# Ongoing Investigations

Character Options For Investigators

Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

AFINDER

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# Introduction

"Investigator" is more than just the name of one of the classes found in Paizo's *Advanced Class Guide*. "Investigator" is a name that applies to any number of courageous and inquisitive individuals who, whether from insatiable curiosity, a desire to see justice done, the thrill of the chase, or simply because it's their job, devote themselves to uncovering the truth behind mysterious circumstances, and dragging the culprits behind those mysteries kicking and screaming out of the shadows and into the light of day. This book focuses on providing additional support and character options for both types of investigators: those who are officially part of the investigator class, and those who are merely investigators at heart.

The first section of the book presents nine new archetypes for investigators, over the course of eight pages. Each of these archetypes is designed to either reflect a particular flavor of investigators, that one might find in a mystery novel or television show, or is designed with specific tweaks and alterations on the investigator class. Some are particularly demanding, exchanging a large number of class features and leaving little room for other archetypes, while others (such as the addicted inspector) were specifically designed to be as unobtrusive as possible, allowing it to be combined with other archetypes.

The next section of the book provides a series of 15 new investigator talents. Several of these talents were designed to showcase and support a handful of skills that were not touched on very thoroughly by the investigator talents in the *Advanced Class Guide*. Others focus on providing the investigator with additional combat options, suitable to the highly intellectual fighting style popularized in some detective media. Following this section is a collection of 16 new feats, which were designed to provide characters of both the investigator class and other classes alike some tools that can be of great use to anyone interested in hunting down clues, making deductions, and solving mysteries. Finally, the mechanical content of the book wraps up with 16 new spells, all of which are invaluable to members of any class who are concerned with solving mysteries.

After this, there is a brief essay intended for GMs, which provides some helpful tips and tricks for constructing and running an adventure that focuses primarily on solving a mystery. While players are certainly able to read this section, and doing so is unlikely to completely spoil any mystery made using it, we recommend that any players interested in a mystery game instead share this section with their GM, because, after all, without a GM who is willing and able to run a mystery game, no amount of readiness to solve mysteries will do you or your character any good.



# New Investigator Archetypes

The following archetypes are available for members of the investigator class. The investigator can be found in the *Advanced Class Guide*, and more information on archetypes, and how to use them, can be found in the *Advanced Player's Guide*. The archetypes are presented in alphabetical order.

#### Addicted Inspector

Many inspectors turn to drugs, whether to give them a little bit of solace from their constantly-working intellects, or to help them to cope with the harsh realities of their profession. Some investigators even come to rely on their drugs not only to help them sleep at night, but even to do their job.

**Drug of Choice (Ex):** An addicted inspector may partake in a variety of drugs, but he has a particular drug of choice, with which several class features are associated. Choose a single drug, which the addicted inspector immediately becomes addicted to. The drug must have an addiction entry, and must have an effect when a single dose is consumed. If the drug's addiction Fortitude DC is less than 10 + 1/2 the addicted inspector's class level, it increases to that amount. At 7<sup>th</sup> level, if the drug's addiction type is minor, it increases to moderate, and at 14<sup>th</sup> level, it increases to severe, if it is not already.

The addicted inspector can be cured of his addiction through the normal means, but if he does so, he loses the benefits of any talents that relate to his drug of choice.

Addicted Inspector Talents: The following talents are only available to characters of the addicted inspector archetype.

Deadpan Delivery (Ex): The addicted inspector is more convincing while under the effects of his drug of choice. While under the effects of his drug of choice, the addicted inspector gains a bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks equal to 1 plus 1/4 his class level (rounded down).

Mixed Brew (Ex): The addicted inspector can mix a dose of his drug of choice into an extract he creates, allowing him to consume the drug and the extract at the same time. He is able to do this even if the drug is not normally ingested. The addicted inspector must declare that he is using this ability when he creates the extract, and must have a dose of the drug available to mix into the extract in this way.

*Narcotic Bravery* (*Ex*): While the addicted inspector is under the effects of his drug of choice, he gains a bonus on saving throws made to resist fear effects equal to 1/3 his class level (rounded down, minimum 1).

*Narcotic Genius (Ex):* Choose two investigator talents that are not related to the addicted inspector's drug of choice, which the addicted inspector qualifies for. As long as the addicted inspector is currently under the effects of his drug of choice, he is treated as having both of those investigator talents.

*Pharmaceutical Focus (Ex):* While under the effects of his drug of choice, an addicted inspector is better able to focus on and perceive minute details, granting him a bonus on all Perception and Sense Motive checks equal to 1 plus 1/4 his class level (rounded down).

Pharmaceutical Inspiration (Ex): Whenever the addicted inspector takes a dose of his drug of choice, he gains a single use of inspiration. This use of inspiration is temporary, and lasts only as long as the drug's effect. If it is not used by the end of that time, it is wasted. The addicted inspector can gain a total number of temporary uses of inspiration in this way per day equal to 1/2 his class level.

Staggered Movements (Ex): The addicted inspector gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC while under the effects of his drug of choice, as his movements become erratic and unpredictable. This bonus increases to +4 against attacks of opportunity.

#### Analyst

Analysts are investigators who prefer to think things through before acting. They are able to pick apart problems by investing their time working on them, and can solve what others consider unsolvable problems by spending that little bit of extra time to dig for information. By carefully studying problems, they can even recreate most forms of magical phenomena. In addition to being able to easily identify most magical items and figure out their inner workings, even without magical aid, the analyst can determine the workings of magic spells in order to create a potent alchemical version of a studied spell.

Analytical Inspiration (Ex): An analyst applies critical thinking and careful study to problems so that he can better understand how things work. Starting at 1<sup>st</sup> level, an analyst gains the inspiration class feature, as normal, except that it requires expending 4 uses of inspiration in order to use it on attack rolls and saving throws, instead of only requiring 2 uses.

The analyst can spend 3 rounds analyzing a problem in order to add 1d6 + his analyst level on a single skill check or ability check. This does not require expending uses of inspiration, but the analyst cannot use this ability more than once to attempt the same skill check or ability check. Finally, the analyst gains double the normal bonus from research materials and libraries.

This ability replaces the inspiration class feature.

Knowledge Base (Ex): An analyst has a wide knowledge base to draw upon to help him in his analytical processes. As such, an analyst adds 1/2 his level (minimum +1) to all Knowledge checks and can make any Knowledge check untrained.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

**Analyze Item (Ex):** An analyst is skilled at analyzing items to determine their properties. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the analyst gains the ability to determine the magical properties of any item he studies for at least 3 rounds without need of a Spellcraft check. This also allows him to determine whether the item is cursed.

This ability replaces the poison lore class feature.

**Analytical Recreation (Sp):** An analyst has the ability to recreate spells he has seen as alchemical formulae by identifying and examining the elements of that spell. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, whenever he successfully identifies a spell using Spellcraft, he gains an insight point for that spell. For every 5 points by which his Spellcraft check exceeds the DC to identify the spell, he gains an additional insight point. If the analyst accumulates insight points for a given spell equal to its spell level, he can copy that spell into a special analytical recreation notebook. Doing so requires the expenditure of 25 gp per spell level of the spell, plus any costly material component the spell requires, and takes an hour.

The analyst can cast spells from his analytical recreation notebook. This functions similarly to casting a scroll, except that the analyst does not need to make a Use Magic Device check to cast it, even if the spell does not appear on his spell list, his caster level is too low, or some other factor would normally prevent him from casting it. Once cast, the spell is consumed from the notebook, similar to how a scroll is consumed upon use. Unlike a scroll, the spell uses the analyst's caster level, and its saving throw DC is determined by his Intelligence modifier. The analyst's analytical recreation notebook can hold a maximum number of spells at any given time equal to his Intelligence modifier. Any additional spells scribed into the notebook beyond this amount cause previous spells to be expended.

This ability replaces the keen recollection and trap sense class features.

**Analytical Combat (Ex):** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, an analyst can analyze his foes during combat in order to make more effective attacks. As a standard action, an analyst can study a creature in order to learn its weaknesses. In order to do so, he must succeed on a Knowledge check to identify the creature. If the analyst has previously used analytical combat successfully against a creature of that kind, he gains a +5 competence bonus on this check. If the check is successful, he learns all defensive abilities and vulnerabilities of the creature, in addition to whatever other information he would be entitled to as a result of the check. The analyst also receives a +2 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls against the target. This bonus increases by 1 for every 5 points by which his Knowledge check exceeded the DC to identify the target. These bonuses last until the target is slain, or until this ability is discharged with a studied strike. An analyst can only have one target of his analytical combat at any one time.

This ability replaces the studied combat class feature.

**Studied Strike (Ex):** The analyst can use his studied strike ability against targets of his analytical combat, as though they were the target of the studied combat class feature.

This ability modifies the studied strike class feature.

#### Arcane Investigator

The arcane investigator is an investigator devoted to the discovery of magic and its effects. Not only do arcane investigators study magic, but all arcane investigators are practitioners of arcane arts and are capable of casting spells in a fashion similar to a wizard. Of course, while arcane investigators are not as skilled at magic as true mages, their supplemental spellcasting abilities, combined with their knowledge of magical spells and objects, augments their other abilities to allow them to easily pursue whatever goals they choose.

**Cantrips:** An arcane investigator can prepare 4 cantrips, or o-levels spells, each day. These spells are cast like any other spell, but they are not expended when cast and may be used again. An arcane investigator begins play knowing all o-level spells on the sorcerer/wizard spell list. **Spells:** An arcane investigator casts arcane spells drawn from the sorcerer/wizard spell list. An arcane investigator must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time.

Only sorcerer/wizard spells of 6<sup>th</sup> level or lower are considered to be part of the arcane investigator's spell list. An arcane investigator cannot use spell trigger magic items (without making a successful Use Magic Device check) of sorcerer/wizard spells of 7<sup>th</sup> level or higher.

To learn, prepare, or cast a spell, the arcane investigator must have an Intelligence score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against an arcane investigator's spell is 10 + the spell level + the arcane investigator's Intelligence modifier.

An arcane investigator can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is identical to the number of extracts of each spell level that can be prepared by a normal investigator. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Intelligence score.

An arcane investigator may know any number of spells. He must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time by getting 8 hours of sleep and spending 1 hour studying his spellbook. While studying, the arcane investigator decides which spells to prepare.

Spellbooks: An arcane investigator must study his spellbook each day to prepare his spells. He cannot prepare any spell not recorded in his spellbook except for *read magic*, which all arcane investigators can prepare from memory. An arcane investigator begins play with a spellbook containing all o-level sorcerer/wizard spells plus three 1st-level sorcerer/ wizard spells of his choice. The arcane investigator also selects a number of additional 1st-level sorcerer/wizard spells equal to his Intelligence modifier to add to his spellbook. At each new arcane investigator level, he gains two new sorcerer/wizard spells of any spell level or levels that he can cast (based on his new arcane investigator level) for his spellbook. At any time, an arcane investigator can also add spells found in other spellbooks to his own.

An arcane investigator can learn spells from a wizard's spellbook, just as a wizard can from an arcane investigator's spellbook. An alchemist can learn formulae from an arcane investigator's spellbook, if the spells are also on the alchemist spell list. An arcane investigator cannot learn spells from an alchemist.

This ability replaces the alchemy class feature.

**Investigate Magical Effects (Ex):** An arcane investigator is keen to investigate into spells and other ongoing magical phenomena. The arcane investigator adds 1/2 his class level as a bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) checks made to determine a spell effect already in place, as well as on Spellcraft checks made to identify spells being cast.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

Arcane Investigations (Sp): By 3<sup>rd</sup> level, an arcane investigator is able to glean a lot more about the casting of spells after the fact than most others are able to. When using *detect magic* and Spellcraft to identify spell effects and lingering spell auras, the arcane investigator is able to distinguish between spells cast by different individuals: each spellcaster has a special "signature," which is consistent in all spells they cast, allowing the arcane investigator to easily determine whether two spells were cast by the same person (and, if he has a sample to compare them to, he can use this to determine who cast a specific spell). A spellcaster can attempt to hide this telltale signature when they cast a spell: doing so requires that the caster succeed on a special opposed roll (1d20 + the caster's Bluff modifier + the caster's Spellcraft modifier, opposed by 1d20 + the arcane investigator's Perception modifier + the arcane investigator's Spellcraft modifier). If the arcane investigator wins, he identifies the signature despite the caster's efforts. If the caster wins, the arcane investigator is unable to find a signature in the spell.

Additionally, the arcane investigator is able to detect lingering auras for a much longer period of time than other casters are typically able to. If the amount of time that the spell's aura would have lingered has expired, the arcane investigator can attempt a Spellcraft check to detect faint traces of the aura, which others would miss. The DC for this check depends on the original strength of the aura, and how much time has passed since the spell was initially cast, as outlined on the table below.

#### Table 1-1: Arcane Investigations

Original Strength	Base DC	+1 Per
Faint	20	Minute
Moderate	15	Hour
Strong	10	Day
Overwhelming	5	Week

This ability replaces the investigator talent gained at 3<sup>rd</sup> level.

**Spell Defense (Ex):** An arcane investigator is trained to counter hostile spells and is exceptional at using his skills to dismantle the spellcraft of enemies. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the arcane investigator gains a +1 bonus on caster level checks made to dispel or counter spells, as well as on caster level checks made to allow a spell to have its normal effect (such as that required by *remove curse*). At 6<sup>th</sup> level, and every 3 levels thereafter, this bonus increases by +1.

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

Arcane Studied Combat (Su): An arcane investigator is able to study his foes and tailor his magic specifically to affect them. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the arcane investigator can use a move action to study a single enemy that he can see. Upon doing so, he treats his caster level as being 1 higher than it actually is when determining the effects of his spells on that enemy. This has no effect on any aspect of a spell that does not specifically affect that creature (for example, a fireball spell cast by a 7<sup>th</sup> level arcane investigator would deal 8d6 points of damage to the target of his arcane studied combat, and 7d6 to any other creatures in the area. The spell's maximum range would not be affected, as that does not specifically affect the target of the arcane studied combat. Alternatively, a hold person spell cast on the target would last 8 rounds, instead of 7, as the duration is 1 round per level). At 8<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, the amount by which his caster level is increased improves by 1 (to a maximum of 5 higher, at 20<sup>th</sup> level).

This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 the arcane investigator's Intelligence modifier, or until he uses his arcane studied strike class feature, whichever comes first. An investigator can only have one target of studied combat at a time, and once a creature has become the target of an investigator's studied combat, he cannot become the target of the same investigator's studied combat again for 24 hours unless the investigator expends one use of inspiration when taking the move action to use this ability.

This ability replaces the studied combat class feature.

Arcane Studied Strike (Su): At 4<sup>th</sup> level, whenever an arcane investigator casts a spell that targets a creature he is currently using his arcane studied combat class feature on, if that creature is the only target, the arcane investigator can increase the saving throw DC of that spell by 2. Doing so ends the arcane studied combat (although its benefits still apply to the spell).

#### **Corrupt Detective**

Some investigators are less concerned with bringing culprits to justice or finding the exact truth, and instead focus on doing whatever needs to be done in order to keep things running smoothly. These jaded investigators know that the ends justify the means, and aren't above doing a few unsavory things to get the result that they want.

Wary (Ex): A corrupt detective is always on the lookout for potential danger, and is rarely caught by surprise. He adds 1/2 his level on Perception checks made to notice enemies or other dangers, or which would allow him to act during a surprise round.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

**Inspired Strike (Ex):** Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a corrupt detective learns to aim his blows just right to inflict a little extra damage. He can expend one use of inspiration whenever he makes a melee attack. If he does, and the attack hits, he adds his inspiration dice to the damage roll for that attack (anything that modifies what dice are rolled for inspiration, such as the amazing inspiration talent, also applies to this ability). If the attack does not hit, the use of inspiration is wasted.

This ability replaces the poison use and poison resistance class features.

**Get the Jump on Them (Ex):** Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a corrupt detective has learned the value of getting in the first strike, and is quick to act in any combat situation. He gains a +1 bonus on initiative checks. Additionally, whenever he makes an initiative check, he may expend 2 uses of inspiration in order to treat his initiative check as though it were a natural 20.

At  $6^{th}$  level and every 3 levels thereafter, the bonus on initiative checks increases by +1 (to a maximum of +6 at  $18^{th}$  level).

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

**Stage the Scene (Ex):** Beginning at 4<sup>th</sup> level, a corrupt detective learns how to stage a scene so that anyone attempting to scrutinize it for clues about events that had occurred there will reach the conclusions that he wants them to, whether or not that's what actually happened. Doing so requires 1 minute of work per 5-foot-square of the area to be affected. During this time, the corrupt detective can expend any amount of uses of inspiration that he desires, up to 1/4 his class level. The corrupt detective must determine what narrative or series of events he wishes to portray during this time, and, depending on exactly what that is, may need to provide specific items in order to complete the effect (for example, if he wanted to indicate that a specific person was present, he might need to acquire a unique item of that person's to place at the scene).

Anyone attempting to use Perception, Survival, or similar skills or abilities to determine what occurred in the staged area must succeed on a separate Perception check in order to do so (DC 15 + the corrupt detective's class level + the corrupt detective's Intelligence modifier, plus 3 for each use of inspiration expended while staging the scene). Failure on this check indicates that the observer is not able to see through the staged evidence, and concludes that events transpired in the way that the corrupt detective outlined.

Because the corrupt detective has some magical knowledge, he can even use this ability to fool some simple divination spells, although he must indicate that he is doing so while staging the scene, and specify what specific methods of divination he is attempting to fool, and how. He can create lingering auras that can fool *detect evil* (and similar spells for other alignments), *detect magic*, or *detect undead*, in this way, but cannot otherwise fool these spells. He can also make a creature, object, or area appear poisonous to *detect poison*. At the GM's discretion, he may be able to fool certain other spells, but such spells should be ones that function similarly to those described above, and can never interfere with divination spells that provide information from another source, such as *speak with dead* or *commune*.

This ability replaces the swift alchemy class feature.

**Underhanded Strike** (Ex): By 9<sup>th</sup> level, a corrupt detective is particularly effective at using underhanded and dirty fighting techniques. The corrupt detective can now choose to expend uses of inspiration to deal additional damage with melee attacks after learning whether or not the attack is a hit, rather than doing so before the attack roll.

Additionally, he can expend up to two uses of inspiration per attack in this way, and adds both results to the damage roll.

This ability replaces the investigator talent gained at 9<sup>th</sup> level.

#### Dogged Investigator

Dogged investigators desperately hunt after a single character, hunting their victim obsessively and learning his every secret. For many dogged investigators, the object of their obsession becomes as close to them as kin, though the two likely meet only infrequently. These dedicated investigators are exceptional trackers and combatants, focused on a single target.

**Mark (Ex):** A dogged investigator chooses to focus all of his efforts on a single individual, and all his abilities revolve around that singular mark. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, a dogged investigator chooses a single creature to be his mark. The dogged investigator does not need to have ever met the mark, and need not even know the mark's name or appearance, but must be able to specify his mark in some way (*for example, he could choose "the king" as his mark, or "my long-lost brother," or even "the person who murdered the local vicar," but he could not choose "the next bounty hunter I meet," or "the weakest goblin in the group."*). Once selected, his mark can only be changed by spending 48 hours to clear his head of the old investigation and begin anew.

When interacting with his mark, the dogged investigator can use his inspiration ability without expending uses of inspiration (including making opposed skill checks against his mark, making attack or damage rolls against his mark, making Knowledge checks regarding his mark, etc.). However, he can choose to spend a single use of inspiration in order to roll his inspiration dice twice and take the higher result. This ability only applies on actions that directly involve the dogged investigator's mark (for example, it could not be used on a check made to convince a judge to convict the mark, nor could it be used on checks made against the mark's flunkies, etc.).

The dogged investigator must spend uses of inspiration as normal when using inspiration for anything not relating to his mark. At 5th level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the dogged investigator can have one additional mark at the same time.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature and modifies the inspiration class feature.

**Dogged Hunting (Ex):** A dogged investigator is a master of finding his marks. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a dogged investigator adds 1/2 his class level to Survival checks made to follow the tracks of his mark, and may do so even if untrained in Survival. Additionally, if the dogged investigator visits a location in which his mark had stayed for a period of at least 48 hours, he automatically becomes aware of the fact that his mark had stayed there. Further, he is always able to determine whether tracks that he finds belong to his mark or not.

This ability replaces the poison lore class feature.

**Same Old Tricks (Ex):** A dogged investigator is used to seeing his mark's tricks and attacks and knows how to avoid them. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the dogged investigator gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC and a +1 competence bonus all saving throw made against spells and abilities of his mark. At 6<sup>th</sup> level, and every 3 levels thereafter, these bonuses increase by 1.

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

**Studied Combat (Ex):** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a dogged investigator gains the studied combat ability as normal, except that the bonuses to attack and damage rolls against his mark are doubled, while bonuses against all other creatures are halved.

This ability modifies the studied combat class feature.

**Once and for All (Ex):** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a dogged investigator may attempt to put an end to his mark, once and for all. While using studied combat against his mark, a dogged investigator can try to put an end to his mark then and there. He may make a single attack as a standard action against his mark, which, if successful, deals damage as normal and forces the mark to succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the dogged investigator's level + the dogged investigator's Intelligence modifier) or suffer an amount of additional damage equal to 2/3 his current hit points (after applying the damage from the attack). Even if the mark succeeds on this save, he suffers an amount of additional damage equal to 1/3 his current hit points.

Regardless of the results of the attack, that creature immediately ceases to be a target of the dogged investigator's mark ability. The dogged investigator still must wait at least a week to clear his mind of the investigation before he can choose another mark. If the mark survived the attack, he can select the same target again a week later.

This ability replaces the studied strike class feature.

#### **Gentleman** Detective

Gentleman detectives live for fame and respect, but also are among the best suited to solving crimes and getting to the bottom of mysteries of all sorts. Equally skilled in schmoozing and witty banter, the gentleman detective prefers to talk to witnesses and those in the know to get their information, rather than digging around musty old crime scenes. Though more of a talker than a fighter, the gentlemen detective is perfectly capable of handling any combatant, provided his opponent is willing to engage in a fair fistfight, and even when his enemies aren't so cooperative, the gentleman detective's sense of honor and propriety will be sure to show the honorless curs the might of the right side of the law.

**Skillful Interview** (Ex): A gentleman detective is good at getting along with people and using his skills in order to learn what he wants from others. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a gentleman detective's charms begin to take hold on those he interviews. As a swift action, he can designate a creature as the subject of his interview. Whenever the gentleman detective speaks with the target of his interview, he can use his inspiration ability on Sense Motive checks against the target of his interview without spending uses of inspiration. Additionally, if he uses Diplomacy or Intimidate to raise the subject's attitude, he raises it one step higher than normal, and the change in attitude lasts for twice as long as it ordinarily would. Finally, a gentleman detective automatically gains a hunch about the target of his skillful interview. The interview effect lasts for up to 10 minutes, and the gentleman detective must wait at least 10 minutes after ending an interview before he can start a new one.

This ability replaces the poison lore class feature.

**Schmoozing (Ex):** A gentleman detective is very good at getting information out of people. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, he gains a +2 competence bonus on Diplomacy checks made to gather information, and can gather information in half the normal amount of time. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, and again at 8<sup>th</sup> level, this bonus increases by a further +2. At 11<sup>th</sup> level, the gentleman detective can gather information by spending 10 minutes asking around.

This ability replaces the poison resistance and poison immunity class features.

**Decipher Clues (Ex):** A gentleman detective is able to draw conclusions from things he notices that others would not be able to. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a gentleman detective can use Perception in place of any Knowledge check to learn more about a subject he can currently sense. Additionally, he automatically discovers any tracks in the area if he spends at least one minute looking for them, provided that the tracks could normally be found with a Survival check result of 20 + his class level or lower. Finally, he can use Perception in place of Survival (at the same DCs) to follow tracks, as long as those tracks are no more than one day old.

This ability replaces the keen recollection class feature.

Witty Repartee (Ex): A gentleman detective knows how to use banter to deflect social attacks and put his foes off their game. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the gentleman detective increases the DC of any Bluff and Intimidate checks made against him by 1 (in the case of Bluff or Intimidate checks that are opposed by a skill or ability check, instead of having a static DC, this amount is added to the gentleman detective's result). At 6<sup>th</sup> level, and every 3 levels thereafter, this amount increases by +1.

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

**Fisticuffs (Ex):** A gentleman detective prefers to settle matters mano a mano. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, as a standard action, the gentleman detective can challenge a foe to fisticuffs. If he does, he gains a morale bonus on all attack and damage rolls made with unarmed strikes against that foe equal to his class level. These bonuses last for a number of rounds equal to his Intelligence modifier, or the gentleman detective may choose to prematurely end fisticuffs with a rabbit punch. A gentleman detective can only challenge one creature to fisticuffs at a time and cannot target the same creature more than once in a given 24-hour period.



This ability replaces the studied combat class feature.

**Rabbit Punch (Ex):** A gentleman detective can perform a special kind of sucker punch in an attempt to put an end to fisticuffs. Starting at 4<sup>th</sup> level, a gentleman detective can choose to use a rabbit punch against the target of his fisticuffs ability. If he does, he makes a single attack roll (with the bonuses from fisticuffs) which, if successful, is considered a critical threat. If the gentleman detective confirms the critical hit, the target is nauseated for 1 round.

This ability replaces the studied strike class feature.

#### Reactionist

Reactionists are investigators of the alchemical process, less interested in understanding people and more in how one can use alchemy in conjunction with other elements in order to produce interesting effects. Some feel these reclusive forensic warriors are mad and unstable more than anything else, but are forced to admit that their chemical skills are unmatched.

Alchemical Reaction (Ex): A reactionist is skilled in the creation of a special catalyst, which can improve the effectiveness of his extracts. At 1st level, the reactionist can apply a catalyst to an extract he created in order to increase its caster level by 1. Doing so is a free action made as part of creating the extract. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, this bonus to the extract's caster level increases by an additional +1. He can use this ability a number of times each day equal to his Intelligence modifier.

This ability replaces the inspiration class feature.

**Venomous Reaction (Ex):** A reactionist can use his skills to temporarily cause poisons to have a more virulent reaction. At  $2^{nd}$  level, by exposing himself to a single dose of poison, the reactionist can attempt to increase its toxicity. If he does, that saving throw DC of that dose of poison is increased to 10 + 1/2 the reactionist's class level + the reactionist's Intelligence modifier. The reactionist must save against this higher saving throw DC when determining if he is affected by the poison (since he exposed himself to it); however, the dose of poison is not consumed, whether he is affected or not. The target dose of poison's saving throw modifier remains increased for a number of rounds equal to the reactionist's class level.

Additionally, the reactionist can apply poison to a weapon without risk of poisoning himself.

This ability replaces the poison lore class feature.

**Internal Reaction (Ex):** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a reactionist learns to use his own body chemistry in order to increase the effectiveness of substances he imbibes. Whenever the reactionist consumes a potion, elixir, or alchemical extract, he may choose to treat the item as though it had a caster level equal to his own caster level, instead of whatever caster level it ordinarily would have.

This ability replaces the keen recollection class feature.

**Studied Combat (Ex):** at 4<sup>th</sup> level, a reactionist gains studied combat as normal, except that he gains no bonus to damage against the target of his studied strike. Instead, whenever he successfully hits the target of his studied combat with a melee attack, in addition to dealing damage as normal, he places a trace amount of catalyst on the target's body, which he can later use to great effect with his caustic reaction class feature (see below).

This ability modifies the studied combat class feature.

**Caustic Reaction (Ex):** A reactionist learns to apply his special catalyst to another creature's skin, causing intense and painful burns. Beginning at 4<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the reactionist successfully hits the target of his studied combat ability with a melee attack, he can choose to trigger a caustic reaction by exposing the target to a specially-prepared acidic capsule. This is a free action made as part of the attack. The caustic reaction inflicts 1d6 points of acid damage to the target, plus an additional 1d6 points of acid damage for every dose of catalyst he had previously placed on the target with his studied combat class feature (to a maximum number of d6 equal to his class level). Only doses of catalyst applied since the last time the reactionist initiated studied combat apply, even if the reactionist had placed doses of catalyst on the target during a previous studied combat.

The acid lingers on the target's body, and he suffers the same amount of acid damage again on the reactionist's next turn. The target can attempt a Reflex save as a standard action (DC 10 + 1/2 the reactionist's level + the reactionist's Intelligence modifier) in order to remove the acid before suffering damage on the following round.

This ability modifies studied strike class feature.

**Persistent Reaction (Ex):** A reactionist's ultimate skill allows him to create longlasting caustic reactions. At 20<sup>th</sup> level, when the reactionist successfully uses his caustic reaction ability, the target continues to suffer acid damage each subsequent round until he succeeds on a saving throw made to remove the acid. Additionally, the reactionist can use his alchemical reaction any number of times each day.

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This ability replaces the true inspiration class feature.

#### Stealth Sleuth

Stealth sleuths are investigators who rely on stealth and guile, rather than charm or social grace. Preferring to stay in the shadows, most stealth sleuths use their abilities to observe subjects of interest from the shadows, either watching events unfold or taking their time to study subjects undisturbed. Eminent stalkers, stealth sleuths almost always remain unobserved, showing themselves only in critical moments or when it is necessary to strike decisively and with precision few can match.

**Stealth Stalker** (Ex): A stealth sleuth is a very sneaky individual, capable of evading most detection. A stealth sleuth adds 1/2 his class level (minimum +1) on all

Stealth checks, and can use inspiration on Stealth checks without needing to spend uses of inspiration.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

**Stealth Dash (Ex):** A stealth sleuth learns to move at high speeds while remaining unseen. At  $2^{nd}$  level, the stealth sleuth can move at full speed while using the Stealth skill with no penalty. At  $11^{th}$  level, the stealth sleuth can run while using the Stealth skill with no penalty.

This ability replaces the poison lore class feature.

**Unseen Observer (Ex):** A stealth sleuth is exceptional at observing things when he remains unseen. At 2nd level, as long as the stealth sleuth is unobserved, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Perception and Sense Motive checks. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, and every 3 levels thereafter, these bonuses increase by an additional +1.

This ability replaces the poison resistance and poison immunity class features.

**Studied Combat (Ex):** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the stealth sleuth gains studied combat as normal. However, he gains no bonus on damage rolls against the target of his studied combat. Instead, he gains the ability to inflict sneak attack damage, as the rogue class feature of the same name, on the target of his studied combat. In order to deal sneak attack damage in this way, the target must still be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, or must be flanked by the stealth sleuth. The amount of sneak attack damage inflicted in this way is 1d6 at 4<sup>th</sup> level, plus an additional 1d6 for every 4 levels beyond that.

The more he catches his target off-guard, the more effective a stealth sleuth's sneak attack is. If the stealth sleuth is not observed by the target when he makes his attack, the result of his sneak attack damage roll is multiplied by 1.5. If the target is not denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, and the only reason the stealth sleuth is able to use sneak attack is because he is flanking the target, the result of the sneak attack damage roll is halved, instead.

This ability counts as the sneak attack class feature for the purposes of feats and class features that require that class feature as a prerequisite.

This ability modifies the studied combat class feature.

**Sleuth's Strike** (Ex): At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a stealth sleuth can ensure that his sneak attack is especially potent and deadly by ending his studied combat early. If he does, he rolls an additional 2 sneak attack dice. Additionally, for this attack he treats all 1s rolled on the sneak attack dice as 2s. Using this ability immediately ends the studied combat ability.

This ability replaces the studied strike class feature.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex):** A stealth sleuth can hide in certain environments even while observed. At 16<sup>th</sup> level, a stealth sleuth can use the Stealth skill even while observed while within urban terrains, underground terrains, and one other type of terrain of his choice (selected from the ranger's favored terrain list).



#### **Truth Seeker**

As their name implies, truth seekers are investigators who will go to any length to find the facts. Masters in the art of discerning fact from fiction, truth seekers possess all the tools required to get to the bottom of any situation. Using both exemplary deductive skills and potent alchemical formulae, truth seekers are exceptionally difficult to deceive and are near-perfect interrogators. While many truth seekers serve the law in this capacity, some choose instead to seek out the truth for darker reasons, perhaps serving as spies, informants for criminals, or as the master torturers of dangerous villains.

**Sense the Truth** (**Ex**): A truth seeker's devotion to ferreting out deceit allows him greater insight when people try to pull one over on him. A truth seeker adds 1/2 his level (minimum +1) to Perception checks made to see through disguises and on all Sense Motive checks.

Additionally, whenever he successfully catches someone in a lie (such as through a successful Sense Motive check) he can spend 1 use of inspiration as a free action in order to sense the truth in the target. This grants the truth seeker the benefits of a *detect lies* spell whenever he speaks with the target for the next 24 hours. The truth seeker does not need to concentrate on the target in order to use this ability. The caster level for this effect is equal to his class level, and the save DC is Intelligence-based. The target is entitled to a new saving throw for each falsehood that he states. Success prevents this effect from revealing that particular falsehood, but does not end the effect. This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

**See Through Lies (Ex):** A truth seeker is not easily fooled by illusions and magical disguises, and thus has a greater chance of shrugging off illusory attacks and effects. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a truth seeker is automatically entitled to a saving throw to disbelieve any illusion he senses, even if he cannot directly interact with it. Additionally, he gains a +1 competence bonus on all saving throws against illusion spells and effects. Finally, he treats all shadow effects as though they were half as real as they actually are (reducing the percentage amount that they are real by half) for the purposes of determining how they affect him.

This ability replaces trap sense class feature.

Truth Serum (Ex): A truth seeker is capable of manufacturing an alchemical truth serum which forces any creature imbibing it not only to speak only the truth, but also makes him more likely to spill his secrets. Starting at 2nd level, the truth seeker can spend an hour to create a potent truth serum, which lasts for 24 hours before becoming inert. Any creature who consumes this truth serum must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the truth seeker's level + the truth seeker's Intelligence modifier) or fall victim to its dread effects. A creature who is subjected to the truth serum is treated as though he were in a zone of truth (the caster level is equal to the truth seeker's class level). Additionally, the truth seeker gains a +2 competence bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks made against the target. This bonus increases by +1 for every 3 levels beyond 2nd. At 11<sup>th</sup> level, the truth seeker can use this ability twice per day. The truth serum is considered to be a poison, and any resistance or immunity to poisons applies to the truth serum.

This ability replaces the poison lore, poison resistance and poison immunity class features.

Vengeful Studied Strike: A truth seeker is able to use the hectic and high-pressure nature of combat to press his foes for the answers he seeks. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a truth seeker gains the studied strike ability as normal, except that whenever he uses studied strike, he can choose to ask the target a question. If the target chooses to answer this question truthfully (to the best of its ability), the studied strike deals no additional damage, beyond what the attack would ordinarily deal. If the target chooses not to answer, or provides a false answer (or even a misleading answer that is technically true), the target suffers damage as normal, but the truth seeker's studied combat is not ended, and he continues to gain its benefits (including the ability to make another studied strike). Either way, the truth seeker knows whether the question was answered truthfully to the best of the target's ability. Magic that obscures lies (such as *qlibness*) has no effect on this ability.

This ability modifies the studied strike class feature.

## New Investigator Talents

Whenever an investigator would gain a talent, he may select from among the following talents, instead of choosing one of the talents presented in the *Advanced Class Guide*. These talents are presented in alphabetical order.

Advantageous Strike\* (Ex): When the investigator deals damage with studied strike, he can perform a dirty trick combat maneuver as a free action against the creature damaged by the studied strike. This dirty trick combat maneuver does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Additionally, the penalty imposed by the dirty trick combat maneuver, if successful, lasts for 2 more rounds than it otherwise would, and requires a standard action for the target to remove (if the investigator has the Greater Dirty Trick feat, or it would otherwise already take a standard action for the target to remove the condition, it takes a full-round action, instead). An investigator must be at least 15<sup>th</sup> level to select this talent.

Arcane Inference (Ex): The investigator can use Knowledge (arcana) in order to create a temporary remedy to most magical problems. As a full-round action, the investigator can make a Knowledge (arcana) check to determine any magical or supernatural effects affecting a willing target. The DC for this check is equal to 10 + the caster level of the spell or effect, or, in the case of supernatural abilities, 10 + the Hit Dice of the character or creature from which the ability originated. If the check is successful, the investigator can spend 1 use of inspiration in order to devise a magical countermeasure to the harmful effect. The countermeasure can be created and applied as a standard action, and suppresses the harmful effects for 1 hour. Effects which specifically state that they cannot be removed by greater dispel magic and/or break enchantment are unaffected by this ability. Further, each use of this ability causes the harmful effect to adapt and become more resilient, permanently increasing the DC for future uses of this ability on that effect by 5 (this stacks, so the third time the ability is used, the DC is 10 higher than the first time). An investigator must be at least 7<sup>th</sup> level and have Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]) in order to select this talent.

Athletic Inspiration (Ex): An investigator can use his inspiration ability when attempting Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, and Swim checks without expending uses of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill. 10

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Disabling Strike\* (Ex): When the investigator deals damage with studied strike, the opponent must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the investigator's level + the investigator's Intelligence modifier) or be nauseated for 1d<sub>3</sub> rounds. An investigator must be at least 13<sup>th</sup> level to select this talent.

Disarming Strike\* (Ex): When the investigator deals damage with studied strike, he can perform a disarm combat maneuver as a free action against the creature damaged by the studied strike. This disarm attempt does not provoke attacks of opportunity. An investigator must be at least 15<sup>th</sup> level to select this talent. Dungeon Expert (Ex): The investigator is skilled in operating in underground environments and with dealing with problems encountered in such areas. The investigator can use Knowledge (dungeoneering) rather than Survival to forage for food and create shelters while in underground environments. Additionally, the investigator can spend 1 fewer use of inspiration (minimum o) to use inspiration for an attack roll against a creature he successfully identified with Knowledge (dungeoneering). This effect stacks with the combat inspiration talent. An investigator must be at least 7<sup>th</sup> level and have Skill Focus (Knowledge [dungeoneering]) to select this talent.

*Engineering Secrets (Ex):* An investigator with this talent can use Knowledge (engineering) to find mechanical traps (but not magical traps), and to identify constructs, instead of using the skills normally used to perform those tasks. Additionally, when using Knowledge (engineering) to identify a structure or complex object, if the result of the investigator's check is 30 or higher, he receives the benefits of a *legend lore* spell about the structure or object, and can use Knowledge (engineering) in place of Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (history) to learn more about that structure or object, its history, and any goings on or events inside it or related to it.

Finally, if the investigator succeeds on a Knowledge check regarding a structure or object, he gains a +4 bonus on Disable Device, Perception, and Spellcraft checks made involving it (including checks made to find and disable traps in or on it).

An investigator must have the applied engineering talent, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), and be at least  $7^{\text{th}}$  level to select this talent.

Get the Point Across (Ex): An investigator with this talent can converse with most creatures, at least in a limited fashion. As a swift action, the investigator can expend 1 use of inspiration in order to gain the ability to speak with and understand a single creature he can see for a number of for rounds equal to his Intelligence modifier. The creature does not need to have a language, or even be intelligent, but there is no guarantee that an unintelligent creature, or one not used to conversing, will have anything worthwhile to say.

*History's Lessons (Ex):* The investigator learns from the past and uses it to guide his actions in the future. Whenever an investigator with this ability uses inspiration, after spending inspiration as normal, he may make a Knowledge (history) check in place of the roll he would normally make. This ability cannot be used to improve saving throws, and can only be used once per day. An investigator must be at least 7<sup>th</sup> level and have Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]) to select this talent.

Inspired Turnabout (Ex): Whenever the investigator is the target of a combat maneuver, if the result of the attacker's combat maneuver check is at least 5 lower than the investigator's CMD, the investigator may spend 2 uses of inspiration in order to use the attacker's momentum and movements against him. If he does, he may immediately make any combat maneuver of his choice against the attacker as a free action, which does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The investigator gains a +2 bonus on the combat maneuver check for this combat maneuver. An investigator must be at least 5<sup>th</sup> level to select this talent.

*Practiced Perception (Ex):* An investigator with this talent can attempt to look for clues he missed the first time around. Whenever the investigator makes a Perception check, after the results of the check are revealed he may expend 1 use of inspiration as an immediate action. If he does, he immediately rerolls the Perception check with the bonus from his inspiration.

Prayer Knowledge (Sp): The investigator has researched many religions and their affairs. He can use Knowledge (religion) rather than Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft when determining the presence of divine spells and for the purposes of identifying those spells. Additionally, the investigator can attempt a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20 + the spell's level) in order to mount a counter-prayer. An investigator must ready an action for a counter-prayer in much the same way a character readies an action to counter a spell. If the check is successful, the investigator can expend 1 use of inspiration in order to attempt the prayer. He then makes a caster level check (DC 11 + the spell's caster level). If the check is successful, the spell has no effect. Only divine spells can be affected by this ability, as well as the spell-like abilities of outsiders with alignment subtypes (chaos, evil, good, or law). Once the investigator successfully counters a spell with this ability, he cannot use it to counter any other spells cast by the same character for 24 hours.

Studied Redirection\* (Ex): Whenever the investigator is the target of a melee attack by the target of his studied combat, and the attack misses, he can spend 3 uses of inspiration in order to redirect the attack to another creature that both the investigator and the attacker can reach. The attacker then makes a new attack roll against the creature the investigator selected, and resolves the attack normally. An investigator must be at least 17<sup>th</sup> level to select this talent.

*Style Expert (Ex)*: The investigator is very familiar with members of the court and their weaknesses, allowing him to exploit his study of their techniques for longer. The investigator's studied combat ability lasts for twice as long against any character he identifies using Knowledge (nobility).

Wilderness Specialist (Ex): The investigator can use Survival to follow tracks with a DC higher than 10, even if he is not trained (he must still beat the DC in order to successfully follow the tracks). Additionally, the investigator can use his inspiration ability when attempting Handle Animal, Ride, and Survival checks without expending uses of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill.

## New Feats

The following feats are available to characters of all classes, and provide benefits that would be of interest to particularly investigative characters. They are presented in alphabetical order.

#### **Black Market Contacts**

# You can reach out to the underworld to buy and sell items. **Prerequisite:** Underworld Contacts.

Benefit: You can reach out to the black market in order to buy and sell items of any value. To do this, you must be in a settlement of at least 5,000 people, and reach out to the black market in order to buy and sell items. This process takes 1d4 days in order to line up buyers and sellers. The black market can find any single item of up to the community's base gp limit within a 1d4-day period, and will sell this item for 90 + 1d20 percent of its actual price. Similarly, you can sell a single item to the black market in 1d4 days. Items sold this way yield 40 + 1d20 percent of their full price. While you are not strictly obligated to go through with a transaction once learning the result of the d20 roll to determine what the final price will be, backing out at that late stage is likely to upset your contacts, and may have serious repercussions, including penalties on future d20 rolls to determine the price of items purchased and sold through your black market contacts, the loss of your black market contacts (and this feat), or even physical violence. You can sell items which exceed the settlement's purchase limit in this way, though doing so raises the time required to find a buyer to  $1d_4 + 1$  days.

#### **Detective Agency**

# You found an agency to help you in your investigative practices.

#### Prerequisite: 7<sup>th</sup> level.

**Benefit:** You gain the services of up to 3 special characters to aid you in your cause. These characters are acquired and handled in a similar fashion to cohorts gained through the Leadership feat, with some exceptions. First, your Leadership score is not used in determining the power of these characters. Additionally, you can replace a lost character by posting a hiring notice in a community of 500 or more people for 1 week.

You can employ up to 3 characters, who each fulfill a separate role and gain special benefits as part of that role. At any one time, you can employ 1 gumshoe and 1 personal assistant; beginning at 10<sup>th</sup> level, you may also employ 1 partner. The gumshoe can be a character of any class, and his level is equal to your level minus 5, to a maximum of 10<sup>th</sup> level. In addition to his racial and class abilities, gumshoes are particularly skilled at keeping out of harm's way, and a gumshoe receives a +1 dodge bonus to AC and a +1 luck bonus on Reflex saving throws for every 3 character levels (minimum 1). Additionally, when reduced from greater than o hit points to less than o hit points, the gumshoe instead stabilizes at -1 hp.

The personal assistant is an expert of any race, and his level is equal to your level -5, to a maximum of 8<sup>th</sup> level. In addition to his other skills, the personal assistant is exceptional at administrative and clerical practices and can run your business affairs while performing other tasks. As such, the personal assistant automatically generates 2d20 gold pieces each week while within an urban environment. Further, once per week, the personal assistant can make a special Diplomacy check to gather information, with a bonus on the check equal to your class level.

Finally, at 10<sup>th</sup> level you can hire a partner, who can be of any class and race, and whose level is equal to your level -3, to a maximum of 15<sup>th</sup> level. You have a close bond with your partner, and any aid another actions you make to aid your partner, or which your partner makes to aid you, grant a +4 bonus, instead of +2. Additionally, you and your partner can use the aid another action to aid each other on any check that you can spend inspiration on (including on attacks made against creatures that the aiding character is not adjacent to). You must still be within 30 feet of one another to use the aid another action in this way.

**Special:** You cannot benefit from both this feat and the Leadership feat. As long as you employ any of these characters, you gain no benefit from the Leadership feat.

#### Detective's Eye

You have spent long enough studying crime scenes to be able to note clues very quickly.

**Prerequisite:** Perception 5 ranks.

**Benefit:** If you take 20 on a Perception check to search an area, it takes only half the normal amount of time to do so (typically 10 minutes per 5-foot square). Additionally, you gain a +4 bonus on all Perception checks made to actively search for something (as opposed to passive Perception checks made to notice something you weren't specifically looking for).

#### Follow Up

# You are good at getting information out of people you have bested before.

**Benefit:** When you succeed on a Diplomacy or Intimidate check against a character, you gain a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks you make against that character for the next 48 hours.

#### **Footprint Savant**

You are studied in the art of footprints, and can provide detailed information about an individual from a set of footprints.

**Benefit:** You can use the appropriate Knowledge skill to identify a monster's abilities and weaknesses from its footprints, as though the monster itself were present. In addition, with a successful Perception check (DC 20), you can learn a variety of things about the creature that made the footprints, including: the creature's approximate height and weight, the creature's gender, whether the creature was running or walking when the prints were left, and at approximately what speed, and, if the creature is wearing shoes, roughly what type of shoes were being worn (old and worn vs. new, the relative style of the shoe, etc.).

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If the tracked party was successfully able to hide their trail, or the footprints are otherwise destroyed or altered, some or all of this information may not be available. Further, a creature that expects such scrutiny may arrange things to provide confusing or misleading information (such as wearing someone else's shoes, in order to leave prints with that shoe's mark, instead of their own).

#### Get on in Nature

You can use your knowledge of the wilderness in order to survive in the wild.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (nature) 1 rank.

**Benefit:** You can use Knowledge (nature) instead of Survival in order to find food for yourself and others in a natural environment. You can also use Knowledge (nature) to identify poisons, as well as to learn if a deceased creature died as a result of poison, and if so, what poison was used. The typical DC for this check is equal to 5 + the poison's saving throw DC, but various factors (such as the amount of time since death, any damage that may have been done to the body, whether or not the poison has unique symptoms, etc.) might affect the DC, or even make the check impossible (such as if the creature's remains have been entirely stripped of flesh).

#### **Gut Instinct**

You know how to capitalize on your feeling about a person. **Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus on all Wisdom- and Charismabased skill checks made to interact with a character you have gained a hunch about.

#### **Gut Reaction**

You are better able to combat individuals if you have a certain sense about them.

Prerequisite: Gut Instinct.

**Benefit:** You gain a +1 bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls against a character you have gained a hunch about.

#### Hallmarks

# You can use identifying features of an item in order to determine its creator.

Prerequisites: Appraise 1 rank, Knowledge (local) 1 rank. Benefit: If you spend 1 minute studying an item and succeed on an Appraise check to determine the value of that item (Appraise DC 20 for most items), you can discern its specific hallmarks to learn who crafted the item and when. If you succeed on the check, you learn when the item was created, with an accuracy within 1 year of the actual creation date. If you succeed on the Appraise check by 10 or more, you also learn the exact date of creation, and you may learn who created the item. If the crafter is at least 12th level, or has equivalent fame so as to be considered legendary (per GM's discretion), then no further check is required to know who created the item. In these cases, a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check (if the creator is contemporary) or Knowledge (history) check (if the creator is a historical figure) is sufficient to tell you more about the creator, such as when he worked, what sorts of items he made, and why. If the creator is not considered legendary, a Knowledge (local) check (if the creator is contemporary) or Knowledge (history) check (if the creator is a historical figure) is required to know exactly who created the item and to learn additional information about when he worked, what kinds of work he did, and other information (DC equal to 30 - the creator's level). In certain cases, other Knowledge skills may be used to determine information about the creator of the item, at the

GM's discretion. Even if you fail on this check, you can use this feat in order to determine if two items were made by the same person. This check can only be made once per item for a given character.

#### **Identify Traps**

You can use careful study in order to learn a number of useful pieces of information about traps you have the chance to study.

**Prerequisites:** Hallmarks, trapfinding class feature. Benefit: You can use Perception in order to learn more about traps. Whenever you successfully locate a trap, you can choose to study it for 1 full minute in order to learn more about the trap and who created it. In order to do this, you must succeed on a Perception check (DC 10 + the trap's CR). If you do, you learn how long ago the trap was created, how long ago the trap was set, and how long it has been since the trap was last triggered (if applicable). Additionally, you learn the exact workings of the trap and may learn who created it. In order to learn who created the trap, you must make a Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (history) check (depending on how long ago the trap was created), with a DC equal to 30 + the trap's CR - twice the creator's level. In addition to the obvious benefits of knowing who created the trap, success on this check confers a +5 circumstance bonus on Disable Device checks made to disarm the trap. Even if you do not succeed on the check to identify the trap, you can determine whether two traps were made by the same person, using identifying hallmarks discovered in the process.

#### **Know Spirit**

You are always on the lookout for possessing influences. **Prerequisite:** Sense Motive 5 ranks, or ability to cast detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, or detect law. **Benefit:** You can spend 3 rounds observing a creature (a standard action each round) in order to learn whether or not that creature is possessed. If the creature is possessed, you also gain information about the possessing creature, including its alignment, its creature type (including any subtypes), and whether it is able to possess others via a spell, spell-like ability, supernatural ability, or magic item

#### Lay of the Land

You are highly familiar with all forms of terrain and can make accurate predictions of the weather in areas he is familiar with.

**Prerequisite:** Knowledge (geography) 1 rank. **Benefit:** You can use Knowledge (geography) to predict the weather in an area you are familiar with, instead of using Survival. Additionally, you can use Knowledge (geography) to discover shortcuts between two places, as long as those places are at least one mile apart. The DC for this ability is typically 20, although particularly difficult or confusing terrain, or terrain with which the investigator is unfamiliar, might increase the DC. If you succeed, you determine a faster route—either one massive shortcut, or a series of barely noticeable shortcuts—which reduces the amount of time it takes to travel between the two locations by 10% for you and anyone who follows you.

#### **Object Study**

You can learn a lot about a man from the objects he has handled.

#### Prerequisite: Perception 1 rank

**Benefit:** You can study an object in order to make insightful deductions about the object's current or previous owner. Doing so requires one minute of uninterrupted concentration, during which time you must be able to handle the object, which must have been used regularly by the person in question. At the end of this time, you make a Perception check (DC 20). If you succeed, you make a single deduction about the item's previous owner. Such deductions could include, but are not limited to: the character's class, the character's alignment, the character's profession, the character's gender, whether or not the character is particularly good at a particular skill (modifier +5 or higher), whether or not the target has an alcohol or drug habit, the fact that the character regularly frequents a certain neighborhood, and so on.

The GM determines what piece of information is gained, based on what sorts of deductions are likely to be plausible from the object in question. For every 5 points by which the result of the Perception check exceeds the DC, an additional piece of information is gained. However, for each piece of information gained by this ability, there is only a chance (70% + 1% per investigator level) that the information is correct. The GM should roll this chance in secret, and roll separately for each piece of information. If the information is incorrect, the GM should make up a similar piece of information which is not correct, and you gain that information instead. You cannot use this ability on a given object more than once.

#### **Rumor Monger**

# You know how to get the information you want from the local rumor mill.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (local) 1 rank.

**Benefit:** You can use Knowledge (local) in place of Diplomacy to gather information. In addition, you can use Knowledge (local) to track a creature in urban environments, in place of Survival.

#### See Right Through It

You are trained in detecting magical disguises. **Benefit:** You gain a +10 bonus on all Perception checks made to see through a disguise that was created wholly or partially with magic.

#### **Underworld Contacts**

# You have friends in low places who can help you find what you need.

**Prerequisites:** Persuasive, any alignment except lawful good. **Benefit:** You can turn to the underworld for help and information, asking shady people to help you achieve your ends. In order to use this feat, you must have access to an underworld; this typically requires being in or dispatching a message to a settlement with at least 5,000 people (a small city is generally sufficient). Once you reach out to an underworld contact, you can choose either to ask for information or ask for help locating a person or item. *Information:* Your underworld contacts attempt to find information about a particular subject you are interested in. This typically takes a 1d4 days, though information that is easy to come by might be available much more quickly. Regardless, it never takes less than 1 hour for your underworld contacts to get back to you, and if you used a messenger, the time it takes to deliver messages is added to the time required to gather information. The amount of information available depends on the size of an underworld community and is based on the effective size of the settlement for this purpose, as follows.

*Small City:* The underworld contacts can determine any information that could be found out using Diplomacy to gather information, or which could be discovered by a Knowledge check with a result of 30.

*Large City:* As above, but you can also ask your contacts for advice in dealing with the situation. This functions identically to a *divination* spell (70% chance of useful advice). Unlike a *divination* spell, if you do not receive useful advice, then instead of receiving no answer, you receive information that is not useful to you. It may be that your contacts had no useful advice, or they may give you bad advice (50% chance of either).

*Metropolis:* As above, except that you can also ask up to 5 specific yes or no questions of your underworld contacts, which they will answer in a fashion identical to the spell *commune.* All questions must relate to a single subject which you are attempting to use your underworld contacts to gain information about.

*Location:* You can instead use your underworld contacts to help you find a person or object. This use of this feat only allows you to find location of the person or object, and your underworld contacts will not retrieve it for you.

*Small City:* Your underworld contacts search the settlement high and low and can locate any object or creature which could be found with a Perception or Survival check of 30. The contacts cannot find objects or creatures obscured or disguised by magic.

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*Large City:* As above, but your contacts can find objects and creatures obscured by magic, except those disguised with polymorph spells or effects of 4<sup>th</sup> level or higher, or those hidden by *nondetection* or more powerful magic.

*Metropolis:* As above, except that your underworld contacts can find objects and people as though by the spell *discern location*. If you are attempting to locate a person using this ability, you must provide a visual reference or extremely detailed description of that person., If you are attempting to locate an object using this ability, there is a 5% chance that the item is treated as having been touched by one of your underworld contacts, unless one of them has explicitly touched the object in the past.

## New Spells

The following spells are presented in alphabetical order. While the vast majority of these spells appear on the alchemist spell list, and are therefore available to standard investigators, a handful are not, and are only accessible to investigators with access to other spell lists. All of the spells included here, however, are ones that are of value to an investigator, and focus on some aspect of investigations.

#### **CONVERT POISON**

School transmutation; Level alchemist 4 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 round/level, or until discharged

You can transform any consumed poison into a breathable cloud of toxic gas. At any point during the spell's duration, as a standard action, you can consume a single dose of ingested poison and then breathe out a toxic gas in a 6o-foot cone. All creatures in that cone must succeed on a Fortitude save or become affected by the ingested poison. Poisons converted in this way change from ingested poisons to inhaled poisons, have no onset period (they take effect immediately), use the spell's saving throw DC instead of the normal saving throw DC, and have a frequency of 1/round for 6 rounds. The magic of the spell protects you from the effects of consuming the poison.

Once you have consumed one dose of poison and used it to create a cone of toxic gas, the spell immediately ends.

#### **DECIPHERING EYE**

School divination; Level alchemist 2, bard 2, cleric/oracle 2, inquisitor 2, shaman 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S, M/DF (a piece of paper with the caster's name written backwards) Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

This spell allows you to find hidden meanings and connections in text, highlighting key words, letters, or phrases, or even morphing or rearranging letters to your sight to reveal the true message concealed within the writings or markings. It takes 1 minute to examine up to one page's worth of writing (250 words) in this way. The secret message or clue immediately becomes visible to you after this scrutiny. This spell can be foiled by certain warding magic (such as the *secret page* and *illusory script* spells). It does not translate the text into other languages, meaning that you must be able to read the language that the hidden message is intended to be read in, in order to benefit fully from the spell (you still learn that the text contains a hidden message, even if you cannot read it).

#### FOE FOCUS

School enchantment; Level alchemist 2, antipaladin 1, bard 2, bloodrager 1, cleric/oracle 2, druid 2, inquisitor 2, paladin 1, ranger 1, shaman 2 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 round/level

You gain an intense burning focus to kill a particular creature. When you cast this spell, choose a single creature you can see. You can change your target as a full-round action at any time during the spell's duration. You gain a +2 competence bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls against that target. If the target is also the target of your studied combat, these bonuses double to +4, but the spell ends immediately if you use a studied strike.

#### FOG SIGHT

School divination; Level alchemist 1, bard 1, cleric/oracle 1, inquisitor 1, paladin 1, shaman 1, witch 1 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

You can see clearly through heavy fogs, mists, sleet, snow and similar effects which limit the range of your vision, including magical fog. You may make attacks normally in such environments, though your targets are still treated as having concealment against your attacks. You can spend 1 use of inspiration in order to ignore concealment caused by fog or similar effects until the end of your turn.

#### FORCED CONFESSION

School enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]; Level bard 3, cleric/oracle 4, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 5, witch 5 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels) Target one creature Duration up to 1 min./level; see text Saving Throw Will negates; Spell Resistance no

As part of casting the spell, you must accuse the target of a particular crime or other action or series of actions. If the target fails his Will save, and your accusation is correct, he is compelled to confess to the accusation in detail, explaining at length the motives behind his actions, the exact methods by which they were done, and so on. If you include additional details in your accusation that might not be obviously apparent (such as the exact time that a murder took place, or the fact that the body was moved to another room after the fact), or you provide some sort of reasoned evidence as to why the target must have been the culprit, the spell's saving throw DC increases by an amount from +1 to +4, depending on the nature of the additional information (the



exact amount is subject to GM discretion). Similarly, if your accusation is close, but not quite right, or some of the details you add are incorrect (such as if the target was not involved in the murder, but witnessed it when he was sneaking somewhere he shouldn't be), the saving throw is decreased by an amount from -1 to -4 (also subject to GM discretion).

The spell ends when the target has finished giving a complete confession, or at the end of its duration, whichever comes first. The target cannot deliberately draw out his confession in order to last longer than this time, but interruptions, or a particularly convoluted set of circumstances, may allow the spell to elapse before the confession is finished.

#### INSPIRED ESCAPE

School transmutation; Level alchemist 4 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

You enable yourself to escape any negative consequences of the potential dangers you encounter. Whenever you succeed on a saving throw to suffer only half damage or a partial effect from a spell or ability, you can spend 1 use of inspiration. If you do, you suffer no damage or ill effects from that spell or ability, instead.

#### **INSTANT INTUITION**

School divination; Level alchemist 1, bard 1, cleric/oracle 1, inquisitor 1, paladin 1, shaman 1, witch 1 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

You gain a detective's intuition, allowing you to easily size up creatures you meet. The first time that you encounter each creature during this spell's duration, you automatically receive the benefits of the hunch use of the Sense Motive skill, as though you had succeeded on a Sense Motive check to gain a hunch about that person. Additionally, you gain a +5 bonus on Sense Motive checks made to sense an enchantment effect or to oppose a Bluff check.

#### **INSTANT RECOLLECTION**

School divination; Level alchemist 2, bard 1, cleric/oracle 1, inquisitor 1, paladin 1, shaman 1, witch 1 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range touch Target creature touched Duration instantaneous Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); Spell Resistance yes (harmless) The target instantly and perfectly recalls the events of a specific time in his memory, which you designate when casting the spell. The target instantly and clearly recalls his memory of the designated period of time, which can be up to 1 hour, and which must have occurred within the last 1 day per caster level. This spell can be used to recover memories lost as a result of natural memory loss, forgetfulness, a *modify memory* spell, or any similar effect. This spell cannot recover or rememorize spells in any way. The memory remains clear and easily accessible to the target for a number of days equal to your caster level, and after that time the target retains the memory as long as it would otherwise be natural for him to remember the event.

#### **INSTANT RECOLLECTION, GREATER**

School divination; Level alchemist 6, bard 5, cleric/oracle 5, inquisitor 5, shaman 5, witch 5 Casting Time 1 minute Components V, S Range touch Target creature touched Duration instantaneous Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); Spell Resistance yes (harmless)

As instant recollection, except that the amount of time that the target recalls can be up to 24 hours per caster level. More recent lost memories are recovered first, and memories are restored from there in reverse-chronological order.

#### INVESTIGATIVE INSIGHT

School divination; Level alchemist 2, bard 2, cleric/oracle 3, inquisitor 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

Your body becomes attuned to the world, allowing you to absorb information about objects and creatures you touch. Any object or creature you remain in direct physical contact with for at least 1 minute confers information about itself to you. In the case of objects, this reveals the item's exact cost of creation (and by extension, its price) in gold pieces, its magical properties (if any), and if the item is cursed in some way. In the case of an individual, you learn any information about him which could be revealed by a Knowledge (local) check of 15, plus one additional piece of information as though you had succeeded on Knowledge check to identify the target.

#### INVESTIGATOR'S SEARCHLIGHT

School divination; Level alchemist 6 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range 30 ft. Area 30-ft. cone-shaped emanation Duration 1 min./level

Upon consuming this extract, your eyes glow with a brilliant golden light which shines forth in a cone, revealing all within its range. All objects and creatures within the area can be seen as though under the effects of a *true seeing* spell (this applies to anyone who looks at them, not just you). Additionally, *glibness, nondetection, magic aura,* and *mind blank* spells are suppressed as long as the subjects are within the light emanating from your eyes. Finally, you gain a +20 bonus to Perception against characters using the Stealth skill to hide while in the area, and characters within the area cannot use the Stealth skill to begin hiding, even if they have the ability hide even while observed. This spell does not grant x-ray vision or any similar ability to see through solid objects, or fog or similar effects.

#### KNOW POISON

School abjuration; Level alchemist 1, bard 2, cleric/oracle 3, druid 2, inquisitor 2, shaman 3, witch 3 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 round/level; see text

You alter your body chemistry to absorb poisons and translate chemically-derived information about those poisons in a way which is easy for you to understand and relate to others. You gain immunity to all poisons. Additionally, if you are exposed to a poison during the spell's duration, then you automatically learn what type of poison it is, what effect the poison would have if you had been affected by it, and any information about antidotes for the poison, if they exist. In addition to the described benefits, this information grants you a bonus equal to your caster level on the next Craft check you make to create either the poison or its antidote within 24 hours of exposure while under this spell's effects.

#### **PSYCHIC FOOTPRINT**

School divination; Level bard 2, druid 3, inquisitor 2, shaman 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2 Casting Time 1 minute Components V, S, F (a magnifying lens) Range touch Target footprint or similar marking touched Duration 1 round/level Saving Throw none; Spell Resistance no

You create an illusory image of the events that led to the creation of the touched footprint, handprint, clawprint, or similar marking. The image lasts for the spell's entire duration, showing the creature that made the marking



during the moments before and after the marking was made, with the exact time that the marking was made occurring roughly in the middle of the spell's duration (for example, if the spell was cast by a 7<sup>th</sup>-level caster on a footprint beneath a windowsill, it might show the creator of that footprint walking up to the window for 3 rounds, stepping in the footprint on the fourth round, and then opening the window and climbing through it for 3 rounds). The creature that left the marking is displayed in detail as though he were actually there, although any disguises, magical or mundane, are also preserved.

#### **REPRODUCE POISON**

School conjuration; Level alchemist 5, antipaladin 4 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S, M (one dose of the poison to be reproduced, consumed in casting) Range personal Target you Duration 1 hour/level or until discharged

You gain the ability to produce a colorless, flavorless liquid or gas, which replicates the effects of a poison. As a standard action, you can produce a special substance which functions identically to the poison consumed in casting this spell. This special substance acts in all ways as the original poison, except that the saving throw (if any) is modified to be this spell's saving throw DC, and the resulting special substance is both valueless and temporary. Substances created by this spell last for 1 minute per caster level, at which time they become inert and useless. You can reproduce the poison once for every 5 caster levels you possess (maximum 4 times at 20<sup>th</sup> level). You can never poison yourself with poisons created by this spell, including by accident or by exposure.

#### **ROGUE'S REFLEXES**

School abjuration; Level alchemist 3, bard 3, bloodrager 2, inquisitor 3 Casting Time 1 round Components V, S, M (a bent lockpick) Range personal Target you Duration 1 min./level

You gain an intuitive sense that alerts you to danger from traps, granting you a +2 bonus on Reflex saving throws to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks by traps. For every 3 caster levels you possess beyond 6<sup>th</sup>, these bonuses increase by 1 (to a maximum of +6 at CL 18th). This bonus stacks with trap sense, if you have that class feature.

#### **TUNNEL VISION**

School divination; Level alchemist 4, bard 4, cleric/oracle 4, sorcerer/wizard 5, witch 5 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 round/level

You gain perfect vision regarding a single entity, negating any ability it has to hide from you. When you cast this spell, choose a single creature or object whose location you can pinpoint. You gain a +40 bonus to Perception checks made against that target, and can always see and hear the creature or object clearly, even if concealed by magic (including any effect which can be defeated by a true seeing spell, as well as allowing you to detect the target while concealed by non-magical means, such as in an area of darkness). This spell does not confer x-ray vision or any similar ability to see through solid objects, though it can see through fog and the like. Because your vision is so focused on the target, you suffer a -20 penalty on Perception checks not involving the subject. As a standard action, you can change the subject of this spell to a different creature or object you can pinpoint.

# Stop Right There!



The remainder of this book contains suggestions, tips, and tricks for GMs who are considering running a mystery game, focusing on investigation, gathering evidence, making deductions, and generally solving mysteries. If you're not the GM of your group, these pages aren't intended for you, though that doesn't mean that you can't get some use out of them.

If you're reading this book, odds are fairly good that you would be interested in playing a mystery game. Rather than reading the following pages yourself, and gorging on our advice for how to construct and run a mystery scenario, why not show this book to your GM, and ask them to read that section themselves, and consider running a mystery game with it (if you have the digital version, of the book, go ahead and give them their own copy of the .pdf to read on their own time. We won't tell if you don't).

We can't promise that they'll agree, but if they do, you'll have a lot more fun with this section if your GM is the one who reads it, instead of you. And if your GM decides that they can't be bothered to read it, and have no interest in running a mystery game, then by all means, come back and read it all yourself. And maybe then, you'll decide that you want to GM a mystery game

## **Running a Mystery Game**

It's not easy to write an exciting and compelling mystery story, even when you have control over the protagonist's each and every move. Trying to write one for a tabletop roleplaying game, where the investigators will almost certainly do every single thing that they could possible do *except* what you want them to, makes the task that much more difficult. As a result, many GMs shy away from mysteries, and choose to focus instead on combat and epic adventure: areas in which *Pathfinder* excels. But if you're reading this, there's a good chance that you want your game to be a little bit more like your favorite detective novels or crime television shows. This section is designed to provide you with a little help in doing so.

#### What is a Mystery Game?

Most likely you already have an intuitive grasp of what makes a game a mystery game and what doesn't, in the same way you can probably identify a mystery novel, movie, or television show, even if you might have difficulty providing an exact definition. Mystery, as a genre, is something that most of us are exposed to, and is fairly pervasive in a variety of forms of entertainment. But that doesn't mean that it isn't helpful to take a moment to consider what, exactly, makes a mystery a mystery.

Ronald Knox, an influential writer on the subject of mystery novels, states that a mystery novel "must have as its main interest the unravelling of a mystery; a mystery whose elements are clearly presented to the reader at an early stage in the proceedings, and whose nature is such as to arouse curiosity, a curiosity which is gratified at the end." In short, a mystery novel focuses around solving a particular problem, or puzzle, which is presented to the reader, in a way that encourages the reader to try to solve it, as well.

While many mystery books, movies, and television shows today may not concern themselves overly much with ensuring that the mystery is one that the reader or viewer is entirely capable of solving with the information that is provided, as Ronald Knox clearly did, mystery games set themselves apart because they are interactive. Unlike a mystery novel, television show, or movie, your players can't simply sit back and wait for the protagonist's quick with or exceptional luck to get them to the puzzle's solution. They need to do all of the hard work themselves.

Ultimately, then, a mystery game is one where the chief goal is to solve a particular problem or puzzle (or, over the course of a campaign, perhaps several problems or puzzles). This is something of a departure from many fantasy roleplaying games, such as *Pathfinder*, where the primary goals are often to acquire wealth, become more powerful, and defeat evil foes. Of course, this isn't to say that none of these things can occurr, but in a mystery game, they take a back seat to the mystery itself.

## What Type Of Mystery Are You?

Now that we've established that mystery games are about solving a puzzle, it's clear that you'll probably need to put a few puzzles together. Before jumping directly into how to do that, though, we first have to consider what types of puzzles are available to you, as different puzzles require different approaches.

There are a few different ways to create the kinds of mystery scenarios that you tend to run across in books, TV, and other media. With very few exceptions, these mysteries almost always revolve around one or more murders, because that's more dramatic than other types of crime. While these murders often have some sort of sensationalist and shocking element about them to grab your attention, there's actually a lot more that separates your average Agatha Christie killing from, say, an episode of Castle. Essentially, it often comes down to what, exactly, the mystery surrounding the death is. Of course, it's also important to note that while most mysteries involve murders (for good reason, as they're generally more captivating and exciting for audiences than other crimes), and the following sections are therefore written with murders in mind, there's nothing preventing you from using other crimes, especially high-profile thefts.

#### Whodunnit

One of the more classic and straightforward murder mystery setups, these mysteries present the reader (or viewer) with a murder that could have been done by any one of several suspicious characters, each of whom has a motive, and all of whom had (or at least appear to have had) an opportunity. The challenge lies in sifting through which of the various promising candidates actually did the deed.

Generally, with these types of mysteries, the characters are all introduced at the beginning, before the murder occurs. After the murder, no one seems to have an alibi. Generally, it turns out that each and every suspect is hiding something, but most of them are hiding things unrelated to the murder itself. For example, perhaps two of the suspects were meeting for an adulterous love affair at the time of the murder, while another was busy trying to steal a valuable treasure from the household, and so on. One by one, the detective ferrets out these secrets, until only the true murderer is left.

Often, but not always, the real killer is one of the ones that you would least expect, and occasionally the author even cheats and makes the culprit someone whose motive was originally obscured. Though it's a common trope now, fooling the reader in this way is what led to the prolific number of murderer-butlers in detective media.

#### How Did He Do It

Sometimes, it's pretty clear from the beginning who the murderer was, but his or her plan was cunning and clever enough that it's difficult to prove. Typically, this ties into the method that the murder was committed, and provides a convenient excuse for the killer to use a strange and convoluted murder method (the kind that grabs one's attention, and mystery authors love), because the murder method is somehow necessary to provide the alibi that the killer relies on to protect himself.

Generally, the murder method is designed to create the impression that the murder occurred a certain way, or at a certain time, when in fact, that's not the case at all. Think of it as a magic trick, except instead of fooling you into thinking that a girl was sawed in half, or doves magically appeared in a hat, the trick is to make you think the murder occurred at a different time or place, or in a different way, which, if it were true, would make it impossible for the real killer to have done it. There's always at least one piece of evidence at the scene of the crime that doesn't quite make sense, but is minor enough as to be dismissed by everyone but the hero of the story. This one out-of-place element eventually winds up being the key to the puzzle, because it is a byproduct of the murderer's attempt to disguise the deed, and once its significance is understood, the hero can also figure out how the murderer set up his trick.

A common twist on this type of mystery is one where the goal is not so much to prove that a particular person committed the crime, but rather to prove that an obvious suspect *didn't* commit the crime. In these cases, the way the crime is disguised is to frame an innocent person as being the killer, and the hero (who, through intuition, powerful observation, close assosciation with the suspect, or some other means, is the only one who believes them) must demonstrate this fact in order to prove the initial suspect's innocence (often proving someone else guilty in the process, in order to ensure that all loose ends are tied up by the end of the story). This adds an extra layer to the mystery, but comes with the added risk, in interactive roleplaying games, that it only really works if your players are willing to accept that the obvious suspect is innocent, and take up the case on their behalf.

#### Why Was It Done

Often similar in many ways to the whodunnit type of mystery, this type of mystery revolves around determining who the true killer is, but the matter of motive plays a much more central role. Whereas, in a whodunnit, it's generally quickly established that all of the suspects had a pretty good motive, and then the detective simply moves on to looking at who had the opportunity, in this type of mystery, the motives are much more unclear, and often misleading.

Typically, instead of introducing all of the suspects at once, this type of mystery examines them one at a time.

Often there seems to be an obvious motive for the murder more or less from the start, which directs the hero to a specific suspect. When investigating that suspect, they get a lead that points them to an even likelier suspect: one with an even better motive for the murder. This continues through a chain of suspects, as the hero uncovers more and more about the murder victim, and more and more reasons why someone might want them dead, until eventually the trail leads to the real killer.

Often, with these types of mysteries, the real killer turns out to be one of the earlier suspects, whose initial motive turns out to be a dead end, but who has a secret, second motive that is not immediately apparent. For example, the victim's wife might initially be suspected for killing her husband for insurance money, only for the hero to determine that their life insurance policy had lapsed. Only after digging much deeper does the hero discover that the victim was having an affair, and only after investigating the man's mistress (and perhaps a few others afterwards) does the hero learn that the wife had just found out about it.

#### **False Mysteries**

This last category isn't really a type of puzzle at all, but it's worth mentioning, because it's a technique that can be found in a lot of different types of mystery (or, perhaps, psuedo-mystery) media.

Whereas most of the types of mysteries described here focus on having a clever puzzle with a dramatic reveal and carefully laid clues, sometimes it can be more rewarding to focus on creating the most evocative, dramatic, and mystifying set of clues and circumstances available, even if the final reveal and the "answer" to the mystery isn't so much a puzzle that the players could solve, as it is a twist that needs to be revealed, and may stretch the realms of believability. The hallmarks of this approach generally include answers that raise as many questions (or more) than they actually answer, and which may strain one's suspension of disbelief. Popular examples of these types of mysteries include the *Professor Layton* series of games (which are well known for their outlandish solutions), and some episodes of the television series *Doctor Who*.

There are benefits and drawbacks to this approach. Since it gives you much greater freedom when building your mystery story, you can really go wild when it comes to adding twists and turns. Since you're less worried about making sure that everything adds up and makes sense with a single, logical conclusion, you can introduce plot elements that might seem mutually exclusive, or otherwise defy explanation. Most of the time, this will make for a far more enjoyable "ride" for your players. The downside, of course, is that the ending will suffer for it. While some players won't mind if the mystery has a solution that has a few plot holes, or falls back on some kind of fiat ("it was all just a dream!"), others may feel cheated. Bear in mind that even with mystery books and movies, many readers like to "play along" and try to figure out the mystery's solution themselves. Since this method doesn't truly have a real solution, they can never really succeed, something that becomes even more of a concern when you consider that this is an interactive game, and not just a story. Still, in the right playgroup, this type of "mystery" can be more than worth the tradeoff.

#### Constructing the Puzzle

Once you have determined the type of puzzle that you want to be at the heart of your mystery, you can turn your attention to creating that puzzle. This is the difficult part of the process, and requires a rather delicate balance: you want the puzzle to be difficult enough that the players don't immediately solve it, and that they can feel proud of themselves when they do, but you also want it to be easy enough that they can, ultimately, solve it.

This can be a daunting task. For one thing, there is a common misconception that in order to construct a clever puzzle that is difficult for others to solve immediately, one must be smarter than his or her target audience. This simply isn't true. Puzzles and mysteries are, at their heart, about misdirection and using human nature to your advantage, by constructing the scenario in such a way that the players will naturally be led to one conclusion, and only through hard work will be able to work their way around their initial assumptions to see things the correct way. Basically, instead of being smarter than your players, you just need to stack the deck, so to speak, to make yourself appear smarter, and like all other skills, it's something that will become easier with practice.

Because each of the different types of puzzles work in very different ways, the approaches to constructing them will also be somewhat different. Each type of mystery puzzle is outlined below.

#### Whodunnit

Of the various types of mysteries presented here, this is probably the most difficult type to construct, and tends to have the most layers of obfuscation and confusion between the information that the investigators initially receive, and the event that actually occurred.

First, determine the details of the actual murder (or whatever crime occurred). Who killed who, and how was it done. Make a note of what effects that might have on the crime scene, and if there are any convenient clues you can leave (for example, if someone was stabbed with a knife in the chest, there might have been a struggle, and if there was, a table or potted plant might have been knocked over). You should also have a clear idea of why the murder was committed (you'll also want to consider whether this will impact the crime scene at all. If the murder was premeditated long in advance, the killer probably brought his own weapon, but if the murder was one of opportunity, or the motive only just became relevant, such as because the victim revealed something that the killer didn't know, the killer might be forced to use something from the scene, etc.).

Once the actual murderer is taken care of, turn your attention to creating your cast of suspects. For the moment, don't worry about hiding the details of the murder, even if it seems obvious to you. For each false suspect, come up with the following:

1) An obvious, easy to find motive for why they would want to kill the victim. It's perfectly fine for everyone to have the same motive, too.

2) An activity that they were up to at the time of the murder. This should be something that they will be reluctant to share, but is unrelated to the murder itself.

3) One or more clues, left behind from that activity, which, when taken together, can be used to prove both that the false suspect was not doing what they claim to have been doing, and also that they were not the actual murderer. Ideally, there should be enough evidence for the investigators to figure out what, exactly, it was that the false culprit was up to, and prove it, but that's not strictly necessary: mystery novels are full of characters who are happy to divulge exactly what they were doing, just as soon as the detective can prove it's not what they said it was.

Ideally, the clues left behind by the false culprits should come close to, or actually be part of, the murder scene (with the culprits being separated from the murder by time, rather than distance, passing through only minutes before the murder, or passing through after, and not noticing the corpse in the dark, etc.). Alternatively, some of the clues can come from witness testimony, such as one person swearing they saw another leaving their room just past midnight, causing the investigators to turn their attention to that person.

Once you have everything laid out, do your best to clear your mind, and try to look at all the clues again from a fresh perspective. Check each false culprit, and see if there are any clues that can prove that they didn't do it. If there aren't, you'll need to adjust some, or add new ones. Also make sure that there isn't anything that would somehow exhonerate the real culprit.

By the time you're done, figuring out exactly what happened should be a suitably difficult task, even if it may not seem that way to you. Remember, it only seems obvious because you already know all of the answers: your players just know that there's a track of suspicious footprints, a smashed piece of pottery, a victim who died of poison, and a signature red scarf left at the scene of the crime, and it's a long way from there to the truth.

#### How Did He Do It

The first thing to consider with this type of puzzle is what, exactly, the murderer is trying to conceal. Most of the time, this will be the time of death, as that allows the murderer to establish a convenient alibi, and thus rule himself out as a suspect. However, it's also not uncommon for the method of the killing to be disguised, either in addition to the time, or instead of it. For example, someone too weak and feeble to physically overpower the victim might poison them, and then stage the scene to look like the victim was killed in a more physical fashion, or someone incapable of using magic might find some means of making it appear that the victim was burned to death with a fireball spell. Hiding the method can also be a roundabout way to hide the time of the killing, to create an alibi: the victim might have been fed a slow-acting poison hours in advance, then stabbed sometime after death but before the body was found, preventing anyone from bothering to check for poisons.

Once you determine what you're trying to hide, you need to determine what the killer wants to make it *look like* actually happened. This is fairly easy, as any answer is acceptable, as long as it's both believable and successfully hides everything the killer wants to hide. Obviously, for the purposes of making a good story, more evocative and "impossible" scenarios are more exciting (though the more impossible they are, sometimes, the easier they are to see through). Also, you'll eventually want to make sure you introduce at least one flaw in the ruse, which the investigators can pick up on, but you don't need to worry about that quite yet.

Now that we know how we intend for the real murder to take place, and what we want it to look like by the time the player characters reach the scene, we need to figure out exactly what happens, in the meantime, in order to transform the crime scene from the former to the latter. In doing so, we should also be able to see, already, some of the subtle clues that this might leave behind, as the killer imperfectly attempts to make one murder look like another.

In the previous example, where the killer tries to make it look like murder by *fireball*, we can imagine that he might stab the victim, then burn the body, right there in the middle of the room. He can't just set the entire room on fire, because then someone might (correctly) assume that he had just stabbed the victim and lit a fire, so he would need to find some way of making it clear that the fire was magical. The obvious solution seems to be to make a fire with an exactly 20-ft.-radius area. This would be done by setting some kind of barrier to stop the fire, in a circle around that area. Perhaps whatever barrier was set leaves a trace on the ground, which a clever investigator might find, and begin to wonder.

From here, there are other things to consider: did anyone see the killer when he went to do the deed? If so, he might have taken steps to disguise that, as well. Would people have been able to see the fireball? If so, he might need to make a fake, somehow. Perhaps he anticipates one or more of the clues left by his attempts to cover his tracks, and he then goes through additional lengths to hide those clues (and, in the process, creates other, different clues, adding layers to the mystery).

#### Why Was It Done

When creating a mystery of this sort, the first thing to consider is who the actual murderer will be, and what their reason was. Generally, with this style of mystery, the culprit will be introduced early as a suspect, and then dismissed, although they can also be someone who was never suspected. In the former case, before going any further, you'll want to come up with a second, lesser motive, and some reason why the investigators would choose to rule that particular suspect out early on. Often, this is because it turns out that the lesser motive is somehow wrong (for example, the party might suspect a woman of killing her husband because he was having an affair, until she reveals that the affair was her idea, and husband and wife were both involved in a con to take advantage of the woman he was having an affair with, for example). Alternatively, you can mix in a bit of another mystery type, and have the time or method of death obscured, making it appear as though the culprit couldn't have committed the crime for some reason (of course, if you do that, you'll need to apply the techniques from that mystery type, as well, creating a sort of hybrid).

Once you've straightened out everything about the actual culprit, there are two main tasks remaining: creating a trail of clues that can lead to the actual culprit's real murder motive, and creating as many false leads as you want (but probably at least two). In a novel or television show, the plot follow a very linear line from one suspect to the next, but in an interactive game, trying to emulate that is only going to make things harder on yourself and your players. So, instead of coming up with a particular order of suspects, and leading the party along by the nose, what you can do is make sure that each suspect has three things:

1) A strong motive for the murder, which can be found from another suspect, or from the crime scene.

2) Some reason why they couldn't or wouldn't have committed the murder, which can be found by investigating them.

3) A piece of information that leads investigators to suspect another false culprit.

4) A piece of information that in and of itself is meaningless, but, when added to another piece of information from a different false culprit, points to the real culprit.

Set up properly, you wind up with a web of false culprits, each of which leads to other false culprits, and some combination of which leads to the real culprit. This ensures that the party goes through at least a couple of false culprits before arriving at the real one. For added security, it might be best to ensure that the information leading to the real culprit is redundant, and make sure that each of the pieces of information that lead to the real culprit can be found in 2 or even 3 places, although doing so can quickly lead to a large number of false leads.

#### **False Mysteries**

The real benefit of the fake mystery is that there isn't actually any real puzzle to worry about. All that you need to focus on with these is producing as many exciting and confusing plot twists, and layering them together in a way that mystifies the investigators. This works especially well if most of the strange and unusual happenings seem to imply one answer, but one or two are completely at odds with that explanation, and can't be reconciled, leaving your investigators puzzled over how to make it all fit together.

Simultaneously the most and least satisfying answers to false mysteries tend to be the ones where the laws of reality are bypassed altogether. This nicely allows you to handwave any individual inconsistencies, but can sometimes be a bit trite, and may, in some cases, undermine the investigator's accomplishments (such as if the answer turns out to be that it was all "just a dream."). A more effective method (albeit one that requires a bit more thought, and carries some additional risk) is to use a solution that manages to answer all the questions raised by the mystery, but perhaps raises a few questions of its own, or has a couple of plot holes. Often, players won't even notice these (or at least, won't notice them until later), and if they do, a quick-thinking GM may be able to patch up any such holes...or may simply tent his or her hands and say, with a knowing smile, "that is strange, isn't it?"

Again, this method isn't for everyone, and some members of your play group may take exception to "cheating" in this fashion.

## The Ten Commandments of Mystery

During the Golden Age of Detective Novels (generally accepted as being between World War I and World War II), Ronald Knox, a prominent writer on the subject of mysteries, penned an essay in which he laid out ten "commandments" that he felt mystery writers should follow. For the most part, these rules concern themselves with ensuring that the writer is "fair" to the reader, and provides a reasonable chance for the reader to solve the mystery. While these rules were written long ago, and the genre has evolved somewhat since then, and even though not everything here is entirely applicable to mysteries that take the form of roleplaying game, these "rules" can still provide some useful guidelines for you as far as being fair to your players is concerned. 1. The criminal must be mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to know.

In essence, the message here is that if the culprit is someone that hasn't come up yet in the story, it's most likely going to be a bit anticlimactic, and your players may feel somewhat cheated, since the culprit will almost certainly be someone they never could have guessed, since they didn't even know who he or she was. The other part of the message, that the culprit must be someone whose thoughts the reader hasn't been allowed to know, has to do with the way a book is narrated, and doesn't really apply to games, unless you plan on somehow making one or more of the party members into the culprit (though, really, an investigator who had been magically compelled to commit a crime, loses all memory of it, and winds up investigating himself unknowingly, could very well be a fun and interesting game, although you would want to give the players a chance to track down the one who compelled them).

2.All supernatural or preternatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course.

Obviously, this rule doesn't really apply to *Pathfinder*, or any other fantasy setting, where the supernatural is entirely natural. What is important to remember, though, is that the culprit shouldn't be able to break the rules of reality, whatever that reality might be. Killing with *slay living*, is perfectly fine, as is using *dominate person* to force someone to do your killing for you. But don't have your killer use *dominate person* to make the victim commit suicide, because *dominate person* doesn't allow for obviously self-destructive orders, and your players will be confused and upset when they learn the truth (if they ever do, since there's a good likelihood they'll never even make the connection, if they're well-versed with the spell).

#### 3.Not more than one secret room or passage is allowable.

This rule is also somewhat comic when presented in the context of a Pathfinder game, where dungeons filled with secret rooms and passages are commonplace. Despite this, there is something important we can glean from this: each time a particular type of plot twist is used, it loses some of its evocative power. The first secret passage is exciting. The second is still interesting. By the third, your players will be losing interest. The same goes for villains escaping, magical disguises being removed to reveal "he was someone else the whole time," and so on. 4.No hitherto undiscovered poisons may be used, nor any appliance which will need a long scientific explanation at the end.

This is similar in spirit to rules number 1 and 2, but applies to a different element of the puzzle than they do. Once again, the bottom line is that if the party needs to bring in obscure knowledge (or impossible knowledge, if you're completely making up the poison or other element), then their odds of ever solving the mystery are low, and they will get frustrated. Of course, in a roleplaying game, this can generally be solved with some Knowledge rolls, but it's a bad idea to hinge an entire mystery on a single Knowledge roll. Still, if you need a fantastic made-up poison, or the equivalent, introducing it somewhere in the earlier parts of the mystery, somehow, will go a long way.

#### 5.No Chinaman must figure in the story.

At first glance, it would seem that this rule isn't very applicable, and not just because we're talking about games instead of books. In the time that these rules were written, racism was much more prevalent and accepted, and there can be little doubt that some amount of racism is at the heart of this particular rule, though the exact meaning that the author put behind it is somewhat unclear, and still a matter of some debate.

The explanation that I prefer, and which serves to be more useful for this piece, is that you should avoid racist charicatures as culprits. At the time that Knox wrote these rules, racist Chinese charicatures were commonplace in mystery novels and psuedo-mystery "shocker" novels. Besides being unsavory and racist depictions, they're not very good characters in the first place, and are such obvious villains that they didn't make for very good mysteries. This, I think, is the sort of "chinaman" that the rule refers to.

Seen in this light, the rule is just as relevant in a *Pathfinder* game as it is in a novel. Given the choice of potential culprits to choose from, the "shifty-eyed drow" is going to be the obvious pick, and so makes for a poor culprit (of course, GMs who want to prey on genre-savvy players could certainly arrange things so that said drow is, in fact, the real culprit, because "no one would make it that obvious: he must be a red herring.").

6.No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right.

The idea here seems to be that the investigator should never get a lucky break, though the reason is less than obvious. Whether it has to do with the reader's ability to compete with the detective character, or is just a strong belief that detective characters should be competent enough to solve the case on their own, the fact that the players are in control of the investigator goes a long way towards solving this issue, already. That said, consider carefully before introducing a lucky accident as a means of providing clues to your players: they may feel that they're not being given a fair chance to solve the case on their own, or they may not even notice. These sorts of things are probably best held in reserve, as a way of giving players new leads if they get stuck.

#### 7. The detective himself must not commit the crime.

We covered this earlier, on rule number one. While I think that there are definitely ways of making this work, and be fun, there are a lot of ways for it to go horribly wrong at the table, too. I think it goes without saying that declaring, at the end of the adventure, that one or more player characters were the culprit, and that they had known it all along, even though the players themselves hadn't, is such a bad idea that it doesn't really need me explaining why not to do it.

# 8. The detective is bound to declare any clues which he may discover.

Once again, the fact that the investigator character is controlled by the "reader" directly, in this case, takes a lot of the relevance from this rule. However, it does raise an issue that may come up for GMs running mystery games, and that is players sharing information. In my experience, mystery games are the ones that most encourage the party to split up, and some players, following in the footsteps of literary detectives who did not follow this rule, like Sherlock Holmes, choose to keep a few things to themselves, for a dramatic reveal later. Depending on the group, this may or may not be an issue, but if it becomes one, take the player aside and gently remind him or her that this is a collaborative game, and that they don't have the luxury of being the lone brilliant detective in their own solo story.

9. The "sidekick" of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal from the reader any thoughts which pass through his mind: his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader.

Again, without a reader, there likely won't be a "sidekick" whose main purpose is to narrate and ask all the questions that readers may want to ask of the detective themselves. That said, many GMs, when running a mystery game, have a tendency to try to hide basic information from the players. It's tempting, when the players ask what's in a room, to omit the one small detail that threatens to unravel the whole mystery. While you certainly don't want to call out all the details right away, you need to make sure that the players have enough information to be able to reasonably make it to the next piece of the puzzle. If you don't say something that draws attention to the mantelpiece, for example, then the players have no reason to look there and notice that it's covered in dust except for a curious ring where something round was recently placed. You may not need to announce the ring as soon as they walk into the room, but if

you fail to mention the mantel at all, it's hardly their fault if they don't check it out.

10. Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them.

This rule is just as relevant for tabletop games as it is for novels, though it plays in more or less the same territory as rules one and four. In short, if something is coming from so far out of left field that your players can't be expected to reasonably guess it as a possibility, you probably shouldn't do it (or you should set things up in such a way that it's not that unusual).

#### Other Tips for Running Mystery Games

There are a few tips for running mystery games that don't fit neatly into their own categories, but which are nonetheless important for you to consider as you embark on running a mystery game. This section presents a variety of such miscellaneous tips and tricks.

#### **Clue Redundancy**

This was touched on briefly in the previous sections, but it is very important to running a successful mystery game, and so gets its own mention here. Because of the structure of mysteries, if the players miss important clues, the game may simply grind to a halt, as they are unable to progress farther, and nothing else really happens. In your average hack-andslash, anything that prevents the party from progressing will likely also bring a swift end to the game, because the player characters will be dead. But in a mystery, failing to progress just means that everything stops.

This is all well and good in books and movies, where the main character will automatically succeed in the end, but in a game, it's important that you make sure that your players have a reasonable chance of success. A very common mistake that first-time GMs of mystery games will make is to hide an important clue behind a skill check (or behind something similar, such as casting a certain spell, like *detect magic*, or some other action that the players may not realize to do, or may fail at doing). For example, the bloody glove that is the final piece of the mystery might be hidden behind a loose brick, requiring a Perception check to find. Since it's so important, and obviously well-hidden, it seems reasonable to make the DC for the check fairly high.

While this seems reasonable on the surface, and is exactly the kind of thing that can destroy a mystery game. What we've accomplished in doing this is made it so that success or victory hinges entirely on this one Perception check: failing that check means failing the entire mystery, period. That's not fun, and it's not likely to lead to a good game. Robin D. Laws, a prominent game designer, and one of the forces behind the mystery game *The Esoterrorists*, advocates a rule of three, whereby any clue or piece of information that is vital to advancing the story should have at least 3 different ways of being found or encountered, and also that any given scene or stage in the investigation should have at least 3 different clues in it, which can lead to different places or stages of the investigation. In this way, one can create a sort of web of clues, each of which leading back to the others, allowing the party to travel along it in whichever path suits them, until eventually finding the answer. This doesn't completely eliminate the possibility of stalls in the game, but it goes a great way towards reducing them, and adapting a similar strategy is recommended.

#### Should We Split Up?

This is a phrase that many GMs have learned to dread. When the party splits up, it's taxing on the GM, but more importantly, it can quickly get boring for whichever players aren't currently being allowed to play. Add in the tendency for players to wind up acting, deliberately or not, on the information gained by other characters that they shouldn't know yet, and some GMs are willing to outright ban splitting the party for any reason, ever. Luckily, in most adventures, there's little incentive for the group to split up, as everyone knows that encounters will have been designed for the whole group to fight at once, and so splitting up will only get you killed. In a mystery game, however, things are different: there's much less combat, so splitting up is safer. Further, everyone imagines themselves as a Sherlock Holmes or a Hercule Poirot, and so wants the "crime scene" to themselves, in order to lead the investigation (of course, they'll say it's because the investigation will get done faster, but we all know the real reason). So, what's a GM to do?

Sadly, there is no single catch-all answer, here. Talk with your group about it, if they bring up splitting the party. There are definitely advantages to doing so: each player gets to feel like the "main character" for wherever they wind up going, and in many ways it's easier to handle each player one at a time at a different scene than it is to handle them all shouting at the same time about what they're investigating in the same place.

The biggest downside to splitting the group is that some players may not have the patience for it when it isn't their turn to play. If your players don't mind spending half of their time watching the others play, and are engaged enough in the story that they're still interested in what's going on even when it's not their turn, you've probably got nothing to worry about. If you don't mind them spending the time that they're not playing browsing the internet and looking at cat pictures, then that's probably fine too, as long as they're OK with that, as well. But if your players are getting restless, you may need to consider enforcing a strict "no splitting the party" rule.

#### Mixing It Up

There are plenty of detective novels that feature not the slightest little bit of combat or violence on the part of the detective. Though Sherlock Holmes was an accomplished boxer, and Watson often went armed, more often than not they solved their cases without having to resort to those methods. Agatha Christie's Poirot was even less likely to use brute force to solve any problem, and it's probably safe to say that Miss Marple was not an accomplished combatant. That said, this book is for *Pathfinder* characters, and it's highly unlikely that you, or any of your players, are particularly interested in running a game in which no combat occurs. The question is, how much combat should there be?

Again, this is another issue that will require that you talk with your players in order to determine what the best mix will be. For some groups, a "mystery game" will feature almost as much combat as any other game, whereas for others, combat might occur only once or twice in any given adventure.

However much combat you decide is appropriate for you, it's important to remember that in a mystery game, combat in and of itself should not be the focus of the game. The players are out to solve a mystery. Now, it's possible that in order to solve that mystery they need to speak to the head of the thieves' guild, and that doing that might require fighting an entire warehouse worth of thieves' guild members, but the important thing is that the party isn't fighting them just because they're there, they're doing so in order to get the information they need. If gaining loot or experience becomes the main goal of your players, you're not really running a mystery game anymore.

For this reason, I recommend that if you want your game to be about a mystery, make sure that your players' rewards come from solving that mystery. That means that the vast majority of experience no longer comes from combat, but instead comes from solving the mystery (if you still have a lot of combat, this may mean that players may get less XP from combat, or maybe even no XP at all). Similarly, if enemies no longer have valuable loot to drop when they die, but players are getting paid princes' ransoms to solve the mysteries that come to them, you'll find that they spend a lot less time salivating over some NPC's boots and considering ways to kill him for them, and a lot more time trying to solve that mystery.

#### Beware the Genre Savvy

There are few things more annoying for the GM of a mystery game than when a genre-savvy player immediately (and loudly) guesses who the culprit is, and turns out to be correct. Somehow, players seem to have a sixth sense for this kind of thing, in the same way that they have a knack for derailing carefully-laid plots. If this happens to you, it's OK. Just smile knowingly, and say something cryptic, like "that's an interesting theory." If you feel the need to change the plot, and are able to do so without negating any clues the players have found so far, or any other work they might have done, feel free.

If you find that this happens to you a lot, it may be time to re-examine the way that you write your mysteries. This isn't to say that you're not writing good mysteries: those who are familiar with the genre and the specific author can often pick apart mysteries by famous authors like Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie in exactly the same way. In fact, that is one of the dangers of trying to be "genre savvy" when it comes to mysteries: different authors tend to approach their mysteries in different ways. If you're familiar with how a certain author or TV show handles their mysteries, you may be able to guess the culprit right away, but, turning to another author or TV show, your "genre savvy" guesses will be wrong 100% of the time.

What types of mysteries have you been doing so far? If they've all been Whodunnit type mysteries, try switching to a How Did He Do It mystery. Have you been favoring characters that were suspects early on but quickly exonerated? Switch to making your culprit someone who was never considered as a suspect in the first place. By contrast, do you have a tendency to have a very shady and suspicious character, who always turns out to be a red herring? Next time, make it the obvious character who did the crime, and watch as your "genre savvy" player makes a fool of himself overthinking it and trying to find the "real" culprit.

#### It's a Magical World

In a setting with magic, such as most *Pathfinder* games, there are additional things to consider when planning out your adventure. Your players will most likely have a wide array of supernatural and magical abilities that can aid them in their investigations. At first glance, it may seem that a world with speak with dead would be one in which very few mysteries go unsolved, but the fact of the matter is that for just about every spell, there is a countermeasure, magical or mundane, which can defeat it. Similarly, there are numerous options available to NPC murderers and cat-burglars to make their work much easier. Phantasmal killer, disintegrate, and dimension door all provide ways for your culprits to do seemingly impossible things, while all that is required to avoid being indicted by speak with dead is to kill your victim without them seeing you, or to remove their head after killing them.

Of course, that isn't to say that you should make sure that *speak with dead*, and similar spells, are never useful, just make sure they don't immediately solve the entire murder. Perhaps the victim didn't see who stabbed them, but they heard a woman's voice in their ear after they were stabbed, as they were bleeding to death. Or maybe a *speak with dead* spell isn't submissible as evidence in this land, and even if the PCs know who did it and how, they still need a way to prove it. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

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# The Game Is Afoot!

Do you love the investigator class from Paizo's Advanced Class Guide, but find yourself wishing that there were a few more options available for investigator characters? Perhaps you'd have liked to have seen some archetypes that were tailor=made for popular character types from mystery novels, movies, and television, such as corrupt detectives, investigators with drug habits, or cold and detached crime scene analysts? Maybe you wish that there was a version of the investigator that cast real spells, instead of using alchemy, and who might have unusual abilities to solve magical crimes? If so, then this book is for you, because it has all that and more

Inside this tome you'll find nine detailed new investigator archetypes spanning eight pages, fifteen new investigator talents, plus sixteen new feats and sixteen new spells, which benefit not only investigators, but characters of any class who are interested in finding clues, making deductions, and generally solving mysteries. An added benefit, the book also contains a section with helpful tips and tricks for constructing and running a mystery=focused adventure, which has obvious uses if you're the GM of your party, but also serves any player interested in playing such a game with a convenient way to hint to their GMs on the subject, while also providing those GMs with useful advice on how to make those desires come true.

Whether you just want to give your existing an investigator an extra edge, or are looking to start up an entire mystery game from the beginning, or anywhere in between, this book has something for anyone with a love of mystery, crime, or investigators.

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE