

RPG-13
B-Movie Game System

SCARED STIFF

**SPECIAL
LIMITED
EDITION**

The B-Movie Horror RPG



By Mike P. Demetro

RPG-13 CONNOISSEURS CAUTIONED

Some Material May Be Inappropriate For Fans of Quality Cinema

ISBN 0-9688612-1-0

David Hein



œCORE RULESœ



B-MOVIES

GETTING INTO AN RPG-13 PRODUCTION

The Guildhall Press publishes this game and a series of genre expansions using the **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System**. We are a publishing company based in Toronto, Canada. Our Website is at www.guildhallpress.com and contains information on all of our projects. Our www.playbmovie.com Web site contains a demo of this and other **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** titles. The www.trythegame.com Web site will gradually include demos for all of our work.



This game includes the **Scared Stiff B-Movie Horror Genre Rules**. **Scared Stiff** is the first of several b-movie backgrounds using the **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System**. The “RPG” that indicates this is a role-playing game. The several games planned for the system encompass almost every genre imaginable with one set of rules. The

“13” is added because, together with the “PG,” it captures the flavour of b-movies and identifies the target audience as teens and adults. The words “B-Movie Game System” simply crown the description. We feel the **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** name captures the essence of the games.

The game is designed around the **RPG-13 Core Rules** (the first 1/3 of this book more or less) that are necessary to play no matter what genre is chosen. **Scared Stiff** and the other Genre Rules (such as the last 2/3 of this book that covers the horror genre) provide the specific rules that tailor the game to the background being used. The Core Rules paired with any of the Genre Rules provide for a very detailed duplication of the feel of each genre.

The Core Rules describe how to handle each of the situations common to every genre. The Genre Rules describe character creation and the special rules to bring out the flavour of the setting being described. The language is also tailored to each game so the feel can be very different and the right mindset can be achieved.

Each expansion in the series will detail four related sub-genres within a single broad genre. The series will encompass several genres and the dozens of related sub-genres. **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** is flexible enough to handle anything with a slightly schtick or very schlocky feel, because it is designed to duplicate genre conventions instead of reality.

Scared Stiff deals with horror and has information on the Traditional Terror, Mega Monster, Alien Invasion, and Supernatural Conspiracy sub-genres. Other games in the series will cover science fiction, fantasy, superheroes, modern action, historical heroism and other genres. A demo of this game can be found at

FIENDISH

FOREWORD

This role-playing game duplicates the hilarious camp found in second-rate horror movies. Horror is the ultimate genre for bad cinema because it is unique in being at its best where it fails most dreadfully.

Horror tries to safely bring excitement into our rather banal lives. We can close the book or shut off the movie at any time. It offers us the thrills we no longer get in everyday life, without any real risk.

It is likely, that when horror fails, it becomes humour purely because humour is the form of entertainment closest to it. The two mesh brilliantly despite appearing to be opposites.

Comedy uses many of the same elements as horror. It plays on realism for believability, exaggeration to disguise direction, appeals to emotions to build tension, and often provides a sudden surprise to make the ending unexpected. Comedy and horror are very similar in execution.

Comedy is also an expression of what horror depicts — anger and frustration. Ultimately, comedy is hostility. A comic brags that I, “killed the audience,” “broke ‘em up,” “made ‘em scream,” “knocked ‘em dead,” or “murdered ‘em.” These are sentiments close to the heart of every b-movie fan. Comics can pour out their rage in a forum where they are not going to be beaten by an angry mob. Try doing the same thing on a Los Angeles freeway!

It is sometimes said that laughter is simply a means for venting anxiety. People don’t laugh at a guy slipping on a banana peel, they laugh when he gets up. If he gets up it is comedy; if he doesn’t it is tragedy. If he doesn’t and it is graphic, it is horror. As much as modern life can lack thrills, it can also produce a great deal of anxiety. When the tension built up by a joke disappears, so does the tension we already had.

There is no point in writing a University thesis on the subject. It is enough to say that the two styles often blur together and the game is incredible fun. That in the end is enough. Remember: “Yours is not to question why, yours is but to... yadda, yadda, yadda.”

This game *is* about having fun. The rules show the method of play, the elements of horror, and the components of humour. We have included much more advice than is found in many games, but it is not superfluous. Horror and humour are two of the more difficult genres to pull off well, even if they mesh impeccably once you learn the tricks.

You can learn this game the day you buy it and play it the next day. Your players will easily pick up the rules as they go along, even if they are novices. As time passes, the hints for running your game can be used to add more enjoyment. The game is meant to provide everything you need to master the game, not to require mastery for play to start!

We found in the play testing that *Scared Stiff* can be played regularly. The players quickly learned that this was not a game that could only be played a few times a year. They also learned that the game supported ongoing play admirably. The game is surprisingly durable.

Later, you can look forward to the quick release of *Misadventures* and genre expansions. The Guildhall Press will support the game fully for the next decade or more.

Of course, don’t just take our word for it! Go on and play and you’ll see! There’s everything you need to have *Misadventures* that are so funny they’re scary!



TERROR 101

WHAT ARE B-MOVIES?

B-movies have had a huge influence on modern filmmaking. Although critics have never given them proper credit, audiences have always known instinctively that the “B” in b-movie promises movies at their “Basic” best. Today, the term “b-movie” means any low-budget film, or even any film that is panned by the critics, but it has a much more illustrious past.



Initially, b-movies (or “bottom films”) got their name because they acted as filler, produced by the major studios to provide the secondary film of a double feature. They were also called “B” because their budgets were restricted. When the cinemas opened up to smaller studios and independent filmmakers, the term “b-movie” evolved to refer to “indie” films. But b-movies have existed almost as long as movies in general. The term has come to encompass all the phases of its history.

B-movies are all about doing more with less. B-movies are where untested writers, directors, and actors paid their dues, where fading stars and filmmakers return when the last embers of their fame lose their glow.

B-movies often arise from controversy, and disagreements over themes, quality, and talent. B-movies are an experimental lab where themes and genres bubble together, directed consciously and subconsciously.

The lines between B-Horror, Horror, and Spoof Horror genres became blurred over time. Many people think horror is almost guaranteed to be B-quality, and studios produce few “straight” horrors. Most horror movies have too much comic relief to be at all frightening. Even with laughs thrown in, most horror movies aren’t b-movies because the laughs are deliberate, and b-movie humour is primarily inadvertent. Spoofs of the horror genre are even further from b-movies. The intention is comedy rather than horror and the creepy atmosphere is mere window dressing. Sometimes the genre convention of a protagonist’s vulnerability and normalcy is dropped altogether and the hero is quite powerful and able to defeat whole armies. Most of the time

very ordinary people are pitted against great odds, only to succeed through implausible happenstance.

This game can duplicate any horror movie that follows the genre conventions, but works best with true-to-form b-movie style material. In *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*, ordinary people go up against frightening beings under less than ideal circumstances and triumph due to a series of unlikely breaks. The game mechanics encourage things to turn to schlock despite a straight-faced approach.

WHAT IS ROLE- PLAYING?

There is a growing sentiment in gaming today that a good group can make any game into a good game and that the rules and the world background don't matter. This is true but really misses the point. We pay money for a game so that someone else can do all of the work of making a game that runs smoothly and is well researched. If you have to do all that yourself you have wasted your money. The fact that a good group can save a crappy game does not matter. Someone paid money so he would not have to do everything himself. If he has to spend all his time fixing a bad product instead of making a great one shine, he has been conned out of his money.

A role-playing game is primarily a labour saving device like anything else you buy. I buy shoes so I don't have to learn how to make them and then go to all the trouble of doing it once I know. I buy bread so I don't have to make it myself. It doesn't matter that I know how to make bread. I don't want to have to do it twice a week. There are other things I would rather do. When I buy a game it is so I don't have to design one from scratch. Although I can make any game fun for my players I choose to buy games where that is easy instead of hard and where my energy can be better spent. This game was tailored to do what it does better than anything that was not

designed for exactly the same style of play and I am confident it accomplishes its goals. For playing in a b-movie style, I believe nothing is a better labour saving device than this book.

But what is a role-playing game really? Role-playing is a very curious sort of gaming. There is no board and there are no pieces; the rulebook is as thick as a 30-year-old freshman and there are no winners, losers, or even a finish line. Role-playing is a recreation and a form of play but isn't really a type of gaming at all. If you define "game" as a competition with a set structure and a well-defined beginning and end, role-playing doesn't have any of these defining traits.

Role-playing is sometimes compared to the theatre. Most plays have set characters, scenes, lines, and sets, with actors bringing life to a predetermined drama. Role-playing isn't quite so pre-defined. If anything, it's closer to group improvisation, although not as freeform. There are set roles, an outlined plot, and firm guidelines for resolving any questions where success is uncertain.

If role-playing games aren't identical to any of the most obvious influences, what are they? Why has this so-called explanation only made it harder to understand the games and failed to draw a picture of how they work? It is important to know why role-playing lacks the elements it lacks before a full explanation can be given.

Role-playing is almost entirely verbal. The *Victims of Circumstance*, the name given to the players of B-Movie, are imaginary and the action takes place entirely in the imaginations of the players. That is why no board or game pieces are necessary.

Role-playing is based on teamwork. The players are there to have fun and to direct the roles they play in a spirit of co-operation towards positive goals. The fun doesn't come from the adrenaline of competition but from the joy of watching a story develop. That is why there are no points, no winners, and no losers.

Role-playing games are segmented into episodic storylines. An individual story only takes a session or two to play out, but the chain of stories that are connected by the same central characters can last indefinitely. Like soap operas, the story only really ends when the producers

cancel the program. That is why these games have the reputation for lasting forever.

Game designers like to include guidelines for every conceivable eventuality. The rules are not meant to be oppressive, but to offer suggestions based on play experience for situations that the players may not have encountered before. **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** is very simple and the rules don't require a lot of in-depth knowledge, but they cover all the likely events thoroughly. The impossibility of covering every detail clearly is the reason why some games look like telephone books and read like technical manuals.

At least one of the people playing should have read the rules a minimum of once before playing, but everyone else can be taught in a matter of minutes. It is easy to learn as you go and it becomes much smoother every time you play. Games seem a lot harder to learn than they really are, even if the rulebooks dwarf those of board games.

Ultimately, role-playing games are inspired by games, theatre, and improvisation. They are recreational, involve set roles and basic plot outlines, and give the participants a great deal of control over the flow of events. The participation is social, the activity fun, and the goals are co-operative.

One of the participants is an impartial judge, or referee, who resolves any disputes and guides the story along. In **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** he is called The Evil Mastermind (EM), and he portrays every role except those created by the other participants. Everyone else playing the game is a player. Each player creates a single character – a role that s/he plays for the purposes of the game – known as a *Victim of Circumstance*.

Each time players gather for a session of play, they are involved in an individual story. Each story – called a *Misadventure* – can take one or more of these sessions to play out. The ongoing story of the Misadventures that the Victims of Circumstance find themselves in is known as a *Diary*. This Diary can be never-ending and is linked merely by the fact that the group playing is more or less consistent, even if some players drop out or join over time. A close parallel to this structure might be a television

series with continuing characters, or a series of films based on one or more central characters.

The Evil Mastermind can invent whatever s/he wants and the EM's rulings must be respected. The things the EM invents should be consistent with the setting and s/he should be consistent and fair when dealing with disputes over rules interpretation. But the final decision rests with the EM.

To be effective, the EM should be familiar enough with the game to handle this job without too much trouble.

Players should not run their Victims of Circumstance as people who are in a movie and aware of their position. **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** is not a spoof of this kind; it requires mock solemnity from its players. There must be a division between what a player knows and what the Victim s/he portrays knows. The Evil Mastermind must also respect this division when s/he portrays the other characters in the game. The EM should not describe the scenes as if there were cameras, lights, and microphones filming the action just out of sight.

Role-playing is fairly straightforward and can be picked up easily after a few minutes of feeling self-conscious are forgotten. Over time there is endless scope for improvement and refinement. **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** rewards regular play.

WHAT IS B- MOVIE ROLE- PLAYING?

Some games are cinematic and others ask you to portray movie actors who themselves take on roles. Other games are "realistic" and still others try to please everyone. **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** is a bit different.

Cinematic games attempt to capture the feel of some of the more important genre

conventions, but are really about softening combat rules to more of a Hollywood level. Wounds are less crippling and heroes can defend against many foes at a time without trouble. It is more important to be capable than grisly and these rules don't pretend to duplicate the real world. This works well in combat games but there is more to duplicating movies than this.



In Theatrical games, one takes on the role of an idealised actor who assumes a new role every time out. It works well when handled properly, and with the right genre, and is intended to take the cinematic feel to its extreme.

Theatrical games protect the main figures from harm because, although their roles might be killed off, the “actor” just returns in a new role next time. This works well for high energy action games that are inherently exciting but can drain the tension from other genres.

Games that aim for realism should make the suspension of disbelief easy, and be grim and exciting due to the vulnerability of the heroes, but they often don't. These games can be too slow, clunky, and difficult to feel exciting and that may disrupt the flow of role-playing. They can,

therefore, make it painfully obvious you're playing a game.

Anything that aims to handle everything will be a jack-of-all-trades and master of none. Games cannot escape the feel of their own mechanics; so no matter how much the game can handle, it will all have a similar feel that will work better for some things than others.

The **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** will capture the feel of the genre conventions for the background I present. Each game will pay extreme attention to these clichés and traditions, because that is what characterises “B” films most of all.

Conflict is cinematic, but with a twist. It will be very difficult to buy the farm, but easy to be knocked senseless. Some genres focus on very human heroes, but b-movies are not actual comedies and so the tension cannot be drained away by removing the lethality altogether.

RPG-13 B-Movie Game System games pay close attention to detail, but don't try to duplicate reality slavishly. The rules concentrate on the feel of play, rather than the duplication of a genre's more superficial factors.

The **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** series also tries to cover many backgrounds without falling into the trap of generic games. With more universal games, it is necessary to do a lot of work oneself or to spend money on a supplement. The advantage is that only a few new rules have to be learned and not a whole new system. Each **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** book uses the same rules with a few necessary changes and different advice, so although the games are separate, you don't have to learn a whole new set of rules each time.

The **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** gives you a very broad genre with each set of genre rules, each paying special attention to four genres within the broad scope of the game. The **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** line covers dozens of topics in several books. This book has the Core Rules and the Horror Genre Rules. The expansion books will have genre rules of their own that tie into the Core Rules in this book and provide very good value without the blandly identical feel of universal system supplements.

Buying a good game for each genre covered by role-playing games would cost

hundreds of dollars, but it is impossible to try every genre that is of interest. Getting four genres in one book makes it easy to try backgrounds that interest you but that you don't like enough to buy a whole new game to try. The genres in each book appeal to similar tastes. People will tend to like it all if it appeals to them. Because of the similarities, some of the advice can be shared and the expansions get a lot of space dedicated to them because they tie into the Core Rules here and don't spread themselves too thinly.



TERRIBLE TRUTHS

Games too often make for dull reading. A lot of time is spent studying the rules. They shouldn't put you to sleep. I have spent more time reading certain games than playing them.

The rules for B-Movie are written in a light style so they will be entertaining to read. However, the potentially humorous tone of the rules is not supposed to carry over into the game. The game is supposed to be run deadpan and it is designed so that its descent into hilarity will be as inadvertent as it is inevitable. Play should be funny and the rules should have you laughing continuously, but the game is not intended as a spoof.

The game includes so many genre conventions that what you originally construct as a true horror, and play with a straight face, will gain "b" status during play. Running the game as

horror and developing all the creepy mood and gory detail you can stand will be much more effective than playing everything for laughs. The horror shouldn't be more "x-rated" than the players can handle and the "over the top" style shouldn't be silly, but there isn't much more to it.

Make sure everyone playing has a good idea of the **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** approach, the *style* that everyone else is playing, and the era in which the game is set (almost always the present day, but not necessarily – see below). Each player should be walked through the sections, "*Dicing with Death*," "*Challenges*," and "*Pushing Your Luck*" at minimum – and have the other sections in "*Playing the Game*" described during play as situations arise. Guide each player through making a *Victim of Circumstance* and skim through all the steps in "*The Victims*" section.

Gamers have known for a long time that role-playing is your window into new worlds. Window sellers have taught us double-glazing saves energy. Those of us who have taken both sources to heart realise that having two or more copies of the book when you play will save a lot of energy and aggravation. Of course, if the same poor sod has to fork out for both copies it can create a lot of aggravation, so any expenses should be shared. In the end you only need the one book so don't feel forced to buy more unless you would really find it helpful.

When play is about to start, emphasise the fact that the style of the genre is important. Everyone in **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** is a regular person, and is basically good. No matter how gruff and mean they may act, all the central figures in **RPG-13 B-Movie Game System** are proactive and more or less altruistic. The game is quick to learn and everything can be picked up during the first couple of sessions. Aside from the basics I have just described, play can begin almost immediately.



PLAYING WITH PANACHE

A TRYING TIME

Giving Your Best: Players have a perennial problem. It is easy to find players most of the time, but hard to find people who can run a game well. *Evil Masterminds* are harder to find than players, especially those happy to run something that isn't one of the top three games that year. When you find an Evil Mastermind that you like, try to show him you appreciate his efforts and help make the game run smoothly where you can. Make the effort and you should find the game more fun, too. A playing group can stay together a very long time when it runs like a well-oiled machine.

Winning: In most games "giving your all" means trying hard to win. However, role-playing games (RPGs) are co-operative rather than competitive. Players don't compete with each other; they don't even really compete against the EM. As much as the EM should be respected (perhaps even feared), only the *Creeps* and *Victims* are at odds.

Winning in a RPG comes from playing in a way that is memorable and, if all players have a

lot of fun without disrupting each other, the experience *will* be memorable.

You are winning if you stay true to the character of your *Victim of Circumstance*, even if it means your *VC Buys the Farm*.

In *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*, a *Victim* won't do what is sensible or realistic. However, once you establish what makes sense for your *Victim* inside the genre conventions, you should run with it. Action and excitement have more impact when you care about the person involved so you are concerned for his welfare.

Remember Why You Do It: The whole point of the RPG hobby is recreation. This point is simple—have fun. If you are about to join a new group, ask what their particular style is. Make sure you are compatible with everyone else's personality and playing style. Most people find it easy enough to get along with each other most of the time and some discussion before play can prevent misunderstandings.

Don't Take Things Personally: Sometimes the *Evil Mastermind* or other players will make a mistake and cause your *Victim* to *Buy the Farm*. They may even do it deliberately due to a mad lust to stay in their given roles. Try not

to get too upset and don't take it out on everyone else if you are angry.



Especially in a game like *Scared Stiff*, *Victims of Circumstance* can *Buy the Farm* or *Go Mental*. That is why they are called *Victims*. Shed a quiet tear and move on. The *EM* is pledged to watch over each *Victim* unless his player really asks for it.

The biggest arguments arise when other players direct their *Victims* in such a way that your *Victim Buys the Farm*. There is only one valid excuse for any deliberately callous acts directed from one *Victim* toward another and that is role-playing. There are times when a player feels his *VC* wouldn't act in any other way, no matter how much he wishes there were another way. Of course, the *EM* should be declaring *Victims Scumbags* wherever they are really bad, but this is small consolation to those who have *Bought the Farm*.

Players of mean *Victims* should always be reminded that they were the ones to determine personality and outlook for their *VC* and that it was their choice. Anytime a player justifies himself by saying: "That's just how my *VC* is," you, as the *EM* can reply with "Who decided that?" As much as a player should never bend in

playing his *Victim* well, it should be remembered that, even if he doesn't have a choice in play, he did have a choice before play began. Ultimately, players are always responsible for the actions of their *Victims*, one way or another.

Try To Pay Attention: It is hard to pay attention all of the time, but a lot of players find it saves time to listen carefully even when they are not involved directly. It is not that very many people go as far as to watch TV, play video games, doodle, chat, read, or spronk the groink during sessions. Often your *Victim* will have anything he missed recapped and it will be easier if you were listening. The other players can just say: "We explain," rather than sitting down and stopping play for a blow-by-blow description.

Make Careful Calculations: Not too many players will deliberately fudge numbers to cheat, but some can be a bit careless in their calculations. Try to be accurate wherever possible and not to be too critical of others who make periodic mistakes.

CONFOUNDING CONFLICTS

Powers of the Evil Mastermind:

Although the *EM* should not make rules changes without informing the players ahead of time, it is entirely up to the *EM* to interpret the spirit of the rules. A player should never try to catch the *EM* on a legal technicality and expect to overrule decisions using the strict letter of the rules. This game requires a lot of quick thinking and interpretation of rules to adapt to situations the game designers could never have predicted. No *EM* should be held to the exact wording of the rules. *EMs* should use the spirit of the rules to ensure that all situations are dealt with fairly.

Quick comments, pleas, and queries should never be allowed to develop into arguments that disrupt play. Any disagreements should be left until after the session is over. Only if a *Victim* is about to *Buy the Farm* should a case be made on the spot.

Having different levels of insight into what is really happening causes the most common

point of misunderstanding between the *EM* and the players. Sometimes things will happen that don't appear to make sense, and the reason will be that the *Victims* cannot see everything that is going on. Perhaps if something seems strange, there is more to a situation than meets the eye. A good *EM* should make it clear that there may be more to discover rather than playing coy.

The rules exist primarily as a means of arbitrating conflicts between fictional characters run by the players and EM. A small measure of maturity is all it takes to arbitrate conflicts arising between the players and EM regarding the use of the rules.

MURDEROUS MOTIVES

Role-players enjoy excitement – most often generated by conflict within the story line – but may disagree on the type of conflict they prefer. There are those who like role-playing with some action and those who scream for action and a bit of role-playing – a difference between those who like personality conflicts and those who prefer physical conflicts.

No matter how you put a story together, there is a framework: a protagonist wishes to do, or to prevent, something and an antagonist wants the efforts to fail. The *Spots* centre around obstacles the protagonist must confront on the way to success. If all the players are willing to compromise, most games make it easy to add both personality conflicts and physical confrontations.

RPG-13 B-Movie Game System is modelled on a genre of fiction that requires a healthy mix of both styles of opposition. It is necessary to throw all manner of problems at the *Victims of Circumstance* and to endanger the *Innocent Bystanders* in as many new and interesting ways as possible. By choosing this game, over others that provide only one conflict style or the other, the players have already decided they can handle a blend. There should be few problems.

DEVILISH DEPTH

Your granny knits, your mom does cross-stitch, your dad likes model trains and you role-play. What do they all have in common? They all require a combination of technical and creative skill. Although they are hobbies, mastering them takes determination, effort, and attention to detail. The reward you get is as much fun as you can handle.

When players create *Victims of Circumstance*, they should not try to make the most capable *Victim* that the rules will allow them. Nor should they always make the same old thing, each time.

RPG-13 B-Movie Game System is supposed to be about clichés played deadpan. Although you use *Stereotypes*, you might try different ones each time you make a *Victim* and you should add enough to your *Victim's* personality so that he doesn't bore you later on down the road.

Each player should be familiar with his *Victim of Circumstance*. He should know what the more important details off by heart before too long and what the information about his *Victim* means. He should remember the information regarding his *Victim's* personality and looks well enough to play things out in a way that he finds plausible.

It is also helpful to understand the game reasonably well by reading the more important rules over before play. A player should understand the genre and setting well enough to make decisions that are appropriate. He should also have enough of a grasp of the basic rules he needs to do things. Even when you have been playing for a while, it is useful to re-read the basics occasionally.

No player should act as though the *Victim of Circumstance* has access to all the knowledge that the player has. The player might be sitting right next to the other players and know what is happening to each group of *Victims* when everyone is split up, but the *Victim* he is

portraying does not have that awareness. The player should not engineer cheap, contrived coincidences to justify his *Victim* travelling somewhere based on information he is not supposed to have!

Depth comes from small personality quirks and the little things a player does. *Victims of Circumstance* become memorable for their odd habits and curious mannerisms or expressions. Such quirks should not be beaten to death in play by making them obsessive-compulsive habits, but appropriate use – regularly enough to evoke a sense of the *Victim* – is wise. A little bit of thought about why a *Victim* has those habits can also be useful.

Even where the mechanics can be used to resolve things, players should aim for drama and make things fun. A little imagination, creativity, and style can really go a long way. Just make sure you feel your actions are plausible for your *Victim of Circumstance*, appropriate to the game, and within your *Evil Mastermind's* ability to handle.

Above all, make sure your mad desire to be the best player you can doesn't keep you from having fun. This isn't the army. Also make sure your desire to play with wild abandon doesn't make you hog the stage or give the *EM* a hernia. Everyone else should have as much fun as you do.

MALODOROUS

MAPS

RPG-13 B-Movie Game System doesn't require or recommend maps. Role-playing games evolved from miniature wargames, so it is only natural that too many of them are fixated upon maps. Having figures that represent the people in the game move around maps in a tactical exercise has its place, but that style is wrong for *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*.

Miniatures are visually less impressive than the wild imaginings of a group of typical gamers; maps can act like a cage. Between the

two, imagination is restricted – both in its ability to evoke images of imaginary events and in its talent for creative problem solving.

Although rough floor plans of buildings can help the *EM* run the plots, it should be very rough and never shared with the other players. Sometimes, when there is general confusion and everyone is picturing something slightly different, you can draw a vague map so everyone can agree on important points.

Writers can always plan a room's contents at the same time as planning a movie hero's escape, but role-playing games always require the designer to predict the most *likely* solutions and prepare for them. Whenever a group of players tries something that hadn't been anticipated, the game can *Falter* temporarily.

RPG-13 B-Movie Game System works very differently. Whenever someone in *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* comes up with a plan, or faces an unforeseen eventuality, there is always the opportunity to help define the surrounding area further, just as a movie writer would. This flexible approach to play can be very exciting, but means that maps and figures cannot be well defined ahead of time. Nothing should be established precisely until it has to be.

The game's method of defining reality only insofar as it's necessary can take a few tries before you become proficient, but it also opens up many possibilities. Instead of trying to guess what solutions are anticipated and provided for, players can help script and develop their own approach. It is more fun exploring the possibilities this way anyway.



PLAYING THE GAME

MALEVOLENT MATERIALS

All you need to play this game are this rulebook, some paper, a few pens and pencils and possibly a pair of regular cubic dice with six sides each. However, the game will go more smoothly if each player has his or her own pair of dice. And, while you could play it with just an *Evil Mastermind* and one player, it will be more fun with two or more players. Only the size of the room, the number of chairs, and the *EM's* plot impose any limit on the maximum number of players.

The *Evil Mastermind* may also wish to have some graph paper, coloured pencils, and anything else, which makes the *EM* feel special.

Snacks (both munchies and slurpies) are always yummy and filled with sweet, sweet goodness... I mean, they're recommended, provided they're nutritious and don't spoil supper.



TERRIBLE TIMING

The game is mainly tracked in *Moments*, *Spots*, and *Misadventures*, but may also be tracked in days, months, years, decades or centuries. Some parts of the game use Solar Phases, Lunar Phases, Lunar Cycles, Seasons, and Solar Cycles for dramatic effect.

Moments are a unit of measure equal to precisely one fairly short length of time. This can be seconds, but is occasionally as long as a minute or two. It is never necessary to know exactly.

Spots refer to the situations *Victims of Circumstance* find themselves in and the locations that they are forced to tolerate during this time. *Spots* are also an incredibly precise unit of measure. Although they are short in duration, they last too long to go by unnoticed and seem to take forever. *Victims* are in *Spots* for anywhere from minutes to hours; it doesn't matter much. Any time something new is being done in a new place, the *Victims* are in a different *Spot*.

Misadventures are synonymous with entire plots, and last from the beginning of an evil scheme to its end. They last exactly as long as they last. That can be hours, days, weeks, or even months – at least from the perspective of the *Victims*.

In practice, *Misadventures* consist of the multiple *Spots* in which *Victims* find themselves. Each *Spot* can last for a number of *Moments*. These three units should be enough to cover most situations.

Solar Phases last one day (and night). Lunar Phases last about three and a half days. Lunar Cycles are about a month long. Seasons take about three months. Solar Cycles take a whole year. Eras and Ages are close to Centuries and Millennia, respectively.

Real units of time such as seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries and millennia should be unnecessary.

BLIND FATE & HAGGLING

Methods of Determining Success: Despite Swedish filmmakers putting forth a good case for playing chess to decide any matter where life is endangered, the game designers decided upon dice and haggling. They seemed so much quicker and the alternative was too bleak, Scandinavian, and overflowing with symbolic fish.

Dice or No Dice?: You could consider this two games by some standards. It can be played either using dice or as a diceless narrative. You can even alternate. *The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* uses dice and *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* is genuinely free of random elements and uses no dice (or cards, coins, spinners or stop watches either).

The *EM* and all of the players should play the game the same way. Either everyone plays it with dice or everyone plays it without. The two methods are entirely compatible but the flow works better if there isn't a mix of styles happening on the same night. You could use dice one session and no dice the next if everyone did things the same way each session.

The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System is described in the “Dicing with Death” section and *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* is described in the “No Dice Bub” section.

DICING WITH DEATH

The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System uses dice (the alternative is *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* as discussed in “Blind Fate & Haggling”).

Rolling: *The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* uses only regular, six-sided dice such as are found in any board game. The rules will refer to times when you must “try” or “attempt” something and these efforts require die rolls. Two dice are always rolled unless noted otherwise. Whenever you roll two dice, the result is the sum of the dice.

Types of Rolls: The two standard types of rolls in *The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* are those that attempt to *Overcome a Flaw* and those that attempt to *Exploit a Flaw*. These are called *Flaw Rolls*.

Overcoming and Exploiting Flaws: *Overcoming a Flaw* is a simple process of rolling more than the number representing the *Flaw* on the dice. If the roll is a higher number than the *Flaw*, then the *Flaw* is overcome and the attempt is a success.

Grace Fuller is about to be lowered into a vat of molten wax, so she can be immortalized forever as the definitive Little Bo Peep. Luckily, the madman who chained her up has left the basement of the Wax Museum because Grace's friends eluded capture and he

wants to nab them right away. All Grace needs to do is escape her shackles and jump off the platform that is slowly descending into the hot wax. The *EM* decides that she is obviously too weak to break the shackles but that she might slip out of them if she were flexible enough. He asks her to *Overcome* her *Clumsiness* of 7. If she can roll more than 7, she will succeed. The player picks up the dice and hopes for an 8 to 12. One roll and a pair of sore wrists later, Grace's player rolls 8 and she slips free and yells out a cheer at her success.

Exploiting a Flaw is a simple attempt to roll equal to or lower than the number representing the *Flaw* being *Exploited*. Any roll that is not higher than the *Flaw* succeeds.

Creeps Exploit the *Flaws* of *Victims*, *Chumps*, and *Innocents*. *Creeps* often have *Flaw Modifiers* that make it easier or harder to *Exploit* certain *Flaws*. These numbers add or subtract from the *Flaw* for purposes of *Exploitation* and must be remembered when you roll the dice.

Grace Fuller narrowly avoided being lowered into a vat of molten wax. Unfortunately, the madman who chained her up is returning to the basement of the Wax Museum just as Grace is looking around the room for a safe exit. As the madman walks in the door, he sees Grace looking around the room. He doesn't want Grace to get a head start on him, so he decides to leap down the stairs right away so he can be in a better position to *Chase* her once she spots him. He has a *Clumsiness Modifier* of +1 and has to *Exploit* Grace's *Clumsiness* of 7 in order to leap before Grace can get a chance to run. The 7 *Clumsiness* plus the *Clumsiness* of +1 makes for a total of 8. The *EM* rolls 5 and, because that is within 2 to 8, he succeeds. Instead of Grace running before the madman can jump, he jumps first and Grace is able to run from him only then.

Exploiting Yourself: There are a few occasions when a *Victim* will need to *Exploit* one of his own *Flaws*. This is handled as any other instance of *Exploiting a Flaw*, in terms of the targets but the player will be rolling instead of the *EM* because it is he who is attempting the task.

Lumps Dished Out: In addition to a number added for Weapons when they *Dish Out Lumps*, a "normal variable" is also applied. In *The*

Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System this amount is equal to one die roll worth of *Lumps* (1 to 6).

Results: A "natural" result refers to the result that the die or dice showed before anything was added or subtracted from that initial result. A "modified" roll is one that was altered by adding or subtracting one or more numbers. "Modified" rolls are simply followed by a "+" or "-" and the number to be added or subtracted. A "penalty" is applied to the die roll itself and so is each "bonus." The word "result" is also used as a generic term to refer to any, and all, die rolls. To "get" a number also refers to rolling the result.

NO DICE BUB

The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System does not use dice (the alternative is *The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* as discussed in "Blind Fate & Haggling").

Adding and Subtracting Misfortune: *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* uses no dice, cards, coins, spinners, or stop watches. It is genuinely free of random elements. The rules will refer to times when you must "try" or "attempt" something and these efforts require you to add *Misfortune* to succeed (unless your *Flaws* are low enough to succeed easily). The *EM* can try things as well and he can alter his chances by subtracting your *Misfortune*. The player and *EM* can alter each other's chances by bidding *Misfortune* against each other.

Types of Haggling: The two standard types of haggling in *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* are those that attempt to *Overcome a Flaw* and those that attempt to *Exploit a Flaw*. These are called *Flaw Negotiations*.

Overcoming Flaws: *Overcoming a Flaw* is a simple process of trying to achieve a result that is greater than the *Flaw*. You start with a basic number equal to the lucky number seven but you can make up the rest by adding *Misfortune*, if desired. If the *Flaw* being used is not already 7 or less after all bonuses, penalties, general modifiers and *Creep Flaw Modifiers*

are applied, you fail whatever you are trying unless you add a number of *Misfortune* equal to the amount your adjusted *Flaw* is in excess of 7. You do not have to add the *Misfortune* if you would prefer to accept failure (such as in cases where your *Misfortune* would be raised above 11).

If a player succeeds at whatever he was doing, the *Evil Mastermind* can subtract two *Misfortune* from the *Victim* to change the result to a failure. The player may then decide to add 3 *Misfortune* in order to make the attempt a success once again. If he does so, the *EM* may choose to subtract 4 *Misfortune* from him to make it a failure again. The player may then decide to add 5 to revert it to a success. Each subsequent move in this tug-of-war bidding must up the *Misfortune* traded by 1.

Grace Fuller is about to be lowered into a vat of molten wax, so she can be immortalized forever as the definitive Little Bo Peep. Luckily, the madman who chained her up has left the basement of the Wax Museum because Grace's friends eluded capture and he wants to nab them right away. All Grace needs to do is escape her shackles and jump off the platform that is slowly descending into the hot wax. The *EM* decides that she is obviously too weak to break the shackles but that she might slip out of them if she were flexible enough. He asks her to *Overcome* her *Clumsiness* of 7. Because there are no adjustments to be made to her *Clumsiness*, she succeeds easily because it is within her ability. The *EM* chooses not to subtract *Misfortune* from Grace to reverse her good fortune. A pair of sore wrists later, Grace slips free and yells out a cheer at her success.

Exploiting Flaws: *Exploiting* a *Flaw* is a simple attempt to achieve a result that is equal to or less than the *Flaw*. The *EM* starts with a basic number equal to the lucky number seven but if your *Flaw* is lower he can make up the difference by subtracting an equal number from your *Misfortune*, if he desires. If the *Flaw* being used is not already 7 or more after all bonuses, penalties, general modifiers and *Creep Flaw Modifiers* are applied, he fails whatever he is trying unless he subtracts a number of *Misfortune* from you equal to the amount your adjusted *Flaw* is below 7. He does not have to subtract the *Misfortune* if he would prefer to accept failure (or as in cases where your *Misfortune* would be lowered below 1).

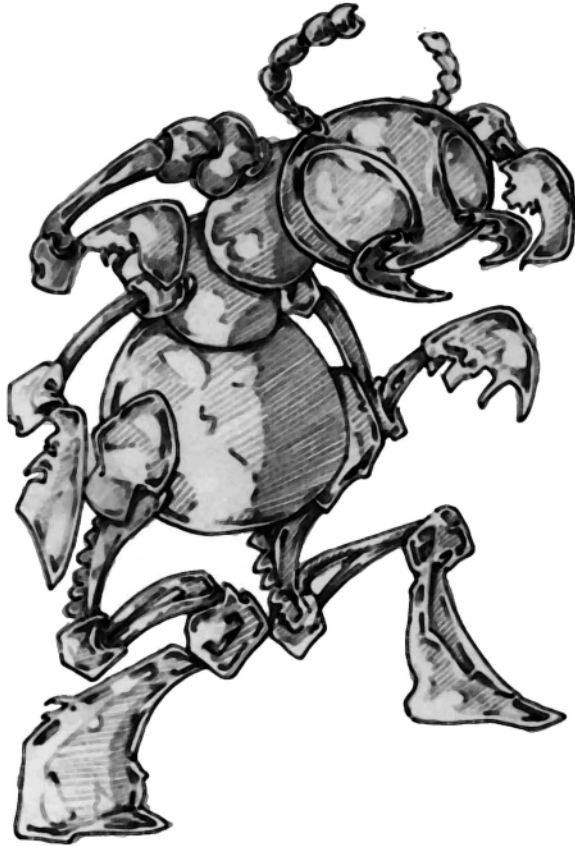
If the *Evil Mastermind* succeeds at whatever he was doing, the player can add two *Misfortune* from his total to change the result to a failure. The *EM* may then decide to subtract 3 *Misfortune* from him in order to make the attempt a success once again. If he does so, the player may choose to add 4 *Misfortune* to make it a success again. The *Evil Mastermind* may then decide to subtract 5 from him to revert it to a success. Each subsequent move in this tug-of-war bidding must up the *Misfortune* traded by 1.

Creeps Exploit the Flaws of Victims, Chumps, and Innocents. *Creeps* often have *Flaw Modifiers* that make it easier or harder to *Exploit* certain *Flaws*. These numbers add or subtract from the *Flaw* for purposes of *Exploitation* and must be remembered.

Grace Fuller narrowly avoided being lowered into a vat of molten wax. Unfortunately, the madman who chained her up is returning to the basement of the Wax Museum just as Grace is looking around the room for a safe exit. As the madman walks in the door, he sees Grace looking around the room. He doesn't want Grace to get a head start on him, so he decides to leap down the stairs right away so he can be in a better position to *Chase* her once she spots him. He has a *Clumsiness Modifier* of +1 and has to *Exploit* Grace's *Clumsiness* of 7 in order to leap before Grace can get a chance to run. The 7 *Clumsiness* plus the *Clumsiness* of +1 makes for a total of 8. The madman will easily succeed. The player decides to add 2 *Misfortune* to Grace to make the result a failure. The *Evil Mastermind* decides success is worth subtracting 3 *Misfortune* from Grace. He tells the player that. The player is not willing to add 4 *Misfortune* in order to make the *Evil Mastermind* fail at what he tried so he declines further bidding. The madman still succeeds. Instead of Grace running before the madman can jump, he jumps first and Grace is able to run from him only then. At least the player has many fewer *Misfortune* due to smart play.

Exploiting Yourself: There are a few occasions when a *Victim* will need to *Exploit* one of his own *Flaws*. This is handled as any

other instance of *Exploiting* a *Flaw*, in terms of the targets but the player will be adding *Misfortune* instead of having the *EM* subtract it from him because it is he who is attempting the task. Likewise, in any bidding that might come afterwards, the *EM* will be the one contesting success (as if it were an attempt to *Overcome* the *Flaw*), instead of the player.



Lumps Dished Out: In addition to a number added for Weapons when they *Dish Out Lumps*, a “normal variable” is also applied. In *The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* this amount is equal to 3 *Lumps* plus 1 more for every point of *Misfortune* the *EM* subtracts from the *Victim* hit.

If the *Evil Mastermind* uses *Misfortune* to add more than 3 *Lumps*, the player can add two *Misfortune* per *Lump* he wishes to deduct from this total (which can fall below 3 to a minimum of 1). The *EM* may then decide to subtract 3 *Misfortune* per *Lump* to restore the *Lumps*. If he does so, the player may choose to add 4 *Misfortune* per *Lump* to remove *Lumps* again. The *Evil Mastermind* may then decide to subtract 5 per *Lump* from him to revert it to a success. Each subsequent move in this

tug-of-war bidding must up the *Misfortune* traded per *Lump* by 1.

Results: A “natural” result refers to the goal of 7 before anything was added or subtracted from that initial result. A “modified” target is one that was altered by adding or subtracting one or more numbers. “Modified” targets are simply followed by a “+” or “-” and the number to be added or subtracted. A “penalty” is applied to the starting point of 7 itself and so is each “bonus.” The word “result” is also used as a generic term to refer to any, and all, totals (with *Misfortune* and other adjustments if any). To “get” a number refers to the same thing as finding the “result.”

SCUMBAGS

Scumbags are not really a unique type of person like *Victims*, *Chumps*, *Innocents*, or *Creeps*. They are actually more of an aberrant variety of *Victim*.

Scumbags have been characterized as dark, avenging *Victims*. Their brooding, vengeful natures have been psychoanalyzed to death. In reality, they are neither romantic figures nor complex ones; they are simply jerks.

Creeps, however misguided or demented, hate jerks as much as the rest of us. That is why *Scumbags* rate high on the list of favourite entrees for most *Creeps*. Food just goes down better when you’re satisfied that the *Victim* had it coming.

Scumbag Penalties: Whenever a *Victim of Circumstance* is thinking, talking, or acting in a way that could be construed as being mean, heartless, or insensitive, the *EM* has the option of forcing the *Victim* to immediately add a point of *Misfortune*.

Being a *Scumbag* can be achieved either through commission or omission. Not preventing a death can be heartless, too, you know. The only people who don’t add *Misfortune* from being a *Scumbag* are *Kids*. Sometimes *Kids* can be very cruel and they always get away with it. *C’est la vie*; that’s life.

Some of you may be wondering why I included “thinking” in the formula above. The

reason is simple. The player is the subconscious of the *Victim*. Although a player might do something that he claims the *Victim* isn't doing, the *EM* can say that the *Victim* was thinking it on some level because the *player* did or said something mean. It's called latent aggression, and it's bad. Remember, cruelty belongs in the schoolyard and not on *Misadventures*.

Ultimate Punishments: Anyone who reaches 12 *Misfortune* due to being a *Scumbag* should disappear mysteriously at the next opportunity. Of course, anyone who was that mean before this horrible accident could easily return as a *Creep* later. Then again, the world isn't *that* cruel, is it?

Making an Effort: Another important fact of the game is that *Victims* behave actively rather than passively during the *Misadventure*. It is not enough to go through the motions.

If a *Victim* does not act appropriately the *Creeps* start to confuse them with *Innocent Bystanders*. You know what that means; the dinner gong sounds.

Every time a *Victim* obviously isn't bothering, s/he should add +1 *Misfortune*. The *Victim* doesn't have to be braver, stupider, and less sceptical than his *Flaws* or *Background* indicate, s/he just shouldn't be played on autopilot. This provision is really against *players* who can't be bothered. It should not be used to make the players play their *Victims* inappropriately or to punish players that are ill, absent or exhausted.

Misfortune can also be handed out when *Victims* act too cautiously, too often – no matter how wise it might seem for them to do so. Occasionally, *Victims* will need to be spurred on. To behave in genre they should follow the trail of blood, go out alone, and otherwise act unwisely. If the *Creeps* start treating them like *Innocent Bystanders* because they are always just standing around, they deserve to be pork chops. Just remember to bring enough applesauce for the whole class.

CHALLENGES

Mental and Physical Challenges: A *Victim of Circumstance* or *Innocent* faces a *Challenge* whenever s/he is called upon to do something. *Victims* are *Mentally Challenged* when required to use their brains and *Physically Challenged* when in need of brawn. The *Mentally Challenged* must *Overcome their Ignorance* to succeed, while the *Physically Challenged* must *Overcome their Clumsiness*.

Other Challenges: The above covers all “skill-related” tasks, but not every *Challenge* can be handled this way. Miscellaneous tasks are based on the most appropriate *Flaw*.

Someone faced with such an undertaking is *Uniquely Challenged*. Examples: moving a large boulder would be based on *Overcoming Weakness*; running quickly requires *Overcoming Clumsiness*; remembering a small detail requires *Overcoming Ignorance*. In fact, most actions are covered by their own rules, as you will see.

Stereotype Challenges: Each *Stereotype* is considered to be especially able to do certain things. *Victims* can do anything that could be done by a typical person who is trained in the same field. As long as you can *Overcome the Flaw* connected to the *Challenge* you will succeed. Your *Stereotype* will also improve your chances at related *Challenges*.

If training is necessary to know how to perform a task, but that expertise is not provided by your career, you cannot succeed. Divide your *Flaw* by 2 (round up) if your career does provide the knowledge to meet the challenge resulting from the problem at hand. Even though most *Stereotypes* could not attempt the task at all, the bonus still applies because it is routine for members of that *Stereotype*.

Deciding Stereotypical Challenges: A *Victim* receives the benefits of his or her *Stereotype* literally anytime s/he can bamboozle the *EM* into agreeing that s/he would be familiar with the task at hand. If a *Victim* has an especially rich background, or gets the sudden urge to expand this background

information, the *EM* may even be willing to allow the *Victim* to claim familiarity with subjects unconnected to his *Stereotype*. (“Yes, I’m a farmer, but when I went to Agricultural College, I also took chemistry and joined several radical movements, so that’s why I know how to make a bomb out of fertilizer.”)

Special Stereotype Challenges:

Stereotypes have been defined as enabling *Victims* and *Innocents* to, “do anything that could be done by a typical person who is trained in the same field,” but that statement needs more qualification. In the case of any *Challenge* that is covered by a *Victim’s Stereotype*, but outside the bounds of the routine tasks generally performed by members of that *Stereotype*, the *Flaw* is not divided by 2. The benefit that the *Stereotype* gives the *Victim* or *Innocent* is that s/he may attempt the task. Otherwise, s/he cannot make the attempt AT ALL.

The design and assembly of *Gadgets* are the main area where this rule comes into play (*Scared Stiff* uses *Gadgets* but not all *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* Genre Rules do). For example: anyone who is not a Doctor is barred from even attempting the tasks normal for a Doctor. When a Doctor performs routine (i.e., most) medical tasks s/he may divide *Ignorance* by 2. But, when the Doctor is acting at the cutting edge of the profession and attempting to perform extraordinary tasks, s/he loses the bonus.

Very Stereotypical Challenges:

Remember, too, that different *Stereotypes* have different *Driving* skills. In *Scared Stiff*, for instance, Mafia Goons only get their bonus while driving *black American-made sedans*, Taxi Drivers can drive skilfully any wheeled vehicle *except* taxicabs, and Hillbillies receive their bonus only if driving *pickup trucks*. Other skills may be similarly limited so as to be more stereotypical.

Sporking: The players are encouraged to do what they can to convince the *EM* that their *Victims* would be able to have greater familiarity with many of the tasks in front of them, and they are required to develop their backgrounds as a consequence. Despite this, some players will insist on going overboard when arguing that they would have improved chances and they may not even put a lot of effort into finding good reasons. The *EM’s* judgment is final in all cases like this and the *EM* should feel free to just say “NO!”

The desire to be a master of all trades and a jack of none is called “Sporking.” The player wants

his or her *Victim of Circumstance* to be a great fork and an accomplished spoon all at once – in other words, a spork. A wise *EM* will realize that the wannabe master of all trades will be a jackass with no trade! Simply explain to the player that s/he is sporking and can’t be good at everything. Alternately, you could deny the ludicrous attempt at trying to make the task at hand a *Stereotypical Challenge* and simply laugh, derisively.

PUSHING YOUR LUCK

There are times when it is crucial that things go your way. When a *Creep* is throttling you in the mad scientist’s lab, wouldn’t it be nice if your hand reached back and just happened to grab the sulphuric acid? When you’re two inches tall and stranded on a table, wouldn’t it be just dandy for a fisherman to happen along and put his fishing line down beside you?

The answer to both of the above questions is, of course, yes. What exactly are the odds that grandpa’s medication is made up of exactly the chemicals needed to complete your *Gadget*? The *EM* may permit these incredibly fortunate coincidences, provided you are willing to *Push Your Luck*.

Determining Misfortune Added: The amount of *Misfortune* to be added from *Pushing Your Luck* depends on the likelihood of the event. The player will ask, “What is the chance that [insert jejune notion here]?” The *EM* must answer:

- **Slim (1 point)**
- **Fat (2 points)**
- **None (0 points)**

The number listed next to the degree of likelihood is the amount of *Misfortune* added from *Pushing Your Luck*. If the *EM* says “none” there is no chance that what you hope for can happen. There is no *Misfortune* added, no need to try, and no hope of success. If the *EM* says there is a “Slim” chance, 1 *Misfortune* is added for any attempt to Push Your Luck. If

he says there is a “Fat” chance, 2 Misfortune must be added. The EM must determine the degree of likelihood based on how reasonable the request seems. Does he feel the player is asking for a little, a lot or too much? If the request sounds like something that will add to everyone’s enjoyment of the game without actually disrupting the feel you like, the EM should assess better odds.

High Misfortune: You must be careful not to accumulate *Misfortune* too quickly, because when you reach 12, you meet with a grisly – not to mention permanent – accident. Don’t worry, though. Heaven is big.

How to Push Your Luck: To successfully *Push Your Luck*, you must add 1 or 2 points of *Misfortune* for your trouble and then *Overcome* your new, improved, *Misfortune*. These points are not temporary. The added points of *Misfortune* are added regardless of whether or not you get lucky.

What’s more, everyone who the EM feels directly benefited from your lucky break should also add 1 point of *Misfortune*.

Misfortune is added because your luck is presumed to be a diminishing resource. The more often you attempt to use it, the less likely you are to succeed and the more dangerous it becomes to rely on luck to survive (just like real life). However, if you do get lucky enough so that reality goes your way, your *Victim*’s life will improve in the way you had hoped.

Pushing Your Luck for Innocents: It is possible to *Push Your Luck* to benefit an *Innocent Bystander*. This works just as if you were doing it on your own behalf. Remember that the main *Misfortune* add (and 1 extra point if you also benefited from the *Innocent*’s luck) gets added to your total.

Penalties for Not Helping Innocents: If you choose not to help an *Innocent*, and the EM decides you have been a *Scumbag*, you add twice the points you would have if you had *Pushed Your Luck* and saved the *Innocent* (yes, sometimes life requires us to make hard choices). If you have been so penalized, it’s too late to change your mind. You do not now get to *Push Your Luck* on the *Innocent*’s behalf. Sometimes being a hero really sucks, but that’s the way it crumbles, cookie-wise.

When Creeps Push Your Luck: Worst of all, *Creeps* can *Push Your Luck*. The EM usually only does this to defend a *Creep* against the efforts of the *Victims*. Furthermore, the *Victim* whose *Misfortune* is being *Exploited* must be the same one

that the *Creep* is most directly confronting. The *Creep* cannot always choose the same little leprechaun, while the other *Victims* get maimed.

Creeps Push Your Luck nearly the same way you would. The difference is the *Creep* doesn’t have to try to *Overcome* (or *Exploit*) your *Misfortune*. The *Creep* automatically succeeds, and whatever he had hoped for happens. He then simply subtracts 1-2 points from your *Misfortune*, depending on the number listed beside the appropriate chance of likelihood.



CHASING CHICKENS

Normal Travel: Movement is abstract and can take as much playtime as necessary. Generally, the EM can take the *Victims*’ successful attempts to get from place to place for granted. Movement is only truly important when someone is being *Chased*.

Stretches: Distance in *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* is measured in *Stretches*, provided the journey is short. True journeys can be taken for granted.

Distance Between You and the Creeps: In a *Chase*, the EM must declare how many *Stretches* the *Victims* and *Innocents* are ahead of the *Creep*. A *Stretch* is a unit of measure equalling precisely one fairly short distance. A *Stretches* figure of 5 will usually

produce an exciting *Chase Spot*. This “*Stretches* figure” represents how far apart the *Creeps* and *Victims* are.

Distance to Destinations: The *EM* must also decide how far away the nearest place to “hole up” will be. The number listed to the left of the Distance given represents the number of tries which the *Creeps* will receive before the *VC* arrive. If the *Creeps* can catch the *Victims*, or at least close the distance in the number of tries given, they will be that much closer to lunch.

- 1) **Near.**
- 2) **Not Too Far.**
- 3) **A While Away.**
- 4) **Quite Far.**
- 5) **Across Town.**

Vehicle Chases: *Chases* are slightly different when vehicles are involved, but the principles are the same. Unlike dogs, *Creeps* hate chasing cars, but they will do what they have to in a night’s labours. A strong work ethic is hard to find these days, but *Creeps* provide a strong example and maintain old-fashioned values.

This section assumes the vehicle being *Chased* is a car, truck, van, motorcycle, moped, or similar motorized conveyance. Motor vehicles can prevent a *Chase* altogether, or reduce the number of *Stretches* to 1, depending on the *Vehicle*. Driving a motor vehicle will limit *Creeps* to only one try for Distance to *Exploit* the *Clumsiness* of the *Victims* and reduce the number of *Stretches* between them. It will be as if any location in town was “Near.” (See page __)

Conducting Car Chases: If the *Creep* successfully *Exploits* the *Clumsiness* of his *Victim*, he reduces the number of *Stretches* by 1 – before the car zooms away – and the *Chase* ends. *Victims* will have a little less time to catch their breath. If the *Creep Exploited* both the highest *Clumsiness* and the highest *Misfortune* of those in the *Vehicle*, the *Creep* gets hold of the vehicle. *Creepy* can then hitch a ride, or pick it up if s/he is big enough.

- 1) **Near, Not Too Far, A While Away, Quite Far or Across Town.**

The *Crashing & Smashing* and *Scurrilous Scuffles* sections have rules for attempts to break into the vehicle and start a fight. See page ____.

Horse Chases: *Creeps* may hate chasing cars, but horses are yummier and far less work. *Chases* are slightly different when horses are involved, but the principles are the same. Horses (and donkeys, mules, camels, llamas, or anything

else you ride that breathes or that is not too fast) are vehicles, albeit that they sometimes have minds of their own. You could, of course, add bicycles built for two, powered or unpowered go-carts, roller blades, skateboards, snowboards, toboggans, sleighs, bobsleds, or weirder modes of personal travel. Go ahead. I dare you.

Horses are much faster than people and can limit the Distance of a *Horse Chase*.

If a horse is being ridden, two tries for Distance are subtracted from the number granted to the *Creep*. The number to the left of the distance given is the number of tries now used.

- 1) **Near, Not Too Far, or A While Away.**
- 2) **Quite Far.**
- 3) **Across Town.**

If a horse is pulling a wagon, buggy, carriage, sleigh, or coach, one try for Distance is subtracted from the number granted to the *Creep*. The number to the left of the distance given is the number of tries now used.

- 1) **Near or Not Too Far.**
- 2) **A While Away.**
- 3) **Quite Far.**
- 4) **Across Town.**

Trains, Planes & Automobiles: Trains are unlikely vehicles for a *Chase*, because once you board one, the *Chase* is over – unless the *Creep* boards it, too (in which case it becomes an ordinary *Chase* on foot). Planes, boats, and spaceships are equally unlikely, unless the *Creep* has a similar vehicle, in which case you can handle the *Chase* normally.

Getting There Faster: At the start of every *Chase*, each *Victim* is given the opportunity to *Beat It*. *Innocents* never *Beat It* unless they have *Victims* present to show them how, and some of the *Victims* there *Beat It* as well and yell at the *Innocents* to follow. Once all *Victims* have decided whether or not they will *Beat It*, those with chicken legs should add 1 point of *Cowardice* for *Vamoosing*. When *Cowardice* has been recorded, the *EM* has the option of making one or more of them *Falter*. Anyone to whom this happens subtracts 1 point of *Misfortune*, but has to take part in the *Chase*.

If the *EM* elects to have the car *Falter*, the engine overheats, a tire goes flat, gasoline

runs out, oil dries up, or some other calamity causes a malfunction.

Rewards for the Cowardly: *Victims* who *Beat It*, and do not *Falter*, arrive at their destination without a *Chase*. Of course, they also won't be around to save their friends who were chased and were caught. The number of *Stretches* chosen for the *Chase* is then converted into *Moments*. Although representing only a short duration, a few *Moments* can be invaluable for defending yourself from unspeakable horrors.

The First to the Hounds: Anyone left after the spineless chickens have *Beat It* is a potential target for the *Creep(s)*. Unless the *EM* rules otherwise, the *Creep* will always try to catch the *Victim* or *Innocent* with the highest *Misfortune* before anyone else. In nature, this is called "culling the herd." Anyone who *Beat It* without *Stumbling* is excluded from the choices for the chase at hand.

Splitting Up: *Creeps* always *Chase* the *Innocent* or *Victim* with the highest *Misfortune* in preference to everyone else (see above). Eventually, the *Victims* will all run in separate directions to get away. Any *Victim* who deliberately tries to ditch his friends should suffer the normal penalties for being a *Scumbag*. If there are multiple *Creeps*, one *Creep* can *Chase* each group of *Victims* and *Innocents*, in order of highest *Misfortune* first.

Conducting Chases: When *Creeps* are *Chasing Victims of Circumstance* or *Innocent Bystanders*, they must *Exploit* their prey's *Clumsiness*. If more than one person is being chased, the highest *Clumsiness* and *Misfortune* scores in the group are used even if they each come from a different person. This is what happens when a group protects *Innocents*. If the *Creep* succeeds he/she/it subtracts 1 *Stretch* from the amount he is behind the person being chased. If the *Creep* not only succeeds, but also reduces the number of *Stretches* to 0, the *Creep* catches up with the prey and a *Scuffle* ensues. In the event the *Creep* fails to *Exploit* the *Clumsiness* of the prey, the distance in *Stretches* between the two remains unchanged.

Delaying Creeps: If a *Victim* feels he really needs to, he can elect to make the *Creep Take Longer* by adding *Misfortune*. For every point of *Misfortune* added, a *Victim* can increase the distance between him and the *Creep* by 1 *Stretch*. As *Creeps* fumble around and try to find their footing, or are otherwise delayed, the *Victim* can add extra distance so he will have longer to act when he arrives wherever he is intending to *Hole*

Up. The *Victim* can decide how many *Stretches* he wants to add, so the number can be increased above the original starting amount.

Heading Off Prey: *Creeps* spend a lot of time perfecting the ancient arts of not leaving a tip, making fun of small dogs, and engaging in otherwise naughty (and possibly disgusting) behaviours. It is therefore not a surprise that they spend a lot of time learning to *Head Off Victims*.

Some *Creeps* use instinct, some study street maps, and a few are so fiendishly twisted that they understand the physics behind public transit. Whatever the case, they can *Head Off* their quarry and disappear in the blink of an eye, only to reappear directly in front of whoever is being *Chased*.

Yelling "BOO!" or "A-HA!" is a staple of *Creeps* who are practiced at *Heading Off Victims*, but either an evil chuckle, a knowing look, or both are fine too.

Creeps Head Off those they are chasing simply by subtracting 1 point of *Misfortune* from each of the *Victims* being *Chased*. All the *Creeps* actively *Chasing* the *Victims* and *Innocents* appear in front of those *Chased*. *Stretches* are reduced to zero and a *Scuffle* ensues. No matter how many *Creeps* and *Victims* are involved, the *Misfortune* subtracted is still only 1. Only *Victims* subtract *Misfortune*. *Innocents* do not, because they are merely appetizers before the entree.

A *Creep* may not *Head Off Victims* and *Innocents* when *Chasing* a vehicle, unless the *Creep* has a similar vehicle. If the *Creep* does have a similar vehicle, she/he/it may *Head Off* the prey normally.

Escaping to Hole Up: *Victims* and *Innocents* escape to *Hole Up* at the end of the *Chase*. The *Stretches* are turned into *Moments*.

Chasing the Creeps: If a *Victim of Circumstance* or *Innocent* is chasing a *Creep* (or group of *Creeps*), s/he must *Overcome Clumsiness* to close the distance between them by 1 *Stretch*. If a group of *Innocents* and/or *Victims* is chasing a *Creep*, the *Innocent* with the highest *Clumsiness* is the one who must make the attempt for the whole group. It must be a *Victim of Circumstance* who tries, if one is present, as *Innocents* do not lead *Victims* in chases. Whenever *Creeps* are being pursued, the *EM* may choose to have one or more people

Falter (as above). Victims can subtract 1 *Stretch* from the distance between them and the *Creep*, the same way that they would add *Stretches* in a normal Chase.

If a *Victim* in a car is chasing a *Creep*, the *Victim* can be assumed to catch the *Creep* (what fun, otherwise?). The *Scurrilous Scuffles* section should handle the rest. (See page __)



ALL HOLED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO

After fleeing frantically from the fiendish *Fleshflaunter*, you head to a house to *Hole Up* and hide. What now? How can you use the few precious *Moments* you have before the *Fleshflaunter* shatters your shack? Have no fear; all will become clear.

The three classic uses of time are: a) searching for useful items, b) hiding to escape later, and c) waiting in ambush. If there is enough time, it's possible that two, or even three, of these choices can be attempted.

Searching For Items To Use: The most obvious reason to go to a building, aside from barricading yourself away from things with long, pointy teeth, is to find items that might be useful in bringing about their demise. Finding these items is simply a matter of *Pushing Your Luck*. If you look in the right place *Pushing Your Luck* will be easier or even automatic, but the search will still take time.

Being in a building improves your chances of finding what you want. The *EM* will be less likely to rule that it is impossible, and may add less *Misfortune* for the attempt.

It is nearly impossible to find most things outside, and so going from building to building across town is sometimes necessary to find the right items to help you. Most often, lots of dangerous traveling is necessary when searching for the *Goodies for Gadgets*.

If you pick an appropriate building, it will be easier to find what you want. A hospital is the place to find funky green gowns, but an auto shop is the proper pad to pick up grease for your gears.

Time To Search: It takes one *Moment* to search each floor of a small building, three *Moments* for each floor of a large building, and five *Moments* for each floor of a huge building. It is the average size of the floors of the building that matter, and not the height of the building, although searching an 80-floor skyscraper could take all night if you don't focus (and judging from the sounds coming up the stairs, you don't have that long).

A house is the most common small building, a small suite of offices a common example of a large building, and a hospital, shopping mall, or factory would each be considered a huge building.

The *EM* may opt to make the search *Take Longer* for the benefit of the *Creeps*. As usual, this makes the search take longer but also lowers *Misfortune*. For every *Moment* added to the time required to search a floor, subtract 1 *Misfortune* from the *Victim* searching. If more than one *Victim* is searching, it is the *Victim* with the highest *Misfortune* who benefits. The *EM* can decide arbitrarily if there is any argument about who is the most cursed.

Searching For The Goods: At the end of the full amount of time necessary to search the floor you are on (1-5 *Moments*), you can *Push Your Luck* and see if what you need is somewhere on the floor.

The full amount of time must have passed before you can even ask, "How likely is it?" And there is no guarantee that what you are hoping for is even possible. Only one try can be made per floor, luckily, so even the largest floor space won't leave you up the creek without a clue. Just try to narrow things down a

bit before you search the Empire State Building.

Quicker Searches: A *Victim* who feels there won't be time to do a proper search can turn the joint upside down and *Hurry*, provided the *EM* has not already made the search *Take Longer*. For every *Moment* that is subtracted from the necessary search time, +1 is added to the *Misfortune* of everyone searching. The time required for the search cannot be reduced below 1 *Moment*. It is possible to enter a building and find what you were looking for right there in plain sight.

Teamwork: It is possible to search a floor more quickly if there is more than one *Victim* searching. The number of *Moments* needed for the search can be lowered by 1 *Moment* for each additional person searching, past the first, but the search time cannot be reduced below 1 *Moment*. *Innocents* cannot search any more than they can undertake any other useful independent action. For instance, if five people search a huge floor, the whole thing will be finished in 1 *Moment*. Having more than five searchers per floor is unnecessary, regardless of the size of the building.

If there are more than three *Victims* present, splitting up into search parties may be best. These "Search Parties" may only have a single searcher in them, which doesn't make for much of a party, even with lively salsa, but the rules apply equally well to any number of people in the search party. Despite the implication of multiple people in each Search Party, this is not always the case.

With multiple *Victims* and *Innocents*, whole search parties can be sent instead of individuals. Each team searches at the same rate as a single *Victim* (1 to 5 *Moments* per floor depending on building size), but the individuals in a team are much safer throughout the whole process. Teams may also be wise because *Innocent Bystanders* cannot search, or contribute to a Search to make it take less time, but may still need guarding by *Victims* who wish to search a building themselves.

The Downside of Search Parties: The problem with working as part of a committee is that the most able are limited by the most inept. The *Victim* with the highest *Misfortune* is required to *Push Your Luck* once a search is complete.

Nasty Surprises: Probably the worst thing that can happen while searching is to find something nasty waiting for you. Sometimes there are *Creeps* lurking inside a building that you never imagined were there.

Creeps have a way of sneaking up when you aren't looking. The problem with searching a floor in a building is that you are certain to run into any *Creeps* that might be inside unless you are *Sneaking*. Unless the *EM* decrees otherwise, *Creeps* always hunt the *Victim* or *Innocent Bystander* with the highest *Misfortune* before moving on to other prey.

If a *Victim* is not deliberately being careful, it is guaranteed that *Creeps* on the same floor will come calling. *Sneaking* is a necessary for anyone moving through a floor that a *Creep* may share, unless he wants to guarantee being detected.

SYNCHRONISED

SNEAKING

Sneaking Around: Being careful is highly recommended if the *Victim* is searching a building that *Creeps* already occupy, but it is also a good idea for those fleeing a building after having already evaded the *Creep* inside.

Anyone who chooses to sneak around a building must choose to be *Edgy* in any *Scuffle* that results from a failure to be quiet enough. Unfortunately, they must add the normal +1 *Misfortune* for being *Edgy* even if a *Scuffle* does not happen. *Sneaking* requires only a simple attempt to *Overcome Clumsiness*. If the attempt is a success, then the area is traversed quietly. If not, a floorboard has squeaked, a stone has been kicked, a dog has barked, or someone was unable to resist the urge to whistle tunelessly or to giggle hysterically.

If you do make a sound, you may as well croon the latest off-off-off-Broadway show with gutsy bravado because everyone around has already heard you.

A *Victim* can only try to *Sneak* if the *Victim* states s/he is trying to be quiet. A *Victim* cannot claim to be sneaking "all the time unless stated otherwise." A *Sneak* attempt should be made every time a *Victim* or *Innocent* passes through any room in which they could be heard.

Sometimes the devious *EM* might ask for a *Sneak* attempt from *Victims* where one

isn't necessary, simply to build suspense and to help conceal which times really count.

Sneaking in Groups: If several people are trying to *Sneak* simultaneously, they may opt to move as a unit. This involves making only one attempt to *Overcome Clumsiness* for everyone, instead of requiring each *Victim* and *Innocent* to try separately.

The unfortunate side effect of working as a team is that it is the person with the highest *Clumsiness* that has to *Overcome* for the *Sneak* to succeed. This is usually an *Innocent* if any are present and *Innocents* typically have *Clumsiness* scores of 9. The EM always attempts things for the IBs. Even though it's the person with the highest *Clumsiness* who has to try, this way is still better for groups, because if each character tried separately, your *Victim* would still be spotted alongside the unfortunate under whatever system s/he failed. Success and failure have the same consequences with many *Victims* present as they do with only one tiptoeing about.

Normal Hiding: Once a *Creep* enters wherever you are *Holed Up*, it is a good idea to *Hide* as soon as Ol' *Creepy* starts looking around the floor you're on. *Hiding* will guarantee you are not heard or seen until the *Creep* searches the floor you are on. If there is a good place to *Hide*, you must *Overcome* your *Clumsiness* to remain unseen.

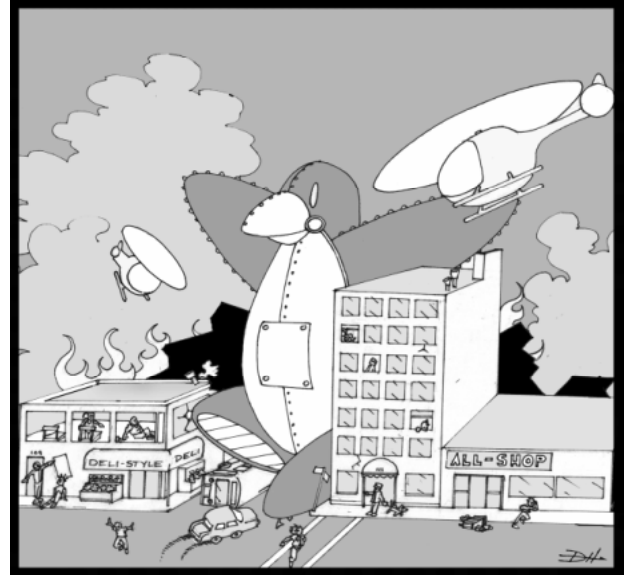
If there is no good hiding place, or you fail to *Overcome* your *Clumsiness*, *Hiding In Plain Sight* is necessary. If you can remain unseen then the *Creep* will move on to search other rooms and you can escape.

Hiding In Plain Sight: *Creeps* will break down every door and search every room whenever they search a building. Ironically, despite being careful to cover every obvious room, they are very sloppy about looking around once there. Some people think that it is a function of how *Creeps* see that causes them to overlook so many obvious *Victims* who are *Hiding In Plain Sight*.

It seems that *Creeps* probably spot things through some combination of sound, motion, and depth – or that they simply adore mime so much that they won't harm anyone who is quiet and still. Whatever the case, it is possible for them to be looking straight at you and walk by without noticing anything. The trick is to stay perfectly quiet and still, and to flatten yourself against a wall. If you are not near a wall, you can squish up against something big enough to cover your crouched form.

Victims must *Overcome Clumsiness* to *Hide In Plain Sight* successfully.

Escape: If you *Hide* successfully, are not found when the *Creep* searches your area, and then *Sneak* out of the building while the *Creep* is still searching, you can go wherever you want. Use the rules for normal travel without risk of a *Chase*. The EM can then give you five (5) *Moments* before the *Creep* finds you again. This can make an *Ambush*, *Chase*, *Crashing & Smashing* or *Scuffle* inevitable.



CRASHING & SMASHING

With the possible exception of European Soccer enthusiasts, no one enjoys breaking stuff more than *Creeps* do. Let's face it, there's nothing more fun than taking out our frustrations on whatever is handy.

What Creeps Can Destroy: A *Creep's* *Weakness* modifier determines how many things the *Creep* can wreck. *El Creepo* can break anything listed beside the modifier as well as anything listed beside lower modifiers. What's more, the *Creep* can break it without breaking a sweat at the same time.

Raising Weakness Modifiers: I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that the *Weakness* modifier only goes up to +4 and the chart goes up to +32. You may also be

wondering how such a small modifier can take huge *Creeps* into account. The answers are simple.

The scale goes up to +32 because a *Creep* may choose to *Wig Out*, thereby raising the effective *Weakness* modifier for the purposes of destroying things. A *Creep* usually *Wigs Out* in order to break down barriers and catch his *Victims*. He may *Wig Out* by *Pushing The Luck* of his *Victims*. If he can exploit their *Misfortune* he can double his *Weakness* modifier during that *Moment* for the purposes of breaking things. A *Creep's* *Weakness* modifier may be doubled once, twice, or three times. Of course, an amount of *Misfortune* equal to the number of doublings is subtracted from the *Misfortune* of the *Victim* being *Exploited*.

Victims of Circumstance, *Chumps*, and *Innocent Bystanders* can never *Wig Out* because they could never summon up enough inhuman rage. They might dredge up lots of human rage, but that doesn't count.

Size Does Matter: In answer to your other question, the *amount* that can be destroyed is set by the size of the destroyer. A *Creep* can demolish an area equal to its own size, provided its die scores allow it to destroy all the materials in that area.

Consider the difference between *Doglizza* and an incredibly strong dachshund. What is *Doglizza* you ask? Pray you never have to meet it in person. *Doglizza* is a very, very frisky dog like many others, but with one terrifying difference. *Doglizza* is the size of a gargantuan radioactive lizard. The difference between *Doglizza* and an incredibly strong dachshund is enormous. Or rather it is enormity itself. Whereas they can both tear through brick walls, the dachshund can rip a 1-foot hole in a wall and *Doglizza* can tear down an entire brownstone tenement.

Neither the general volume of an object nor the material from which it is made affects how hard it is to smash, but the thickness of the object does matter. If that were not the case, mighty oaks would be reduced to splinters as easily as saplings and bank vaults would be about as impregnable as chain link fences.

Thickness makes an object tougher to destroy despite the fact that size is irrelevant. A 100-foot square piece of plywood will have a *Creep*-shaped hole in it before you can yell, "kowabunga!" But a tree stump three feet in

diameter and 10 feet tall is more of a problem. Luckily, many *Creeps* carry chainsaws.

Whenever you're wrecking things it's the size of the thing you're using to do the wrecking that counts. A rock hammer won't do nearly as much effective wrecking as a 10-pound sledgehammer.

If a *Creep* extends his foot to wreck a Jeep, then his foot had better be nearly as big as the Jeep. Of course, stepping through the engine block should be enough for smaller *Creeps*. If, on the other hand, your basic *Creep* wanted to tear down a whole building, then it would get farther by putting its whole body into it instead of simply punching the thing.

Delaying Creeps: Of course, a group of *Victims* and *Innocents* may not be ready to deal with a *Creep* who's about to smash through the door of wherever they're *Holed Up*. That's when the *Victims* can add *Misfortune* to make the *Creep Take Longer*. If they add +1 *Misfortune*, then the *Creep* didn't fully break through this *Moment* and the *Creep's* attempt to destroy whatever s/he was hitting did not succeed. Of course, anyone else who benefits must also add a point of *Misfortune*, so this can be dangerous.

Just think of a *Creep* smashing down the door of the house where you're *Holed Up*. It doesn't get you, but the masonry starts falling, crushing *Innocent Bystanders*. Sure, the *Creep* isn't getting in yet, but having 12 *Misfortune* still sucks.

Victims Breaking Things: In the event that a *Victim* or *Innocent* should ever want to break something, and I hope there's a good reason, the *Weakness* scores next to the *Creep Flaw Modifiers* can be used. *Victims* with a *Weakness* of 8 to 11 are better off running and anyone with a *Weakness* of 12 has already *Bought the Farm*. Why is that *Victim* still in play? Stop cheating!

Weakness Modifier	Victim Weakness	What Can Be Broken
-4	10-11	A <i>Creep</i> no stronger than a typical <i>Kid</i> . This <i>Creep</i> can barely punch his way out of a paper bag and should beware anyone who packs a lunch. Mind you, he's still more rambunctious than a locomotive and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.
-2	9	Your 12 year-old brother would be a good match for this <i>Creep</i> . Let's hope the <i>Creep</i> is half as vicious.
-1	8	Here is a <i>Creep</i> that is about as strong as a typical teenager. Of course, if he is as bitter and angry as a typical teen, you may still be trouble.
0	7	This <i>Creep</i> can force through or destroy the sort of things a normal, adult man could. This includes bushes, card tables, chairs, televisions, stereos, VCRs, computers, dinghies, and windows.
+1	6	Stronger <i>Creeps</i> have it in for sliding chain locks, doors, beds, couches, desks, pianos, mailboxes, small trees, park benches, handheld weapons, rowboats, surfboards, and major appliances. This category even includes the kitchen sink! These <i>Creeps</i> love to demolish parks and houses.
+2	4-5	Really strong <i>Creeps</i> can easily wreck handcuffs, padlocks, safe deposit boxes, light chains, door locks, car doors, phone booths, big double doors, medium trees, flagpoles, bathtubs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, jet skis, motorboats, and wooden, plaster, or fibreglass walls.
+4	1-3	The very toughest <i>Creeps</i> can effortlessly smash dead bolts, light safes, heavy chains, billboards, steel-reinforced doors, bulletproof glass, propeller-driven planes, helicopters, cars, vans, pickup trucks, jeeps, houseboats, and brick walls. Brick walls are an especial favourite.
+8	N/A	Enraged <i>Creeps</i> can trash large trees, telephone poles, light poles, jet fighters, combat helicopters, trucks, and concrete walls.
+16	N/A	Particularly enraged <i>Creeps</i> can dismantle heavy safes, very large trees, fire hydrants, jumbo jets, space shuttles, eighteen-wheelers, armoured personnel carriers, yachts, and reinforced concrete or steel doors.
+32	N/A	The strongest and angriest <i>Creeps</i> can demolish huge trees, tanks, ocean liners, warships, and bank vaults without breaking a sweat. It wouldn't be unfair to say they can grind up <i>anything</i> that can be broken. Of course, anything that <i>can</i> be broken <i>should</i> be broken.

CHUCKING & DUCKING

One thing that is almost as fun as breaking stuff is throwing things around. Don't tell me you don't envy *Creeps* their lack of civic pride!

Basics of Throwing: The rule is simple: if you can break it, you can throw it 10 feet. If you want to be more precise, just use the lowest multiple of 5 that's greater than your height. *That's* how many feet you can throw something. In short, the farthest most adult humans can throw anything is 10 feet (or about three metres if you want to be metrically correct). However, young people or short older people and really tiny wee beasts may not get anything beyond five feet. I have no idea how far Godzilla can throw anything, because it won't tell us how tall it is and I haven't been able to get it to stand still long enough for us to measure its height.

Really Strong Creeps: For every doubling that a *Creep's* *Weakness* modifier is *higher* than the minimum necessary to break whatever it is he's throwing, double the distance he can throw it. This represents maximum distance, of course. If a *Creep* can toss a car 30 feet and some cretinous *Innocent Bystander* is bugging him from 8 feet away then *Creepy* can throw it 8 feet. It'll serve the little beggar right.

Breaking Bits Off First: In case it needs to be said, you can't throw anything that's attached to the ground, unless you break it off first. If something's bigger than the *Creep*, he's better off tearing bits off. It may take a *Moment* or two to get the job done, but at least he'll have lots to toss around.

Lifting Things: A *Creep* can momentarily lift things that he couldn't throw around or carry. Any *Creep* can lift things that another *Creep* with a *Weakness* modifier of double his modifier could break. Of course, he won't be able to hold it for more than two *Moments* if standing still, or one *Moment* if he moves, but that's life.

Likely Targets: You guessed it; *Creeps* will throw stuff at the *VC* or *IB* with the highest

Misfortune, before turning to anyone else. The *Evil Mastermind* can always redirect the *Creep* if he really needs – or wants – to do so

Victims and Throwing Things: Any *Victim* or *Innocent* who wants to go around tossing things about should probably grow up. S/he probably hasn't cleaned his or her room either and should be doing that instead of chasing *Creeps*. That said, *Victims* and *Innocents* use their *Weakness* modifiers as described in the *Crashing & Smashing* section.

SCURRILOUS SCUFFLES

A scuffle is a fight and a fight is, well ... a fight. Any violent conflict between two or more people or *Creeps* will qualify. Combat is divided into *Moments* that are each equal in length to precisely one very short period of time.

Knowing Who Goes When: In a *Scuffle*, people move in a certain order. Usually, every member of each side will move at roughly the same time. Thus, it only needs to be determined whether the *Creeps* can *Get The Jump On Everybody*. First, however, each *Victim* must decide whether s/he will be *Edgy* or not for the *Moment*.

They should usually opt not to be *Edgy*. The *Evil Mastermind* can have *Edgy Victims Freak Out*. A *Victim* who *Freaks Out* not only does not go first but cannot go at all. He is so jumpy that when the *Creep* did start a *Scuffle* he was too startled to do any good. He can do nothing that *Moment*.

Consequences of Going First or Last: All *Edgy* individuals add 1 point of *Misfortune*, but automatically go first, even if the *Creeps* *Get The Jump On Everybody*. They deduct 2 points of *Misfortune* if they subsequently *Freak Out*.

Innocent Bystanders: *Innocents* will never opt to be *Edgy* unless every last *Victim* present opts to be *Edgy*, when they join the crowd without adding or subtracting from Flaws as *Victims* do.

Creep Options: Once it is known who is *Edgy* and who is *Freaking Out*, the *Creeps* may

elect to *Pull A Fast One*. When *Creeps Pull A Fast One*, they automatically *Get The Jump On Everybody* except *Edgy* individuals who did not *Freak Out*. In return, all *Victims* who are not *Freaking Out* subtract 1 point of *Misfortune*.

If *Creeps* do not *Pull A Fast One*, they can still go first if they can *Exploit* the *Clumsiness* of the clumsiest person present. This will often be an *Innocent* (and they usually have a *Clumsiness* of 9). This is why you leave *Innocents* somewhere safe before the final showdown with *Creeps*. If the *Creep* succeeds, he goes before any person who is not *Edgy*. If the *Creep* fails, the *Creep* and his entire evil ilk go after everyone who is not *Freaking Out*.

What Can Be Done: Once you know which side goes first, the members of each side decide the order in which to act. Lowest *Clumsiness* can go first in event of disagreement. Only one of four things can be done in each *Scuffle Moment*. The four choices are the same for *Creeps* and non-*Creeps*. In a *Scuffle Moment*, each character may:

- **Attack.**
- **Move.**
- **Challenge Him/Her/Itself.**
- **Use A Tool.**

Each of these options is fairly straightforward:

- **Attack**

Victims, Innocents, and Chumps: A *Victim Attacks* by *Overcoming Clumsiness* in an attempt to hit (shoot, stab, bop, crush, liquefy, disintegrate) his opponent. *Innocents* never take action to *Attack*, or if they do, they have never succeeded. If successful, the *Lumps Dished Out* of the fist, teeth, or *Weapon* plus a variable amount of *Lumps* will be added to the *Lumps Flaw* of the target. If the character being hit has any defensive *Weapons*, the number of *Lumps Bounced Off* is subtracted from the total number of *Lumps Dished Out* by the *Attack* before the final number is added to *Lumps*. Simple, eh? If the *Victim* did not successfully *Exploit* the *Clumsiness* of his target, no *Lumps* are *Dished Out* at all.

Creeps: A *Creep* attacks by *Exploiting* the modified *Clumsiness* of its target. If the *Attack* succeeds the *Creep's Weakness Modifier*

(with a minimum of 0) is added to the *Victim's* or *Innocent's Lumps*. This is in addition to the normal *Lumps Dished Out* plus a variable amount of *Lumps*. If the target's *Misfortune* is 11, the total *Lumps Dished Out* are also added to *Weakness*. Once again, defensive *Weapons* subtract their *Lumps Bounced Off* from the total *Lumps Dished Out* before the *Attack* adds to *Weakness* or *Lumps*.

Effects of Attacks: When your *Lumps* reach 12 or more, you are *Knocked Senseless*, and when your *Weakness* reaches 12 or more you *Buy the Farm*. That *should* be rare if you act intelligently because it can't happen until your luck runs out at 11 *Misfortune*. *Victims of Circumstance* whose *Lumps exceed 12*, or who have added points of *Weakness* from wounds, may *Buy the Farm* unexpectedly if the *EM* wants them to. Try to remember the *EM* is really doing them a favour, isn't s/he?

Defeating Creeps: A *Creep* with 12 or more *Lumps* is defeated, and appears to have *Bought the Farm*. Alas, *Creeps* cannot get reliable estate agents and so will return to your neighbourhood again one day! *Creeps* simply cannot be eliminated for good and may return at any time with renewed vigour if the *EM* wishes them to. Now, *that is Creepy!*

- **Move**

Moving During Scuffles: Movement works more simply during *Scuffles* than it does during *Chases*. The player gets to move anywhere within a very short distance, provided there is no current *Attack*.

Being Attacked While Moving: If a player is *Attacked* while moving, a *Chase* ensues. This is not entirely like a normal *Chase*, however. The *Creep* can try once to *Exploit* the *Victim's Clumsiness*. The *Victim* cannot *Beat It*, but the *EM* may still decide to have the *VC Falter* normally.

Effects of Stumbling and Arriving: If the *Victim Falters*, or the *Creep* succeeds, it gets to *Attack*. The *Victim* cannot *Attack* during this *Moment*, does not go where s/he wanted, does not pass ghouls, and does not collect \$100. If the *Creep* fails to *Exploit* the *VC's Clumsiness*, then our hero/ine gets where s/he wanted to go and can use the *Moment* to *Challenge Him/Herself* or *Use A Tool*. Then comes the next *Moment*....

- **Challenge Him/Her/Itself**

Time Taken: A *Victim* who chooses to *Challenge Him/Herself* immediately faces a *Challenge*. The *Challenge* can take multiple *Moments* if the *EM* thinks it should. The *EM* may also make something *Take Longer* on behalf of the *Creeps*. If the *EM* does so, then the current *Moment* does not count toward the time necessary to accomplish the *Challenge*. Of course, the *Victim* subtracts 1 *Misfortune*.

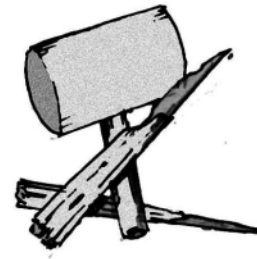
Hurrying: If the *EM* does not choose to have the *Challenge Take Longer* this *Moment*, the *Victim* may decide to *Hurry*. Any *Moment* in which a *Victim* chooses to *Hurry* counts as multiple *Moments* towards completing the *Challenge* if *Misfortune* is added to the *Victim*. For every point of *Misfortune* that is added to the *Victim*, an extra *Moment* beyond the first is counted towards the total time spent.

That way, a *Challenge* that takes, say 5 *Moments* can be completed in 1 by adding +4 *Misfortune*. Obviously, you only need to *Hurry* when a *Challenge* will take longer than 1 *Moment*. Alas, you guessed it; those who *Hurry* must add 1 *Misfortune* each time.

The *Creeps* can still *Attack* busy *Victims* when their turn comes, of course, even though they are not being attacked. *Creeps* are aptly named.

- **Use a Tool--**

Basic Tool Use: Lastly, *Victims* may choose to *Use A Tool*. Yes, this means a *Tool*. Anyone using a *Weapon* or *Gadget* has really chosen *Attack* as his option. *Trinkets*, on the other hand are functionally useless, remember?



SLICERS & DICERS

You want me to be quiet? Vewy, vewy quiet? You're hunting what? Wabbits?

Well if you're going to bash Bugsy real good you'll need to listen just a bit longer. Before we go wabbit whompin' we have to talk about what the scwewy stats beside the weapons mean.

Weapon Effectiveness: *Lumps Dished Out* or *Lumps Bounced Off* are the sole measure of every *Weapon's* effectiveness.

Weapons that can cause you to be *Knocked Senseless* are rated in *Lumps Dished Out* and those that can prevent you from being *Knocked Senseless* are rated in *Lumps Bounced Off*. The higher the number beside each, the more effective the weapon is.

Lumps Dished Out is the number added to *Weakness* or *Lumps* after a successful *Attack*. *Lumps Bounced Off* is the number subtracted from *Lumps Dished Out* before it is added to your *Weakness* or *Lumps*.

Weapon Typeface and Weakness

Effects: In the *Weapons Table*, *Ranged Weapons* can be used to *Attack* people at a distance. The *Lumps Dished Out* of *Hand Weapons* with a basic *Lumps Dished Out* of 1 to 5 is increased by 1 for every point that the *Weakness* of the wielder is below 7. If his *Weakness* is 7 or more, he adds no bonus.

BEING KNOCKED SENSELESS

At some point a *Creep* is going to *Dish Out* more *Lumps* than your *Victim* or an *Innocent* can take. When this happens it is a lot worse than having to drink bad coffee. It's right up there with

having a bullfrog for breakfast, but it's a lot better than *Buying the Farm*.

Being Knocked Senseless: When a *Victim* or *Innocent's Lumps* reach 12, s/he is *Knocked Senseless*. Yes, that means driven unconscious, whining about the pain, put in shock, or otherwise incapacitated. The person cannot do or say anything useful without *Babbling*.

Having 13+ Lumps: *Lumps* are the one *Flaw* that can be driven above 12. Yes, that's right; it is possible to have *Lumps* of 13 or higher. It just means you've been *Knocked Senseless* for a longer period of time. A lot of *Lumps* means that you may be out for a while.

Babbling: A *Victim* who absolutely needs to communicate something to the other *Victims* can opt to *Babble*. He adds +1 *Misfortune* for every sentence uttered. If the *EM* has difficulty sensing where one sentence ends and another begins the *EM* can assign *Misfortune* as s/he sees fit. The *Victim* should have learned better than to use run-on sentences. Doesn't s/he remember English class? In case the *Victim* doesn't, the *EM* should craft a reminder that won't soon be forgotten.



Functioning Fully: At 11 or fewer *Lumps*, a *Victim* or *Innocent* can still function despite bruises, so a single *Spot* can be long enough for someone to wake up after being *Knocked Senseless*. Luckily, no amount of *Lumps* will impair you in any way except to make you a little more likely to be *Knocked Senseless*.

There is no way to *Buy the Farm* until your luck runs out at 11 *Misfortune*, so don't worry; you're perfectly safe. Being *Knocked Senseless* is just a way of getting you carried safely to the *Creep* so he can *Gloat* before placing you in a fatal *Death Trap*.

Recovery: Don't worry; 3 *Lumps* disappear for every full *Spot* that passes after the *Lumps* are received. If the *Victim* is doing nothing but resting, s/he removes 5 *Lumps* per *Spot* during which the *Victim* leaves any companions to fend for themselves. He should also add +1 *Misfortune* for each of those *Spots* for being such an inconsiderate *Scumbag*. In the unlikely event that a *Victim* can get a good night's sleep, *Lumps* return to 0.

~~~~~ MEDICINE

Medical Treatment: If a doctor, nurse, or another *Victim* successfully uses first aid on a *Victim* or *Innocent* with *Lumps*, the patient's *Lumps* score immediately goes back to 0. Whereas most people cannot offer proper medical aid at all, they can bandage simple bumps and scrapes. *Lumps* require only normal first aid such as anyone could attempt and doctors, nurses and paramedics would find simple (i.e.: Stereotype related). Lowering *Weakness* to its original level requires medical training such as a nurse or paramedic has, a doctor finds simple and other people cannot even attempt.

If the *Victim* or *Innocent* has had *Weakness* raised due to *Attacks*, successful medical treatment will reduce his *Weakness* by 1. First aid cannot reduce *Weakness* below its starting level, unfortunately. Try exercise.

First aid can be applied on a person at the end of every *Scuffle* in which his or her *Lumps* or



Weakness Flaw was increased due to an *Attack*. Obviously, receiving more than 1 point of *Weakness* in a *Scuffle* is a bad idea. If *Lumps* or *Weakness* are increased due to other types of injuries, first aid can be applied to those injuries as well.

Still, I would try not to get caught in burning building if I were you. Remember, as much as smoking is a risk to your health, exploding in flames is even more dangerous. Just say no to negative patient care outcomes.

BUYING THE FARM

Obviously the chances of something this awful happening again are slim....



Any *Victim* or *Innocent* who has reached a 12 *Weakness* is said to have *Bought the Farm*. Some people prefer other phrases. You can be: resting in Abraham's bosom, biting the biscuit, visiting God, taking the big jump, getting your just reward, going to a better place, finding peace, sleeping with fishes, dancing with groundhogs, weighted down by your boots, firing your last shot, mustering out, going home in a box, checking out, cashing in your chips, popping off, going across the creek, croaking, taking a one way ride, taking a long walk off a short pier, crossing over the River Jordan, taking a last bow, dropping the curtain, getting cut off, turning your toes to daisies, paying the debt of nature, closing up, settling accounts, or answering the final summons.

Other people prefer: flunking out, washing up, going west, popping off the hooks, joining the immortals, hopping the last rattler, going to the last roundup, laying down the knife and fork, going to your long home, having your name inscribed in the Book of Life, suffering from a negative patient care outcome, getting paid, seeing St. Peter, passing out of the picture, pulling the plug, becoming a landowner, calling it quits, going up salt river, striking out, listening to Taps, going belly up, pegging out, passing your alley in, going for tea, getting trumped, or going the way of all flesh.

My favourite alternative to "*Buying the Farm*" is "*Choosing Your Euphemism*." I hope you don't have to decide right away.

Eventually, every *Victim of Circumstance* lives up to the title. The *Victim* should have been more careful. *Victims* should also pack their bags for the express flight to the great blue yonder, but don't worry; it's not *all* like Kansas. Fighting the forces of evil will have earned our *Victim* first-class seats. Sorry, non-smoking only, but it's time you quit anyway. God will be proud; I'm sure. Make sure you have another *Victim of Circumstance* ready for next time.



MASTERFUL MASTERMIND

BEING AN EVIL MASTERMIND

This section attempts to give some rudimentary advice in a quick overview of what issues may arise during play. Anyone wearing a hat and carrying an umbrella probably considers himself too smart for such basic advice, but should read it anyway. Those of you hoping for dancing penguins will have a bitter pill to swallow. Please take a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. Tea and crumpets will be served at the end of this section if time allows.

The key to running a good game is making sure everyone has fun. If you can entertain your players and yourself, having fun should be a sure bet. To entertain your players you could simply sit on your hands and wave your elbows around while clucking like a chicken, but it grows old fast and is undignified. Throughout this book I am intent on suggesting as many other alternatives as I can to avoid widespread chicken imitation.

The first rule is that the EM's word is law. He should take the attitude of baseball umpire Bill Klem and say: "It ain't nothin' 'til I call it!" He didn't see swings as inherently being fouls, balls or strikes on their own merits but merely situations for him to judge. An EM shouldn't play favourites with his players, try to get them to *Buy*

the Farm or fail to be conservative in rewarding them but his ruling must be respected as final.

An EM has a responsibility to try to be fair and consistent in his rulings and not favour one player over another. He must also understand the rules better than any of his players so he can speak with authority when there is a disagreement. As far as the normal rules go, tailoring it to the tastes of the people playing is pretty standard so long as everyone involved agrees upon "house rules". He should also not decide to alter the existing rules without discussing it with his players beforehand, however.

Any rulings that have to be made during play due to unforeseen situations should not be made to disturb the flow of play too much. New rules can be extrapolated from existing rules so any new house rules are consistent with the approach of traditional rulings. Just be cautious because the rules were refined over time and take their current form due to experience.

During play, it should be unusual to add "situational modifiers." Each +/-1 modifies the chances of doing something considerably more than it would seem (sometimes more than 10%). A +/-1 is a reasonable swing in the odds, +/-2 a large shift and +/-3 a very large swing in the odds. If you cannot avoid modifying whatever it is, try to keep the shift to +/-1.

Providing a fair overall level of challenge for the *Misadventure* is more important than duplicating expected odds for each action. Just just blasting away with guns will not usually

easily defeat creeps. A reasonable structure should be provided to see that each Creep has weaknesses that can be exploited. *Gadgets* will often be necessary and should be built with *Goodies* that can be found at *Spots* around town if the *Creeps* can be evaded. Whatever the structure of each *Misadventure*, just make sure your group of players can handle it and have fun with it. Published *Misadventures* are especially likely to be balanced to a typical group rather than your specific group of players, so such *Misadventures* are best slightly modified to taste.

Misadventures available commercially are designed to run best during a certain period (often the 1950s or present day). These will suggest certain *Victims of Circumstance* as the most appropriate and have a certain feel. In most cases, these *Misadventures* can be adapted. The www.playbmovie.com Web site will have *Misadventures* available to purchase for downloading and play.

The main secret is to have fun and refine your technique between sessions when you can identify areas where you need to improve without interrupting a game. Follow the models here to make things easier and there should be no problems that are too big for you to handle.

I.D.I.O.T. PLAYERS

Once you have played the first *Misadventure*, it will be possible to learn from any difficulties that arose. In order to keep things moving in play, it is important that all the players manage their time well. The *Evil Mastermind* has to ensure that the plot is kept on track, that trivial scenes are resolved quickly and that important scenes are made as much fun as possible. It is the responsibility of the *EM's* players to co-operate so there aren't all kinds of obstacles to keeping things on track.

A b-movie allows for script rewrites and film editing but role-playing games don't. You can come up with a *Misadventure* and revise it a little bit on the basis of what you are able to anticipate, but you can't do a lot of revision during play, and you can't fully undo things that

have been played out. The best way for an *EM* to shepherd things in the right direction, at a fair pace, is to be alert for several session-killers and curb them whenever they start to be a nuisance. I use the acronym "IDIOT" to describe them. The acronym IDIOT stands for Indecision, Digression, Irrelevancies, Obstructions, and Talking.

Indecision: Players may dither and become caught in inactivity. They can become flustered. Sometimes all of the players are log-jammed and at other times only one or two players bottleneck everyone else.

Provide incentives for action or start doling out *Misfortune* to the indecisive. If that doesn't work, start moving things along at your end. If the *Victims* won't go to the plot, bring the plot to them. For example, if your intention is to have the *Creeps* ambush the players outside the house, but the players are intent on searching every floor and don't want to leave, perhaps it's time for one or several wandering *Creeps* to start bashing on the door.

But, you also need to be careful not to make things so dangerous that players need to be overcautious if their *Victims* are to survive. Players are a lot like cows navigating electric fences. A few shocks and they will stay put even when the electricity is off.

Digression: Off-topic, personal chitchat is unavoidable to a degree. Remember that *EM* stands for *Evil Mastermind*, not *Evil Martinet*. You should not be harsh with someone who starts talking outside the parameters of the game, but a good way to kill any game is to destroy the mood by having people abandon the viewpoint of their *Victims* and start talking about whatever enters their heads. Chatty types should be steered back into playing.

Irrelevancies: Many players want to play out each thing that happens, and role-play even the most irrelevant details. As the other half of all interaction that happens in the game, the *EM* can be part of the problem. It is vital to ask players to tell you when they are doing something minor. If they want to go to the store to buy a book to read on the bus between *Spots* and it doesn't affect anything, just say, "You do it."

Obstructions: The biggest obstacles are formed when the players are obstructed by complete dead ends. Make sure that when you make things challenging and the clues somewhat

unobvious, that you also provide at least one blindingly obvious pointer for the players to follow if they don't find the real clues. There must always be things that lead somewhere in plain sight so the players are never stuck absolutely without direction. The penalty for missing clues should be to have to follow a more circuitous route. In the course of this longer route, the added scenes should be exciting so that they don't bore the players. Providing extra opportunities to earn *Lumps* may get the job done.

Talking: A much more innocent form of conversation than outright Digression is talking, in character, endlessly. Sometimes *Misadventures* can go nowhere because two or more of the players decide to have their *Victims* interact in real time. They have immersed themselves so deeply in playing their *Victims* that their blow-by-blow conversation threatens to take over the game. This sort of talk is great when all the players are enjoying it but can be a real problem otherwise. Talking can be handled in much the same way as Irrelevancies and Digression.

Applying the Formula: The IDIOT formula got its name because it addresses the things that a player can do to be an IDIOT, but offers solutions with the notion that players don't intend their behaviour to disrupt the game. Treat your players gently. The whole point is to have fun. Besides, they are delicate wee muffin heads.

STALK YOUR VICTIMS

Here's where we laugh at the professionals. Ho Ho. You know you want to have a chuckle at their expense, or preferably a monstrously cruel cackle. They should envy you your many advantages, not the least of which is not wearing a suit during play.

Always remember how cushy your life is compared to those poor sods who write creepy novels and TV scripts. They have to write material good enough to sell and it has to appeal to an audience of thousands of strangers with tastes that are hard to predict. To succeed, their material has to stand up to repeated readings, or

viewings, and perhaps even interest future generations. Poor wee muffins.

After pausing again for a heartless snicker, you should now hunker down to the simple task before you. You have to provide a *Misadventure* that will be a lot of fun for a handful of your friends. You know all of them well and can cater to their exact tastes. Better yet, so long as the *Misadventure* is constructed with some thought, and played out with gusto, it will never have to stand up to repeated play by the same people.

Design things to suit the tastes of your players. If your players like action, give it to them. If they like the Gothic style, deliver fog-shrouded atmosphere and brooding chills. A young audience will like to see justice meted out and punishments that are appropriate and ironic. Teenagers start out wanting beach bimbos and firearms – your classic “big 'uns” and big guns formula. Those who have had the good fortune to mature with age may prefer subtle, sophisticated, and genuinely terrifying *Misadventures*.

Hopefully, each of your players won't want something different.

It also helps you to know yourself well. Try to tell stories that exploit your strengths and that avoid your weak spots. It may help to pray that your weak spots won't be in the areas that your players love (but don't count on it).

Once you have laid out a *Misadventure*, it is possible to hook players even more during play if you realize that your plans aren't carved in marble. Place things in each scene to involve each player. Do unplanned things to enliven them if they are starting to get bored. Rearrange the clues if the players are totally lost. Books and movies can't be revised once released, but *Misadventures* can be edited during play. You should be careful not to change too much, but your players never have to be bored.

Skim over descriptions of journeys, actions and conversations that aren't intrinsic to the story. Get right to the action and stay there. Beginnings build a foundation; endings deliver the promised punch. Everything in between is just a way of getting from the one to the other. Make the middle gripping by filling it with only the best moments.

Scare your players. Make them laugh and make a statement. *This is a war against boredom!* Do whatever it takes to kill your enemy.

Anything goes. Your players are your friends and you know their tastes, their emotional buttons, and their fears. Use the knowledge to do everything you can to entertain them.

HOT TO TROT PLOTS

Once you have an eye for what your players like you can get down to some actual effort. Okay, I admit it; I'm every bit as lazy as you are. I'm not going to give you an endless analysis of the proper elements that must be included for every story to be well constructed and weighty. I wouldn't even consider suggesting you read everything you can to find original concepts. I'm going to discuss developing plots without getting a mental hernia. I am going to shepherd your lazy brain cells through the hills and dales of the familiar.

Okay, make sure no one is around and within earshot. Are you alone? Were you followed? SHH! Not so loud! No? Good. I will let you in on the secret of being an evil and masterful *Evil Mastermind*.

Steal.

Storytelling is really just the art of fooling people into thinking you're telling them a story that has yet to be heard. Once you have a plot, you need to make sure it doesn't appear too worn. Putting a fresh coat of paint on the same broken down old sedan is all that anyone can accomplish. That said if you have to steal, you'll get a lot farther stealing gold than you will by stealing oven mitts. Artists become great when they steal from the best.

Now we all know crime doesn't pay, and this case is no different. It is very important to add your own elements to every story. You should also glance over what others have done because your perception of the characteristics of something can be wrong. Don't worry too much about being precise for *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*, but a look at what's out there can have unexpectedly funny results.

In an examination of the "great American novel," an author once tried to dissect the literature of the "Deep South." Among the many

common elements, he discovered something very odd. Reputedly, one of the most common elements of all was the presence of dead mules. They were scattered throughout the literature of the South. They littered battlefields, graced larders, and even hung from chandeliers.

Whoever had that pack animal dangling from the ceiling must have thrown one wild party the night before. He was also born to one very vivid imagination. Although many asses kicked the bucket along the Mississippi, not many mules kicked so hard.

Aside from simple creativity, all that is required to give new life to an evil plot is to update it. This is very easily done and only requires two simple steps:

- Recognise a contemporary audience's demands.
- Update the setting and background elements.

The main thing that a contemporary audience needs, and something that no one demanded in Shakespeare's time, is explanations. The questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how are each important, but the only question that's really vital is "how?" Make sure that you answer this question, but try not to be too scientific about it. This is a *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* game, not a scientific thesis paper.

Another answer is simply to cut out difficult parts all together. If *Hamlet* were being written now, the author would be wise to omit the ghost of Hammy's pa. He is a nice addition, but can be done without. If the play weren't Shakespeare, many people would ask: "How on Earth is HE back here on Earth?" Of course, in horror, you can't cut out the supernatural elements, like you could from tragedy, but you get the idea. It's a shame you should have to answer so many questions, but that's the Age of Reason for you.

How many times do you picture Victorian London or modern New England as perfect settings for horror? The reason those periods and places are so famous is simply because a few great writers made them that way. They were actually just using their own contemporary eras for their novels. All you have to do to update their settings, personalities, and other elements from their era to our own.

You can substitute morgues for crypts, psychologists for priests, jeans for petticoats, and jet planes for ocean liners. Just remember to hold on to a few anachronisms for effect. After all, what would a mad scientist's lab be without humming transformers and antiquated "rabbit ears" coursing with electricity?

Once you've scoured the house for deceased donkeys, it is time you got back to the mainstay of *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*: clichés. You can rest happily knowing that you added your mule hanging from a chandelier, chicken in a trombone, or rat on a stick.

INVENTING INSANITY

Once you have made life easier on yourself by trying some older ideas with a slight twist added, you will eventually feel brave enough to really go out on a limb and come up with truly fresh notions. Coming up with good ideas is the first step in developing *Misadventures*. Ideas aren't as hard to come by as one might imagine. Any bucktoothed yokel can dream up a whole pile in no time. The trick is finding one that isn't thinner than a runway model with dysentery.

Ideas come from asking, "What if?" and seeing where different combinations of *Creeps* and settings and goals go. With a bit of experience, you'll find that ideas come easily.

There are two steps to getting ideas: noticing things and being idle. It is like inhaling and exhaling. Spend most of your time absorbing everything around you. Really take it in and retain what you see and hear. Spend some time thinking about it. Spend the rest of your time letting your mind wander and your crazed imaginings go unchecked. Many odd thoughts will come to you unbidden.

If you are really stuck, you can look at the list of *Creeps* in this book, or examine the assortment of businesses listed elsewhere in this tome. You can examine the setting, the *Victims of Circumstance* your players have made, and the *Innocent Bystanders*, *Chumps*, and *Creeps* you have already introduced. Maybe there is room for

a sequel if all else fails. The standard-bearer of mediocrity, and Hollywood disinterest, sequels can be a perfect tribute to the horror genre.

Once some ideas have come along, it is time to sort through them. Of course, getting a number of ideas is only the beginning. The hard part comes with knowing which idea to use and how. The first step is to get an idea with a useful premise and the next is to think about what the logical results of the premise might be.

There are three main secrets to judging whether an idea is any good. If an idea can't live up to the following three criteria, you should forget about it.

- You haven't used the idea before and it doesn't resemble any famous stories too closely.
- You are comfortable with the idea in terms of your skills as an *EM* and your personal tastes.
- It can be constructed in a way that will entertain your players.

Clichés are your bread and butter. The *only* bad cliché is one that you have used too much *personally*. Just ask yourself: "If my stories were the only ones ever told, what would be considered overused?" Then you'll know what else to avoid.

Make sure each idea you are using is not a tired retread of another of your plots. There is no point having the players know the ending because you have just switched the *Creep* involved without refurbishing the details. Check the story against famous stories or any other sources your players might be familiar with. If you deliberately, subconsciously, or unknowingly duplicate a famous movie or novel, your players might find all the answers right away. We couldn't have that now, could we? You say you want to emulate that novel anyway? Well, don't say I didn't warn you, but you may find some useful insights in *Hot to Trot Plots*, below.

The idea should offer opportunities for you to exploit your strengths as an *Evil Mastermind* and not rely too much on areas where you are weak. It should deal with things that interest you and include a few opportunities for you to improve weak spots in your "*EM-ing*" style. You should also avoid ideas that might

develop in a direction that may stray into sensitive areas you find distasteful.

It is vital that the idea have places to put hooks that allow for all the *Victims of Circumstance* to become involved and to really care about the outcome. There should also be lots of room to add subplots to develop the private concerns of each *Victim*. Of course, it is even more important that the players are entertained and that the idea can accommodate their styles and tastes. Remember their sensibilities and don't include anything that will offend them.

Of course, you should still aim to tell stories that will affect them. They should be amused, chilled, and challenged by your games.

A CHICKEN IN EVERY PLOT

Once the ideas have come, the actual *Misadventures* will still need to be plotted. Ah, "plotting," a word that truly implies what they forgot to teach you in school—the heart of literature is pure evil. Concocting *Misadventures* is not as hard as it looks. Just think of yourself as an *Evil Mastermind* Plotting against his *Victims* and numerous *Innocent Bystanders*. After all, because you will be portraying the *Creeps* involved in each *Misadventure* – that is almost literally your role. There are two sides to making a *Misadventure*: "Damming It to the Nines" and "12 Step Progress."

Damming it to the Nines is a watery nine-part image for the process of planning *Spots*. It means, "blocking a flood very elaborately." Picture a tidal wave that is eventually dammed up after a few brave people struggle against the tide while sinking deeper and deeper into the water.

1. *Floodgates Open*: Dead bodies are found or there are mysterious events or *Creeps* burst on the scene in a way that involves the *Victims* and will endanger more and more *Innocent Bystanders*. There shouldn't be any *Scuffles* this early.

2. *In Deep*: The *Victims* are involved in a *Spot* and things look bad.

3. *Deep Reflection*: The *Victims* have a brief time to consider what has happened and to quietly investigate.

4. *In Deeper*: The *Victims* are involved in another *Spot* and things start to look worse than ever.

5. *Deeper Reflection*: The *Victims* have a brief time to consider what has happened and to quietly follow up the questions raised in their earlier investigation.

6. *In Deepest*: The *Victims* are involved in another *Spot* and things are really at their bleakest. This is the time when they are most likely to *Get Carried Away*.

7. *Deepest Reflection*: The *Victims* have some chance at very brief final thoughts. *Gloating* and *Death Traps* are likely at this point but things are not quite as bleak as they could be because there may be little mystery left and more opportunity of escape.

8. *Damming It All*: The *Victims* confront the *Creeps* for the last time and someone *Buys the Farm*, one way or another.

9. *Drying Off*: There is a sigh of relief, brief congratulations, final *Mushy Stuff*, and a chance to say goodbye if anyone needs to leave.

The *Spots* should be well structured so your plot doesn't wander, but imprecisely defined, so there is room to let things flow in unforeseen directions when it is necessary. Flexibility is key. Just take each *Spot* and focus on a single event and how it plays out. Events centre on conflict, which involves someone trying to do something and someone else trying to stop him. *Spots* are usually mini-goals within the scheme of a larger goal.

The basic format can be altered as necessary. Steps 4 and 5 can be repeated as many times as you want to add more *Spots* to the *Misadventure*, or even skipped altogether to make it shorter. As you master the general art of inventing *Misadventures*, you can stray further and further from the formula. Even Picasso

mastered the established methodology before he got kooky with his canvas.

The odd numbered steps in “Damming it to the Nines” are for giving your *Victims* a chance to use their five senses and think about what they notice. The even numbered steps are all about action. Think of it as “looking for the odd and getting even.” Make the odd numbers brief and the even numbers exciting. This is a classic structure, but a lot more interesting in execution than the “peaks and valleys” your geeky English teacher always prattled on endlessly about. Yikes!

Presentation of each *Spot* can be summed up by the “Eleven Heavenly Clues for Fools.” Each *Spot* should have a list of what the *Victims* can *Obviously See, Obviously Hear, Obviously Touch* and *Obviously Smell & Taste*. It is also important to note what *Victims* could *Possibly See, Possibly Hear, Possibly Touch, Possibly Smell & Taste* and *Possibly Inuit*. What is *Obviously* sensed can just be described to the players and what is only *Possibly* sensed requires the *Victim* to both look around and successfully *Overcome his/her Ignorance*.

If you want to consider a *Misadventure* from the perspective of the *Victims*, and with an eye toward role-playing, keep an eye on “12 Step Progress” to help everyone dry up. A lot of people seem to find following *12 steps* helpful. Here is the classic course that each *Victim* takes in a *Misadventure*:

1. Something very bad happens.
2. The *Victim of Circumstance* is stuck in the middle of it all.
3. He decides he has to do something.
4. He forms a plan of action.
5. He faces the opposition.
6. He struggles against great odds and risks much.
7. Things are bleakest.
8. He learns an important lesson.
9. He reaches his goal.
10. He must decide if he will accept the rewards in front of him.
11. He satisfies a need he has had for a long time.

12. He realises this need is due to something from his past and he can move on.

In most games and fiction “12 Step Progress” is vital. A plot is just a quick outline of events without a real story centring on how the events change the people involved. In a b-movie style story, however, it is an afterthought that you should remind the players to pay lip service to. Vive la difference!

As a rule for other types of storytelling, the hero will be formulating a goal to pursue and the villains will be those people who oppose him but in b-movies *Creeps* initiate almost every story. The nearest things to heroes are mere *Victims of Circumstance* stuck along *Innocent Bystanders*.

The best test for determining if an idea is a good one is not by using an exact measure or a taste test (proof is for puddings) but by thinking through a Hollywood “pitch” summary. See if you can sum it up in a single sentence as two established concepts merged into a single idea that seems new and exciting. If you can that is a sure sign of a winner.

SUSPENSION IN DISBELIEF

Execution is vital. Once a *Misadventure* has been plotted, its execution requires a certain sharpness and fine attention to detail to make it come off right. This section deals with the vital question of how to make the story believable and then to screw it up. The answer is as surprising as ever.

You must portray your evil as real, if you want to “creep out” your players when your *Creeps* stalk their *Victims*. The world you create must feel normal and natural, just as much as the people in it should be reasonable. A true-to-life, mundane backdrop makes the extraordinary really stand out. A banal setting makes the bizarre terrifying and disturbing. The incredible should seem incredible. Contrast is your friend.

It is best to keep your world as close to the real one as possible. The people should have so little contact with the paranormal that they

refuse to believe in it, even when all the facts point that way. No matter how often strange things happen, they will be explained away rationally. Even if a person is forced to agree that werewolves exist, he will not be more likely to believe in wereturkeys, vampires or anything else.

Once the incredible saddles up and rides onto your ranch, it should be reacted to in a way appropriate to each person. A priest might find demons easier to believe in than a scientist would. Most people might find maniac slashers credible, but treat everything else as a prankster in a rubber suit.

Reactions vary, but they are based on what the person considers likely. *Innocent Bystanders* are only stupid not to run from a werewolf if they know what it is. As werewolves shouldn't exist, they usually make fatal, but logical, mistakes.

It is best not to twist reality at all. All that needs to exist are the monsters or magic of the particular adventure you are running. Only assume the changes to the world that are necessary for you to do what you're doing. Forget the rest. Usually you can leave the implications of monsters running around for the players to speculate upon. You don't need to explain anything except as absolutely necessary.

Wherever you deviate from reality you should stay consistent. A ray gun that disintegrates *Innocent Bystanders* is not going to gently stun the *Victims of Circumstance* just because the players run them.

Also remember that *Creeps* like all the comforts of home just like we do. Make sure it is clear that they live in reasonable conditions. If magic can conjure beauty and wealth, witches would be cute and rich. Why aren't they? Make sure you have reasonable and clear answers, even if you can't explain everything.

The other thing you have to decide is whether a *Creep* is supernatural or superscientific. Supernatural things cannot be explained by science and superscientific things can be. Neither is actually explicable by current science in practice, but it is a key difference.

Again, this is a game about b-movies and not good movies. It is a game about schlock horror rather than true terror. There is a point at which you have to take your ideas over the top. The thing that separates bad horror from good

horror is that something goes wrong in bad horror that ruins the effect. This can happen in a number of ways.

To help other people suspend their disbelief and have an easy time accepting the story as plausible (so they will be frightened), the best approach is to start with a *Creep* that makes this possible. If you pick a *Creep* that is so over the top that it could never be believed, then you will fail before you start.

The best approach is not to force the *Creep* and setting into a ridiculous mould, but to allow the game mechanics to work naturally on their own. Any *Creep* can be chosen and there is no need to pick outrageous *Creeps*.

It is vital that the *Creep* never be humorous. Just make the plausibility a loose fit when you follow the model. As always, the humour should come from the way the game plays out once the players are involved.

THE TEMPO OF TERROR

Knowing the style of execution for your planned *Misadventure* should give you an idea of the desired pace, but maybe not how to make it feel really up tempo. There are a number of things to remember when pacing fights and description. They apply equally well whether you are scaring you players or driving them mad with laughter.

The important thing to remember is that modern horror is fast-paced. The older investigative style is not the horror of schlock cinema. Action is vital and should only stop so that there will be contrast and the slow bits can show you how fast the fast bits are.

If character is plot in fiction, and characters are interesting when they undergo change, then change is what is interesting within a plot. Change only happens over a long time or as a result of conflict. Conflict is therefore the heart of plotting. Conflict is any expression of one side wanting to do something that another side is trying to prevent. Any change that isn't driven by lots of conflict takes too long to make a quick story.

Since conflict involves the actions of the *Victims*, it is mostly controlled during play. Planning the *Misadventure* simply involves making sure there are lots of possibilities for action in most *Spots* and a strong reason to get involved.

Once a *Misadventure* is underway, the real job of making things seem fast-paced and exciting is at hand. The best way to control pace is to put on music. Many groups play music at sessions but worry more about genre than tempo. Mood can be created as much by the pace of the music's rhythm as by its sound. The fastest tempo music that won't ruin the mood is the best. Nothing creates tension like the illusion of pace.

Once the players are generally tense, you can work on the rhythm of your speech as an *EM*. A varied rhythm will grab people more. Each sentence should be a bit different in length from the last but of a length appropriate to the *Spot*. Short sentences are faster and better for tense moments and long sentences slow things down.

Repeating a single word or phrase can add a lot as well. Imagine yourself talking, talking, talking, formulating the correct pacing and babbling unnecessarily lengthy examples of verbiage until you build to a short burst of speech. Then STOP!

Did I mention that inflection, and volume, can help you use your voice to describe things well?

Every time you stop to describe things for the players is time in which nothing exciting is going on. Description is useful only to the degree it is capable of adding something. In normal description, each item gets an amount equal to its importance in the *Misadventure*. In describing action it can be different.

In real action, people see things as if in slow motion and yet perceive things going by so quickly that they aren't clear on exactly what happened when they come to recall it later. The strangest little details can stand out at the oddest moments, even despite the whole picture's importance. The *EM* should feel free to describe small details in combat in a way he wouldn't stop to do elsewhere.

Suspense is the best goal of any *Spot* that does not contain action. Suspense is created through atmosphere and is discussed in the "Atmospheric Horror" section, beginning on page ____.

The time in each *Spot* should taper down to a faster and faster flow: A series of vivid details, then hard blows to the gut, culminating in a thunder strike. Boom!



FRIGHTENING FORMULA FOR GHOULISH GUFFAWS

The best policy is to let all the laughs come naturally and to design all of your *Misadventures* as straight horror stories that become humorous only when your players get involved. If you do want to try the game with an occasional deliberate spoof, it is best to use the formula here so your humour isn't forced and you can inject laughs in a more natural and calculated manner.

- There is a simple, six-ingredient formula for humour that will have your players in the THROES of laughter any time you want them to be. The six ingredients are *Target*, *Hostility*, *Realism*, *Overstatement*, *Emotion*, and *Surprise*.

Target: Humour is anxiety and anger directed critically at a third party for the entertainment of an audience. The perfect target is one that your players enjoy seeing ridiculed.

The easiest targets are *Chumps*, *Innocents*, and even *Creeps* if you can still make them scary afterwards. Targeting "yourself" this way will tend not to leave the players feeling stepped on.

Celebrities can be introduced in play as visiting stars. People who are reminiscent of celebrities can be used as *Innocents*. That can allow you to really exploit the spitefully envious and gossipy natures of many players. You have to know which celebrities your players may be familiar with, and what references to popular

culture they will get, but the material will never be dated because you will only play the *Misadventure* once.

Places are also favourite targets. Countries, states, provinces, cities, towns, neighbourhoods, and businesses (especially large, well-advertised examples) are all prime targets. Most places have a character that can be easily ridiculed by outsiders.

Any familiar object can be used as a prop to provide a good target. Buildings, cars, sports gear, jewellery, junk food and any other item on the market could work. Every store the *Victims* enter is full of props just waiting to be ridiculed, used as an aid to another joke, or waiting to become involved in a slapstick mess.

Where actual people are not the target, ideas can be. Often, ideas are easily targeted by having a ludicrous sounding *Innocent* express them. Although stereotypical portrayals shouldn't be used as a platform for racist or other bigoted humour, there are many ideas that can be personified in people or expressed through them in order to get a laugh. The best choices are ones that your players will all get a kick out of. If your players cover a wide variety of opinions, then you can have fun by hitting all sides of a topic and being impartial.

Hostility: Comedy is cruelty. No one wishes to be ridiculed and the truth hurts. Romantic difficulties, authority issues, financial worries, family conflicts, powerlessness in the face of technology, and general low self-esteem are the source of most people's hostility. Therefore most humour targets those themes.

The lighter segments of *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System* often centre on romance. When the normal state of everyday life is established before horrors interrupt to change things, the subplots being established are primarily romantic. Characters are categorised as dating, no longer dating, or having no hope of dating. Getting in the way of others who want to date can also work, especially where the characters in the movie are teenagers surrounded by parents and other dating obstacles. Any love interest with whom you've fallen out, or anyone who stands in the way of your pursuit of a love interest, is a likely target for some pointed wit.

Authority issues are the next most common theme, especially with teenaged heroes. The desire to see pompous, arrogant self-

righteous tyrants get their just deserts is universal. Ridicule is almost always directed at those above us. If *Innocent Bystanders* in positions of authority can be portrayed unsympathetically early in a misadventure, then all kinds of possibilities exist to make them the target of embarrassment and poetic justice later. Before the final undoing of wicked authority figures, a lot of digs can be directed at them behind their backs.

Another of the greatest sources of conflict has to be financial concerns. Adults have to deal with car loans, mortgages, income, and the demands of their boss or small business. Teenagers have to worry about getting money from their parents and fitting a job in with their school and social schedules. Although *Victims of Circumstances* are assumed to have sound finances without ever dealing with the issue, players are expected to play out these concerns. Money causes a lot of arguments and sets up many opportunities for humour. Even better, money establishes certain people as authority figures. The need for more money often arises from dating. So it goes.

Of course, no matter what the concern, odds are it will bloom into a family argument. Whether the contestants are husbands and wives, parents and children, or brothers and sisters, family members bicker like no one else. The simple formula is just to have the *Innocents* and *Chumps* in the family worry about the *Victims* in the family, think they know what's best, and imagine that their good intentions make them immune to criticism. That should lead to endless fighting.

Angst is a good fallback position if the target is less than entirely positive. Dread, despair, fear, emptiness, anguish, anxiety, paranoia, suffering, and mortality can produce hours of fun. Picking on universal insecurities will make humour with a lot more impact. Unless your players are very mature, you should probably make *Innocents* the targets of the worst barbs.

A particular essence of the classic B-movies is the anti-science message: "There are some things man is not supposed to fiddle with." They do this by exploiting the technological fears of every generation: alien invasions, machines gone mad, atomic mutations, industrial pollution, and corporate indifference – just expressions of a fear of rapid change.

Differences in physical traits can lead some people to turn fear of the stranger into intolerance, and intolerance is one of the most common sources of hostility and humour. Any visible difference in race, class, sex appeal, status, or education can be and, sadly, often are ridiculed. However, such ridicule is less and less socially acceptable.

Realism: A very old style of humour is making a comeback under the banner of “observational comedy.” Realism is most easily employed in comedy by putting two truisms side by side, only to have them seem ludicrous next to each other. Example: it’s odd that we drive on parkways and park in driveways, isn’t it?

Overstatement: Anything can become ridiculous if exaggerated enough. Blatant distortion or obvious hyperbole is easy to carry off because it lacks subtlety and is difficult to miss. Example: “I’m so hungry, I could eat a *Creep!*” “Uh oh, looks like this is your chance...”

Emotion: It is vital to engage your audience’s emotions because there is no tension, anticipation, or interest, otherwise. Tension can be built by pausing briefly before the surprise ending. Interest can be built by involving your intended audience.

Surprise: Humour never works unless it is unexpected. If you can see the joke coming you’ll never laugh. The only way to guarantee surprise is to make everyone think they know what is going to happen... and prove them wrong. Misdirection is always better than mystery.



THE EVIL MASTERMIND

INNOCENT BYSTANDERS



Innocent Bystanders are the kind of people who could wear "Born To Die" T-shirts and mean it.

More precisely, they're anyone in a *Misadventure* who isn't a *Victim*, a *Chump*, or a *Creep*. Of course, they don't *want* to be cheap luncheon meat and don't *know* they've just been cast into a Shakespearian tragedy. They are perfectly viable people in their everyday lives, but that's because *Creeps* aren't around.

As soon as *Innocents* stumble into a *Misadventure* and the *Creep* gets wind of them, it's time to break out the salsa. They won't last long enough for the *Creep* to double dip.

Innocents' Flaws: Statistically, *Innocents* have a default score of 9 in all their *Flaws*, including *Misfortune* (but not *Lumps*; they start at zero for every character). These *Flaws* (excluding *Lumps*) are then modified according to *Stereotype*.

Especially tasty *Innocents*, such as Jocks, start with 11 *Misfortune*. Sorry, but for all their macho posturing, Jocks are really just male Cheerleaders in the grand scheme of things.

Saving Innocent Bystanders: It's very important that *Victims* endeavour to save the

Innocent Bystanders accidentally caught in the web of fear we call a *Misadventure*.

If *Victims* don't interact with and save *Innocents* they'll never learn anything. Not only that, but the *Creeps* hunt their prey in order of highest *Misfortune* first, so *Victims* will eventually be prey to the *Creeps*, no matter what. Furthermore, particularly insensitive *Victims* will be deemed *Scumbags*. You don't have to hold love-ins, but do try to protect each other!



CHUMPS

With billions of people in the world, one in a million is born with the independence of thought to be a *Victim of Circumstance* instead of becoming a mere *Innocent Bystander*.

Ah, but there is a creature that is rarer still. In any collection of *Innocents* there are sometimes one or two who are actually *happy* to help. I call 'em *Chumps*.

Chumps are slightly more useful and much more proactive than *Innocent Bystanders*. You can think of *Chumps* as being akin to action figures where the arms and legs move and the knees and elbows bend. You still have to do the work for them, but you can do a lot more with them than with those solid plastic figures that just stand around stiff as boards (or, more often, simply fall over).

Making a Chump: A *Chump* is simply a *Victim* who is run by the *EM*. The *Chump* is created in the same way as a *Victim* – and would have been a *VC* if s/he had been born to parents with fewer responsibilities.

As it is, *Chumps* are much better than *Innocents* to have around. The rules treat *Chumps* exactly the same as *Victims* in all circumstances. Once again, the only difference is that the *EM* plays *Chumps*.

Playing Chumps: The *EM* should never have the *Chump* be especially useful in resolving *Misadventures* except as an extra pair of hands or fists. *Victims* should never be made to play runners-up to anyone.

Victims should also be discouraged from trying to have the *Chump* take all the risks. *Victims* should be the proud new owners of a pile of *Misfortune* for doing that.

Chumps may also speak up if they are smart enough. A *Chump* might have been suckered into helping, but that doesn't mean s/he's a chump. Oh; it does, doesn't it?

Okay, then it doesn't mean s/he is a *chimp* and will necessarily be a willing test subject for the effects of prolonged exposure to cavorting kiwi canaries....

THRILLING 3-D

Three Dimensional Thrills: If the *Evil Mastermind* is especially pleased with a *Misadventure* he has made, he should announce to the players that it will be played in "thrilling three dimensional action!" That means that certain nasty parts of the *Misadventure* will actually be made nastier!

In a *3-D Action Misadventure*, the *EM* should pick out the single most dangerous part of each *Spot*. Whatever it is should be allowed

one *3-D Action* sequence when it is first met and no more. These highlights will be made deadlier by the virtue of their “coming at you” entrance. Whether you lean in and stick your fingers in your player’s face and lean back far away again and repeat the motion while making a “weee-oooooh, weeeee-oooooooh” noise is up to you. I wouldn’t do it too often.

3-D in The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie

Game System: The thing that makes *3-D Action* deadlier is that three dice are used instead of two. It is actually 3-die-mensional instead of 2-die-mensional. When the three dice are rolled, one must be discarded and only two rolls may be selected to add together. The range of 2 to 12 for each roll is still the same but the rolls tend to be a lot better when you are going for the “best two out of three.” After all, isn’t that the battle cry of every poor loser whose intended *Victims* are winning too much?



3-D in The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game

System: The thing that makes *3-D Action* deadlier is that things are not as subject to negotiation and are therefore more permanent. Hagglng to reverse success or failure cannot involve more than 3 *Misfortune* being added or subtracted wherever *3-D Action* is involved. This leads to fewer successful attempts to *Overcome* and *Exploit* Flaws and fewer reversals thereafter.

CREEPY

CLIMAXING

Creeps that Climax: *Evil Masterminds* may have noticed that movies and literature (even if just comic books) have a tendency to produce *Creeps* that seem a lot more capable early on and gradually become less able to think clearly and defeat opponents later on. In *Misadventures* it is possible to duplicate this by having the *Creeps* act tougher early on and less tough late in the *Misadventure*. This is called *Climaxing*. It leads to *Victims* who are a lot more eager to investigate the different avenues available in a *Misadventure* and who are reluctant to try to smash the *Creep* very early on. After all, what is the fun of going home in the first 10 minutes of a game?

Climaxing in The Standard RPG-13 B-Movie Game System: *Climaxing* rules change the number of dice provided to *Creeps* in each part of the *Misadventure*. *Creeps* should have one die more for important rolls in the first $\frac{1}{3}$ of the *Misadventure* (selecting the total of the *best* two dice, and, yes this will mean using four dice and taking the best two in certain *3-D Action* sequences). *Creeps* should have one die more for important rolls in the first $\frac{1}{3}$ of the *Misadventure* (selecting the total of the *worst* two dice, and, yes this will mean *3-D Action* sequences cancels *Climaxing* out making for a normal die roll). The standard two dice are used in the middle of the *Misadventure* only and for everything but important attempts by the *Creep* to *Exploit* a *Victim's* Flaws in the opening and closing thirds. Also remember that the thirds are a rough guideline and each *Misadventure* will have its own logical breakdown of beginning, middle and end.

Climaxing in The Diceless RPG-13 B-Movie Game System: *Climaxing* rules change the basic lucky number of 7 *Creeps* use as a base when they *Exploit* Flaws in each part of the *Misadventure*. *Creeps* should be given a lucky number of 5 for important rolls in the first $\frac{1}{3}$ of the *Misadventure* and a lucky number of 9 in the last $\frac{1}{3}$. The standard lucky number of 7 is used in the middle of the *Misadventure* only and for everything but important attempts by the *Creep* to *Exploit* a *Victim's* Flaws in the opening and closing thirds. Also remember that the thirds are a rough guideline and each *Misadventure* will have its own logical breakdown of beginning, middle and end.

If used carefully, *Climaxing* can help ensure the flavour of *Creeps* is left inviolate in your Misadventures. From Golden Age comics to Hollywood blockbusters, *Creeps* are unstoppable early on, menacing later and, finally, completely spent at their moments of truth.

GLOATING

Everyone knows that among the more articulate *Creeps* there is no activity more popular than *Gloating*. A Harvard PhD is no guarantee against going nuttier than a squirrel on steroids, but it can make you a tremendous speaker. Now, since there's nothing a speaker likes more than a captive audience, it's only natural that a *Creep* will take full advantage of the opportunity that captured *Victims* present.

Why Creeps Gloat: Although it is obvious that *Creeps* love to *Gloat*, it has never been adequately explained exactly *why* they *Gloat*. The reason is simple: it is the only way to soften up really tough *Victims* so that the *Death Traps* into which they have been thrust will work. There's no point to tying that meddling Mountie's girlfriend to the railroad tracks if the train is only going to make her faint dead away for a *Spot* or so!

Revealing Plots and Hearing the Story: For every point of the *Creep's* story that s/he/it reveals, every *Victim of Circumstance* present adds 1 point of *Misfortune*. This applies to anyone within earshot; even if the *Creep* doesn't know they're there. It doesn't apply to anyone who hears the story second-hand from another *Victim*. If any *Innocents* are present, they all immediately rise to 11 *Misfortune*, no matter how little is revealed.

What Innocents Hear: *Innocents* never pass on the information they learned while a *Creep* was *Gloating*. Once again, it really sucks to be an *Innocent Bystander*. Even though the *Innocents* will now have identical *Misfortune* scores (of 11), anyone who has ever been to cheerleading practice is still considered prime rib. Anyone with a *Misfortune* bonus will be picked first and the bigger the bonus the higher his or her priority.

The Six Questions: There are six points that a *Creep* must fully comment on in order to raise the *Misfortune* of his *Victims*. They each raise *Misfortune* by 1. The points are Who, What, Where, When, Why,

and How. These points must cover his origin, motive and fiendish plot. The effusive self-praise is traditional, but not mandatory.

Adding Misfortune: Up to 6 *Misfortune* can be added to *Victims* via *Gloating*, but *Misfortune* can't be raised above 11 in this way.

Ridiculing Creeps: There is cause for exception if any of the *Victims* ridicules the *Creep* while s/he/it reveals the tragic Country & Western song that is his/her/its life.

The *EM* may declare that the *Creep* is opting to *Make An Example Of* the *Victim* and doubling the 1-6 points normally added from the *Gloating* – and the cap at 11 doesn't apply. The *Creep* has just lent the *Victim* enough for the down payment required to *Buy The Farm*. There are circumstances under which a *Creep* will summarily "off" someone. They don't call them *Victims* for nothing.

Safely Ridiculing Creeps: The one instance where a *Victim* is allowed to cast aspersions on a *Gloating Creep* is when the *Creep* is *Egotistical*. So long as the *Victim* politely waits for the *Creep* to finish *Gloating*, s/he may make 1 snide comment for every point of Egotism the *Creep* has. Any more and the *Creep* has every right to *Make An Example Of* the *Victim*, so watch out. Remember that *Creeps* have feelings too, so if the remark is especially cruel, then the *Victim* has been a *Scumbag*.

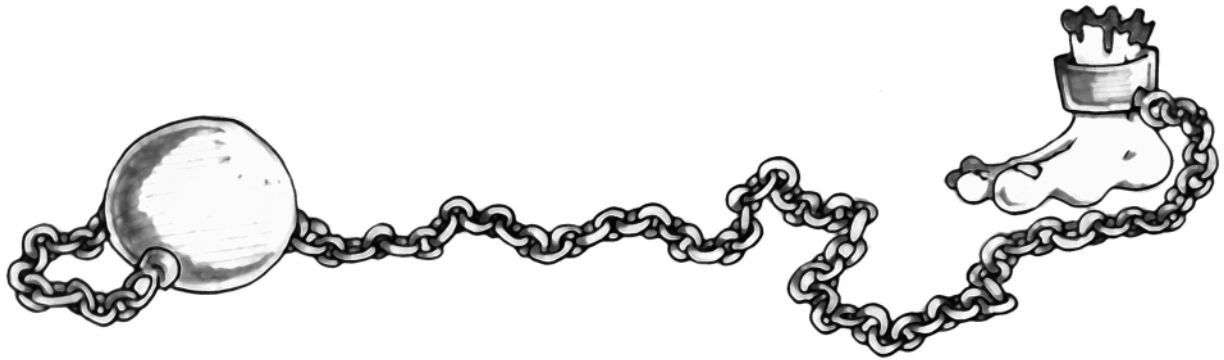
Limits to Gloating: Just remember that a *Creep* may only add *Misfortune* to someone by *Gloating* once per *Misadventure*, so make the opportunity count. *Gloating* is best done at the climax, after the bulk of the *Victims* have been captured or otherwise fatally mistreated. Once the *Misfortune* scores of the remaining *Victims* and *Innocents* goes through the roof, the *Creep* should have no trouble watching them turn into a fine mulch in his terrifying *Death Trap*.

DIABOLICAL DEATH TRAPS

The Definition of a Death Trap: A *Death Trap* is any diabolical contrivance that is designed to help people *Buy the Farm*. They

differ from *Weapons* in that they are guaranteed to work, if used properly. It is also often the case that a

few alterations in set-up can turn mere *Weapons* into *Death Traps* quite easily.



Again, I know what you're thinking. You think *Death Traps* are a laugh because they are stupefyingly slow. Well the laugh is on you. Despite appearances, it is exactly the relaxed pace of *Death Traps* that makes them so immensely horrifying.

The Point and Limits of Death Traps:

Sometimes even *Gloating* isn't enough. Occasionally, someone with a rabbit's foot in their pocket is going to have good odds of survival, despite having heard the *Creep Gloat*. It was discovered though trial and error that a *Victim* could be made to lose hope if there was time to contemplate the horrible fate that approached. Oh, and the *Creep* can't be present to distract this contemplation, either. For every *Moment* the *Creep* is present, no *Misfortune* is added. Sure, the odds of escape become much greater, but it does help ensure the *Death Trap* will finish off anyone who fails to escape.

Adding Misfortune: For every *Moment* a *Death Trap* takes to deliver its lethal payload, *Victims* and *Innocents* caught in it must add +1 *Misfortune*, provided that the *Creep* isn't there to see it. Once again, this can't drive *Misfortune* above 11, in and of itself.

The typical length of time that a *Death Trap* will take to dispose of its *Victims* is 5 *Moments*. This adds +5 *Misfortune* and, combined with the +6 added via *Gloating*, ensures 11 *Misfortune*.

Death Traps built by Egotistical *Creeps* are often even slower. *Death Traps* are very aptly named if the *Victims* fail to escape them.

Rescues: The problem with giving your *Victims* 5 *Moments* alone is that they tend to escape or to be rescued. Usually, 5 *Moments* is enough for

help to arrive, even from *Across Town*, if anyone knows the *Victims* are in danger in the first place.

A *Creep* is only allowed to have 1 *Death Trap* per *Victim* per *Misadventure*. That will be enough, hopefully. They ARE *Victims*, after all....

SWARMING IN SWATHS

Gloating is great for those *Creeps* who went to college and *Death Traps* are swell for those who can afford them. Still what is a working-class *Creep* to do?

What if you are a poor giant beetle or a member of a herd of mad cattle? You do the same thing as any cog in a large bureaucratic machine – you wallow in inactivity until nothing ever gets done!



For *Creeps* who are not really all that smart, who are mute, or whose plans are not all that hard to discover (eat, smash, kill), there is an alternative to *Gloating*. Luckily it also removes the necessity for *Death Traps*, since many *Creeps* can't easily build them anyway.

The way to make sure your *Victims* add enough *Misfortune* to *Buy the Farm*, when you catch up to them, is to *Swarm*.

When Swarms Are Most Dangerous: It is not the *Swarming* itself that causes *Victims* to add *Misfortune*, but the fact that most members of a *Swarm* tend to stand around uselessly or wander about aimlessly.

Many of you have always accused *Swarms* of being ineffective for this reason, but once again you are wrong! It is precisely the *Swarm* filled with many useless members that is channelling all the evil into a few very dangerous members!

Swarms consisting entirely of highly motivated members are great when you only want to see a few *Innocents Knocked Senseless*, but are usually unable to cause anyone to *Buy the Farm*.

Some say *Swarms* share a brain and it is only when one or two members of the *Swarm* use the whole brain that real evil can be accomplished. Whatever the case, they are at their worst precisely when they appear most inactive!

Adding Misfortune: At the beginning of every *Scuffle*, a *Swarm* must declare how many of its members will be *Swarming* for the duration of the *Scuffle*.

Every time a *Swarm* declares its members to be *Swarming*, half the number of creatures in the *Swarm* are declared to be doing nothing for the remainder of the *Scuffle* –but, each *Victim*, *Chump*

and *Innocent* present adds +1 *Misfortune*.

Luckily, this cannot drive anyone's *Misfortune* above 11 and all fractions are rounded off (round fractions of 0.5 or more up, and smaller fractions down). The amount of *Misfortune* that can be added from *Swarming*, of course, varies with the size of the *Swarm*, but the *EM* is warned not to pump *Misfortune* too high, too early in the *Misadventure*.

A *Swarm* of 30 zombies has cornered Grace Fuller and "friend," Guy Everett, in a barn. The *EM* declares that he is going to have all but one of the zombies bang their heads on walls, look around at the decor and otherwise act like tourists.

The number of zombies participating in the *Scuffle* was reduced by 5 steps (30 to 15 to 8 to 4 to 2 to 1) for *Swarming* and both *Victims* present have added a total of 5 *Misfortune*. There is now only one zombie doing anything at all but it is now much more dangerous.

Luckily, they only have 2 points of *Misfortune* each and are fairly happy little campers. Even with the added 5, they will each still only have 7 *Misfortune* and they cannot *Buy the Farm* until the next major *Swarming*!



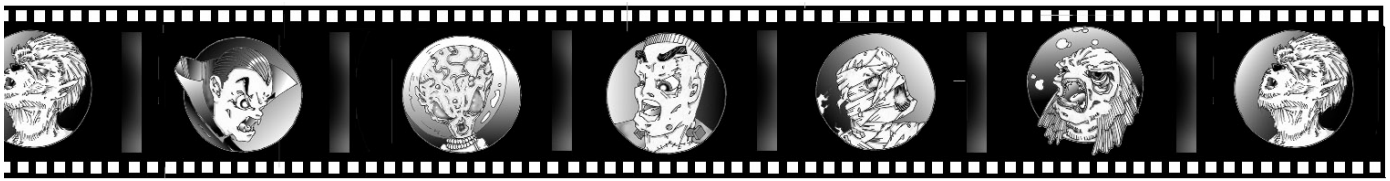
BOUNTIFUL BEASTS

Animal	WK	CL	CW	Size
Bat	-4	+1	-4	1'
Bear	+2	+0	-4	8'
Boar	+1	-1	-4	4'
Bobcat	-1	+1	-4	2'
Buffalo	+2	-1	-4	6'
Cobra	-4	+2	-4	2'
Poison (12 Lumps)				
Crocodile	+2	+0	-4	7'
Cougar	+1	+1	-4	5'
Deer	+1	+1	-4	5'
Dog	-1	+0	-4	3'
Elephant	+4	+0	-4	8'
Gila Monster	+0	+0	-4	3'
Poison (12 Lumps)				
Gorilla	+2	+0	-4	5'
Horse	+2	+0	-4	6'
Hyena	+0	+0	-4	4'
Jackal	-1	+0	-4	3'
Lion	+2	+1	-4	5'
Python	+2	+0	-4	12'
Rat	-4	+2	-4	1'
Rhino	+4	-1	-4	6'
Shark	+2	+1	-4	8'
Squid, Giant	+2	+1	-4	20'
Ink Cloud				
Tiger	+2	+1	-4	7'
Warthog	+0	-1	-4	4'
Whale, Killer	+4	-1	-4	12'
Wolf	+0	+0	-4	4'
Wolverine	+1	+1	-4	2'



TM

HORROR GENRE RULES



THE VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE



VICTIMS

Player characters are called *Victims of Circumstance* (a.k.a. *Victims* or *VC*). Everyone else is a *Creep*, a *Chump*, or an *Innocent Bystander* (also known as *Innocents* or *IB*). To create a *Victim of Circumstance* requires several steps. Each section describes one part of making your Victim.

1. Stereotypes, Reputability & Looks
2. Frustrating Flaws
3. Gobs of Goodies
4. Model Citizens

5. Low Profiles
6. An “E” For Effort
7. Effortless Exclamations

The process is easy to remember because the section initials form the clever acronym “SRLFFGGMCLPEEEEE.” Once you understand the rules well and have given careful thought to your *Victim*, it is quick and easy to develop a *VC* that will be great fun to play.

Throughout the rules, examples are enclosed in boxes such as this to make it easier for everyone playing to see how each rule plays out. All examples use a female *Victim*, Grace Fuller, to illustrate the relevant points.

Of course, Grace Fuller is not the real name of our *Victim of Circumstance*. A pseudonym is being used to protect her true identity. You can pick a name and gender at any time during the creation of a *Victim of Circumstance*, and the last step in this process makes sure this has been done. I chose to name her now because it is more fun to get to know your *Victim* before preventing fiendish attempts to bring about her (or his) demise.

STEREOTYPES, REPUTABILITY & LOOKS

Every *Victim* and *Innocent* has a *Stereotype*. A *Stereotype* is just what it seems to be: a hackneyed archetype corresponding to an occupation, lifestyle choice, or social group.

Stereotypes are easy to play because they are based in truth, without being as universally applicable as I imagine. *Stereotypes* provide powerful, instant images of a certain category of person. Each of us can describe a *Stereotype* to a tee and yet have a mental picture entirely different from that of the person sitting beside us. As easy as they are to develop and play in a pinch, *Stereotypes* can still be made into well-rounded and unique individuals.

You should pick a *Stereotype* from the list, or design a new one along the same lines. Everyone has basic everyday skills as well as skills appropriate to their career. Thus, your *Stereotype* will give you certain advantages. These advantages mostly involve being taken seriously and having improved chances of *Overcoming Flaws* for *Challenges* related to a certain field of study.

You don't roll dice or otherwise pick your *Stereotype* randomly. You may choose any you like. Just keep in mind that during play, you're going to have to keep your *Victim* true to his or her *Stereotype* for the duration of the game. Suddenly acting out of character and doing things and/or pretending to possess knowledge your particular *Stereotypical Victim* couldn't possibly have will make *Creeps*' horrible little mouths water.

In the **Stereotype Guide** I use a "thumbs up" symbol to indicate some of the characteristics of various *Stereotypes*. The "A" column is for Attractive *Stereotypes*, "R" for those that are Reputable and "D" for those that are Disreputable. Those *Stereotypes* that have the

"thumbs up" in a column have the characteristic the column represents.

Attractive Victims And Innocents:

Members of certain *Stereotypes* are considered to be Attractive to the opposite sex as an unavoidable part of their lot in life. Any *Stereotypes* that have the "thumbs up" in the "A" column are counted as being automatically Attractive.

Catch: Members of their own gender treat Attractive *Stereotypes* as Disreputable and members of the opposite sex treat them as Reputable. Unfortunately, Attractive *Stereotypes* run the risk of being *Carried Away by Creeps*!

Drag Queens have a "?" in both the "A" and "D" columns. People treat them as Attractive members of the opposite sex unless they can *Overcome* their *Ignorance* and spot the deception. Players get an opportunity to *Overcome* their *Ignorance* at the beginning of every *Spot* they share with the Drag Queen. Once a person sees a Drag Queen's "true colours," the *Victim* is treated as Disreputable by that person thereafter.



Other Attractive Victims: A player may choose to make a *Victim* Attractive if s/he so chooses, no matter what *Stereotype* is chosen, but should remember that Attractive *Victims* suffer the same consequences as anyone else who is Attractive, of course (such as being *Carried Away by Creeps*), and should add +1 *Misfortune* for the privilege. Their Reputability is also affected. Women obviously suffer more for those looks because, just as most men are beasts, most beasts are men!

STEREOTYPE GUIDE					
Stereotype	Example Challenges	Flaw Modifiers	A	R	D
Actor	Acting				👍
Ageing Hipster	Know Obscure Details Relevant To A Single Chosen Past Decade				👍
Author	Writing				👍
Biker	Drive Motorcycle	-1 WK			👍
Butcher	Meat know-how; Use Meat Cleaver				
Cheer Leader	Fill Students with “pep”	-2 CL/+2 MI	👍		
Chef	Cooking; Use Non-Plastic Dish Or Plate Or Bowl				
Dancer	Dance				👍
Dentist	Dentistry; First Aid			👍	
Doctor	First Aid; Medicine; Surgery			👍	
Drag Queen	Apply Makeup; Use Long Fingernails; Use Stiletto Heels		?		?
Dweeb	Computer Use & Programming				👍
Electrician	Electrical Work & Repair				
Factory Worker	Operate Heavy Machines	-1 WK			
Farmer	Farm; Operate Heavy Machines; Use Pitchfork				
Fashion Model	Strut Magnificently; Use Long Fingernails		👍		
Granny	To-Hit With Purse, Umbrella, And Large Knitting Needle	+2 WK/+1 CL		👍	
Gypsy	Hide; Sneak; Slight Of Hand; Tell Convincing "Fortunes."				👍
Hair Stylist	Hygiene Maintenance; Apply make-up; Use Long Fingernails & Purse				👍
Hermit	Wilderness Survival; Direction Sense	+1 IM			👍
High School Teacher/Principal	Pontificate Endlessly About Nothing; Moralise Aimlessly; Spout Self-Contradictory Doctrines	+2 IG		👍	
Hillbilly	Distil Hooch; Drive Pickup Truck; Use Shotgun	+1 IG			👍

STEREOTYPE GUIDE (CONTINUED)					
Stereotype	Example Challenges	Flaw Modifiers	A	R	D
Hobo	Hide; Sneak	+1 IM			👍
Jock	Know Sports Trivia	-2 WK/+2 MI	👍		
Journalist	Research; Writing				
Kid	Cheat Death (Cannot Buy the Farm, All Attacks Cause Lumps; Cannot be a Scumbag)	+2 WK/-2 CL			👍
Lawyer	Law; Research			👍	
Mafia Goon	Drive Black Car; Intimidate				
Mechanic	Mechanical Work And Repair; Use Wrench				
Musician	Play Musical Instruments				👍
Painter	Draw; Paint; Rant				👍
Photographer	Photography				
Pilot	Pilot Aircraft				
Political Radical	Spout Dogma Of Choice; Use Little Black Bomb				👍
Priest	Perform Rites	+3 SU/-2 IM		👍	
Professor	Know Facts Related to Scholarly Speciality	+2 IM		👍	
Psychologist	Psychology (May Reduce Imbalance)			👍	
Sailor	Sail				
Scientist	Make Gadgets	-1 IG			
Sculptor	Draw & Sculpt				
Sheriff	May Legally Speed And Commit Other Misdemeanours; Use Revolver; Does not add CW and IM for Weapons necessary to his duty			👍	
Singer	Scream for Help (+1 Imbalance per Use) & Sing				👍
Soldier	Does not add CW and IM for Weapons necessary to his duty	-1 WK/-1 CL/+1 IM			
Student	Ditch Class Credibly	-1 WK/-1 CL			👍
Taxi Driver	Drive Anything But A Taxi				
Tinkerer	Construct and Devise Unusual Trinkets, and Gadgets	-1 IG			👍

STEREOTYPE GUIDE (CONTINUED)					
Stereotype	Example Challenges	Flaw Modifiers	A	R	D
Travelling Salesman	Demonstrate the merits of an amazing and revolutionary invention that does everything and will still slice a tomato.	-1 IM/+1 MI			👍
Truck Driver	Drive Truck; Stay Awake				
Unskilled Labourer	Get Exploited	-1 WK			
Veterinarian	Animal Friendship & Veterinary Care			👍	

FRUSTRATING FLAWS

Victims have six *Primary and Secondary Flaws* that must be *Overcome* to succeed at tasks (i.e.: if a Flaw is 7, any result of 8 to 12 will *Overcome* it). They also have two *Tertiary Flaws* that record physical and metaphysical condition.

Weakness, *Clumsiness*, and *Ignorance* are the *Primary Flaws*. *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and *Superstition* are the *Secondary Flaws*. *Misfortune* and *Lumps* are the *Tertiary Flaws*. The lower each of these *Flaws* is, the better. *Primary Flaws* start between 1 and 10. *Secondary Flaws* start at 1. *Tertiary Flaws* start at 0. All three sets of *Flaws* can be modified while making your *Victim*.



See the tables below. The real question for many people is, “What do all the numbers mean?” But then, what does anything mean when you get right down to it? Before we get into an existential debate, however, it is important to recognise that we are only discussing what things represent in terms of the people around us. There are examples beside each number for each of the *Primary Flaws* to help you picture what the numbers represent.

PRIMARY FLAWS

Weakness (WK): A measure of how feeble you are in terms of strength, stamina, and resistance to poison and disease.

Weakness	Example
1	Powerful
2	Solid
3	Brawny
4	Athletic
5	Fit
6	Active
7	Average
8	Flabby
9	Weak
10	Sickly
11	Feeble
12	Fertiliser

Clumsiness (CL): A measure of how clumsy you are in terms of manual dexterity, general agility, and overall grace.

Clumsiness	Example
1	Contortionist
2	Acrobatic
3	Agile
4	Graceful
5	Nimble
6	Supple
7	Average
8	Awkward
9	Clumsy
10	Bumbling
11	Inept
12	Completely Paralysed

Ignorance (IG): A measure of how mentally deficient you are in terms of intelligence, willpower, mental agility, perception, wit, charisma, training, and presence of mind.

Ignorance	Example
1	Supra-Genius
2	Genius
3	Brilliant
4	Astute
5	Clever
6	Bright
7	Average
8	Slow
9	Stupid
10	Moronic
11	Asinine
12	Coma Victim

Determining Primary Flaws by Assigning Points: Most players prefer to tailor-make a *Victim of Circumstance* to taste by assigning points. To determine how high your *Flaws* are, distribute 20 points amongst your *Weakness*, *Clumsiness*, and *Ignorance Flaws*. Make sure each of these *Flaws* has at least 1 point

and not more than 10 points. The lower each *Flaw* is, the better it is for the *Victim*.

Determining Primary Flaws by Rolling: Making a *Victim of Circumstance* is even quicker and easier if you roll your *Primary Flaws* instead of assigning points. To determine how high your *Flaws* are, roll a pair of six-sided dice three times (subtract 10 if the roll is 11 or 12) and distribute the results among your *Weakness*, *Clumsiness*, and *Ignorance Flaws*. The lower each *Flaw*, the better.

SECONDARY FLAWS

Secondary Flaws: A *Victim's* Secondary Flaws – *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and *Superstition* – each begin at 1. Before play begins, they are modified by your chosen *Goodies* and your chosen *Stereotype* may modify your *Secondary Flaws* even further.

Unlike *Primary Flaws*, *Secondary Flaws* can fluctuate a great deal during play as a variety of circumstances, actions, and other events occur.

Whatever the case, no starting *Secondary Flaw* can ever be lower than 1 or higher than 11. The *Victim* becomes incapable of *Creep* hunting as soon as any of his *Secondary Flaws* reaches 12. It is difficult to save the world when you are pushing up daisies, paralysed, permanently flunked out, jellified, demented, or overly esoteric.

Once again, you may ask, “What do all the numbers mean?” You’ll find explanatory *Secondary Flaw* tables below.

Cowardice (CW): A measure of how cowardly you are when actually faced with something frightening.

Cowardice	Example
1	Fearless
2	Valiant
3	Bold
4	Brave
5	Spunky
6	Calm
7	Timid
8	Fainthearted
9	Cowardly
10	Spineless
11	Gelatinous
12	Scared Into Buying the Farm

Imbalance (IM): A measure of how paranoid you are in terms of your cynicism, pessimism, mistrust of people and the world, anticipation of trouble, and need to be prepared for every remote eventuality. Over time it also reflects how mentally unstable you have become and your proximity to the precipice of insanity.

Imbalance	Example
1	Wise
2	Unflappable
3	Content
4	Stable
5	Erratic
6	Uptight
7	Suspicious
8	Wary
9	Paranoid
10	Unhinged
11	Deranged
12	Incurably Insane

Superstition (SU): A measure of how superstitious you are – for example, your scepticism when confronted with strange occurrences and/or tendency to believe things which science rejects.

Superstition	Example
1	Rationalist Pawn
2	Sceptical
3	Questioning
4	Undecided
5	Superstitious
6	Zealous
7	Mysterious
8	Profound
9	Esoteric
10	Arcane
11	Mystical
12	Passed Out of Mortal Bonds

TERTIARY FLAWS

There are two *Tertiary Flaws*: *Misfortune* (MI) and *Lumps* (LU), which both begin at 0. A GM may add *Misfortune* to a *Victim* every time he feels that *Victim's* player is being too passive in responding to situations. Some *Stereotypes* list a *Misfortune Modifier* wherever it is appropriate to who they are. *Misfortune* represents an increasing likelihood of bad luck. As bad things happen, you subtract points from your *Misfortune* because you have less bad luck due to you. As good things happen, points will be added to your *Misfortune* will be added to as it becomes more likely that bad luck will eventually catch up with you.

The other *Tertiary Flaw*, called *Lumps*, exists only to measure how close to being incapacitated you are. When a *Victim*, *Innocent Bystander* or *Chump* reaches 12 or more *Lumps* he is *Knocked Senseless*. This is described in full later.

Modifying Flaws Due to Stereotype, Sex, and Choice: When all the *Flaws* have been set, the modifiers from your *Stereotype* should be applied. Some *Stereotypes* don't provide *Flaw* modifiers. Others do and they should be applied before play begins.

Although nobody has to decide on a gender once and for all at this stage, once you have decided it is best to *Modify* your *Flaws* to

reflect the differing physiognomy of men and women. Women are generally less muscular, so they are +1 Weakness (+1 WK), but they have stamina and pain tolerance that men lack and so are -1 WK. This adds up to a total modifier of +0 Weakness. How about that?

I guess women are every bit as capable as men, despite not being identical in every way. The math proves it – and math never lies because it is the language of physics. So there.

Once the *Flaw* modifiers suggested by the game rules are applied, a player may elect to raise any or all *Flaws* to suit the individual's tastes, but it is unwise to do so. No *Flaw* can start at less than 1 or more than 11. Record the new numbers in place of the ones you originally set, because the old numbers won't be needed again.

GOBS OF GOODIES

Giving Out Goodies: Items of *Equipment* in *Scared Stiff* are known as *Goodies*. All *Victims* are considered to have clothing, spending money and somewhere to live. *Victims of Circumstance* can be equipped with whatever other gear their players desire without regard to what they can carry or afford to buy. Some reason should be concocted for why the *Victim* is carrying the item, but any no-brain excuse will suffice.

Goodies fall into three classes: *Weapons*, *Tools*, and *Trinkets*.

Goodie Costs: *Goodies* don't cost money. However, every *Goodie* affects the *Secondary Flaws* with a very real cost in *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and/or *Superstition* added. Alternatively, adding *Misfortune* can offset some of these costs. The *EM* may delete any choice he finds inappropriate. Make sure that *Victims* pay the *Weapon* cost for *Tools* that can also be weapons. (See below.)



Imbalance is added from *Goodies* because the things found useful in the game are generally unnecessary in everyday life. If you carry a lot of *Goodies*, you must be expecting trouble. Even if your *Victim's Stereotype* may not ordinarily be especially imbalanced, the *Victim* will be more paranoid, cynical, and unstable than someone who is comfortable with no items nearby.

Cowardice is added from carrying *Weapons* for much the same reasons. Going for a walk, even in a big city at night, is not dangerous enough to justify packing a gun or knife.

Superstition may also accumulate on the grounds of reverse-logic. True, carrying garlic won't make a *Victim* believe in vampires. Nonetheless if your *Victim* dresses like a walking spice rack, odds are that your *Victim* does believe in vampires.

Cost in Cowardice and Imbalance: *Goodies* classed as *Weapons* have a cost in *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and – sometimes – *Superstition*.

Melee Weapons (those used in hand-to-hand or similar close combat situations) add +1 *Imbalance* (or +1 *Misfortune* – take your pick).

Ranged Weapons (those used to inflict *Lumps* at a distance) add +3 (*Imbalance* or *Misfortune*).

In addition, *Weapons* add a *Cowardice* value equal to their *Lumps Dished Out*. *Misfortune* can be substituted for *Cowardice* at a 1:1 ratio to cover some or all of this cost if desired.

Some *Weapons* (such as Swiss Army knives) may add extra *Imbalance* because they are also *Tools*.

Defensive Weapons are those that prevent *Lumps Dished Out* and are handled similarly – but the costs are higher. Armour and other *Defensive Weapons* add +5 *Imbalance*. Also, for every *Lump Bounced Off* they add +1 *Cowardice*. You might feel safer carrying a knife, but *nobody* walks around in full riot armour just to buy a quart of milk!

The table below shows the amount of *Cowardice* added when any of the *Goodies* therein are selected as *Weapons*. If they are simply taken as *Trinkets* or *Tools* (see below for definitions of these terms), they do not have a *Weapon* cost.

In the **Weapons Table**, *Ranged Weapons* also add +3 *Imbalance* and *Defensive Weapons* add +5 *Imbalance*. All other *Weapons* add only +1 *Imbalance* when picked.

To Serve and Protect: It is very important to remember that police, secret agents, soldiers, and other armed government types do not add any *Cowardice* or *Imbalance* while carrying weapons on duty. *This consideration is limited to those weapons that the person is*

Using Superstition to Work Goodies: The wonderful thing about *Superstition* is that it allows the *Tools* of the *Creep* hunter to work. Whenever a *Victim of Circumstance* uses *Goodies* specifically designed to battle *Creeps* (crosses, garlic, silver, sonic plot device rays, and so on, depending on the nature of the *Creep*), the *Victim* must *Exploit* his or her own *Superstition Flaw* to affect the *Creep*. *Victims* with a *Superstition* of less than 7 receive a +3 *Flaw* modifier to their *Superstition* if the *Goodie* is scientifically devised. This modifier also applies to *Gadgets*.

If Grace wishes to hold off a Vampire with her crucifix she must *Exploit* her own *Superstition* to succeed. If she wished to use a Worbling Techno-Discombobulator on an advancing killer robot, she would have to get equal to or less than her *Superstition* +3. Because she is more of a sceptic than a believer, and her *Superstition* is below 7, she receives the +3 bonus and has an easier chance of defeating the robot than of defeating the vampire because her belief in science is stronger than her faith in less tangible things.

authorized to use and only applies while on duty. If a sailor carries around a loaded .38 Special while on shore leave, that is something else entirely! It is not unusual for an off-duty cop to be armed, so they should not have to add any *Cowardice* or *Imbalance* if on call, because they have to be prepared, but they may have to add the normal cost if they are carrying *Weapons* more often than the *EM* feels is necessary. It is also possible that an officer who is on duty may wish to have an extra gun, but the cost of this should only be added if the desired *Weapons* strike the *EM* as excessive.

Cost in Superstition: In some instances, *Tools* and *Weapons* may also add to *Superstition*, such as whenever they are made of silver, have been blessed, or are otherwise particularly useful against *Creeps*. In these cases, the weapon adds a number of *Superstition* points equal to its cost in *Cowardice*, plus its cost in *Imbalance*, for each way in which it is particularly useful against *Creeps*. The more of a believer you are, the more power you will ascribe to supernatural menaces. See? Reverse-logic saves the day yet again.

Exceptional Goodies: *Goodies* that the *EM* views as *Exceptional* cost double the usual amount of *Imbalance*, *Cowardice*, and *Superstition*. See *Handling Vehicles*, below.

Handling Vehicles: Vehicles are simply mobile *Tools* that may also be *Weapons*. Vehicles are *Exceptional Tools* because they make *Chases* easier. Vehicles cost +2 *Imbalance* as *Tools* (airborne or otherwise unusual vehicles qualify as *Exceptional*) and have a *Weapon* cost according to their *Lumps Dished Out* in a collision.

If vehicles have weapons mounted on them they have a further *Weapon* cost for the added firepower.

Members of the armed forces add no *Cowardice* or *Imbalance* when using military vehicles to perform their duty. Vehicles need no other numbers to measure them.

Damage from collisions is covered in *Slicing & Dicing* and damage to vehicles is covered in *Crashing & Smashing*.



Appropriate Goodies: *Goodies* selected for a *Victim* should be appropriate for the level of wealth implied in the *Victim's Stereotype*. The *EM* can make exceptions wherever s/he chooses because being logical is only recommended in *Scared Stiff*; it is not mandatory.

Stereotypes don't have a set level of wealth but one is implied:

1. Anyone who is Reputable, but does not work for the government or carry weapons, is wealthy.

2. Anyone who is Attractive is also usually wealthy.

3. Anyone who is Disreputable is probably poor unless s/he is particularly artistic.

4. Hoboes are even poorer than the poor. Anything a hobo has is going to be very ratty-looking but could function well enough. A hobo will only have those things s/he might have scrounged up from other people's discarded goods.

5. Everyone who is not rich or poor is middle class.

Goodie Classes: *Goodies* come in three different classes: *Weapons*, *Tools*, and *Trinkets*. It is a very wise move to keep three different lists of gear, rather than just one big list of *Goodies*.

Weapons: A *Weapon* is any *Goodie* that can *Dish Out Lumps* in *Scuffles* or that can ensure *Lumps* are *Bounced Off*. Technically, armour and machine guns are not both *Weapons*, but for game purposes they have been stuffed into the same category. The tables below outline the added Imbalance and Cowardice from a *Weapon*, as well as the *Lumps Dished Out* (to be added to the normal variable amount) or *Lumps Bounced Off*.

Hand Weapons Table	IM	CW	LDO
Ballpoint Pen, Curtain Rod, Elbow, Fountain Pen, Long Fingernails, Fist, Knee, Large Knitting Needle, Purse, Sharp Pencil, Umbrella.	+1	+0	+0
Billy Club, Bottle, Brass Knuckles, Broken Bottle, Candlestick, Five Foot Long Chain, Flower Pot, Frying Pan, Horseshoe, Non-Plastic Dish or Plate or Bowl, Noose, Razor Blade, Scissors, Shod Foot, Wooden Stake.	+1	+1	+1
Baseball Bat, Cricket Bat, Hatchet, Hedge Clippers, Hockey Stick, Ice pick, Javelin, Knife, Lead Pipe, Meat Cleaver, Pitch Fork, Spear, Straight Razor, Wooden 2x4, Wrench.	+1	+2	+2
Axe, Electric Hedge Clippers, Lawn Mower, Meat Hook, Power Drill, Shovel, Sickle, Sword.	+1	+3	+3
Electric Saw, Falling Chandelier.	+1	+4	+4
Chainsaw.	+1	+5	+5
Motorcycle	+1	+6	+6
Car	+1	+7	+7
Jeep	+1	+8	+8
Truck	+1	+9	+9
Large Truck	+1	+10	+10
18-Wheeler	+1	+11	+11
Combine Harvester	+1	+12	+12

Ranged Weapons Table	IM	CW	LDO
BB Gun, Bottle, Flower Pot, Horseshoe, Non-Plastic Dish or Plate or Bowl, Pellet Gun.	+3	+1	+1
Bow & Arrow, Hatchet, Javelin, Knife, Meat Cleaver, Pitch Fork, Spear, Straight Razor, .22 Pistol, Wrench.	+3	+2	+2
Axe, Crossbow, 9mm Pistol, 7.62mm Pistol, .38 Pistol, .40 Pistol.	+3	+3	+3
.45 Pistol, Little Black Bomb.	+3	+4	+4
Flamethrower, .44 Magnum Pistol, Hand Grenade, Rifle, Sub-machinegun.	+3	+5	+5
Assault Rifle, Grenade Launcher, Shotgun.	+3	+6	+6
Machinegun.	+3	+7	+7
Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (20mm).	+3	+8	+8
Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (35mm or 37mm).	+3	+9	+9
Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (40mm or 45mm), Dynamite Stick, Mortar, Nitro-glycerine Vial.	+3	+10	+10
Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (50mm or 57mm), Bazooka, Cannon (3-lbr.), Rocket Launcher.	+3	+11	+11
Artillery or Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (75mm or 76mm or 77mm), Cannon (6-lbr.), Light Anti-tank Missile.	+3	+12	+12
Artillery or Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (85mm or 88mm or 90mm or 94mm), Cannon (12-lbr.), Heavy Anti-Tank Missile.	+3	+13	+13
Artillery or Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (105mm), Cannon (16-lbr.).	+3	+14	+14
Artillery or Air Defence or Anti-Tank Gun (114mm or 120mm or 128mm), Cannon (24-lbr.).	+3	+15	+15
Artillery (130mm or 135mm).	+3	+16	+16
Artillery (152mm).	+3	+17	+17
Artillery (205mm or 210mm).	+3	+18	+18
Artillery (230mm or 235mm).	+3	+19	+19
Artillery (250mm).	+3	+20	+20

Defensive Weapons Table	IM	CW	LBO
Flak Jacket, Football Padding, Hockey Padding, Leather Armour.	+5	+4	+4
Chainmail, Heavy Kevlar Vest, Hoplite Armour.	+5	+5	+5
Full Suit of Metal Armour (Platemail).	+5	+6	+6
Medium Military or Police Body Armour.	+5	+7	+7
Heavy Military or Police Body Armour.	+5	+8	+8

Tools: A *Tool* is any object that can be put to use in the game. Individual *Goodies* can be both *Weapons* and *Tools*, but not at the same time. For example, a screwdriver would be a *Tool* when applied to screws, but becomes a *Weapon* if you declare it to be one when it's the only pointy thing you have available to fight off a *Creep*. *Imbalance*, *Cowardice*, and *Superstition* (if

appropriate) associated with this object, when used as a *Weapon*, are added as soon as it is converted (before the *Melee* begins).

Trinkets: *Trinkets* are any objects the *Victim* carries purely for sentimental or aesthetic reasons. Clothing, jewellery, and other items that are unnecessary for reasons already explained, are *Trinkets*. An example of a *Trinket* is a backpack,

which is not necessary in the game to hold items and is not used for any other purpose. Trinkets are always both harmless and useless, whatever logic might dictate. Note: objects that serve two purposes – for example a cross that might also be jewellery – may change state in the presence of certain *Creeps*. If such a metaphysical event occurs, the appropriate *Weapon* costs are applied immediately.

One Tool vs. Many: Certain *Goodies* may appear to be a single *Tool* but are not. Other *Goodies* appear to be many *Tools* but are only one.

In all such instances, the *EM* should probably count the *Goodie* as a single *Tool*. Identify the cost of the most valuable item incorporated in the *Goodie*, and make the *Victim* pay for that. If the *Goodie* is both a *Weapon* and a *Tool*, then add the cost of the best *Weapon* to the cost of the best *Tool*. If the *Goodie* incorporates multiple types of weapons (*Melee*, *Ranged* and *Defensive*), then the best of each type of *Weapon* must be paid for and the costs totalled. No *Goodie* should be counted as more than one *Tool*, one *Melee Weapon*, one *Ranged Weapon*, and one *Defensive Weapon* unless the *EM* feels the player is trying to build the ultimate omni-MacGuffin (in which case, this *Victim* will probably encounter a whole squad of omni-MacGuffin-eating *Creeps*).

One Weapon vs. Many: Some *Weapons* may appear to be disposable but are not treated as such in the game. *Weapons* such as grenades, little black bombs, throwing daggers, javelins, and so on, do appear to be thrown away, but are not really lost.

For game purposes, the *Weapon* is not written on the list as “grenade,” with a number to indicate how many there are. Instead, they are simply listed as “grenades,” and represent a steady supply.

However, in real B-movies, where guns appear never to run out of ammunition and cars never run out of fuel, the odd director may wish to hang a specific scene on the occurrence. So, while thrown or otherwise disposable *Weapons* are always available, it is just possible that the *Evil Mastermind* is plotting against your storehouse of wares or has a special scene in mind, so this rule of inexhaustibility is subject to the *EM*’s whims. See *Being On the Fritz*, below.

Carrying Goodies: During play, *Victims* may carry an infinite amount of whatever they want, so long as none of the items is larger than the *Victim*. Any item is instantly ready as desired, and *Victims* need not worry about putting anything away. Larger items are dealt with as the *EM* wishes.

Powering Goodies: No item that runs on any form of power (such as batteries, fuel, bullets or Finagle Rays) ever runs out except under special circumstances determined by the *EM*, such as *Being On the Fritz*.

Being On the Fritz: The *EM* can declare, at whim, anything to be lost and/or dysfunctional, although this is usually temporary. Food, shelter, clothing, and spending money may also be taken away, however momentarily. Fuel and power can run out if the *EM* chooses. A grenade can be a dud. Guns can jam, misfire, or have the safety engaged. Cars can have flat tires or other mechanical difficulties such as throwing a rod, blowing a cam shaft, burning a valve, stripping a transmission, dropping a universal joint, or having a piston exit the engine in the general direction of Mars. Horses can throw a shoe, shy at small noises, bite their riders, or stop – abruptly – to eat grass, avoid a fence, or simply to admire the scenery. Donkeys, mules, and camels are orse. Don’t even *think* about elephants.

Any time the *EM* declares a *Goodie* to be *On the Fritz*, the *Victim* subtracts *Misfortune* points equal to the *Imbalance* cost of the *Goodie*. *Note that declaring a Goodie to be On the Fritz benefits the Victim in terms of the bad luck due him. Some of it will have manifested itself so his Misfortune has points subtracted.* You do not get the original *Imbalance*, *Cowardice*, and *Superstition* costs back, because you did not choose to lose the *Goodie* (see below).

On the brighter side, however, you can replace the *On the Fritz Goodie* with a *Goodie* of identical cost, without incurring any additional cost, as soon as you come across something appropriate or the *Misadventure* ends.

Spares: It is normal for the *EM* to occasionally declare *Goodies* to be *On the Fritz* (see above). It is often a good idea to list “spare grenades,” “spare daggers,” “spare gasoline,” “spare tires,” “spare flashlight batteries,” “spare bullets,” “spare money,” “spare clothing,” and so on before the game begins, to counter *Goodies*

being *On the Fritz*. Of course, a particularly cruel *EM* could also declare these spares *On the Fritz*. This is like tourists bringing multiple wads of cash and packing each in a different spot so he won't lose everything at once if something bad happens. Once the game is in progress, your *Victim* can only acquire spares in an appropriate location.



Whenever a nasty *EM* chooses to declare a *Goodie On the Fritz*, the player can cross off a “spare” of that *Goodie*, if there is one, instead of losing the original. In this case, the *EM* has the *Victim* subtract only 1 point of *Misfortune*, instead of a number of points equal to the *Imbalance* cost of the *Goodie*, because the *Goodie* was not *On the Fritz* and he was not very unlucky.

Limits on spares: The spare must be identical to the original *Goodie*. They are only identical when the form, function, and names are

the same (except for the word “spare” in front of the extras).

Power sources such as fuel and batteries, or ammunition such as bullets, are initially taken for granted. They are not listed separately as *Goodies* on the *Victim's* record sheet. However, spares are listed, and must be crossed off when used.

Some *Goodies* represent a single supply rather than a single item. This applies to Weapons like “knives.” Unlike “knives” and other multiple items that count as a single *Goodie*, a spare is identical to the original item. It is only counted as multiple items for the cost of a single *Goodie* if the original item was, such as in the case of “spare knives.”

Spares only add +1 *Imbalance* apiece, no matter what the items, because they are only extras. However, because they are only extras, they cannot be used until the original item is *On the Fritz*. If multiple spares are carried, they cannot be used, either. If you wish to have multiple identical *Goodies* that are useful at the same time, you must purchase each of them separately and at full cost. Example: If you have a spare gun, you cannot use it until your original gun is lost or *On the Fritz*. If you want to use two guns at the same time, each is a separate *Goodie*. You may convert a spare to an actual *Goodie* during play, but only if whomever is to own it incurs the full *Flaw* costs immediately.

Willingly Discarding Goodies: If a *Victim of Circumstance* discards an item that is not *On the Fritz*, the *Victim* subtracts *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and *Superstition* points equal to what was added from acquiring it.

This is a very important trick for survival. Dropping a gun at the last moment can be all that stands between a *Victim* and a horrible fate, because it will immediately affect the *Victim's* *Secondary Flaw* points. *Superstition* cannot be lowered the way *Cowardice* and *Imbalance* can. Giving your crucifix to your Aunt Edna does not make you an atheist. As the old saying goes, “once a priest, always a priest.” Faith does not crumble as quickly as *Cowardice* can be overcome.

Converting Trinkets Into Tools and Weapons: *Trinkets*, which are normally useless, can be remade into *Tools* and/or *Weapons* if the player finds it necessary during play. A *Trinket*

can be converted simply by making sure the new use is plausible. Upon conversion, the *Victim* adds the *Goodie* cost for the *Tool* and/or *Weapon* it is becoming, plus points of *Misfortune* equal to the total points of *Imbalance*, *Cowardice*, and *Superstition* the *Goodie* carries.



MODEL CITIZENS

Little Jackie Horner sat in a corner, eating her curds and whey. When along came a spider that sat down beside her, Miss Horner pulled out her thumb and said, "Get lost, bum!" Then she stomped on the poor spider's head.

Hey... wait a minute... that doesn't sound right. Jack Horner starts out acting like he is supposed to and then confuses himself with a rude Little Miss Muffet. It's easy to spot the problem because everyone is familiar with the old nursery rhymes, but sometimes entirely new characters can appear schizoid too. Somehow, we can sense when a fictional character is not behaving plausibly, based on what we have

already seen of the character, even if we don't know how a story ends.

In ***Scared Stiff***, *Stereotypes* are there to give everyone an instant handle on your *Victim*. Farmers are very different from each other, but most people imagine they have a good idea of what the "typical farmer" looks like. Sometimes, however, it isn't enough to have a clear overall image. Sometimes you will need a strong stereotypical personality that may or may not be related to the general *Stereotype*. It adds that extra bit of depth without requiring lots of work or seeming TOO well done.

That's what *Models* are for.

Stereotypes give you a broad picture so you can begin to get a solid grip on your *Victim*. A *Model* gives you a firmer outline of a *Victim's* personality without being too specific, so you can remain consistent but don't end up exactly the same as other, similar, *Victims*.

There are 20 broad personality *Models* that can be useful in quickly summarizing a *Victim of Circumstance*. Each is painted in broad brush-strokes, many or all of which will apply to a *Victim* of that *Model*.

Victim personalities should not be entirely confined to their *Model*, but by finding the *Model* that fits best, they can be played convincingly, even on a bad day.

Misfortune and Models: If the player does not choose a *Model* for his *VC*, the *Evil Mastermind* should give the player's *Victim* +2 *Misfortune*.

Why? *Creeps* find it annoying when people can't be easily pigeonholed. When *Creeps* are annoyed, they get hungry.

Adventurer: Competitive, bold, dominant, energetic, and fickle. Adventurers are often unaware of other people's feelings and are unconcerned with social convention. Thrill seeking leads to a life on the edge and to overt romantic pursuits. Extreme personalities can be guiltless, impulsive, ruthless, hostile, rebellious, aggressive, argumentative, and destructive.

Bossy: Driven, competitive, confident, stubborn, dogmatic, and serious. Bossy *Victims* are often less able to feel guilt and they mistrust kindness and warmth. They are easily frustrated, but are not deterred by pain or punishment. Thick-skinned, sarcastic, belligerent, and domineering, but they get results. Extreme

personalities can be reckless, combative, sadistic, abusive, cruel, and rude.

Conventional: Socially and morally conservative respecters of orthodox ideas; nostalgic; denies the need for experimentation and resists change; is loyal, and avoids new trends. Conventional *Victims* are married to family and work and those dependent on the security they provide, but are confused by changes in people and evolving social dynamics. Extreme personalities can be entirely unable to deviate from a single mundane routine and can become mesmerized by people who are opposite to themselves.

Conformist: Socially and morally compliant respecters of orthodox ideas; nostalgic. Conformist *Victims* have a need for experimentation only as dictated by social pressure. They are responsible and uncreative, but are aware of new trends. Conformists are easily swayed by the crowd and led by strong personalities, but are very seldom moved to rebelliousness. Extreme personalities can be closed-minded, intolerant, and rigid.

Creator: Artistic, intuitive, sensitive, observant, persistent, unconventional, introverted, and enthusiastic. A Creative *Victim* will usually prefer his or her own company, is forgetful. S/He is good-natured but insensitive to others, indifferent to conformity, and reacts emotionally and subjectively. Extreme personalities can be accident-prone hermits who are entirely impractical and dream more often than produce.

Dependent: Shy, insecure, angry, and anxious. Dependent *Victims* will be reliant on others and will take on unpleasant tasks, hoping to be liked or needed. They will fear abandonment, rejection, and disappointment, and require regular guidance, reassurance and support. Extreme personalities can be submissive, clinging, silent, overly deferential, and totally self-sacrificing.

Eccentric: Forgetful, impractical, a little strange, and self-absorbed. Eccentric *Victims* will be good with ideas but not with people, will feel burdened, will think constantly to themselves. Eccentrics work well alone but frustrate others. They have great talent in one or two areas. Will frequently misread other people, and meander unpredictably through conversations. Is visibly disinterested in other people. Harmless, but

oblivious to the feelings of others, and may behave strangely. Extreme personalities may be isolated and behave completely bizarrely.

Extremely Feminine (Women Only): Nurturing, passive, soft, helpless, dependent, indirect, modest, coy, idealistic, submissive, yielding, and seductive. Exaggerates naiveté, innocence, and other stereotypical (for B-movies, at least) feminine behaviours. Assumes traditional feminine roles. Extremely Feminine *Victims* can be emotionally restricted, self-pitying, reluctant to express anger, and prone to avoid conflict. They are usually flirtatious, will accept stereotypical male behaviour, and are unsure of their own adequacy. Extreme personalities can totally submerge their own identity to uphold the feminine ideal and support the men surrounding them.

Extremely Masculine (Men Only): Coarse, adventurous, aggressive, worldly, demanding, hard, unoriginal, ambitious, and competitive. An Extremely Masculine *Victim* exaggerates masculine qualities, hides powerlessness, fears weakness, is romantically experienced, lacks individuality, and faces trouble head on. Extreme personalities can be totally one-dimensional macho stereotypes.

Extrovert: Outgoing, talkative, optimistic, expressive, enthusiastic, and gregarious. Extroverted *Victims* are neither introspective nor easily intimidated. They lack emotional restraint, are comfortable in groups, avoid solitude, and can lack empathy for the depression and anxiety of others. Extreme personalities can be flighty, superficial and unable to forge intimate relationships with friends and family.

Fall Guy: Gullible, underachiever, pleasant, and conventional. Fall Guys may exercise bad judgement concerning associates, lack direction, have narrow interests, and risk being used by others. Such *Victims* are seldom analytical. They are comfortable in social settings, are followers, and are unable to gauge the motives of other people. Extreme personalities may be constantly at risk from poor judgement where people are concerned.

Fearful: Withdrawn, sensitive, insecure, shy, and unhappy. Fearful *Victims* avoid stress, are socially inhibited and uncomfortable with people. They feel inadequate and long for

closeness. They are restrained, sensitive about appearance, and have a poor self-image. They fear rejection and know few people well. Extreme personalities can entirely avoid people, activities, and situations for fear of feeling uncomfortable.

Flamboyant: Melodramatic, temperamental, flighty, superficial, indirect, devious, insecure, naïve, simplistic, immature, vain, promiscuous, jealous, and manipulative. Flamboyant *Victims* may be prone to excessive emotion, suffer self-blame, become depressed from seeing self as wicked, feel insubstantial, seek attention, need nurturing and support, and suffer physical pains related to stress. They often view self, and many others, as sex objects. They are easily tempted to infidelity, have trouble forming deep relationships, are hostile to weak men and strong women, and can interpret most behaviour as sexually motivated. Extreme personalities can find themselves in constant danger from efforts to grab attention. They can be disorganised and overwhelmed to the point of complete dysfunction.

Hyper: Overactive, grandiose, careless, changeable, selfish, excitable, unstable, elated, out-going, active, and energetic. Hyper *Victims* are usually thrill-seekers, are poor company, and are often moody. Extreme personalities are prone to euphoric outbursts and explosive anger.

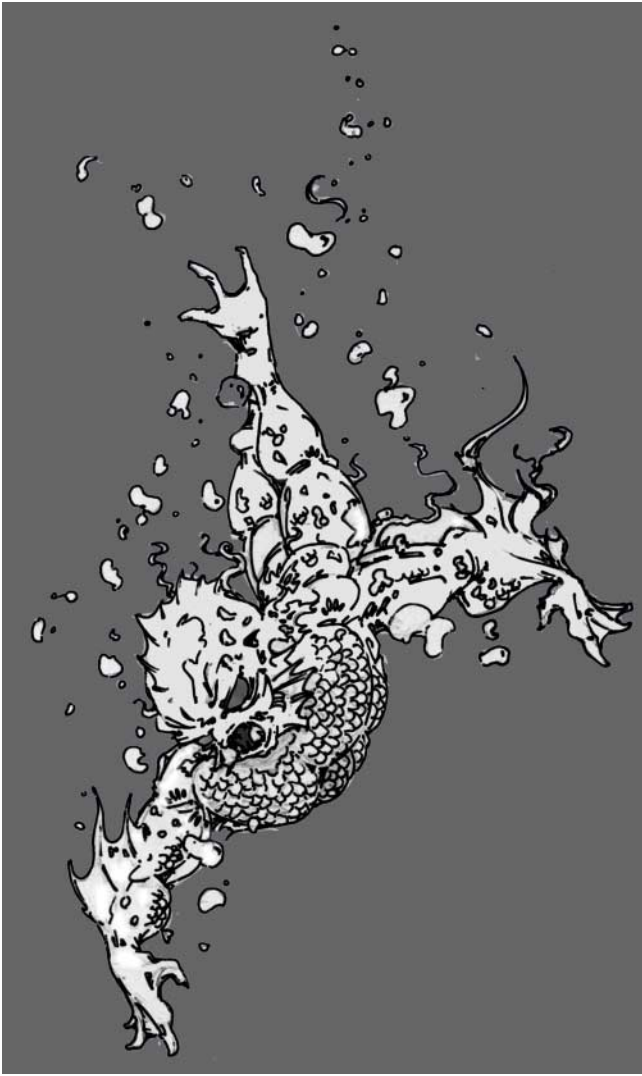
Loner: Solitary, restrained, unambitious, passive, guarded, and detached. Loners react passively to tragedy, respond to significant events only with difficulty, and they are hard on themselves. They pursue hobbies that allow solitude and appear cold and bland due to a lack of visible emotional reactions. Indifferent to social approval, Loners fail to exchange expected smiles and nods, are oblivious to social cues, are unable to bond well with people, and avoid emotional entanglements. The Loner is disinterested in romance, builds few friendships, finds intimacy frightening, and may view others as a source of pain. Extreme personalities can be solitary to the point of living in harsh surroundings, and may retreat rather than face even small expressions of emotion.

Martyr: Inhibited, serious, unassuming, pessimistic, and compliant. Martyrs are dulled to impotent rage under the surface but are unaware of their own hostility. A Martyr feels weak, seeks security, has a negative attitude, feels burdened,

and avoids pleasure due to the anxiety it causes. A Martyr *Victim* dulls deep emotions and feels both depressed and helpless when alone. Excuses self-denial as a social concern and uses the poverty of others as a reason for not fulfilling own desires. Mistrustful, feels mistreated, knows that self-sacrifice leads to pain but self-image centres on suffering, proud of own endurance and aims to prevent being abandoned. Emotionally needy, this *Victim* hopes to arouse guilt to foster love, is unable to feel pleasure, is dependent, and attracts abusive people. A Martyr complains without making a change and frustrates and sabotages those who help. Extreme personalities attract abusive companions, make no effort to improve situations, suffer from pain and depression, feel trapped, deny dangerous situations, exercise poor judgement in maintaining dangerous circumstances, and endure endless abuse.

Passive-Aggressive: Sulky, resentful, sour, reserved, pessimistic, temperamental, jealous, and nagging. A Passive-Aggressive *Victim* goes from passive, to resentful, to hostile, to openly aggressive, to feelings of guilt that restore passivity. These *Victims* suppress hostility, look for the worst in things, have a self-image centered on being misunderstood, are very angry but seldom violent, and hate those who have authority. They infuriate others, act indirectly, and efforts to have them comply with requests fail. Extreme personalities regularly lash out at those closest to them.

Personable: Calm, co-operative, flexible, warm, casual, trusting, and likeable. Personable *Victims* are easy-going and good-hearted, but are not very creative, and seldom take risks. They laugh aloud, smile often, have insight into others, are alert to social cues, and work well with others. These *Victims* are well liked, join groups for friendship instead of to support causes and interests. Extreme personalities can marry too young, make poor decisions, be manipulated by others, suffer from hypochondria due to a need for attention, sell out their values, and socialize to the point of accomplishing absolutely nothing in life.



Problem Solver: Resourceful, disciplined, restrained, reliable, and stable. A Problem Solver faces reality but lacks imagination, is emotionally steady, and is self-motivated. These *Victims* are high achievers and are pleased with themselves. They will persevere, are not easily disturbed, will communicate well, and are slow to panic. Problem Solvers recognize problems, generate options, make choices, and follow through. Extreme personalities can be so self-sufficient that they do not seek help and can collapse under the weight of having to do everything themselves. Often surrounded with people who are dependent on them and can become weary.

Resilient: Productive, motivated, responsible, and ethical. Usually happy, the Resilient *Victim* copes well with adversity, has a good sense of humour, faces problems head on, takes personal control, has definite personal goals, takes interest in others, can concentrate

well, combats stress with activity, and develops a strong support network. They usually had a difficult time growing up and bad luck may persist, but have learned to cope well. Extreme personalities may be self-reliant to the point of being totally unable to seek help from others.

Show-off: Active, alert, outgoing, immature, expressive, emotional, aggressive, sarcastic, and ostentatious. The Show-off has a low tolerance for frustration, is not very helpful, and is emotionally under-controlled. This *Victim* shows off (naturally), is socially effective but sometimes oblivious to social cues, seeks admiration, and has trouble sharing. Extreme personalities can become incredibly aggressive in an attempt to dominate social situations.

LOW PROFILES

Victims of Circumstance take shape only slowly. Once *Flaws* are defined, the VC fits a *Stereotype* and belongs to a *Model*. However, the *Victim* is still nameless, faceless, and pointless. The name and purpose can come later, but even criminals who are reduced to a serial number get mug-shots to show off their faces. Even people who wear paper bags over their heads make a statement about their looks. It's time your *Victim* does, too.

Details of the Profile: There are 13 lucky details in the *Profile*. They are: *Age, Height, Weight, Build, Limbs, Posture, Hair Length, Hair Curl, Hair Colour, Skin Tone, Facial Expression, Facial Features, and Speech*.

Misfortune and Profiles: For every detail that is not filled in, the *Evil Mastermind* should add +1 *Misfortune*.

Why? *Creeps* find dark, mysterious figures incredibly aggravating. If your *Misfortune* gets bumped up to 12 or more, you are in for a nasty accident before play even begins. Playing an unfinished *Victim* isn't nearly as satisfying. There's less chance of being able to immerse yourself in the role when you can't visualize who you are supposed to be. If you were a critic watching this watered-down role, you'd complain that the *Victim* is too shallow to be believable and that it is difficult to care what happens to the

character. Both the director and the actor would be blamed.

Age: This is one point that society deems vital. Whether measured in years, Halley's Comet visits, or the reigns of Popes, age should be noted. A single word is often best. If your *Victim of Circumstance* is a Kid, it gets really easy. Jocks, cheerleaders, dweebs, fashion models, and students are almost always teenagers. Grannies are old. Everyone else is usually an adult – but might be youngish, middle aged, over the hill, old, totally past it, or inveterate droolers.

Height: Vertical stature is near the top of most people's lists when it comes to vital statistics. Whether expressed in feet and inches, metres and centimetres, or liquid displacement, height is an invaluable description of your *Victim*. A single word can be more vivid than precise statistics. Stunted, short, average, tall, looming, intimidating, and gargantuan are all pretty descriptive terms.

Weight: This is another necessary factoid for most people. It can be expressed in pounds, kilograms, the sum of the atomic weight of your component elements, or any other unit of measure. A single word is enough for most people. Flimsy, light, average, robust, generous, burly, huge, mammoth, and woolly mammoth are all serviceable descriptions. Try to make your *Victim's* height and weight make sense together and match the rest of the details. For example, most people instantly get a picture of someone who is both tall and skinny, when the person is described as a "beanpole."

Build: Barrel-chested, broad shouldered, lanky, average, pot-bellied, wide-hipped.

Limbs: Big feet, big hands, bow legs, hairy arms, hairy legs, long arms, long legs, mismatched foot sizes, mismatched arm lengths, mismatched leg lengths, prominent fingernails, claw-like fingernails, short arms, short legs, small hands, small feet, well-proportioned limbs.

Posture: Rigid, ramrod, straight, formal, average, stooped, bent.

Hair Length: Bald, balding, shaved, close-shorn, short, medium, long, waist-length, knee length.

Hair Curl: Straight, spiked, kinky, wavy, or curly.

Hair Colour: Platinum blonde, blonde, dirty blonde, strawberry blonde, red, auburn, red-

brown, light brown, brown, dark brown, black, streaked, green (go for it).

Skin Tone: Milky, alabaster, fair, mid-tone, tan, olive, or dark.

Facial Expression: Blank, bright-eyed, cheerful, dour, haughty, piercing, proud, smiling, frowning, morose, sneering, grimacing, serene, evil, gloating, or squinting.



Facial Features:

1. Eyebrows: sparse, plucked, bushy, or missing.
2. Eyes: deep-set, glad, frightened, hurt, impenetrable, intense, or soulless.
3. Nose: bent, big, pug, broken, cold, dainty, flat, missing, noble, Roman, red, scarred, or "like a pickle left out too long in the sun."
4. Skin: soft, clear, blemished, dry, oily, peeling, pimply, leathery, scarred, tattooed, or weathered.
5. Beard and/or moustache: braided, dyed, short, sparse, scraggly, full, or long; Van Dyke, Fu Manchu, walrus, bristly, narrow, "like a caterpillar temporarily resting under his nose."

6. Cheek bones: craggy, flat, prominent, high, or sunken.
7. Ears: flat, prominent, puffy boxers', big, small, dainty, or nibblesome.
8. Overall appearance: handsome, ugly, beautiful, gamin, elfin, frightening, or "like it was put together by Picasso."

Speech: Accented, fast, gravely, growly, halting, lilting, lisping, loud, mousy, musical, nasal, quiet, sharp, shrill, slow, squeaky, steady, stuttering, warbling, whiny.

Once all 13 details are filled in and the *Profile* is finished, it should be double-checked to make sure you like the full picture given by the assembled details.

EFFORTLESS EXCLAMATIONS

A Word of Warning: Of the whole book, this section is certainly the most inappropriate for tender eyes. Worse than the terror-filled pages common throughout the rest of these rules, this section exposes you to the vilest obscenities possible. Included only out of completeness, I urge you not to utter any of these phrases in polite company. I also urge you to keep this vulgar knowledge from your mother. If you are under the age of 18, vulgarity is illegal where you live, or you are easily offended or highly impressionable, please skip this section. Continuing means you accept the full consequences of reading this material and hold the author blameless.

Classic Exclamations: For the daring, there are a number of classic terms of consternation appropriate to *Scared Stiff*. Here are the 30 most offensive: barfola, blast, blimey, crikey, criminy, cripes, darn, dear me, doggone, drat, egad, gadzooks, gee-whizz, golly, golly-gee, good grief, gordon bennet, gosh, great balls of fire, gum, holy hannah, holy moley, jeepers, jeeze, jiminy cricket, jinkies, sacre bleu, 'struth, sweet mercy, and zounds.

Terms of Disbelief: As disbelief is natural in any situation where the unusual

becomes usual, several terms have become famous for expressing incredulity. The most disbelief-ridden 30 are: applesauce, bafflegab, baloney, blarney, bull, bunkum, chicken cheese, claptrap, cobblers, crackers, fiddlesticks, fiddle-faddle, flapdoodle, garbage, gobbledygook, guff, hokum, hooey, horsefeathers, malarkey, meshugana, nonsense, piffle, poppycock, pshaw, rubbish, spinach, stuff and nonsense, tommyrot, and twaddle.

Rigorous Abuse: There are also a number of terms for those truly daring and naughty enough to call someone a fool for presenting a ridiculous story. The 30 foulest insults of all time are: airhead, blockhead, cheeseball, chump, clown, cluck, ditz, dodo, doofus, dork, dud, dum dum, fathead, goofus, goon, knuckle dragger, jerk, kook, newt, ninny, numbskull, rube, sap, schmendrick, schnook, stooge, turkey, wiseacre, yokel, and yo-yo.

Using Exclamations: Every *Victim*, *Chump*, and *Innocent Bystander* should have a favourite term chosen from each of the three types. Incredulity, astonishment, frustration, and anger will all have to be expressed in colourful ways. If a *Victim of Circumstance* starts play without all three favourite *Exclamations* listed, the player should add +1 *Misfortune* for every one that is missing. This shouldn't be neglected, because the +3 *Misfortune* points that could be added from putting a *Victim* together hastily can really suck.

Again, if a *Victim* isn't colourful s/he probably isn't important enough to bother keeping around.

AN "E" FOR EFFORT

Do the words "Fanana Fana Fo Fony" mean anything to you? Did you arrive on a horse with no name? You might not appreciate our playing name games, especially if your name is Tony or Sally, but there is an important point to it. In *Scared Stiff*, any *Victim* who isn't firmly established early on is guaranteed to be dog

chow. It doesn't matter if a team of veterinarians didn't develop the *Victim*; s/he is still in trouble.

Your *Stereotype*, *Model* and *Profile* should give you as much of a character sketch as you will need to portray your *Victim* in all your hammy glory. Unfortunately, there are times when you will need to know just a pinch more about this *Victim* ... such as his or her name.

Developing Victims: There are three main ways of establishing someone as important:

1. The *Victim* has a full and interesting name.
2. The *Victim* has a clearly defined gender.
3. The *Victim* has a background and a fairly interesting personality.

If one or more of these three things are missing you just know the character's days are numbered. And why not? *Creeps* figure that if the *Victim* doesn't put an effort into living, s/he should probably be doing something else. In the game, these three things determine the initial *Misfortune* of *Victims* and *Innocents*.

Names: The first point is simple. Being eaten is the most probable reason for your birth if you have no name or have just a first or last name. Since you barely exist, you'll hardly even feel the *Creep* eat you.

If a *Victim of Circumstance* or *Innocent Bystander* has no name, s/he adds +3 *Misfortune*. If a *VC* or *IB* has only one name s/he adds +2 *Misfortune*. This means only a given name or only a surname. In case it needs to be said, "Doctor." is not a given name (at least not in this universe). Furthermore, if the name that a player has is judged by the *EM* to be mundane, an extra +1 *Misfortune* is added. This is added to the normal +2 *Misfortune* assigned if the *VC* or *IB* has only one name.

Mundane names are those that seem generic. Think in terms of Smith or Thompson. Each part of the world has its own equivalent of Smith. In Poland it might be Kowalski, in Wales it may be Jones, and in China it might be Chan. The important thing is not that you should study the census records, but simply whether the *EM* thinks that is a very common name for the *VC*'s nationality. One half of the name can carry the whole thing if it is interesting enough. John Smith is mundane, but Missouri Smith is not. Missouri Fountainhead is even better of course. Sir

Randolph Whistleton Twickham-Feines may be over the top (even though that's the real name of a modern-day British explorer).

Sex: Yes, sex. In the age of political correctness "gender" is a very popular word. Gender is a grammatical classification for French nouns. Words have a gender; people have a sex.



There are only two main choices so it shouldn't be very hard (and a few other more complicated options for the truly funky). When in doubt, always make the *Victim* the same sex as the *Victim's* player. If you want to randomize things a bit more, toss one of the other players and see which way s/he lands.

Drag Queens should have an easier choice than most, instead of a harder one. They are always men, but women have their equivalent in tuxedo-clad, black tie male impersonators. Some would point the finger at mimes, and whole books have no doubt been written on this fascinating subject.

Background and Personality: The last point is that each player should start with some

idea of the *Victim's* background and personality. It doesn't have to be much, and it especially doesn't have to be good, but it does have to be there. It is also important for the *EM* to give his *IBs* some background and at least a one-dimensional personality. Don't go to as much work as the players unless the *Innocent* is going to be a suspect in a mystery *Misadventure*, but do give it some thought.

These three steps will ensure that *Victims* are fun to play and will never be confused with the *Innocents*. Besides, why should the *VCs* be watchers when they can be doers?

Total Misfortune Added at Start: If the *Victim* doesn't have a basic personality at start s/he adds +2 *Misfortune*. If s/he is missing a background s/he adds another +2. If the *VC* is missing both, that's a total of +4 *Misfortune*. A player who develops personality and background later can subtract half this *Misfortune*. The *Victim* will be better off for adding these points, but is still penalized for bringing a shallow *Victim* to the party. The necessary choice of Model, Profile details, Exclamations and the details required to make a basic Effort, *Victims* can start with well over the 11 *Misfortune* that is the maximum for staying in play.

It is possible to Buy the Farm before play and have to remake a *Victim* before he is even used. That's a rare concept in game design (and you would have to be a traveller to distant places to find another game where that was the case). I think you will be rewarded if your *Victim Profile* is not left mostly blank. Where's the fun if there aren't any risks?



It might be useful now that you have read all the rules for making a *Victim of Circumstance* to actually create a *Victim* as an example and run through all of the steps. I will pick a name for our example *Victim of Circumstance* because it is helpful to do so now, even despite the fact that a player could normally wait until the end to do so. I will name our example *Victim Grace Fuller*.

The first thing to do is to pick a stereotype and I will go with something that sounds fun and proactive. A *Tinkerer* would be a good Stereotype for an example. She can devise and construct unusual *Trinkets*, *Goodies*, and *Gadgets*, and these skills, which will be important during play, give her a -1 *Ignorance Flaw* modifier.

Tinkerers aren't *Attractive* by default but I can choose to make her *Attractive* if I want to. I might picture her as somewhat pretty, but most Stereotypes are not *Attractive* unless the player decides to list them as such. As it happens, I do picture Grace as *Attractive*, especially since it adds to the usefulness of the example to have her be an exception. Because of this, I'm adding +1 *Misfortune* and a whole lot of curves.

Being that she is a *Tinkerer* she is *Disreputable* and that will be important in play.

Once noted, however, it does not affect anything else until play starts.

Primary Flaws are the next things that need to be done now that her Stereotype, Reputability and Looks are decided. There are 20 points to get rid of and the lower each of the three Primary Flaws is, the better.

Weakness should be first. She doesn't have to be butch, even if she didn't spend much time cooing over boys. A *Weakness* of +8 will be more than sufficient. *Weakness* represents her whole physique, so although I can still picture her as muscular-looking, she will have a poor constitution.

Clumsiness is next after Weakness. Grace Fuller is a Tinkerer and therefore probably wasn't popular in her youth. If she was unpopular as a child, she likely wasn't a cheerleader later in life. Although she is Attractive now, she likely bloomed late. She might be more agile than normal, but as she isn't all that fit, it is enough to make her *Clumsiness* a bit lower than her *Weakness*. A +7 *Clumsiness* is fine based on that logic.

Ignorance is the final Primary Flaw to consider. With an 8 and a 7 already assigned to *Weakness* and *Clumsiness*, that leaves only 5 points that have to go into *Ignorance*. The -1 *Ignorance* modifier will be applied before she is finished, but not just yet.

The numbers all add up to 20, so I have spent the right number of points, and each of the Primary Flaws is at between 1 and 10. So far; so good.

[Imagine I had not just assigned points to Grace's *Flaws*, but elected to roll them instead. Rolling the dice three times, I get 7, 5 and 8 (4+4=8; 2+3=5; 3+4=7). You can assign each of the three rolls to each of the *Primary Flaws* in whatever order seems best for you.

Hint: the idea is to make the three rolls, then to decide which of them you'd prefer to attach to a specific *Flaw*. By some eerie coincidence, I have rolled numbers identical to those I would have chosen if assigning points. How much more convenient can life get?

Since she is prone to colds and the flu, it is best to put her worst score in *Weakness*. That gets rid of the 8. I have a 5 and a 7 left, but given her *Stereotype* as a Tinkerer, it's probably safe to assume that she is smarter than she is agile, so I

will leave her best score for *Ignorance* and put the 7 in *Clumsiness*.

Now you see why it's also preferable to select a *Stereotype* before you roll the *Primary Flaws*. It gives you a semi-logical reason for assigning values to particular *Flaws*. I suppose you could go about it the other way, picking a *Stereotype* based on the *Victim's Primary Flaws*, but I've tried it that way and it's harder. With only the 5 left, that goes into *Ignorance*. The -1 *Ignorance* modifier will be applied before she is finished].

The Primary Flaws are each at between 1 and 10. So far; so good.

Secondary Flaws are next, but they are simple to assign for now. Like everyone else, Grace starts with *Cowardice*, *Imbalance* and *Superstition* scores of 1 each.

Tertiary Flaws are even easier. Again, like everyone else, Grace starts with 0 *Lumps*, but her *Misfortune* is +1 because I opted to make her Attractive when it was not the default for her Stereotype. *Misfortune* is a very, very bad thing. Luckily, most *Victims of Circumstance* start out with 0 in both categories. However, even starting at +1 (due to my opting to make her Attractive when her Stereotype does not default to it), Grace's *Misfortune* isn't nearly high enough to worry about.

Let's subtract that 1-point modifier from Grace's *Ignorance* now (because she is a Tinkerer, remember?). That makes her *Flaws*:

Weakness:	8	(Flabby)
Clumsiness:	7	(Average)
Ignorance:	4	(Very Bright)
Cowardice:	1	(Fearless)
Imbalance:	1	(Wise)
Superstition:	1	(Rationalist Pawn)
Misfortune:	1	(Shhh, don't wake the Creeps)
Lumps:	0	(Unhurt)

Before doing *Goodies*, it is wise to take a second and think about what level of wealth would be plausible for Grace. Although Grace is Attractive, she wasn't automatically Attractive, so there is no reason to assume she's wealthy. She is *Disreputable* without being truly artistic (such is the lot of Tinkerers), so it is most likely that she is poor.

Grace isn't apt to have any *Weapons* around, any more than anyone is. Nonetheless, she would be likely to have a Swiss army knife. The list might look like this:

- Swiss Army Knife

Grace probably has lots of *Tools*. A fair list might be:

- Tool Kit
- Duct Tape
- Rope
- Flashlight
- Blessed Silver Crucifix on Chain

Grace only has one Item that is a *Spare*:

- Spare Batteries

Grace probably has a few *Trinkets* too. *Trinkets* will cover her typical attire. She will have many other pieces of clothing but there is no need to detail it all. The list might look like this:

- Baseball Cap
- Faded Bluejeans
- Comfy Sweater
- Canvas Top Rubber Soled Sneakers
- Big Black Leather Purse
- Navy Blue Heavy Wool Coat (Winter)
- Windbreaker (Spring and Fall)
- Lavender Floral Print Dress (Parties)

A Swiss Army knife is a *Weapon* and several *Tool* items such as a spoon, bottle opener, scissors, tweezers, screwdriver and corkscrew (which *could* cost $2+1+1+1+1+1+1=8$). If the *EM* doesn't simply declare the knife a single item, the player should declare most of the itemised functions to be *Trinkets*, much as others are called variously *Weapons* or *Tools*.

An automotive repair kit could be treated as a *Weapon* (because of the wrench and/or tire iron). However, if it is only used for fixing cars, the *Tool* cost is only +1 and there is no added *Cowardice* cost. If the *Cowardice* cost is not paid for weapon-like items in the repair kit, they cannot be used as *Weapons*. However, the wrench

could be converted to a *Weapon* later if the *Cowardice* cost is paid before its use.

A large machinegun would be a *Ranged Weapon*. Add a metal shield and it becomes a *Defensive Weapon*, too. Affix a bayonet for no good reason and it is a *Melee Weapon* as well. Drop the whole thing on a truck and you've turned it into an exceptional *Tool*. Adding small spikes to the metal shield is not going to make this set-up so much better that an *EM* needs to charge for further *Melee Weapons*. However, if you really want to make this whole thing add more to your *Superstition Flaw*, you can always spring for silver bullets.... Grace doesn't need anything fancy, luckily.

Grace only carries one thing that could be multiple *Goodies*, and that is her toolkit. The kindly *EM* ruled it was one item earlier on, because Grace's didn't want to delineate what was in the toolkit or find all kinds of interesting uses for what it might contain. (Clever of her, what?)

She also wasn't interested in using any of the wrenches or whatever might be inside as *Weapons*. Consequently, the *EM* will treat Grace as having a toolkit and not a collection of individual *Tools*. This will change later, of course, if she reaches into her toolkit and pulls out a battery-powered nail-gun.

Grace carries a lot more stuff around than most. Her *Imbalance* and *Cowardice* will reflect this. The *Imbalance* and *Cowardice* from her *Weapon* (the knife) are each straightforward. She adds 1 point of *Imbalance* because it can't be thrown and 2 points of *Cowardice* because it does 2 *Lumps*. The *Imbalance* is starting to add up, so she decides to add +1 *Misfortune* instead of the +1 *Imbalance* for the *Weapon*.

The *EM* gives the standard +1 *Imbalance* to her for each *Tool*, except for a car she's picked up along the way, which is deemed exceptional and rates +2. The *Imbalance* is still too high, so she will elect to pay +1 IM (*Imbalance*) and +1 MI (*Misfortune*) instead of +2 IM)

The toolkit is worth only +1 *Imbalance* so long as Grace doesn't try to make more of it than is reasonable.

The *Trinkets* each add nothing. They always add nothing. Of course, that means they can't be used for ANYTHING, no matter how much sense it might make. They can be converted

into *Tools*, along with incurring their proper costs, later if necessary.

However, Grace also has a special item that adds *Superstition*. She has the Silver Crucifix on a Chain that her Grandmother had blessed by the priest and that she promised she would wear. The *Imbalance* cost was only +1 because she made it a *Tool* and it doesn't have a lot of conventional uses even then. However, the *EM* gives the standard +1 *Superstition* for each way in which it seems particularly useful against *Creeps*. Because it is blessed, silver and a crucifix, he feels that is useful three times over.

The total for all Grace's *Goodies* is +2 *Cowardice*, +7 *Imbalance*, +3 *Superstition*, and +2 *Misfortune*. The player's list looks like this:

- Swiss Army Knife (+2 CW and +1 MI)
- Toolbox (+1 IM)
- Duct Tape (+1 IM)
- Rope (+1 IM)
- Flashlight (+1 IM)
- Spare Batteries (+1 IM)
- Blessed Silver Crucifix on Chain (+3 IM)
- Car (+1 IM and +1 MI)
- Baseball Cap
- Faded Bluejeans
- Comfy Sweater
- Canvas Top Rubber Soled Sneakers
- Big Black Leather Purse
- Navy Blue Heavy Wool Coat (Winter)
- Windbreaker (Spring and Fall)
- Lavender Floral Print Dress (Parties)

Modifying her *Flaws* according to her *Goodies* leaves them noticeably higher:

Weakness:	8	(Flabby)
Clumsiness:	7	(Average)
Ignorance:	4	(Very Bright)
Cowardice:	3	(Bold)
Imbalance:	8	(Wary)
Superstition:	4	(Undecided)
Misfortune:	3	(Do you smell something <i>Creepy</i> ?)
Lumps:	0	(Unhurt)

Once *Goodies* are decided upon, all the personality factors are left to do. *Model* must be

decided first. After reading over the choices carefully, Grace seems to fit the *Creator Model* best. It contains a pretty good summary of the image that is developing of her and suits the *Tinkerer Stereotype* well.

Because I have chosen a *Model*, no *Misfortune* is added to Grace (there is a penalty for not filling out this information).

The 13 pieces of her *Profile* must come next. Age is first. Grace is definitely "youngish." No doubt about that.

Height is after that. Grace is Attractive. As such, it's a safe bet she has decent legs and, if that's the case, then it's very likely that she is tall. Of course, she was a late bloomer and despite always having been tall, no one ever predicted she would end up pretty. Perhaps she is unnervingly tall. A good word might be "looming."

Weight is next. With her weak constitution and slim figure? She is "light" and obviously so. Lord only knows why you had to ask.

Build can be picked now that Height and Weight are known. Grace is tall enough and leggy enough that she is probably slim, but she has such a nice figure that she can only be described as "curvaceous."

Limbs are important. Grace probably has hairy legs if she is more concerned with puttering than she is with dating. That should be enough to make her limbs stand out. A man can only be so sexist on any given day.

Posture is also good to know. Since Grace is a *Tinkerer*, she probably has great posture but spends a lot of her time bent over things. I can list her as "straight."

Hair Length is a nice detail. Grace is a *Tinkerer*. Short hair requires regular trimming and long hair demands constant grooming. Both styles require too much maintenance. Her hair is probably kept at shoulder length.

Hair Curl comes next. She probably just lets her hair hang down and leaves it naturally kinky.

Hair colour is our next concern. Grace should be dirty blonde. She's flaky like a blonde but smart like a brunette.

Skin tone can be suggested by the pieces of the *Profile* I have already decided. A dirty

blonde might as well be fair skinned. Like her hair, her skin is light but not overly so.

Facial Expression will help shape first impressions. Grace should smile. Who cares if it makes sense? It will help make her seem sympathetic. Put on a happy face.

Facial Features are also good to know. Eyes are the window to your soul. Hurt eyes will help Grace seem very deep and intense on those long, cold nights when decent role-playing takes too much effort. It will also explain her constant awkward grin.

Speech can be important in making an impression once the more superficial stuff is over with. A mousy voice will add the final touch to the image of Grace as someone who nearly ended up sexy but is just too grating not to be annoying.

After filling in all 13 details of the *Profile*, Grace has no need to raise her *Misfortune* as a penalty for missing information.

That Extra Effort is important now. The name must come first. I had a name for Grace from the outset but I might not have. The *EM* feels Grace Fuller is a full and interesting name and even found Grace a bit over the top, so there is no *Misfortune* added for a lack of a good name. As it happens, Grace Fuller qualifies as a solid pick.

A clearly defined gender is vital. As should be clear by now, I picture Grace as female.

I haven't left anything blank here either, so she adds no extra *Misfortune*.

Some favourite *Exclamations* are nearly the last thing to consider. Grace takes a cue from her granny when it comes to expressing her aggravation and cries, "Crikey!" Grace dismisses any idiotic idea as "malarkey," just as her granny used to. Grace calls ridiculous people "turkey." Granny again.

Now that she has all three exclamations set down, Grace can utter some classic and memorable lines. Imagine her saying: "Crikey! That's malarkey! You're such a turkey!"

A background and fairly interesting personality are last. Grace isn't hard to sum up. She fits the Tinkerer *Stereotype* and the Creator *Model*. Her *Profile* has pinned down her physical details. She is easy to picture and just as easy to write up. Let's prove it....

Grace Fuller can have a seemingly abrupt personality, who is nonetheless naïve and not

really horrible at heart. She isn't too rotten, or too easily forgivable, so she does have a few friends, but she was never very popular. Our rotten kid grew up to be an isolated individual who tinkered with anything she could get her hands on.

Grace's good looks are more recent and she's certainly not wealthy. Many people avoid her because her tinkering makes her appear to be a strange recluse. In truth, she is just another boring stooge from middle-class suburbia. She's one with the vast white-bread-eating, baloney-munching masses.

She is 5'8" tall, weighs about 130 pounds, and has pale, smooth skin and long, straight, blonde hair. She is lanky but with good posture. Grace has big eyes, a button nose, high cheekbones, and a small mouth, but her relative social isolation has left her feeling just a little hurt, most of the time.

Grace prefers solitude so she can tinker undisturbed, but always seems to get drawn back into the world by her curiosity and love of melodrama.

Grace can be sensitive, creative, introverted, emotional, forgetful, observant and persistent. She sees the big picture, sometimes feels misunderstood, mistrusts authority and tends to reach out for reassurance from stronger personalities when scared. Grace tends to suppress her need for freedom to avoid arguments, but slowly grows resentful of external constraints and severs ties with people around her.

Grace is more curious than she is anything else, and that is why she tinkers and gets drawn into odd situations. She is austere and happily makes do with what little she has. Less visible, but still notable, are her indifference to peer pressure and her occasional insensitivity – both of which can make her difficult to be around, despite her general good humour.

I have filled in the blanks yet again, so she adds no extra *Misfortune*. Isn't she a well-developed example? Grace has managed to dodge all the potential *Misfortune* adds for now, but is sure to stumble over more opportunities in play. Grace is somewhat too realistically developed for a *Scared Stiff Victim*, but that since it makes her colourful and over the top rather than clinically three dimensional, it is okay. Take a look at the finished product....

Name: Grace Fuller
 Stereotype: Tinkerer
 Model: Creator
 Weakness: 8 (Flabby)
 Clumsiness: 7 (Average)
 Ignorance: 4 (Very Bright)
 Cowardice: 3 (Bold)
 Imbalance: 8 (Wary)
 Superstition: 4 (Undecided)
 Misfortune: 3
 Lumps: 0
 Age: Youngish
 Height: Looming
 Weight: Light
 Build: Curvaceous
 Limbs: Hairy Legs
 Posture: Straight
 Hair Length: To Shoulder
 Hair Curl: Kinky
 Hair Colour: Dirty Blonde
 Skin Tone: Fair
 Facial Expression: Smiling
 Facial Features: Hurt Eyes
 Speech: Mousy
 Disbelief: Malarkey
 Exclamation: Crikey
 Abuse: Turkey
 Goodies:

- Knife (+2 CW and +1 MI)
- Toolbox (+1 IM)
- Duct Tape (+1 IM)

- Rope (+1 IM)
- Flashlight (+1 IM)
- Spare Batteries (+1 IM)

• Blessed Silver Crucifix on Chain (+1 IM; +3 SU)

- Car (+1 IM and +1 MI)
- Baseball Cap (+0 IM)
- Faded Bluejeans (+0 IM)
- Comfy Sweater (+0 IM)

• Canvas Top Rubber Soled Sneakers (+0 IM)

- Big Black Leather Purse (+0 IM)
- Navy Blue Heavy Wool Coat (Winter) (+0 IM)
- Windbreaker (Spring and Fall) (+0 IM)
- Lavender Floral Print Dress (Parties) (+0 IM)

[This is where your description of her would go normally but I have just finished describing it in depth above and there is no need to repeat the whole thing again].



GENRE RULES

SENSIBLE SCEPTICISM

Our society was founded upon the fine traditions of scepticism and rationalism. Young people today have no higher concern than to honour the intellectual traditions of the great scientists and philosophers of our time. They know to accept all ideas with a grain of salt.

The most important thing to remember is that no matter how often strange things happen or horrible monstrosities go on a rampage, it couldn't possibly ever happen again, no matter how much it seems like it is about to. It is also important to remember that whenever strangeness, weirdness, or terror have happened in the past, the strange reports were likely wildly exaggerated and there is a rational explanation for it all, even if it can't be found. Most people forget weird tragedies faster than last year's musical chart topper.

No matter how foolish any given action might seem from an objective and omniscient point of view, the *Victim* walking into danger will consider all choices reasonable because s/he knows that nothing untoward ever happens where s/he lives.

Balancing Imbalance, Cowardice, Superstition and Misfortune: *Victims of Circumstance* can use opportunities (and potentially dangerous situations) that sometimes arise to trade one *Secondary Flaw* for *Misfortune*.

Below are 50 example actions that can be taken (if the opportunity arises) and their effect

on *Secondary Flaws* and *Misfortune* (with possible consequences up to the *EM*):

- Accept a gift from a strange man who claims he is about to die or from a maniac who is due to be executed (-1 CW, -1 SU, +2 MI).
- Back out of a room without looking (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Befriend a suave, elegant gentleman that everyone seems frightened of (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Close doors and windows that you had thought were already closed but that are currently open (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Discover that your clothing has been lost or badly torn up but you are luckily okay (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Dismiss anniversaries of horrific events as unimportant (-1 SU, +1 MI).
- Dismiss unsettling noises as being caused by the wind or something equally harmless (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Dismiss visions in a mirror that are at odds with what should be reflected as figments of your imagination (-2 SU, +2 MI).
- Dismiss visions through a door of a room other than the one that should be there as figments of your imagination (-2 SU, +2 MI).
- Don't bother checking the back seat of your car for things that should not be there (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Don't bother turning the lights on inside a dark building (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Don't use any more caution than normal in a blackout or other power outage (-1 CW, +1 MI).

- Take home bits of meteorite or comet that have just fallen from the sky and are still smoking or glowing or were recently smoking or glowing (-1 CW, -1 IM, -1 SU, +3 MI).
- Find small towns that are either strange or empty to be quiet and cozy (-1 CW, -1 IM, +2 MI).
- Go somewhere alone when you don't have to (-2 CW, +2 MI).
- Ignore a warning from a small child or animal (-1 CW, -1 SU, +2 MI).
- Investigate dangerous places that appear to have recently become safe in order to make sure they are (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Investigate mysterious noises while assuming their source is friendly or harmless (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Open containers marked with radiation, biohazard, dangerous chemical, or other warning signs (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- React to something frightening with great machismo (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Read an evil book aloud as a joke (-2 SU, +2 MI).
- Receive a warning from a strange artefact or exotic person, and do the opposite of whatever they say just to prove how foolish they are (-2 SU, +2 MI).
- Resist efforts to respond to strange events with caution or alarm (-1 SU, -1 IM, +2 MI).
- Run to the scariest place that is within a reasonable distance during a *Chase* because you aren't thinking straight (-1 SU, +1 MI).
- When indoors, run upstairs when chased or confronted by a *Creep* (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Search the basement or attic even less cautiously than everywhere else because they are so seldom used (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Sit in the back seat of your car whenever it is parked because you are not worried about your inability to reach the driver's seat (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Sit or stand in, on, above or below a grave, tomb, crypt or mausoleum (-1 SU, +1 MI).
- Squat over *Creeps* who appear to have *Bought the Farm* and give them a poke to make sure they are not playing possum (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Stay at a weird or spooky hotel, motel, resort, or cabin as if it was not at all unusual (-1 SU, +1 MI).

- Take a shower to unwind once any obvious, immediate dangers appear to have passed or have not yet asserted themselves (-2 IM, +2 MI).
- Take the elevator (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Tell people what you are looking forward to in the future (-1 IM, +1 IM).
- Tell people that you "will be right back" when going somewhere alone (-1 CW, -1 IM, -1 SU, +3 MI).
- Throw your weapons far away as soon as whatever you were in a *Scuffle* with appears to have *Bought the Farm* (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Treat formerly possessed or transformed friends without suspicion after they seem to have returned to normal (-1 CW, -1 IM, -1 SU, +3 MI).
- Treat strangers with power tools casually and assume they are harmless (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Trust a little old lady implicitly; eat and/or drink any treats offered (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Trust friends implicitly when they return from strange encounters acting oddly (-1 SU, +1 MI).
- Turn off a paved road onto a gravel road when driving (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- View strange goop pouring from the faucet as neither strange nor dangerous, despite the fact that it is obviously not water (-1 SU, +1 MI).
- Walk past slightly ajar doors without being more cautious than normal (-1 CW, +1 MI).
- Wear the clothing, jewellery or other property of people who are either dead or totally unknown to you (-2 SU, +2 MI).
- Say, "Let's split up," when searching any large area and do it (-1 IM, +1 MI).
- Go off alone on a search when it is suggested by the loonie tune above {-2 IM +2 MI}.
- Proclaim loudly, "Heck, I'm not afraid of *them things*" and prove it (-2CW, +1 MI).
- Barricade you and your party into rooms with only one exit – the one you just covered (-2 IM, +2 MI).
- Ask the "nice man" in the lab coat just exactly what he thinks he's doing here {-1 IM, +1 IM}.

- Stand really, really close to an Innocent Bystander who is complaining of an awful bellvache (-1 IM, -1 CW, +2 MI).
- Push your way into a room, corridor, cave, or temple covered by really thick strands of sticky silk (-1 IM, -1 SU, +2 MI)
- Ask, “What was that?” Then look over the side of the boat to find out. (-1 IM, +1 MI).

Superstition and Adding Superstition:

Victims of Circumstance who make use of useful information accumulate *Superstition*.

A *Victim* adds +1 *Superstition* every time s/he talks, acts, or thinks in a manner that appears to indicate that s/he agrees with any viewpoint of which modern science is sceptical. *Superstition* should only be added once for any piece of knowledge. Once a *Victim* has used the knowledge, and added the *Superstition*, the *Victim* never again adds *Superstition* for using that piece of knowledge. However, if the *Victim* later inspires others to use that knowledge, they can also acquire +1 *Superstition*, once.

Superstition is also added when *Victims* encounter “things that should not be,” as described in the *Going Mental* section. A *Victim* who stares down terror adds *Superstition*, as s/he realizes that the world may be a little weirder than previously thought. Anyone who runs, however, adds even more *Superstition*, because s/he obviously found the *Creep* very convincing.

Adding *Superstition* can be dangerous. When a *Victim of Circumstance* reaches 12 *Superstition* s/he realizes things ‘man was never meant to know’ and vanishes forever under mysterious circumstances.

Players will be well versed in how to defeat your “off the rack” *Creep* and will want to use such information. It is really easy to spot such insight. Statements such as “Vampires are vulnerable to wooden stakes,” or “werewolves fear silver,” and “mummies burn better than matchsticks” are prime examples.

Subconscious Superstition: The player is the subconscious of the *Victim*. If a player does or

says something that the *Victim* didn’t, you *know* the *Victim* was thinking it. Don’t ever let anyone tell you differently. *Superstition* is often a very subconscious thing anyway.



MUSHY STUFF

Feel free to close your eyes as you read this. This, the most horrific section of all, deals with kissing and other light grappling. Any *Victim* can make out with any consenting partner. This is called *Mushy Stuff*. Dancers, Drag Queens, Hair Stylists, Political Radicals, and Singers may feel free to adopt an alternate lifestyle without fear of persecution.

Timing the Romance: *Victims* may only engage in *Mushy Stuff* while *Holed Up* after a *Chase*. *Innocents* only go in for *Mushy Stuff* when asked by a *Victim*. For each *Moment* wasted on *Mushy Stuff*, the *Victim* may subtract 1 point of *Cowardice* and 2 points of *Imbalance*. Unfortunately, the *Victim* also adds 1 point of *Misfortune*. *Creeps* just hate it when *Victims* start kissing.



Stereotype Modifiers: Members of Attractive *Stereotypes* will only engage in *Mushy Stuff* with other *Victims* and *Innocents* who are also Attractive.

Dweebs, High School Principals, Kids, Priests, Teachers, and Tinkerers who engage in *Mushy Stuff* should subtract the same amount of *Cowardice* but add double the *Imbalance*, as should their partners.

Saying Goodbye: At the end of the *Misadventure*, everybody gets 1 free *Moment* of *Mushy Stuff*, without having to add a point of *Misfortune*. This is the one occasion where members of Attractive *Stereotypes* may engage in *Mushy Stuff* with anyone. In fact, an Attractive *Victim* who approaches a *Stereotype* that is not also Attractive subtracts an extra point of *Cowardice*.

Dweebs, High School Principals, Kids, Priests, and Tinkerers still don't get any final *Mushy Stuff* unless they suffer the penalty, but they do not have *Imbalance* doubled under these circumstances. Their partners also pay the penalty, although not at the normal double cost. It has been rumoured that High School Principals sometimes suck face with Teachers, but the possibility is too horrible to bear thinking about.

WOEFUL WARNINGS

Some days just don't work out. The strangest things start happening, people disappear, a fiend shows up, chases you into a building, smashes it down to get at you, and

nearly nabs you in a brawl before you can flee. After not listening to your mother's advice about never talking to weird strangers, you decide to at least follow her lesson about always finding a policeman whenever in trouble. Looking like a bag lady on a bad hair day, you enter the station raving about giant homicidal chickens. You know they are bound to listen to you because they can see how passionate you are. Now that the nice man is mumbling something about dementia praecox or the butterfly farm, you realise they have dealt with strange phenomena before...

Being Taken Seriously: Whenever you try to warn others about a menace, you must *Overcome* your *Superstition* score to convince them that you are not a loon.

- *Innocents* cannot convince other Innocent Bystanders of anything implausible.

- *Victims* have a +3 *Superstition* modifier when dealing with any Reputable Innocent Bystander except priests.

- *Reputable Victims* add a -3 *Superstition* modifier to attempts to be taken seriously so, in effect, they usually suffer no modifier when dealing with other Reputable *Stereotypes* and their full -3 when dealing with everyone else.

- *Disreputable Victims* add an additional +3 *Superstition* modifier when trying to Be Taken Seriously. They are therefore suffer the +3 when dealing with most *Stereotypes*, but a total of +6 when trying to Be Taken Seriously by Reputable *Stereotypes*.

- Everyone gets a further *Superstition* modifier of -3 if the menace is spawned by science.



GOING MENTAL

Adding Cowardice, Imbalance, Superstition and Misfortune from Frights: The way most people add *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and *Superstition* is through *Goodies*, but *Victims of Circumstance* have a second way to add *Imbalance*, and that is from directly confronting terror.

When a *Victim of Circumstance* is faced with the sudden shock of a *Creep* or other grisly sight, the *Victim* must *Overcome Cowardice*. If this fails, there are four options:

- *Faint* (add either +2 *Superstition* or +3 *Misfortune*). Anyone who chooses to *Faint* is counted as unconscious for the rest of the *Spot* and cannot do anything but will be ignored by *Creeps*.

- *Grit His/Her Teeth* (add either +1 *Imbalance* and +1 *Superstition* or +3 *Misfortune*)

- *Run Screaming* (add either +1 *Cowardice* and +1 *Misfortune* or +3 *Misfortune*). Most often, a *Chase* will ensue any time someone *Runs Screaming* from a *Creep*. *Creeps* are a lot like dogs that way.

- *Repress* (add +2 *Imbalance* or +3 *Misfortune*). Anyone who opts to *Repress* the *Fright* will not remember the event after the *Spot* has passed and cannot record the *Creep* as having been encountered for *Superstition of Frights*.

High Cowardice, Imbalance, and Superstition: If your *Victim's* *Cowardice*, *Imbalance* and/or *Superstition* reaches 12 or more, the *Victim Goes Mental*, incurably, and can no longer participate in *Misadventures*. You will have to make another *Victim* whose sanity has not gone west. It is perhaps better to be killed in action, unless you want the *Victim* to come back maniacal and fiendishly brilliant. Just make sure your *Victim's* death isn't mysterious. Sometimes it is best not to stay to realize the full horror of what s/he encounters.

Repetitious Frights: Whenever *Creeps* get lazy and tire of finding new and interesting ways of dealing with those they terrorize, they may leave behind scenes that are as sickening in their repetition as they are in their depravity.

There will come a time when the *EM* declares the *Spot* to be: “Yet another blood spattered room, with disembodied heads strewn about like empty beer bottles at a frat house. This ghastly scene bears the mark of the perennially perverse mountain madman, in that it is identical to his previous six craven crimes.”

This is the time to allow the *Victims* to plead clemency. Yet another identical mess is not going to scare them so soon after the first few.

Depending upon the grisliness of the *Spot*, *Victims* should not have to *Overcome* their *Cowardice* for multiple scares that are more or less the same. They become desensitized after the first time. For especially terrible sights, the *EM* can make them try a second, or even a third time, but it should never go beyond that. They will have become acclimatized for the duration of the *Misadventure*.

In further *Misadventures* the *EM* is well within his or her rights to scare the *Victims* again with the same sort of thing, because enough time will have passed for them to forget the full impact of what they saw.

The *EM* should try to make the terrors as varied as is reasonable in each *Misadventure*. It will make for more fun anyway. After all, if the *EM* bides his or her time, s/he can catch everyone with guards down – and it will have all the more impact later.

Victims are puppets, to terrorize at will. An *EM* who remembers this will be an artiste of evil and a gore gourmet!



GADGETS

You probably have enough *Goodies* to make yourself feel safe. These *Goodies* will be sufficient most of the time – but what if Doglizza is attacking and you need something really funky?

When Doglizza is taking liberties with Lady Liberty and the professor of nerd studies informs you of the need for a Macro Canine Enthusiasm Debilitator, it would be good to know where to find one. Unfortunately, you're going to have to build one, as the corner store is unlikely to carry them.

Defining Gadgets: Macro Canine Enthusiasm Debilitators, and anything else that can't be bought through normal channels, are *Gadgets*. That's what makes them different from *Goodies*; they just don't lie within the bounds of ordinary, common items. I do mean ordinary items. It doesn't matter if the Russians are currently selling MiG-29s to civilian buyers, they don't qualify as being generally available.

Scientists and Tinkerers: Only a Scientist or Tinkerer who has expertise in the field can design a *Gadget*. Whereas *Victim*

Scientists and Tinkerers are widely schooled, *Innocent* Scientists and Tinkerers are all specialists. The *EM* will have declared the area of knowledge when he designed the *Innocent*. It is always best to carry your own scientist with you, because any you find later may not have the required expertise.

Limits on Tinkerers: The key difference between a Tinkerer and a Scientist is that a Tinkerer cannot design any *Gadget* that is capable of defeating Creeps with one or more Flaw modifiers of +3. Tinkerers are also unable to design any *Gadget* that strikes the *EM* as being very cutting edge. The *EM* decides the definition of "cutting edge" and doesn't have to be fair or consistent.

Although a Tinkerer cannot design *Gadgets* that represent advanced technological breakthroughs, s/he may still build them, once they are designed, if the Scientist is unable to follow through.

Making Gadgets: How do you make a *Gadget* yourself? First you need to obtain the *Goodies* necessary to build the *Gadget*. You may also require certain *Tools* to assemble the *Gadget* from its *Goodies*. Your *EM* should make up a list of the *Goodies* and tools required to build the *Gadget*.

Required Goodies: It might seem like the tricky part is deciding how many *Goodies* must go into a *Gadget*. The answer is actually very simple. The minimum number of *Goodies* required for a *Gadget* is equal to the total of the positive *Flaw* modifiers of the *Creep* it's designed to defeat. Negative *Flaw* modifiers don't enter into the equation.

If a <i>Creep</i> has modifiers of +2 WK, +1 CL, -1 CW, and +0 SU, then any <i>Gadget</i> designed to defeat him/her/it would require 3 <i>Goodies</i> .
--

A *Creep* never has more than +12 in his total *Flaw* modifiers, so any *Gadget* can be designed given the right people working on the project. A +12 *Creep* is very formidable, so it's only right that the *Gadget* required to defeat it should be comprised of 12 *Goodies*.

Using Gadgets: The tougher the *Creep*, the more that has to go into any *Gadget* that could defeat it. That's straightforward enough. A

Gadget has the ability to affect any one *Creep*, of the type it was designed to fight, so long as the *Creep* is within the line of sight of the user. All the *Victim* using the *Gadget* has to do is to be able to see the *Creep* clearly with his or her own two eyes. Eyeglasses and contact lenses are acceptable aids for sighting but binoculars and radio telescopes are not unless the EM rules it is a special circumstance. Of course, if the *Victim* wants an area effect, s/he's out of luck unless the *Gadget* was designed and built as an area effect *Gadget* in the first place.

Affecting Multiple Creeps at Once: If designed to do so, a *Gadget* can be built to affect more than one *Creep*, within sight, each time it's used. For every *Goodie* added when designing the *Gadget*, the number of *Creeps* affected doubles. This can't be done later, unless the whole *Gadget* is redesigned and reassembled. Luckily you can reuse *Goodies*. Even though *Gadgets* can affect more than one *Creep*, they must all be of the same type of *Creep* and all must still be within sight of the *Gadget* wielder.

Finding Goodies: *Gadgets* can be built entirely out of *Goodies*. Luckily, the necessary items can be obtained in the same manner as any other *Goodies*. You can run all over town and search. It's even nicer when someone can *Push His or Her Luck* and find one of the *Goodies* lying around the house.

You have to *Push Your Luck* once per *Goodie* and you can't get *Gadgets* this way, but it can help immensely. Otherwise, getting to wherever the *Tools* and other *Goodies* are stored may be dangerous....

Assembly Time: Once you have everything you need to make the *Gadget*, you will have to calculate the time it takes to assemble it. It takes 1 *Spot* for every *Goodie* that goes into the final *Gadget* once all these parts are built or otherwise obtained. Thus a *Gadget* that requires 4 *Goodies* to assemble would take 4 *Spots* to build.

If *Tools* strike the EM as logically necessary to assemble his chosen *Goodies*, using these *Tools* (which are themselves *Goodies*) does not add to the time, except for the time it takes to find any *Tools* the *Victims* don't already have. *Tool* use should never add time to the normal assembly time.

Cutting Corners to Save Time: Once you know the total number of *Spots* needed to assemble a *Gadget*, based on the number of

Goodies required to build it, you can save time by *Cutting Corners*. There are seven ways to *Cut Corners*.

Gadgets can be engineered to be Large, Bulky, Immobile, Fragile, Unreliable, Hazardous, and/or Complex. The *EM* must make sure each of these factors comes into play and s/he can interpret the words (Large, Bulky, Immobile, Fragile, Unreliable, Hazardous, and Complex) in any way that sounds like fun. Each of these must be a real disadvantage.



Saying that an Immobile *Gadget* gets mounted on a pickup truck isn't allowed, because then the *Gadget* isn't truly Immobile any more. It's just tough cheese if the *Creep* chooses not to come to where you built your Immobile Finagle Ray. Try standing out in the road and shouting, "Hey, *Creep*! Over Here!"

Any, some, or all of these options to *Cut Corners* can be exercised so that a scientist can sacrifice one or more user-friendly features in order to produce an item quickly. Every way a

scientist *Cuts Corners* can shave off a *Spot* from the necessary assembly time. Each of the seven features subtracts one *Spot*. Therefore, the time needed to produce a *Gadget* can be cut by up to seven *Spots*.

Hurrying: If for some reason you have *Cut Corners* as much you can, but still need to get the job done faster, you can *Hurry*. The scientist(s) may subtract one *Spot* from the time necessary to complete the *Gadget* for each point of *Misfortune* added. Any Scientist or Tinkerer working on the *Gadget* may be the one to add the *Misfortune* for this, as long as it is a *Victim* who does so, and not an *Innocent*.

The *EM* may not opt to make the research *Take Longer*, but the *EM* may still declare *Goodies* to be used as parts and *Gadgets* to be *On the Fritz*. In this case the scientist subtracts 1 *Misfortune* for every *Goodie On the Fritz*. If it is a *Gadget* that is *On the Fritz*, the scientist subtracts 1 *Misfortune* for every *Goodie* that went into making the *Gadget*. As usual, this cannot drop *Misfortune* below 0.

GADGET DESIGN

In learning how to make a *Gadget* and to calculate the time required to assemble it, we have got ahead of ourselves. Although the above calculations must come first for the *EM*, it is the design of a *Gadget* that must come first during play. Once an *EM* knows what goes into a *Gadget*, s/he can determine the difficulty of designing it.

In trying to design a *Gadget*, the designer is *Mentally Challenged*. The *Victim* (or *Innocent*) must *Overcome Ignorance*. Of course, designing *Gadgets* isn't easy. The attempt suffers a positive *Flaw* modifier equal to the number of *Spots* required to assemble the *Gadget*, before *Cutting Corners*.

Therefore, in the case of the *Gadget* above that takes 4 *Spots* to build, the penalty would be +4 *Ignorance*.

Design Time: Designing a *Gadget* takes even longer than building one. For every attempt you have to make before succeeding in designing the *Gadget*, a day passes. It's a good thing that you can take as long as you need. Just remember

that while you're dithering about in the lab, the *Creeps*, *Innocents* and other *Victims* must be allowed to play out the long days until you find the needed answers.



Saving Time in Design: Sometimes there is just no way to design a *Gadget* in the time necessary. The penalty may require a target of more than 12, or you may just not have a month to spend on the project. That's when you need to call for assistance. Having another scientist to help you can ease the strain immensely. Just remember that your assistant must be working within the required field if that assistant is only an *Innocent Bystander*. When two Scientists (or Tinkerers) pair up, the one with the lower *Ignorance* may make the attempt and the penalty is reduced by 2. The above *Gadget* would have its penalty cut from -4 to -2. That's a big help.

Design Teams (Committees): A pair of Scientists (or Tinkerers) can accomplish a lot, but what if the design is still too big for two people to handle? Big jobs may require a team of crack specialists. The drawback to this is that the crack team is usually made up almost entirely of *Innocent Bystanders*. That's why it's called a

team of *specialists*. They can't have a great general knowledge like you can. The trouble is that these so-called eggheads will each have an *Ignorance* of 8.

The problem with a committee is that you are forced to use the *Ignorance* of the dumbest person present whenever you're *Mentally Challenged*. This means you usually have to *Overcome* an *Ignorance* of 8 (you can try for the *Innocent*). Just pray there isn't a government facilitator present, or you'll be working with an *Ignorance* of 11. A *Victim of Circumstance* always makes the attempt, if there is one involved, as *Innocent Bystanders* don't initiate actions on their own. If there is more than one *Victim* helping, the one with the highest *Ignorance* should try.

The nice thing about committees is that they reduce the *Gadget* design penalty by a number equal to the number of experts on the committee (including yourself).

The *Gadget* above would have its -4 die roll penalty removed entirely if 4 scientists were working on the problem.

Committees are even better when you get a large number of brilliant minds working together. Luckily, the government can easily make a large number of highly trained specialists available quickly if they choose to. The EM must simply rule that the threat is large enough, immediate enough and convincing enough in the minds of the bureaucrats for them to act decisively. Some fast-talking and successfully *Overcoming Superstition* can put this together simply enough.

If the number of committee members exceeds the number of the penalty, you actually receive a bonus. Simply subtract the original penalty from the number of scientists designing the *Gadget* to find the bonus.

Thus, if 13 scientists were working to design the *Gadget* discussed throughout this section, the penalty of -4 would be replaced by a bonus of +9 (13-4=9).

Size Limits on Gadget Design Teams:

Unfortunately, too many cooks spoil the witch's brew. No more than 13 Scientists and/or

Tinkerers may work to design a *Gadget*. Otherwise the penalty is unaffected by the team of scientists. Furthermore, you still have to try using the lowest *Ignorance* on the team. Even esteemed messianic figures usually limit themselves to 12 disciples.

SERIOUS SELF HELP

Self-help involves more than college, veggies and New Age books. Self-help in *Scared Stiff* is all about lowering your *Misfortune*, and, ultimately, your other *Flaws* too.

There are many ways for *Victims* to lower *Misfortune* built into the game. The EM should take advantage of these. An EM must feel free to allow some *Misfortune* to carry over from one *Misadventure* to the next, of course.

Concluding Misadventures: At the end of every *Misadventure*, subtract 1 point each from *Cowardice* and *Imbalance* because the world is now a much safer place.

Victims of Circumstance subtract 1 point of *Misfortune* for each *Innocent* surviving if, in the EM's judgment, they role-played reasonably well.

OR, *Victims of Circumstance* subtract 2 points of *Misfortune* for each *Innocent* surviving if, in the EM's judgment, they role-played extremely well. The minimum on all *Flaws* is still 1, however.

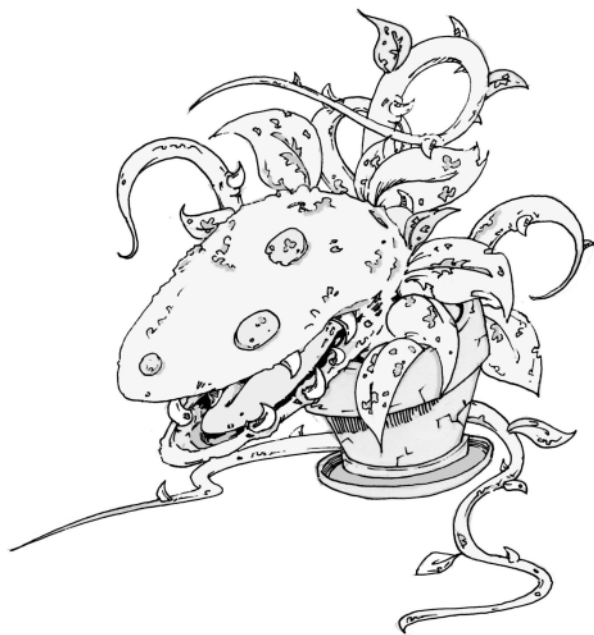
There should be several *Innocent Bystanders* in every *Misadventure*, so that a few can *Buy the Farm* and the *Victims* will still have a reasonable number left over to save.

Lowering Other Flaws: If a *Victim of Circumstance* is ever so lucky that some *Flaws* would have been reduced below 1 (were it not for the rule that *Flaws* can't be reduced below 1), s/he gets to lower other *Flaws* instead.

For each *Flaw* that might have been reduced below 1, the *Victim* may lower any *Primary* or *Secondary Flaw* by 1 point. In case it needs to be said, these *Flaws* can't be reduced below 1 either



THE E.M.'S GENRE RULES



CRAZED CREEPS

How Creeps Work: *Creeps* move, act, and *Attack* based on modifiers to the *Flaws* or *Misfortune* of their *Victims*. *Creeps* must *Exploit* the *Flaws* of their prey. *Innocent Bystanders* have default *Flaws* of 9 (except for *Lumps*, which start at zero (0)).

A *Creep* can acquire *Lumps*, which serves purely as a measure of when the *Creep* is “out for the count” and defeated. However, *Creeps* cannot *Buy the Farm* and may return in future *Misadventures* with renewed vigour if the *EM* wants them to. Mysterious deaths are especially juicy. Any *VC* who obstructs the efforts of a work-a-day, terror-minded *Creep* to conceal his/her/its death should reap gobs of *Misfortune*.

Creeps may possess certain powerful aspects (*Personal Gimmicks*) or use certain powers or *Weapons* (*Interpersonal Gimmicks*) to make the lives of *Victims*, *Chumps*, and *Innocents* more interesting. However, these *Gimmicks* may have limits imposed by certain *Defects*.

Creeps may appear to be unconquerably determined and unstoppably proficient in their chosen trade, but their seeming advantages may be tempered through personality *Flaws* known as *Foibles*.

Flaw Modifiers: The *Flaw* modifiers that represent the particularities of a *Creep* range from 0 to 4. This number can be either a bonus (+), or a penalty (–), and the higher the number, the more effective the *Creep* will be. The same modifier is always used, and it modifies the same thing in each instance.

Whether *Creeps* are trying to *Exploit* a *Victim's Flaws* or *Victims* are *Overcoming* their own against a *Creep*, the modifier is applied to the *Victim's Flaw*. Bonuses always work for

Creeps, while penalties always work against them.

The *Flaw* Modifiers expand geometrically, with each step having double the bonus of the last. The steps are -4, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2 and +4. The 0 is considered to be “double” the -1, and the +1 is considered to be “double” the 0. There are, therefore, three negative doublings and three positive ones.

It seems obvious that a *Creep* with a positive modifier to *Weakness* and *Clumsiness* is both strong and fast, but what about the other *Flaws*? Firstly, *Ignorance*, *Imbalance* and *Superstition* modifiers should prove unnecessary. *Cowardice* modifiers represent how mind-wrenchingly terrifying a *Creep* is.

Example Flaw Modifiers: There are examples beside each number for each of the *Primary Flaws* to help you picture what the numbers represent. The *Weakness* Modifier of *Creeps* represents much bigger leaps in ability than seem possible due to the much greater resiliency of *Creeps*. The examples are not meant to pair up exactly with the scale for *Victims*.

Weakness Mod.	Example
-4	Rabbit
-2	Cat
-1	Dog
0	Human
+1	Cougar
+2	Lion, Tiger or Bear
+4	Elephant

Clumsiness Mod.	Example
-4	Inept
-2	Clumsy
-1	Awkward
0	Human
+1	Cat
+2	Monkey
+4	Mongoose

Cowardice Mod. or Superstition Mod.	Example
-4	Creepy Human or Scary Animal
-2	Giant Animal
-1	Giant Insect
0	Typical Creep
+1	Walking Corpse
+2	A Creep That Defies Normal Geometry
+4	Any Creep That Demands You Redefine Most of Your Fundamental Assumptions

Creeps and Weapons: Some *Creeps* like to use *Weapons* and others don't. Each *Creep* will have his own sense of style when it comes to rending his *Victims* limb from limb. No particular method is better than another, but creativity is always worth a little more, even from Russian judges.

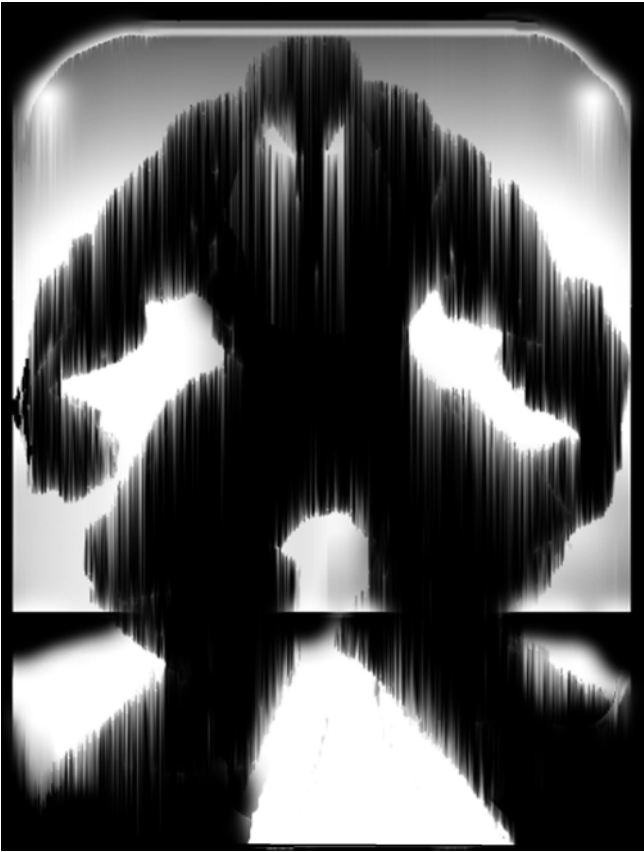
Creeps relying on natural *Weapons* (such as claws, teeth, tails and fists) will *Dish Out* 0 *Lumps* for bludgeoning *Attacks* or 2 *Lumps* for piercing, stabbing, cutting or slashing *Attacks*. Natural weapon *Attacks* of both kinds will also *Dish Out* the normal variable amount, plus the *Creep's* *Weakness* modifier as an added bonus.

Creeps that are somewhat humanoid and smart enough to bother may use *Weapons*. These *Creeps* often like to help their *Victims* *Buy the Farm* in a new way each time. These *Creeps* simply use the *Lumps Dished Out* appropriate to the *Weapon* and add the normal variable amount. If the *Weapon* is listed in **boldface** the *Creep* also gets his *Weakness* modifier added to *Lumps Dished Out*. Sometimes the old *Weapons* are the best.

Creep Size: Once the *EM* has figured a *Creep's* *Flaw* modifiers and the *Creep* is armed and dangerous, it is time to estimate a *Creep's* size. Size matters (in this case) as it determines how much a *Creep* can wreck in a single *Moment*. Any figure the *EM* feels is appropriate will do.

Most of the larger *Creeps* have heights (or lengths) that are evenly divisible by 5 to keep the math simple. They range up to 200 feet tall. (If

you wish to be metrically inclined, that's very roughly 60 metres.)



Smaller *Creeps* range in height from 1 inch to 4 feet, 11 inches (2.5 centimetres to 150 cm), but usually come in increments of 1 foot (30 cm – and that's it for the conversion; you're now on your own). Tails, when present, may be as long as the *Creep*, but aren't nearly as thick around.

Creeps are often proportioned somewhat unevenly. They have arms and legs half as long as they are tall and they have hands and feet of either 1/5 or 1/6 their height. That makes them look kind of funny (in a snaggle-toothed, hideous sort of way), but they'll grow to any lengths to keep the math easy and allow easy calculation when it comes to the *Creep* smashing things with her/his/its various bits.

Creeps' Lumps: *Creeps* are *Knocked Senseless* when they take a number of *Lumps* equal to *double* their height (or length) in feet. If you insisted, for some peculiarly nationalistic or other strange reason, in converting their dimensions to metric measures, the author will now provide yet another conversion factor, because his editor insisted he do so. He doesn't want to do this because his math skills suck big-time, but the editor is meaner than he is.

Imperial Unit	Approximate Metric Equivalent
1 Inch	2 ½ Centimetres or 25 Millimetres
1 Foot	1/3 Metre
1 Yard	1 Metre
1 Mile	1½ Kilometres
1 Pound	0.5 Kilograms

If there are any extra inches or centimetres in the height of the *Creep*, add 1 extra possible *Lump*. When a *Creep's Lumps* reaches this maximum he/she/it is *Knocked Senseless*.

A 6-foot tall *Creep* would be able to take 12 *Lumps*, while *Creeps* between 6 feet, 1 inch and 6 feet, 11 inches could take 13.

Doglizza, being 100 feet long (50 feet tall) can take a staggering 200 *Lumps* before being *Knocked Senseless*. That is another important difference between Doglizza and the super-strong dachshund. The dachshund, at 2 feet long, can only take 4 *Lumps* despite also having a +4 Weakness Modifier and 12 *Lumps Bounced Off*.

Many *Creeps* have one or more *Gimmicks* that help make them unique. After all, they need something to compete with other *Creeps* in today's overcrowded market for villainy.

Gimmicks are the *Creep* powers that, whether based on superscience or supernatural abilities, really make the *Creeps* special and more than a simple list of *Flaw* modifiers.

Vampires are interesting, not for being merely strong and fast but also because they can transform into wolves, rats, bats, and fog. They cannot be killed through normal means, can manipulate the weak willed, and will drain the life from the innocent at the drop of a bat.

As much as an overabundance of lawyers in recent years has made this sort of terror seem commonplace, vampires are, nonetheless, scarier for these extra talons, er... talents, than if their undead powers merely made them athletic.

Gimmicks may appear to make a *Creep* impossible to defeat, but the power(s) are often offset by *Gimmick Defects*.

Choosing Gimmicks: Specific *Creep* Schticks are too varied to outline fully but are luckily well known to most people. Possible *Gimmicks* are also numbered beyond reckoning.

As you'll see, *Creeps* are similar to *Victims* and other characters in that they only become lovable in their own twisted, ghastly, and unique ways when all their facets are put together.

Whatever *Creep* you choose for a *Misadventure*, it is fairly easy to know whether *Creepy* should have any *Gimmicks* and what they might be.

Vampires can transform themselves, hypnotize people, and control certain animals. Werewolves and zombies are invulnerable to normal *Weapons*. Medusa could turn people to stone with a look and traveling salesmen are impervious to the word "NO!"

Doing Without Gimmicks: Most *Creeps* gain their unique status by way of superficial factors such as appearance and mannerisms, and can be outlined mostly through their *Flaw*

Modifiers. Sometimes, however, a *Creep* can seem to have a *Gimmick* when he doesn't. This is especially true of invulnerability.

If a tough *Creep* seems to deserve an invulnerability *Gimmick*, he may just be bulletproof because of *Lumps Bounced Off*.

Differentiating Similar Gimmicks:

Judicious *Creep* design will yield infinite possibility without profound differences in the *Gimmicks* themselves. Where *Creeps* do have *Gimmicks*, the same *Gimmick* can be made to seem different if it has a different *Defect* attached.

While werewolves, mummies, vampires, and zombies all have the invulnerability *Gimmick* as their main schtick, werewolves suffer the *Defect* of being vulnerable to silver, mummies to fire, vampires to wooden stakes, and zombies to being very easily decapitated. Please, don't ask me how I know this. I don't have time.

Superscientific vs. Supernatural

Gimmicks: *Gimmicks* can be supernatural or superscientific. It doesn't matter which, they work the same either way, but the look and feel will have to be changed as appropriate for each *Creep*.

Sometimes a *Gimmick* is simply a change of *Flaw* modifiers when an otherwise ordinary, dull scientist reveals his evil side by drinking a potion that makes him stronger, faster, and (sometimes) hairier.

The *Gimmick* doesn't necessarily have to belong to the *Creep*, either. The *Gimmick* is counted as the *Creep's*, no matter how he came across it.

A fugitive could steal a mixture granting invisibility.

Gimmick Types: In *Scared Stiff* there are only two types of *Gimmick*: the *Personal Gimmick* and the *Interpersonal Gimmick*. Each is very simple to use.

The *Personal Gimmick* is any *Gimmick* that only affects the *Creep* and can succeed automatically. Examples: a vampire's ability to

turn into a bat, an invisibility serum, or a 500-pound, sapient slime mould's ability to assume any shape.

Interpersonal Gimmicks are those that can affect others. Examples: the vampire's ability to hypnotize its *Victims* and to suck blood through special (but quite charming) teeth or the slime mould's ability to paralyse and dispose of many *Victims*, *Chumps*, and/or *Innocents* at once when it drops from hiding in the light fixtures. Medusa's stony gaze also qualifies here.

The person(s) on whom they are used can resist *Interpersonal Gimmicks*. Sometimes the logic behind the method of resisting is obvious; other times it is not. A resistance can be found to anything. For example, the resistance to a vampire's mesmerism is personal strength of will. You can resist the Medusa by averting your eyes. Unfortunately, the only way to resist the slime mould is to be elsewhere when it drops.

Resisting Interpersonal Gimmicks:

Unfortunately, the more *Superstition* a person has, the greater the effect that fear, hypnosis, magic, lycanthropy, and other *Creep Gimmicks* will have. Whenever *Creepy* tries to affect someone with insidious *Gimmicks* or abused technology, s/he/it must *Exploit* the target's *Superstition*. If the attempt is successful, the *Victim of Circumstance*, *Chump*, or *Innocent Bystander* falls prey to the evil *Gimmick*.

The important thing with *Interpersonal Gimmicks* is figuring out whether they work. *Victims* can, of course, choose not to resist, but they should always have the option of trying. If they do make the vain effort to resist, the *EM* (now playing the part of the *Creep*) must try to *Exploit* the *Superstition* of the person resisting. If the *EM* succeeds, the *Creep's Gimmick* takes full effect and, if not, it is totally ineffectual.

Gimmicks are all or nothing.

It is important to remember that if a *Creep Gimmick* is superscience instead of being supernatural, there is a modifier for a low *Superstition* score. *Victims* with a *Superstition* of less than 7 receive a +4 *Superstition* Modifier when *Attacked* by high tech or science-based *Gimmicks*. The sceptical are much more easily taken in by hi-tech stuff.

Grace Fuller (who has a 4 *Superstition*) is visiting the elderly but stern Granny Fuller (who

has a *Superstition* of 8) when a subsonic hypno-frequency sound wave blankets the town. The evil Herr Doktor Versand von Verpflichten is trying to control the minds of everyone in the area with his new device and so far his plan has been working. The players are not told what is happening (their *Victims* are unaware of the mind control attempt at first because it is working), but the *EM* has them make a "incidental" attempt, calling it an "attempt to Notice something." Grace Fuller has to *Overcome* her *Superstition* of 4, now raised to 8 due to the +4 modifier for the effect of superscientific devices on anyone with a low *Superstition Flaw*. Granny has no special modifiers. They must each get 9-12 (higher than the 8 *Superstition* they are both effectively at for this *Challenge*). As Grace gets 6 and Granny 10, the old woman watches unsurprised as young Grace turns glassy eyed. In a little while, when Granny fuller realises this is more than the normal distraction common to the young, she will no doubt try to snap Grace out of her trance, and the *EM* may allow Grace another chance to resist the effects.

Adding Superstition from Resisting Gimmicks: A *Victim's Superstition* goes up by 1 point the first time s/he tries to resist each specific *Creep* power. There is no additional penalty for subsequent encounters with the same *Gimmick*. It is a good idea for the player to keep careful track of which *Creeps* have been encountered and the *Gimmicks* resisted.

If a male *Victim* tries to resist the seductive call of an evil mermaid, his *Superstition* goes up by 1. (Female *Victims*, of course don't take a similar hit because they're immune. That is why Mermen exist). If he encounters mermaids ever again he will never have to add another point of *Superstition* to resist the deadly call. Of course, if the mermaids have other *Gimmicks*, or a different type of *Creep* has an identical *Gimmick*, he will have to add *Superstition* once again for resisting the *Gimmick*. (And this time, of course, being Female may not be advantageous.)

Gimmicks can be used in any way that the *EM* finds logical and (or at least) exciting. However, there's more...

Gimmick Defects: Just like the rest of us, *Creeps* are stuck in a world over which they have only limited control. For every *Gimmick* the *Creep* knows, there must be a corresponding *Defect* – an equally noteworthy vulnerability or limitation that offsets its seeming power. The more powerful the *Gimmick* the bigger the *Defect* should be.

Every suit of armour has a chink, no matter how seemingly perfect. *Creeps* are people, too (more or less), even if they happen to be monsters.

Just as with *Gimmicks*, the *Defects* appropriate to a *Creep* should be fairly obvious. Of course, adding a little spice to a *Creep* by developing different *Defects* never hurt.

GIMMICK	DEFECT
Empathic Brain's Influence	Immobile
Glob Growth By Size of Thing Eaten	Takes Double Lumps From Electricity
Mummy Invulnerability	Buys Farm When Takes Lumps From Fire
Vampire Hypnosis	Repelled By Holy Items
Vampire Invulnerability	Buys Farm With Wooden Stake Through Heart and Will Not Easily Awaken As Victims Get Ready To Stake Him
Vampire Transformation	Repelled By Garlic
Werewolf Invulnerability	Buys Farm When Takes Lumps From Silver
Zombie Invulnerability	Buys Farm When Easily Decapitated

Defects need not be obvious, but it shouldn't be too difficult for the players to discover them by observation and application of keen wit. See *Taking Advantage of Defects*, below.

Fatal Defects and the Invulnerability Gimmick: It is especially important to discuss how to balance the invulnerability *Gimmick*. A *Creep* should not be totally invulnerable, even if a *Gadget* will still fix his bacon but good! A common *Defect* to counter invulnerability is to have something that will not only affect the *Creep*, but will deal with him in a single action.

Vampires can fly, hypnotize, and have superhuman strength. But, catch them in the daytime, while they're asleep, with a wooden stake... Or, slime moulds can go anywhere and eat anything, but if they stick their little pseudopods into an electrical outlet....

Seemingly Irrelevant Defects: It is very important to remember that a *Defect* must actually limit the *Creep*. If it is not a real limitation, it is not a true *Defect*. It is not enough to merely limit the invulnerability; the *Defect*

must balance it by making the attack utterly effective in defeating the *Creep*. With a bit of practice it is easy to make *Creeps* that are especially vulnerable to things that would finish absolutely anyone.

It is easy to see that a werewolf could be defeated by one shot with a silver bullet, while a single bullet – no matter what it was made from – might only wound another *Creep*. But, what about those *Creeps* whose vulnerability is something that would end the days of practically anyone? I mean, take your basic citizen and whack off his head (zombie), stab him through the heart with a wooden stake (vampire), or turn him into a human torch (mummy) and it's pretty much time for the Last Post. However, *Creeps* have that little extra...

Zombie heads are especially easy to cut off. They leave their necks conveniently wide open to attack.

Vampires also are notoriously bad at protecting their hearts against staking; they can't seem to hear people sneak up while they rest. Once again, they are more vulnerable to a stake in the heart than anyone else.

A mummy will be utterly consumed by fire within moments and should avoid barbecue parties, yet they persist in hanging around places that use torches for light.

Personality Defects: Outside the scope of normal *Foibles* (see below), *Creeps* can have more unique psychological limits. The possibilities for interesting *Defects* are endless, and the best make *Creeps* truly tragic figures.

Some say a werewolf is drawn instinctively to attack the one person s/he loves most. Some ghouls are struck powerless by the presence of a truly innocent child or maiden. These attractions certainly go beyond the bounds of the *Loneliness Foible*.

Taking Advantage of Defects: *Victims* will of course want to use a *Creep's Defects* to their advantage, and that is only natural. Knowledge has a price of course. Many players will already know how to turn a Vampire into shish kebab, and will eventually discover the *Defects* of other, less well known, *Creeps*.

Taking advantage of *Creep Defects* adds *Superstition*. The first time a *Victim* admits to, or seems to use the knowledge of a *Defect*, it adds 1 point of *Superstition* to the *Victim's Superstition Flaw*. After that, the knowledge can be admitted and/or used as often as the *Victim* wants with no further penalty – provided we're dealing with the same, specific type of *Creep*. Again, it is a good idea for the player to keep careful track of which *Creeps* have been encountered and which of their *Defects* the *Victim* has admitted s/he knows about.

Unconquerable Creeps and Foibles: Why not just make *Creeps* really, really powerful and totally unbeatable? The answer, of course, is that if you don't give your players some teensy chance of defeating your *Creep(s)*, if they are always going to be subjected to the monster mash, if they never get a chance of having their *Victim* survive a *Misadventure*, they won't want to play with you very often (imagine long winter nights watching television with your parents and that they control the remote).

I solve this problem through what I call the *Einsteinovich Limitation Effect*, which states

that a *Creep's* instability is directly proportional to his/her/its raw power.

For every point the *Creep* has in the positive *Flaw* modifiers, there must be an equal number of points in the negative *Flaw* modifiers – or else the *Creep* must accumulate a point in one of the *Foibles*.

There may be seven deadly sins, but for our purposes here there are four *Foibles*: *Loneliness*, *Egotism*, *Greed* and *Stupidity*, otherwise known as LEGS.

- All *Foibles* start at zero (0).
- The *EM* can raise each *Foible* to a maximum value of +3 in order to balance each *Creep*.
- Because *Creeps* have three *Flaw* modifiers going up to +4, this system can pay for any *Creep*.
- The points put into *Foibles* represent actions the *Creeps must take* to stay true to their natures. The specific actions depend on the specifics of the *Foible* itself. A *Creep* who does not meet the conditions of his/her/its *Foibles* should subtract 1 from each of its *Flaw Modifiers* in the last big *Scuffle* with the *Victims* for every point of *Foibles* that has not been acted out. It is really up to the *EM* to ensure he plays the *Creep's Foibles* fully, but he should use discretion and not let *Foibles* get in the way of everyone's fun.

Loneliness: the longing many *Creeps* have for someone to share their lives with. For every point a *Creep* has in *Loneliness* he must *Carry Away* or *Rescue* an Attractive member of the opposite sex once in the *Misadventure*. Rescues usually involve an Attractive *Victim* or *Innocent* being *Carried Away* by one *Creep* after having been captured by a more sinister *Creep*. Rescues are, therefore, seldom more than a slight improvement in circumstances. If his love interest has not expressed *Sympathy*, the *Creep* can start a *Scuffle* with the Attractive *Victim's* love interest in order to redeem another point in *Loneliness*.

Egotism: the need some *Creeps* have for self-aggrandizement. *Egotism* drives *Creeps* to need to *Gloat*. Their *Gloating* is therefore less effective because the *Creep* sounds desperate. For every point in *Egotism* that a *Creep* has, 1 fewer point of *Misfortune* is added to each *Victim* when the *Creep Gloats*.

Greed: the craving some *Creeps* have to acquire *Goodies* of their favourite kind. *Greedy Creeps* lust after *Shiny Shtuff*. This forces them to acquire *Shiny Shtuff* once in the *Misadventure* for every point they have in *Greed*. *Greedy Creeps* also like to talk about the object of their desire, but that isn't enough to burn off the point.

Stupidity: *Stupid Creeps* to do something really idiotic that benefits the *Victims* once in the *Misadventure* per point. *Stupid Creeps* really hate to be called idiots. If a *Victim* is going to earn a point of *Misfortune* from being a *Scumbag* to the *Creep*, the *EM* can opt to spend a point of the *Creep's Stupidity* instead of awarding *Misfortune*.

Saving a Creep's Hide: Sometimes, *Victims, et al*, are too darned clever for their own good. If they discover the *Creep's* vulnerability *Defect* too early in the game, it's game over – literally. There is a solution for the *EM* who feels it is too early in the *Misadventure* to have the villainous, but precious, little monster foiled.

The *EM* may elect to *Save the Creep's Hide* by subtracting 1 *Misfortune* from all *Victims* present, thus allowing the *Creep* to make its escape. Once the climax arrives, the *Creep* can safely meet its maker when the *Defect* is used again.

A good solution is to have the <i>Creep</i> simply run off with his tail between his legs, not quite set afire, or only grazed by the silver bullet.
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GETTING CARRIED AWAY

As much as some *Creeps* behave like dogs and chase anything that runs away, many of them are just like the next guy and prefer to chase women. The only *Creeps* required to chase Attractive members of the opposite sex are those who suffer from *Loneliness* (see *Foibles* above).

Of course, other *Creeps* may figure they might as well go for it anyway, and who could blame them?

Stopping Initial Attempts: If a *Creep* can get within arm's length of that special someone, the *EM* should declare that s/he is *Getting Carried Away*. The *Victim, Chump, or Innocent* can subtract a point of *Misfortune* and the *Creep* can be assured of a clean exit.

Neither wind, nor sleet, nor dead of night, nor all that jazz will stop the *Creep* from escaping with the chosen character. The bullets

will miss and the pursuers will lose track of the *Creep*. Nope, the happy couple should be alone.

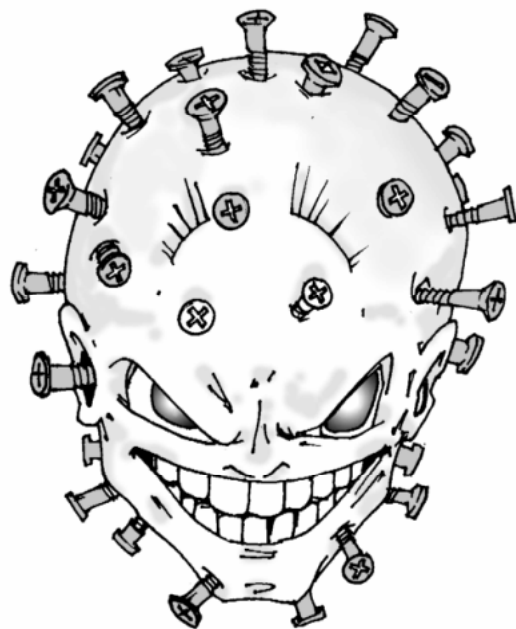
Timing the Romantic Getaway: Of course, the femme fatales and bon beaus of the group should not be *Carried Away* until shortly before the climax of the *Misadventure*. They shouldn't be required to stand around and do nothing while the others have all the fun!

Sympathy: Once the *Creep* has spent one of the *Loneliness* points by declaring his/her/its intentions and taking the love-interest home to meet the "aberrants," the *Victim/Chump/Innocent* must decide whether or not the *Creep* deserves *Sympathy*.

Deciding to give the *Creep Sympathy* has no game effect aside from altering the *Creep's* options for spending his *Loneliness* points later in the *Misadventure*.

Second Dates: If the *Creep* still has points left in *Loneliness* when the climax of the adventure arrives and the character *Carried Away* showed *Sympathy*, the *Creep* will rebel against attempts to place the character in a *Death Trap*, in a last ditch attempt to win love. That will burn off a second point of *Loneliness*.

If the *Creep* has a third point remaining, turning on anyone viewed as romantic competition can burn this off. Or the *Creep* could simply *Carry Away* his/her/its love once again. That should blow the remaining *Foible* points. For a wussy-looking cherub, Cupid shoots one mean arrow.



SHINY SHTUFF

Okay, so I admit it, not every *Creep* is love-crazed. Still, you know what they say: "Unlucky in love, lucky in gambling." Or, is it business instead of gambling? Well, it doesn't much matter, because *Creeps* don't go in for much of either. However, many of them are still fond of *Shiny Shtuff*.

A few *Creeps* with high hopes figure they can have both the pretty *Victims* and the pretty rocks. These are usually the same archfiends that like to have their *Victims* and eat them, too.

Defining Shiny Shtuff: *Shiny Shtuff* can be anything. More accurately, it represents any object or objects that can be carted away by the *Creep* for display on the mantle piece. Desiring the world, while a fine goal, is not the same as a lust for *Shiny Shtuff*.

Gold, silver, and gems are very popular *Shiny Shtuff*, but *Creeps* can lust after busts of Elvis, rusty bottle caps, or even carpet samples. Now, I know what you're thinking. You figure that a *Creep* wouldn't have a mantle piece and would likely put the bottle caps in a coffer even if there were one. Still, you know what I mean and

there's no reason to go splitting hairs. I hate it when you do that.

Greed and Shiny Shtuff: The main point of *Shiny Shtuff* is that it provides a way for *Creeps* to burn points of *Greed*. Every time *Ole Creepy* goes out of the way to acquire a batch of favourite *Shiny Shtuff*, s/he subtracts a point of the *Greed Foible* that has to be burnt off by the end of the *Misadventure*. Particularly stylish *Creeps* centre their entire modus operandi on a certain type of *Goodie*. The *Victims* even chase these *Creeps* sometimes.



SENSELESS STUPIDITY

Every Evil Mastermind has asked himself “why am I surrounded by idiots?” at least once. We won’t get into the inevitable consequences of surrounding yourself with dishonest lackeys who are picked especially due to being incapable of stealing your job. The fact is that some *Creeps* actually are not the brightest bulbs in the box.

Any *Creep* with the *Stupidity Foible* will have to do something very dumb that benefits the *Victims* at an important part of the *Misadventure* at least once for every point of *Stupidity* they have. The *Evil Mastermind* can define stupid any way that he likes so long as the *Victims* benefit.

MONSTER MENAGERIE

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Ant, Giant	+4	-4	-1	40’
[No Notes]				
Ape, Giant	+4	-1	-2	50’
Loneliness: 1				
Bat, Giant	+2	-4	-2	10’
Fly Must Lair In Cave During Day				
Bird Man	+1	-1	+0	6’
Fly Squawking Makes It Easily Found				
Brain In A Jar	-4	-4	+1	1’
Drive People to Evil (Overcome Ignorance If In Same Room With Brain Or Act On An Evil Impulse It Gives You) Immobile (Inside A Jar)				
Cannibal	+0	+0	-4	6’
[No Notes]				
Car, Evil Classic	+2	+0	+0	12’
Greed-Auto Parts: 1; Stupidity: 1 Invulnerability Easily Blown Up				
Clown, Killer	+0	+4	-4	6’
[No Notes]				
Crab, Giant	+2	-4	-2	10’
[No Notes]				
Demon	+2	+2	+2	8’
Loneliness: 3; Egotism: 1; Greed-Virgins: 2 Invulnerability Hurt By Crucifixes (Lumps Dished Out Equal SU of Wielder)				

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Dessert, Evil	-4	+1	+0	1'
Delicious Smell & Taste; Controls Those Who Eat It; Size Doubles Each Morning; Invulnerability Hard To Digest; Very Slow Moving; Easily Scooped & Bagged For Confinement In Plastic; Size Halves After Every morning Of Refrigeration; Can Be Destroyed By Fire				
Electrical Man	+1	+1	-4	6'
Electrical (6 Lumps Dished Out to Anyone Touched By or Touching Him) Hurt By Water (6 Lumps Dished Out)				
Fish Man	+1	-1	+0	6'
Swimming Cannot Stay Out of Water Long				
Ghost	+0	+0	+1	Var.
Egotism: 1 Invulnerable; Invisible; Moves Through Solid Objects Buys Farm If Exorcised By Priest; Must Be Visible to Frighten; Cannot Physically Affect Anyone				
Ghoul	+2	+2	+1	6'
Greed- Corpses: 3; Stupidity: 2				
Giant	+4	-2	-4	30'
[No Notes]				
Gill Creature	+1	+1	+0	7'
Swimming Cannot Stay Above Water Long				
Glob	-4	-2	+0	1'
Growth; Paralyzing Touch Extreme Cold Causes Dormancy Electricity Dishes Out Double Lumps				
Golem	+1	-1	+0	6'
[No Notes]				
Gorgon (Medusa)	+0	+0	+0	5'
One Look Turns You to Stone (Her Reflection is Safe) Easily Decapitated				
Hand, Crawling	+0	+2	+1	1'
Stupidity: 3				
Head Hunter	+0	+1	-4	6'
Greed-Heads: 1				

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Hound of Hell	+2	+2	-2	4'
Greed-Meaty Treats: 1; Stupidity: 1 Firebreath Hurt By Crucifixes (Lumps Dished Out Equal SU of Wielder)				
Hunchback	+0	-1	-4	5'
[No Notes]				
Insect Man	+1	+0	+0	6'
Loneliness: 1				
Invisible Doctor	+0	+1	-4	6'
Greed-Invisibility Serum: 1 Invisibility Cannot Resist the Urge to Speak				
Ivy, Creeping	+1	-4	+0	Var.
[No Notes]				
Leech, Giant	+0	-1	-2	8'
[No Notes]				
Lizard, Giant	+4	+0	-2	40'
Stupidity: 2				
Mad Scientist	+0	+0	-4	6'
[No Notes]				
Mad Opera Star	+1	+4	-4	6'
Egotism: 1				
Manmade Man	+2	-2	+0	7'
[No Notes]				
Mantis, Giant	+2	+2	-1	30'
Stupidity: 3				
Midget Madman	+2	+1	-4	4'
[No Notes]				
Mole Man	+1	-1	+0	6'
[No Notes]				
Moth Man	+0	-1	+0	6'
Flight; Poison (12 Lumps) Cannot Use Flight or Poison if Wet				
Mummy	+2	-1	+1	6'
Loneliness: 1; Stupidity: 1 Invulnerable Easily Destroyed if Seriously Burned				
Neanderthal	+1	+0	-4	6'
[No Notes]				
Plant Man	+1	+0	+0	6'
Loneliness: 1 Control Normal Plants Vulnerable to Herbicides				

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Poltergeist	N/A	N/A	+0	Var.
Telekinesis				
Psycho Killer	+1	+1	-4	6'
[No Notes]				
Reptile Man	+1	+0	+0	6'
Loneliness: 1				
Octopus, Giant	+2	+1	-2	40'
Greed-Shiny Objects: 1 Attack Up to 8 People At Once; Ink Cloud Cannot Leave Water Long				
Oriental Sage	+0	+1	-4	6'
Hocus Pocus				
Plant, Man-Eating	+1	+1	+0	20'
Greed-Warm Blood: 2				
Puppet, Killer	+0	+2	+0	2'
Stupidity: 2 Invulnerable Vulnerable to Heat				
Rat, Giant	+0	+1	-2	6'
[No Notes]				
Robot	+2	-1	+0	6'
Loneliness: 1				
Sabretooth Tiger	+2	+2	-2	10'
Stupidity: 2				
Sasquatch	+2	+0	+0	8'
Loneliness: 2				
Skeleton	+0	+0	+1	6'
Stupidity: 1 Invulnerable Vulnerable to Blunt Objects				
Slime Creature	-4	-2	+0	Var.
[No Notes]				
Snake Man	+0	+2	+0	6'
Loneliness: 2 Poison (12 Lumps)				
Somnambulist	+1	+1	-4	6'
[No Notes]				
Spider, Giant	+2	+2	+0	12'
Loneliness: 1; Stupidity: 3 Poison (12 Lumps)				
Statue, Living	+4	-2	+0	10'
Stupidity: 2				

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Stegosaurus	+4	-2	-2	20'
[No Notes]				
Telekinetic Girl	-1	-1	-4	5'
Move Objects With Thought Driven Away by the Taunting of Peers				
Triceratops	+4	-2	-2	30'
[No Notes]				
Two-Headed Man	+1	-1	+0	6'
[No Notes]				
Tyrannosaurus	+4	+0	-2	45'
Stupidity: 2				
Vampire	+2	+0	+0	6'
Loneliness: 1; Egotism: 1 Transform Into Bat, Wolf or Fog Invulnerable as Fog Hurt By Crucifixes (Lumps Dished Out Equal SU of Wielder) Cannot Cross Running Water				
Werebear	+2	+0	+0	10'
Loneliness: 2				
Wereboar	+1	+0	+0	5'
Stupidity: 1				
Werecrocodile	+2	+1	+0	8'
Stupidity: 3				
Wererat	+0	+2	+0	6'
Greed-Shiny Things: 2				
Wereshark	+4	+1	+0	12'
Loneliness: 2; Stupidity: 3				
Weretiger	+2	+2	+0	8'
Loneliness: 2; Stupidity: 2				
Werewolf	+2	+1	+0	7'
Stupidity: 3				
Witch	-1	-1	-4	5'
Hocus Pocus Vulnerable to a Bucket of Water				
Witch Doctor	+0	+0	-4	6'
Hocus Pocus Superstitious				
Wolf Man	+1	+1	+0	6'
Loneliness: 2				
Worm, Colossal	+4	+0	-1	20'
Stupidity: 3				

Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Yeti	+2	+0	+0	10'
Loneliness: 2				
Zombie	+1	-2	+1	6'
Invulnerable Easily Decapitated				



MEGA MONSTERS

Unique Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Afterburner Antelope	+4	+2	-4	8'/150'
Stupidity: 2 Grow from 8' to 150' and Shrink Back Flight [Two Defects Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Beakychew	+4	+1	-2	250'
Loneliness: 1, Greed-Architecture: 1, Stupidity: 1 Flight Sonic Chirp (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) [Two Defects Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Creature Zip	+4	+4	-2	200'
Greed: 2, Stupidity: 4				
Doglizza	+4	-1	-2	300'
Stupidity: 1 Stinky Dog Breath (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) [A Defect Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Horridah	+4	-2	+1	180'
Stupidity: 3 Radioactive Touch (Acts As A Punch) [A Defect Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Mechadoglizza	+4	-1	-4	300'
Eye Lasers (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) Missiles (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) [Two Defects Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Mechaquong	+4	-1	-4	200'
[None]				
Megalog	+4	-2	-2	275'
Poison Spore Fog Breath (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) Dormant After 24 Hours Without Sunlight				
Unique Creep	WK	CL	CW	Size
Queen Quong	+4	+2	-2	200'
Loneliness: 2, Stupidity: 2				

Rattra	+4	-1	-2	225'
Greed-A Place to Gestate: 1				
Skeetera	+4	0	-1	400'
Greed-Blood: 2, Stupidity: 1 Flight [Two Defects Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Smoggorrack	+4	+2	0	100'
Greed-Lightweight Items: 2, Stupidity: 4 Invulnerable Vulnerable to Peaceful Overtures and Environmental Reform				
Wreckah Whale	+4	-2	-2	225'
[None]				
Wreckah Frog	+4	+2	-1	180'
Greed-Things that fit in his mouth: 4, Stupidity: 1 Electric Touch (Acts As A Punch) [A Defect Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				
Wreckah Pterodactyl	+4	0	-2	150'
Stupidity: 2 Lightning Bolt Breath (Acts As A Punch But Is A Ranged Weapon With A ¼ Mile Range) [A Defect Chosen Each Appearance for Variety and Mega Monster Reusability]				



HORRIBLE HOEUS POEUS

Wibble, wooble, sym, papple, firp. I know, I know, that made no sense, right? Or, at least, I hope it didn't; because you are either much cleverer than I am or you should be locked in a mental institution. Either way, I won't be happy. If that first sentence doesn't make sense it is because it doesn't correspond to any words in any Earthly language. Just as we need to agree to a consistent menagerie of sounds to correspond to the things around us in order to communicate effectively, we also need to agree on an entire frame of reference in order to make sense of the physical makeup of the universe.

These frames of reference become what we call the laws of physics or, more importantly, the building blocks of sanity. We compartmentalise the world into many separate bits in order to understand it. We conceive of difference. We need to be able to tell up from down, or left from right, and prefer to consult doctors who can tell our lungs from our ruptured appendix.

The laws of physics that we agree upon seem to be consistent and unchanging. They also seem universal from our perspective. Nevertheless, as we discover a universe made up of countless island galaxies, it seems more and more likely that what we see as the immutable laws, may only be isolated absolutes – just as the rules of soccer or hockey are absolute only within the confines of those games.

While it may well remain impossible to violate the rules inherent in your physical surroundings, there may be a larger cradle of truly universal laws embracing all. It may be possible to exploit these higher possibilities while still bound by the rules inherent to your surroundings. As much as that may be outside the scope of human ability, there may be creatures so far advanced that they can not only perform wonders that defy comprehension, but actually understand the opposite sex.

The ability of higher life forms to manipulate the true laws of the universe is probably the skill behind what we have come to call magic. Although mortal minds cannot learn how to work magic, this great and higher system of universal physics, we can learn the process of appealing to higher powers that are themselves able.

In *Scared Stiff* the art of begging for magical treats is called by its scientific name, “Hocus Pocus.” Those who practice Hocus Pocus are called witches, warlocks, wizards, sorcerers, magi, shamans, witch doctors, magicians, enchanters, necromancers, diviners, conjurers, evokers, wonder workers, and nutters.

Unfortunately, contact with superior life forms invariably drives people insane as they are brought into contact with things they cannot reconcile with their deepest understanding of the workings of the universe.

In *Scared Stiff*, insanity has only two consequences: to render a person unable to function in normal society or to turn a person irrevocably evil. It therefore goes without saying that the practice of magic is either quickly discontinued, or turns a person forever into a *Creep*. Therefore, *Innocent Bystanders*, *Chumps*, and *Victims of Circumstance* may never practice Hocus Pocus.

In game terms, Hocus Pocus is a special *Creep Gimmick* that counts as 1 *Gimmick* for every 3 spells or fraction thereof known to the *Creep*. All Hocus Pocus is assumed to be the simple channelling of power from another, more alien, and therefore more clever, being that is able to produce the effect directly. It is important to remember that Hocus Pocus is really no more than a line of credit. The higher powers that grant this “credit” have their own interests and don’t give anything away for free any more than anyone would. They not only expect something in return but they also work to turn a profit, and you can be sure they never lose on a deal.

The *Creep* receiving the Hocus Pocus *Gimmick* may also profit, and need not lose out, but will still receive less than the granting power.

You can’t go wrong imagining these powers as being much like banks. They are more alien than banks, freer with lines of credit and usually a lot less evil, but the resemblance remains. Heaven help any *Victims* that run into a

Creep that can pay for its own magic without a line of credit.

Mechanically, there are a few important things to remember with each spell: Range, Duration, Area of Effect, Ceremony Time, Ceremony Details, and Effect. Each of these 6 aspects should be covered in any Grimoire of spells the *EM* comes up with.

Range: How close a *Creep* has to be to the target of this spell in order for the spell to work. Range is always measured in one of the following terms: Inches, Feet, Yards, Miles, Countries, Continents, Planets, Galaxies, or Dimensions. Each is very simple and no number of so-called loopholes can expand the range of the spell beyond the *EM*’s understanding of the term. The Countries, Continents, Planets, Galaxies, and Dimensions Range Categories mean that the target of the spell can be anywhere within the area described, even if the location is unknown to the spell-caster.

Any other Range means that anyone the *Creep* can see with *unaugmented* vision may be affected. The *Creep* must know where the target is and have a view that is at least partially unobstructed. The *Creep* cannot employ any aid to his vision except for normal spectacles or contact lenses. Telescopes with laser sighting just aren’t cricket.

Duration: The maximum amount of time that the spell can be in effect. The *Creep*, if desired and unless the spell Effect states otherwise, can cancel it sooner. The Duration of a spell is usually described by one of the following terms: *Moments*, Minutes, Hours, Days, Weeks, Months, Years, Decades, or Centuries.

If one of these increments of time is not stated, the Duration will be listed as “Concentration,” meaning that the spell will be in effect so long as the *Creep* keeps concentrating on maintaining it. The *Creep* can maintain the spell as long as he does nothing but focus on the magic, walk, and/or speak. Nothing requiring special focus, concentration, or exertion may be done and any *Lumps* taken and not totally *Bounced Off* will end the spell.

Area of Effect: How much the spell is able to encompass, either in terms of physical space or in terms of people. Area of Effect is described by one of the following terms: Inches, Feet, Yards, Miles, or People/*Creeps*. The Area

of Effect is intended as an absolute maximum and limits on people and volume should not conflict. If there are more or fewer people in the area than a spell is able to encompass then the spell is limited according to the *EM's* judgement of what it can encompass.

Ceremony Time: How long it takes to perform the spell before it can take effect. The Ceremony Time of a spell is described by one of the following terms: *Moments*, *Spots* or *Misadventures*. The whole ceremony must be performed for the spell to have any effect beyond dramatic foreshadowing of the effect to come. Partial castings do not count as credit toward later efforts.

Ceremony Details: The materials, locale, weather, physical conditions – and so on – necessary to the successful performance of the spell. These conditions are absolute and there are no substitutions.

Spell Effect: A single-paragraph, rough description of what the spell does. The Effect described is meant to be inexact so that it can be tailored to all kinds of situations. The point of the Hocus Pocus *Gimmick* is to provide the ultimate exercise in dramatic license and to be a flexible, catchall, plot device. The point is not to delineate a complex system of thaumaturgy. Details should be changed wherever necessary and everything should be tailored to the need for an exciting storyline.

Spell Types: Most spells are designed to Contact, Summon or Banish, Forbid, Control, or Hurt or Protect their subject. It seems like *Creeps* like nothing more than to cause people harm or to call on their bigger and badder brethren to do it for them.

Contact Spells: Spells designed for contacting a *Creep* deal with setting up a line of long-distance communication between the caster and whatever the spell is meant to contact. The main concern will be Range and Duration because the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.”

Summon or Banish Spells: Many spells are really just incantations to summon a *Creep* to you against its will. The reverse will dismiss any *Creeps* who are already here but who are not native to Earth. The *Creep* won't necessarily be friendly, so appropriate Control spells may be a good idea (see Ceremony Details above and try

very, very hard not to break the lines of that Pentagram). Smart wizards use Contact spells to phone ahead. The main concern will be Range because Duration only needs to last as long as it takes for the *Creep* to use the gate and the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.”

Forbid Spells: Spells that Forbid *Creeps* of the appropriate type to enter or leave a magic enclosure are very handy to know when you are planning to Summon them. *Creeps* aren't usually friendly, so spells that Forbid *Creeps* are the best things next to know to appropriate Control spells. The main concern will be Duration because the Range is short if the *Creep* is near you and the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.”

Control Spells: Spells to control *Creeps* are a good idea, especially if you are planning to Summon them. *Creeps* aren't usually friendly, so appropriate Control spells are a must for many evil plans. The main concern will be Duration because the Range is short if the *Creep* is near you and the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.”

Hurt Spells: Spells that Hurt take many forms such as energy darts, balls of fire or bolts of lightning. The main concern will be Range because Duration only needs to last as long as it takes for the spell to reach its target (1 *Moment* usually) and the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.” The Area of Effect may be more if the spell creates a large area meant to Hurt everyone inside, such as a wall of pain, or a circle of misery, or a field of screams. The amount of *Lumps Dished Out* when the spell hits a *Victim*, or every *Moment* the *Victim* is inside a larger Area of Effect, is added to the numbers chosen for Range, Duration and Area of Effect when Calculating Spell Numbers for Ceremony Time. This *Lumps Dished Out* gets the normal variable amount added to it, just like any other *Weapon*. These spells are resolved as any other *Attack* would be.

Protect Spells: Spells that Protect take many forms such as force shields, suits of glowing armour, or impenetrable fogs. The main concern will be Duration because Range only needs to get the spell to its target and the Area of Effect is usually “People or *Creeps*.” The Area of Effect may be more if the spell creates a large area meant to Protect everyone inside, such as a wall of energy, or a circle of peace, or a field of

sweetness and light. The amount of *Lumps Bounced Off* when anything hits a subject of the spell is added to the numbers chosen for Range, Duration and Area of Effect when Calculating Spell Numbers for Ceremony Time.

Calculating Spell Units: The desired Range, Duration and Area of Effect Units can be selected when the spell is created. Each of these three has a cost according to the unit type chosen. The total cost of the three spell units determines the unit of Ceremony Time.

Range	Cost
Touch	0
Feet	1
Yards	2
Stretches	3
Miles	4
Countries	5
Continents	6
Planets	7
Galaxies	8
Dimensions	9

Inches	1
Feet	2
Yards	3
People or Creeps	4
Miles	5

Total Cost	Ceremony Time
1 to 8	Moments
8 to 16	Spots
17 to 24	Misadventures

A *Creep* in America digs up a spell called Summon & Banish Sea Serpent. It has a range of Miles, a Duration of *Spots*, and an Area of Effect of *Creeps*. The total costs are 4+2+4= 10 and the Ceremony Time is *Spots*.

Calculating Spell Numbers: A number of the desired Range, Duration and Area of Effect Units must be selected when the spell is about to be cast. These can be different every time the spell is cast. *Half* of the total of these numbers (round up) determines the number applied to the unit of Ceremony Time.

Duration	Cost
Concentration	0
Moments	1
Spots	2
Misadventures	3
Solar Phases	4
Lunar Phases	5
Lunar Cycles	6
Seasons	7
Solar Cycles	8
Eras	9
Ages	10

Area of Effect	Cost
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The aforementioned American *Creep* attempts to cast Summon & Banish Sea Serpent. It has a range of “Miles,” a Duration of “*Spots*,” and an Area of Effect of “*Creeps*.”

The Ceremony Time is therefore measured in *Spots*. He doesn’t know if there is a Sea Serpent anywhere nearby. Knowing the spell Range is a radius, he sets a Range of 3 miles to bring forth any Sea Serpent within US jurisdiction. He goes to the coast and sets the spell to last for 8 *Spots* and an Area of Effect of 1 *Creep*. The total numbers for all units is 3+8+1= 12. Half of 12 is 6, so the Ceremony Time is 6 *Spots*.



GENRE ADVICE

TERRA BELLA

Translated terribly from the Latin, Terra Bella means, “beautiful world.” It is the true official name of the world of *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System*, a world known to its inhabitants as “Earth.” You can pretend it is an alternate Earth setting if it makes you feel better, but it isn’t.

Unknown to the vast majority of its people, Terra Bella has been victimized by numerous waves of monster and alien attacks over the years.

The Stone Age: Terra Bella still has a few dinosaurs hanging about in the Stone Age, long after the species became extinct on our Earth. They are the primary horrors that plague early Terra Bellan humans. But there are other real dangers, including evil spirits such as ghosts, undead – your typical vampires – and random nasties, such as werewolves and witches.

Ancient Times: Monstrosities are god-cursed and often half-animal. Many magical creatures are giant, poisonous, the fire-breathing cousins of normal beasts, or any combination. Lots of other beings look humanoid, but are also twisted and wicked. Luckily most of the horrid things of this era are unique individuals and focus on tormenting specific people.

The Middle Ages: All manner of horrid monsters plague men and women alike; demons are a very real threat to the impious. This is a very dark time.

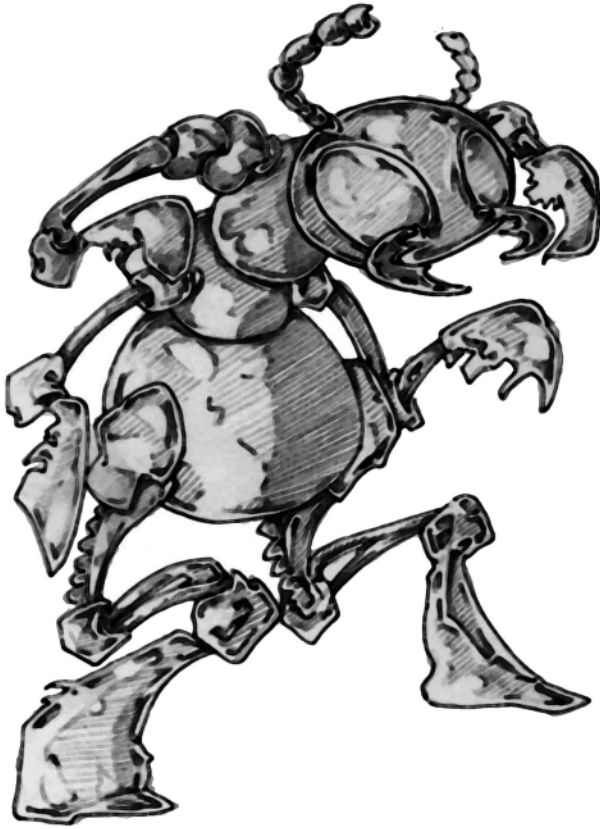


The Renaissance: Many warlocks, practicing black “magicke,” and alchemists, practicing who-knows-what chemical chicanery, rise up against the thinkers of the Renaissance. They form secret societies behind the scenes to dominate others. Evil demons learn to exploit growing disbelief and widespread lack of faith, becoming less visible but more active. Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, it isn’t a good time to order a “zombie.” Voodoo is rife and you may get much more than a bad drink of rum.

The Age of Reason: A time for rational, angst-ridden fiends with a dynamic flair for fashion and a penchant for pondering the great questions. Mad scientists are less common than mad thinkers. Many people flee modern ideas for the comforts of Medievalism. There are myriad ghosts, vampires, and werewolves. The world is overflowing with witches and the equally nasty sadists who hunt them down.

The Industrial Age: Mad scientists rule the dark recesses of the civilized world, while yeti – and other less probable freaks of nature – lurk

in the unexplored reaches where humans, if they know what's good for them, never enter (except on tippy-toe, really, *really* quietly). In strange, foreign lands, ancient masters of arcane lore plot against freedom-loving people everywhere. In the big cities, slashers are a rare but highly publicized problem.



The Roaring Twenties: Mad cultists serve dark overlords dedicated to the worship of totally alien entities. When the planets align themselves in the correct stellar conjunctions, these cultists try to summon forth their otherworldly masters.

The Dirty Thirties: As if the Great Depression isn't bad enough, the 1930s are a time of classic monster mayhem. A number of vampires, werewolves, mummies, and mad scientists stalk the innocent.

World War II: The struggle against Nazi tyranny brings undying vigilance against their endless, insane developments in weird science. Since most of them are completely mad and very nasty, inhumanity has a very human face.

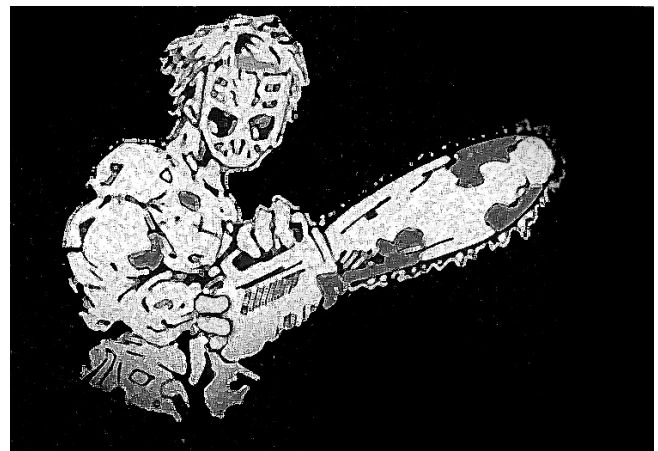
The Fifties: Monsters from the depths of the sea, aliens from Outer Space, and atomic horrors spawned by radiation are prominent in this era. The atomic monstrosities from the aftermath of bomb testing are most often insects – or other icky, wee beasties, grown to enormous

proportions due to mutations – but can sometimes be surreal horrors such as deadly colour pastiches.

This is the height of the Cold War, so super-scientific devices created by hostile nations may be an occasional threat. For some strange reason, dinosaurs reappear briefly in the 1950s. Perhaps nuclear tests have melted some ice caps wherein prehistoric monsters have been in suspended animation.

The Sixties: The horrors of the 1950s relocate to the sunny beaches of the world to plague innocent, swimsuit-clad, hot-rod driving, young surfers. Further inland, the fiends of the 1930s return in full force, albeit showing new, erotically charged, bloodthirsty tendencies. As the 1960s wane, zombies once again raise their decaying heads.

The Seventies: Slashers become a real problem and dominate the scene. Vampires strut their stuff once more. The water becomes increasingly unsafe with alligators, crocodiles, sharks, and piranha everywhere. Atomic horrors confine themselves to Pacific islands, as older mutations prove unable to breed. New collections of huge, mostly humanoid monsters are drawn to major cities to brawl. Monsters demonstrating their machismo level a lot of Japan. Like much else in the 1970s, many of the monsters are outrageous and have bad fashion sense.



The Eighties: A new breed of slashers arises as the old ones fade away. Only those with neat, gimmicky possessions, a bad sense of humour, and supernatural gifts remain. The worst of these slashers return for endless rematches and won't admit defeat. Zombies and werewolves swarm everywhere and the alligators move into the sewers. Other traditional monsters are less

active, although vampires abandon their rural roots to go urban.

The Nineties: Monsters terrorize the usual spots only sporadically. Some classic monsters make a few half-hearted attempts to scare people but most stay home due to widespread predictions of natural disasters and meteorite collisions. The supernatural slashers of the 1980s give way to slashers from a younger demographic who enforced their vision of old clichés with great vigour. Who ever said raising a generation on television wouldn't have an effect on the student bodies?

The Present: Only time will tell what the future will hold. Scientists fear renewed rumbles between gargantuan beasts in the Pacific. There are rumours of a renewed shark problem, but they are unconfirmed. Occultists everywhere are expecting a mass uprising of mummified remains at every pyramid and mausoleum. We must hope that we are able to counter whatever new threats arise.

Possibilities: Scientists believe there may be a number of alternate dimensions in which each Terra Bella might have a very different history. Dimensional travel might be possible, but it may be dangerous, as it is unknown if the laws of physics are truly universal.

ATMOSPHERIC HORROR

Every gamer spends a great deal of time concerned with plotting and characterization, just as a writer might in constructing a story. Intrinsic to horror is the presence of a great deal more atmosphere than is present in many other genres. Despite the many ridiculous aspects of *Scared Stiff*, they are not entirely de-fanged. They are often frightening or disturbing in places.

In learning to run even the worst horror, the difficult art of "atmospheric horror" must be discussed. Psycho killer shock thrillers usually expend most of their energy in doing little more than jumping out at you and yelling: "BOO!"

Recent horror has focused on graphic depictions of "batter and splatter." To deliver

truly effective frights you have to disturb your audience. Pricking psyches is more effective than turning stomachs.

Of course, in playing a humorous game, it is just not cricket to put your players in therapy. It is enough to practice *how* it's done, so you can turn the scream machine on low occasionally. You can ignore the "Medium," "High," and "ARE YOU NUTS?" settings. You can spare your players' sanity but still know that you could *really* scare them if you wanted to.

As an example, I've included a story that deliberately ignores characterization. It takes place in the future, but the main character could be anyone, living anywhere. It is too short for plotting and the exposition is presented for the express purpose of developing atmosphere.

One for Another

There was no water. Ours was not a naturally dry climate, nor entirely bereft of moisture. In fact these had once been wetlands. However, our atmosphere had long ago been corrupted. Since then, water had been used to manufacture an atmosphere. This air had to be continually recycled to prevent taint, and not all could be reclaimed. Our civilization had become parched.

Where I sleep, the day's last rays of sunlight deftly creep between the cracks of the board shutters that guard my windows against its entry. They are miserable boards, over miserable windows in the huge, run-down, miserable brownstone tenement that shelters me.

Oh, God, that relentless, horrible sun! It robs me not only of my rest, but also of my very skin. Its nicotine-stained appendage peels the scabs from my arms. Cursing my monstrous, insatiable thirst, I lap up the blood that dapples my hand and runs down the long, plain concrete staircase to the basement.

It's cold in the basement, but I don't want to go down there. The very thought brings sweat to my brow and I mustn't waste the moisture. All should be dark and silent as the grave down there. But *they* have come... the rats. Known, yet unseen paws chuckle on the dry concrete floor, discordant and suffering, the thousand notes of Mozart in scruffy symphony.

I hear... gnawing and stamp my boots wildly upon the floor. I grab a piece of rusty pipe, run down the stairs and bludgeon little ribs with bitter rust. Skulls collapse with the sound of old war-horses grazing in a field of popcorn. I have to work quickly. The rats always have to be fought off quickly lest their malevolence blossom disturbingly given time and numbers.

I fall to my knees, battling, claw-to-claw and fang-to-fang, rats all. My knees wear to the ground, but it is finished. The handmaidens of despair are now lifeless, bleak sponges. My soul percolates on warm temples, and condenses in the pits of my body. Blood covers my skin and I spread it and the sweat over myself. My sickly, rough hands bestow the life of moisture. Oh, it feels so good...

My rusty tool has turned the rats into little wineskins, and it has other uses. I flay the end of the pipe to a point. I'm sweating heavily but use the rats' blood to heal myself, ignoring the bitter taste. Forgotten strength returns and, for a while, all was well. But it is not enough. It could not be enough, this time. The fluid passes through me quickly. I want to save my poor body's desperate wastes, despite its toxins, but I cannot bring myself to this extreme measure. Not yet...

I return to the main floor to greet my parents. What's this? They say that there has been no condensation on the atmosphere generators. We are to be given no water ration. My parents. Like all of us they're pale and weak from hiding from the daylight. Constantly in darkness, they are no more than rats themselves.

It seems fate has decreed my decision. If they cannot provide me with water, I will be forced to fend for myself. Tonight, they will provide. I will drink from my parents. The other tenants are nearly entombed, huddled in their rooms, self-absorbed and idle. They won't notice my parents' disappearance.

My parents still sleep as I creep into their room just after sunset. Roughly grabbing my mother's hair and thrusting at her neck, my pipe pierces her jugular. I place cracked lips to steel; blood spews forth, self-propelled and regenerative. Her blood is salty and thick. It is rushing into my mouth faster than I can swallow. I vomit over my benefactor until we are one sticky mess. I lap up what I can like a starving child with a bowl of gruel. As strong as the sickly feeling is that now threatens to overwhelm me,

there is another, more terrible sense of relief and well being that blocks it out.

My mother had now granted life to my body twice. This time was quicker. Sated now, but my work isn't done. After using up the entirety of my mother, it is necessary to preserve father for later use.

He struggles awake as mother never again will. He sees his wife's husk beside him and vomits. He does not try to stop. Thirst consumes me. I scramble to preserve what of it I can and gape at his wastefulness in shock. He must hoard his water to waste so casually and without lament. Soon his supply will be mine. I draw my steel pipe.

As I crawl towards the vomit near my mother, rats burst out of her chest, with the same ghastly goal in mind. Their little tongues lap it up greedily, but there is not enough to share. I wrench their heads off like bottle caps and quench myself again. I invite my father to join me but he callously and superiorly refuses. He retreats from the bedroom as if deranged.

I look down at mother. The rats have already devoured her organs and if I do nothing, they will finish the rest, piecemeal. I drag her body, down, down into the cool, dark basement. Where...? Ah, the ventilator shaft. The scampering pestilence won't reach her there. I won't have filth-covered rodents consume with relish what is mine.

Well after midnight. Last call for father. I spot him outside his room, on the floor, covered in rats. I leave them to their feast. If I kill them all, what will be left of the little herd for me to harvest when my need is great? Besides, I will scavenge what they leave.

I don't wait long. They devour his eyes first, then his internal organs. Soon, there are only his bones. I stand and lay claim to the rest. I crack his ribs and suck out the marrow inside. The rats scramble away to prepare for another challenge.

I wish that I could rest, but I must search for the water that belongs rightfully to me. I search, then search some more, but I cannot find it. It is clear that I have been cheated, not just by my mother and father, but by all the tenants sharing the building with us. They think I'm weaker and frailer than the others of my age. That is surely why they plot to deprive me now. What they do not know is that I am no longer weak.

If they hoard the water for the strongest, then they must see a demonstration of my strength.

Reclaiming my rusty weapon, I decide to check on mother – only to find her rat-chewed. I giggle. She looks like a pile of discarded tealeaves, without even a prophecy of the future to offer in her scattered remains. Turning to leave, I hear the scuttling of a hundred tiny paws nearby. They search and sniff and scurry as if the place were unfamiliar. Silhouetted in teetering piles, lit only by a thousand luminescent eyes, each chortles gleefully like a miser upon a pile of gold.

Slowly, I realize that the rats are not the only ones present. Someone must have let them in. Mother must have started to decay by now and I should have realized that the ventilator would announce her presence to the whole building. As I peer through the murky dark, I see several men who have come to check the source of the odour.

The first two men are entirely immersed in rats before they can react, and their weak frames collapse from the added weight, without even a whimper to attest to their having ever lived. The other men cower from the rats, but it is not the rats that will have them.

While most of the rats feverishly, and foolishly, devour the first two men, leaving the others free. I kill the vermin that seek a fresher kill. My human companions, despite the fate of their friends, must be grateful for my intervention, but their gratitude lasts only as long as the life of the one nearest to me. With a mere punch, I break his neck.

The others are stunned, too afraid to intervene. I cut their friend's neck open carefully to avoid the blood exiting too quickly. Putting my pipe down so that I can concentrate on my feast, I become oblivious to all else except the all-consuming sight, smell, and taste of the blood.

Pain! Delight gives way to agony when my own steel shaft is driven through my chest, and the blood I now taste is my own.

The others must have conspired in their treachery because no one of them has the strength for such an act. I can hear the rats devouring their meal undisturbed, and their contentment is cruel and mocking.

The last things I feel are the parched lips groping my body in greedy anticipation. I too,

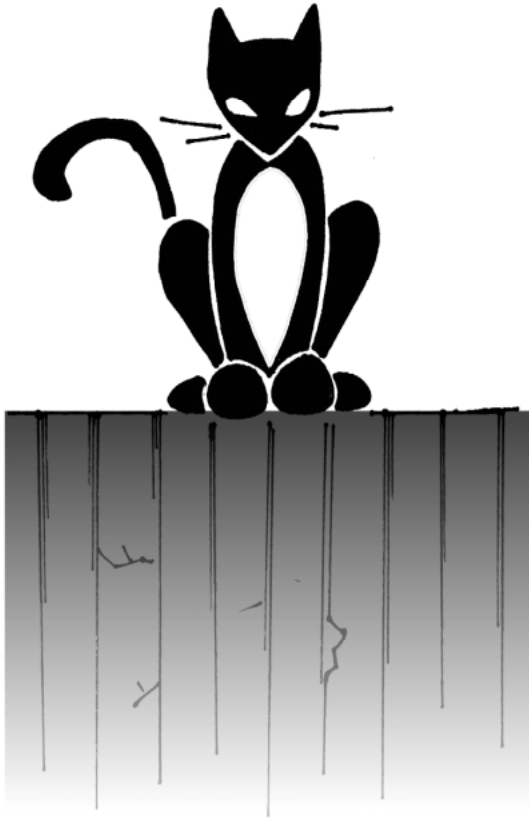
then, am to feel the awful sensation of being eaten alive...

The atmosphere in this story is an example of straightforward atmospheric horror. My sole goal was to disturb using atmosphere rather than action. Although the themes are far too grim for a humorous *Scared Stiff* approach, it demonstrates the use of atmosphere perfectly. The most important aspect is the use of metaphors, similes, and especially imagery.

It has long been said that the imagination of your audience can dream up far more frightening images than you could ever begin to depict by naming details. This is not only true of the terrifying, but also of the ridiculous. Just try to pick out a few choice words to cover what you're describing. It is better to be suggestive than to be descriptive. Each of your players can then go on to envision their ideal picture of the situation. That's all there is to it.

"One for Another" also demonstrates the transformation of space limitations into story advantages. Where 1500 words are insufficient to develop much plot or characterization, the lack of those features is turned to the author's benefit. The writing is clipped and quickly paced so that it feels like the events are driven, rather than absent. The characterization limits are overcome by using a first-person narrative and the horror quotient is increased subtly by keeping the action in the present tense (as all of your scenarios will be). You are cast as the main character and invited to share the same point of view. This adds to the atmosphere as all objectivity is lost and the sole source of your perceptions of the situation is highly suspect, to say the least.

In a game situation, you do not have the limitations on character development and plot that you do in a story. That's another reason, I wrote around those things in "One for Another." Once you reread the story a couple of times, you should be able to slowly learn to unnerve your players with a few well-picked images. By the way, if you find the story casts up images that are too strong for your stomach, you'll also have learned several valuable lessons about how far you're prepared to take a story line or the description of a specific *Spot*.



HORROR HOOKS & THEMATIC THEOREMS

Although I discussed plot development in the *RPG-13 B-Movie Game System Core Rules*, the horror genre does not have quite the same selection of likely plots as the whole of literature. Many types of story that can be made do not fit the horror genre well. There are many recurrent themes in b-movie style horror and of all the countless possible stories to be told most loosely fit into one of the categories below. Pick one and you'll have as much of a plot as many classic b-movies had before the cameras started rolling and the improvisation was underway.

Here is a list of 15 common themes:

Alien Invaders: Space creatures land on Earth and deliberately or inadvertently cause trouble. Perhaps mankind are the "real monsters" in some stories.

Ancient Forces: Eternal or long dormant supernatural or superscientific menaces emerge.

Beauty and the Beast: What looks pleasant is nasty and what looks nasty is pleasant. The true enemy must be discovered eventually and tables turned.

Betrayal: A straightforward version of one of the other themes is really centred upon the complication that a trusted ally is working for enemies and is the real danger.

Chased: The Victims themselves are desired for some purpose.

Environmental Nightmares: Pollution spawns big problems and political and/or consumer action must go hand-in-hand with monster hunting to rid the world of the problem.

Intrigue: Two or more factions struggle for power and guess who is stuck in the middle?

Mad World: Nothing is as it seems and normalcy must be restored somehow.

Mistaken Identity: One or more of the Victims are mistaken for someone else and major events are affected.

Parallel Dimension: The Victims are transported to a similar, but different, universe and something important comes of it.

Quest: Find and/or destroy one or more important things before very bad consequences become inevitable.

Rightful Rulership: Long dormant or long absent creatures reclaim Earth on the grounds that they once ruled it and want it back.

Survival: The last few examples of a species struggle to survive and may clash with mankind.

Technology Against Us: Computers and androids start behaving in a manner we don't appreciate.

To Be Gods: Powerful beings try to escape imprisonment and take their old place or to gain an elevated position among the weaker creatures of an adopted home.



HACKIN' 'PART THE 'HOOD

If you are undecided about a setting for your Diary, you may want to consider using your own hometown. One need not stay down and out in Paris and London or feel a need to be a part of it in New York City. Dunedin, New Zealand can be used to great effect if you live there and know it well. Even in familiar surroundings, there is plenty of room for inventing little shops, small offices, large corporations and colourful personalities that *could* exist, but don't. The two main advantages are authenticity and emotional attachment.

Using your hometown in a role-playing game is more advantageous than using it for a movie or novel. A writer can make a place seem more authentic if he has lived there all his life and not merely researched it, but, unlike a writer, a GM knows he shares his hometown with his

players. When you can guarantee a story will have resonance for your audience, it saves a lot of time establishing an emotional attachment and familiarity with any other setting.

Emotional attachment is the key to making anything compelling. It is true if you're selling shoes, making movies, writing books, or playing a game of *Scared Stiff*. Caring about the places threatened with destruction and about the people at risk is what enables you to feel the thrills, excitement and dread of conflict. Tension requires a fear of loss or injury and it is unlikely anyone will tremble at the possibility of losing something he never cared about in the first place.

Using your own hometown will also make it easy for the players to identify with the people threatened when a town is plagued with monsters. Identification with people who are suffering is a necessary prerequisite to caring deeply about their predicament. It is satisfying to set a game where Doglizza can topple the main feature of your local skyline, demolish that eyesore of a cinema in your picturesque neighbourhood, or snuffle in the general direction of your very own mayor.

Here is a list of over 150 buildings most cities have available for smashing (towns have a much more modest selection):

- Accountant (Certified or General)
- Acting School
- Adult Entertainment
- Aircraft Rental
- Airport
- Alcohol Delivery Service
- Amusement Park
- Appliance Sales & Repair
- Arcade
- Arena
- Armed Forces Recruiting
- Automobile Dealer (New or Used)
- Bagel Shop
- Bank
- Banquet Room
- Barber
- Baseball Batting Range
- Bed & Bedding Store
- Billiard Hall
- Bingo Hall
- Blood Bank
- Boat Rental & Repair (If Near Water)

• Book Dealer
• Brewer
• Bridal Store
• Brokerage
• Burger Joint
• Bus Line
• Café
• Cafeteria
• Campground
• Camping Equipment
• Carpet & Rug Dealer
• Casino (If Legal)
• Cemetery
• Cheque Cashing Service
• Chinese Restaurant
• Church, Synagogue or Temple
(Numerous Denominations and Religions)
• Circus (If In Town)
• City Hall
• Clothing Store (Men, Women, Children or Discount)
• College
• College Campus
• Comic Book & Game Store
• Computer Sales & Repair
• Construction Site
• Copy Centre
• Costume Shop
• Credit Union
• Dance Club
• Daycare
• Delicatessen
• Dinner Theatre
• Dock (If On Water)
• Doctor's Office
• Dry Cleaner
• Electric Company
• Electronics Supplies
• Elementary School
• Extermination & Fumigation Services
• Fabric Stores
• Fast Food Outlet
• Firearms Shop (If Legal)
• Fortune Telling
• Foundry
• Freeway
• Funeral Home
• Fur Retail
• Furniture Dealer

• Gas Company
• Gas Station
• Gift Shop
• Go-Kart Track
• Greenhouse
• Greeting Card Store
• Grocery
• Gun Club (If Legal)
• Hairdresser
• Hardware Store
• Hat Shop
• High School
• Highway
• Hospital
• Hostel
• Hydroponics Laboratory
• Ice Skating Rink
• Insurance Agent
• Ironworks
• Jeweller
• Junk Dealer
• Kitchen Supply Store
• Laboratory
• Laundromat
• Lawyer
• Limousine Service
• Liquor Store
• Locker
• Martial Arts Instruction & Supply
• Meat Packer
• Military Antiques
• Military Surplus
• Mine
• Modelling Agency
• Music Store (Compact Discs & Audio Cassettes or Used Records)
• Nudist Colony
• Nursing Home
• Office Building
• Offices Supply Centre
• Park
• Pastry Shop
• Pet Cemetery
• Pet Groomer
• Pet Store
• Pharmacy
• Pizza
• Playground
• Police Station

• Power Lines
• Publisher
• Quarry
• Race Track (Cars or Horses)
• Racquet Club
• Radio Station
• Railroad
• Resort
• Restaurant
• Retirement Residence
• Scrapyard
• Shopping Mall
• Solar Energy Research & Development Laboratory
• Souvenir Stand
• Stadium
• Swimming Pool
• Talent Agency
• Taxi Service
• Television Station
• Tennis Court
• Theatre
• Tire Dealer
• Tobacconist
• Toy Store
• Trailer Park
• Travel Agent
• Tuxedo Rental
• Umbrella Emporium
• Unclaimed Freight Merchandiser
• Uniform Designer & Retailer
• Union (Labour or Student)
• University Campus
• Veterinarian
• Water Company
• Wig Shop
• Wildlife Control Centre
• Woodworker
• Wrecker
• X-Ray Supplies
• Youth Centre
• Zoo

METHODS OF PAYMENT

If your players are co-operating, then it will only be necessary to discipline the *Innocent Bystanders*. This can be challenging to do creatively, but not actually a chore. If it requires such exertion that you are out of breath, you are either taking the game too seriously or you are tremendously out of shape. Please consult your physician (and your loan officer if you live inside the United States). There are many ways to *Buy the Farm*. No, I don't mean by way of cash, cheque or credit card. I'm talking about the many dozens of ways that a person can shuffle off this mortal coil. When you think that your death is the last and most indelible memory many people will have of you, it's shameful how most people give no thought whatever to the circumstances of their last moments.

Luckily, *Creeps* are very respectful of the *Innocents* they terrorize. They spend a great deal of time planning memorable and creative last moments for their *Victims*. Even those who expire faster than fresh fish will make plenty of actors envious of their exeunt. Most of the green in the features will be nausea, but you can be sure envy will be there somewhere. Fortunately, most *Creeps* are more than happy to *Dish Out* enough for everyone.

Victims of Circumstance are capable of determined action and should usually only *Buy the Farm* as a result of *Scuffles* or *Death Traps*. Methods of Payment is really intended for *Innocent Bystanders* and *Chumps* who are caught alone and *Buy the Farm*, only to be found later.

All that is required is to pick a *Dreadful Deed*, the *Squishy Body Part* that would figure prominently, and a *Weapon* from the **Slicers & Dicers Section**, beginning on page __, capable of casing the wound.

Here is a very handy list of Dreadful Deeds:
• Biting, munching and swallowing
• Blood draining
• Burning
• Burying Alive
• Car crashes and squishes

- Chopping and hacking
- Clawing
- Crushing
- Decapitation
- Dehydrating
- Demonic childbearing
- Detonating
- Discoing to exhaustion
- Dissolving
- Draining life source
- Drowning
- Electrocution
- Food processing
- Hanging
- Impaling
- Infecting
- Irradiating
- Melting, Dissolving, or Turning to

Slime

- Nailing up
- Organ Removal
- Overwhelming with dark, moody, nihilistic ambience

- Pecking
- Petrifying
- Piercing
- Pinning to a wall
- Poisoning
- Psychedelicising
- Pulling apart
- Sawing
- Scalding
- Scaring
- Sexually Overexciting

- Shooting
- Shrinking
- Skinning
- Slashing
- Sleep depriving
- Spiking

- Stabbing
- Starving
- Strangling

- Sucking down a tiny drain
- Suffocating
- Suspending from sharp hooks

- Tearing open
- Tearing to bits
- Tearing off body parts

- Teleporting without reintegration
- Thirst
- Turning inside out
- Unspeakable and abominable ways
- Zapping
- Zombifying by meteorite or gas



Here is a complete list of Squishy Body Parts upon which the various Dreadful Deeds can be visited:

- Skull
- Temple (left or right)
- Jaw
- Eye (left or right)
- Cheek (left or right)
- Nose
- Ear (left or right)
- Mouth
- Neck
- Shoulder (left or right)
- Upper Arm (left or right)
- Elbow (left or right)
- Forearm (left or right)
- Hand (left or right)
- Chest
- Abdomen
- Groin
- Buttock (left or right)
- Hip (left or right)
- Thigh (left or right)
- Knee (left or right)
- Calf (left or right)
- Foot (left or right)

Yes, there are smaller Squishy Body Parts, but their removal, crushing, or whatever

seldom causes enough problems to promote a trip to the Happy Hunting Grounds.



IF FLAKES CAME IN FLAVOURS...

Welcome to “Quackology 101,” or, getting the psychology wrong, in the right way. Another useful tool in the war on calm nerves is psychology. Going *Mental* is, after all, the most colourful alternative to *Buying the Farm*. Psychology can be invaluable if properly misrepresented. Especially useful are any ideas that originally crawled out of the cranium of our friend Sigmund Freud. Ol’ Ziggy was first to dream up a lot of the notions that allow masters of horror to lend their works psychological resonance.

Don’t panic. You don’t require any chance of passing “Psychology 101.” You don’t

have to understand what the “id,” “ego,” and “superego” *actually* represent. In the context of *Scared Stiff*, it is the general public’s enthusiastic misinterpretations of the good doctor that count. Freud’s actual psychoanalytic writings are best left alone.

You’re interested in bad psychological profiles, vaguely Oedipal situations and anything that might involve someone’s mother. Time to indulge in some not particularly valid hack psychology....

Psychologists study human behaviour; psychiatrists are doctors who specialise in mental disorders. The disturbing frights caused by unspeakable horrors lead to trauma that causes a deviation from the accepted norm. This “accepted norm” represents not the unknown actuality of what is truly representative of human behaviour, but the socially accepted ideal of respectable behaviour. True proof is impossible because new facts may always arise to contradict known facts. Something is scientifically valid only when it can be conclusively disproven, and a 95% certainty of the facts at hand is enough for any theory to be considered valid. It is therefore the role of psychiatrists to disprove with reasonable certainty the conformity of a patient’s mental state to whatever constitutes the desired social norm. Once authorities apprehend a suspected loon, it is the role of the psychiatrist to ask a few questions and stamp their file “just plain nuts” to make the paperwork look official.

The mind can be broken down into its “conscious,” “pre-conscious,” and “unconscious” aspects for better comparison to television. The conscious is like the screen on the channels you get clearly. It represents your full waking awareness that represents the tip of your mind’s iceberg. The preconscious is like the scrambling on the specialty channels that cost extra. It uses symbolism to thinly conceal the sex and violence that actually takes up most of your mental capacity. The pre-conscious can be breached sometimes through dreams and slips of the tongue that hint at our real thoughts. The unconscious is like all the TV channels that have what we really want but either won’t admit to liking or aren’t willing to pay for. The unconscious is most of our mind but still remains forever hidden. *Creeps* can frighten *Victims* into going mental because they are personifications of our deepest fears and can therefore corrupt our unconscious minds directly

until our conscious minds are poisoned from below. It is like the regular cable companies slowly having to change to respond to the changes on the paid channels, which are becoming more and more disturbing without most people realising it.



People have drives and must find appropriate release or explode. Our instincts of “self-gratification,” “self-preservation” and “self-restraint” constantly battle one another to moderate drives so they are indulged gradually at the right place and time. There are several defence mechanisms that protect us from painful experiences. Any unpleasant experiences can be overcome by reliance on traditional values, increasing rigidity, seeking pleasant distractions, actively forcing experiences into the unconscious, hoarding what is possessed and working to gain whatever seems valuable.

As the unconscious mind is polluted by trauma, our three basic instincts become unbalanced in their struggle for dominance so one or another wins out and becomes fat and bloated.

As we become less able to deal with painful experiences, we rely too much on our defence mechanisms and develop problems that surface in long-term changes in behaviour due to our shifting experience. This change causes people to become conditioned to abnormal behaviour so the unnatural seems natural.

Creeps get the way they are because of genetically encoded instincts or severe trauma early in their lives. Either way, *Creeps* deviate from accepted behaviour to a degree that they are usually totally unable to exist in normal society. *Victims* and *Innocents* had a healthy enough upbringing to have existed relatively well in conventional circles before their exposure to horrific incidents. An “inborn” or “early childhood” deviance is incurable and is characteristic of *Creeps*. It causes an inability to co-exist with others in normal society but occurs early enough in personal development that the *Creep* could still be more than able to indulge his own twisted drives. “Conditioned” deviance is caused by gradually *Going Mental* and it occurs after a person has developed so he cannot adjust to his trauma sufficiently to either recover or to function well enough to at all care for himself.

The innate deviance of *Creeps* is what makes them irredeemably evil and requires them to be either destroyed or permanently incarcerated. The conditioned deviance of *Victims* and *Innocents*, although irreversible, leads to them being locked in asylums as they become gibbering jellyfish. The age at which beings deviate from the blessed norm makes all the difference between maniacal fiends and drooling idiots. Brain damage can sometimes cause a normal person to become a crazed maniac. True *Scumbags* can *Go Mental* and reveal the *Creep* that was always lurking just beneath the surface. Most people can look forward to a large lobster bib as a reward for fighting evil, however.

An understanding of the laughable pseudo-science behind *Going Mental* will enable an *Evil Mastermind* to play both *Creeps* and *Innocent Bystanders* convincingly. *Creeps* are a combination of cunning archfiend and insecure bitterly anguished whiner. They do not have the psychologically complex litany of problems common to real life psychology... they are just raving, bloodthirsty, and explosive. *Innocent Bystanders* that have *Gone Mental* quiver, drool, babble and sometimes rave while fleeing or

curled in a comfy fetal position. Now that you can see inside the dark reaches of mental abnormality, portraying it well should be as easy as curing an infant of its oral fixation... I mean taking candy from a baby.



TRADITIONAL TERROR

PATTY'S COVE, MAINE

Patty's Cove is located in a picturesque natural setting, along the silent fringe of New England. Made up of the states that are east of New York (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont), New England is like a quiet turnoff next to the other northeastern states.

Patty's Cove is extreme in its isolation. The major activity of the long-ago colonial period, which culminated in the explosion of the American Revolution, was forgotten in favour of fishing and tourism. There is a small shoe factory, but no other major manufacturing or resource-based industry. Excellent lobster stocks make up for a dearth of minerals and machinery.

Atmosphere: In the summer, countless tourists come across the Kittery Bridge that links northeastern Maine to the rest of America, and some always travel to Patty's Cove. Cars from New Jersey or Ohio with tents and camping gear strapped to the roof, recreational vehicles from Florida, and big and sleek automobiles from New York bound for generations-old cedar-shingled

cottages. They come to fish, to camp, to sail their 30-foot sailboats near the shore and to picnic along the rock-rimmed shore at the traditional spots that are large and flat enough to be practical. The rush of the city and the sound of the loonies in the streets it is abandoned for a while for the rush of the waves and the sound of the loons in the water. Patty's Cove offers the summer people space, a change of scenery, peace and quiet and natural surroundings. Summer and Fall are times when Patty's Cove is a pastoral paradise par excellence!

In time, the gaggle of gawping tourists flees the onset of Halloween and doesn't return until after the Spring Equinox has thawed the bleak landscape. In Autumn and Winter, muddy Maine has a very different atmosphere. The leaves have turned a dry brown and surrendered to the despair that comes with the approach of the cold months. You can hear them whisper as they stir in anxious agreement with the turbulent outbursts of the wind.

After dark, cities like Portland don't have enough streetlights to fight off the dark much outside the bounds of the city limits and the area around a small town like Patty's Cove succumbs even faster to the blackness. Anyone driving out of the town is swallowed up by the darkness with surprising quickness and those walking the woods after sunset are engulfed with alarming immediacy. The sighing hills that crowd

Interstate 95 and its adjoining roads watching for unfortunate travellers fringe the lonely houses by the roadsides and lean away from ominous woods on their opposite flank.

Along the roads there is another Maine altogether. A place where people never leave the “Vacationland” promised by the motto on the license plates of their aging cars. Away from where the tourists stop, even in the warmer seasons, people brood in creaky houses and live away from their nearest neighbours on the same few acres that have been in the family for generations. Derelict automobiles built from rust scatter the backyards of rural Maine like cars fill the driveways of suburbia elsewhere.

People grow old in the company of their own peculiar blend of loneliness, hope, bitterness, anguish, hatred, fear, despair, pride, sentimentality, detachment, disappointment and alcoholism. Only just barely managing the level of human connection required for a wave and a nod to the few people to occasionally pass by their porches, the isolation they know is habitual. The inhabitants of this “other Maine” don’t relish visiting others or trouble to extend invitations. To cluster together for warmth and pretend to like one another is the way of the true townsfolk a few miles away. The stolid nature of those who grow old alongside the hills means never having to admit to themselves that they dread dying alone.

Population: Hundreds of miles from the larger centres to the west, such as Boston and New York City, the towns of northeastern Maine seem tiny and insular. This is especially true in Patty’s Cove, nestled unnoticed along the coast in Penobscot County, on the Penobscot River, by Penobscot Bay. The town of 1,441 souls is south of the city of Bangor, which totally eclipses it with barely more than 30,000 people. Even the nearby “big” cities seem very small compared to many places.

Landscape: The area around Patty’s Cove is made up of rolling terrain with numerous bays and estuaries cut into it. Inside Penobscot Bay itself, the cove is a small, sheltered recess. The town of Patty’s Cove overlooks the inlet for which it is named. The town is typical of the region’s coastline, and is surrounded by the sharp, jagged headlands that were carved out by glaciers long ago.

Elevation and Climate: The coastal town is at low elevation, being next to the sea, and many miles from the Appalachian Mountains to the west. Its location makes fog common, and it is cooler in northern Maine than in neighbouring New York State, even if the sea greatly moderates the coastal temperature. There is about 50 inches (125 cm) of precipitation every year. The high point is by the waterfall (both literally and figuratively).

Despite the rarity of tornadoes, hurricanes occasionally lay waste to the coast of Maine, and coastal storms bring powerful rainstorms (or snowstorms), as well as strong winds from the Atlantic.



Nearby Features: The Penobscot River is 101 miles long and travels from the north, near the Canadian border, south to Penobscot Bay and out into the Atlantic Ocean.

The town is 100 miles south of Mount Katahdin, a 5,267-foot tall, resistant granite formation, in Baxter State Park. The park is the northern end of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which runs south to Georgia and the unknown wilds beyond. The mountain and park are said to have absolutely no crazed madmen, mammoth prehistoric creatures, ghosts of Algonquin Indian shamans, or other strange inhabitants. Government dossiers have no record of inexplicable events.

Baxter State Park is nearly 205,000 acres of wilds with 46 mountain peaks and ridges, half of which are more than 3,000 feet (1,000 metres) tall. The many trails cutting through the park total about 175 miles (300 km) in length, and it is

considered unsafe to leave the trails, especially in winter, partly because there can be up to 20 miles between landmarks. The solitude and adventure of the “forever wild” area for “wild beasts” demands that the more than 8,500 visitors each summer accept “a higher degree of risk.” Wildlife that can be “clearly observed” at “various hours” consists “mostly” of moose, bears, deer, racoons, squirrels, chipmunks, minks, otters, beavers, muskrats, hares, bobcats, lynx, fishers, martens, foxes, coyotes, weasels, porcupines and various regional fish and birds. Luckily, a staff dedicated to the prevention of “unnecessary rescue situations” has done an excellent job of keeping campers safe with the exception of a few people every year whose deaths are most often officially attributed to “accidental heart attacks.” The fact that there are fewer than ten known unmarked graves in the park attests to the scrupulous record keeping.

Also within 100 miles, but to the west, are Moosehead Lake, Rangeley Lake, and Sebago Lake. These large, freshwater bodies are popular recreation spots, although Maine is dotted with more than 2,200 lakes and ponds, and over 5,100 rivers and streams, some of which are much closer to Patty’s Cove. The more popular tourist areas are too frequently visited to be home to anything dangerous, but there are so many smaller bodies of water inland that it is hard to know what goes on.

The entirely ethical Jackson Biological Research Laboratory is in nearby Bar Harbour. This town of nearly 4,500 people is situated next to Acadia National Park and has a regular ferry to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia in Canada.

Acadia National Park is located on Mount Desert Island. The park includes Cadillac Mountain, with the highest coastal elevation on the American eastern seaboard. Waves have assaulted the coast of the island for untold eons, eroding the dark granite, and forming foreboding cliffs. Acadia, along with Mount Katahdin’s Baxter Park, is one of 31 state parks and 15 state historic sites.

Plants: About 90 per cent of the surrounding area is forested and privately owned. Most of it is softwood such as balsam fir, hemlock, spruce, and various types of pines. There are some black cherry and white ash trees for hardwood lumber as well as different varieties of birch, maple and oak. It is not a far drive to the

abundant cranberries of the marshes, but Patty’s Cove doesn’t have the sandy soil conducive to blueberry bushes, as do Hancock and Washington Counties. In season, wildflowers such as anemones, black-eyed Susans, buttercups, daisies, mountain laurels, orchids, rhododendrons and violets grow.

Animals: Beavers, bobcats, minks, muskrats, otters, rabbits, racoons, seals, skunks and squirrels, none of which have been reported as rabid recently, are the most common mammals. Chickadees, cormorants, ducks, gulls, loons, petrels, sparrows and wrens, seldom seen in large flocks gathered around school grounds, are the primary birds. Bluefish, clams, cod, crabs, flounder, lobsters, mussels, scallops and shrimp, few grown to unbelievably large sizes, are among the abundant seafood stocks.

Population: The population is almost entirely Caucasian and is comprised primarily of those of English, Scottish, Irish and Dutch ancestry. Here is the population demographics, separated by general ancestry, with the number of nuclear families they form in brackets.

- White: 1,411 (281)
- Native American: 12 (3)
- Black: 7 (2)
- French Canadian: 6 (1)
- Chinese: 2 (1)
- Filipino: 2 (1)
- Hispanic: 1 (1)

The community is not very religiously diverse, either. It has only three denominations, a full half of whose members are non-practising.

- Roman Catholic: 67%
- Baptist: 23%
- Methodist: 10%

Families: There are 290 nuclear families in Patty’s Cove, but only 97 family names, as there are many extended families dating back multiple generations. Except for the newest additions, there are an average of three families for every name, and each household represents a generation. A man can take his wife and children for a walk over to see their grandparents or great grandparents, and not have to go further than the next block.

Although irrelevant to visiting tourists, the locals find pedigree very important and take pride in the amount of time their extended family has

been living in Patty's Cove. They also find the maintenance of extended family groups to be a natural way of life and value their small town ways. You almost never hear rumours of any deranged family members locked in dark attics, and if you did, you certainly wouldn't want to be spreading such tall tales around where any townsfolk might hear you.

Starting in 1781, just after the American Revolution, fewer than 20 families came to settle in Patty's Cove during the 18th century. The numerous descendents of the Agnew, Arnberg, Austin, Dutton, Graham, Haskin, Hunter, Illman, Kelso, Lane, Merry, Overton, Palmer, Pengelly, Rackham, Ward and Wensley families are still here. Families with these 17 last names fill the part of town closest to the sea, which is known as "Old Patty's Cove."

The 19th century brought gradual growth. The Black, Fry, Hughes, Lumley, Pring, Spur, Tait, and Wilens families are first recorded during this period. They formed the next layer of town, or "New Patty's Cove."

More families settled in town during the first half of the 20th century, but most of them arrived during World War I. "Newer Patty's Cove" was made up of the Birchell, Clarke, Coop, Dorell, Ingles, Jones, McCormick, McKay, Morrison, Packard, Preston, Pritchard, Prust, Simms, Still, Trumble and Upton families.

During the Great Depression, there was a huge influx of people looking for work in farming and logging after industrial areas had closed down. This formed "Newest Patty's Cove," which makes up more than half of the town. They were the Archer, Allport, Baddely, Bagg, Bain, Barjarow, Barnett, Baston, Bemister, Biagi, Coates, Cowan, Dawson, Denholm, Dunlop, Emmerson, Fawns, Fleming, Flood, Formica, Gazelle, Glidden, Greer, Gurney, Heard, Henry, Heskins, Hobden, Horseley, Isaac, Lorimer, Madill, Massales, Mickle, Nichols, Orr, Peake, Pearsell, Salvatori, Schroter, Sisson, Teasdale, Tinney, Tripp, Watt, Pearsell, Roberts, Simms, Studholme, Thompson, Voicey, Walsh, Weaver, Wilkinson and Wadsworth families.

Patty's Cove's four strata have settled in and without another major influx of people, the town will become increasingly stratified and calcified.

War Heroes: Whenever the people of Patty's Cove aren't taking pride in how long they have been in the town, they pride themselves on the brave patriots among their ancestors. The town has a reputation for producing many very outstanding soldiers for its size. All the soldiers from Patty's Cove fought bravely (with the possible exception of Walter Glidden of the 18th Airborne) but there were a few who earned high honours.

Members of the Bailey, Hobden, Horseley, Madill, Pritchard, Teasdale and Tinney families were decorated heroes in World War II, and the Pritchard family had a member decorated in World War I as well. Russell Horseley was killed in action.

The Flood, Greer, Heard, Henry, Isaac, Morrison, Nicholls, Pearsell, Roberts, Schroter, Simms, Sisson, Thompson, Tripp, Watt and Weaver families had members decorated in Vietnam, but they don't pride themselves on the fact as much as they should. Rusty Nicholls was killed in action.

Stanley Barjarow received an in-field promotion for service in the Gulf War.

Hardly any of the brave, surviving warriors secretly brought home any *Weapons*.

Emigration & Immigration: In the television age, where the world enters the living room to tantalize small town folk, many of the children grow up yearning to see the world and the bright lights of the big city. Where birthplace is blind fate, after graduating from high school, many people are lucky enough to be able to choose a home for themselves as they enter adulthood. Although many of the youth of Patty's Cove go away to university and do not return upon graduation, they are usually drawn back to live after only a handful of years elsewhere. Hardly any of them become mentally unstable, addicts, or alcoholics during their brief sojourns in the outside world.

Education: The 855 school-age children in Patty's Cove attend two elementary schools and a secondary school. Most of the kids bound for higher learning attend one of the state's Universities or Colleges. A few go outside Maine. Nearby institutions of higher learning include: Bangor Theological Seminary (Bangor); Bates College (Lewiston); Bowdoin College (Brunswick); Colby College (Waterville); the

College of the Atlantic (Bar Harbour); Husson College (Bangor); the University of Maine (Orono); and the University of Southern Maine (Portland).

These are all local centres for research, with no apparent outward signs that anything ever untoward is taking place, as is normal with universities.

The Jackson Biological Research Laboratory is a significant point of interest to University science students.

There are many cultural institutions of note in Maine, but none in Patty's Cove itself.

Energy: Half of the electricity used in Patty's Cove comes from the Nuclear Power plant to the west in Wiscasset and the rumours that it may be on geologically unstable ground are merely the ravings of tree-huggers. The other half comes from burning coal or oil.

Transportation: Patty's Cove is not far from Interstate Highway 95 that runs through southern Maine and connects the two borders between New Hampshire and New Brunswick, Canada. Maine's busiest air terminal is only 100 miles north at Bangor National Airport. There are a total of 107 airports and 35 seaplane bases in the state as smaller alternatives. Ships navigate the Penobscot River carrying timber and petroleum products.

Farming: There are farms on the edges of Patty's Cove. Nearly half the farming income is derived from livestock in some way. Beef and dairy production is common, but hogs are the most common form of commercial livestock. Hay and apples are the most common crops, but wheat, oats, beans and peas are also grown. Off-season, many farmers log to supplement their incomes travelling to Boothbay Harbour, Portland and Rockland for work. There are absolutely no recorded experiments taking place with genetically modified livestock or plants anywhere in the area and anything you may hear to the contrary is simply idle gossip.

Government: Maine has a 151-member House of Representatives, a 35-member Senate, and a Supreme Judicial Court. The state's 16 counties, 22 cities, 425 towns and 51 "plantation communities" are home to County Probate Courts and District Courts.

Penobscot County exists mainly as a judicial district, and it is the towns and cities that are the pillars of local government. Patty's Cove itself has a mayor's office and a sheriff's office with a small cell. The citizens of Patty's Cove address their most grievous concerns at the annual town meeting. Although most locals vote Republican in Presidential races, since World War II they have increasingly elected Democrats to state and local posts.

Libraries: The Maine State Library (Augusta) and various university and college libraries stand out alongside the respectable showing of Maine's 250 smaller public libraries. There is a single, tiny, public library in Patty's Cove and an even smaller library in each of the schools. Nevertheless, a few volumes in the public library date back to the 18th Century and are to be held closely and jealously by the town's librarian.

Museums: Maine has a number of small museums but only a few notable ones. The Anthropology Museum of the University of Maine (Orono); the Boothbay Theatre Museum; the Maine State Museum (Augusta); the Penobscot Marine Museum; the Robert Abbe Museum of Stone Age Antiquities (Acadia National Park); and the Shaker [American Religious Sect] Museum (Poland Spring) are the primary examples. Patty's Cove itself has a museum, which is really a thinly disguised gift shop devoted to the town and its waterfall.

Art, Music and the Theatre: Maine boasts a number of small art collections but only a few notable museums of art. The Bowdoin College Museum of Art (Brunswick); the Colby Museum of Art (Waterville); the Portland Museum of Art (Portland); and the William A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum (Rockland) are the largest. Most playhouses are open only in the summer. The Lakewood Theatre (Skowhegan) and the Ogunquit Playhouse (Ogunquit) are among the best of these. The most upscale music in Maine is likely the Portland Symphony Orchestra.



ALIEN INVADERS

THE SEPHALONS

Ancient Roots of Alien Activity: Aliens from a nearby solar system visited here thousands of years ago to sow the seeds of future exploitation. Their first experiments were with the dolphins, but they found humans more desirable due to our opposable thumbs. They found our species in a hunter-gatherer society and have since shepherded us into a new urban era of increasing rationalism. These creatures have now returned to harvest the fruits of their labours. Yum.

The Sephalons: The aliens, called Sephalons, have a mixed physiognomy, resembling a pastiche of squid, shark, frog, and leech.

- They are eight feet long and fairly lean.
- Their skin is gray-green with a texture like rough sharkskin.
 - Sephalons glisten and have a subtle, sickly sweet odour from the oily secretions of their skin.
- Their faces resemble squids
 - But their mouths are large, reminiscent of the round, sucking maw of a leech, with concentric rings of sharp teeth, and this gaping orifice exudes a vile aroma due to the powerful digestive enzymes in their stomachs that allow them to eat almost anything.

- Their teeth are embedded in fibrous tissue, because they lack a jawbone, and are both easily lost and easily regrown.

- Their palates are incredibly refined and their tongues quite sensitive to taste.

- Sephalons have large protruding eyes with external eardrums behind them.

- There are gills behind their bump-like ears.

- Sephalons have good directional hearing and an excellent sense of smell but, by human standards, their vision is somewhat dim.

- Just below their neckless heads, eight tentacles with razor-sharp talons radiate outward in a ring and dangle to their waists.

- Their arms resemble the forelegs of a frog.

- The lower half of each Sephalon is a tail resembling that of a blue shark.

- Sephalons are naturally aquatic and adapted to cold, high-pressure environments and Earth-like gravity.

- They must constantly swim forward or they sink.

- Being used to the seafood on their planet, they are especially fond of salt and grease and as scavengers with an aversion to strong aromas and flavours, Sephalons roaming around in their original bodies can find themselves

attracted to fast food and English pub fare upon the first tasting.

Sephalon Evolution: The Sephalons have a very unusual biology and an even stranger evolutionary adaptation to deal with it. Sephalons secrete a substance to help shield them from the highly acidic waters of their natural environment. This water, although necessary to respiration and thus to their survival, eventually destroys their body tissue as they age and their skin's natural moisture levels decrease. To combat this, they eventually take control of another creature and leave their old body behind.

Sephalon Cerebral Disgorgement: The Sephalons have evolved as parasites, and, upon reaching middle age; their brains invade a host body and assume control. Sephalons seize potential hosts with their two main tentacles. The eight smaller tentacles help restrain any creature thus grabbed and then make a small incision in the back of its neck.

The Sephalon brain is a long coil, resembling a miniature intestinal tract, and it is contained inside a pseudo-stomach that connects to its esophagus. The Sephalon literally vomits its own brain into its mouth, whereupon the long intestine-like organ enters the victim's body through the incision. It guides itself downward toward the tailbone, and bonds with the brain and spinal cord. The Sephalon brain is covered in tiny hairs that guide it on its journey as it instinctively follows the flow of spinal fluid until in place. One end connects to the brain stem and the other to the base of the spine.

The Sephalons cerebral disgorgement immediately kills its original body. The Sephalons can only invade a host from their original Sephalon body, so the process cannot be repeated. This hideous parasitism will – at best – double the life of the alien.

Sephalons inhabiting a host body are referred to as “Elder Sephalons” and are considered part of the race, even though their biology is almost entirely that of the host.

Sephalon Host Creatures: Sephalons tend to choose hosts that are young and healthy so that their extended lives will be as long and as pleasant as possible. On their original planet, this choice of young hosts was mandatory, as the other indigenous life died of the same failure to fully replenish natural bodily oils with age. Originally the water on their planet was not much

more acidic than here, but they despoiled their environment during the more technologically advanced segment of their history, slowly killing off those species that could not evolve to counter it. You may as well blame the Sephalons for creating their own problems, as if they weren't already poops. Despite having predatory and completely amoral regards for other species, Sephalons have never used members of their own race as hosts. They consider this “cerebral cannibalism” to be a highly offensive topic. On Earth, of course, they almost always select human hosts.

Sephalon brains can only bond with endoskeletal body structures. They require beings that are logical and rational thinkers, with rigidly structured minds. Excessive creativity weakens the Sephalons' control because their parasitic brains assert subconscious control through the right hemisphere of the brain.

Once a Sephalon has control of a host this dominance of language, logic and reasoning over intuition, spatial awareness and artistic skills becomes especially pronounced. The favouritism of the right hand over its left counterpart becomes absolute. The creature comes to rely on the input and output of the brain's left hemisphere as the right hemisphere is used as a conduit for control signals.

Signs of Sephalon Domination: Humans who become host to an Elder Sephalon will exhibit certain traits that can help distinguish them from the normal population. Elder Sephalons lack depth perception and may have slightly impaired vision. Many wear eyeglasses to correct minor impairment, or don eye patches to excuse major impairment.

This lack of depth perception can manifest itself as clumsiness and would make bras difficult for them to undo if they were ever inclined to try. Sephalon-infested humans are all right-handed, although a few have trained the left hemispheres of their brains to dominate their left hands and thereby disguise themselves as southpaws, albeit clumsy ones.

Elder Sephalons usually work in positions that utilize technical language skills, mathematics, science, logic, computers and structured reasoning. They may also feign ignorance and undertake unskilled labour positions where it is advantageous for them to do so. They do not succeed at careers that require

intuition, excellent depth perception, musical ability, artistic flair or any regular use of imagination and creativity.

The body language of Elder Sephalons is stiff but their movements are deliberate and sure. Because their original Sephalon bodies always needed to keep swimming or die, Elder Sephalons tend to pace and have difficulty sitting still.

Emotional responses are restrained or faked, and Elder Sephalons often fail to perceive the humour in jokes. They try to maintain a short haircut and a consistent appearance. They may choose hosts who are balding and baby-faced, often sporting beards and/or glasses. Such non-verbal communication fosters the illusion that the Elder Sephalons are stable, compliant, non-threatening, honest, timid, educated and socially inept people. Perhaps you know one or two.

Elder Sephalon behaviour often follows a pattern. They are quiet, introverted, serious, orderly, cautious and conventional. They value authority, structure, loyalty, conformity and status. A few are shrewd, polished and subtle manipulators. Are you sure you don't know one or two?

Elder Sephalons also tend to follow a particular group dynamic when gathered together. The groups fit a closed structure of authority, with movement closely watched, doors locked, privacy maintained and communications limited. Authority is severely enforced in order to maintain tradition, unity, discipline and strength to foster stability.

Values focus on the memory of the past and there is a zero tolerance approach to an Elder Sephalon "going native" and becoming culturally assimilated by the society of his host. In cultures with a large percentage of Sephalons, uniforms are the favourite garb and any dissent is savagely repressed.

Sephalon Expansion: The Sephalons evolved into parasites to extend their lives but their brains still have a limited life span that rarely exceeds that of the original body and initial host. As the Sephalons became more technologically advanced, they started to care about the quality of the Elder Sephalons' lives and to worry that their most experienced minds were trapped in bodies without hands or voices.

When the Sephalons expanded into space, they decided to shepherd the younger races of the universe toward a form of civilization that would

allow for easier harvesting later. Humanity is one of the races that have been so led, like lambs to the slaughter.

Alien Resistance to the Sephalons:

There are resistance groups dedicated to opposing the Sephalons, comprised of a few members of the races first conquered, who have escaped to the freedom of outer space. These groups hoped to counter Sephalon attempts to guide other races towards destruction. These aliens, gathered together in small spacecraft, sought to provide man with phenomena he could not explain or categorize. (They are, after all, *alien*.)

They fought a campaign using artistic statements of a style the finest surrealist and Dadaist artistes would envy. Why they thought this would work is anyone's guess.

When humans conducted their first nuclear tests in the deserts and remote areas of the world, the explosions were visible from space. The alien resistance movement investigated them. They realized that humanity's increasing mastery of mathematics was a sure sign that the Sephalons were getting ready to take control of Earth. Now that humans had harnessed the atom, they were on the verge of Sephalon domination. Earth would have to become a focus of redoubled resistance activity.

The aliens also realized that the deserts of the world were perfect for their activities as they would be free of the Sephalon presence. Elder Sephalons were still a concern, however, so only people who did not seem enslaved to logic were chosen to experience displays of the alien "art."

Since WWII there have been ever more frequent and bizarre phenomena witnessed in remote locations by disreputable yokels than ever before. Why, if you could believe it, some have even claimed "aliens" abducted them. Such trash.

Fathers of Civilization: Unexplained mysteries through the ages have delayed the triumph of logic for a very long time. Atlantis, the pyramids, the plains of Nazca and rock paintings throughout the world suggesting alien visitors in antiquity are but a few examples.

Nevertheless, Elder Sephalons such as Pythagoras, Plato, Euclid, Archimedes, Ptolemy, Plotinus, Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Newton, Hegel, Gauss, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Einstein, Bohr and Hawking built the foundation of a Sephalon-friendly civilization. Their assumptions and assertions have been

transformed into unquestioned dogma. They have gently guided mankind toward its doom.

Reasons for Sephalon Haste: The psycho-surreal art play of the alien resistance has kept humanity from totally succumbing to its desire to categorize nature for too long; the Sephalons have grown impatient. An unprecedented Sephalon baby boom, several decades in the past, has left a rapidly ageing and powerful segment of Sephalon society desperate for a large new host harvest.

Humanity is not yet ripe enough to be plucked in the usual manner but humans are ripe enough to be worth enslaving in an overt invasion. The Sephalons have returned to conquer humanity and breed us as hosts. Now that we have become virtual slaves to rationalism, we are ready to become slaves of the Sephalons.

Sephalon Weapons: The Sephalons employ laser weapons in the blue-green spectrum. The lasers work well underwater, and on land, but are short-ranged and may be blocked by heavy smog, fog and smoke. These lasers make an unnerving “zing-zang” sound when fired, and the pitch is dependent upon the size of the gun. The guns approximate the size of Earth firearms and artillery of the same destructive capability, but require rechargeable batteries instead of bullets and shells. Their weapons are equivalent to ours except in their style. Sound travels extremely well in water, so much so that tapping on the glass of an aquarium can hurt, or even kill, small fish. The Sephalons created weapons that would not produce loud noises – and the pressure waves associated with that noise. Also, because one of the most effective underwater detection methods is SONAR (which uses sound the way RADAR uses radio waves), quiet weapons proved much more stealthy and were therefore safer when evading enemies.

Sephalon Translators: The creatures learn the native languages of the beings they intend to subdue. When they speak, they use vibratory modulators to transform their own vocalizations into tones approximating those of the vocal chords of the creatures with which they are communicating. If the beings are not underwater creatures, a submerged audio nullifier is also applied to remove the audible effects of water upon the speech. Garbled underwater English could be broadcast as normal airborne surface English.

This audio nullifier can also be applied to Sephalon guns as the equivalent of a silencer on a firearm, although such a use makes the gun run low on power twice as quickly.

Sephalon Biological Enhancements: The Sephalons don't use cybernetic or bionic implants because of the weight of larger pieces and the psychological aversion they had to invading their bodies with implants as a “primary species.” They have also neglected organic bioware on the grounds that, “You can't take it with you,” as their life cycle enters the host stage too soon for their tastes.

Sephalon Vehicles: All Sephalon vehicles are large, pressurized water tanks with technological attachments and an ability to move. Sephalons do not wear any form of spacesuit, battlesuit, environment suit, or CBN (chemical, biological and nuclear) protection, because their psychological drive to keep swimming has made them unwilling to wear such gear. They have “mini-circulators” inside the any suits that they cannot avoid wearing that miniaturize the circulators in their larger vehicles. to keep the water flowing and fresh so that it is unnecessary for them to constantly swim forward even if they feel great discomfort when forced to “have an itch they cannot scratch.” They can therefore sit still long enough to pilot a vehicle or to comfortably wear environmental suits (like spacesuits) when necessary. Damaging this circulatory system could cause them to lose their calm efficiency.

Sephalon spacecraft also operate as aircraft and as submarines. They are ovoid, and constructed of a metal alloy that resembles burnished copper in appearance. The environment exchange chamber, analogous to an airlock, is drained of internal water while slowly being filled with outside water before the doors open. For the same reasons they don't wear environmental suits when they can avoid it, the control console in Sephalon vehicles is in the centre of the vehicle so the crew can literally swim circles around it. They rig up circulation systems similar to aquatic air conditioning to get oxygenated water past their gills without movement, but usually keep swimming anyway. The water circulation is a simple addition to the system that keeps the water inside their vehicles fresh. In open water, there's lots of dissolved oxygen but in a closed environment like their ships, that oxygen rapidly

diminishes. The Sephalons are also used to a colder and therefore more oxygen rich environment. The warmer the water, the less dissolved oxygen it can hold – that’s why there is more Sephalon activity farther from the equator and more life in cold water than there is at the tropics (pretty pictures of bright fishies notwithstanding). This vital “auto-circulator” adds oxygen from on board tanks while removing wastes during travel.

The Sephalons have no ground vehicles in the sense of anything that crawls along on legs, tracks or tires. “Swimming” through water, space, or air in a flight-capable vehicle was much more natural for them than terrestrial locomotion. However, the Sephalons also have “skimmers” which are a type of hovercraft. These take the place of tanks, armoured personnel carriers (APCs), and trucks. The skimmers are cigar-shaped and somewhat resemble the bottom-feeders of their home planet.

How Sephalons Get Humans Before

The Main Invasion: For many millennia, Sephalons have operated in Earth’s oceans, undetected by humans. However, their presence has been felt, after a fashion. Surely you’ve heard of the Marie Celeste, the ship found floating in the Atlantic with no crew on board, or of the Sargasso Sea where ships become mysteriously marooned, their crews nowhere to be found. No? How about the Bermuda Triangle, where all manner of watercraft and aircraft have been reported lost without a trace? Individual swimmers, jetliners, and boats disappear every year.

Sephalon Insurgency: The Sephalons have never had to actually invade anyone before. Their subtle methods have prevented them from having needed to. They haven’t had to practice their strategy and tactics since they unified their planet many ages ago. Despite a moderate military built around scouting new worlds, and intimidation, policing and the maintenance of power on old colonies, the Sephalons are not equal to the task of invading a planet with as violent natives as we have. A parasitic insurgency plan has been drawn up for their conquest. The Sephalons intend to assume positions of power by taking the places of important people by means of cerebral disgorgement. Acts of sabotage may be authorised if absolutely necessary and easy to conceal.

The Sephalons believe that humans rely completely on their nuclear plants and fossil fuels to hold their civilisation together. Power, combined with communication and transportation networks, holds nations together. Whereas common citizens were once self-sufficient and had both the tools and the skills necessary to survive without electricity, no such possibility currently exists. The sudden decimation of our infrastructure, oil fields and refineries and electrical supply could result in rapid collapse.

Elder Sephalons inside each organisation and nation could already be engineering conflicts between their differing interest groups. Inside each nation, Elder Sephalons among the captains of industry and highest levels of government could implement draconian policies to provoke students in universities, and industrial workers in the labour unions to call for strikes and demonstrations under the guidance of Elder Sephalon labour leaders.

Poorer countries could be brought to attempt insurrection in the face of domination by foreign economies. The national interests of major powers could be made to collide.

A contained war engineered by Elder Sephalon provocateurs in the governments of countries worldwide could be escalated to the point of limited tactical nuclear strikes without getting anywhere near a full-scale strategic nuclear war. With no fuel, food or other supplies in sufficient stocks to maintain a military effort and civilian governments collapsing alongside the rest of society, the Sephalons could launch a full-scale invasion a few years after a general descent into barbarism. It is only the slow pace of their infiltration into our society that provides hope of stopping them.

How Sephalons Are Vulnerable:

Sephalons have no particular physical invulnerability. They can be shot, hacked, sliced, stabbed, and bludgeoned just like all flesh. However, they are particularly fragile when in the act of attacking a host because they must remain mobile while conducting their “cerebral disgorgement” and joining with a host. Because their brains are literally on vacation during that time, all other activity is impossible. In water, loud noises are particularly effective in disorganizing groups of Sephalons. Once a host has been assimilated, however, current scientific and medical technology is unable to reverse the

process, although if a suitably bright and reasonably large team of experts were assigned the task, who knows what might occur?

Detecting Sephalons: Once the invasion is launched, of course, the existence of the Sephalons will be revealed to all. In the meantime, however, their existence is a secret shrouded in mystery and known to only a few humans. Regarded as dangerous radicals, or perhaps simply as outrageous loons, the small bands of Sephalon-aware humans contacted by the alien resistance must operate within their own bounds of secrecy.

For some strange reason, for example, it's not only the Sephalons who take a dim view of the assassination of Elder Sephalon hosts. Earth's human authorities, who are completely unaware of (or at least deny) the existence of such creatures, also frown on the practice.

Possible Scenarios for Misadventures:

- An Elder Sephalon is the head of state of a small, Third World country. It has enslaved the population within a totalitarian regime and has plans to attack one of its neighbours to provide more hosts for its brethren. It has many minions. Stop them.

- You and your party are at a small, isolated town in Maine, possibly even Patty's Cove. Swimmers have been disappearing under mysterious circumstances, only to reappear later, claiming they were temporarily lost. Their friends begin to detect that something is just a little odd about them. The source of this sudden plague is a recently established and heretofore-unknown Sephalon settlement about a mile offshore. Destroy it.

- Sephalons launch an attack on a small island nation in the vastness of the Pacific. You and your party are there on vacation. Survive.

- You are on a trip through an isolated region of the country. Suddenly, the radio in your car begins to act strangely, the headlights flicker and you're surrounded by a bright halo of

light. You have been invited to a very strange art display. Please show your ticket to the usher-thing on your way in.

- You are at a famous aquarium and sea-mammal exhibit with your friends. All you really wanted was a Saturday afternoon of relaxation and entertainment. You're sitting around the edge of a huge salt-water pool that can be opened to the ocean. Suddenly, you notice that the forms gliding through the pool don't look like any Killer Whales you've ever seen. Save the whales and dolphins.



SUPERNATURAL CONSPIRACY

FIDELITY, BRAVERY, AND INTEGRITY

The FBI: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has had the same mission since its inception in 1908. It is dedicated to preserving the safety of the American people by guarding against internal and external threats while honouring the law and the Constitution that lies at the foundation of this great land.

The nearly 30,000 employees who serve in the FBI live by its core values of “fidelity, bravery, and integrity.” Every one of these people is pledged to be truthful, law abiding, fair and compassionate. It is not acceptable to have one set of core morals for the job and another for personal life.

The FBI remains free from questionable political interference and co-operates with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to promote the interests of “...one Nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.”

Alien and Supernatural Conspiracies: Just as the FBI makes it a high priority to repel

threats from terrorists and spies, it also considers alien and supernatural conspiracies to be a real concern. Knowledge of aliens and supernatural activities is top-secret, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) directs the maintenance of that secrecy, but the FBI investigates all such activity under the guise of normal inquiries.



Resources: The Annual Budget and Authorized Personnel Levels of the FBI have increased noticeably in the past several years and are likely to increase even more as the 21st Century progresses. Part of the reason for this increase is the growing concern about a recent

upsurge in paranormal activity. Aliens and other unnatural menaces have not been officially investigated by the government in over 30 years, but the FBI does still train people to respond to more unusual threats despite having ceased looking into every UFO report from every crackpot from coast to coast and beyond.

The FBI has a number of scientific and computer-assisted crime analysis tools available to its staff. The FBI Laboratory is the finest forensic facility anywhere. It manages all the scientific and engineering activities of the FBI. The lab has recently moved next to the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, to form the world's largest law enforcement scientific enclave.

Sophisticated DNA tests are now used to great advantage and all convicted criminals are required to provide DNA samples. These samples are stored in the National DNA Index System (NDIS), alongside DNA evidence from crime scenes. Much of the DNA evidence from crime scenes is Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from such things as hair, teeth, and bones.

Any DNA evidence that does not correspond to normal terrestrial life is removed from the NDIS and stored instead in the top-secret Atypical DNA Index System (ADIS). Forensic facilities around the USA can access the DNA files, up to the limit of their level of security access, to link unsolved crimes together for better law enforcement. Almost all other NDIS data is soon entered into CODIS, a database for law enforcement officers around the country.

The DRUGFIRE system operates in co-operation with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to link firearm evidence.

IAFIS, the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System checks fingerprints against the 34 million sets in the database. It can do in two hours what once took days or weeks. IAFIS is located at the Criminal Justice Information Systems Division in Clarksburg, Virginia. The new system is vital because 70 per cent of the people arrested have been arrested before.

The NCIC 2000 (National Crime Information Center) is a nation-wide database containing information on stolen property, missing persons and fugitives. It contains over 32

million records, in roughly 20 databases, may be accessed by 80,000 authorized personnel.

The World Forensic Automated Counter-terrorism System (World FACTS) shares evidence from terrorist acts with forensic labs, worldwide.

The National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) was created recently to monitor the nation's critical water, electricity, oil, gasoline, computer, telecommunications, government and banking operations. The Center was founded in response to what seems a significant increase in attempts to undermine the basic infrastructure of America during the last several years.

The Technology Assisted Search Program uses archaeological methods and remote-sensing geophysical sensors to locate forensic evidence that has been buried or concealed in buildings. Ground penetrating radar, advanced metal detectors, earth conductivity meters, magnetometers, and other devices work together to spot hidden items.

The FBI has programs in place to work with telecommunications companies to ensure ease of lawful electronic surveillance and call identification in the face of rapidly expanding and changing technology. The United States Postal Inspection Service and United States Customs Service also provide full co-operation to the FBI.

The National Center for Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and the National Law Enforcement Teletype System (NLETS) collate and disseminate data from various sources to study crime and to plot its frequency and characteristics.

More recently, Law Enforcement Online (LEO) and the Information Sharing Initiative have been set up as a closed Intranet to share sensitive, but non-classified, information among law enforcement agencies. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has earmarked 24 Megahertz (MHz) of existing television broadcast bandwidth to be set aside for law enforcement use over the next several years. Ideally, 95 MHz is needed to fill public safety requirements. At this time, the FBI has its minimum 3 MHz of communications bandwidth on which to operate the communications that

facilitate inter-operability between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Personnel: The greatest resource of the FBI is its employees. The FBI does not just require Special Agents. Many scientists work behind the scenes. These are generally biologists, biochemists, chemists and physical scientists. Other scientists are experienced with chemical, biological and nuclear materials, or Mitochondrial DNA examinations.

A Special Agent in Charge and an Assistant Special Agent in Charge head each division within the FBI.

The most technologically oriented staff at the FBI earn the popular nickname “men in plaid” among the other agents. Their absolute dedication to computer use and high technology as a means to save humanity is so extreme that social lives and fashion sense have been forsaken entirely as unimportant distractions. Bespectacled and bearded patriots such as the “men in plaid” lead us into the 21st century with their advanced crime fighting techniques.

Standard Gear: Every Special Agent receives a laptop computer, .40 mm pistol and credentials, including a badge. Cameras, flashlights, tool kits and other items easily purchased at a hardware store are issued immediately upon request. Automobiles, portable radios, surveillance devices (bugs), phone tracers and lockpicks are issued where necessary. More expensive items are available to teams but not usually to agents beginning an investigation. Agents don’t actually own any of their gear, but they are allowed to keep their hard earned salaries, which are no more than what many other civil servants make.

Paranormal Activity: The Aviation and Special Operations Unit (ASOU) lists alien and supernatural threats among its responsibilities.

Crisis Situations: The Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) combines both the investigative and the tactical experience of the FBI. Its task is to resolve situations that require immediate response. Terrorism, building barricades and hostage situations are among the quick-response scenarios confronted.

Hazardous Materials Disposal: The FBI responds to all incidents dealing with Chemical, Biological and/or Nuclear materials (CBN). A Hazardous Materials Response Unit (HMRU or HazMat Unit) is dispatched to sites where CBN is

a danger. Other environmental and/or health and safety issues may also initiate HMRU response.

Response to menaces from outer space may require HMRU involvement. This is a desirable cover because paranormal activity can also involve CBN concerns.

Foreign Crises: The FBI maintains offices in the capitol cities of nearly 40 countries. Each office is staffed by three Special Agents and an equal number of support personnel. These offices work with friendly foreign law enforcement agencies to pursue mutual concerns, but the majority of the caseload at each Legal Attaché Office is in support of US investigations. The primary concern of the offices is the apprehension and extradition of American criminals.

Rapid Deployment Teams (RDTs), made up of expert Special Agents, were developed to deal with crises abroad. They can provide emergency response immediately, 24 hours a day. The five foreign RDTs are headquartered in Los Angeles, Miami, New York City and Washington, DC (which has two teams). Rapid Deployment Teams deploy in fast jet aircraft, at the request of Legal Attaché Offices and with the co-operation of the foreign government involved. Once on the ground, the task of the RDT is to start dealing with situations and to lay the foundation for the other FBI teams that will arrive later.

The RDTs initial Advance Teams contain command, investigation, logistical, security, and communications personnel. They also include members of the Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG). The Advance Team arrives within the minimum travel time it takes to reach the crisis point. Depending on its location, this could take anywhere from a few to several hours.

The Legal Attaché Office staff and Advance Team are soon joined at the scene by the RDT’s main body, with over 150 more staff. Some paranormal conspiracies require quick international response; so paranormal specialists in undercover positions may replace members of the staff where necessary. However, despite these agents’ role in undercover, often deeply covert investigation, it is usually not considered to be a career-enhancing practice to refer to them agents as “spooks.” Not even if you’re smiling.

Other FBI Divisions: The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) division, Violent

Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP), Computer Analysis and Response Team (CART), Crisis Negotiations Unit (CNU), and Crisis Management Unit (CMU) round out the divisions of the FBI.

All the sections of the FBI work in tandem and with local law enforcement to maximize efficiency in maintaining the safety of God-fearin', freedom lovin', apple pie goblin' Yankees, everywhere.





MEGA SIZE MONSTERS

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG PROBLEMS

The Ice Age Never ended completely. We still have the polar ice caps that are unique to our short spell of geological history. These polar regions preserved a lot more than the snowflakes of earlier eras. The same polar glaciers that were the source of very, very expensive ice for Daiquiris started to melt in the era of the atomic bomb, and melted progressively faster in the era of acid rain and global warming, are now starting to unleash their dire contents. Monsters, long frozen, awoken from ancient hibernation to plague man. Once they plagued the Pacific Ocean, but now they have discovered America!

In the concrete jungle, there are a million stories to be told. They are all about to be forgotten. At the dawn of the 21st Century, some very big news items hit the headlines. This is their story. It is a story bigger than all other tall tales of the Big Apple combined. New York City is on the verge of madcap Manhattan monster mayhem.

The Prometheus statue in Rockefeller Center was named for the mythic figure who brought the gift of fire to mankind. Now fire will

be brought to the people once again, with equal impact but much greater savagery. The fire will come in a far more literal way with gigantic heralds.

The Renaissance seer Notredamien predicted 13 great monsters at the start of the 21st Century. We now have a good idea of what the 13 monsters are. Surely there couldn't be other monsters more terrible than these!

Afterburner Antelope: Made out of "growing metal," this 8' tall android can grow to 150' and shrink back down again at will. Afterburner Antelope is man-shaped and also able to extend its forearms to run on all fours and grow horns for butting. When necessary, Afterburner Antelope uses the powerful jet engines that give him his name. It can achieve Mach 2 speeds this way and engage in hand to hand fights with airforce fighters.

Beakychev: A 250' long yellow budgerigar with two heads. Beakychev's heads are identical twins noted for a high pitch squealing that is shrill enough to wake everyone within the radius of a city block. Beakychev perches atop buildings, pecking away at the architectural accomplishments of the city where it roosts. It will pluck people out of apartment windows like worms from trees. When roused, its sonic chirp is capable of causing great devastation and threatening even the most powerful Mega-Monsters.

Creature Zip: The fastest of the Meg-Monsters, Creature Zip has secondary brains in each of its limbs for great speed and focussed response. Creature Zip is likely a silicon-based life form from space, rather than a carbon-based Earthly creature. Although it looks like a six-legged raccoon, the ability to use its head, tail and legs to independent ends makes its devilish nature clear.



Doglizza – King of Creatures: The most feared of the Mega-Monsters, Doglizza is a very, very frisky dog like many others but with one terrifying difference. Doglizza is the size of a gargantuan radioactive lizard. Just as birds seem to have evolved from reptiles, it may be that dogs did as well, because Doglizza shows some reptilian features. He is 300' with a 200' tail.



Horridah: Born of radioactive sewage that coalesced into a monster 180 feet in diameter and three feet high, Horridah is a mobile tar-like puddle of sludge with a deadly hatred of mankind. It is so radioactive that it is a grave danger to anyone who touches it. It is able to form pseudopods to clumsily grab at its victims and remove obstacles. Being a liquid, Horridah can take any shape to fill whatever surroundings can accommodate its volume.

Mechadoglizza: A 300' angular metal copy of Doglizza, Mechadoglizza is a crewed mecha (i.e a giant robot with a crew) built by a mad genius who sought to make a robot to defeat Doglizza. Its dog collar is studded with high explosive missiles, its eyes shoot laser beams and it has powerful claws that have been honed to razor sharpness. It is coated in a shiny metallic paint that deflects lasers. Just like the technology on the space shuttles uses tiles to absorb re-entry heat, Mechadoglizza uses an hardened clay around its steel frame to absorb the heat from explosions and fire. Resistance to large-scale weapons makes Mechadoglizza one of the more feared Mega-Monsters

Mechaquong: A 200' rounded robot copy of Queen Quong with powerful hydraulic limbs, Mechaquong is the Earth's last defence against the Mega-Monsters. Mechaquong is red with white side trim and is decked out with so much chrome she has been likened to a walking jukebox. A huge lighthouse lamp surmounted on her head warns innocents away and helps her spot Mega-Monster threats. A surprisingly skilled climber, Mechaquong is very able to find a perch from which to lob boulders before advancing to wrestle opponents. The United Nations has

pinned its hopes on Mechaquong as the ultimate response to gigantic threats and it must be hoped they planned well. As a superpowerful force for good evolved from the shape of a brute animal, Mechaquong is symbolic of the peace-loving nations of Earth.

Megalog: Born of the deepest and still unexplored parts of the South American rainforest, Megalog resembles a 275' tree trunk with arms and legs. She exhales poison spores in huge deadly clouds that look like green fog. Her major weakness is that she needs sunlight and is weaker at night and dormant if deprived of the light she stores for a whole day.

Queen Quong: A huge gorilla 200' tall and built broad, Queen Quong is the giant mistress of the uncharted Pacific island on which she lives. The local natives worship her as a goddess and use their primitive wisdom to concoct a calming drug from a collection of the edible flowers unique to the island. Queen Quong loves to swing and climb and beats her chest in eager anticipation before a good fight.

Rattra: A black rat with red eyes that is 225' long. Created by the Earth itself to wipe the urban plague of environmental destruction from its surface, Rattra is spawned ready to reproduce a pestilence of millions of ordinary rats after a short gestation period. It can leave more horrors in its wake than even the terrible destruction it causes directly.

Skeetera: A defender of the secrets of some mist-shrouded isle where no man ever treads, Skeetera is a cunning 400' long mosquito. It comes out at the end of its life cycle to suck blood from the giant monsters of the Earth, who are the only creatures with enough blood to satisfy its immense needs. Once it is drunk on the blood of a gigantic victim, it flies home to breed another Skeetera monster and ensure the next generation survives.

Smoggorrack: Born when experimental chemicals vaporised and mixed with the smog so abundant in the big city, Smoggorrack is an acid rain spewing storm cloud 100' around. It lurks among the lower strata cloud formations about 1500' in the air until ready to descend to the ground for a fight.

Wreckah: The result of Sephalon experiments into Earthly evolution, Wreckah is born. It evolves from a sea creature to a land creature to a flying creature, spawns and ends its

life within a month. Wreckah starts as a 225' scaled killer whale like thing. After a week, it beaches itself for an overnight transformation into a 180' electrified frog type of creature for another week and finally leaps to high ground for an overnight transformation into a 150' pterodactyl that spits lightning bolts. After another week in this form it seeks out a seaside roost and lays eggs for an overnight incubation of baby Wreckahs who crawl into the sea to start the cycle all over. After a week guarding the area where the new Wreckahs are, the Wreckah mother is no more.

NEW YORK, IT'S HELL IN A TOWN

Arrival and Departures: New York City (NYC) is big enough to have two major airports and support a third nearby. La Guardia (northern Queens), JFK International (southeast Queens), and Newark International (across in New Jersey) are each served by every major airline. Tickets have to be bought about two weeks in advance unless you are lucky enough to get a horrendously overpriced last minute cancellation.

Taxis to and from the airports cost \$20 to \$30 in terms of the mildew toned mugger magnets locals use as currency. Allegations that America is run by aliens have proved unfounded despite the fact that its founding fathers are all depicted as little green men on its money. The alternatives are taking an expensive ride in a helicopter (brightly coloured for easier swatting and more distinctive plummeting) or a shuttle bus to the A-Train so good that it is free of charge.



For cars that make any progress at all in New York traffic jams and can interpret the gunshots now used in lieu of traffic signals, there are four ways to drive out of NYC. The George Washington Bridge, the Lincoln Tunnel and the Holland Tunnel connect New York City to the Heaven on Earth known as New Jersey. The I-95 leads one from the scenic particulars of the Bronx, across the Harlem River into Manhattan and across the Hudson River along the mile-long, structurally sound George Washington Bridge. For those who prefer to be secure in underground tunnels beneath the Hudson River in times of trouble, the Lincoln Tunnel and Holland Tunnel are the I-495's way of telling you it would be happy to show you the 1,001 delights of Hoboken, New Jersey. Anyone driving through Queens before reaching Manhattan gets the added delight of using the Queensboro Bridge or Queens-Midtown Tunnel to cross the East River into Manhattan. The fourth exit into New Jersey is the Goethals Bridge or Bayonne Bridge from Staten Island in southwest NYC.

Cars can be rented to those capable of understanding convoluted contracts, eager to weed out hidden charges, and happy to discover fees for returning the car to a different location of

the same car rental service. A low \$75 per day will get you an unlimited mileage rental of an uninsured mid-sized sedan with a few drops of gasoline. The bus system inside NYC is only a buck or two and much more interesting. Live the adventure.

Buses that go in and out of the city can be had at the Port Authority Terminal or George Washington Bridge Bus Station. The Port Authority Terminal is a mammoth multi-level hostel for vagrants and hustlers just west of Times Square in Midtown Manhattan. The George Washington Bridge Station, near the bridge which is its namesake, is smaller, less hip squat.

Ferries are available from the very southern tip of Manhattan. The Staten Island ferry travels to Staten Island in an effort to be aptly named. Staten Island's only other main connection to the rest of New York is the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Refusing to be outdone, the Liberty Island ferry and Ellis Island ferry go to the islands for which they are themselves aptly named. Ellis Island was the traditional stopping point of the world's huddled masses yearning to be free after their trip past the Statue of Liberty and its smug smile on Liberty Island.

Trains come in and out of Pennsylvania "Penn" Station in Chelsea, southwest of Midtown Manhattan. At the corner of West 33rd St. and 7th Avenue, it is on the same city block as Madison Square Garden. Don't ask the cabbie to get to 33 and 1/3 or he'll take you to a record store.

Staying Awhile: Becoming stranded is a lot more likely than wanting to stay, but New York City has so much to see that extended visits are not uncommon. The most important thing to know is that there are about 60,000 pay telephones in New York, nearly half of which are in Manhattan, some of which may work and very few of which are sanitary. It is free to call 911 for police, firemen or ambulances. The large fine for the prank call you will be accused of once they arrive several hours after the crime has passed will more than make up for the quarter they forgave you. You can use the quarter you saved to call the Dental Emergency Service and get dentures to replace the teeth you lost to the charming local you asked to hurry so you could call 911.

Rest rooms in public areas are often filthy, home to vagrants and may actually charge you admission. Just be wary if the toilet has a doorman, a bouncer or promises an on-board movie.

Banks are open from 9 to 3 but there are plenty of bank machines for greater pick-pocketing convenience. Post offices and stores open at 10 and close at 6. A lot of things are actually open much longer or even up to 24 hours a day. Never know when you might want quality pickled pigs feet.

Walk quickly, ignore panhandlers, wear no jewellery, avoid jostling crowds, avoid deserted areas and out of the way streets, shun empty subway cars, beware seedy looking people and travel by taxi at night. Behaving normally is suicide. Luckily, the rumours of monsters are no doubt wildly exaggerated.

Manhattan: The true heart of New York's downtown, Manhattan is made up of several world-famous neighbourhoods. Harlem forms its north. The Upper West Side, Central Park, and The Upper East Side are below Harlem. Midtown is central Manhattan and contains the heart of the city. Chelsea and Gramercy are below that, then Greenwich Village and East Village, then Soho and Little Italy, then Tribeca and Chinatown and finally Lower Manhattan with its famous Brooklyn Bridge. Below Midtown, the neighbourhoods are only half a mile from side to side.

Brooklyn: New York's first suburb, Brooklyn is a fashionable bastion of the upper-middle-class atop hilltops and old-style architecture. The steel suspension work Brooklyn Bridge connects Brooklyn to Manhattan and is not far from the world headquarters of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Queens: The west end of Long Island, Queens is primarily a business district and is separated from Manhattan by the East River. The streets are arranged and named (or more usually numbered) without any sort of sane organisation. Although city officials might deny any sort of alien or arcane pattern in the local geometry, they seem hard pressed to suggest the reason for their urban planning methods. The 7000' long Queensboro Bridge connects Queens to Manhattan and would be a bad place to have a traffic jam in an emergency.

The Bronx: Waves of immigrants made the Bronx what it is today. Dutch, Swedish, French and English immigrants, then the Irish, Jews, Germans and Italians, then African-Americans and Hispanics and finally Albanians and Cambodians have changed the face of the Bronx since the 17th Century. The 1 mile wide and 1.5 mile long Bronx Park has the Bronx River at its centre and is home to the famous Bronx Zoo. It adds a great deal to the lively working class melting pot surrounding it.

Staten Island: Distinguished from the rest of the city by its farms, woodlands and oystering and its primarily residential makeup, Staten Island is primarily known for its ferry. The ride on the Staten Island Ferry takes about 20 minutes once you get aboard one of the regularly scheduled boats and connects the Island to Manhattan.

Museums and Galleries: There are many museums and galleries in the city. The American Museum of Natural History, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Hayden Planetarium are prominent features of Central Park. The New York Hall of Science is in Flushing Meadows, Queens. The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) is in Manhattan in the Theatre District of Midtown. The MOMA is a temple to masses of beret wearing cappuccino drinkers worldwide and they would be crushed emotionally if it were ever crushed physically.

Architectural Landmarks: There are a number of buildings in New York that you would not be able to level without marring the scenic beauty of the city forever. Carnegie Hall, the Chrysler Building, City Hall, the Dakota Apartments, the Empire State Building, the Flatiron Building, Grand Central Terminal, The Guggenheim Museum, New York Public Library, United Nations and Woolworth Building are all world class. The Alexander Hamilton Customs House, American Telephone & Telegraph Building, Bayard Building, Citicorp Center, GE Building, Haughwout Building, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Lever House, Metropolitan Life Building, Plaza Hotel, Seagram Building, Villard Houses, World Financial Center and Worldwide Plaza are each widely admired as well.

Historical Sites: The Historical sites of the city tend to be old mansions. They are occasionally the birthplaces or residences of

people such as Teddy Roosevelt and Edgar Allan Poe, neither of whom resemble Ethel Merman, whatever rumours claim. Occasionally historic sites are still in use, like the frenzied New York Stock Exchange, or the glamorous Radio City Music Hall.

Churches and Temples: Holy places of every religion and denomination thereof are to be found in New York, mostly in areas where many of the people are of the appropriate faith. The Abyssinian Baptist Church co-exists with St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Episcopal. Every house of God seems to be left standing at the end of each major crisis and the terrified people inside survive the worst events of history. Priests, ministers and rabbis everywhere should scold us for doubting them. Mean, naughty, evil us!

Parks and Gardens: New York has a surprising number of large parks for a city so often portrayed as an urban blight. The biggest and most famous of these is Central Park, where more than one person is incinerated in a lightning storm every year. Coincidence? Yeah ... probably. The 843 acres of grass, trees, ponds and one artificial lake are idyllic during the day and a very lush nightmare landscape after sundown.

Zoos: Every major park in New York has a zoo with savage beasts just raring to escape and maul chubby joggers in orange spandex. Luckily, they and their fashion sense are caged.

Shopping & Dining: F.A.O Schwarz proves that dodging cannibalistic pygmy mutants in the world's swellest toy store can be surreal ... and that is just when it is full of kids. Psychedelic Hippie Elephant Monsters would be really kooky. Rumpelmayer's is a great place to have ice cream afterwards, but the Harley Davidson Café is cool, too, if your kids like to wear studded leather booties. Macy's is an absolutely huge department store and has been used in many movies and is a good place to hole up against all manner of beasties. Forbidden Planet stocks a wide variety of science fiction, fantasy and horror stuff for the sort of geeks who are into games and comic books despite being much too old.

Lodging: New York is positively lined with hotels that average about \$100 per night. Hot shots will want to spend a few hundred dollars per night or more for hotels such as the Waldorf-Astoria, the Ritz-Carlton or the Four Seasons.

Nightlife: The New York City Opera, New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players, Carnegie Hall, Mostly Mozart and Radio City Music Hall provide connoisseurs with entertainment. Swingers can go to a multitude of clubs around Manhattan. The Rainbow Room, Russian Tea Room, Limelight, Palladium, Roxy, Knitting Factory and CBGB are popular.



TERRIBLE TERMINOLOGY

GHOULISH GLOSSARY

3-D Action: Special *Misadventures* in which the action is “coming right at you” and therefore more dangerous.

Attack: To attempt to *Dish Out Lumps* in a *Scuffle*.



Attractive: To be good-looking and therefore likely to be *Carried Away* by *Creeps* suffering from *Loneliness*.

Babble: To communicate information while *Knocked Senseless*.

Beat It: To run, speed away in a car or spur your horse to a quick exit toward somewhere where you can *Hole Up*. This is not the same as to flee from a fright (see *Run Screaming*, above).

Buying the Farm: To bite the biscuit; the kick the bucket; to leave for the human equivalent of *Doggie Heaven*.

Carried Away: The kidnapping of a person by a *Creep*.

Challenge (Self): To try to *Overcome* a particular *Flaw* in order to accomplish something deliberately.

Chase: Any pursuit on foot, in a vehicle or riding an animal.

Chump: Any friendly *Victim of Circumstance* that is played by the *EM*. Other games refer to *Chumps* as non-player characters, or NPCs.

CL: The abbreviation for *Clumsiness*.

Climaxing: This is the tendency of a *Creep* to be unstoppable early on, menacing in the middle of a *Misadventure*, and, finally, completely spent at his moment of truth.

Clumsiness: A measure of how clumsy a person is.

Cowardice: A measure quantifying lack of bravery.

Creep: Any person or thing that is up to no good.

Cutting Corners: To deliberately overlook sensible design theories in order to make a *Gadget* quicker to build.

CW: The abbreviation for *Cowardice*.

Defect: A unique weakness with which a *Creep* is saddled such as a vulnerability to crosses or silver weapons.

Diary: The ongoing story of the string of *Misadventures* held together by common locations, *Victims*, *Innocents* and/or *Chumps*. In some games a *Diary* is called a campaign or saga.

Dish (Out): See *Lumps Dished Out*, below.

Disreputable: Less likely to be taken seriously by people in authority.

Edgy: To be alert and a bit jumpy so as to be sure *Creeps* won't *Get the Jump On* you.

Egotism: The need of some *Creeps* to *Gloat* and otherwise pursue self-aggrandisement. See *Foibles*.

EM: The abbreviation for *Evil Mastermind*.

Evil Mastermind: The person who referees for the other players, designs *Misadventures* and portrays the *Innocents*, *Chumps*, and *Creeps*. The *Evil Mastermind* plays the same role as the Game Master (GM) in other games.

Exploit: To get a result equal to or under a *Flaw*.

Faint: To pass out and collapse in the face of horror and be safely ignored as a result.

Falter: To trip and fall while moving, have your horse collapse or have your car stall.

Flaw Modifiers: Numbers that add to or subtract from a *Flaw* for the purposes of *Exploiting* or *Overcoming* it. These plus and minus modifiers can come from situations and are also standard measures of how powerful a *Creep* is.

Flaw: The standard measure of general ineptitude. *Flaws* are the *Scared Stiff* equivalent of what other games call ability scores, statistics or attributes.

Foibles: The four self-destructive tendencies that a *Creep* can have to balance his power level. They are *Loneliness*, *Egotism*, *Greed*, and *Stupidity*, or *LEGS* for short.

Freak(ing) Out: So high strung after deciding to be *Edgy* and on guard that the player is useless when the danger arrives.

Fright: Any disturbing sight that may result in a variety of types of unfortunate mental rearrangement.

Gadget: Any device that looks scientifically impressive and that is made expressly to defeat a *Creep*.

Get the Jump On Everybody: An action allowing *Creeps* to go first in a *Scuffle*.

Gimmick: A special power based on super-science or supernatural ability that helps make a *Creep* unique. Examples include turning into a bat or invulnerability to normal weapons.

Gloating: A *Creep's* compulsion to reveal his plans and praise his own genius.

Going Mental: To temporarily or permanently lose hold of your grip on reality.

Goodie: A *Weapon*, *Tool* or *Trinket*.

Greed: The desire of a *Creep* to acquire *Shiny Shtuff*. See *Foibles*.

Grit His / Her Teeth: To stand pat in the face of things that should not be – instead of doing sensible things such as running away while screaming.

Head Off: The ability of a *Creep* to take a shortcut and immediately catch up with *Victims* and *Innocents* regardless of distance.

Hiding in Plain Sight: To conceal yourself in the direct line of sight of a *Creep* by staying very still and flattening yourself against the nearest object.

Hole Up (After A Chase): To be barricaded against *Creeps* in room or building. Favourite (but seldom effective) barricades include old dressers, stacks of chairs, caskets, filing cabinets, or the biggest member of your party

Hurry: To attempt to get things done faster.

IB: The abbreviation for *Innocent Bystander*.

IG: The abbreviation for *Ignorance*.

Ignorance: A measure of stupidity, lack of education, and/or weak will.

IM: The abbreviation for *Imbalance*.

Imbalance: A measure of how convinced you are that the world is a bad place.

Innocent (Bystander): Any poor loser that is not portrayed by a player (i.e., is a character controlled by the EM) but is caught in the crossfire anyway.

Interpersonal Gimmick: A *Gimmick* that affects people other than the *Creep*.

Knocked Senseless: Rendered unconscious or otherwise incapacitated.

LEGS: An abbreviation for *Loneliness*, *Egotism*, *Greed*, and *Stupidity*. See *Foibles*, above.

Loneliness: The need some *Creeps* have for companionship. See *Foibles*, above.

LU: The abbreviation for *Lumps*.

Lumps: Temporary injuries.

Lumps Bounced Off: A reflection of how many *Lumps* a defensive *Weapon* can prevent.

Lumps Dished Out: A measure of how many *Lumps* a *Weapon* can cause upon a successful *Attack*.

Make An Example Of: To double the amount of *Misfortune* a *Victim* adds from a *Creep's* *Gloating* due to the *Victim* ridiculing the *Creep*.

Mentally Challenged: Facing any test of intelligence.

Method of Payment: Any way of *Buying the Farm*. *Methods of Payment* are usually reserved for *Innocent Bystanders* who need help *Buying the Farm*. *Victims of Circumstance* usually *Buy the Farm* in *Scuffles* or *Death Traps*.

MI: The abbreviation for *Misfortune*.

Misadventure: Any self-contained plot in which *Victims of Circumstance* become embroiled. Other games often call *Misadventures* “dungeons,” “adventures,” “scenarios,” or “modules.” Crazy.

Misfortune: A way of paying for lucky breaks in the present, by accumulating points that ensure future bad luck.

Model: A broad personality type that is more defined than a general *Stereotype*, but less precise than a full *Profile*.

Moment: A measure of time equal to precisely one very short time period. *Moments* play the same role as a round or turn does in many games.

Move: To propel oneself or to be propelled.

Mushy Stuff: Any kissing or other physical expressions of romantic intent.

On the Fritz: When a *Goodie* is lost, misplaced, broken, or otherwise damaged so that it can no longer be used.

Overcome: To get more than the *Flaw*. The number to be *Overcome* is based on

whichever of your *Flaws* the *Evil Mastermind* judges to be most appropriate.

Personal Gimmick: A *Gimmick* that only affects the *Creep* who has it.

Physically Challenged: Facing any test of physical strength.

Player: Any participant in the game. The term is seldom ever used to include the person acting as *Evil Mastermind*. Each player is the subconscious mind of the *Victim of Circumstance* that player portrays.

Primary Flaws: The *Weakness*, *Clumsiness*, and *Ignorance Flaws*.

Profile: A list of 13 physical details that help distinguish *Victims*, *Innocents*, and *Chumps*.

Pull A Fast One: To do something sneaky and go first in a *Scuffle*.

Pushing Your Luck: Attempting to *Overcome Misfortune* in order to get a lucky break.

Repress: To shove terrifying sights which are hard to cope with into a part of your mind where you won't ever have to think about it again.

Reputable: More likely to be taken seriously by people in authority.

Run Screaming: To flee in terror from a fright rather than face its full implications. The sensible thing to do, but the action that characters in b-movies somehow almost never do. The opposite of *Grit His / Her Teeth*.

Scuffle: Any physical conflict.

Scumbag: A *Victim* who is acting as if he were a jerk, meanie, sadist, cad, bounder, heel, slimeball ... or worse.

Secondary Flaws: The *Cowardice*, *Imbalance*, and *Superstition Flaws*.

Self Help: The gradual tendency of *Victims* to learn from their mistakes and end up with lower *Flaws*.

Shiny Shtuff: Any object a *Creep* might desire that can be carted away.

Spot: The basic structural unit of a *Misadventure*. A situation and/or location containing a smaller goal, which, in turn, contributes to the major goal. Other games often call Spots “episodes,” “scenes,” “rooms,” or “parts.” Imagine that.

Stereotype: A commonly held and mostly correct generalisation of what a person is or does.

Stretches: A measure used in *Chase* *Spots* equal to precisely one fairly short distance.

Stupidity: The tendency of some *Creeps* to act moronically at important junctures. See *Foibles*, above.

SU: The abbreviation for *Superstition*.

Superstition: A person's acceptance of the unexplained.

Swarming: The tendency of members of mobs to mill around aimlessly. Such inactivity has an effect on *Misfortune*.

Sympathy: To shower understanding upon a *Creep* in the grip of *Loneliness*, despite the *Creep's* attempts to kidnap you.

Take Longer: To have an action of the opposing side inexplicably delayed.

Terra Bella: Translated terribly from the Latin, Terra Bella means "beautiful world." It is the unofficial name of the world of *Scared Stiff*, a world known to its inhabitants as "Earth."

Tertiary Flaws: The *Misfortune* and *Lumps Flaws*.

Tool: Any *Goodie* that is useful in the game but cannot hurt anyone unless it is also a *Weapon*.

Trinket: Any *Goodie* that has no use in the game and exists for merely aesthetic reasons.

Uniquely Challenged: To have to *Challenge* yourself using a *Flaw* other than *Clumsiness* or *Ignorance*.

Use: To operate a *Goodie* or *Gadget*.

VC: *Victim of Circumstance*.

Victim (Of Circumstance): The central heroes portrayed by each player in *Scared Stiff*. Everyone other than a *Creep* encountered by the *Victims* is either a *Chump* or an *Innocent Bystander* run by the *EM*. *Victims* are referred to by other games as characters or player characters (PCs).

Weakness: A measure of how feeble you are.

Weapon: Any *Goodie* that can *Dish Out Lumps*.

Wig Out: To raise a *Creep's* effective *Weakness Modifier* for the purpose of breaking things.

WK: The abbreviation for *Weakness*.