Growing into their teen years, humans have less and less time with cats. The Meat-Dropper, however, still loves and pets feline associates, and can always be counted on to defend a cat against a tormentor or dog. Whenever possible, the Meat-Dropper saves scraps from meals and drops them where the cats can feed.

Catlover: This kind-hearted teen will plead with parents to adopt as many kittens as possible, treating them all with spoiling attentions, overfeeding them, and spending plenty of allowance on catnip mice, jingle balls, and anything else with a picture of a kitty on it. It's a soft gig for any cats who make into a Catlover's life.

Ear-Scratcher: Busy with his or her own life, the Ear-Scratcher probably houses no pets. When encountering a cat, however, the Scratcher remembers fondly the pets of childhood and acts indulgently, petting properly and respecting personal space. An Ear-Scratcher may even sneak the cat some meat or a treat out of another human's supply.

Hearth Heart: All grown up and busy, this kind human nonetheless extends the balm of beneficent care to every small thing. No cat goes hungry in this house, nor gets turned away from the stoop, nor suffers from any other basic need for long. The Heart probably also keeps a bird feeder and one or more dogs, and human children of all ages come and go in addition to any immediate family, so the household may be chaotic, but it is always loving.

Napper: This old human is slowing down. Even if formerly a Thrower, the Napper is by now is far too self-content to need to scare little creatures. While not strongly inclined to keep cats, the Napper welcomes furry companions who like warm laps, blankets, and generally taking it easy.

Cat Crazy: For whatever reason, all of this human's love and devotion go to cats. Of course even the most amiable and clever feline does not give back the same kind of love as another human, so the Cat Crazy is perpetually dissatisfied. The solution: More cats. The resulting household is completely overrun and contains a cat society

that functions almost without regard to the ostensible owner, with clans and plans and probably a devoted circle of Ffar-Axlan cultists. Other humans sense that the place no longer belongs to their kind, and steer clear.

MEAN PEOPLE DESCRIPTIONS

Yanker: Learning bad lessons from the adults around him or her, this child finds it funny to inflict pain. Typical habits include pulling tails, yanking fur and whiskers, or dropping objects on a sleeping cat. Unless somehow re-educated, the Yanker is likely to be a life-long cat hater and probably devoid of empathy to other humans as well.

Bonker: The evolved form of the Yanker, the Bonker inflicts pain and fear on cats wantonly, setting traps, tying bells or cans to tails, and outright bonking a sleeper with blocks or toy hammers. The Bonker is headed into a life of cruelty and only unusual efforts can reform him into a more worthy being.

Martinet: Superficially similar to the Princess of Tea in fascination with social games, the Martinet tolerates no escape. The Martinet's games require dressing cats in restrictive clothes, forcing them into baby seats or toy cars, closing them in doll houses, grabbing forelegs and making the cat jig strenuously, and otherwise cramming pets into the role the child desires without considering their comfort, preference, or even safety.

Furphobic: This human needs everything to be clean, neat, and attractive at all times. Anything the Furphobic cannot control comes in for caustic derision. The idea of an animal that sheds, coughs up hairballs, eats smelly food, needs a litterbox, and, worst of all, has its own ideas and will is quite unacceptable. The Furphobic even avoids the houses of friends who keep pets, and tries to persuade them to get rid of the things.

Banger: Now we enter the realms of evil. The Banger actively torments cats, along with any other living things not fast or clever enough to escape. Typical Banger delights include tying firecrackers to an animal's tail and lighting them, dousing the unsuspecting with cold water, dropping a pile of pot-lids on a napping feline, or anything else that causes not only discomfort but terror. The Banger does not actually kill or maim cats... yet. However, bloody practice may occur involving "lesser" beings such as frogs and bugs. If unchecked, this adolescent might grow into the worst type of human of all: the Cutter.

The Sneer: An older form of the Furphobic, with all the joy sucked out. The Sneer hates cats, and also children, the outdoors, and less fortunate humans. The Sneer seeks only to have a perfect exterior at all times and to associate with those who can help put more walls of money and snobbery between the terrified self and the messiness of the real world. If fashion so demands, a Sneer may carry a tiny, spoiled, and chronically nervous dog. The Sneer deals with an unexpected cat like a pile of excrement: disgust, avoidance, and telling someone else to get rid of it.

Thrower: In some parts of human society, this is the typical adult male. Often a dog lover, a Thrower does not care about cats one way or another, except to find something irksome about their self-sufficiency. The Thrower cannot stand to be ignored, and so gets a cat's attention by scaring her: stamping, shouting, laughing at frightened reactions, or tossing a small object. The Thrower intends no real harm but takes satisfaction from an accurate throw and the cat's surprise. The Thrower may well wish to join the household of a Hearth Heart, leading to potential conflict.

Cutter: This highly disturbed individual compulsively captures and tortures small animals, to the point of medical experiments, poisoning, vivisection, and death. A trip through the Cutter's private workroom resembles a vision of Hell. Such humans, fortunately rare, are possessed by pure evil. The deaths of their victims amount to blood sacrifices and draw the attention of malevolent gods. All too often, the Cutter grows bored with cats, pigeons, and other small fry, and carefully plots how to move on to victimizing fellow humans. Beware.

Cane Whipper: The converse of the Napper, this human has grown bitter with age, and lashes out with decades of pent-up ire at anything even slightly annoying. Abusing the indulgence that other humans tender to the aged, the Whipper smacks children and pets with a cane or walking stick carried for the purpose, berating them the while. A flooding infusion of love might convert the Cane Whipper into a contented Napper, but it's nearly too late.

Bird Crazy (Bug Crazy, etc.): Devoted, unwittingly, to the Bird God, this human tends a spacious garden with multiple bird feeders. Every season brings a different crowd of avian guests and all receive ample food. The Bird Crazy dislikes cats for preying on birds, and chases them violently out of the area, not averse to landing a few blows with a broom, flinging clods of dirt, or even firing stinging BBs from a pellet gun. A less common form of this role is the Bug Crazy, thrall to the Insect God, growing a garden of flowers chosen to attract butterflies and other species, and perhaps keeping hives of bees. The sight of a cat trying to catch a butterfly fills the Bug Crazy with rage. Rare humans even devote themselves similarly to rats, fish, or other animals and their gods.

Appendix K

THE BOOK OF DOGS

by John D. Kennedy

INTRODUCTION

One of the Kickstarter Stretch Goals for *Call of Catthulhu* was to offer supplementary rules for playing dog characters. When we reached the goal, we were fortunate to have John Kennedy step up: a veteran designer with his paws in the worlds of real canine rescue and the *DAWG* RPG. John's take on the Catthulhu universe gives the perspective of humanity's undoubted best friend, plus his own spooky ideas for gods, monsters, and supernatural crises. The Cat Herder of a normal campaign can use this Appendix as a guide to including dog NPCs for the cats to encounter, or—as Dog Wrangler—run a party of Player Dogs through their own doggy adventures. Enjoy!

— Mr. Joel

John D. Kennedy has worked in RPGs for eight years, both as a freelancer and for Onyx Path Publishing, Kenzerco, and Third Eye Games. When he's not designing new games he spends his time rescuing lost dogs in the Indy area and reading and writing comics. John's credits include the "Terrifying Tomb of Ankhatten" adventure for the *DAWG* roleplaying game (p126).

DOG CHARACTERS

Dogs, just as much as cats, fight against the darker powers, but they are by no means allies. Dogs see the felines as usurpers of their roles as Man's Best Friend, a title that was bestowed upon the First Dogs during the Dark Days at the beginning of the world. Dogs serve mankind loyally and lovingly, and fight very fiercely for their friends.

THE FIVE ROLES

Ask any dog owner about all the pets they've owned and they will tell you that no two dogs are the same. Some dogs are brave and adventurous while others spend their lives cowering in their owners arms at the sight of their own shadow. For game purposes, the player starts defining a new dog by choosing one of five Roles.

GUARD DOG

Aggressive, protective, and dangerous, the Guard Dog is a terror to his enemies and the protector of what is his. Favoring the larger breeds, Guard Dogs will take the fight to the enemy and rarely shy away from a fight. Some care must be taken, as the sight of a lumbering brute of a dog can inadvertently cause humans to become alarmed. The upside to this is the sight of a vicious attack dog can send even the most stoic opponent running for their lives.

SNUGGLER

Cute, affectionate, delightful: all these words describe the dog who spends the majority of his time with humans wrapped around their paw. Humans cannot help but fawn over the Snuggler, whose natural charisma and adorable looks let them live a life of comfort. These dogs often have their own beds and multiple fashionable collars to wear. They may even know a trick or two that's guaranteed to get their humans to play with them and give them all the treats they can ask for.

BESTFRIEND

Loving, loyal, and faithful, the Bestfriend is the constant companion to another, whether that is a human child or another dog. The Bestfriend is inseparable from the human, spending their days within arm's reach of their friend while constantly being alert for potential threats. Bestfriends would rather take harm themselves than allow it befall their charges, and are adept at pointing out oncoming threats.

WILD HEART

These dogs are the strange ones amongst doggy kind, and that's saying something considering some dogs' penchant for consuming their own poop. The Wild Heart feels ancient ways beating in their chest and longs to return to the wild to be with their ancestors. They feel the Earth moving beneath their feet and they can feel great cosmic events in their dreams and sense disturbances in the natural order. A Wild Heart hears the great Song of Mutt'Thra. Whether a mongrel dog living in the wild or a particularly feisty Chihuahua, a Wild Heart can become a great seer among dogkind.

THE PEDIGREE

These dogs are an example of good breeding and refinement, and others can tell! They exemplify the best traits of their breeds, from the German Shepherd's work ethic, the regal grace of a Greyhound, or the quirky nature of the Pug. They are sometimes looked down upon by other dog for their dignified pedigrees but they do not care. Whatever it is that they do, from running in a field to sitting curled up by the television, they do so with grace and beauty as befitting their regal nature.

BACKGROUND

Whether born in dark alleys or in loving homes, all dogs belong to families. From there, life gives each dog its own unique spin. What sort of family does the dog belong to? When were they taken away from their parents? Defining a dog hero's background gives the player and the Dog Wrangler more options to work their character into the game. Details vary by the setting, but certain general information about the dog's past is relevant to the story.

LIFESTYLE

Feral dogs are born outside and their untamed nature guide them from birth. They live in the wild or on the street, and life is a constant struggle to survive. While ignorant of technology and the laws of human society, they are expert at foraging and at dealing with wild animals.

House dogs live within a home and, with the exception of being let outside, they have never been away from their homes. This gives them an advantage when dealing with humans, as they are around human technology and see how it works. Unlike other dogs, most house dogs have been spayed or neutered.

Show dogs live a pampered life, whether it's because they are appear in actual dog shows or because they are viewed as prized breeding stock. They are often very ignorant about the wild world but understand humans very well, knowing how to get their way as well as how to avoid blame.

SCROUNGING

The player should decide how the dog survives in the world. Is the dog a hunter, pouncing upon unsuspecting squirrels and bunnies in the backyard? An expert scavenger nosing up delicious treasure at the bottom of a trash can? Does the dog fight with cats and rats over leftovers thrown out by restaurants, or would this character be completely helpless without the kindness and good graces of food-providing owners?

DESCRIBING BREED

Players of cats get to describe their characters any way they want as long as the resulting creature is still called a cat. There are many breeds of cat, from the American Shorthair to the Persian, but they mostly have the same features. This is not so with dogs. Indeed, since around the 17th century, the number and variety of dog breeds has exploded, to well over 100. Breeds of dogs vary widely in height, color, the shape of their ears, the shape of their snout, and even the overall shape of their bodies. While all share the same basic physical characteristics (4 legs, 2 eyes, 2 ears, etc.) it can be a challenge to describe a dog without having some sort of favorite breed in mind.

PUREBRED OR MUTT

A Purebred dog is very recognizable at a glance, and will display all the physical traits that correspond to one of the recognizable breeds of dogs. For a Great Dane, you will see the long legs, the towering physique, and the elongated snout. For the Chihuahua, you will see the diminutive frame, the short tail, and the short, thin muzzle of such a tiny dog. The Purebreds are highly prized by some humans who are willing to exchange numerous pieces of the paper they consider so valuable in exchange for one. These dogs are also kept under strict observation by their owners for fear of them escaping or being stolen. Also, while some breeds are prized for their positive traits like their ability to hunt or speed, many have picked up genetic factors that can lead to problems later on as the pet gets older. Some purebreds are even born blind or with stunted noses, giving them great challenges.

Certain purebreds are often chosen for Guard Dogs because they fit into the specific categories that people look for in those breeds. Others live the joyful lives of luxury as the Pedigree, where their noble breeding is recognized more easily than other breeds. The Purebred dog allows for players to play as the dog of their dreams, and allows them to describe themselves by the name of breeds such as Golden Retrievers or Alaskan Malamute.

A Mutt comes from different parents who are either mixed themselves or from different Purebreds. With rare exception (such as in the case of the Puggle or Corgipoo) these lead to dogs that combine the traits of their parents and result in dogs with Labrador bodies but the head of a Pit Bull, or dogs that combine the traits

of more than two dogs. A Mutt can look almost exactly like a Pit Bull or more like a comical mix of features, and players are encouraged to provide physical descriptions of their character to help other players determine what they look like.

Mutts are never chosen for the Pedigree but they do carry a lot of spirit, making them expert Snugglers or Bestfriends. Those with larger bodies find themselves as Guard Dogs, kept in junkyards and outside large homes to keep them safe.

SHORT FUR, WIREY FUR, LONG FUR?

For Purebred dogs their fur can match whatever is standard for the breed, but for Mutts anything goes.

Some dogs have very Short Fur which to the touch feels like the dog barely has anything cover its body. This fur never mattes and is easier to clean, but makes them more susceptible to the cold.

Dogs with Wirey Fur often have very coarse fur to the touch, which can help provide them with some protection against the elements but has to be maintained and cleaned or it will become full of hard clumps of fur called mattes.

Those with Long Fur have glorious coats that, with proper grooming, can really shine and attract the attention and respect of humans. These coats provide the dog with warmth in their environment, but without proper attention it can become a sticky, filthy mess that needs to be trimmed and brushed daily.

FUR COLOR?

What color is your dog's fur? Is your dog a bright yellow Labrador, able to blend in to a cornfield but standing out against a snow drift? Are you a deep brown dog whose fur blends in with the couch that serves as your bed? Is your fur black as night, as befitting a stray dog who stalks the neighborhood hunting coyotes and monsters? Dog fur has great variety in color from grayish blue to bright golden colors, and even some Purebred dogs show different fur colors from time to time.

EYE COLOR

Dog eyes can be yellow, brown, or blue, or for players who want to add variety (and with the Dog Wrangler's permission) they can be of any color they choose. Different eye colors come into play when trying to tell the difference between two dogs. Are they a ruddy brown color, helping it to blend in with other dogs of the same breed? Or does your dog have bright blue eyes, the better for your owner to pick you out from a crowd?

THE POWERS THAT BE

The dogs live in the same world as the cats and encounter many of the same creatures from day to day. They still deal with cats and their deities, and they deal with the Cult of Doggone's fish worshippers who seek a world free of influence from other pets. There are other animals in a dog's world, and these creatures are as much a threat to dogs as they are to cats. They follow their own gods and have their own agendas which sometimes are beneficial to dogs but often times are not. Packs of dogs have encountered strange rituals in the woods where rabbit zealots try to summon an elder god who promises to elevate them to the status of most favored pet of the humans, while other cultists seek the absolute destruction of every living thing on the planet.

MUTT'THRA

Mutt'Thra the Monster Dog, Mutt'Thra the Liberator, the Uniter of Packs, the Supreme Alpha, and Mutt'Thra the Good Doggy are all aspects of the same divine being that all canines, including wolves and other wild dogs, worship with respect. According to the senior Wild Hearts known as the Long Muzzles, Mutt'Thra has been around since the beginning of mankind, and at one point Mutt'Thra and the primal human walked the earth together. Over the years, they say, avatars of Mutt'Thra have appeared several times to his followers, leading exoduses of his people to all corners of the globe and giving rise to the Wild Dogs of Africa, the Dingos of Australia, and the Wolves of North America.

[Note: Details of the Cult of Mutt'Thra, as known to cats, appear on p27. It may be that devout canines suffer a schism, similar to the split between the feline cults of Fftar and Axlan. Perhaps Covens of Mutt focus entirely on the Good Doggy ideal and the standing of dogs with humans, while wolf packs and other wild canines venerate Thra the Growl, embodiment of the same ideal of loyalty but without reference to the Two-Foots.—Mr. Joel]

CATS

Cats believe they rule the human world, but dogs know they are the ones with the real power. Cats have been jealous of the favor shown to dogs by man and have tried to trick man into taking them in, causing man to build temples to their cats and treat them like false idols. Fftar-Axlan, the Cat God, wages an eternal struggle with Mutt'Thra for the attentions of humanity, causing both sides to position their players carefully upon the Great Game Board to see who will come out on top.

RACCOONS

The Brotherhood of Silver Glory is a constant foe to all dogs out there, as they are guild of raccoon thieves who are obsessed with hoarding treasure and breaking into places they shouldn't, knowing that often times it will be the family pet who gets blamed for messes in the kitchen. Serving their mysterious Aldermen, the Brotherhood invites only the most skilled thieves into their ranks and their human-like hands give them the leg up on dogs.

OPOSSUM

Serving the avatar of Death known as Ogone, Opossum Cultists see themselves as heralds of great change in the world. They prefer to live solitary, monastic lives but the opossums are known for collecting secrets and information about other animals. It is said that their closeness with Death makes them resistant to the Blood Madness, but their filthy ways and tendency to loiter where they are not welcome puts them at odds with canines.

OTHER WILDLIFE

Untamed animals of all kinds have their own Cults, generally some version of the Wild (p35). Such creatures might seek revenge on dogs for huntings past; in company with humans, dogs have hunted everything from hares to foxes to bears. At other times, Wild Cultists could seek canine assistance in stopping human plans that, if allowed to go forward, will poison the environment for dogs and their people as well as other creatures. The humans, bereft of the wisdom of Spirit, may not sense the consequences, or perhaps human Cultists of Mammon (p35) seek profit despite the risk.

THE BLOOD MADNESS

Everydog knows a story about another dog who fell victim to this strange disease, and each dog fears that a bite from a wild animal may lead to them taking a one way visit to the V-E-T. The Blood Madness festers within until the dog can no longer think straight, and sounds and smells become too vivid to handle. Untreated, the poor creature runs mad, foaming, ready to bite out of sheer fear. No one knows if the Blood Madness is a natural thing or a curse created by one species to wipe out all others, but the Blood Madness causes division and fear wherever it is encountered.

Bad Doggy!

One secret that dogs try to keep others from finding out is that not all dogs live up to the Great Promise of Mutt'Thra. Some have turned against humanity and their own kind, and have become some of the most dangerous threats out there for dogs to content with. This is in addition to the threats posed by Catthulhu and his other minions. **WARNING:** These forces are not nice. Younger players, or Dog Wranglers who don't wish to taint their play sessions with the knowledge of Chaos, may want to skip this part.

ASTRACOPH THE POUNDSMAN

Not all deities that dogs dread appear as their kith and kin. Astracoph is the one who stalks innocent dogs who are away from their homes and hopes to capture them to bring home to his otherdimensional lair, a Dog Pound of such horror that tales of it are told to young pups to keep them in line. He appears as a giant of a human being, who appears normal to humans but to dogs has gnarled purple skin and a belt made of the collars of several dogs.

DOGLINGS

Sometimes, dogs are not what they appear. Occasionally kennels will admit a stray pup that makes no noise but watches its environment very carefully, only for it to disappear the next morning with several empty cages around it. That is because the kennel has been raided by a Dogling, a creature of great malevolent hunger. In its natural form of a shapeless glob the thing appears harmless but its touch burns like acid and it can imitate the shape of any creature it encounters, gaining bulk from those it consumes.

THE GREAT BREED OF YIPP

An ancient race with machinations spanning eons, the Great Breed of Yipp do not exist in the physical world of the present time. They have the power to reach psychically across millions of years, switching the mind of a Great Breed member into the body of a dog, while the mind of the dog occupies the alien's body in a bewildering, futuristic city called Yipp. The Great Breed body is canine but with hairless yellow skin, bulging black eyes, tentacle-like legs that allow bipedal or quadrupedal motion, and a tongue that can extend several feet with a gripping end.

[Adventures: An important non-player dog could suddenly start acting strange, as a possessing Great Breed mind attempts to hide its presence while exploring as much as possible about the present day. Or a whole party of Player Dogs could be transferred into Yipp, free to wander the city in their strange host bodies, and must find out how to reverse the process lest they be away from their humans forever.]

SQUEAKY TOYS FROM SPACE

Occasionally, among the toys bought by loving humans, dogs come across one not seen before. These are not toys at all but the shells of horrific creatures from beyond this dimension. Upon entering our universe, their skin burns, so they create elaborately colored shells. Although they look harmless, these organisms seek to feed on human pain and put themselves into situations to cause accidents. When their shells are ruptured they appear like jellyfish of bright colors impossible to describe, and they unleash a horrifying death-squeal before attacking.

PUGGENS AND HIS NIGHT RETRIEVERS

An ancient primordial alpha dog, Puggens lives on in Spirit as a great hunter and tracker, reveling in the hunt and bringing down great prey. When he manifests he is a gigantic pug with eyes of hellfire and flames coming from inside his throat. His pack of Night Retrievers are special winged labs who move without making a sound and track prey for their lord. Occasionally Puggens will send a Night Retriever to assist loyal Mutt'Thra Cultists who seek to summon aid.

THE WILD PACKS

Wolves, coyotes, and other large canines are assumed to follow Mutt'Thra. Some packs, however, choose their own ways, turning their bristling backs on dogs who live with humans and sometimes even preying on them. [Such packs may venerate the Wild (p35) and are susceptible to manifestations of Snarlyathotep (p29), who could appear as a lupine avatar with a Cult intent on gathering the wild packs into a force to attack humankind.]



The Notebook of Tour-Boullion
(fragment)

Art by Svenja Liv.

Models: Suki and Pocky.

Steampunk thanks to

Kickstarter backer Kara B!

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TYPICAL CHALLENGES

These examples may help the Dog Wrangler decide which task is appropriate for what Role, and how difficult each challenge might be. The first list is of tasks that come easily to that Role; the second, more difficult tasks, but still easier for that Role than for any other.

A GUARD DOG...

- Can easily outrun a human, leap a small fence, intimidate others with his growl, smell intruders.
- With difficulty, remain calm after sensing an intruder, come to sudden stops, navigate unfamiliar territory, be diplomatic with other dogs.

A SNUGLER...

- Can easily get help from humans, beg for food, sneak unnoticed in a room, be diplomatic with other dogs.
- With difficulty, intimidate another dog, make threatening barks and growls, outrun an athletic dog, scavenge for food outside.

A BESTFRIEND...

- Can easily memorize potential threats in the environment, convince his buddy of danger, rescue a trapped pup, know how to open doors, be brave in the face of danger.
- With difficulty, abandon his best friend, ignore potential threats, excuse bad behavior, interpret the motives of stray dogs.

A WILD HEART...

- Can easily recall forgotten lore they heard in passing, leap over fences, leap onto a counter, run really fast for long periods of time, survive in the wild.
- With difficulty, resist the urge to try dangerous paths, stand still for a long period of time, sneak stealthily across a yard, convince others of their own talents.

THE PEDIGREE...

- Can easily gain respect of humans and other dogs, appear graceful under pressure, be highly prized to other humans, forge friendships with children.
- With difficulty, deal with stray dogs, avoid getting diseases, running for long periods (joint problems), and escaping from possessive owners.

THE WORLD TO A DOG

BEING DOGS

Dogs can talk among themselves and to other animals. Dogs have a long storytelling tradition of passing stories from one dog to another and passing news long distance via barking. Their second method, while considered vulgar by human standards, is through the use of marking their territory. This act, which is done by urinating on an object, lets the dog convey simple information to other dogs in the area. While this information is usually only in two word phrases, it can still be used to convey important information like “STAY OUT,” “WELCOME,” and “MY HYDRANT!”

When it comes to the supernatural most dogs only know the basic stories they were told as young pups. They may have heard of Mutt’Thra from their parents but they do not know who Puggens and his Night Retrievers are. The exception to this are the Wild Hearts, whose connection with the unseen world reveals to them great mysteries that other dogs may have overlooked. The Dog Wrangler can use dreams and visions to give the player hints or clues to the mystery.

Human Talk

Their special relationship has led to dogs being able to understand human terms better than cats ever will. Where as a cat can only hear emotion coming from a human’s mouth (p48), the dog will listen for key words that have become expected. Examples include “Good dog,” “Bad,” and “No,” and other phrases that have been oft repeated in the same tones. Dogs even learn to associate these phrases with specific actions or items. A dog who hears a human say “*find* blah blah blah *leash* blah blah” knows what to look for, and can assume that they’ll go for a walk. Other examples come from associating certain phrases with intensely good or bad experiences, such as the dreaded V-E-T word or the joyous P-A-R-K.

Senses

The world is a big place for a dog. It’s not just the size and scope of the physical. What humans do not understand is how little they sense! Dogs have a sense of smell powerful enough to detect mood shifts in humans, toxins in the environment, and even illnesses in other animals. A dog’s nose is treated to a constant banquet of smells, and dogs are quick to pick out odd scents, such as the presence of a monstrous creature in the environment.

On top of the smells there are the sounds! Dogs can hear many octaves above a human. Sometimes this can prove detrimental, and many canines fear painful noises, such as those annoying whistles that are used for punishment. On the other paw this can be a great boon, as dogs can hear the subtle vibrations of the universe, and are often the first to know when something dramatic is about to happen. They can hear the cries of a lost girl from miles away or the swooshing noises of a Mew-Go’s wings as it stalks its prey.

Pack Dynamics

Perhaps the most important thing to a dog when they come together in a group is establishing who the leader is. Democracy is not practiced amongst dogs, and when humans are not around the dogs look to whoever proves themselves to be not just the toughest but also the best leader of the pack. Any bully can fight their way to become the top dog, but by doing so they run the risk of other dogs leaving when the alpha's back is turned. Dogs have to feel like they have faith in their leader, and the most powerful dog will find a way to take control both with pure physical power and with diplomacy.

Death

Dogs rarely think about death until it happens to their siblings, their parents, or their humans. For a dog, life is so much more interesting in the Now than it is in the Then. Why worry about what day you're going to die? Life is better spent worrying about how to find the best sun beam on the couch or how to prevent the Mew-Go from kidnapping other pets. Some dogs believe that they will travel to their own paradise when they die, where all their human friends will be waiting for them in an endless field of food and comfortable beds as a great reward for their faithful service.

THE GREAT PROMISE

Most dogs have heard the basics of the Great Promise of Mutt'Thra, which forms the basis of their culture. The Great Promise was an oath that was sworn between Mutt'Thra and the great Primogenitor of the Humans back when the world was young and full of terrors that stalked the night. As the Primogenitor slept, Mutt'Thra watched over him and when he was awake Mutt'Thra would help him guard his home and search for food. In exchange for faithful service the Primogenitor swore to Mutt'Thra and his followers that as time went on their lives would become easier, they would be given warm beds and plenty of food to eat, and they would never, EVER replace them with another pet. This was how all of canine kind came to earn the title of Man's Best Friend, a title dogs have jealously guarded ever since.

Cats are the usurper, a parasitic animal that has managed to worm their way into the hearts of so many humans despite their obvious feline failings. Cats are rarely loyal to their owners, and expect worship and supplication from humans where as dogs respect and serve their owners faithfully. This has started the great rivalry between the two, and while cats are becoming more popular with humans dogs stay by their charges, refusing to abandon their posts as Man's Best Friend.

SETTINGS & ADVENTURES

The ancient struggle can happen anywhere. This section contains lots of hints for adventures, so players should check with the Dog Wrangler before reading it.

HILLCREST PARK

Hillcrest Park is a large green space located on the outskirts of the city. It's an old place, part of formerly dense woods that were cleared away in favor of housing developments, and this little slice of land is all that remains. Humans bring their families to this park to enjoy relaxing afternoons or to watch sports over at the Little League Diamond. In the summer it provides a great place for kids to play, and on the 4th of July it has a fantastic view of the fireworks on the other side of town. Dogs often get to walk here with their owners and at night, several cunning animals are able to escape from their homes and roam with their friends along the grassy hills and howl at the moon.

What brings dogs from so many households together? Plenty of adventures await them. It's said there's a hole in the ground near the creek that is bottomless, and the smell of death emanates from it at night. A troll is said to live underneath the bridge near the retention pond and he hunts down any poor pup that doesn't say "Please" before walking across the bridge. By the Little League diamond, it's said the ghost of a lost boy waits on the bleachers for his dad to come pick him up.

Bad Cat Cultists: It seems the neighborhood is being overrun by exceptionally adorable kittens as of late. Humans cannot help but pick them up and take them home, and many dogs are starting to find themselves shut out for affection. At night the cats return back to the park carrying a curious item with them as they leave: their owner's souls! The cats are deranged cultists worshipping the dreaded Catthulhu and they know if they can sacrifice these souls to their lord they can summon him forth onto the mortal realm. Can the dogs save their owners and the lives of the other humans around the park? And who is this mysterious black hound known as the Schatten Schnauzer who seems to be the only one who knows how to free the souls of the dogs owners?

Little Puppy Lost: It's night time and a small black puppy is seen roaming the park alone, seemingly overlooked by nearby humans. The mental image of the puppy is haunting to the pups, who cannot seem to get a night's sleep while the puppy is out there. When the pack goes to retrieve the lost puppy they learn his story: He is one of Puggen's Night Retriever pups, who was sent out on his first mission by his lord but now he cannot remember where he was supposed to go or what he was supposed to do. A cruel raccoon has stolen the puppy's powers, and is using them to terrorize a nearby neighborhood and lord over the local ferals. Getting the powers back is no small task, as the raccoon is now the size of a mountain lion with wings and sharp talons. Should he be overcome or otherwise convinced to return his pilfered powers back to the young pup, the pack has gained an ally in the form of a Night Retriever; or have they? Puggens now takes great interest in the pack and begins testing them to see if they would make worthy servants... or a great potential hunt!

THE SHELTER BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

On the outskirts of Knoxville is the Happy Homes Animal Shelter. Built out of an old school, the shelter has seen thousands of animals of all shapes and sizes go through it in its lifetime. The people who work there are happy when they can place an animal in a new home and deeply saddened when they are forced to euthanize animals they cannot place, and they provide a great service for the local area.

The shelter is built upon a great Divergence in the spiritual world. Once a former hospital and then school, it has seen lots of joy and lots of sorrow. The bricks in the building are soaked with psychic energy which has led to several holes to appear within the pockets of reality around the building. This has had strange effects on those living within the building and in the nearby neighborhoods, as the barrier between worlds is at its weakest here and much psychic energy is stored up within the shelter's walls. [After running the "Greener Pastures" adventure (p81), these ideas can be used to continue with a shelter-based campaign.]

- The rats are very well organized at the shelter, moving out in organized platoons to capture food to bring back to their burrows. Rumors of a "Generallismo" persist among the animals, and some say that he is building up his army to unleash a plague upon humans.
- There is a Sheltie that was adopted into the shelter many years ago but for some reason is overlooked by the staff, who give it food and occasionally attention but otherwise act like he is not there. The Sheltie is a powerful human warlock, hiding in animal form from dangerous enemies.
- A moth flies in through the window one night and lands outside the cage of one of the Player Dogs (PDs). It pleads in a song that only canines can hear. The moth claims to be a prince from a nearby realm that is under attack by an army of ants, and they need the canines help to rescue his people from doom. He can promise assistance against the army of tiny Insect God Cultists, fleas and other bloodsuckers, that attacks every summer.
- A dog arrives who seems to have given up on life despite being young and fairly healthy. When asked about why he is depressed, he tells a story of how his family lost their minds and abandoned him. He was toying with a strange object, bone-like but oddly tough, when there was the scent of magic, and suddenly his family didn't seem to know him. Unknown to the pup, the object was an artifact of the Great Breed of Yipp, and Yippian minds now occupy the bodies of his mother and siblings. The PDs might be able to find the bone-thing again...
- A great army of stray dogs has emerged in the nearby woods and they send scouts to warn the animals inside the building that soon they will attack, hoping to destroy the building before a portal is opened up inside. They claim this was all foretold by one of their mystics, a Poodle Wild Heart

who has foreseen great carnage if the building is left standing. Can the pack talk sense into the Poodle or can they otherwise stop the destruction of their home?

DEMONS AT THE HART'S HOPE HOTEL

In the 21st century, it's great to be a dog. Not only are there heated houses and all sorts of food to drool at, but particularly well-off owners take their dogs along on travel, and more hotels are accommodating to those who walk on all fours. The Hart's Hope Hotel is one such place, a ski resort that not only encourages people to bring their pets but provides them with their own activities. From doggy spa days to group play in the private dog park, the Hart's Hope Hotel offers one of the most luxurious dog resorts in the United States.

The hotel, however, has a much more sinister design to it. The building rests on an ancient cave system once used by an unknown Cult. Now, someone has manipulated humans into building this expensive resort, complete with special statues and esoteric architecture which allows it to channel spiritual energies. The hotel feeds upon the emotions of the guests, and their happiness and joy is fed into a great vault in the subbasement.

The hotel provides opportunities for dogs from all walks of life to come together. Strays loiter around the loading docks of the hotel, where humans toss out huge quantities of half-eaten food. The Pedigree and other favorites are brought to the hotel to enjoy the luxury at their owners' expense, and the energies swirling around the building attract Wild Hearts, who find that the whole place gives them nightmares.

Cats have been brought there as well. While the hotel does its best to keep the two groups separate, at night the dogs find that cats roam the corridors, and stray cats lurk near the loading docks. Competition is fierce at the hotel, as both groups pursue their own agendas there.

The Great Crossover: Taking advantage of the resort's isolation, a strange convention group has arrived: *Bunncon*, a massive event catering exclusively to rabbit owners. The groups of dogs and cats now must contend with humans fawning over the seemingly emotionless bunnies and their oddly cheery humans.

As the dogs and cats relax at night, they notice strange robed figures roaming the hallways and indoor water park, stealing animals' food, and tampering with equipment around the hotel, causing plenty of arguments and damage to the structure. Strange chanting occurs at night, punctuated by high pitched shrieks. A great sense of foreboding and dread begins to fill the pets and they see their owners behave strangely around the new animals.

The rabbits are worshippers of an unnamed god. They have come to the Hart's Hope because of the weakness of the dimensional walls in the area, and seek to complete a Major Ritual which they name the Crossover. The rabbit Cultists believe that the Ritual will allow a monstrous figure into the world, who will slay predatory

races such as dogs and create a rabbit paradise. The actual result would more likely be widespread, indiscriminate destruction. Among the rabbit owners, several humans are under mind control, used to adjust the steam pipes, electrical circuits, and other hotel systems until they achieve geometric perfection for transdimensional contact.

The rabbits, helped by the mice in the hotel, gather materials and herbs during the day for their rituals at night. Can cats and dogs put aside their rivalries to stop the lapine conspirators? For an added twist for particularly dark games, the rabbit Cult can establish mind control over one or more owners of the Player Dogs.

On an auspicious date, a lunar eclipse will provide the alignment that lets the Cultists complete their Major Ritual (p13), tear a hole in reality, and release Something Bad from its ancient prison. The dogs cannot let that happen.

WEREDOGS

This kind of story is particularly dark, and it is meant for more mature players. Those wanting a more jovial form of adventure may choose to alter it to fit the mood, but the themes of friendship and the desire to save someone at all costs are very prominent. In these scenarios, a strange dog bites the owner or other human friend of a Player Dogs. This biter, described only as a very large animal, disappears; the human, taken to a hospital and treated with the best of human medicine, healed quickly, and it seems that the friend recovers... until the next full moon.

- The owner of one of the Pedigree dogs has gone missing, his mind succumbing to the bestial rage that now fills him. The dog is trapped in the house and has to work with the other PDs to escape. That done, can the dogs find out where the owner has traveled? How can they defeat the owner, who is now a monstrous killing machine?
- The Bestfriend in the group has discovered that his boy is showing strange symptoms. He rarely plays catch anymore, preferring to sit in the yard and stare at the woods. He doesn't sleep in his bed, pulling the sheets off the bed and making a nest on the floor. Then one day the most unbelievable thing happens; the boy understands animals perfectly! In this scenario the dogs must help out the boy as he deals with his condition, and they must help him maintain a link with his humanity while everything that he was fades away.
- A doglike monster called the Black Grimm has appeared on Earth, a Major Servant of the Wild. The creature seeks to replace all of mankind with wolves through infectious, mind-eroding lycanthropy. Soon the transformation occurs every night. Packs of huge black dogs roam the dark woods, including some owners, and the characters must stop the spread without harming the humans. The most direct method is to kill the Black Grimm itself, but it is in hiding, and will prove hard to defeat.

Appendix N

INSPIRATIONAL READING

SHORT FICTION

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips (H.P.)

Key short stories:

“The Call of Cthulhu”

“The Cats of Ulthar”

“The Shadow over Innsmouth”

Novellas:

“The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath” (features cats)

“The Shadow out of Time”

“The Case of Charles Dexter Ward”

Kipling, Rudyard: “The Cat That Walked by Himself,” from *Just So Stories*

Marquis, Don: *The Life & Times of Archy & Mehitabel* (collected columns)

Stevenson, Robert Louis: “The Bottle Imp” (dark magic)

NOVELS

Hunter, Erin: *Warriors* series

Smith, Dodie: *The Hundred and One Dalmations* and sequel, *The Starlight Barking*

DOGGEREL

Eliot, T.S.: *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*

FILM

Disney, Walt (Walt Disney Productions):

Lady and the Tramp (1955)

One Hundred and One Dalmations (1961)

The Aristocats (1970)

Miyazaki, Hayao (Studio Ghibli): *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989)

RPGS

Call of Cthulhu (1981), by Sandy Peterson: Ground-breaking game of horror and mysteries based on the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft and his followers. Revised and updated many times, with supplements and adventures from numerous authors. After a successful Kickstarter, the 7th Edition is expected from Chaosium in 2014.

Toon (1984), by Greg Costikyan, developed by Warren Spencer for Steve Jackson Games. Player characters are cartoons, including talking animals.

Woof Meow (1988), by Ulrico Font and John Williford. First game where characters are pets.

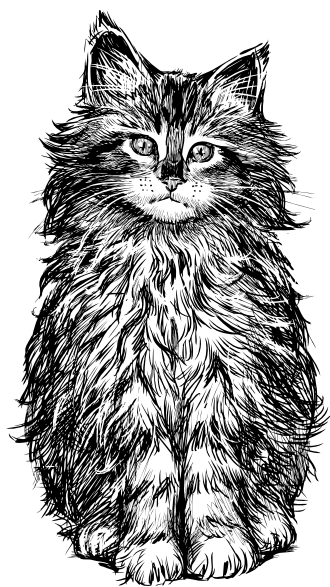
CAT (1999), by John Wick: Compact and fun game where cats protect their owners from invisible monsters; additional rules include adventuring in dreams. Revised 2004, re-released 2011.

“Another Fine Mess” (2000), by Ann Dupuis: Innovative fantasy adventure where the characters are the animal companions of a captured human master. Designed for the FUDGE system, the book contains all needed rules.

“Katzulhu” (2001), by Ingo Ahrens: German magazine article with rules for cat investigators in *Call of Cthulhu*. Translated in *Worlds of Cthulhu* magazine in 2006.

DAWG (2009), by Ashok Desai for Kenzer & Company. So-called Second Edition RPG where all player characters are dogs; the first edition is a fictional product in the webcomic “Knights of the Dinner Table,” by Jolly Blackburn.












Warriors Adventure Game (2009), by Stan!, based on Erin Hunter’s books.



Rules Summary

CHALLENGES. Book I, p20-25

Roll two Cat Dice (2dC) and read zero, one, or two Happy Cats (3–6 on a d6).

Easy Challenge Need one Success	 /  
Normal Challenge One Success: Partial progress or insight Two Successes: Challenge met!	  /  
Difficult Challenge Need two Successes	  /  

RCFTJ: The Right Cat for the Job gets one automatic Success.

Midnight: Double 6s is a Triumphant Success. **Snake Eyes:** Double 1s is an Embarrassing Failure (Embarrassing Success for RCFTJ on Easy Challenge).

Dire Challenge: RCFTJ only. Difficult Challenge; no Treats or automatic Success; each Failure inflicts an Injury.

Glory: Sacrifice a Life (I, p21) to roll a third Cat Die (3dC) on a Dire Challenge.

Brush with Death: Glorious Dire Challenge attempt, costing a Life, to avoid doom.

Blaze of Glory: Cat dies but succeeds spectacularly at any one Challenge.

SCRAPPING Book I, p28-30

Contest of 2dC. Non-cats count Sad Cat rolls (1–2 on a d6). Scrapper or warlike creature gets one automatic Success. Winner chooses 1 Result to inflict on loser:

Dodge: Winner avoids all attacks and can flee.

Stun: Loser becomes temporarily unable to act.


Shove: Winner moves loser a little.



Grab: The winner gets a grip on the loser.




Hurt: The winner does her best to draw blood.

Holding Action: If the cat chooses to face an overwhelming foe, win or lose the Scrapping contest, each Failure draws a Result inflicted by the enemy.

INJURIESBook I, p27


 **Injured:** Physical Challenges more difficult.

  **Disabled:** No physical actions. Mental Challenges more difficult.

   **Dying:** Unconscious; will pass away by end of session unless helped.

Recovery (I, p27): Spend leftover Treats after play, or sacrifice a Life for instant healing.

TREATSBook I, p21

 Trade in a Treat to retry any roll—except a Dire Challenge!