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THE WORLD OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT



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TM



SHOCKING!



FRIGHTENING!



DOWNRIGHT
SPOOKY!



A MASTERBOOK Game

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome, kiddies, to my cozy Crypt. Have I got a story for you! Hehehehehehe! It's all about some putrefying player types whose characters tried to call up the old Cryptkeeper for a chunk of chilling charnel chatter! It so happened I was looking for some suckers ... er, folks just like them for a little game I'm designing. To start out, each player rolls a die ... and then dies! Hehehehehehe!

I kill me ... them, too, if they wander into the wrong part of my little doomicile. Instead of telling them a terror tale, I'm going to let them all star in one ... and another ... and another ... and another ... until the grave matter in their shiny little skulls has turned to goo ... or is that grue?

So fluff up your coffin pillow, boils, ghouls, and gamemonsters, and settle in for the fright. This is a nasty little nugget I call ... The World of Tales From The Crypt!

WELCOME TO THE CRYPT

An isolated, eerie house atop a hill ... a storm-swept night ... a trip through dark passages and down a winding staircase to a subterranean vault ... a lone coffin that springs open to reveal a cadaverous occupant ...

Anyone who has watched the popular TV series *Tales From The Crypt* will recognize this scene. And now you too can pull volumes from the shelves of the Cryptkeeper's "diebrary" and plunge your player characters into horror, terror, and even worse! *The World of Tales From The Crypt* puts you, the gamemaster, into the role of the Cryptkeeper, leading the characters through a monstrous maze of murder and mayhem.

Just like the TV series, you can play the game in "episodes" — one-shot adventures that last an evening. Or you can start a creepy campaign of your own, designed to drive your players out of their poor, mortal minds!

A CRYPTKEEPER CAMPAIGN

If you're playing *Tales From The Crypt* as a series of isolated adventures, like television episodes, then all you need to do on a given night is come up with a plot and run your players through it (watch any episode of the series and cast the players as the main characters, or use the mini-adventure or adventure hooks in this book. There'll be more on this later.)

In the campaign game, the characters have tried to summon the Cryptkeeper and now they regret it (*a little Monday morning quarter-hacking? Heheheheheh!*) Or maybe their winning ways attracted that teller of deadtime stories. Which-ever it is, he has drawn them into the Crypt to be his playthings ... or something even more sinister?



Now the characters find themselves being dropped into one scenario after another, never quite sure what terror awaits them or what they must do to move on to another. Their comings and goings are controlled by the Cryptkeeper, who provides them with a little sage advice just before the axe-tion begins. Their only hope of survival is to win his little game ... but first they have to learn the rules.

And so do you ... so before playing this game, you should feast your eyes on *MasterBook*, where you'll find all sorts of rules and dregulations you can use to harass, torture and madden your players ... oh, all right, and ways they can win out in the end. Happy, now?

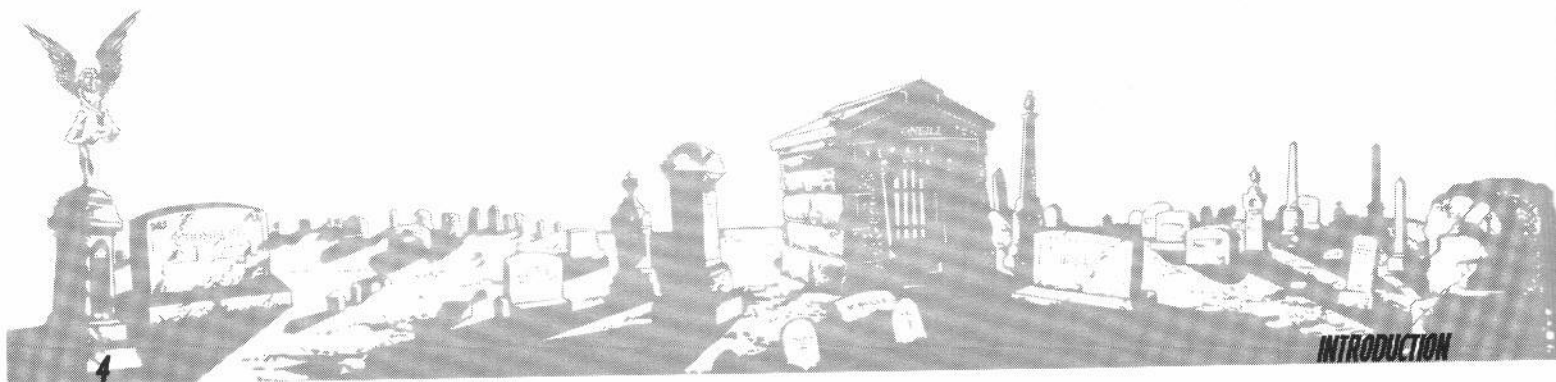
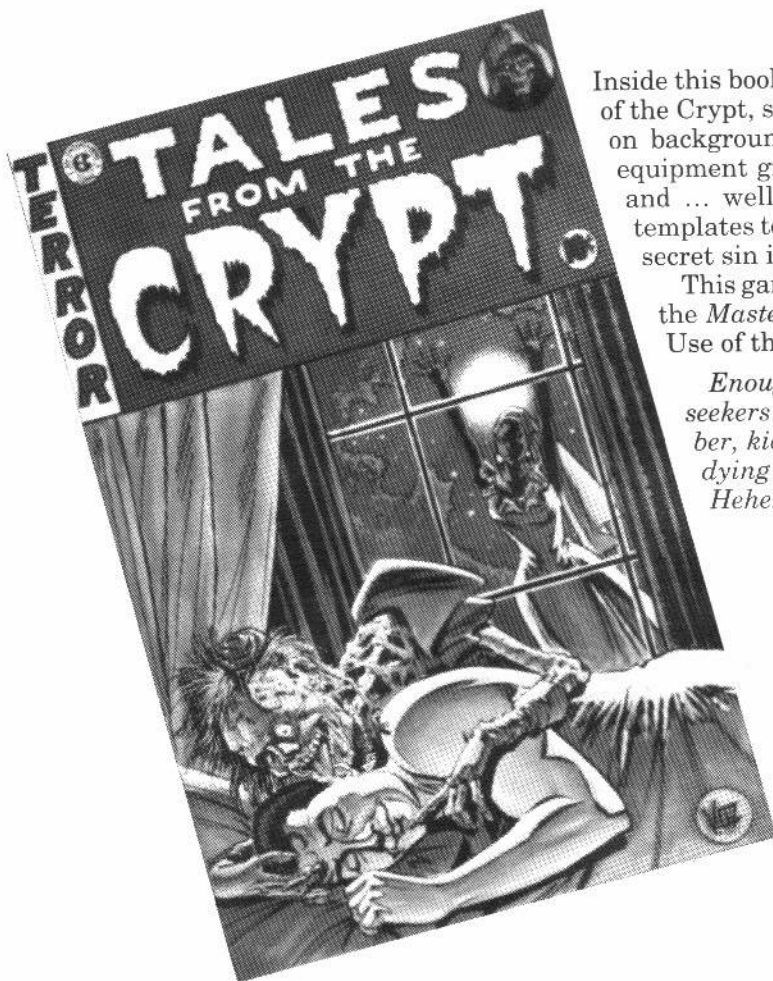
Then come right back here ... no dawdling, no wandering, and no talking in the bloodline.

THIS TOME

Inside this book, you'll get a guided tour of some of the choicer parts of the Crypt, some hints on how to run and prey ... um, play, notes on background and skills for characters, and all sorts of nasty equipment great for bludgeoning, skewering, chopping, mashing and ... well, you get the picture. You'll also get 10 character templates to get your started, each with a fatal flaw, dark deed or secret sin in their past, just to make things interesting.

This game is part of the *MasterBook* system and you will need the *MasterBook* to play. You will also need two 10-sided dice. Use of the *MasterDeck* is optional but recommended.

Enough of this putrid palaver. I know what all you kill-seekers really want. You want to get to the game! But remember, kiddies, this is my game ... and my rules. You might be dying to win, but I'm way ahead of you — I'm already dead! Hehehehehehe!!!



I INTO THE CRYPT

Fond felicitations, fiends! It's your old friend, the Cryptkeeper, back again to tease, tantalize, torture and terminate you! Hehehehehe! Since you've been so ghoulish as to wander into my tasteful tomb, I thought I might show you around a bit. Hang on to your hats, kiddies!

Over here is my study ... there's my touchbone phone, and my eyebacus (funerals are so expensive these days!), and there's an original in oil by Vincent Van Ghoul. I'm not sure what he did the other one in, but it certainly does attract the flies!

Let's see, that's my deadroom ... over there is the kitchen, where I whip up a little shiska-Bob when things are slow (just now, I've run a little short on Bob, though) ... that's the playroom there. You can tell by those fellows relaxing with a little red-hot poker ... and the chest set ... and those sharpies in the corner rolling the bones.

But this is the part you're interested in — my dying room. This is where I keep my books, filled with terror tales, murderous morality plays, sinister screamfests to shock you out of your senses! Every one's a blood-red gem, each venomous volume just waiting for me to open to the proper page ...

What's that? You've seen enough? You want to leave? Sorry, kiddies, the tour's not over yet! Didn't I tell you, you're in the Crypt for the duration ... why you're renting with an option to die! Hehehehehe!

Far beneath the earth rests the tomb of the Cryptkeeper, a cheery little chamber of horrors just waiting for the unwitting to wander in. In its depths are terrors beyond imagining, horrors too awful to bear, and more ways to die than you can shake an axe at. Even further in are windows on the world through which the Cryptkeeper peers to find his nightmarish narratives ... but that's not all they're used for.

Sometimes, people come and tap on those windows ... people who want answers or advice from the Cryptkeeper, people at the end of their rope, people who don't believe there really are fates worse than death. If they catch him on a good day, the Cryptkeeper might even help! There's only one problem ...

The Cryptkeeper *doesn't* have any good days.

Those who have the courage (and sheer lack of hope, fear or brains) to approach the Crypt more often than not become pawns for its owner, players in the Cryptkeeper's little game of "truth and consequences." Sometimes, he even reaches through one of those windows and plucks someone out of their daily routine of sin, greed and general debauchery for a whirlwind tour of their pain centers. Once under his sway, these unfortunates are dropped back through the windows into settings and situations of his choosing and left to their own devious devices. If they achieve what the Cryptkeeper wishes, he'll move them on to another place; if they fail ... they can hope that death isn't permanent, or pray that it is, their choice.

In this chapter, we'll go over some of the basics of this gruesome game, and take a look through one of his favorite windows.

Hehehehehe! Ready for a little sport, sports? Then grab your coat and grab your axe ... leave your good sense on the doorstep ... and get ready to play my game. If you like hair-raising horror, bloodcurdling butchery, and fear-fraught frolics, then I promise ... this'll kill ya!

THE CRYPTKEEPER'S GAME

The object of the Cryptkeeper's game is ... is ... well, he's not telling. No one knows quite why he chooses the people he does as players, although most have some dread secret lurking in their past. No one is certain why he chooses the settings he does, since the only thing they have in common usually is sheer terror. Maybe there's something he hopes to get from the players, or things he needs them to get for him ... or maybe he's just a sadistic little stiff. Could be all three.

The rules of the game are simple: the Cryptkeeper controls where the players are in time and space. He drops them into situations — deadly situations, mysterious situations, horrifying situations — with a few cryptic clues about what they'll encounter or what he wants them to do there. Then they're on their own, unless he's feeling particularly generous that day ... then he might add a few more threats to their health and sanity!

Whether the characters succeed or fail at their task (or even figure out what it's supposed to be) is up to them. So's whether they live or die (and die they might — come back, too — see Chapter Two, "Cryptic Rules.") If they achieve what they're supposed to in a given place, they'll move on to another one, a little wiser and a little better able to handle whatever's next. If they fail, they might wind up someplace much worse than where they were ... they might even wind up dead. Or they might just wind up back in the Crypt, a crucial part of a game called "Pin the Recently Amputated Limb On the Donkey."

Eventually, they might start to get an inkling of just what it is the Cryptkeeper wants from all this. At the least, they might get a chance to escape the Crypt. In the meantime, though, they'll have the fun of turning into screaming bundles of shattered nerves!

THE SETTING

As anyone who has watched *Tales From The Crypt* already knows, there is no single setting for the Cryptkeeper's scream stories. One week, it might be the heart of Manhattan; the next, a rundown honeymoon hotel; the week after, a cabin in the mountains in the middle of winter. Because of this, there is no one setting for the game, either. Just as the Cryptkeeper's windows can look out on any part of the world, so too can the settings for Crypt adventures take place virtually anywhere.

Of course, there is one problem: the players in his game probably don't want to be in these places, and when the blood starts flying, they *really* won't want to — especially if it's *their* blood. How does the Cryptkeeper keep them there until the tale is told? It's simple. If a player character wanders off "the board," he winds up back in the Crypt ... and the Cryptkeeper is not glad to see him. While the characters still in the midst of the setting continue to investigate/confront/scream and hide, their errant comrade will get to play a spirited game of "Fun With Nerve Endings" with his host. After a little gentle conversation, sage advice and a few twists of the thumb screws, he's usually more than willing to go back where he belongs.

The size of the setting is determined by the view from the Cryptkeeper's window. It might be as big as all of New York City; it might be as small as one room on the top floor of an otherwise deserted motel. It's also possible that the characters might be on a plane, a bus, or a ship — although they're covering a lot





Tim E. Optina

of ground, they'll still basically confined to one space. The Cryptkeeper wants them to deal with the situation, live or die, not simply run off (*yes, I hate to see my players running around like chickens with their heads cut off, just because their heads really might be cut off!*)

THE PLAYERS

What sort of situations the characters find themselves in and just how this happens depends a great deal on whether you are playing the adventures as one-shots or as part of a campaign:

One-Shot: In the back of this book are a number of pregenerated character templates that can be used in a *Crypt* adventure (or players can generate their own). As you'll see, each of the characters has a dark side (and some have nothing but!) They can be used as is in a one-shot adventure, if they fit your plot. On the other hand, you may wish to have the player generate new characters whose occupations, etc. better match your setting and plot. One-shot *Crypt* adventures are just like the episodes — they don't have to have continuing characters or familiar settings. You have complete freedom as a gamemaster in terms of where you want the story to take place and what sort of characters you want to populate it.

Campaign: The templates in the back can also be used in the campaign game. However, since the characters will occasionally be dropped into other bodies for specific adventures (see the section on shells in Chapter Two, "Cryptic Rules"), they may be operating with different physical attributes and appearances (even genders) from time to time. Since skills and personality remain the same, though, those templates can be used throughout a campaign.

Players will rapidly see that they are not playing the heroic types they might be used to. They're playing real people with real dark secrets, real dread fears and real murderous impulses. Unlike other horror games, they won't be motivated to solve a mystery or quell a horror by altruism, but more likely by a desire to survive and to get out of wherever the Cryptkeeper placed them. This may take a little getting used to, and gamemasters should be aware that they'll be dealing with people who may not a) work easily together and b) will be less likely to take the direct approach to problems. Player characters can be expected to come at things from the sides ... and from behind, whenever possible.

THE GAMEMASTER

The role of the gamemaster in *Tales From The Crypt* is explored in much more detail in Chapter Six, "Designing and Running Adventures," but it's worth noting that you have a great deal more power here than in some other games. As the Cryptkeeper, you decide what setting the player characters go to and how dark the horror they face. They'll choose their course of action, but they only have as much input into where they wind up as you choose to allow them.

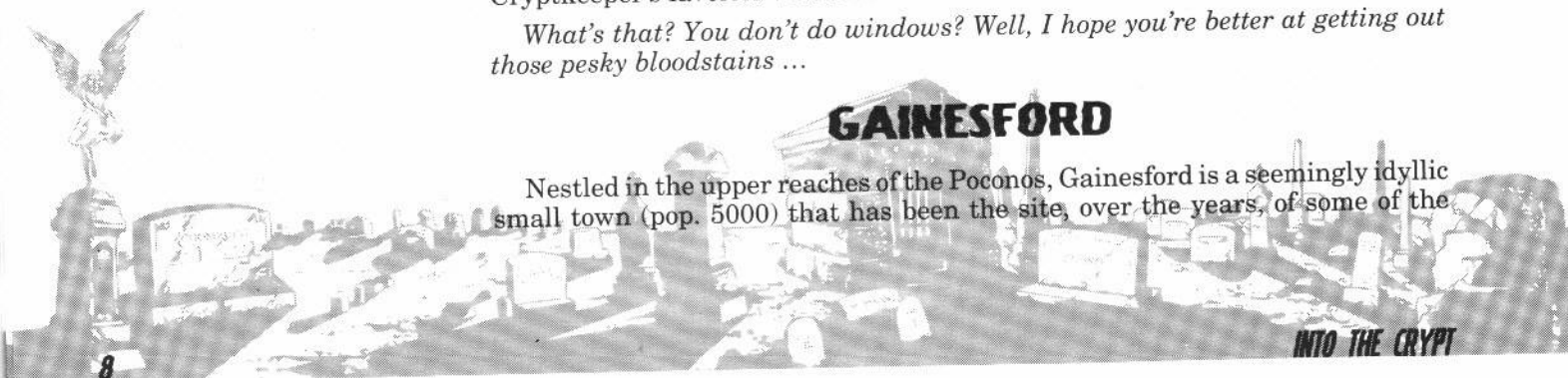
Remember that the Cryptkeeper does prefer that they achieve the goals he sets for them in a given adventure, but he also wants to test them, tease them and, if necessary, mash them to pieces repeatedly. He won't make it easy for them, so you don't have to either.

The blood and bones of *Tales From The Crypt*, of course, are the tales themselves. And every tale needs a setting, so let's take a look through one of the Cryptkeeper's favorite windows ...

What's that? You don't do windows? Well, I hope you're better at getting out those pesky bloodstains ...

GAINESFORD

Nestled in the upper reaches of the Poconos, Gainesford is a seemingly idyllic small town (pop. 5000) that has been the site, over the years, of some of the



Cryptkeeper's more horrific idylls. Only the toss of a dead cat away from the budding metropolis of New Oldtown, PA, Gainesford was once home only to young people desperate to get out and old people waiting to die. But with the opening of a large medical waste plant in New Oldtown and Fayervue State Hospital for the Criminally Insane on the outskirts, the local economy has boomed.

Gainesford sits squarely on two main routes, 193 and 8, and is jammed with tourists all summer long. In the winter, though, it dies a slow death, finally expiring just after Christmas. Suddenly, half the houses are empty and an unsettling silence settles on the town. All there is to see is the inevitable blanket of snow, the trees weighted down by ice ... the only sounds are the occasional shout of a child, the barking of a cold dog, the screams of an entire family being butchered when one of them finally snaps (*ah, it would be music to my ears — if I had ears! Hehehehehehe!*)

Once described as a place "so sweet it would make Norman Rockwell heave," Gainesford is best compared to fairly recent roadkill: not too hard on the eyes, if you don't look too close. But hold your nose and bend in close and you can see something exceedingly nasty is happening beneath the skin ...

CITY HALL

Located in the heart of town, City Hall also acts as the seat for Endesnear County, and is marked by the marble statue of the town's founder, Hiram Gaines. Mayor Michael Primm is currently in his fourth term overseeing the day-to-day running of the town, while down the hall, County Executive John Urfe does the same for Endesnear as a whole. Their paths cross multiple times a day, but neither one speaks to the other if it can be avoided. Urfe ran against Primm last year, but had to drop out of the race when Primm ran into and over him on Main St., sending him to the hospital for six months. As things turn out, the cane makes Urfe look very distinguished, much moreso than the neckbrace and full body cast did.

Primm, it seems, is anything but. He's had affairs with his secretary, the town clerk, the barmaid at the Endesnear Hotel, the cleaning staff, half the "Parents Without a Prayer" support group, and the wives of virtually every important person in Gainesford. The secret of his romantic success remains a mystery, since on a good hair day he resembles a wood gnome. He'd be a ripe target for blackmail, if it wasn't for the fact that he keeps dossiers on everyone around him, their strengths, their weaknesses, their ... hobbies. There's a joke in town that most of Primm's votes come from people scared to find out what will happen if they vote against him.



Ray Leister

Urfe, on the other hand, is a devoted family man, with somewhere around a dozen kids by now. He is one of the most recognized men in town, heavily involved in civic affairs, a coach of the Little League, and host of the annual community Christmas party. All of his children can be recognized by their bright red hair ... all except Nick, the youngest, who looks like ... well, like a wood gnome.

Mayor Primm only smiles knowingly. Mrs. Urfe isn't talking. Mr. Urfe jumps every time he hears tires squeal.

MAYOR MICHAEL PRIMM

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Deduction 11, perception 13, trick 12

MIND 8

Business 12, scholar: Gainesford government 11

CONFIDENCE 10

Con 11, intimidation 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Charm 15, persuasion 13, taunt 11

Life Points: 5

Description: Mayor Primm is a short man, about 39, with slicked-back black hair, a cherubic face that makes him look younger than he is, and the smooth voice of a radio commentator.

JOHN URFE

AGILITY 7

Unarmed combat 8

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 11, deduction 12, perception 11, trick 10

MIND 9

Business 11, scholar: Endesnear County government 13

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Charm 10, persuasion 10

Life Points: 5

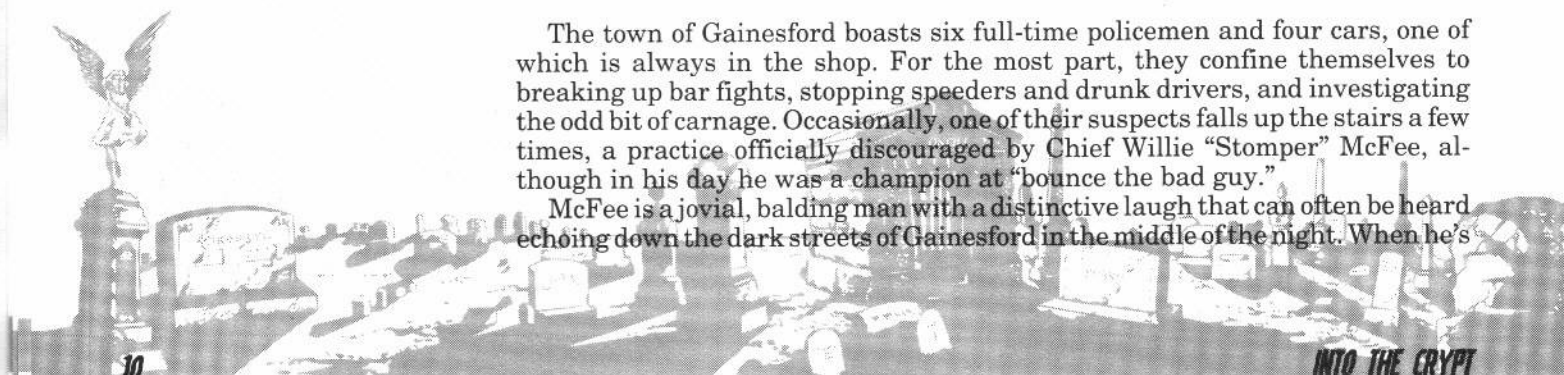
Equipment: Cane, damage value STR+4/19

Description: Urfe is of medium height, 35, with black hair and a moustache. He walks with a pronounced limp in his left leg and carries a cane.

GAINESFORD POLICE

The town of Gainesford boasts six full-time policemen and four cars, one of which is always in the shop. For the most part, they confine themselves to breaking up bar fights, stopping speeders and drunk drivers, and investigating the odd bit of carnage. Occasionally, one of their suspects falls up the stairs a few times, a practice officially discouraged by Chief Willie "Stomper" McFee, although in his day he was a champion at "bounce the bad guy."

McFee is a jovial, balding man with a distinctive laugh that can often be heard echoing down the dark streets of Gainesford in the middle of the night. When he's



not roaming the streets, he's sacked out in his armchair, watching horror movies and drinking beer.

The Chief is best known among his men for his love of rodents — mice, rats, whatever — and he's particularly fond of an old, dilapidated part of the county lock-up called the "rat cell." Holes at the foot allow the rats in the walls to get into the cell, and they're often hungry. Prisoners who particularly offend Chief McFee often find themselves tossed overnight into the "rat cell," with no lights, no water ... and lots of cheese.

CHIEF WILLIE "STOMPER" MCFEE

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

First aid 10, perception 11, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 12, interrogation 11, intimidation 13, streetwise 14, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 10

Life Points: 6

Equipment: Baton, damage value STR+5/20; .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6, range 3-10/25/40

Description: McFee is a beefy man with coarse black hair covering all of his body save the top of his head. When on duty, he is in uniform at all times — when off duty, he's often lounging on his front porch in a tattered t-shirt and leopard-striped sweatpants.

STANDARD GAINESFORD POLICEMAN

AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, maneuver 10, melee combat 14, stealth 10, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 12, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 9, streetwise 14, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

Life Points: 4-5

Equipment: Baton, damage value STR+5/20; .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6, range 3-10/25/40

ENDESNEAR COUNTY JAIL

In the bad old days, this prison had a ridiculously high mortality rate among prisoners. Now, of course, nothing of that sort happens anymore (*and folks are just dying to get in! Hehehehehe!*) But the exercise yard rests on top of a mass grave filled with the bodies of prisoners slain in a mini-riot twenty years ago, and blood still stains the sides of basement hot water pipes to which inmates used to



be bound. The few career criminals in Gainesford know enough when they're sent to this jail to immediately do something worse — attack a guard, try a break-out — anything that will get them sent to the state pen. A few have even opted for extended stays in Fayervue rather than stay in Endesnear County Jail after lights out ...

MAIN ST.

Gainesford has the largest Main St. shopping area in the county, and the shops, restaurants and other spots along it can provide characters with information, entertainment, and reasons to wish they were somewhere else ... anywhere else.

Some of the highlights of Main St. include:

THE MEAT GRINDER

Located at the southern end of the street, the Meat Grinder is the oldest diner in Gainesford. It serves a variety of refreshments and sandwiches (all of them on white), specializing in reconstituted meat. The owner, Art Noble, and his attractive wife, Noreen, double as chefs and servers in the small place. It's one of the few restaurants in town that is consistently packed to the rafters, summer and winter, prompting some to wonder why Art doesn't hire some help.

Well, he did, once ... a drifter named Matthew, who did some of the sweeping and proved to be pretty handy with a frying pan. He was pretty handy with Noreen, too, as it turned out, until the night Art caught them inventorying each other on the counter.

Just what happened, only the Nobles know. Noreen disappeared for a day or two, then returned, strangely subdued. Matthew vanished for good. And Art started really pushing the hamburgers, which tasted just a little strange ... (*The "hamburger special" was a great deal, but a lot of folks got sick from it. Guess it's true what they say ... you can't keep a good man down!*)

Characters can stop in here anytime during the day for a rest, a little local gossip, or maybe just a snack (*the Nobles just love having people for lunch! Hehehehehe!*)

ART NOBLE

AGILITY 9

Melee combat 11, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

First aid 9, perception 9, trick 9

MIND 8

Artist: chef 10, business 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 4

Equipment: Meat cleaver, damage value STR+5/20; assorted knives, damage value STR+4/19

Description: Able is an older man, 53, with a slight brogue and surprisingly kindly features.

NOREEN NOBLE

AGILITY 8

Melee combat 9, running 9, stealth 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, trick 10

MIND 9

Business 11

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 11

CHARISMA 10

Charm 14, persuasion 13, taunt 12

Life Points: 5

Description: Noreen is an attractive blonde of 31 with heavy features and naturally curly hair. She used to be quite animated, but since the "burger special," seems to be a shadow of her former self.

ENDESNEAR COUNTY LIBRARY

An excellent source for information or local lore, this two-story brick building is staffed by friendly retirees who will be more than happy to answer any questions the characters put to them. The library is marked by a conspicuous lack of horror fiction except that by local resident Bill Kurstendamm, and the fact that none of the reference books are dated later than 1955.

PHALEN'S PHOTOS

Fred Phalen, owner of Phalen's Photos, is a short, balding man with a love of cheap cigars. He doubles as local photographer (graduation photos, prom pictures, etc.) and shutterbug for the county coroner's office. A while ago, Fred made an interesting discovery: if he paired a picture of a living person with a picture of their corpse, he could talk to them after death (at least, he thinks he can). Since he stumbled upon this, Fred has gotten divorced, abandoned his friends, and often closes the shop early, preferring to spend all his spare time talking with his new companions. He's even fallen for the late prom queen from two years ago, Gwen Hatcher, and is trying to talk her into coming back. (She's reluctant to do so, since the car accident that killed her also mangled her features something fierce. But Fred's assured her that with the right filter and a little airbrushing, she'll look just as good as ever.)

Characters might encounter Fred if they get involved in any kind of murder investigation. If he evidences any real enthusiasm for his work, it probably means he's photographed the corpse before and is looking forward to having another new friend.

(A few years back, four local girls were strangled just after Fred snapped their graduation shots. The police even found an empty film canister near the bodies and thought he might be involved, but nothing ever ... developed. Hehehehehe!)

FRED PHALEN

AGILITY 8

Melee combat 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, trick 10

MIND 7

Artist: photographer 11, psychic: medium 11

CONFIDENCE 7

Willpower 9

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 3

Equipment: Phalen has access to all sorts of cameras, film, developing chemicals and equipment. Hatchet, damage value STR+6/21; box of cigars.

Description: Phalen is no treat for the eyes, nor is he much of a talker these days, except to his pictures. At the same time, someone passing him on the street wouldn't guess that nature of his "hobby."

FIVE HORSES GAMES

Gainesford's only game/comic store, it's managed to be a marginal success despite the opposition of local church groups, school officials, and most of the other merchants in town. Its owner, Rick Salmon, has the distinction of being one of the few friends of writer Bill Kurstendamm and about the only living person Fred Phalen still talks to. Salmon stocks a wide range of comics, but only one roleplaying game, *Nosferatu*, because that's the only one he plays.

Salmon appeared in town virtually from nowhere three years ago (although there are whispers he was either recently paroled from the state pen or recently escaped from Fayervue). He started out doing magic shows at the local camps, but his "disappearing kid" act worked a little too well, and camp insurance rates went up whenever he performed. With the help of a girlfriend, he started Five Horses a year ago, investing most of his money in a card game about card game design ("I tap my 'Too Damn Many Meetings' card ...") What few profits he makes he pours into his other hobby, collecting souvenirs from famous local murder cases and particularly gruesome accidents. (His prize piece — which Fred Phalen doesn't know he has — is Gwen Hatcher's skull.)

RICK SALMON

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, long jumping 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, running 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

Prestidigitation 12

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 11, perception 11, trick 11

MIND 8

Scholar: comic books 10, scholar: crime 10, scholar: magic tricks 10, scholar: roleplaying games 10



CONFIDENCE 8

Con 10, streetwise 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 9

Life Points: 6

Description: Tall, thin, with jet-black hair and the beginnings of a moustache and beard, Salmon looks harmless enough. But appearances can be deceiving ...

ENDESNEAR COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

This is another good source for facts, legends, lore, pamphlets, brochures, and other information on Gainesford and Endesnear County. Included among the displays are native American artifacts, antique books, and a replica of "Sparky," the first electric chair ever used in the nation (Gainesford is justifiably renowned as the "birthplace of the modern chair").

If the characters just want to get a little background on the town and the county, they can talk to the museum's curator, Richard Garson. Affectionately known to the townspeople as "Uncle Rich," Garson is a treasure trove of anecdotes about the early days of Gainesford. He'll gladly regale the characters with stories about some of the dark doings in town over the centuries, and if the answer to their problem lies in the past, it's a fair bet "Uncle Rich" can provide it.

RICHARD GARSON

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 10

Lifting 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 10, deduction 11, first aid 10, perception 11, teaching: history 11, trick 10

MIND 10

Artist: storyteller 14, research 15, scholar: local history 14

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10, willpower 11

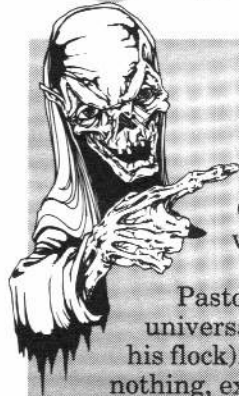
CHARISMA 9

Charm 12, persuasion 11

Life Points: 5

Description: Although retired now from his career in law enforcement, Garson still looks capable. He's made no secret of his distrust of Sheriff McFee or his dismay with the way Gainesford is being run these days.





PROVINCE OF THE DEAD

Knowing the history of a place can come in handy, especially when so many of the nastier things that happen tend to happen again and again. That holds true for Gainesford as well, so the characters may want to learn where some of the bodies are buried and dig them up ...

Endesnear County was incorporated in 1745, named for Pastor Hayward Endesnear, who insisted that 1750 would bring universal Armageddon (the naming was sort of a parting gift from his flock). Many of them sold their homes and possessions for next to nothing, expecting it to all to go up in smoke anyway any day. When January 1st, 1750, came and went without incident, they mobbed Pastor Endesnear, intending to tar and feather him. Things got a little out of hand and he wound up drowned in the town well of what is now Gainesford. They say the water from the well ran red like blood for 10 years afterward. (And, even though the town no longer draws water from that well, there are still some who point out a reddish tinge and a faint rotten odor to the water at times. The Public Works Dept. defiantly points out that that is simply the result of rust in the pipes and the occasional dead rat getting caught in the filtration system.)

Gainesford itself was founded in 1760 by General Hiram Gaines ... well, "founded" may be too strong a word. General Gaines served with the British Army during the French and Indian War and fought a battle on this site in which close to 2000 French regulars and their Indian allies were slaughtered. Gaines moved on and it would be another decade before anyone would bother to bury the bodies. Eventually, all that nonsense about the land being "cursed" was forgotten, and a settlement sprang up here. Looking for a name that would give the place an air of distinction, the residents happened upon the story of Gaines and decided to christen their town in his honor. (The statue in front of City Hall doesn't actually depict him — no pictures could be found of the general, who died from a system-wide hemorrhage shortly after the battle — but it looks heroic and most people figured it was close enough.)

Gainesford's achievements have been few and far between. Around the turn of the century, Fitzhugh Metal Works produced the chair that would eventually be wired to fry the condemned. Later, it would latch on to the Pocono tourist trade, and finally became a bedroom (and coffin) community for New Oldtown. Through it all, it has maintained that unique flavor, one part wheatcakes, one part rancid butter, swathed equally in red-and-white checked gingham and black funeral crepe.

TERWILLIGER'S RECORDS

Anton Terwilliger is one of the leading merchants of Gainesford, also owning Terwilliger Insurance, Terwilliger Bakery, Terwilliger Furniture and the Terwilliger Funeral Home. He has a beautiful wife, three fine young sons, a lovely home on Pine St., a seemingly irrational hatred of Rick Salmon and a homicidal maniac brother living in his attic. (*Also bad feet and lousy taste in music, just for the record!*)

Terwilliger probably wields more influence in Gainesford than any other man, but that doesn't mean he's happy. His first marriage ended in divorce; his second marriage ended in a ditch on 193, to the sounds of shattering glass and spinning



wheels; his third is to a woman 20 years his junior, with a killer body and a roving eye.

Still, his vast fortune (by Gainesford standards) should still have been enough to bring some peace. But all that was shot to hell one rainy night when brother Carson, still in his Fayervue-issue robe, showed up at the door. He'd gone over the wall of the asylum, and he insisted that Anton would hide him out — or maybe Chief McFee would like to find out the truth behind Dad's careless (and fatal) "accident" with that powersaw?

Worse, Carson Terwilliger didn't escape alone. He had help — Rick Salmon, who proceeded to open a game store in town and blackmail Anton into keeping the Chamber of Commerce off his back. For now, their hatred for each other remains an open secret in town, though the reasons for it are a mystery to everyone else. How Anton will react to Carson's plan to turn his house into a stop on an "underground railway" for Fayervue escapees remains to be seen.

ANTON TERWILLIGER

AGILITY 7

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

Computer ops 11, deduction 12, perception 13, trick 13

MIND 11

Business 15

CONFIDENCE 10

Con 14, intimidation 13, willpower 15

CHARISMA 8

Charm 11, persuasion 12

Life Points: 6

Description: Very tall, quite thin, with thick glasses and a perpetually smug expression, Anton doesn't look like the sort capable of warming up to anyone. There's more than a trace of arrogance in his manner and his voice.

CARSON TERWILLIGER

AGILITY 10

Dodge 12, melee combat 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 9

Lock picking 11

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 9

Perception 12, tracking 11, trick 14

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Con 14, intimidation 15, survival: asylum 13, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 11

Life Points: 7

Description: Big, musclebound, with piercing light blue eyes and a smile with no mirth in it.

Equipment: Carson has used various weapons in his career, but seems to be happiest with the old, reliable meat-axe, damage value STR+7/22.

DEISEN'S HARDWARE

This is the place to come for all the things that make life worth living and death so easy to come by: ice-picks, shovels, power tools, hammers, rope, heavy tape, tarpaulins and everything else you need to build a shed, mend a fence, or fill a coffin (preferably with a close friend or relative).

The owner, Ron Deisen, is a walking encyclopedia of tool trivia, from the proper alloys for use in an awl to the amount of force per square inch needed to drive a chisel through the frontal lobe of the brain. He manages to attach a macabre anecdote to virtually everything he sells, and has been known to needle purchasers of hatchets, cement, pitchforks, etc. about who they're "planning to kill today."

Deisen also runs a small taxidermy shop and there is a refrigerated shed attached to the back of the store, which is always kept locked. His stated reason is to keep kids from wandering inside and getting trapped, or someone stealing the squirrel, rabbit, and bird carcasses he keeps inside. But the neighbors do occasionally wonder about those bulky plastic bags he tosses in there ... at least once, it seemed like the contents were still moving.

RON DEISEN

AGILITY 7

Dodge 9, running 8, melee combat 9, unarmed combat 8

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 11, deduction 10, perception 10, trick 11

MIND 10

Scholar: * 11

CONFIDENCE 9

Willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 3

* Deisen's head is packed with trivia, so he has numerous *scholar* foci at one add apiece.

Description: Thin and bearded, Deisen almost resembles a mountain man come down from the hills. He's an amiable sort who will gladly engage in conversation with anyone.

Equipment: Deisen keeps a variety of knives (damage value STR+4/19) and bone saws (STR+5/20) around the place.

THE GREENERY

The Greenery is Gainesford's most upscale eating place as well as a flourishing florist. The menu is limited to four items, all of which mix traditional meals (tuna sandwiches, chicken salad, etc.) with strange mixtures of fruits, nuts, and vegetables no one can pronounce. In the rear of the restaurant, flowering plants of all types are sold, but no cut flowers. The place as a whole is very different from the rest of the town's establishments — very clean, very classy, and surprisingly inexpensive. If you don't mind the restrictions laid down by management (no smoking, no cursing, and no damaging any of the growing things), it makes for a nice lunch spot.

The owner, Amy Bryce, is without question the most beautiful woman in Gainesford. Half the young men in town have proposed to her; the other half are still working up their courage. She turns them all down, of course, although a

small number have gotten to take her out and a few have made it as far as her front porch. (Some of the elderly men in town have remarked on how much Amy resembles a woman named Constance Drew, who lived in Gainesford in the early 1900s. She disappeared under mysterious circumstances in 1911 ... some say she ran off with a beau, others that she was murdered by him and her body hidden in the swamp outside of town.)

One thing no one questions is that she grows more beautiful every day. What puzzles the restaurant's regulars is that this really seems to be true. Her hair is a little more golden each day, her voice a little sweeter, her eyes a little brighter ... and her plants seem lusher and greener too. Some of her more devoted suitors eat all their meals at the Greenery, and at least one lost his job because he didn't want to leave the place.

(The restaurant's meals are delicious, but apparently not very nutritious. The regulars never seem to have very much energy at the end of the day ... but they keep going back.)

(Amy's got "it" — and if her boyfriends aren't careful, they'll get it too! Hehehehehehe! I've heard of people winding up wormfood, but these poor saps are plant food! Things may be coming up roses at the Greenery, but the customers all end pushing up daisies ...)

AMY BRYCE

AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, melee combat 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Perception 12, trick 11

MIND 8

Business 10

CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 14, willpower 16

CHARISMA 14

Charm 19, persuasion 18

Life Points: 8

Description: Amy is blonde, green-eyed, and almost indescribably beautiful. Characters will discover an almost magnetic effect that makes it impossible to take their eyes from her.

Amy is, in fact, Constance Drew (and a number of other women over the decades) and not quite what she seems. She has the power to drain life energy from her targets, which renews her own life force and that of her plants. She does this through the use of her *charm* skill — whenever a target is successfully *charmed*, the results are read on the



General Success Column of the Success Chart, as normal. For every success level obtained, Amy drains one Attribute Point off each of the target's physical Attributes (AGI, DEX, END, STR). If any of the target's Attributes ever go to zero, the target dies. If the target survives, he will regain one Attribute point (to each Attribute affected) every hour after the attack.

Amy receives none of the Attribute Points she drains — but she does need to “feed” in this way at least three times a day. If she does not, her own physical Attributes begin to drain at a rate of one point off each per day — she can regain the points by getting her three meals in a day, after which she will regain her full values.

Amy is psychically linked to her plants. Treat them essentially as “bugs” and “homing devices” for her. In addition, if a plant is killed, she takes a shock point from the attack.

CLARK'S AUTOS

For a little town, Gainesford has more than its share of auto dealerships, used car lots, and garages. Easily the most successful is Clark's Autos on Rte. 8, just north of town, specializing in wrecks, junkers and cars that will be one of the two after a few miles' drive. Despite the poor quality of the merchandise, owner Jeff Clark outdistances every other dealer in sales every year, and his wall is lined with Gainesford Chamber of Commerce citations.

Clark has been in sales all his life and he rapidly discovered a knack for it (at least, that's how he tells the story). He's sold everything from noisemakers and marbles to a School for the Blind to whale repellent to a guy in downtown Kansas City to icepacks and ThirstQuencher in suburban Nome. When he returned to Gainesford, he opened an auto dealership with a partner, Dennis Anthony. Profits were good, but not good enough. Clark talked Anthony into selling his share of the business for much less than it was worth; talked the Zoning Board into freezing Anthony out of opening a competing dealership; talked Anthony's wife into leaving him; and finally talked his old partner right off the end of the O'Neill Bridge.

Characters who wander by Clark's Autos can expect to drive out, probably with something that's more than they can afford and may or may not make it all the way down the block.

JEFF CLARK

AGILITY 9

Unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Perception 10, trick 12, vehicle mechanic: wheeled 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 11

MIND 8

Business 10

CONFIDENCE 11

Con 15, intimidation 13, willpower 14

CHARISMA 12

Charm 15, persuasion 16, taunt 14

Life Points: 5

Description: Would you buy a used car from this guy? Sure, you would — he's tall, handsome, looks like he has your best interests at heart and talks like you're the person he's been waiting his whole life to see.





ENDESNEAR COUNTY HOSPITAL

Serving Gainesford and a number of the smaller surrounding communities, Endesnear County Hospital boasts some of the most adequate medical care in the state. Normally, you would expect a hospital this size, in this small a town, to be handling primarily births and deaths, with the occasional 18-car pileup on the interstate to keep things interesting. But in fact, Endesnear County attracts patients from all over northeastern Pennsylvania, due in large part to the reputation of the chief of surgery, Dr. Stan Crane.

His diploma reads "Harvard Medical School" — on the bottom, in very fine print, it reads, "TimTom Novelty Company, Burlington, VT." But he looks like a doctor, that can't be denied: crisp, white lab coat, air of authority, vaguely harried expression, deep tan and a low handicap. He's performed over 1000 operations, almost all of them successful, and if he's a little unorthodox, well, the nurses look the other way. It's not unusual for a surgeon to be a believer in "less is more," but most do draw the line at removing what they deem "non-essential organs" from patients. Crane's patients often leave the operating room stripped clean of everything but what they *really* need, with the remainder going to the doctor's private office for "research purposes."

Of course, Crane's career has not been without incident. Dr. John Halson, a local cardiologist, began to suspect something was wrong when the x-rays of his patients looked so ... barren. He confronted Crane about it, but before he could complain to the hospital's Board of Directors, he suffered a sudden attack of appendicitis. As it turned out, it was one of the strangest cases Endesnear had ever seen, as the infection spread from Halson's appendix to his brain, necessitating an immediate lobotomy by Crane. The operation was a success, for the surgeon at least, and Halson seems pleased with it too. At least, he always has a smile on his face these days ...

DR. STAN CRANE

AGILITY 8

Melee combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

First aid 14, perception 11, science: anatomy 12, trick 14

MIND 10

Medicine 12

CONFIDENCE 11

Con 16, intimidation 13, willpower 14

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 11

Life Points: 7

Description: A big man with a black moustache and beard, Crane looks more like a pirate than a doctor (he probably was one at one time).

Equipment: Crane has access to all sorts of medical equipment and surgical tools.

BILL KURSTENDAMM

Gainesford's only celebrity, Bill Kurstendamm is a moderately successful horror novelist with a string of paperbacks to his credit (*The Bleeding, The Burning, The Breeding, The Blanching and The Bloating*). He is something of a recluse, rarely seen except on his ventures to Five Horses Games. All his food shopping and other errands are done by Bob Karn, his gardener.



Kurstendamm is a mid-sized, fellow, very quiet and reserved, but with a fierce intensity about his work and terrible insomnia which allows him to work all night long. Still, his works had met with nothing but rejection until five years ago when he hired Karn. Later, he would tell Rick Salmon that having all the mundane details of life taken off his shoulders had made all the difference in his ability to write.

But some people in town think there is more to it than that. Karn, a tall, darkly handsome, and vaguely sinister figure seems to literally run Kurstendamm's life, controlling not only the running of the house but the running of the finances. Kurstendamm's girlfriend, Angelica, received a "Dear Jane" note obviously penned by Karn; the author's agent hasn't spoken to him in months, having to content himself with dealing through the gardener; and Karn answers all questions about his employer's health with a smile and a whispered, "He's just fine. Why do you ask?"

Moved by curiosity, Salmon once went to Kurstendamm's house in the evening on the pretext of making a delivery. Although the lights were on inside, no one answered his knock. The shades were drawn, and the windows nailed shut, so after a few frustrating moments, Salmon left.

BILL KURSTENDAMM

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Deduction 13, linguistics 11, perception 11

MIND 10

Artist: writer 13

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 2

Description: Once a bit overweight, Kurstendamm has grown lean since hiring Karn, almost unhealthily so. He smiles rarely and, on those rare occasions when he leaves the house, seems a bit uncomfortable.

BOB KARN

AGILITY 10

Dodge 12, maneuver 12, martial arts: judo 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13

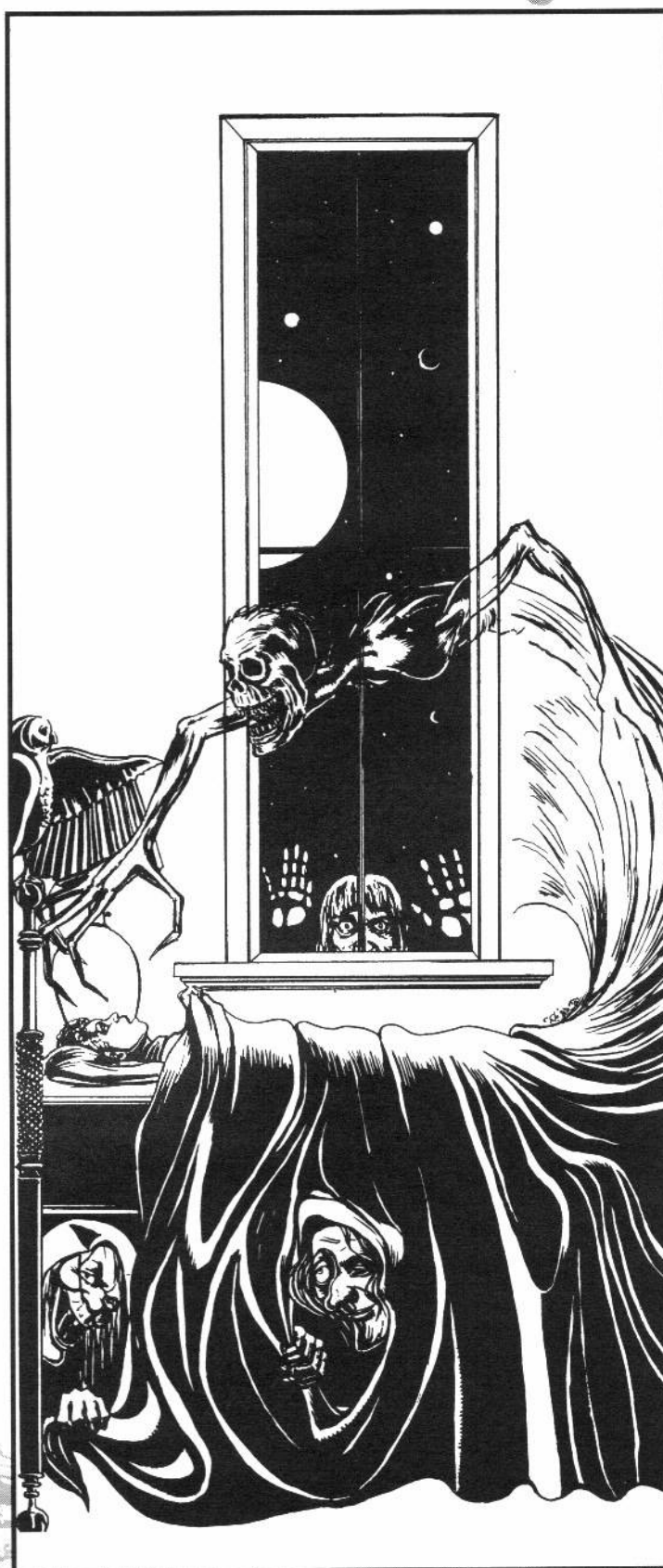
DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9



Tim E. Ogline

Perception 13, trick 13

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 15, streetwise 12, willpower 14

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 11

Life Points: 6

Description: Karn is the classic book that can be judged by its cover — tall, darkly handsome, with an almost devilish look to his appearance and a deep basso voice, Karn is a naturally intimidating figure. And he's certainly had a chilling effect on Gainesford as a whole ...

THE GAINESFORD HERALD

The town's only newspaper, the *Gainesford Herald* is a weekly with a reputation for accuracy ... and something a little beyond accuracy. Although few in the public know this, many of the news stories that grace the front page have actually been written weeks ahead of time. The *Herald's* staff not only reports the news — they anticipate it!

Credit for this must go to editor-in-chief Peter Jaeger, who moved to Gainesford from Connecticut some years back. He immediately sacked half the staff and somehow managed to meet deadlines with a skeleton crew. After a few months, secure things were running smoothly, Jaeger began coming in before the staff and leaving after they had left, spending the day behind his office door. None of the staffers have the courage to go in, or even knock — he sends his instructions out via note slipped under the door. (There are some who half-joke that he never leaves ... or that he isn't in there to begin with!)

What is certain is that *Herald* reporters are on the scene of accidents before they happen, fires before they break out, once even going up the front walk of a house just as the owner was stuffing his two artist tenants into a wood-chipper in the backyard ...

STANDARD HERALD REPORTER

AGILITY 8

Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 9, melee parry 12, stealth 11

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 8

Perception 9

MIND 8

Research 9, scholar: Gainesford 9

CONFIDENCE 10

Con 11, intimidation 11, streetwise 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 11

Life Points: 2-5

GRASSY SWAMP

Located on the southern edge of town, Grassy Swamp is a treacherous bog teeming with wildlife and shrouded in legend. Pierced by only one dirt road (called, appropriately enough, "Grassy Swamp Road"), this is one of those areas parents warn their children to stay away from. More than a few people have become trapped in its mires, never to be seen again (despite this danger — or maybe because of it? — it remains a popular "make out" spot for local teenagers).



Among the more notable spots are:

Murderer's Mire: In the late '30s, a bank robber named Brian "Bullets" Brown held up Gainesford National and shot a guard. With police hot on his trail, he drove down Grassy Swamp Road, but his tire hit a protruding rock and went flat. Forced to flee on foot, he stumbled into a mire and began to sink.

Some say the police had lost their way and simply couldn't find him; others believe they did catch up to Brown, but stood around and let him sink, laughing as he screamed his life away (of course, they made sure to get their hands on the money first). Legend says that "Bullets" rises out of the mire from time to time ... all of the policemen involved in the chase died violent deaths eventually, and the whispers are that swamp water was found staining the rugs in their houses. In more recent years, night tellers at Gainesford National have been frightened half to death by what appears to be a rotting corpse carrying a .45 and "casing" the bank.

Lover's Ledge: A much more recent legend, this refers to a rocky outcropping on the side of a hill that's always been a favorite spot for young lovers. Over the past two years or so, couples who have gone there have never returned. At first, the theory was that they were simply eloping after a night of bliss in the swamp ... but now people aren't so sure.

Suicide Pool: Desperate and despairing, Gainesford's most tragic cases have come here over the years looking to end it all. Most of the deaths here have been ruled suicides, although there was one murder (a lonely store clerk came here to die, saw someone had beaten him to the spot, and rather than share, he shot the poor soul). Add to the list of victims treasure hunters who search the pool for rings, watches, or other jewelry the suicides might have thrown in first (the story goes that spectres hold those types under the water as punishment for violating the pool).

(Roses are red / And violets are blue / A gallon of swamp water / Looks good in you! Hehehehehe!)

Grassy Swamp is sparsely populated ... by the living, that is. There are only a few known residents of the inhospitable area:

Shane and Tasha Herbert: A pleasant young couple, Shane and Tasha moved to Gainesford three years ago from North Carolina. Shane is a former Army demolitions expert who delights in blowing things up (he's been known to fish by tossing lit sticks of TNT into a pond and waiting for dinner to surface). Muffled explosions can be heard much of the evening and all weekend around Grassy Swamp. Tasha was a "wild child" raised by Shane's parents — although she is beautiful and now quite refined, she is still capable of bringing down a swamp deer with her bare hands. Both have a thing about trespassers, and characters are advised to be careful just where they step on the Herberts' front lawn.

SHANE HERBERT

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, stealth 11, swimming 10, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

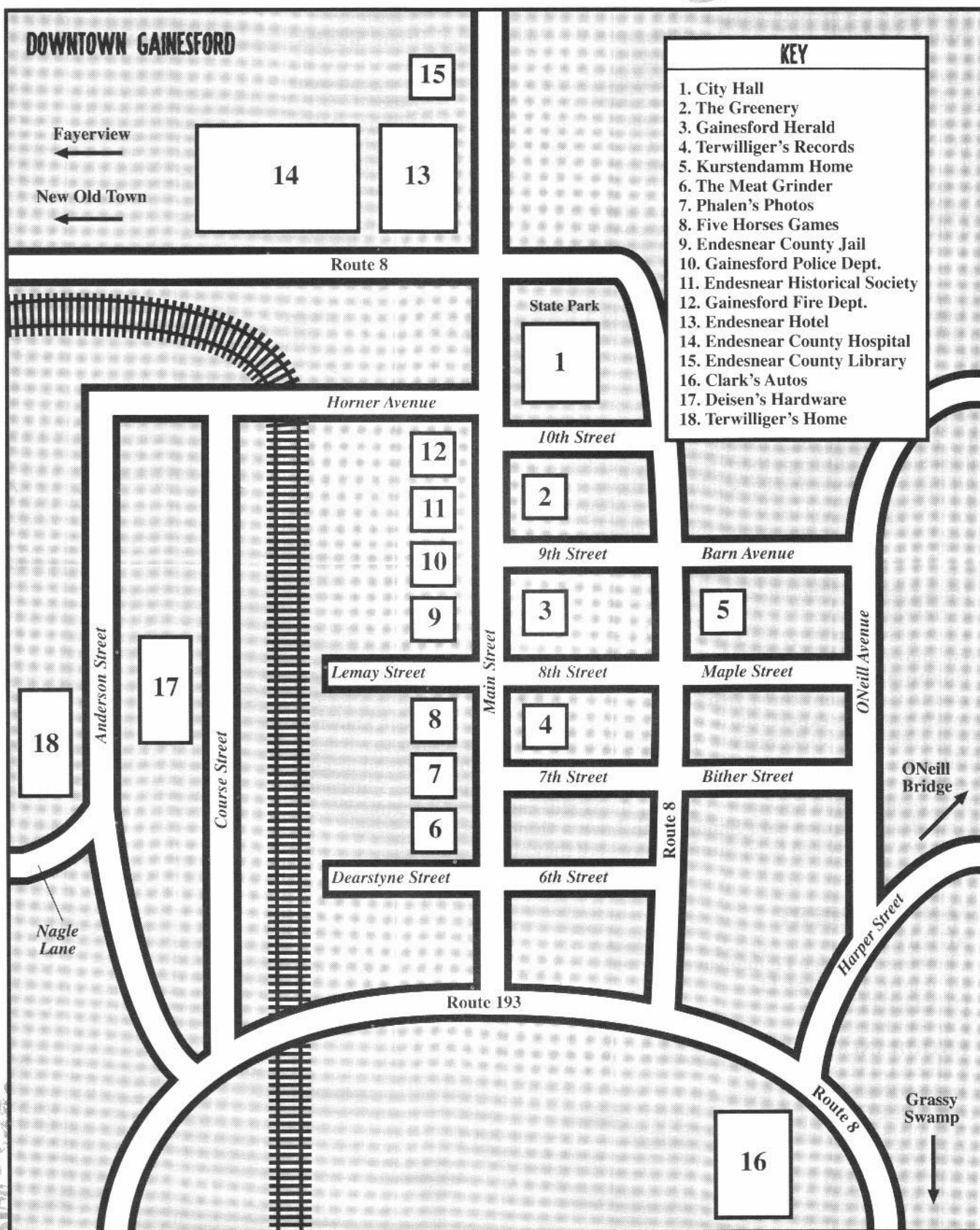
INTELLECT 8

Demolitions 12, first aid 10, perception 10, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, survival: swamp 11, willpower 10



CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 6

Description: Middle height, blonde, blue-eyed, with more than a trace of a Southern accent, Shane *seems* perfectly normal.

Equipment: Remington .30-30, damage value 21, ammo 7, range 5-30/90/200/300; various grenades (damage value 23) and explosive devices.

TASHA HERBERT

AGILITY 11

Acrobatics 12, climbing 15, dodge 14, long jumping 13, maneuver 14, melee combat 14, running 13, stealth 15, swimming 14, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 9

Thrown weapons 10

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 10

Lifting 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 10

Perception 12, tracking 14, trick 11

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, survival: forest 14, survival: swamp 14

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 4

Description: Tasha has brown hair, brown eyes, and a trim, well-toned body.

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19; throwing dagger, damage value STR+3/18, range 3-5/8/15

Gary and Cynthia Moreau: Seemingly a perfect couple, the Moreaus were married eight years ago. She carved out a successful career as a real estate agent in Gainesford and is a close friend of Dr. Stan Crane (who advises her on patients about to kick off so she can put in a bid for their property). Gary has pursued a number of careers, ranging from local constable to a stint as a cowboy in Montana and the early stages of NASA training. A year ago, while between jobs, Gary slipped on the staircase and suffered a severe head injury which sent him into a coma. Since then, claiming it was what "Gary would have wanted," Cynthia has taken a number of lovers. Sometimes her dalliances even take place on the same bed where her husband sleeps ... and sleeps ... and sleeps ...?

CYNTHIA MOREAU

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Deduction 10, perception 10

MIND 9

Business 12

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Charm 13, persuasion 12

Life Points: 5

Description: Cynthia is an extremely attractive green-eyed brunette with perpetually tanned skin and a figure that has prompted its share of traffic accidents downtown.



Big Earl: Gruff and a bit simple-minded, “Big Earl” is the town game warden (loosely translated, that means the town gave a shotgun to someone who can barely remember which end to point). He roams the swamp, rousting trespassers, drinking and letting off the occasional blast from the gun just to let people know he’s there.

BIG EARL

AGILITY 10

Dodge 12, melee combat 12, swimming 13, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 11

Fire combat 14

ENDURANCE 11

STRENGTH 11

Lifting 12

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

Tracking 11

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 12, survival: swamp 10

CHARISMA 6

Life Points: 3

Description: Tall and lanky with salt and pepper hair and beard, Big Earl has an easy smile and a vacant gaze to go with it. He’s rarely seen about without his shotgun.

Equipment: Remington M31, damage value 22, ammo 5, range 5–20/30/75

FAYERVUE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

One of the two major employers for Gainesford residents, Fayervue (called “Fearvue” by the inmates) is a maximum-security mental hospital located about halfway between the town and New Oldtown on Rte. 8. The ominous-looking brick building is surrounded by a three-meter-tall fence topped with barbed wire. Floodlights are mounted on top of the roof, but no guards are visible (part of management’s effort to make it look less like what it is). Along Rte. 8, signs are posted warning motorists of Fayervue’s presence and advising that they not stop to pick up hitchhikers.

Among the inmates sent upstate to Fayervue are some of Pennsylvania’s most notorious killers. There’s Lou “The Axe Man” Desmond, who hatcheted a co-worker to death in a dispute over who was scheduled for kitchen clean-up, then hid the body parts in old coffee cans and smuggled them out of the building; Paul Scharnhorst, who killed women and stole their boots for his collection — with their feet still in them; and Catherine Chasen, who buried her husband up to his neck in the side yard and repeatedly drove the riding mower over him.

Director of the hospital is Dr. William Willis IV, a believer in modern, some say radical, treatments. "Trust is the key," Willis says, which is why he allows his patients full access to the phones, the library and rec room, and the kitchen (this despite a few ugly incidents with cutlery). He has even encouraged the inmates to study psychiatry, and indeed, his right-hand man, Dr. Paul Bleachhigh, is serving a life term for blowing up an apartment house in Carbondale, PA (he would later blame work stress and the negative influence of talk radio).

Unfortunately, Willis can't be everywhere and some of his "assistants" take their freedom a little too far. Claustrophobics have been locked in closets; hydrophobics tossed into the hospital pool; and staffers delight in speaking in furtive whispers around the paranoiacs. When Willis stumbles upon these things, he takes measures to rectify them, often stern ones. But some of the inmate-advisers are beginning to grumble and are looking to Bleachhigh to lead them in a coup ...

DR. WILLIAM WILLIS IV

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 10, first aid 11, perception 13

MIND 11

Medicine 15, scholar: psychology 15

CONFIDENCE 10

Willpower 12

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 14

Life Points: 4

Description: Boyish good looks, an enthusiastic manner, and a fervent love for the business of curing the sick — even when they don't want to be — are the best thumbnail descriptions of Dr. Willis.

DR. PAUL BLEACHHIGH

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Computer ops 11, deduction 11, perception 11, trick 11

MIND 9

Demolitions 10, scholar: international business 10, scholar: psychology 11

CONFIDENCE 11

Willpower 13

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

Life Points: 5

Description: Most of the time, he's the nicest guy you'd ever want to meet. But take a hard look at him when Willis is discussing his latest treatment theory and you'll see another side emerge ... the side that perhaps explains why he keeps stealing cutlery from the cafeteria and hiding it in his socks.

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19.



USING GAINESFORD IN THE GAME

It should be pretty obvious that Gainesford has some ... unique personalities, and it's an ideal setting for one-shot or campaign adventures. It can also make "cameo" appearances (for example, the adventure "Circus of Souls" in the back of this book is set on the outskirts of Gainesford, allowing you to work some of the characters above into the scenario if you wish).

How do you get the characters into Gainesford? Well, they might be dropped into shells there; dropped in as themselves; or simply be driving along and get stranded there by auto trouble, bad weather (or one of those other classic horror movie cliches). Little by little, they'll uncover some of the oddities of the town, much as lifting a rock reveals all sorts of slimy, disturbing things.

Here are some adventure hooks you can use for Gainesford-based scenarios:

AMIDST THE GREENERY

While visiting the town, one of the player characters gets enthralled by the Greenery and its beautiful owner. His participation might be crucial to the adventure, but he doesn't want to leave the restaurant. For their own sake, as well as his, the characters will have to delve into the secrets of Amy Bryce and his strange tie to her plants. And just why does the jewelry box in her bedroom have the initials "C.D." engraved upon it?

Goal: Solve the mystery of the Greenery and force Bryce to reveal her true nature in public.

LOVER, COME HACK

A string of headless corpses — all female — have been turning up in Stark Park. And as the newcomers to town, the characters are naturally suspects in the eyes of Sheriff McFee (maybe they'll even get to spend a night in the rat cell!)

What's really happened is that Fred Phalen has finally talked Gwen into coming back (*the only problem is she's lost her head over him! Hehehehehe!*) Where, oh where, could her head be? Why, it's been polished down to a skull and it's sitting on the shelf of Five Horses Games. Of course, Fred and Gwen don't know that. So like the devoted lover that he is, he's been out collecting heads, trying to find one that might satisfy her. No luck yet ... but one of the characters has a good head on her shoulders ...

Goal: Retrieve Gwen Hatcher's skull and bring it back to the Cryptkeeper.

JAILHOUSE SHOCK

Jailed (possibly as a result of their actions in one of the other adventures), the characters make a bizarre discovery: a tunnel leading from their cell deep underground ... and emerging in the mass grave beneath the exercise yard! Who would dig a tunnel to a grave? Or is it possible the diggers were going in the opposite direction? Locked in, the characters will have all the time in the world to find out ...

Goal: Find out if something is being put inside the mass grave for safekeeping, or if something is coming out.

ASYLUM SINISTER

The characters are dropped into the bodies of Fayervue inmates, just in time for the annual Christmas celebration. This year's party features mistletoe,





Ray Lederer

eggnog, turkey loaf, caroling, guards roasting over an open fire ... Yes, the coup has begun, but no one thought to invite Lou "The Axeman" Desmond, and he's a trifle miffed. Fire axe in hand, he's stalking the corridors, looking to commit a little ho-ho-homicide.

Goal: The Cryptkeeper wants Lou's axe, even if it's buried in one of your skulls.

DEADLINE

The *Gainesford Herald* is a must-read if you're interested in what's going on in town ... or what's going to go on. But as the characters wander down the street one day, their attention is caught by a banner headline about a mass murder — a group of people whose throats were slashed and the house in which they lay set ablaze. Not a terribly unusual story, even in a town this size — except that the victims and the characters are one and the same! And if the *Herald's* reputation for accuracy is earned, the group doesn't have long to live ...

Goal: This should be an *especially* deadly adventure, and not to be played first. Tell the players to try not to die.



CRYPTIC RULES



hat was fun, wasn't it, creeps? I just knew you would enjoy a guided gore through my quaint little tomb! I decorated it myself, you know, in late Victim and early Death ... my favorite kind! Hehehehehe!

Admit it, boys and ghouls, the Crypt isn't like anyplace you've ever visited ... and my game's not like any you've ever flayed ... er, played, that is. But now it's time to start getting to the heart of things ... and like I always say, the fastest way to a gamers' heart is with a pick-axe! Hehehehehhe!

This chapter details some special rules for use in *Tales From The Crypt*, some of which apply to any version of the game and some of which apply only to the campaign version. Also included are tips on how to use the *MasterDeck* to add to the flavor of the adventures and a shiny new cleaver to get you started (well, okay, we lied about that last one ...)

SHELLS

There are many differences between playing a game as a one-shot, one-night adventure and running a campaign. One of these is the characters the players choose to play. For example, if you were running the adventure "Circus of Souls" from the back of this book, your players might choose to play the strongman, the high-wire artist, and the aerialist. But if you're running a campaign — and your players are already playing the Amateur Occultist, the Executive, and the Reluctant Investigator — how can you introduce them into this setting and adventure? Sure, the Cryptkeeper could just drop them in there, but then they'll spend half the adventure just trying to explain who they are and get close to the action.

And that's where shells come in. Every now and then, when he feels it's necessary or just on a whim, the Cryptkeeper rips the characters' spirits out of their bodies and shoves them into other bodies. So the Amateur Occultist suddenly finds himself in the body of the strongman ... and the Executive finds himself in the body of the trapeze artist, but with absolutely no idea how to fly high over the center ring without winding up a bag of shattered bones on the sawdust below. Physical attribute values will be modified up or down, as the situation requires — physical skills will be transferred from the player character into his shell, at the same number of adds.

Example: George is playing the Reluctant Investigator, with physical attributes of AGI 11, DEX 8, END 8, and STR 8. For this adventure, he's being dropped into the strongman shell, meaning his physical stats change to AGI 9, DEX 7, END 10, and STR 11. The Investigator's only physical skills are *dodge*, *stealth* and *running* — these get transferred to his new body at the same number of adds he had before (so his *running* skill goes from a 15 to a 13, because his new body has two points less Agility. He does **not** gain any of the strongman's skills or knowledge.

Intellect, Mind, Confidence and Charisma values and skills remain the same, regardless of shell.

Keep in mind that Background Advantages and Compensations may be affected by this. If a character has a "Handicap" Compensation (he walks with a limp), that will disappear if he's in a body with no such handicap. A woman with an Advantage based on her physical beauty who is dropped into the body of an old hag will probably lose the benefits of that Advantage (though her Charisma will remain high, as she is no less charming for the change). In addition, moving into the body of a person in, say, a wheelchair will visit that Compensation on the Cryptkeeper.

This is by no means a mandatory rule. If you, as Cryptkeeper, prefer to just drop the characters as is into situations, go right ahead. But suddenly "waking up" in a new body as well as a new place is a great way to unsettle player characters — and isn't that what the Crypt is all about?

Be reasonable when using shells. The Cryptkeeper won't drop the character into a piece of furniture or a week-old corpse (well, he might do that for a laugh, but not for the whole of an adventure).

DEATH AND THE CRYPTKEEPER

The only hard and fast rule about player character death in *Tales From The Crypt* is ... there are no hard and fast rules. But there are lots of nasty options all you Cryptkeepers can make use of during the course of a campaign.

Death is a fact of life, so to speak, in the Cryptkeeper's domain, whether it's brought about by a spirited tap with a meat-axe or fun with garden shears. And a *Tales From The Crypt* adventure just wouldn't be complete without some murder and mayhem. But players, as a rule, hate losing characters left and right, especially if they've grown attached to them. This can be a problem.

At the same time, this is a horror game — if the characters know they can cheat death time after time, they'll lose their fear of it. Take that away and a lot of the power of the game goes with it. So what you need is a happy medium (*or at least a cheery seer ... maybe even a peppy prophet*).

Well, player characters are, inevitably, going to meet death in adventures, so the question is do you bring them back again (through the power of the Cryptkeeper) for the next adventure? Or do you just leave them to rot?

The answer lies in a sinister little system we like to call ...

CRYPTKEEPER POINTS

First off, this section of the book should be a **big secret**. Don't, under any circumstances, ever let your players hear of Cryptkeeper Points, know how many they have, know how to gain or lose them, know when they've gained or lost them ... well, you get the idea. If you feel tempted to share this information with your players, stop yourself before it's too late. You might want to eat this chapter when you're done reading it.

Cryptkeeper Points are a measure of just how much that worthy dislikes a player character. Every character begins with 1, but you keep a record of it — they won't find any mention of these points on their templates. Characters gain and lose points during the course of a campaign in the following ways:

Gaining Cryptkeeper Points

Player characters gain Cryptkeeper Points whenever they:

1. Fail to achieve one of the primary or secondary goals of an adventure;
2. Do something to anger the Cryptkeeper (solving a problem rife with murderous potential non-violently, etc.);
3. Within reason, whenever you feel like doling one out.



Losing Cryptkeeper Points

Player characters lose Cryptkeeper Points whenever they:

1. Achieve the primary or secondary goals of an adventure;
2. Solve a problem in a way that involves lots of mayhem, body parts flying around, etc.;
3. When you, as the gamemaster, feel someone's roleplaying has just been exceptional, you can scratch one off as a reward;
4. Doing something particularly pleasing to the Cryptkeeper (discovering an artifact he didn't know was lying around the Crypt, etc.)

Everytime a player character dies, have the player roll one ten-sided die. If his total exceeds the number of Cryptkeeper Points the character has, the character can come back next adventure. If it doesn't, the character isn't only merely dead, he's really most sincerely dead.

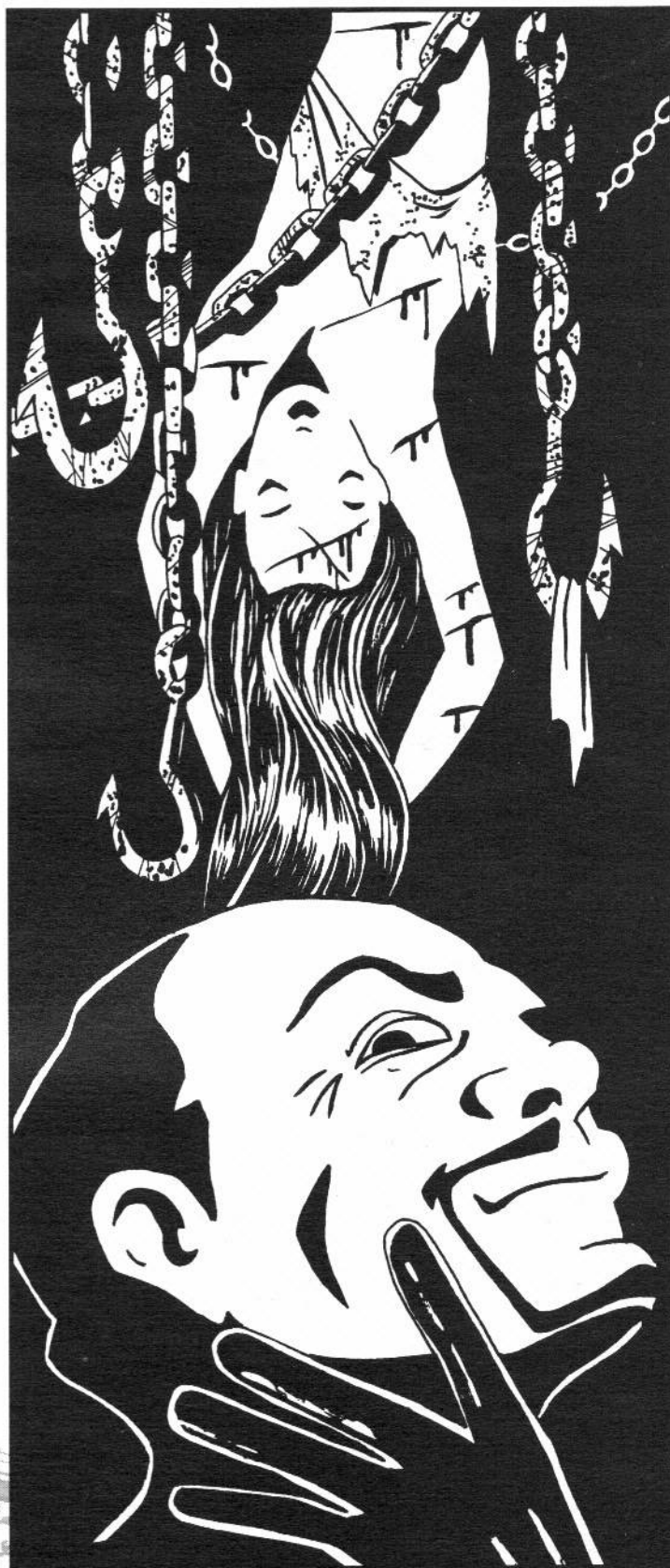
Simple, right? Well, it doesn't have to be. Remember, we said there are no hard and fast rules. For example, if you really, really like a character and want to keep him around, you can cheat and let him live. If you really, really hate a character, you can cheat and let him die. Regardless of what you decide, that character is dead for the remainder of that adventure and can't come back until the next one begins.

Want to have some real fun? Okay, the player fails the roll, his character is dead. Don't tell him that, though. Bring him back for the next adventure, let him walk around for a while ... then start to rot. Right in the middle of the adventure, pieces are falling off him. Seems he's dead and just didn't realize it ... bet he knows now, though!

You can see why it's important that the players not know how many points they have or what they have to do to get or lose them. If you really want to be shifty, you can make the rolls for the characters and cut the players out (or up) completely. All they'll know is you're rolling dice, making hash marks on paper and laughing maniacally.

What you're shooting for here is for the players to never know whether death is final for their characters and do it in such a way that you can blame this book. The alternative is making arbitrary decisions on your own and having the players come after you with axes.

Of course, even if they know they have to achieve certain goals in an adventure, they probably won't know what they are. Thanks to the Cryptkeeper's cryptic clues, they'll be going down blind alleys in the dark with their eyes closed and only the sweet sounds of meat-grinders to guide them ...



Tim Boko



Yes, my clues will be a continuing deaducation for you. Let's hope you kiddies are good at ... Cryptograms! Hehehehehe!

BACK AGAIN?

If a "dead" player character does come back in a later adventure, keep in mind that he should still have the same number of Cryptkeeper Points he had before. He doesn't lose any through dying, unless you feel he died in a particularly wonderful way and deserves to lose a point for it. He's in just as much danger this time around unless he gets on the ball. And even if you don't tell him, he'll suspect it, and be much more likely to do whatever's necessary to avoid getting offed.

It's recommended that you not stick to the point system to the exclusion of all else. If you do, anyone who dies in an early adventure has virtually no chance of staying dead, and isn't that depressing? Kill 'em if you're of a mind to ... this isn't "Sunday in the Cemetery With the Cryptkeeper." This is the Crypt, which means they won't have far to go when they're stiff and cold.

Gamemaster characters (or "Cryptkeeper puppets" as we like to call them) do not get Cryptkeeper Points. If they die, they're dead, at least until they dig their way out of the ground and go to get some revenge ... but that's another story.

Imagine ... my own points! And here I thought I'd have to be content with the ones on your heads ...

THE MASTERDECK

Before reading this section, you should play your sweaty orbs over Chapter Five of *MasterBook*, "The Cards." This will give you all the basics you need to use the MasterDeck in your campaign. Though they are optional, they add an element of unpredictability to a game that adds to the tension and suspense. Check out page 119 of *MasterBook* to determine how many cards your players start out with in the game.

SUBPLOT CARDS

Certain cards in the MasterDeck are referred to as subplot cards. These allow a player to add a continuing storyline involving his character into an adventure. In *Tales From The Crypt*, though, subplots can often wind up drawing in the whole party (yes, *I can virtually guarantee you'll all end up sharing a plot ... probably in that little cemetery just outside*). Listed below are some ways you can use subplot cards to spice up your *Tales From The Crypt* adventures.

ALERTNESS

This card gives the player character a sort of "sixth sense" (*certainly the other five won't be doing him any good*). Basically, it means he'll spot clues others might not or maybe see that axe coming for his head just before it hits. This makes him more likely to let out with a good, loud scream, always a treat, so gamemaster/Cryptkeepers should encourage the play of these cards.

PERSONAL STAKE

Well, first you put it over the heart, then you take your hammer and ... oh, not that kind? What sort of game is this anyway?

Often, *Tales From The Crypt* stories involve people carried away by their passions ... their passions for love, for murder, and usually both. A *Personal Stake* means simply that something of importance to the character is at stake and motivates him to take action — often rash, foolish action with a chainsaw. To take an example from a *Crypt* episode, a photographer falls in love with his model. When she gets kidnapped by her insanely jealous boyfriend, the *Personal*





Tim Bobko

Stake comes into play. The photographer takes a gun and goes to find her ... too bad the boyfriend was waiting with that shovel.

Once the party members get to know each other or other people in the setting they're in, get to care about them, they become targets for *Personal Stakes*. Menace one and watch the player character throw caution to the winds and wind up food for the worms.

COMMON GROUND

Now let's see ... you're locked up in a dark house and somebody with a rubber fright mask on is hunting you down, one by one ... it might even be one of your fellow party members! What could you possibly all have in common? Hmmmmm ... you're all *terrified*, maybe?

Fear can split people apart, but it can also draw them together against a common enemy. No matter what setting the characters find themselves in, they can always count on the universal language of terror coming into play.

CONNECTION

Let's see ... carving ... chopping ... clubbing ... cremating ... no, I don't see any connecting here.

Since the *Connection* card deals with knowing a gamemaster character who can help you, it will probably not be of much help in a *Crypt* campaign. With the characters being dropped in and out of adventures at the whim of the Cryptkeeper, the odds are against their knowing anyone where they wind up ... or trusting any of them enough to accept help from them. But if you really want to be sadistic, maybe the characters could encounter a few dead friends or relatives who will help them on their way. Certainly any character would be happy to see dear old Dad again, even if he is missing a few parts ...

MARTYR

Giving your life so your friends might live ... how noble ... how admirable ... (*how idiotic! You can be sure they'll all be laughing at your funeral over what a sap you turned out to be! Maybe they'll even plant a tree and you can wind up a sapling ... Hehehehehe!*)

The *Martyr* card promises a dramatic, exciting death ... the *Crypt* promises something with lots of blood, gore, broken bones, shredded cartilage, and pain ... lots and lots of pain. The *Martyr* card is a sacrifice by the player, sure, but it's also a cute way of choosing when his character dies — but you still get to choose the how. Make it a moment the characters will remember, with a shudder.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Mistaken Identity means just what it says — you think someone is someone else or they mistook you for someone you're not (like this, kiddies: "What's that? You're not tonight's human sacrifice? But I could have sworn ... ! Oh, heck, you'll do just as well!")

You can have loads of fun with this card! A jealous wife has mistaken you for her husband's lover ... you know, the one she wants to chop up and feed to him? The local sheriff is sure you must be the guy who's been draining the blood out of all those cattle, arrests you and locks you up with ... the guy who's been draining the blood out of all those cattle. Or you're absolutely certain the tall, gaunt man with the sunken eyes is that devil-worshipper you've been hearing about ... it couldn't be that sweet little girl who's been following you, right?

(I'm always getting mistaken for famous movie stars, myself ... all the dead ones! Hehehehe!)

NEMESIS

Like *Connection*, this card is of limited use. Almost anyone you meet in the Crypt could be inclined to be your nemesis, but it's doubtful any of them will follow the characters from one adventure to the next. An enemy in one setting will probably be confined to that setting, with the exception of the Cryptkeeper.

ROMANCE

Some of my favorite terror tales involve a little love, a little sex, and lots of murder. Everybody wants some loving in their life ... but in the Crypt, boys and ghouls, be careful what you axe for ... you just might get it! Hehehehehe!

The *Romance* card can see a lot of use in *Tales From The Crypt*. There's nothing like moonlight in the graveyard ... wind through the spines, er, pines ... broken hearts, broken ribs, broken necks ... makes you feel half-dead again, doesn't it?

The great thing about love is that it clouds the brain. And clouded brains lead people into situations they'd be better off avoiding, situations that are more likely to end with a sharp thud than a soft sigh. Feel free to throw handsome hunks and femme fatales in your characters' path, folks whose good looks aren't the only things murderous about them.

SUSPICION

The important thing to remember about this card is that the player who draws it doesn't suspect others, but is suspected himself. People might start edging away from him, even his fellow player characters. Before he knows it, he's a pariah, shunned and hated by all, hunted through forests with hounds baying at his heels and ... well, okay, it might not be that bad. But it should certainly mess up his day.

ACTS AND SCENES

Like all *MasterBook* games, adventures in *Tales From The Crypt* will be broken up into Acts and Scenes. This means that ...

We interrupt this paragraph for a special noose bulletin. This is my game, remember? Acts and Scenes are for hams with some prayer of saving their bacon ... not for creatures of my comfy Crypt. So from now on, those prolonged periods of agony you call "adventures" will be broken up into ... hmmm ... "Hacks" and "Screams" seems a bit more like it!







CHARACTER CREATION



Welcome back, kiddies! Are you ready to start building your character? Of corpse you are! Hehehehehe! In this chapter, you'll learn all about Advantages (like "you're still alive") and Compensations (like "you won't be for long!")

So settle back, frightseers, and get ready for a behind-the-screams look at character cremation ...

To begin your adventures in *The World of Tales From The Crypt*, you must first design your character. This chapter describes how to create characters for a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign, including the special rules designed to give this game its unique flavor. As the Introduction states, this is a *MasterBook* game; the *MasterBook* rulebook is also required to create player characters for this game.

Before beginning to design your character, look through the chapters on "Character Creation" and "Background Generation" in the *MasterBook* rules. These will provide the basic outline of the character creation process, while this chapter fills in the details for *Tales From The Crypt*.

CHARACTER CONCEPT

The first step in character creation is developing a character concept. Consider who your character is, what she does for a living, what she cares about, and what types of skills she might have. When considering these issues, keep in mind that you will want a character who is both interesting to roleplay and will fit into the world and the game the gamemaster is developing.

In *Tales From The Crypt* campaigns, the setting and some of the physical abilities of the characters may change from episode to episode as the characters challenge the Cryptkeeper. Therefore, while skills are still important, personality and character type are the most important factors. Look beyond the numbers in the creation process. Ensure that your character has a purpose, and think about the problems he will face — how he will respond to the Cryptkeeper's evil schemes.

The basic assumption in this chapter on character creation matches the basic premise of *Tales From The Crypt* itself. The characters are presumed to be humans with an assortment of interesting personality quirks and flaws, strengths and weaknesses, who are trapped in these worlds by a power seeking their destruction ... or something infinitely worse. However, it may be possible to have a character who breaks free from that mold, operating as a free agent in the Cryptkeeper's realm, and the principles here apply to those characters as well.

As you develop your character concept, keep the gamemaster in mind. Talk with the gamemaster about the type of character you're most interested in, and allow him to help develop your character's history. This interaction will also help ensure that the gamemaster develops a campaign that appeals to you.



ATTRIBUTES

After developing your character concept, you then choose your character's attributes. There are eight attributes in the *MasterBook* system, which measure the physical, mental, and social abilities of the character. Characters in *Tales From The Crypt* begin with 68 attribute points; the normal human range for each attribute is from 5 to 13. Some characters may be able to exceed the normal maximum by selecting certain Background Advantages (see below).

Each character also begins play with five (5) Life Points.

For more information on attributes and Life Points, see Chapter One of *MasterBook*.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Players in the *World of Tales From The Crypt* have many options to choose from when they begin to develop their characters. They may select a "normal" human character from almost any profession — artists, businessmen, scientists, mercenaries, entertainers, etc. — trapped by the Cryptkeeper and manipulated as pawns in his murderous psychodramas. These characters use the standard rules for character creation in this chapter, and in the *MasterBook* rules.

The players may also choose to play a supranormal character, either a psychic with extraordinary powers of the mind, or a magic-wielder, who flirts with dark forces in pursuit of knowledge and power. These psychic characters and mages must select the required Background Advantage, either "Special Effects: Psychic (CIII)" or "Special Effects: Magic-Wielder (CIII)," in order to gain their exceptional powers. These Background Advantages are described in the section below.

Each character in *Tales From The Crypt* also possesses at least one "fatal flaw," normally a personality quirk, psychological problem, or a guilty secret. The Cryptkeeper seizes on these flaws, uses them to tempt the characters into his world, and then attempts to manipulate these flaws to drive the characters to destroy others and, finally, themselves. (For more on this, see "What the Cryptkeeper Knows," below.)

Before you begin to choose Background Options for your character, read Chapter Two of *MasterBook*, "Background Generation." That chapter will give you the basics of choosing Advantages and Compensations to round out your character. The Advantages and Compensations listed below are *in addition* to those in *MasterBook*, unless otherwise noted. Given the unique nature of the Cryptkeeper's domain, many Background Options listed in *MasterBook* do not apply, or have only a limited scope, in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*. These important differences are noted in this section as well.

Standard characters in *Tales From The Crypt* begin play with three Column I, two Column II, and one Column III Advantages, and a matching set of Compensations. As noted above, psychics and mages automatically select their most powerful Background Advantage when they choose to be that type of character. Each character in *Tales From The Crypt* also automatically possesses the Background Compensation "Enemy (CIII): Cryptkeeper." A "Quirk (CII)" is also highly recommended, often related to their fatal flaw or dark secret.

The "New Advantages and Compensations" box at the end of this chapter lists those background options which may be chosen by characters in addition to those included in the *MasterBook*.

BACKGROUND ADVANTAGES

The following are new Background Advantages available in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*. Certain Background Advantages listed in the *MasterBook* are also discussed here, to detail their application in this unique game setting.





Tom O'Neill

SPECIAL EFFECTS: PSYCHIC (CIII)

In the *World of Tales From The Crypt* game setting, this Background Advantage applies to characters with some psychic potential. This advantage allows the character to choose one *psychic* skill at one add, and to learn other *psychic* skills at normal cost. Characters without this Advantage may not learn *psychic* skills. These skills are described in Chapter Four.

SPECIAL EFFECTS: MAGIC-WIELDER (CIII)

This Advantage grants the character the ability to tap into and "control" certain of the mystic forces in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*. A character with this "Special Effects" advantage may choose one of the three *magic* skills which exist in the world at one add, and may develop his ability in that skill or learn additional magical skills at normal cost.

Given the disparate nature of these *magic* skills, and the rarity of magic in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*, it will be rare for a player character to be schooled in more than one such skill. Still, consult with the gamemaster if you wish your character to possess more than one *magic* skill. It may be possible to devise an appropriate background for such a character.

CONTACTS

As described in *MasterBook*, the "Contacts" Advantage fills in a character's background and provides them with certain resources to draw upon in time of need. With this Advantage, the character "knows" a person or a group of people who may provide assistance according to their abilities and inclinations.

This Advantage will usually not apply in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*, for the very premise of the game is that the characters have been torn from their usual life by the Cryptkeeper. As discussed in Chapter Six, "Designing and Running Adventures," the setting will change from one episode to the next. In addition, the characters will bounce from "shell" to "shell," filling many roles, exploring many mysteries and running into horror of all types! In this type of campaign, the characters are isolated from all they have known, and have little opportunity to build such connections anew.

At the discretion of the gamemaster, it *may* be possible for the character to know another person who is also trapped in the Cryptkeeper's domain, or to have some connection with a person or force which endures from one setting to the next. The "Contacts" Advantage would be useful in a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign only in such exceedingly rare cases.

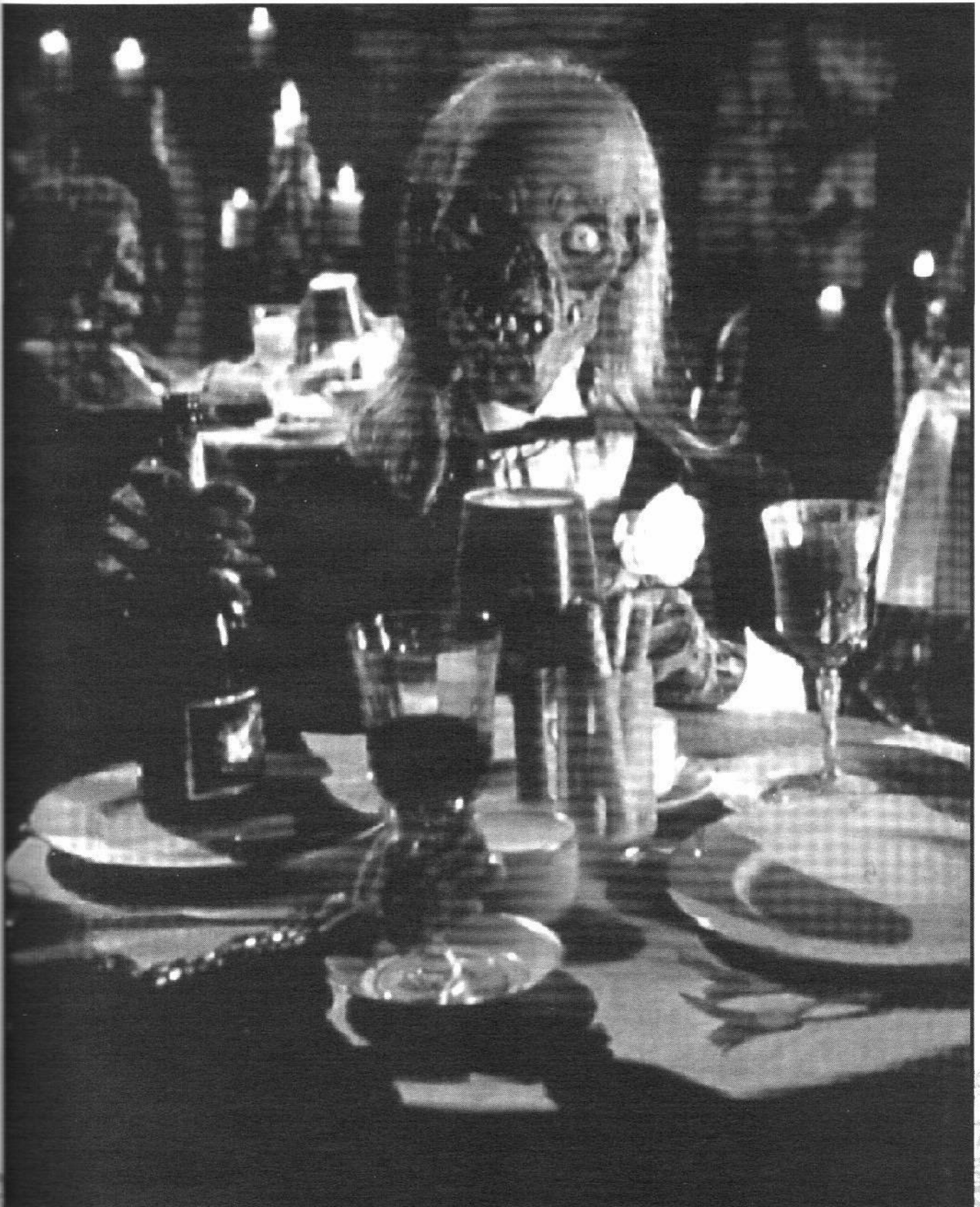
If, however, the gamemaster has designed a "one-shot" scenario — a one episode game — the characters may make full use of this Advantage. In these scenarios, the setting remains constant and the characters do not occupy a "shell" character. Therefore, the players may choose "Contacts" and other Advantages which rely on their characters' links to the world around them.

EQUIPMENT

In the *MasterBook* system, this Background Advantage enables a character to possess expensive, specialized, or restricted equipment beyond the gear, rations, and everyday items commonly available in the world. The "Equipment" advantage works very differently in *Tales From The Crypt*, for (save for certain rare magical artifacts) equipment does not normally shift with the character from persona to persona and from one world to the next, unless the gamemaster wishes it so. Therefore, this Advantage is normally only useful in a "one-shot" *Tales From The Crypt* scenario.

Here are some guidelines for how to use this advantage in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*:





Equipment (CI): A character with the "Equipment (CI)" advantage begins the scenario with approximately \$2,000 worth of additional gear or personal items. Even at this level, this Advantage could also refer to one valuable or precious item (perhaps a family heirloom) which might serve as a focal point for the character's own paranoia, or for the avarice of another.

Equipment (CII): The Advantage provides the character with up to \$10,000 in additional equipment. These resources may allow the character to possess rare items, and only the best quality in clothing and personal effects.

Equipment (CIII): The character with this Advantage may begin the scenario with up to \$20,000 of additional equipment. At this level, the character may purchase items which are very rare, restricted to military or government personnel, or even illegal.

FAME

This *MasterBook* Advantage is of little use in a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign, where the characters are torn from their own world and those who might recognize or remember them. Characters may still enjoy this advantage in a one-shot scenario, however. They would be wise to remember, however, that notoriety, and the pride it engenders, always come with a price in the Cryptkeeper's world!

SPECIAL ABILITIES

The fundamental premise of *Tales From The Crypt* is that the Cryptkeeper snatches normal, average people (well, maybe not strictly "normal" ... a bit more disturbed than most) away from their lives, manipulating them for reasons of its own. Aside from the "Special Effects" Advantages described earlier, most characters in *Tales From The Crypt* do not possess superhuman or paranormal abilities, and this Advantage won't come into play.

However, a handful of *Tales From The Crypt* episodes have dealt with vampires and such, so a future supplement will deal with how to incorporate such characters into your campaign.

WEALTH

As with the other *MasterBook* Advantages tied to a particular setting, "Wealth" is no advantage in a campaign setting. However, characters may still be very wealthy in a stand-alone scenario. Indeed, the high stakes and privileged atmosphere of the upper classes may serve as a breeding ground for intrigue, betrayal and misery behind a glittering facade — the stuff of everyday horror which is so easily magnified by the Cryptkeeper.

BACKGROUND COMPENSATIONS

The following are new Background Compensations, or twists on existing Background Compensations, for use in *Tales From The Crypt*. As we touched upon in the discussions above, it's recommended that player characters have a "Quirk" of some sort — appropriate examples are listed below.

In addition, all characters have the Cryptkeeper as a powerful foe ("Enemy (CIII)"). Normally, therefore, a *Tales From The Crypt* character will be able to select no other Column III Background Compensation. The gamemaster may make exceptions in individual cases for the sake of roleplaying, but should use extreme caution to avoid unbalancing the campaign.

SENSE OF DUTY

This Compensation gives the character a sense of loyalty or obligation to a certain person, place, institution, or cause. The character may be regarded as quaint, foolish, or worse for having this type of devotion to a cause. This Compensation also limits the character's freedom of action, by creating at least



a desire to remain loyal and fulfill his obligations. At this level, however, the character can violate his Sense of Duty if circumstances require by making a willpower total of 11.

Common foci for this sense of duty are a character's friends and loved ones, as well as their place of business or a social group. This Compensation works particularly well in *Tales From The Crypt* if it must coexist with other, competing, desires. The Cryptkeeper often uses this Compensation to manipulate the character, and enjoys little more than so hoisting the character "by his own petard."

Sense of Duty (CI): The character feels compelled to take certain actions out of a love of code or perceived duty to something else. The character may, at times, do things he finds morally questionable in order to achieve a greater good. At this level, his beliefs don't come into play very often.

Sense of Duty (CII): The character with this Compensation believes very strongly in something and will attempt to persuade others of the rightness of his beliefs. His beliefs play a role in his day-to-day life.

Sense of Duty (CIII): A character whose belief in a cause is so strong that it motivates almost all his actions would have this Compensation. The character would be willing to die for his belief.

ILLITERATE (CII)

A character with this Compensation can neither read nor write. This obviously makes it very difficult for the character to function in modern society, and almost impossible for him to better his station in life. This Compensation also may expose the character to scorn or ridicule. In sum, this Compensation can cause great frustration and bitterness, or cause the character untold heartache (for example, he accidentally poisons his daughter because he could not read the label on the medicine bottle).

QUIRK: FATAL FLAW (CII)

These Quirks differ from the standard Quirk described in *MasterBook* only in their virulence — the way in which they strike to the very heart and soul of the character. These Quirks are the passions, rages, desires and fears of the characters which make them most vulnerable to the Cryptkeeper. Using these fatal flaws as levers, the Cryptkeeper manipulates the characters, works his way inside their psyches, and leads them into temptation and worse.

Many characters in *Tales From The Crypt* will possess at least one fatal flaw, though many may have a host of other psychological problems. If used correctly, these flaws may add greatly to the



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roleplaying and terrifying humor in the game, and allow the characters to struggle to overcome their own weaknesses in order to survive. The *willpower* difficulty number to resist the lure of this flaw is 12, at first (as with any "Quirk (CII))." However, the Cryptkeeper is certain to place the characters in situations where their will is tested again and again, and the temptation grows. Several examples of possible fatal flaws are listed below.

Envy: A character with this flaw is consumed with desire for something (or someone, or some *things*, or just *more* things) which he does not have and may not easily obtain. This envy, whether of possessions or of love, will color the character's perceptions, and, indeed, his entire life. The character will often be tempted to scheme, plot, manipulate and betray others in an effort to obtain whatever he desires. This obsession may well lead the character to his destruction, and/or the destruction of all that he holds dear.

Gluttony: A character with this fatal flaw has huge, perhaps insatiable appetites for a variety of pleasures. This flaw is most often associated with food, but may apply equally to alcohol, or any other sensual pleasure. The character finds it extremely difficult to resist the "temptations of the flesh," and may well act against her own best interests in pursuit of pleasure.

Jealousy: A character with this flaw is obsessed with protecting his hold over something (or things) or, more often, someone. This character is always suspicious, concerned that threats to his money, position or love lie behind every corner. He will often act irrationally to "protect" his interests, and may well follow the "If I can't have it/her, no one else can either" school of thought. This character may often be manipulated into destroying that which he seeks to protect, and thus ultimately himself.

Perfectionist/Workaholic: This quirk is fairly common in modern society, among people from all walks of life. Perhaps the stereotypical victim of this obsession is a professional driven to spend long hours away from his family. He takes no pleasure in the company of others, but strives only for tangible "achievements" — and for perfection in all things.

This flaw often leads to a dangerous obsession, and moral blindness in the pursuit of his goals. To a character with this flaw, the subject of his employment is by far the most important thing in his life. This type of obsession and lack of perspective makes him very dangerous, and may lead to his destruction.

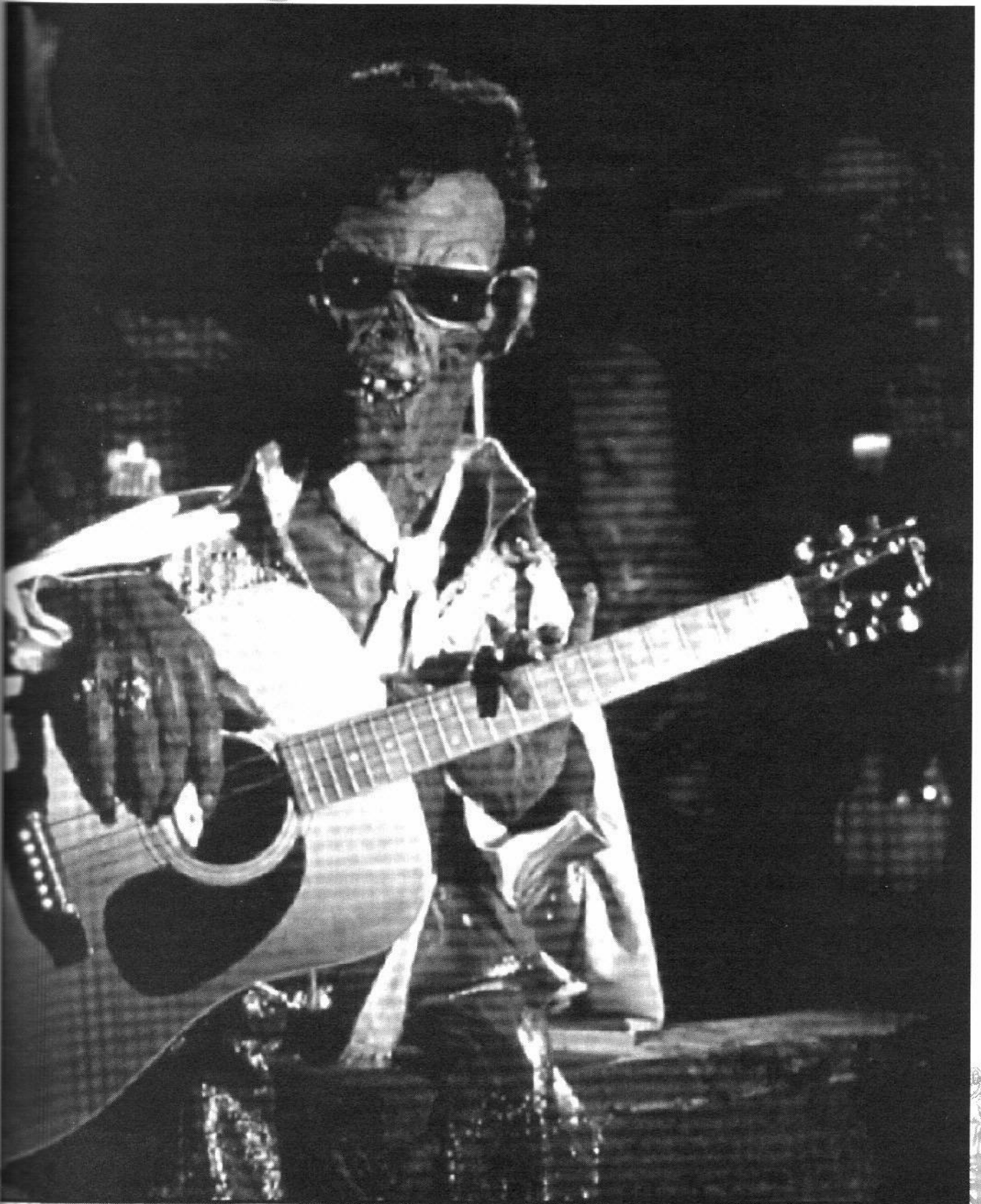
ENEMY (CIII): CRYPTKEEPER

All characters in *Tales From The Crypt* possess this mandatory compensation. The Cryptkeeper is the nearly all-powerful enemy of the characters. He has drawn them into his world; trapped them in his strange dimension; and tests and tempts the characters, seeking to terrify and manipulate them for his own dark purposes.

Yet, despite the Cryptkeeper's power, he is not invincible, and the characters may hope to struggle against him (and themselves) and someday succeed in breaking his hold and returning to their normal lives. For, while the Cryptkeeper seemingly wants to destroy the characters, he wants them to die in a certain manner. He derives great pleasure from manipulating the characters, "pulling their strings" and watching them react to his ploys. He seeks to force the characters to act and react against their own best interests, willingly treading the path to destruction. Indeed, the Cryptkeeper draws into his world only those characters with compulsions or quirks which make them most vulnerable to his ploys (in fact, many of those drawn in have initially attempted to summon the Cryptkeeper themselves, only to have the attempt backfire horribly on them). Characters who resist these temptations may hope to one day win free.

WHAT THE CRYPTKEEPER KNOWS

In the back of this book, you'll find 10 character templates. Each of these templates features one new entry, entitled "What the Cryptkeeper Knows." Put





NEW ADVANTAGES AND COMPENSATIONS

ADVANTAGES

Special Effects: Magic-Wielder (CIII): Gain one *magic* skill at one add, and may learn other *magic* skills at normal cost.

Special Effects: Psychic (CIII): Gain one *psychic* skill at one add and may learn other *psychic* skills at normal cost.

COMPENSATIONS

Sense of Duty (CI): Character feels compelled to take actions out of a love of code.

Illiterate (CII): Character cannot read or write.

Quirk (CII): Fatal Flaw: Character has a potentially destructive character flaw.

Sense of Duty (CII): Character believes very strongly in something and will attempt to persuade others of the rightness of his beliefs.

Enemy (CIII): Cryptkeeper: The Cryptkeeper is set on manipulating and torturing the character.

Sense of Duty (CIII): Character believes in something strongly enough to die for it.

simply, each character in *Tales From The Crypt* has some dark secret in his past, some secret fear, or just something they'd rather everyone around them not know. But the Cryptkeeper knows ... and he'll use that knowledge against the player character, when the time is right.

For example: George is deathly afraid of rats — maybe his mother was devoured by them before his eyes when he was a boy. Anyway, here he is going down to a dank basement with Peter, searching for a femur that got misplaced somehow. What they don't know is that someone sawed through the stairs. Peter goes plunging into the darkness, hanging on by his fingertips. George is the only one who can save him — if only those rats hadn't started swarming all over the staircase. The result? Peter winds up maimed and a nice, juicy hatred develops between him and George. What fun!

Remember, you are essentially doing two jobs in this game. As gamemaster, you are trying to make the game fun, interesting and challenging for the players. As Cryptkeeper, you're there to make the poor fools' lives hell. Remember that it's a fine line between challenging players and frustrating them — if they feel things are hopeless, they'll lose interest in playing. Try to always leave them an out if they're smart enough to find it ... of course, the Cryptkeeper only knows what they'll have to go through to do that!



IV

NEW SKILLS



That's right, creeps — it's the Cryptkeeper again, here to talk about your characters' skulls. They're pretty important, you know — after all, if you didn't have a skull, what would your friends and loved ones get to bash in? Hehehehehe!

What's that? Not skulls? Skills? Well ... I suppose your character might want a few of those too. After all, the morgue the merrier! Hehehehehehe!

This chapter discusses new skills for use in *The World of Tales From The Crypt*. The *Tales From The Crypt* Skill List on pages 70–72 lists all skills available to *Tales From The Crypt* characters, including those found in the *MasterBook* rules.

The *MasterBook* skills not listed are not normally available to characters in *The World of Tales From The Crypt* (unless the gamemaster decides otherwise). The skills marked with an @ are explained in this chapter. Explanations of the other skills listed can be found in Chapter Four of the *MasterBook*, "Skills and Skill Use."

AGILITY

ESCAPE ARTIST

Uses: Cannot be used untrained.

Specializations: Types of restraints (ropes, chains, locks, etc.)

This skill allows a character to escape from otherwise secure bonds by twisting, contorting, dislocating and relocating joints, and manipulating her body into a variety of "impossible" positions. A character with this skill may attempt to escape from almost any type of confinement which physically restrains his body, so long as the character is not completely immobilized. (This skill can be downright handy when those little "monsters" from next door take the concept of "trick or treat" just a little too far!)

The chart below contains sample difficulty numbers for escaping from various kinds of restraints. The gamemaster may modify these DN's according to the specific circumstances of any given escape. (Examples of modifying circumstances include: a time limit, the character's distraction as she sees the axe blade on the pendulum slowly descending towards her chest, or quality of restraints.)

Note that this skill does not substitute for the *lockpicking* skill when opening doors, attempting to open handcuffs before the maniac returns with his electric drill, or breaking out of a dungeon. For example, this skill would allow the character to pull his arms over his head to use his hands, but not to slip out of properly secured handcuffs.

ESCAPE ARTIST CHART

Sample Restraints	Difficulty Numbers
Ropes	10
Wires	12
Handcuffs	13
Straitjacket	15

IMPROVISED WEAPONRY

Use: Cannot be used *untrained*

Specializations: Piercing weapons (icepick, awl, scissors), bludgeoning weapons (bat, iron, pans, chair), strangulation attacks (scarves, electrical cords), slashing weapons (scissors, kitchen knives, sharpened pencils, staple removers), missile weapons (canned goods, paperweights), etc.

This skill allows the character to improvise a weapon in almost any situation, and use it effectively in self-defense or to maim a hapless foe. Anyone can grab a garbage can lid to use as a shield, or swing a baseball bat as a club, but most suffer penalties when using these unfamiliar implements which all too often make clumsy weapons. Characters skilled at *improvised weaponry*, on the other hand, are veritable geniuses at recognizing weapons in common items and putting them to good use.

When a character with this skill looks about for a weapon, he must make a successful skill total of 8 to find a likely candidate. Success indicates that the character locates and seizes a weapon, and can use it in his next action. (At the gamemaster's discretion, the level of success achieved may determine the nature and quality of the weapon found.)

In the hands of these "experts," the improvised weapons function exactly as their closest standard counterpart (gamemaster's discretion) with no reduction to damage. Thus, an electrical cord becomes a garrote, and an icepick becomes a dagger. Moreover, if the character possesses the appropriate general weapons skills (*melee combat*, *missile weapons*, etc.) the character suffers no penalty to hit with the improvised weapon if he rolls another skill total of 8 or better. If the character has no relevant weapons training, he must make a skill total of 10 or better, or suffer the standard penalties.

ENDURANCE

RESIST PAIN

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*

Specializations: Ignore wounds, resist going into shock, etc.

This skill allows the character to ignore the detrimental effects of wounds in combat. What this means is that when the character is injured (one wound or more) he can choose to make a *resist pain* roll against the difficulty number indicated on the chart below. If he succeeds, he will act as though he was suffering from a less severe wound. The result of the roll is checked on the "Push" column of the Success Chart to determine what wound level the character operates at.

Please note that use of this skill has no bearing on the actual wound levels a character has suffered and in no way reduces or heals them. This skill is useful only in short term (during combat rounds). The pain reduction lasts until another wound or shock point is taken or until ten combat rounds have passed, when another skill roll must be made.



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RESIST PAIN CHART

Wound Level Sustained	Difficulty Number
Light	9
Moderate	11
Heavy	15
Incapacitated	20
Mortal	26

INTELLECT

COMPUTER HACKING

Use: Cannot be used *untrained*, requires *computer ops* as a prerequisite skill.
Sample Specializations: Types of software, network designs, virtual combat.

The *computer ops* skill allows a character to operate a computer, do basic programming, and access information. That skill, however, does *not* grant the character the ability to attempt to gain unauthorized access to other computer programs and systems.

The *computer hacking* skill is primarily used to penetrate and operate within normally inaccessible computer systems. This skill reflects the talent and experience of the character not only with general computer operations, but with decoding passwords, defeating security programs and failsafes, and accessing and manipulating information from outside of a home system.

The gamemaster must determine the difficulty numbers for each *computer hacking* attempt. Computer systems and 'cyberspace' encounters vary so widely that gamemasters should determine the difficulty using the "Arbitrary DN Scale" in Chapter Three of *Masterbook*. The sophistication of the character's computer system and of the target system, the quality of the target software, and the level of security on the target system may all modify the DN. The character must roll a separate action to penetrate the target system, to read/download a file, and to escape detection while performing these illicit actions. If the system is being actively monitored for intrusion, the character may have to roll repeatedly to avoid detection.

To this point, *computer hacking* differs little from the user's excursions onto the Internet in our own world. However, horror takes many forms in *The World of Tales From The Crypt*, and danger lurks everywhere. Computer use can be very dangerous in the Cryptkeeper's world. While characters gain access to the shadowy routes of the information highway, they also open their body and mind to the horrors which lurk in the ether — computer viruses and security programs warped beyond all recognition by the evil which permeates this world. If a netrunning character attracts the attention of such entities, these insubstantial denizens may attack the character if they (or the Cryptkeeper) so desire — drawing the unfortunate character's perceptions into the system for the duration of the encounter (similar to the dream sequences common to many modern horror films), or invading the character's body.

If an episode of *Tales From The Crypt* includes situations in which the characters may have to turn to computers for research or clues, the gamemaster should determine whether they risk facing one of these high-tech horrors. If so, the characters must use their *computer hacking* skills to avoid detection (similar to evading a security system), and to improvise and quickly create the codes required for successful attacks and defenses should combat begin. Gamemasters should use these electronic encounters as opportunities for roleplaying, as well as to enhance the strangeness and horror of this world.



In virtual combat, the computer-using character must use *computer hacking* to improvise attacks and defenses, which manifest as metaphors — images selected by the players and the gamemaster. In this battle, the character's mental abilities substitute for the physical abilities commonly used in combat (see chart below). Damage done in this insubstantial world may be very real indeed; characters run the risk of losing their minds (or worse) to these creatures of the void. The characters may attempt to destroy their adversaries, but will most often wish simply to avoid detection or to successfully flee. Regardless of the outcome of the combat, one of these "cyber-battles" in a target system will certainly ruin a stealthy mission.

Of course not all viruses manifest so openly. More than one character has unknowingly picked up a hitchhiking computer virus, only to discover its existence after becoming fatally infected.



A NOTE ON MAGIC SKILLS

Three of the magic skills — *divination*, *summoning* and the all-new *curse* — are included in the *World of Tales From The Crypt* skill list. All three of these skills are described in this chapter, because even those listed in *MasterBook* have special twists in the Cryptkeeper's world. In general, while these are powerful skills, they are less "flashy" than the magics of heroic fantasy. These skills are chosen because they have an unsettling tendency to crawl deep into a person's brain, feeding off of — and into — horror, obsession and despair. These magical skills may doom the victim, but often lead the caster to his own destruction as well.

Characters trapped in the Cryptkeeper's macabre world will, in all likelihood, encounter practitioners of these "arts" in their travels, and some characters may possess these skills as well. These three skills are not Macroskills in *Tales From The Crypt*. Only characters who possess the Background Advantage "Special Effects: Magic-Wielder" may use these skills, and such characters should use caution when approaching occult matters. To paraphrase a noted philosopher, when you stare into the darkness, the darkness is liable to pluck your eyeball out and have it for supper!

VIRTUAL COMBAT CONVERSION CHART

Physical Statistic*	Substitute
Strength	Mind
Dexterity	Intellect
Endurance	Confidence
Agility	Charisma

*The character's TOU and "movement" values are also recalculated for virtual combat, using the substituted statistics.

DIVINATION

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Scrying pools, crystals, viscera, Tarot cards, Ouija boards, bones, runes, dice, etc.

Divination is a special effects skill (see Chapter Six of the *MasterBook*, "Special Effects"). This skill is used to generate magical special effects — specifically governing magical means of obtaining knowledge. Only a character possessing the Background Advantage "Special Effects: Magic Wielder" may use this skill in *Tales From The Crypt*.

Divination covers a number of different magical means which a character might use to gain knowledge of far-off happenings in his world. For example, predicting the future, reading the past, and seeing or hearing occurrences in distant places are all within the province of the diviner. In *Tales From The Crypt*, the character does not "cast spells," as such. Rather, the diviner performs the

necessary ritual to gain knowledge — note that almost all diviners will have one set ritual, with a specialization in their favorite “tools of the trade.”

When attempting a divination, the character must generate a *divination* skill total which exceeds the difficulty of the desired special effect. The gamemaster determines the difficulty of the attempt based on the information sought, the setting, the character's use of proper ritual and equipment, any protection around the target, etc. If the *divination* skill total is higher than the DN, the attempt succeeds. The level of success achieved may determine the quality and extent of the information gained.

INVENTOR

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Clockwork; electronics; simple mechanics (ropes, pulleys, etc.); complex mechanics (vehicles, engines).

The *inventor* skill is the skill of the tinkers and gadgeteers. These characters can range from the handyman who can fix any problem while creating just the right tool for the job, to the crazed hermit who toils for decades in his smoky basement laboratory. Inventors may have varying degrees of scientific knowledge or higher education, but none is required for the use of this skill. Training and learning don't make one an inventor. More often, the inventor has an inspiration and a wild idea which actually works — a triumph of instinct rather than reason.

Of course, the source and results of “inspiration” often take a sinister turn in *The World of Tales From The Crypt*. Far too many inventors may become obsessed with their creations or with creating; after all, in such obsessions lie the roots of madness and self-destruction. Inventors can be exciting and useful companions, but they can also fuel many episodes delving into the very depths of obsession, frustration, twisted desires and despair.

RADIO OPS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Military, shortwave, satellite transmission, HAM radios, AM/FM, etc.

The radio has been a fixture of daily life since the 1930's, and it is a vital means of communication for many organizations. This includes military units, scientists operating in isolated locations, and all those operating in remote areas. *Radio ops* is the ability to monitor radio transmissions and to transmit messages across the airwaves. It also covers the technical operation of all the equipment necessary to send and receive broadcasts. This skill can be used for simple transmissions, or for picking specific signals out of the crowded ether. This skill may be particularly important for transmitting desperate pleas for help which are unlikely to arrive in time, or in reinforcing the hopelessness of the characters' situation as no one responds to their cries for aid.

SAFE CRACKING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Acids, explosives, lock-picking, tumblers.

Anyone can blow a safe, a building, or a school wide open with enough firepower. Indeed, this type of criminal activity is all too common among greed-filled inhabitants of this world. It is much more difficult, however, to force a safe or other container open while leaving its contents intact. Bank robbers don't just drop a 500-pound bomb on the vault, because burnt fragments of money are no good to them. That's where the *safe cracking* skill comes in.

The specializations of the skill cover the most common means used to break into safes. This skill also applies to other types of vaults or strongboxes with



complicated locking mechanisms. *Safe cracking* cannot be used in place of *demolitions* or *lockpicking* in other situations.

VEHICLE MECHANIC

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: By specific vehicles within a *foci*, or by specific type of repair.

This skill is used to diagnose and repair the mechanical problems of motorized vehicles, or to surreptitiously cause mechanical problems where none had existed before. This skill can accomplish a variety of tasks, from changing oil to overhauling an engine. Characters with this skill may also sabotage a vehicle (cutting or bleeding brake lines, weakening vital parts, etc.) in ways that are difficult to detect beforehand or trace afterwards. While the gamemaster must set the difficulty number for each task, factors including the complexity of the vehicle and the tools available can modify the difficulty of any given task.

If the mechanic fails his roll, he may have failed to make the repair, may have only made a temporary fix, or botched the task entirely. It is the gamemaster's responsibility to decide whether the repair works for a time, only to fail later if and when too much stress is applied to the machine.

This skill may also be used to sabotage a vehicle. A skilled mechanic will understand how a vehicle works, and may cause a vehicle to malfunction completely, or set up a subtle flaw that will cause a catastrophic failure at some later time.

MIND

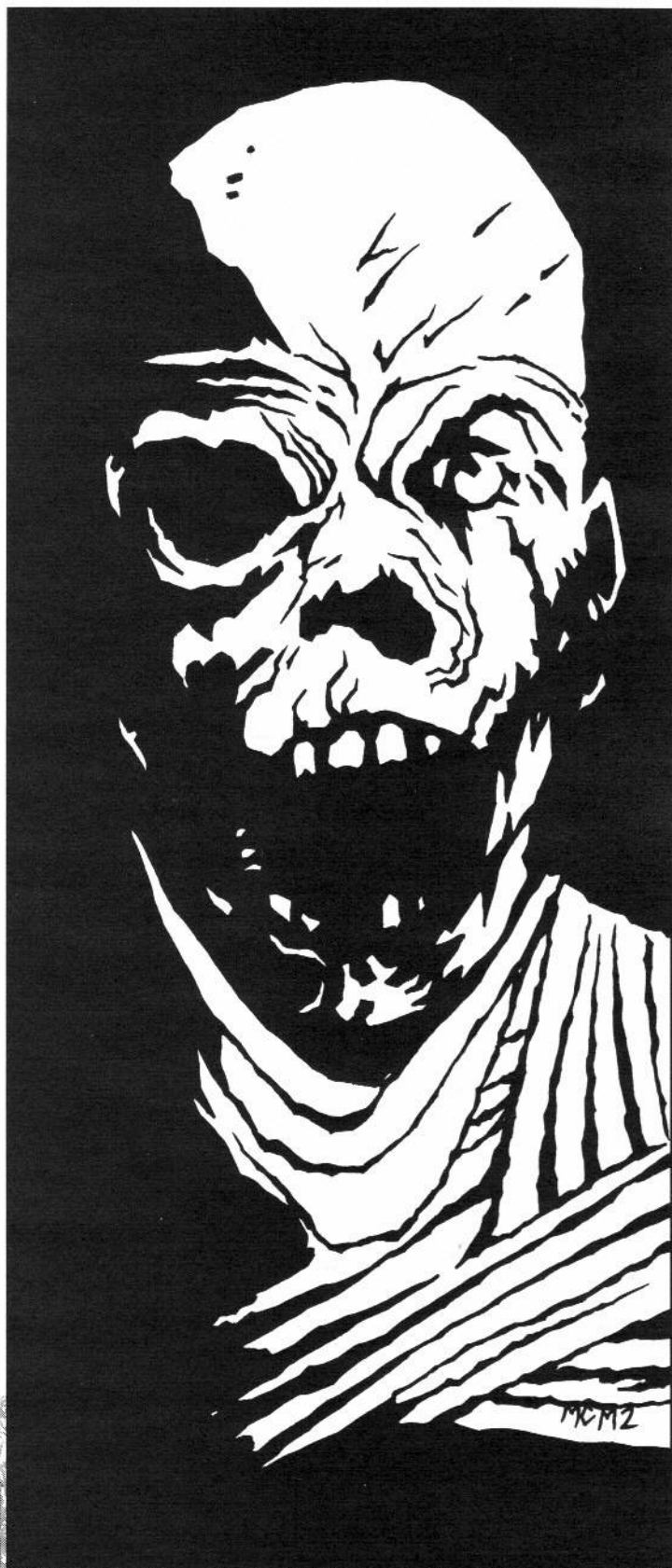
PSYCHIC SKILLS

Like the *science* and *scholar* skills, *psychic* is a Macroskill, a skill which requires a particular focus. These *psychic* foci are available only to characters with the Background Advantage "Special Effects: Psychic" (CIII). Note that, for the purposes of *Tales From The Crypt*, this macroskill takes the place of the *MasterBook* skill *psionic manipulation*. Psychic abilities in *Tales From The Crypt* tend to be less powerful and less easily-controlled than the effects of *psionic manipulation*.

Note that many of the *psychic* foci may be used (or should we say "experienced") *untrained*. If the characters possess the required Background Advantage, they may choose to buy these *psychic* skill foci at an *untrained* level for a reduced cost (one point less). In this case, these *psychic* foci represent latent potential in the character — potential which may manifest spontaneously from time to time. This reflects the fact that in *The World of*



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Tales From The Crypt, the mystic and psychic energies move just beneath surface consciousness; the barriers between the physical realm and the spiritual/magical realms are very thin. Stressful situations, including stimuli intentionally inflicted by the Cryptkeeper, may jolt the character from one realm into the next. All actions taken by a character untrained at the use of the *psychic* foci are at +3 difficulty.

Characters who choose the "Special Effects: Psychic" Advantage receive one add in a *psychic* skill with a particular focus (e.g. *psychic: astral projection*). These characters may also learn other psychic disciplines at the same cost as any other skill. Characters who do not choose this Advantage may not learn any *psychic* skill. (Note also that no character may choose both this Advantage and the "Special Effects: Magic-Wielder" Advantage.)

A list of foci — individual psychic skills — is provided below. While many psychics have only one strong psychic talent, and most will have no more than a few such talents, a character may select and develop as many of these foci as their skill points, and the gamemaster, will allow. Remember that the list below is not all-inclusive. Gamemasters should feel free to develop other psychic skills for use in their campaign.

PSYCHIC: ASTRAL PROJECTION

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

Psychics with *astral projection* may leave their bodies behind, wandering the world in spirit form — travelling far more rapidly than is normally possible. Indeed it is rumored that astrally projecting characters may even approach the Crypt itself.

The psychic character may sense the physical world, but cannot affect the physical world while in astral form. He may use any other psychic skills he possesses while astrally projecting. However, the strain of using two such skills at once adds +2 to the DN of any actions taken with the second skill.

Psychic: astral projection is not a simple skill to use. The character must make a skill total of 10 to successfully slip out of her body. For each hour beyond the first which the character wishes to remain outside her body, she must make an additional roll at DN+2. (For example, the first hour is at a difficulty of 10, the second at a 12, the third at 14, and so on.)

Note that the body is an empty shell while the spirit is travelling, and will need to be protected. The character has no idea what is happening to her

body while her consciousness is away from it. If the body is moved, the spirit will have to search for it. If the body is killed, the spirit has no place to return to — and will dissolve into the ether upon failing a skill roll. The body is also vulnerable to occupancy by other spirits or creatures travelling in astral form while the character's consciousness remains outside the physical shell. If another entity occupies the character's body, she must fight to expel that consciousness from her body or else risk the possibility of permanently sharing her physical form with the outside entity and losing control of her body to it at crucial times.

The distance that an individual may travel, and the time she may remain out-of-body, may vary with each out-of-body experience. The gamemaster must assign difficulty numbers to any task attempted in astral form. The chart below gives some examples of various tasks, with sample difficulty numbers.

PSYCHIC: ASTRAL PROJECTION DIFFICULTY CHART

Activity	Difficulty
Entering astral form	10
Travelling for up to one minute per point of Endurance, up to one kilometer from body	5
Travelling for up to ten minutes per point of Endurance, up to ten kilometers from body	8
Travelling up to 1,000 kilometers away, up to one hour per point of Endurance, May manifest visually to observers	12
Travel up to 4,000 kilometers away. All senses except touch now function. Appear solid to observers when manifesting	15
Travel anywhere in the world. May speak in a whisper when physically manifest	18

PSYCHIC: CLAIRVOYANCE

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This ability allows the psychic character to use her senses at a range not normally possible, to hear or see what is happening in distant places. A skill total of 8 is required to activate the skill; and a +3 is added to the DN of all actions unless a focus for the effort — such as someone known to the character — is present at the targeted location.

As with *astral projection*, the character may not notice things happening at his body's location while sensing clairvoyantly. *Clairvoyance* does not allow the character to affect events that he witnesses using this skill. The character is merely an observer.

PSYCHIC: CLAIRVOYANCE DIFFICULTY CHART

Activity	Difficulty
Activating clairvoyance	8
Seeing fuzzy visions of other rooms inside same building	5
Seeing location in the same town, hearing also functions on a Good success roll or better	8
Can see and hear things anywhere within 250 kilometer; touch functions on a Good success roll or better, although objects feel peculiar	12
Can see, hear, and touch anything within 1,000 kilometers	15
Can use all five senses on any object anywhere in the world	18

PSYCHIC: MEDIUM

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This skill allows the psychic to attempt to call up and contact the spirits of the dead. (*Untrained* characters may simply find themselves in contact with spirits inhabiting a particular location.) This skill is not easy to use, for the dead do not enjoy being disturbed. Characters must make a successful skill roll of 12 to contact the spirit in question.

The level of success achieved on the roll determines how long the two may remain in communication. For each level of success achieved by the psychic, the character may speak for one minute. The psychic may double this time limit by generating a successful total of 15. The chart below lists sample modifiers to the difficulty rolls of the psychic character. Difficulty modifiers can be cumulative.

PSYCHIC: MEDIUM DIFFICULTY MODIFIER CHART

Condition	Modifier
Psychic at location of former home of spirit, or place of death	-2
Psychic has a possession of the spirits'	-1
Psychic knows spirit's name	-1
Spirit dead less than one year	-1
Spirit was murdered	+1
Spirit has been contacted previously	+1 (per contact)
Spirit dead more than five years	+1
Spirit dead more than ten years	+2





PSYCHIC- EMPATH

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This psychic skill allows the empathic character to sense the emotional state of those around him, to catalogue and identify strong emotions. This skill can be very useful in negotiation, but can also be used to detect the presence of a hostile or dangerous spirit or entity. Of course, the emotions sensed by the empath may be very disturbing, or even frightening, to the character given the often evil or perverse nature of their foes (and sometimes of their friends).

This skill is easier to access than many psychic skills. Empaths require only a successful skill roll of 5 to begin receiving emotions. This ability functions to a maximum range of approximately 50 meters.

Characters may also use this skill in an attempt to sense strong emotions even days after the person or alien experiencing the emotion has left the area. Strong emotions sometimes leave psychic echoes and a skilled empath may pick up on these. This requires a skill total of 12 with the difficulty number increasing by +1 for every day that passes following the emotional release.

There are many conditions which modify the difficulty of tracking and identifying the emotions of a specific individual, especially when attempting to sense the emotions of one individual in the midst of a crowd. The chart below provides some sample DN modifiers.

PSYCHIC- EMPATH DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS TABLE

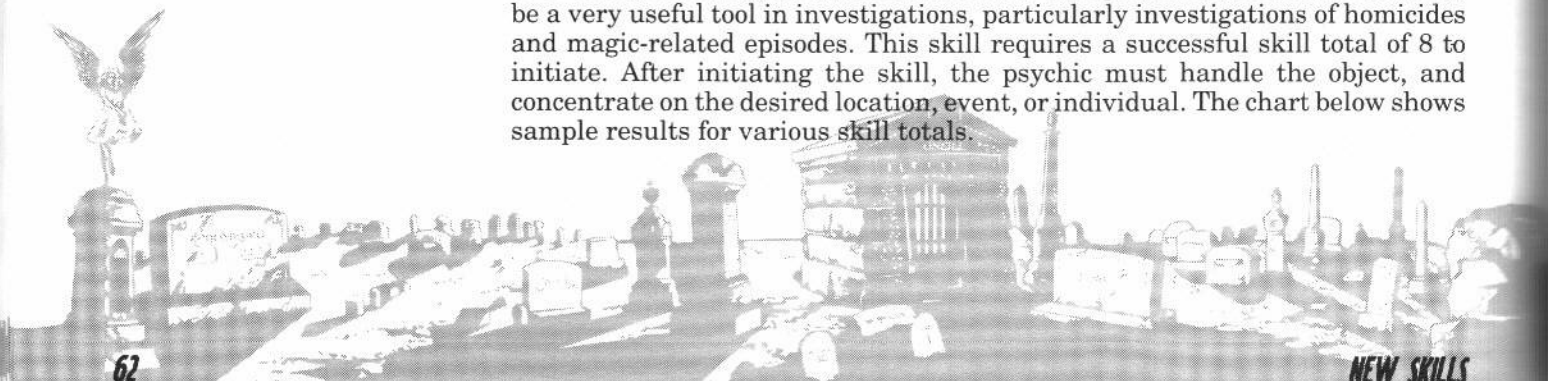
Condition	Modifier
Target experiencing very intense emotions	-1 to -3
Target alone	-1
Target unaware of empath's presence	-1
For every five people within 15 meters of target	+1
For every five people within 15 meters of empath	+1
Target attempting to conceal emotions	+2
Empath experiencing intense emotion	+1 to +5

PSYCHIC- PSYCHOMETRY

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This ability allows the character to sense information about a person, place, or event by handling an object connected to that person or place. This skill can be a very useful tool in investigations, particularly investigations of homicides and magic-related episodes. This skill requires a successful skill total of 8 to initiate. After initiating the skill, the psychic must handle the object, and concentrate on the desired location, event, or individual. The chart below shows sample results for various skill totals.



PSYCHIC: PSYCHOMETRY DIFFICULTY CHART

Result	Difficulty
Character receives vague, dreamlike impressions of recent activities involving strong emotions	8
In addition to above, psychic receives a snapshot quality image of the person most closely associated with object	10
Can register the gist of an event and the number of people involved. If concentrating on person, can learn general information on subject, like age, emotional state, personality, etc.	12
Can clearly visualize event, or the actions of the individual for the last twenty four hours	15
Psychic understands the context of all interactions at the event, or into the plans and motives of the person when last in possession of the object. Also receives vague impression of owner's whereabouts.	18

PSYCHIC: TELEKINESIS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This ability allows the character to move things with her mind simply by concentrating. This skill requires a total of 8 to initiate, and the psychic then rolls again to attempt to move the desired object. The object must be in the psychic's line of sight for the psychic to pick it up, but need not remain in the line of sight afterwards.

The gamemaster should assign difficulty numbers to all prospective *psychic: telekinesis* rolls. The chart below provides some sample results.

PSYCHIC: TELEKINESIS DIFFICULTY CHART

Action	Difficulty
Levitate small items off a table	5
Bend spoons, flip switches, otherwise affect small objects	8
Pick up object up to 15 meters away and throw it around.	10
Object can weigh one-half of the weight value the psychic can "lift" with his Intellect.	
Can lift objects requiring full Intellect, within 200 feet.	12
Can pick up multiple objects.	

Can lift object weighing as much as INT+2 could lift. Range is line of sight. Can manipulate number of items equal to Dexterity.

15

PSYCHIC- TELEPATHY

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This skill grants the psychic the ability to read people's minds, as well as the minds of spirits and monsters, which is often a decidedly mixed blessing. Unfortunately, more than a fleeting brush with the minds of such creatures may unbalance the psychic, or even drive him completely insane. The results of such an encounter vary with the intensity, purpose, and duration of the contact. A prolonged encounter (more than one minute) could, for example, result in the character acquiring a new Quirk (CII) or insanity (CIII).

To initiate contact with the target's mind, the psychic must first make a successful *psychic: telepathy* roll with a DN equal to the target's Confidence attribute + any *willpower* adds. Once contact is initiated, the psychic rolls again. The chart below provides sample results, and difficulty numbers for desired results. The target is normally unaware of the telepathic contact, unless the character rolls a 2 on his skill roll. If the character wishes to convey information to his subject through telepathy, he must make another roll (DN 12) to do so.

PSYCHIC- TELEPATHY DIFFICULTY CHART

Action	Difficulty
Can feel basic emotions of target in line of sight	8
Read surface thoughts of target in line of sight	10
Read recent memories, or plans for near future, of target in line of sight	12
Read deep thoughts and future plans. Level of success achieved determines amount of information.	15
May read people within 15 meters without seeing them	
Read multiple minds at once, or discover deep secrets	18

RESEARCH

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Library, files, newspapers, public records

This skill allows the character to gather information from second-hand sources. Characters with the *research* skill can attempt to discover information from a variety of sources. Most often, the source will be a library or reference book, but *research* covers the skill required to sift through almost any type of printed material, or even other media (e.g. computer research). *Research* differs from the *scholar* skill primarily in that it focuses on the study of broad subjects. This skill is best used for short projects with a definite conclusion. The chart below provides guidelines for determining the difficulty of a particular research project.

RESEARCH DIFFICULTY CHART

Condition	Difficulty
Information in any encyclopedia	7
Information available in old secondary sources	10
Information available from only a very well-stocked university library, or equivalent	12
Information available from rare volumes, or is extremely obscure	15

NEW SCHOLAR FOCI

The scholar skill covers knowledge of a particular topic or area of expertise. Whether this knowledge comes from life experience or "book learning" is immaterial. To use this Macroskill, you must have a focus; a new focus for The World of Tales From The Crypt is listed below. Of course, players are free to choose other scholar foci detailed in MasterBook.

SCHOLAR: OCCULT LORE

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Black magic, the Cryptkeeper, Satanism, Voodoo, Qabbalism, Demonology, Spirits, etc.

This new focus of the scholar skill is particularly vital in Tales From The Crypt. This skill grants the character access to a great deal of information concerning the many religious, quasi-religious and magical practices he may stumble upon in the Cryptkeeper's twisted reality. This skill covers topics covering the spectrum from magical spells to spirit lore, from summoning extra-dimensional creatures to the uses of protective runes. A character with this skill might possess insight on the possible strengths and weaknesses of a magical adversary, or he might be able to piece together obscure clues and oblique references to learn the true nature of the demonic horror he faces. (What is the meaning of that hastily-scrawled symbol? Why is that blood flowing from the mirror this morning?)

The gamemaster must determine the difficulty number each time the character attempts to use this skill; the difficulty will vary greatly according to the obscurity of the information sought, the character's mental state, and the resources at the character's disposal.

This skill can be used untrained, for many characters may have picked up a little bit of knowledge over time. However, no character is likely to know a great deal about occult lore or its specializations without substantial study or practical training. The gamemaster should normally consider assessing an additional penalty to the skill roll of an untrained character attempting to use scholar: occult lore.



CONFIDENCE

BRIBERY

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Favors, goods, money

Bribery is the character's skill at convincing some individual to ignore their duty, either "looking the other way" or actively betraying their trust for personal gain. Such corruption is all too common in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*, as weak or greedy people all too easily, and often cheaply, justify the selling of their integrity. *Bribery* totals are modified by the amount of money offered, the extent of favors received, or the value of the item proffered. The difficulty number of the *bribery* attempt is the target's modified Confidence or *willpower*.

The Bribe: To determine the modifier for the amount of the bribe, find the value of the amount offered on the *MasterBook* Value Chart and divide it by two. Add this number to the character's *bribery* skill total. For example, a man bent on murder offers a doorman \$100 to leave his post for ten minutes at a specified time, so that he may enter the building unobserved. The value of \$100 is 10, so +5 is added to the murderer's *bribery* total.

The Target: To determine the difficulty of the bribe, note the target's Confidence or *willpower* value. Then, determine the target's attitude towards the bribe. The chart below indicates the level of success needed to bribe the target (see the "Success Chart" in Chapter Three of *MasterBook*). Characters may also use *charm* or *persuasion* to win the target's trust or willingness, and characters who just flatly offer a bribe may be automatically rejected (i.e. the target's attitude becomes more suspicious than ever.)

A great deal depends on the target. People who are wealthy, or fear being caught and punished are less likely to take a bribe, and some rare individuals are truly unbribeable. The gamemaster should always feel free to increase or decrease the difficulty number of the *bribery* roll based on individual circumstances.

BRIBERY CHART

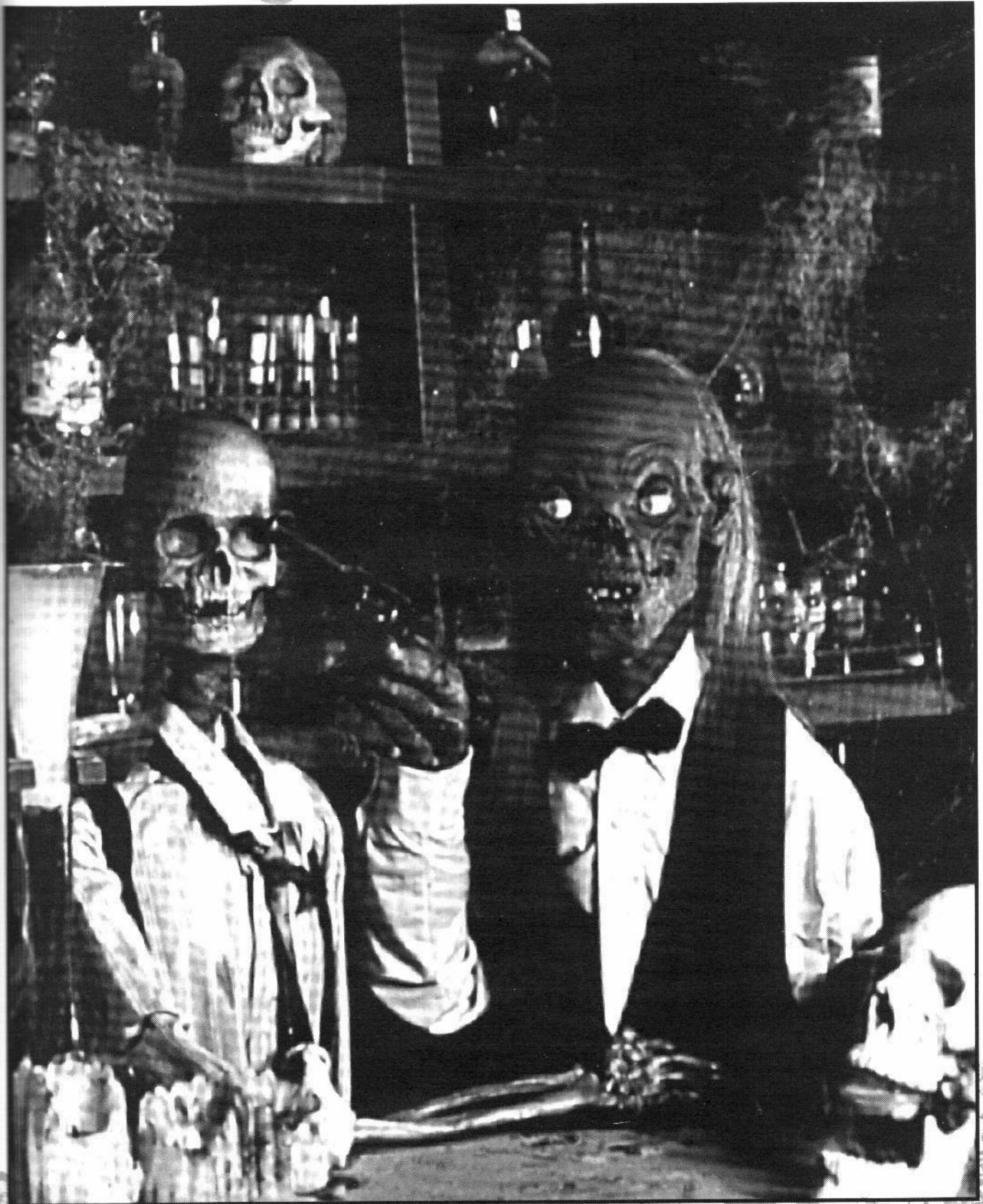
Target's Attitude	Success Level Needed
Agreeable	Minimal
Neutral	Solid
Suspicious/Unfriendly	Good
Wary/Hostile	Superior
Unwilling/Very Hostile	Spectacular
Absolutely Adverse	Spectacular +

CURSE

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Various types of curses and methods of cursing (e.g. evil eye, voodoo dolls, etc.)

Curse is the ancient magical art of causing pain or misfortune to befall your enemies by directing and focusing all of your bile, hatred, or evil towards this end. This skill may also be used to negate existing curses. *Curse* is a special effects skill (see Chapter Six of the *MasterBook*, "Special Effects"). This skill is used to generate magical special effects — specifically governing harming others over either long or short range. In *Tales From The Crypt*, this skill may only be used by a character possessing the Background Advantage "Special Effects: Magic Wielder."



As with *divination* and *summoning*, a proper curse will usually require time, preparation, and ritual. The ritual of the curse may occur over several days (effects gradually increasing in severity); and the curse itself may take effect instantly, build up gradually, or be triggered by some event in the future. A character attempting a curse must generate a *curse* skill total, trying to beat the difficulty of the *curse* special effect (determined by the gamemaster). See the chart below for sample difficulty numbers for various types of curses and effects.

If the *curse* attempt succeeds, the target may be affected by the curse. At this point, the value of the *curse* effect is compared to the target's *willpower* or *Confidence*. The target may attempt to resist the curse by generating a bonus number and adding it to the score above. If the value of the *curse* exceeds the target's resistance, the curse takes effect. See the table below for additional situational modifiers to the values of the curse and the target's resistance. These modifiers may be cumulative.

A character afflicted by a curse may attempt to have it removed by undergoing another ritual, or by convincing the curser to have mercy. (Of course, mercy is a rare commodity in the Cryptkeeper's world!) In this case, compare the final effect value of the second ritual against that of the original curse. A higher "removal" value indicates that the attempt succeeds.

CURSES- SAMPLE DIFFICULTIES

Curse/Effect	Difficulty
Target gains +2 DN for certain skill; grows minor blemish; automatically fails one action; etc. curse lasts for one week or less.	10
Target gains +2 DN for all skills; automatically fails several actions; curse lasts for up to one month.	12
Target moderately afflicted for up to six months. As above save +3 DN to skill rolls. Severe rashes, painful accidents, etc.	13
Target afflicted for up to one year; as above save for more serious; +5 to DN of actions; or receives a severe disease or injury.	15
As above, save that target is affected indefinitely unless curse is removed.	18

CURSES- SAMPLE DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

Situation	Modifier
Caster possesses piece of target (i.e., hair, blood, skin, etc.)	-3 DN
Target aware of curse, and fears its power	-2 DN
Caster possesses article of target's clothing	-1 DN
Curser conducts full ritual, with correct components	-1 DN



Caster has never met target	+1 DN
Target also possesses curse skill	+2 DN
Curse is instantaneous, from abbreviated ritual in passing	+3 DN

GAMBLING

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Numbers; roulette; various card games; racing; sports.

Gambling is the ability to win money at games of chance, reflecting the character's skill or luck at evaluating various competitors, measuring odds, and taking action at just the right moment. There are two types of games of chance, direct and indirect.

Direct games involve the gambler as a competitor in the event; his own skill and judgment come into play. Examples of direct games include card games such as poker and blackjack. The person who generates the highest *gambling* total wins these direct games of chance.

Indirect games of chance are games in which the gambler bets on a random outcome (e.g. roulette), or an outcome determined by others (e.g. horse racing, baseball). In indirect games, the odds of the desired outcome determine the difficulty of the *gambling* total. See the chart below for sample difficulty numbers for indirect gambling. (Note that because the results of the event are beyond the gambler's control, the character may not spend Life Points or cards to affect the outcome.)

Many of the basest passions in human nature come to the fore while gambling — envy, greed, lust, cruelty, and obsession. Many people can attest that they have lost everything in the grip of “gambling fever.” Successful gamblers risk the enmity of their fellows, while losers risk their lives and livelihood. The miasma of emotion and the trail of broken lives which too often surrounds these events makes gambling excellent grist for an episode of *Tales From The Crypt*.

BEATING THE ODDS

Chance of Winning*	Odds	Difficulty
50%	Even	9
33%	2-1	10
25%	3-1	13
17%	5-1	14
10%	9-1	15
1%	99-1	18

*Note that the Cryptkeeper can (and often does) alter these odds in whatever direction promises to be most entertaining.

CHARISMA

ETIQUETTE

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Conversation, witty retorts, parties, table manners, the cold shoulder.



Etiquette is the measure of a character's social knowledge and graces — the all-important art of knowing what to do and what to say in almost any situation. It also allows a character to evaluate a given social scene to identify the important players on the scene. This skill can be very important in *Tales From The Crypt*, for characters may come from and encounter people of widely varying social strata. With this skill, a character may attempt to ingratiate himself with the people who matter, snub those who don't, and fully engage in the vicious, predatory sniping that occupies much of the attention of the well-to-do in the Cryptkeeper's world. After all, rejection is the ultimate horror for many; alienation and isolation have led all too many desperate individuals to destroy friends, enemies, and even themselves.

SUMMONING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*

Specializations: Demons, spirits, people, etc.

Summoning is the magical art of "moving" someone or something from one place to another (specifically, the summoner's location). In *Tales From The Crypt*, this spell most often involves summoning creatures or spirits from another plane of existence — but an individual may also summon beings within the summoner's own world.

Summoning is a special effects skill (see Chapter Six of the *MasterBook*, "Special Effects"). This skill is used to generate magical special effects — specifically, this skill governs magical means of movement. In *Tales From The Crypt*, this skill may only be used by a character possessing the Background Advantage "Special Effects: Magic Wielder."

When making a *summoning* attempt, the character generates a *summoning* skill total, and tries to beat the difficulty number of the desired effect (gamemaster's discretion). If the *summoning* total exceeds the difficulty number, the attempt succeeds (to at least some extent). In the *World of Tales From The Crypt*, a summoned object is teleported to the desired location — appearing in the summoner's presence instantly. (Given the nature of certain objects often summoned, the summoner had best have appropriate protection in place!) The effect value of the *summoning* must exceed the value of the object's mass.

People or creatures, however, must be summoned by compulsion. Therefore, the *summoning* effect total is compared to the target's *willpower* or Confidence in much the same way as a *persuasion* attempt is handled. The gamemaster must assess the target's attitude towards being summoned, and the *summoning* works as if it were "persuading" the target.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT SKILL LIST

AGILITY

Acrobatics
Beast Riding*
Climbing
Dodge
Escape Artist@
Flight*
Improvised Weaponry@
Long Jumping
Maneuver
Martial Arts*
Melee Combat
Melee Parry



Running
Stealth
Swimming
Unarmed Combat
Unarmed Parry

DEXTERITY

Fire Combat
Heavy Weapons*
Lock Picking
Missile Weapons*
Prestidigitiation
Thrown Weapons
Vehicle Piloting*

ENDURANCE

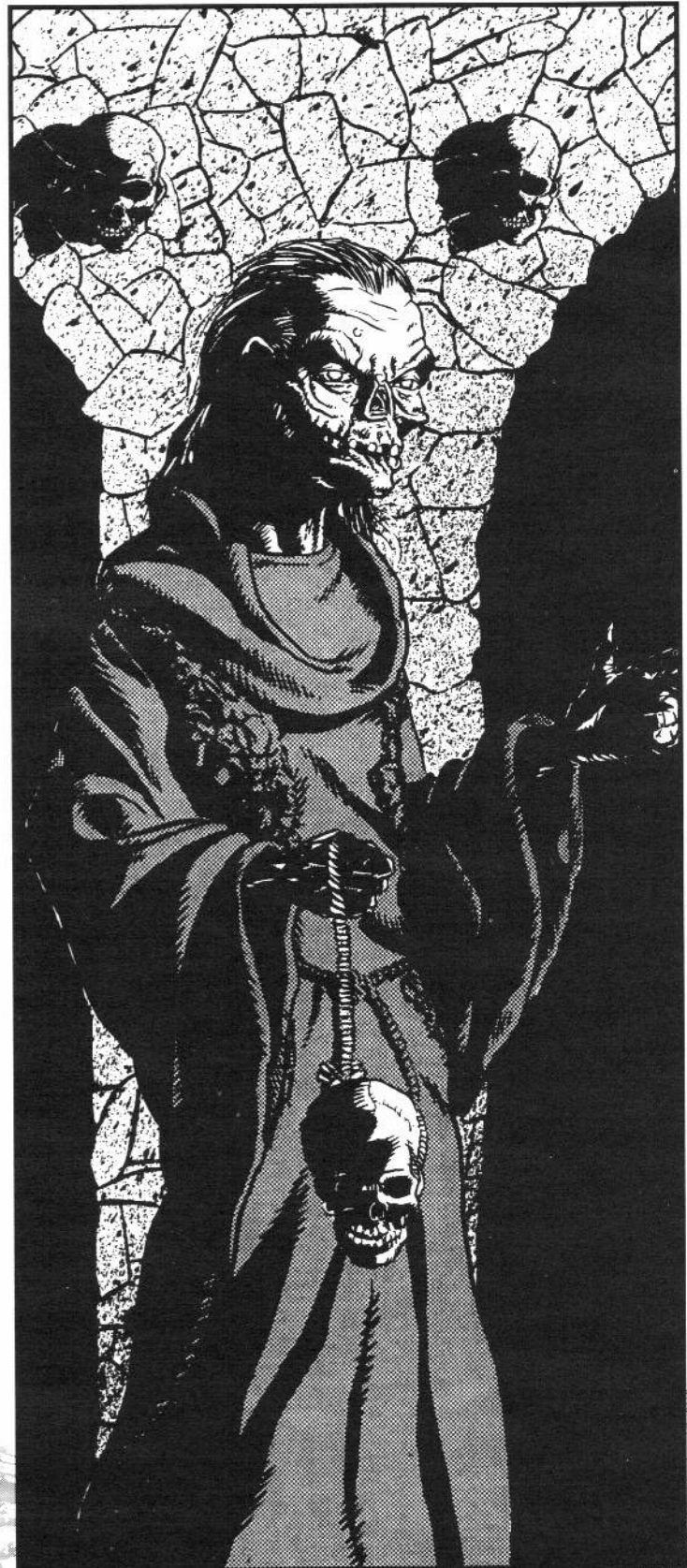
Resist Pain@
Resist Shock

STRENGTH

Lifting

INTELLECT

Camouflage
Computer Hacking@
Computer Ops
Deduction
Demolitions
Divination@
Forgery
First Aid
Linguistics
Navigation *
Perception
Radio Ops@
Safe Cracking@
Science*
Super-science*
Teaching*
Tracking
Trick
Vehicle Mechanic *@



Brian Ewing



MIND

Artist*
Business
Hypnotism
Language*
Medicine
Psychic *@
Research@
Scholar*

CONFIDENCE

Bribery@
Con
Curse@
Faith*
Gambling@
Interrogation
Intimidation
Streetwise
Survival*
Willpower

CHARISMA

Charm
Disguise
Persuasion
Summoning*
Taunt

*Macroskill; must select focus

@Skill new with *Tales From The Crypt*

Boldface: Skill cannot be used untrained.

V

EQUIPMENT AND ARTIFACTS

Wmmm ... chainsaw ... thumbscrews ... color-coordinated cleavers ... now where did I leave those garden shears? Oh, greetings, kiddies! This is the place to look for all the gruesome gadgets and gory gear to make your very own 'mashed to pieces' theater. Hehehehehe! No headstone's been left unturned here, so prepare to peruse my creepy collection

The equipment lists in this chapter concentrate on the weapons, vehicles, and other equipment characters in *Tales From The Crypt* might encounter and use as they bounce from episode to episode of the Cryptkeeper's crazed immorality play. Of course, no chapter can list all possible equipment, and these lists are certainly not exclusive. Feel free to come up with your own equipment lists, or further nasty applications of common household items and appliances! The final section of this chapter discusses some of the many artifacts which appear throughout the game — powerful items which may help or harm characters. Unlike standard equipment, these artifacts can travel with the characters from episode to episode; in fact, they might not be able to lose artifacts no matter how hard they try!

Aside from these artifacts, and other bizarre creations of the Cryptkeeper's twisted psyche, the world of *Tales From The Crypt* is most often our own world. While in theory an episode can take place in any place or time, most episodes are set against a relatively modern backdrop. (After all, what's more horrifying than the monsters in your own back yard ... or your own mind?) Thus, the items available to characters are generally the same as those available to people in the modern world.

Catalogues covering such topics as guns, cars, outfitters, clothing, computers, etc. are valuable resources for the Cryptkeeper. (Remember, you can make literally any item available so long as it fits into the episode's theme and amuses the Cryptkeeper!) Cryptkeepers should feel free to develop additional equipment lists and charts based on the ones found below to expand upon the equipment (and game statistics) available to either player characters or Cryptkeeper puppets. Equipment prices given are all in 1990s U.S. dollars. These prices may vary with the location or the legality of some of the items (or the whim of the Cryptkeeper). As always, the Cryptkeeper makes the final decision.

ARMOR

Tales From The Crypt does not focus on group combat, particularly not high-tech, pre-planned battles. Therefore, the common Crypt denizen does not usually wear such uncomfortable, weighty items. After all, armor isn't much use when you ask for a vodka and orange juice and your lover decides to give you a different kind of screwdriver — in the back! Still, whether through fate or dumb luck, a

character might occasionally find himself wearing something useful! In addition to the general rules on armor found in the *MasterBook*, the following section discusses those types of armor most common in *Tales From The Crypt*.

Soft Leather: This type of "armor" is common in the modern wardrobe. At the very least, the characters can look stylish while gibbering in terror or stabbing a loved one in the back. While these garments of tanned and treated animal hide offer relatively little protection, they are perhaps the most common type of "armor" worn in *Tales From The Crypt* (Availability Code 0). Soft leather can be worn almost anywhere without causing fatigue or discomfort.

Padded Leather: This type of armor consist of stiffer leather cushioning made up of two or more layers of cloth fabric. Examples include the "bomber jackets," "motorcycle jackets," and other heavy, ornate leather jackets which are so common today (Availability Code 0). This armor is of no use against bullets, but does provide some protection against blades, fists, and blunt objects.

Bulletproof Vest (Kevlar): This armor is standard issue for most law enforcement agencies today. It consists of a vest made of bullet-resistant synthetic fibers. This vest normally covers the torso, and occasionally extends to offer some protection to the neck and groin regions. Bulletproof vests are not uncommon, and may be purchased by catalogue or at many surplus stores (Availability Code 1).

Flak Jacket: These armored vests consist of durable nylon coats lined with steel, aluminum, or fiberglass plates. As a product of slightly older technology than that used in kevlar armor, flak jackets are strong but quite heavy, reducing the character's Agility totals (except *dodge*) by -1. Flak jackets are relatively common items (Availability Code 1).

ARMOR CHART

Armor Type	TOU+/Max Value	Fatigue?	Price
Soft Leather	+2/17	No	\$50
Padded Leather	+3/18	No	\$200
Bulletproof Vest*	+7/22	No	\$600
Flak Jacket*	+8/23	Yes	\$450

*Cover only the torso.

MELEE WEAPONS

These hand-held weapons, used in close combat, are generally made of steel. Some weapons may be used to inflict non-lethal damage against an adversary, if the wielder so chooses. (*Hmmm, like to make them suffer, do you?*) Characters are likely to find plenty of melee weapons lying about in *Tales From The Crypt* — standard or improvised.

Awl/Icepick/Screwdriver: These common household implements are normally slender, solid pieces of steel several inches in length, with very sharp points. Awls and icepicks may also have wooden or steel handles several inches in length. The shape and nature of awls and icepicks make their attacks armor-piercing (see below for effects). These wonderfully dangerous, yet common, weapons are the implements of choice for much household mayhem. The screwdriver is built similarly, but is not as sharp. It does slightly reduced damage, but is a still an excellent choice for last-minute mayhem!

Axe: "Old reliable" a bladed head mounted on a long wooden handle. When you care enough to rend the very best...



Blackjack: A blackjack, or "sap," is usually either a small, mesh bag containing steel shot or other weights, or a small piece of metal encased in leather. This small, heavy weapon can do a great deal of damage, and may be used to strike opponents unconscious when attacking from behind and/or by surprise.

Brass Knuckles: These weapons consist of linked metal rings, or a bar with finger-holes in it, worn on the hand. Brass knuckles are easily concealable and easy to use in a fight, adding to the damage caused in a brawl.

Club/Baton: These are lengths of molded steel (usually encased in rubber) used to strike opponents. Batons tend to be shorter, lighter, and more easily concealed than a club (e.g., police nightsticks).

Electrical Cord: These cords consist of wires covered with heavy insulating rubber, and are found attached to electrical appliances or in utility sheds everywhere. Electrical cords tend to be unbalanced by the plug on the end, but still function quite nicely as whips, or as strangling devices. Electrical cords come in two varieties, the lighter cord found on most household appliances and the heavier outdoor extension cords.

Hatchet: A smaller version of the axe, and easier to conceal for that special surprise.

Hedge Clippers/Garden Shears: The twin cutting blades of these oversized scissors are most commonly applied to trees or shrubbery. Still, the sharpened steel will cut through flesh nicely "in a pinch!" Given their balance and construction, clippers are not very effective as slashing weapons. When used two-handed on a target caught between them, however, these blades can inflict deep wounds, or perhaps even amputate individual digits or small limbs.

Knife/Dagger: These single or double-edged kitchen implements or fighting blades can range from 15 cm to almost 0.6 meters in total length. The average weapon in this category is assumed to be a fighting knife with a blade from 15 to 30 centimeters in length. Household scissors also fall into this category, with their damage add reduced by one.

LETHAL/NON-LETHAL WEAPONS

For campaigns using the optional "non-lethal weapons" rules from the *MasterBook*, this chart describes which *Tales From The Crypt* weapons are considered "lethal" and which are not. Players should not be unduly discouraged by this chart, however. With sufficient creativity, you can make almost anything lethal! The table below also contains special "notes" for each weapon listed, which apply only when using the non-lethal rules.

Weapon	Lethal/Non-Lethal	Notes
Awl/Icepick/ Screwdriver	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal, damage value STR+0/14.
Axe	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal damage value STR+4/18
Blackjack	Non-Lethal	+1 to damage value; Use "Knock-Out" rules also
Brass Knuckles	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value, may be built into knife hilt
Club/Baton	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value

Weapon	Lethal/Non-Lethal	Notes
Electrical Cord	Non-Lethal	
Light		+1 to damage value, use Entangle attacks
Heavy		+2 to damage value, use Entangle attacks
Hatchet	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal, damage value STR+2/16
Hedge Clippers	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal, damage value STR+1/15
Knife/Dagger	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal, damage value STR+2/16

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Price
Awl/Icepick	STR+2/16	\$3-\$10
Axe	STR+7/22	\$45
Blackjack	STR+3/18	\$15
Brass Knuckles	STR+4/19	\$25
Club/Baton	STR+5/20	\$15
Electrical Cord		
Light	STR+1/15	\$5
Heavy	STR+2/16	\$10
Hatchet	STR+6/21	\$20
Knife/Dagger	STR+4/19	\$20-\$600
Hedge Clippers	STR+2/16 (slash) STR+4/19 (chop)	\$15

MISSILE WEAPONS

Missile weapons are not particularly common in *Tales From The Crypt*, but may certainly appear if they fit a particular episode or promise amusement and mayhem. Statistics on a wider range of missile weapons may be found in the *MasterBook*.

Acid: These corrosive liquids are available at any chemical supply store and certain hardware stores, and their effects may be duplicated by certain household chemicals. "Acid" eats away at whatever it touches (save glass and ceramic), and leaves horrible scars on the flesh of human victims. Acid is listed as a missile weapon only because it is commonly splashed upon its target, or hurled in a small container. Using this method, acid *may* affect more than one target in a small area.

Crossbow: A crossbow consists of a heavy, short bow attached sideways to a stock. This allows the weapon to be cocked with little effort by the firer. Modern crossbows are mechanically bent, allowing for much greater power and range than the previous, "hand-cranked" models.

Gasoline Bomb: These homemade weapons are normally made by placing some type of cloth or paper wick into a jar or bottle filled with gasoline. The attacker then ignites the wick and lets fly; the gasoline usually ignites when the





Brian Ewing

container breaks on impact. Like acid, these bombs have a small "splash radius" (varying with the size of the weapon). Use the grenade rules on page 162 of the *MasterBook*, reducing the range by one-third.

Grenades: These weapons are generally fist-sized explosive devices, activated by removing a firing pin, and hurled through the air in high arc towards an enemy or other target. Grenades are most effective against soft targets, and their damage decreases over distance. Note that most grenades have a blast radius (rules for this are found on page 162 of the *MasterBook*).

Several varieties of grenades are listed below:

Concussion: A concussion grenade creates a powerful shock wave when it explodes, designed to stun its targets. Concussion grenades use the non-lethal damage rules. The base damage value is 23, with the first two wounds taken read as three shock apiece.

Fragmentation: A fragmentation grenade explodes and hurls shrapnel or pellets in an arc. The base damage value is 23.

Gas/Smoke: Tear gas and smoke grenades do not explode. Rather, they release their contents through holes in the canister. The cloud created by such a grenade will quickly fill an area of eight square meters. Armor does not provide protection against this attack.

White Phosphorus: White phosphorus grenades generate intense heat when they explode. They do damage as a fragmentation grenade, and also ignite all flammable material in the area of effect. The base damage value is 25, plus damage value 19 for each round the phosphorus continues burning.

Throwing Dagger: These light daggers are specially balanced so that they may be thrown accurately. These weapons are slim and easily concealed, and often have no hilt.

MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Range				Price
		Short	Med.	Long	Ext.	
Acid	20	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	STR	Varies
Crossbow	STR+9/24	3-10	100	200	300	\$300
Gasoline Bomb	23	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	STR	\$1.09
Grenade	23	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	\$50
Throwing Dagger	STR+2/17	3-5	10	15	30	\$30

EXPLOSIVE BURST RADIUS

Weapon	Damage	Range		
		Short	Med.	Long
Acid	1(+2)	1(+0)	2(-5)	3(-10)
Gasoline Bomb	0-2	5	10	15
Grenade	0-3	8	15	30

FIREARMS

There are many, many types, brands, and models of firearms available in our modern world, and some of them find their way into episodes of *Tales From The Crypt*. Listed below are categories of firearms, which are available as specializations of the *fire combat* skill. The Firearms Chart lists examples of specific weapons with their game statistics — usually standard statistics for that caliber





SPECIAL AMMUNITION

In addition to the very wide variety of regular ammunition available, there are several types of special ammunition which characters can use to increase the effectiveness of their firearms attack. The two most common types of special ammunition are described below.

Armor-Piercing: These rounds are called armor-piercing because their special coating (Teflon, tungsten carbide, etc.) enables them to slice through light armor and protective vests (or walls, or stone). However, these rounds do less damage to soft targets than a standard round, because they tend to slice straight through the target, without bouncing and spinning inside the body.

When these rounds are used, reduce the Toughness of the opposing armor by TOU-4. Reduce the damage value of the attack by -2. (Note that armor-piercing melee weapons penetrate armor as these bullets do, without the corresponding reduction in damage.)

High-Impact: The opposite of an armor-piercing bullet, the high-impact rounds are slower and softer than regular rounds. They also flatten and expand when they strike their target. Armor is much more effective against these rounds (double the Toughness bonus from armor), but they do much greater damage to unarmored targets (damage value +3).

weapon (the cost in parentheses is the cost of 50 rounds of ammunition). Of course, this list is not complete, and players and Cryptkeepers should feel free to create game statistics for other firearms they wish to use in *Tales From The Crypt*. For information on heavier weapons, see Chapter Seven of the *MasterBook*.

Pistols: These weapons are either revolvers, or clip-fed semi-automatic handguns. Pistols typically hold between six (revolvers) and nineteen rounds. Most pistols are easily concealable.

Rifles: These weapons have an extended barrel (rifled bore), which allows for much greater range and power than that of the shorter barreled pistols. Rifles generally have stocks which rest against the firer's shoulder for stability. Rifles can be bolt-action, lever-action, or pump-fed.

A sub-category of the rifle is the assault rifle. These rifles are clip-fed weapons (up to 30 round clips), which can fire either in single-shot or fully-automatic mode.

Shotguns: These weapons often (though not always) have extended barrels. However, the barrels are not rifled, and the range and accuracy are therefore greatly reduced. However, unlike rifles, shotguns may fire much larger slugs, or exploding, scattered shot ammunition.

Sub-Machine Guns/Machine Pistols: These hand-held weapons commonly have much shorter barrels and higher rates of fire than rifles or assault rifles. They can normally be fired on a single-shot, burst fire (three rounds), or fully automatic setting.

VEHICLES

Transportation may or may not be important to an episode of *Tales From The Crypt* — the characters may spend their short miserable lives inside one building! Yet this section provides examples of (and game statistics for) many of the vehicles which move over land, sea and air. *Now you can calculate exactly how fast that truck is moving when it crushes your skull!* These lists are not all-inclusive, and there are many vehicle models which will differ slightly from these averages.



FIREARMS CHART

Weapon	Damage	Ammo	Range				Cost
			Short	Med.	Long	Ext.	
PISTOLS							
Colt Anaconda .44 Magnum	20	6	3–12	17	44	150	\$600 (\$40)
Colt M1911 .45 ACP	18	8	3–10	15	40	140	\$300 (\$25)
Glock 17 9mm	17	17	3–8	13	35	130	\$500 (\$35)
Glock 22 .40S&W	18	15	3–10	15	40	140	\$600 (\$35)
S&W .357 Magnum	19	6	3–10	25	50	150	\$350 (\$35)
S&W .38 Special	17	6	3–10	25	40	140	\$200 (\$20)
RIFLES							
AK-74 5.45mm Assault Rifle	22	30	5–20	50	150	300	\$1500 (\$35)
M-16A2 5.56mm Assault Rifle	23	30	5–20	50	200	300	\$2000 (\$35)
Remington .30-30 Lever-action	21	7	5–30	90	200	300	\$700 (\$40)
Remington .30-06 Bolt-action	22	5	5–20	75	200	300	\$400 (\$30)
Winchester .45-70 Lever-action	22	5	5–20	75	200	300	\$450 (\$35)
SHOTGUNS							
Remington 20 gauge pump	20	5–20	30	75	150	100	\$600 (\$30)
Mossberg 500 12 gauge pump	22	5	5–10	20	40	100	\$450 (\$35)
Fiorelli SPAS12 12 gauge semi-auto	22	10/20	5–10	20	40	100	\$700 (\$35)
SUB-MACHINE GUNS							
Heckler & Koch MP5 SMG 9mm	19	30	5–10	25	60	85	\$2000 (\$35)
Ingram MAC-10 SMG 9mm	18	30	5–10	20	50	75	\$1000 (\$35)
Uzi SMG 9mm	19	32	5–10	25	60	85	\$1500 (\$35)

LAND VEHICLES

Bicycle: They're energy efficient and environmentally friendly! *It's so hard to find good Cryptcleaners these days!* Besides, you never know what sort of transportation will be available in the Cryptkeeper's world! *And the chains leave lovely scars, simply lovely!* See the chart below for the statistics on these muscle-powered conveyances.

Motorcycle: These two-wheeled vehicles are very fast, but can be difficult to control in bad weather or on rough terrain. Also, the rider is terribly exposed to



painful, even disfiguring, damage in the event of an accident. Add a +2 penalty to the difficulty of all *vehicle piloting* rolls on anything but clean, dry roadway.

Compact Cars: Small, fuel efficient models, these cars usually have two doors (and possibly a hatchback). Examples of compact cars include a Chevrolet Cavalier, a Honda Civic, or a Dodge Dart.

Mid-size Cars: The mid-range of vehicles, including four door sedans and station wagons. For example, these include the Honda Accord, the Buick LeSable, and the Nissan Sentra.

Large Cars: This category covers luxury vehicles, vans, pick-up trucks, etc. Examples include Mercedes, Ford Broncos, and the Volvo 750 SL.

Sports Cars: The perfect vehicle for self-satisfied, materialistic fools whose world will soon come crashing down around them! These are the sports cars, convertibles, and serious muscle cars. Examples include the Mazda Miata, the Dodge Viper, and any Ferrari.

Small Trucks: The vehicles that make local deliveries, moving vans, etc.

Large Trucks: This category includes tractor-trailers and the other vehicles which haul cargo all across our country.

Water Vehicles: A variety of craft, from canoes through luxury liners and aircraft carriers, traverse our waterways and criss-cross our oceans. Game statistics for a range of these are given on page 85.

Air Vehicles: There are any number of aircraft and helicopters moving through our skies. The chart on page 85 lists statistics for a variety of aircraft.

ARCANE ARTIFACTS

Turning from the everyday items of death and destruction, we now look at those one-of-a-kind mayhem makers which can make any character the envy (and terror) of the Crypt. This section discusses arcane artifacts, unique magical items of great power which exist in the Cryptkeeper's twisted realm. Reflecting or, perhaps, brought into being by the bizarre powers shaping the Cryptkeeper's world, artifacts can give characters just enough of an advantage to survive the Cryptkeeper's deadly scenarios. Magical weapons, protective devices, sources of knowledge, and objects of mystic insight, unlike most items in the Crypt artifacts travel with the characters from episode to episode (even if the character decides he no longer wants the artifact's aid). Once attached to a character, it is almost impossible to lose one of these singular objects. Some artifacts are usable by any character, while others require certain skills to use.

Beware, though! Power always has a price — particularly so in *Tales From The Crypt*. Like a coin, every artifact has two sides — two faces of power. Many helpful artifacts have dangerous side-effects, some are even cursed! Characters who snatch up every artifact they stumble across, like a shop-a-holic at a half-price sale, may soon come to bitterly regret their haste and greed. However, characters who refuse to take aid, no matter how flawed, will almost assuredly fail to survive long enough to escape the Cryptkeeper's clutches.

ALARM BRACELET

This bracelet — an exquisite piece of art delicately crafted from the finest precious metals and semi-precious stones — is suitable for any occasion. Yet, while it truly makes a fine addition to any wardrobe, this bracelet is more than a mere fashion statement. The alarm bracelet serves a purpose vital in the world of *Tales From The Crypt* — warning its wearer of impending danger.

Of course, the entire world is dangerous to those poor individuals trapped in the Cryptkeeper's realm, so the bracelet must concern itself with only the most immediate perils. When a character wearing the bracelet enters the physical



VEHICLE CHART

Vehicle Type	Safe/Max Speed	Pass.	Tough	Maneuver*	Price
LAND VEHICLES					
Bicycle	STR/3xSTR	1-2	8	+2	\$200
Motorcycle	75/150	1-2	13	+3	\$10,000
Motorcycle (Large)	90/170	1-2	14	+2	\$15,000
Compact Car	70/90	3-4	15	+2	\$11,000
Mid-size Car	70/120	5-6	16	+1	\$16,000
Large Car	70/110	6-8	17	+1	\$25,000
Sports Car	100/190	2-4	15	+3	\$35,000+
Small Truck	70/110	3 (cab)	19	+0	\$40,000+
Large Truck	70/110	3 (cab)	20	-1	\$65,000+
WATER VEHICLES					
Canoe	STR/STRx2	1-4	8	+0	\$500-\$2,000
Rowboat	STR+3/STRx3	1-8	13	+3	\$1,000
Sailboat (Small)	Wind Speed/Wind +vehicle piloting total	1-8	16	+2	\$75,000
Sailboat (Large)	Windx2/(Wind +vehicle piloting totalx2	6-18	20	+1	\$200,000
Powerboat	30/50	4	16	+1	\$20,000
AIR VEHICLES					
Helicopter-Chinook	150/240	30	23	+3	\$600,000
Helicopter-Attack	120/180	3	24	+5	\$12m
Prop Plane (Small)	110/170	4	17	+1	\$150,000
Prop Plane (Medium)	180/230	6-20	21	+0	\$250,000
Small Jet	400/550	8-20	21	+0	\$1.5m

presence of an enemy, monster, trap, etc. (perhaps even a fellow character), the delicate bells which dangle from the bracelet begin to jingle. Moreover, the bracelet itself tightens around the character's wrist (or ankle) and warms slightly. The intensity of this reaction varies with the danger's proximity and urgency.

The problems with this useful device may appear obvious: first, the jingling of the "alarm bells" not only warn the character of the approach of danger, but warn the character's enemies of his approach! Secondly, if the danger is sudden and intense, the constriction of the bracelet and the heat it generates will certainly shock the character — and may even cause him injury! (Purely at the discretion of the Cryptkeeper — that kindest and most merciful of souls!)

A third flaw with this bracelet is that after a time (roughly two weeks) the device becomes attuned to the prejudices of the wearer. At this point, the alarm responds not only to actual danger, but to the perceptions and paranoias of its owner. Therefore, the device may activate in the presence of an individual whom the bearer dislikes or distrusts, even if he or she poses no immediate threat. This will, of course, cause even more fear, distrust and dislike in the bearer, which may lead to an even stronger reaction by the bracelet. This type of "feedback loop" has caused more than one amputation among previous wearers of this artifact!

This knowledge comes at a terrible price. After each use of the candelabra, successful or not, the character must generate a Mind total of 13. If the character fails, the curse of the candelabra begins to take hold. At first, everything merely seems somehow "wrong" or "off-kilter." However, after a number of failures equal to the character's Mind value, the candelabra's magic has overtaken her mundane perception. At this point, the character always sees the "real truth," that all things progress slowly towards their inevitable doom. Images of death, disease and decay overlay everything the character sees at all times. These horrible images prey upon the character's mind, with the ultimate effects left to the Cryptkeeper's (and player's) discretion. Nightmares, depression, and a sense of hopelessness are common side-effects, while madness may eventually result.

COMPANION CHAIN

This artifact came into being due to the heroic efforts of a group of voodoo practitioners. Trapped together in the Crypt, bound together and facing terrible torture at the hands of the Cryptkeeper himself, the friends determined to make one bold strike for freedom. The most powerful member of the group began to initiate a chant, calling upon his brethren to lend him strength. The 15-meter chain which held them all prisoner kept the friends a long way apart, too far to touch flesh to flesh, making it difficult for each other to draw energy and power from the group.

The strain soon began to show on the leader's face as he pressed against the power of the Cryptkeeper; again, he called for aid ... but his friends could do naught. Finally, as his blood began to mingle with the sweat flowing across his face, he cried out in agony, beseeching his companions for the aid which could save them all. At that crucial moment, they found a way.

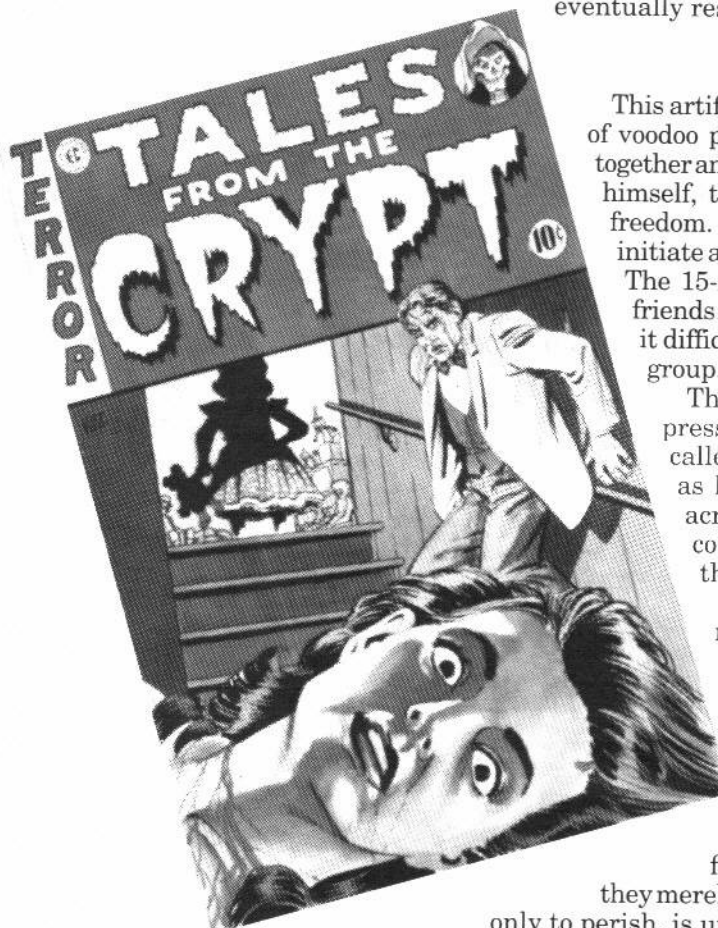
It is unclear whether these friends changed the nature of their magic or the nature of this chain that night. It was clear however, as triumph replaced the anguish blazoned across their leader's blood-soaked brow, that they had succeeded. Through the chain, the cold, unfeeling links of steel, the magical power flowed. With a roar and a flash, they disappeared as shrill curses filled the air from everywhere and nowhere. (Whether the

five friends succeeded in returning home, or whether

they merely succeeded in freeing themselves of the Cryptkeeper only to perish, is unknown.)

The chain, however, remained, but its nature was fundamentally altered that night. Now, this chain not only allows magic-workers (psychics included) to share power when joined along its length (acting like a *Supporter* card). It also permits those without skill in magic or psionics, to lend aid — in the form of spiritual and psychic strength to a casting if they concentrate successfully. For each character who succeeds at a Mind or *willpower* check with a difficulty of 13 while attempting to aid a magic user, the primary caster receives a +1 to his roll.

The escape of the Companions — as they are called — and the very existence of this chain are terrible affronts to the Cryptkeeper. To this day, his undying eye searches for any trace of the Companions, and any use of the Companion Chain is almost guaranteed to draw the Cryptkeeper's personal attention.



MYSTIC LENS

Several magical lenses exist in the world of *Tales From The Crypt*. They range in size from stylish monocles to a windowpane the size of a small pocket mirror. All of these lenses come from the same source — they are lost fragments of a single scrying mirror which the Cryptkeeper created long ago to monitor the activity of those in his domain.

One group of brave, doomed souls penetrated the Crypt itself in their battle to defeat the Cryptkeeper and escape his maze of endless horror. In the ensuing battle, the adventurers were apparently destroyed. However, much of the Crypt, including the mystic mirror, suffered a similar fate. Since that time, several shards of that original mirror have come to light, and their remaining magic has led knowledgeable (crazed, and desperate) souls to craft them into their current forms.

Mystic lenses grant the wielder the ability to detect the resonance of magic, and to see the reality behind the magical cover. Characters who peer through the mystic lens must generate a Confidence total. On a 10, the character can detect illusions, magic and invisible entities or objects within her line of sight.

As one might expect, however, the malevolent influence of the Cryptkeeper has proven lasting. Even as these shards of an item which he created retain power, they retain a link to their creator as well. The Cryptkeeper may automatically sense the location of all of these mystic lenses, and thus any individual who possesses one of these items is subject to detection. (This is the main reason that the Cryptkeeper hasn't bothered to reclaim the shards of his mirror.) No known magical protection can block this link.

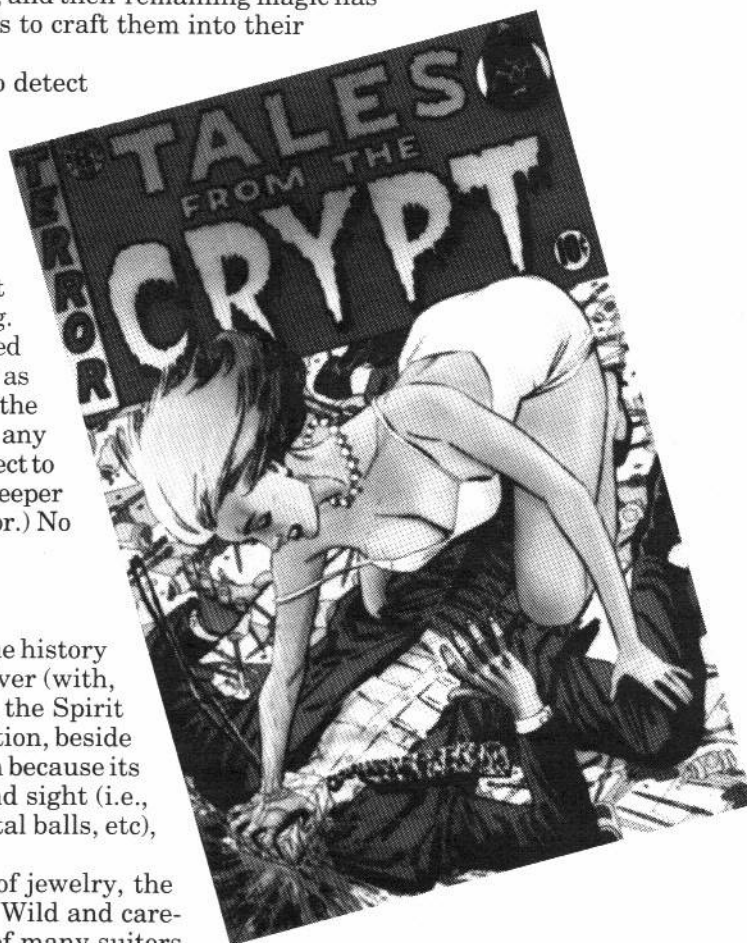
THE SPIRIT TORQ

This singular piece of jewelry has both a unique history and unique power. A simple, elegant band of silver (with, some say, perhaps a touch of baxtrian as well), the Spirit Torq protects its bearer against any sort of detection, beside that of the human eye. This item is so named both because its wearer seems to "disappear" to all but first-hand sight (i.e., the wearer is invisible to cameras, mirrors, crystal balls, etc), and because the torq is invisible when worn.

The torq was once merely a beautiful piece of jewelry, the property of a vain and beautiful young heiress. Wild and care-free, she toyed mercilessly with the affections of many suitors. One day, soon after she broke the heart of a dashing young Gypsy prince, she was accosted on the street by the lad's sister. Eyes flashing, the Gypsy maiden cursed the heiress — stating that she would die as she had lived, utterly alone.

The heiress laughed at this curse, but three days later found herself lost in the woods on a friend's estate while attending a party. As time went on and she heard and saw no one, and could not find her way back to the mansion, the young woman grew increasingly desperate. For the first time she knew real fear, and ran sobbing through the woods until she stumbled into a cave entrance.

Taking shelter there, the heiress waited in vain for the rescue which never came. She died of thirst and exposure, and the search party which eventually found her noticed her broken nails and the bloody streaks upon cave walls. At the end of her life, crazed with fear, she had torn at the walls of the cave while she shrieked for aid.



The heiress had worn the torq to that party, and it puzzled the others when the item was never found. They assumed that she had lost it in the woods, but she had lost it instead to the horrifying world of the Cryptkeeper. The crazed emotions of intense fear and isolation, as well as the energy of the heiress' wandering spirit, coalesced in the torq. An artifact was born.

As stated above, the torq will protect the bearer from any kind of assisted detection. Yet the power of the torq has consequences, as well. Once donned, the torq may not be removed by conventional means. Over the course of the first few days the torq is worn, the character becomes increasingly "clingy," and feels the need to seek companionship. After approximately a week, the character fears isolation and solitude almost as much as the heiress did at the end of her life. The character will always strive to be with someone, and must succeed at a Confidence or *willpower* check of 13 to ever be able to stand being alone.

WHISTLER: THE MANIAC'S AXE

This hand axe is a handsome example of that common woodcutter's tool. With a burlled walnut handle, gleaming silver head and razor-sharp steel blade, this weapon is truly a fine example of craftsmanship. What's more, this axe is imbued with a magic power which allows it to damage any substance and any foe — even creatures normally immune to physical attack (damage value STR+10/22).

Yet the murderous power which fills this axe is not directed only against the owner's foes — it works upon his mind as well. For each day the character possesses the axe, he must generate a Mind total. On the first day, the difficulty number is 0, and it increases by +1 each day. On the day after a failure, it begins anew.

If the character fails, he at first seems only irritable, but becomes increasingly suspicious and jumpy over time. When the character has failed a number of checks equal to his Mind value, he is convinced that his closest friend or loved one



Tim E. Ogline



Tim E. O'Line

is secretly plotting to kill him. He eventually will decide that a pre-emptive strike is his only hope — and should then attempt to give his buddy “forty whacks.” Unfortunately, it seems that enemies are everywhere! The cycle begins again, and the character will always find that there is someone else near him who needs forty one.

Now it's time for all you Junior Cryptkeepers to turn the page and learn all sorts of tips you can use to run my game and paint your player characters into a coroner! Hehehehehe!



VI

DESIGNING AND RUNNING ADVENTURES

Come here, kiddies ... so you want to be a Cryptkeeper, eh? Well, first you need a winning personality ... a strong chin (even if it's not your own) ... the brains of a tycoon, the guts of a general (I keep those in jars over here ... or are they over there?) ... oh, and it helps if you're dead! Hehehehehehe! Anyway, boils and ghouls, here's some tips on how to scare the living dead-lights out of your players ...

Tales From The Crypt is very different from most roleplaying games, particularly in its themes, the relationship between the players and the gamemaster, and the mechanics of an ongoing campaign. Following the principles of good storytelling, the gamemaster must take these differences into account, folding them into her writing to create a seamless tale crafted to suit the characters and the game. The material below describes the distinctive elements of the game, and can help the gamemaster design and run an exciting *Tales From The Crypt* campaign.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

Tales From The Crypt is a game of horror. The player characters are under the influence of the Cryptkeeper, who has "sentenced" them to move from one macabre little terror tale to the next for his own nefarious purposes. Every character has some dark secret, fatal flaw, or secret fear that the Cryptkeeper will exploit at every opportunity.

Yet all is not gloom and doom in the Cryptkeeper's world; nor is it so in the *World of Tales From The Crypt*. The Cryptkeeper loves a bad joke, and works hard to snare the characters in situations chock-full of bitter irony and bizarre humor. This flavor, a slightly tongue-in-cheek attitude, permeates his world and should permeate the campaign. As discussed below, the twin themes of horror and black humor may appear to varying degrees in any one episode. Yet these are the core themes of *Tales From The Crypt*, and give the Cryptkeeper's world its unique flair.

The characters are playing the Cryptkeeper's game, and the odds are stacked against them. But with luck, effort, and skillful role-playing, they might just survive ... or even win their way out of



the Crypt. (Or they might end up skewered by one of my sickening stabs at suspense ...)

TYPES OF ADVENTURES

As discussed above, the Cryptkeeper often sends the characters from one setting to the next, constantly changing the situation and the challenges that they face. This ever-shifting setting makes a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign different from most others, and means that the adventures and mechanics of play are very different in an extended campaign as opposed to a single episode. The material below discusses these differences, and the mechanics of the two styles of play.

ONE-SHOT EPISODES

The first type of adventure is the single episode, unrelated to a continuing campaign. These "one-shot" episodes stand alone as self-contained adventures, usually designed to be played in one fast-paced, hard-hitting session; they are gaming "short stories" rather than novels or serials. In these adventures, the characters created for the session are used without modification, and the setting (i.e. the world) usually remains the same. The characters may live or die, depending on their actions, with no worries about Cryptkeeper Points, etc. Watch any *Tales From The Crypt* episode and consider the player characters to be the stars and you have the idea.

CAMPAIGN PLAY

A *Tales From The Crypt* campaign consists of a series of episodes, a serial drama in which the player characters are the recurring elements in a game played in many sessions. These episodes may be linked by similar themes, one may serve as a continuation of the one before, or they may seem unrelated. In these campaigns, the Cryptkeeper sends the surviving characters from one world to the next at the end of each episode, placing them in a variety of roles and precarious situations from which they tempt their fate.

SHELL CHARACTERS

In campaign play, characters may often inhabit "shells," bodies other than their own that allow them to more quickly get into the action of the adventure (for more details on the rules mechanics of this, see Chapter Two). Keep in mind that the characters must adjust quickly to these new "identities," for to everyone but their fellow player characters, they are who they appear to be. (As a sort of "dearly departing gift," the Cryptkeeper has al-



lowed the player characters to recognize each other, regardless of their physical shell.)

If the characters survive an adventure (regardless of success or failure), they will be whisked out of their shells and back to their original bodies in the Crypt (if they've done a really poor job in the adventure, their bodies might be ... changed just a little. Even Cryptkeepers get bored sometimes ...)

ESCAPE

At some point, the characters may feel they have learned enough about the Cryptkeeper, his Crypt, and his windows on the world to attempt an escape. Perhaps they'll try using some bit of magic or artifact they've retrieved in one of their adventures. Sometimes they may catch the Cryptkeeper unawares and actually have a shot at breaking his grip; other times, he'll let them think they are going to get away with something before slamming the coffin lid on them. Strike a balance between player hope and frustration and you'll have a more enjoyable campaign for everyone involved.

INDIVIDUAL ROLEPLAYING

The "facts of life" in the *World of Tales From The Crypt* makes this type of campaign an exciting challenge for all involved. The use of shell characters offers the players tremendous roleplaying opportunities, as they are called upon to portray characters who are playing the parts of people of various ages, backgrounds, genders, and roles. The interaction of these two "personas" within each character promises a constant challenge for the players, and humor at the many awkward situations that will surely ensue.

In addition, the campaign setting will often change in *Tales From The Crypt* as the characters finish their roles as players on the Cryptkeeper's bizarre stage. As they succeed (or fail) to meet the challenges, the characters bounce from place to place, culture to culture, or even backward and forward in time. While these changes may challenge the characters as they first feel out their new world, they also offer a potentially endless variety of mysteries and experiences. If a player dislikes a certain setting or "world," he knows it will soon change!

At some point, the Cryptkeeper might even allow the characters to choose the windows through which they want to go, if not necessarily the shells they will jump into. This little bit of freedom will also lessen player frustration, a common problem in horror games.

GROUP PLAY

While a single player may certainly play this game, *Tales From The Crypt* is best suited to group play. The group dynamics, the tensions and personality clashes, and the competing flaws and desires offer roleplaying and story potential not available with a single character. Indeed, the Cryptkeeper vastly prefers to manipulate entire groups in his scenarios, for it gives him great pleasure to set each against the other.

Group play also offers advantages to the characters, in addition to the fun for the campaign. The players may often want and need the protection of the other characters, (hopefully) their allies against the dark. By pooling resources, skills, and knowledge, a group of characters may be more likely to survive in this world (if they don't kill each other first).

There are two primary ways to create groups of characters in *Tales From The Crypt*. The first method is to have the Cryptkeeper force the characters together, counting on the interplay of this particular group to provide him with great amusement.





Mike Chaney



This method takes much less time than roleplaying the creation of a group, and makes beginning play much simpler for inexperienced roleplayers. It may be best suited for the relatively abbreviated "one-shot" episodes, where there is much less need to carefully craft a balanced group. In such adventures there are no long term consequences (and no long term group). The characters have little choice but to interact, for the Cryptkeeper can ensure that they remain together throughout their journey.

Character groups or "parties" also form voluntarily in *Tales From The Crypt*, when lone "travelers" encounter each other in a setting and decide to cooperate. After such an encounter, the characters seem to be connected, reappearing together in each world. Perhaps the Cryptkeeper noted their meeting and wishes to see where their combination of abilities will carry them.

This method of creation will likely be more satisfying to experienced players, for it allows them to feel more in control of their characters and their destiny.

DESIGNING AN EPISODE

The most critical part of any roleplaying campaign is the design of the individual adventures, and of the campaign as a whole. Designing an adventure or a campaign is similar to writing a good story, with the player characters as the protagonists. Even though the gamemaster doesn't control these characters, it is essential that they have engaging settings, characters, and challenges to interact with. The gamemaster can ensure an entertaining and exciting adventure for everyone concerned by crafting the action around a tight plot, developing interesting characters, establishing the appropriate mood, and weaving in strong themes. The key steps in adventure design are discussed below.

SELECT A THEME

There are many possible kinds of *Tales From The Crypt* adventures. The characters may be placed in almost any situation, from action/adventure to mystery, from horror to romance. The time-traveling aspect of the campaign also offer the possibility of many special scenarios — Chicago during Prohibition, Morocco in the early 1940s, or any other interesting genre. Certain themes, however, are more important to the world of *Tales From The Crypt*. The gamemaster must select a theme, and understand the theme(s) that she wishes to convey throughout the adventure. These themes keep the story focused, and help the gamemaster determine the natures, motives, and actions of the people the player characters will encounter in the course of the adventure.

The dual nature of reality in a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign means that every adventure will have at least two themes. The first, or "core" theme, is horror. Horror, tinged by bizarre humor and bitter irony, is the underlying theme of *Tales From The Crypt*, and runs throughout every adventure. After all, the characters' predicament should never be far from their thoughts. They have been torn from their lives and their families, taken from all that they know. Bouncing from one strange place to the next, the only islands of stability in their lives — the only constants — are their fellow players and the Cryptkeeper (*oh, I wouldn't say an island ... more like a quicksand bog of stability. Hehehehehehe!*)

The second, or "superficial," theme(s) of the adventure is established by whatever the adventure appears to be on the surface. In a successful adventure, the gamemaster will select one or two central themes, and will weave these in throughout the action. The following themes, or types of adventures, are particularly important to *Tales From The Crypt*.

MYSTERY

Mystery can be an especially useful theme in a *Tales From The Crypt* adventure. The characters know very little about the world of the Cryptkeeper, particularly in the early stages of the campaign. They often know only that they have been cast adrift in a strange land (and maybe in a strange body), and as a result they must inevitably investigate their surroundings. The gamemaster should encourage this sense of mystery, and the players' fear of the unknown. Provide information to the players slowly, and make them work for every key bit of knowledge.

Many adventures will unfold for the player characters like the plot of a mystery novel. Their shells may become caught up in a murder mystery, or be called upon to resolve a similarly baffling problem. In these situations, the characters will have to solve puzzles, avoid traps (perhaps on more than one level!), and use their intuition and mental skills to achieve their goals.

These principles apply particularly when the players investigate the true mystery behind the scenes — the nature of the Cryptkeeper's world. The players should learn of the magic and lore of the world only slowly, developing contacts among the local citizenry, discovering artifacts, and uncovering information on the Cryptkeeper himself. This process is the characters' ultimate challenge, and should test them to their limits.

HORROR

The theme of horror should recur frequently in a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign, as a part of the superficial themes of the adventure as well as an ever-present reality lurking just beneath the surface. The characters are being manipulated and used by a vastly powerful foe, feeling like helpless pawns with little control over their lives. These senses of helplessness, constant tension, and lack of control are classic elements of the horror genre.

In addition to these existing horror elements, the gamemaster may add more visible, superficial elements of horror to the mix, such as placing the characters, and their shells, in situations involving a brutal murder, or as the targets of a crazed enemy or mysterious attacks. If possible, the gamemaster may wish to create a contrast by placing these elements into an otherwise idyllic rural or suburban setting. The jarring dichotomy between the apparent perfection and the evil festering beneath the surface has an unsettling effect on the mind.

These plot devices, as well as the presence of the Cryptkeeper lurking behind the scenes, will bring home to the characters a constant sense of danger. They will always expect a blow, with no clue as to the source, and may well live in fear. This type of uncertainty in the face of the unknown is the key to a successful horror adventure.



IRONY

As mentioned above, irony and black humor are key elements of a *Tales From The Crypt* campaign. The Cryptkeeper just loves offering player characters a chance at salvation, only to have it blow up in their faces, splattering their brains all over the walls. There's nothing like seeing a train bearing down on you, and knowing that you were the one who blithely drove onto the tracks and ripped out the ignition wires. For this reason, the Cryptkeeper's scenarios will often be aimed directly at one or more of the characters' flaws, phobias, or deepest desires, in an effort to tempt them into acts that will ultimately lead them to destruction.

And, of course, the Cryptkeeper loves a good joke — especially when it's on you. The worse and more macabre the pun, the more likely he'll burst out cackling. And nothing amuses him more than seeing player characters in severe pain. Although you can always count on an introduction and conclusion from him at the beginning and end of an adventure, feel free to interject his ... unique perspective on things anytime during a scenario.

ACTION

Tales From The Crypt is not really an action game, though there may be lots of blood and gore flying. The violence tends to come in bursts after a long build-up — after a while, those axe murderers just need to release all that tension, you know? And of course characters might find themselves in the Old West, in the middle of a war, in the depths of a jungle, or any place conducive to action.

But action shouldn't be all there is to a *Crypt* adventure. You want to weave character interaction, chances for role-playing, and good old-fashioned terror into the mix. If the zombies are rising from their graves and attacking the characters (who are trapped in a mausoleum), you don't want an adventure of non-stop carnage. You want to give the player characters time to sweat, to fear, to hate, to dread the coming of the darkness ...

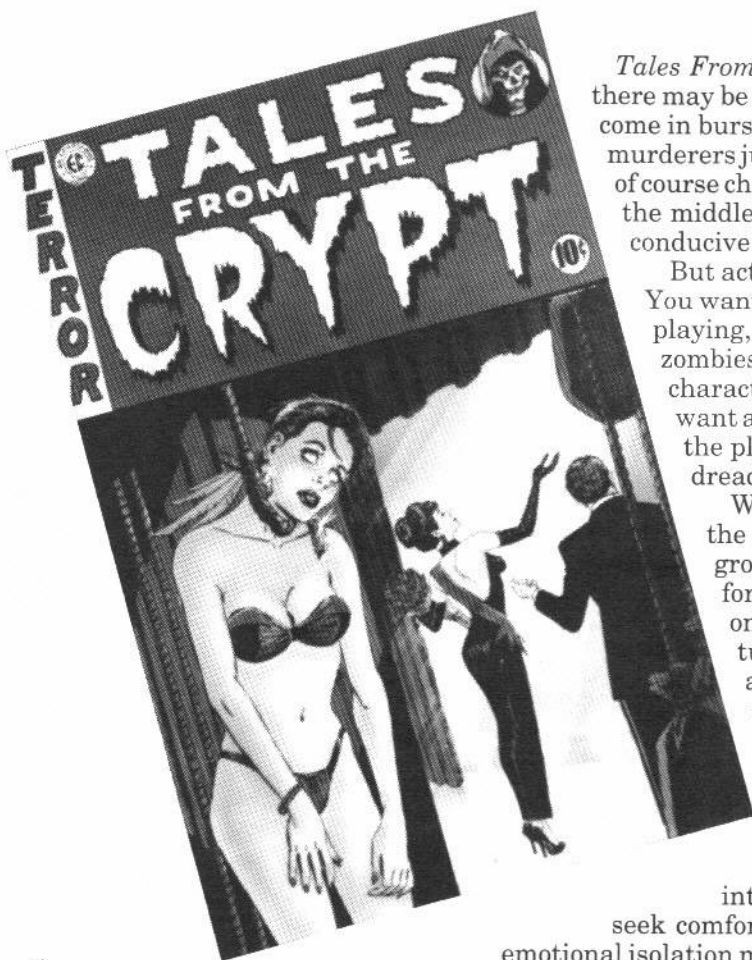
When designing these adventures, carefully judge the power level of the encounter to the power of the group. Nothing frustrates players more than being forced to fight an unwinnable battle, and this should only happen for a good reason. After all, the adventure may be designed around the horror of a desperate, unceasing struggle against apparently insurmountable odds.

ROMANCE

Romance may also enter the picture, even in the world of *Tales From The Crypt*. Romance is a central theme in many genres, and may enter into the campaign as characters fall in love or merely seek comfort in the face of their desperate situation. Their

emotional isolation may be the greatest challenge for many characters — separated from all that they have known. It is only natural that, in an extended campaign, they would seek to connect with those around them. It is also inevitable that the Cryptkeeper will use these relationships to his advantage (and may even attempt to throw a beautiful vampire or a handsome ghoul in the characters' path).

When someone loves, they are vulnerable, and the Cryptkeeper will put this to good use. Love and passion can be wonderful and beautiful — they can also bring out the absolute *worst* in people. There's a fine line between love and hate, and a



finer one between love and encounters with sharp objects. Endangering the loved one is a great way to get a character involved in the story — killing him and then bringing him back (at least, parts of him) is an even better way to motivate a character!

CHOOSE A SETTING

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this book, *Tales From The Crypt* adventures can take place virtually anywhere and anywhen, with the only limit being your imagination. In the future, West End will be providing source material on different sorts of places you can use for an adventure, but for now, try using settings you have seen on episodes of the television series or in horror movies. You probably don't have to worry about knowing every detail of the location you have chosen ... one way or another, the player characters won't be there long!

The best locations are ones with atmosphere. That doesn't mean it has to be a cemetery or a haunted house every week, but think about places that people are inherently a little afraid of or unsettled by. Circuses, wax museums, hospitals, dentists' offices, airplanes, anywhere the sense of reality is a little twisted, anywhere the characters don't feel in complete control is grist for the Cryptkeeper's mill.

Once you have a setting, time for...

A LITTLE PLOT

There are plenty of stories you can make up for *Tales From The Crypt* — we've included some adventure hooks at the end of this chapter, as well as at the end of Chapter One. Sometimes, it's enough to just drop the player characters into a disturbing setting and let their own fears do the rest.

Plots can range from the supernatural (*Tales From The Crypt* episodes have dealt with vampires and werewolves, to name a few) to the suburban (wife wants to get rid of cheating husband — good thing the player characters are around to pin it on, huh?) The stories can be violent and bloody, or just heavy with the *threat* of violence — if the characters are stalked for an entire adventure through an old, dark house by a maniac, the terror comes from what he *might* do, not what he is doing.

Often, *Tales From The Crypt* adventures have a startling twist at the end. This can be a little harder to pull off when you are dealing with experienced roleplayers who are quick to guess at shifts in the plot, but it's not impossible. The primary problem you will encounter is that roleplaying adventures can go in so many different directions through the actions of the players that you may not arrive at the twist you wanted. Keep this in mind and adjust as you go.



Finally, if you are really stuck for a plot, watch *Tales From The Crypt* — it's in syndication and probably on in your area. With all the episodes that have been done, there is certain to be one whose plot you can cop or which will give you a good idea for one of your own.

There are a few other things you need to do in creating an adventure. Among these are creating your cast of characters (antagonists for the player characters, sources of information, and "red herrings" to keep them guessing), creating any artifacts the player characters might encounter, and deciding just what it is the Cryptkeeper wants the characters to accomplish. When you are done with the latter, put your mind to coming up with some en-Crypted clue he can use at the start of the adventure to tip off the players.

Along those lines, if you feel up to it try to come up with Cryptkeeper intros and exits of your own, just like those in the television series. This will add some of the feel of the Crypt to your adventure. And along those lines ...

A PINCH OF BAT WING FOR FLAVOR

Now it's time to think of ways to add a little extra tone and feel to your *Tales From The Crypt* adventure. There are a number of ways to do this, some easy, some requiring a little more work on your part. These include:

Invite the Cryptkeeper: What's the Crypt without the Keeper? There are plenty of likenesses of the Cryptkeeper on the market (posters, puppets, cards, etc.) that you can scatter about your gaming room, along with other trappings of the Crypt. Candles, plastic skulls, gruesome rubber horror masks, virtually any sort of Halloween decorations that are left over can be a great help at creating atmosphere. Another idea is to videotape the opening credits of *Tales From The Crypt* and play them at the start of the adventure.

Mood Music: Tapes and CDs with ominous music or horrific sound effects can be found at any record store and provide an excellent background for your game sessions.

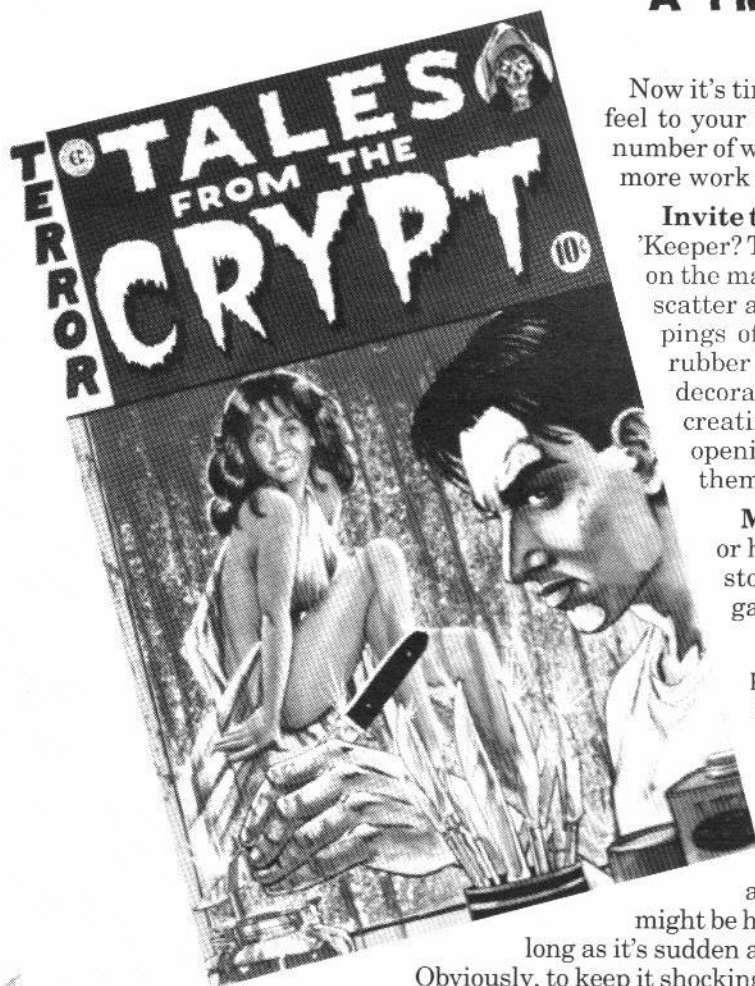
Turn the Lights Down Low: Or out completely, even if only for a few moments. But keep in mind the fears and feelings of your players (see "Player Panic," below).

Kill a Player Character: If you really want to show the players the world is a dangerous place, kill one of their characters at the start of the adventure. His death doesn't have to have anything to do with the adventure itself — he

might be hit by a car or fall down a staircase — anything, as long as it's sudden and painful and shocking to the other characters.

Obviously, to keep it shocking you can't be doing this all the time (and players will get frustrated after a while). But once ought to be more than enough.

Along those lines, you may want to allow players to choose more than one character template at the start of a campaign. That way, if you are planning an especially lethal adventure, the players can use secondary characters for it rather than risk ones they have been shepherding along for months. By the same token, if one of their valued characters does die at some point, it will have much more meaning.



Player Panic: Get to know your players. Find out what really scares them. Then use it against them. Simple as that.

But be careful. There's a fine line between having fun with your players and being cruel to them, and more than a few horror game sessions run by insensitive gamemasters have ended with arguments and lost friendships. If you know, for example, that one friend gets the creeps in the dark, feel free to douse the lights at a dramatic moment to unsettle him a little. On the other hand, if he's *really* afraid of the dark — to the point where his fear will ruin his enjoyment of the game — then don't do this. You're all after the same thing, to have fun, and messing with someone's psyche to the point where they don't want to or can't play anymore is no fun for anyone.

So the most important part of the above instructions is "get to know your players." It may take a lot of time and effort to find out what lines not to cross with them and just how far you can go in frightening them, but it's far, far better than "trial and error" in the long run.

Another point along those lines is be careful about the props you use. Rubber knives or plastic axes are fine, especially if the lights are dim. Real knives, axes or other sharp instruments should *not* be used, even as props — there's too great a risk of someone getting hurt. A good rule of thumb is, no matter what you're using, never strike anyone with anything. That's the best way to make sure no one has reason to regret playing in your campaign.

TALES OF THE HOOK

Here are some adventure hooks to help get you started on your *Tales From The Crypt* campaign:

CRUISE TO NOWHERE

The characters are taking a cruise on a luxury liner, and wake up on the second day out to discover that the crew, the other passengers, —everyone— has disappeared! Only the characters remain, stranded in the middle of the ocean. Where did everyone else go? Was there really ever anyone else there? And is what took them planning to come back for the characters?

SEVERANCE PAY

The player characters are dropped into the bodies of executives who have been working late. Together, they're riding down in a glass-walled elevator which travels down the outside of the skyscraper. Across the way, a neon clock shows that it is 7 p.m.

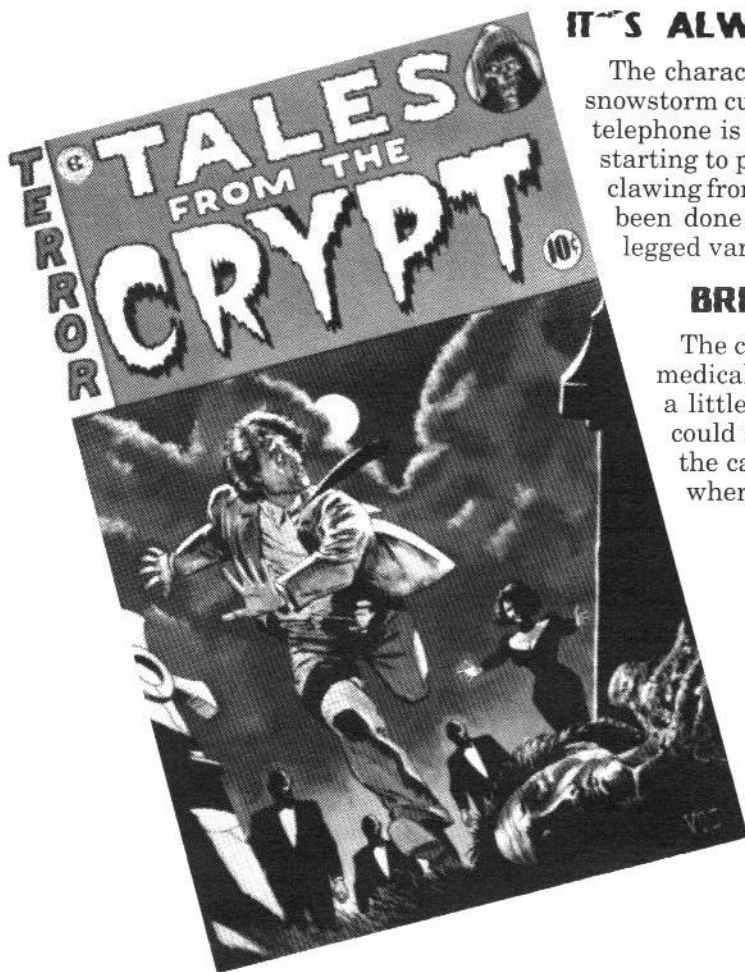


Suddenly, the elevator stops dead between floors. The characters are stuck, and the two floors are empty. The emergency phone isn't working. The ground is a long way down. Allow them a scene or so to get good and panicked as the clock ticks on ...

Then the Cryptkeeper whispers in all their ears at once: "Oh, did I forget to mention? One of you is a werewolf."

The hour is growing later. The moon will soon be rising. And since the characters don't retain the memories of the bodies they are inhabiting, none of them can know just which is the lycanthrope. They'll have fun finding out — especially with you saying things like, "Samantha, your hands are starting to itch" and "Fred seems to have an especially heavy five o'clock shadow tonight." Either they'll discover the werewolf (with a little help (?) from the Cryptkeeper) and toss him out of the elevator ... or he/she will shift and tear them all to pieces.

In the meantime, just remember that there's nothing like murderous paranoia to liven up the work day!



IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST

The characters are at a retreat in the mountains when a snowstorm cuts off the power. The roads are impassable, the telephone is dead, the asylum outpatient support group is starting to panic. And something is scratching, scrabbling, clawing from inside the walls in the old house ... rats? Nah, been done ... more likely, it's some scourge of the two-legged variety ...

BRING BACK MY BODY TO ME

The characters are dropped into the bodies of young medical students at an isolated school — just in time for a little dissection! There's only one problem ... they could swear the gardener they saw at work today is the cadaver they cut up yesterday. Time to find out where the bodies are buried ... and for how long.



VII

MINI-ADVENTURE

Wurry, hurry, hurry — ladies and gentlemen, boys and ghouls, step right up for the goriest show on Earth! I wanted to be a clown, but they made me ringmaster — guess they were afraid I'd knock them dead! Hehehehehe!

This is a three-ring terror tale: the first ring is madness, the second is murder, and the third ... that's for you kiddies to discover. It's all about greed, ambition, and the funny things people keep in chests ... like knives, for instance! And that's your sole clue ...

Ready for a trip to the "carnage-val?" This is a sick little story I like to call ...

CIRCUS OF SOULS

THE MAJOR BEAT

After a moment's disorientation, the player characters awaken to find themselves occupying the bodies of circus performers in a fading, run-down old carnival. The midway's only half-lit, the rides are dirty and dangerous ... about the only thing still bringing the people in is the freak show. And when a local cop tries to shut it down ... somebody shuts him down, in a pine box.

No, there's anything but a circus atmosphere under the Nason Bros. big top. The mentalist is keeping his thoughts to himself; the snake-charmer wants a bigger bite of the profits; the geek's developed a taste for something besides chicken; and somebody's started cutting acts ... with a cleaver.

The characters may not know what's going on, but you have to. Seems that the Amazing Harmon, the two-bit fortune teller, decided he wanted to do more than a few paltry predictions for pitiful pay. So he put his soul up for auction, and threw in those of some of his fellow performers (without asking them first, of course). The bottom line is that he got his wish — real power — and they got it too. The snake-charmer's gone serpent; the dog-faced girl does more than just howl at the full moon; you get the picture.

Only Harmon's soul is gone for good — the rest he's keeping in an ornate chest for delivery at a later date ... and he's always on the look-out for more. Good thing the circus just hired on some new help, isn't it?

Primary Objective: The Cryptkeeper wants that chest destroyed. He doesn't much care what happens to the carny performers, but the chest got misplaced in the Crypt a while ago and he's been wondering ever since where it got to.

Secondary Objective: The player characters have to worry about worse than death ... they also have to worry about death. Somebody's been burying knives in

the backs of the performers. Could be the magician with the disappearing dagger trick ... or the insanely jealous knife thrower ... or maybe somebody just wants to take a stab at the circus biz! Finding out the who and why before their lives hit a stainless steel stop sign should also be a priority for the characters.

SHELL GAME

This adventure can be played as a one-shot or part of a campaign. If you are playing it as a one-shot, the best way to approach it is to either have the characters play new members of the carnival or have them play potential investors in the show (the latter allows you to use the templates in the back of the book). Using that method, though, will require you to make some modifications to the adventure — the characters will be hanging around and investigating to protect their investment, etc. If that's the case, skip the initial part of *Scream One* and go directly to "Nickel Tour."

If you are playing the adventure as part of a campaign, the Cryptkeeper will drop the characters' spirits into the bodies of new performers at the carnival. Their mental attributes and skills will remain the same, as will their physical skills, but their physical attribute values will change. Listed below are six possible "shells" for the characters to enter — you can use these or make up your own.

GROLLO. THE STRONGMAN

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 7
ENDURANCE 11
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 12

Description: Grollo is a musclebound bald man with a thick, black handlebar moustache. He speaks with a heavy Eastern European accent.

MARCUS THE TRAPEZE ARTIST

AGILITY 11
DEXTERITY 11
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10

Description: Marcus is a devilishly handsome youth, about 25, who will catch the eye of any woman in the circus.

SYLVIA THE WIRE WALKER

AGILITY 12
DEXTERITY 10
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9

Description: Sylvia is an attractive woman, just a little past her prime. She can still pull off her act, but her reflexes are just a *hair* off.

BOMBO THE CLOWN

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9

Description: Bombo is a short, round, late middle-aged gent, a mass of aches and pains from too many tumbles over the years.







GILBERT THE JUGGLER

AGILITY 11
DEXTERITY 11
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9

Description: Gilbert is an oily, vaguely sleazy type. He originally joined the carnival as a means of getting out of a small Southern town where he'd gotten a little too friendly with a sheriff's daughter.

ANGELA THE LION TAMER

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 9
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10

Description: Angela is a short, well-built red-head, who has already caught the eye of Mandini the knife-thrower.

Note that the physical attributes of the shells may boost the characters' total value above the 68 that is mandated for beginning characters. Don't worry about this—these are only temporary homes for the characters' spirits, and any attribute boost should be considered an extra Advantage.

SCREAM ONE: BREAK A LEG

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters suffer a momentary blackout and awaken to find themselves standing before a small crowd. The wire-walker and the trapeze artist are high above the center ring; the lion-tamer is in a cage with the roaring lions; the others are in various places in the ring.

Ideally, the characters should be completely disconcerted. Feel free to encourage this feeling, because it's part of the fun of being Cryptkeeper!

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Suddenly, there are bright lights, and sawdust, and people smiling and cheering. Clowns are tumbling about, a ringmaster is shouting something you can't quite understand, lions are roaring, elephants are trumpeting. Looking up, you see you are in a red-and-white striped tent. The smells of greasepaint, popcorn, and horses assail your senses.

Without warning, bang the table.

There's a sudden explosion and the ground shakes underneath you. A man flies out of a

cannon and soars over your heads to land in a net. The screams of the audience grow louder. You need a moment to collect your thoughts, but you're not going to get it.

THE ACTION

The characters are performers, whether they want to be or not. Time to perform!

Of course, there is one little problem ... namely, that they don't have the skills or the knowledge of the people whose bodies they're in. "Grollo" has the raw strength to lift a 500-pound weight, but it takes more than strength — you have to know the right way to lift or you'll hurt yourself. Won't it be fun watching him find out the hard way?

Think of it ... all of a sudden you have a spotlight shining on you, and you have to do something you've never done. All of a sudden, people are expecting you to swing out on a trapeze or make a lion behave or juggle torches (and if you screw up, the Cryptkeeper will have something infinitely worse waiting for you back in the Crypt!) If this doesn't make the characters sweat, what will?

Go around the table — if you have a little desk lamp, focus it on the players to simulate the spotlight (other players can provide the crowd noise). Everyone is looking at them expectantly — so what's it going to be? (It's recommended that you shove nets under the wire walker and the trapeze artist ... no point killing them just yet. That long fall should be enough to shake them up, though.)

The whole purpose of this part of the scene is to unsettle the characters. Once you feel that's been done sufficiently, move on to "Nickel Tour."

One of the things the characters should notice right away is that somehow — who knows how? — they all recognize each other despite the new shells. (This will save a lot of time at the start of the adventure — they have enough to worry about without trying to find each other.)

When the main show is over, the crowd will melt away and head for the midway and the freak show. The characters will be approached by the carnival's owner, Errol Nason, last of the founding Nason Bros., who will show his new employees around. Cut to "Nickel Tour."

NICKEL TOUR

Read aloud or paraphrase:

A portly man with a shock of red-orange, curly hair and a loud sportcoat approaches you. An unlit cigar hangs out of his mouth. He shakes all your hands in rapid succession. "Great show! Great show! Oh, sure, not perfect — but hey, everyone gets a few nerves their first night out." His smile disappears as if someone has thrown a switch. "Things will be *much* better tomorrow night, won't they?"

When the characters answer in the affirmative, the smile returns. He leads them out of the tent and on to the half-lit midway.



USING THE SHELLS

As gamemaster/Cryptkeeper, you should choose which bodies the characters enter, and do it with an eye toward maximum effect. Feel free to play with genders (putting men into women's bodies, etc.), or if you know a character is scared of heights, drop her into the wire walker, that sort of thing. Try not to put characters into shells they're going to absolutely *hate*, as that might lessen your players' enjoyment of the game (remember, they're being manipulated by the Cryptkeeper, but as gamemaster you still want them to have fun).

“Sure, they will! Never doubted it for a moment! Now I guess you’d like to see some of Nason Bros., right? Come on, I’ll show you around.”

In addition to getting to see the layout, etc., Mr. Nason serves another purpose. By referring to the characters by their “names,” they’ll learn a little more about their new identities.

ERROL NASON

AGILITY 7

Stealth 8

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

First aid 11, perception 13, trick 14

MIND 10

Business 13, scholar: carnival history 14

CONFIDENCE 11

Con 14, intimidation 13, streetwise 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 14

Life Points: 4

Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6

Description: Errol Nason got his start in the carnival business 40 years ago, along with his brothers Sam and Gus. Sam and Errol made the money and Gus drank it — that is, until the day Gus “accidentally” wandered into the lion cage around feeding time. Sam died of a heart attack six years ago, leaving Errol as the sole owner.

Nason is a businessman, first and last, which is why his carnival has survived when so many have gone under. He’s willing to indulge his performers up to a point, but if they fall down on the job, they’re out. He frowns on booze and tries, without much success, to discourage romances between the acts.

The “nickel tour” includes the following:

MANDINI’S TENT

Located just off the midway, this is where Mandini the knife-thrower practices his craft. Tonight, he’s tossing daggers at his assistant, Julie, while another figure, clad in worn top hat and tails looks on appreciatively (mostly at Julie’s form rather than Mandini’s skills. This is Randolpho, the magician.) If one of the characters is Angela, the lion-tamer, Mandini will give her an appraising look before going back to work.

Mandini is a thin, dark type, with a dark brown moustache and beard and piercing blue eyes. He’s good with his knives, his motions are almost a blur and he misses Julie’s body by the merest fraction of an inch. She seems perfectly calm, having great faith in her partner.

Randolfo sports a pencil-thin black moustache and a cynical air. He has no real magical ability — he’s just good at sleight-of-hand, card tricks, and has a small repertoire of decent-sized illusions. He also has an eye for Julie, who doubles as his assistant.

After the characters have been there a few moments, Mandini will ask one of them to stand in for Julie, who needs to get into costume for the next show (he’d prefer a female character, but if there are none, he’ll settle for one of the men. Grollo will be his last choice.) Nason thinks this is a fine idea, envisioning an act where Mandini tosses knives at clowns, trapeze artists in mid-flight, etc. He’ll pressure one of the characters into accepting.



The first few throws go just fine. Then, as he readies for a fourth toss, Randolph mutters, "So I heard one of your missing knives showed up, Mandini ..."

The throw goes wild. The knife is heading directly for the character's head! She's got a split second to react — call for a *dodge* total, with a difficulty number of 8. Failure means she takes a glancing blow from the knife (damage value 11), necessitating some dandy stitches in her forehead. Success means she ducks out of the way and the knife buries itself in the board.

"Hey there," Randolph says, "sawing someone in half is my act." Then the magician saunters out.

If the characters ask Errol about Randolph's joke, the owner will explain that someone stole a half-dozen of Mandini's knives a week or so ago. That was bad enough, but then one of the roustabouts (carnival workers) wound up dead, stabbed in the back with one of them. It's not unusual for carny types to get in fights, sometimes bad ones, but the incident had shaken Mandini up. And Randolph isn't happy unless he has someone to needle.

MANDINI

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee combat 12, melee parry 12, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 10

Thrown weapons 14

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

First aid 10, perception 11, trick 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 5

Equipment: Throwing daggers, damage value STR+2/17, range 3-5/10/15

Description: Mandini is a fiercely proud man, with a dark past (he killed a man in a fight over a woman some years back, and served five years in prison). The theft of the knives has him extremely worried that he will be fingered as a suspect in any crime committed with them.

RANDOLFO

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 10

DEXTERITY 11

Prestidigitation 14



Ray Lodovici

ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 11, perception 12, teaching: magic tricks 12, trick 14

MIND 9

Hypnotism 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 12, intimidation 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12, taunt 11

Life Points: 4

Description: Randolfo is a cynic, an occupational hazard of a profession based on trickery. He has "crossed swords" with Mandini on more than one occasion usually fighting over Julie and Nason has had to break them up.

THE AMAZING HARMON

On their way along the midway, Nason tells the characters that he's been having some problems with the fortuneteller lately. He's supposed to paint rosy pictures for the suckers, but instead he's been sending people out looking shell-shocked. "And those types don't spend money on cotton candy and popcorn."

Harmon works out of a tent on the midway, billed as "World's Greatest Fortuneteller ... Sees All, Knows All." Inside, he's revealed to be a fairly shabby character with a ratty turban and a dirty crystal ball on the table in front of him. His clientele is mostly gullible old women and young lovers. When he's introduced to the characters, he will take one of their palms and make a pretense of reading it. Halfway through, he'll suddenly stop and stare intently at the character, then shake his head, smile, and say, "I see a very different future than I might have expected for you ... and a very different past, as well."

Play Harmon as very cold. Remember, this is a man with no soul. At best, he should make the characters uncomfortable; at worst, a shiver should go up their spine just from the chill in his voice. Without knowing what, they will probably guess something is just not *right* about this guy.

THE AMAZING HARMON

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, improvised weaponry 10, stealth 11

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 14*

Deduction 16, divination: crystal ball 18, divination: palmistry 18, perception 17, trick 16

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 10

Interrogation 11, intimidation 13, willpower 14

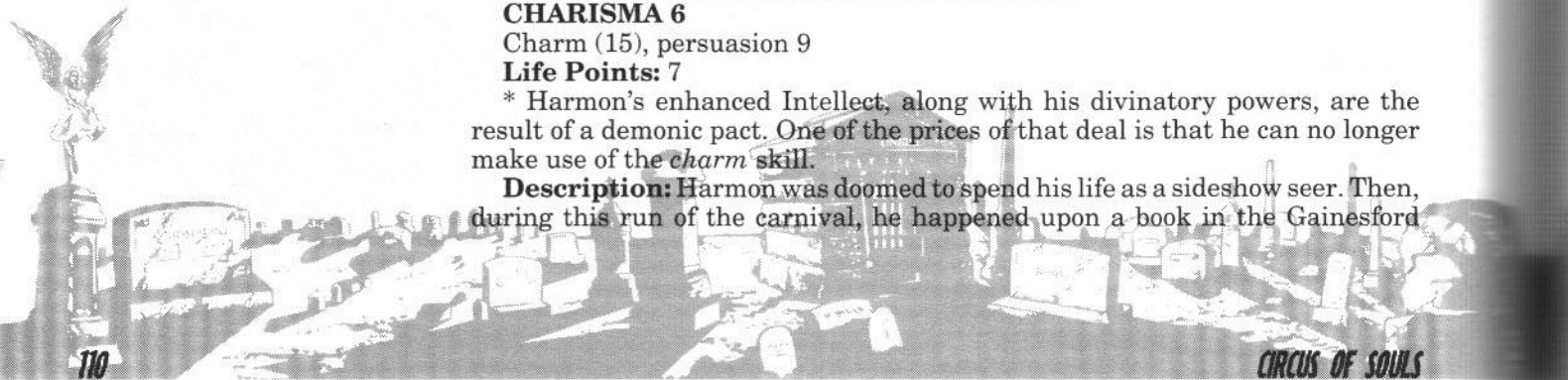
CHARISMA 6

Charm (15), persuasion 9

Life Points: 7

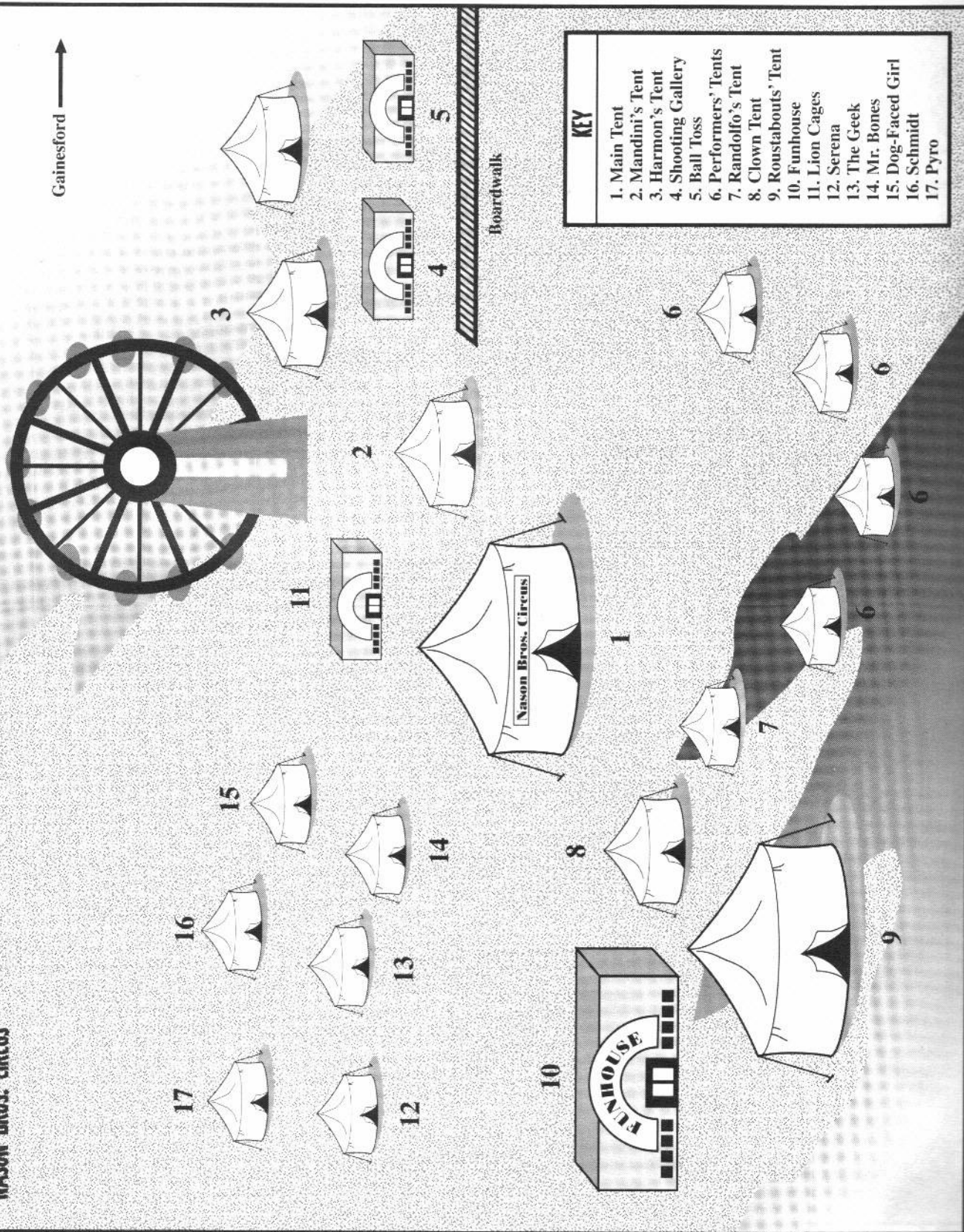
* Harmon's enhanced Intellect, along with his divinatory powers, are the result of a demonic pact. One of the prices of that deal is that he can no longer make use of the *charm* skill.

Description: Harmon was doomed to spend his life as a sideshow seer. Then, during this run of the carnival, he happened upon a book in the Gainesford



NASON BROS. CIRCUS

Gainesford →





Library on demonology. Using it, he contacted an otherworldly presence which offered him true divinatory abilities in return for his soul ... and any other souls he might dig up. Harmon jumped at it. Now he really can predict the future, which is why his forecasts have been so gloomy for so many of late.

He knows there is something off about the character whose palm he read ... he senses that the spirit inside of it doesn't belong, but he doesn't know for certain why this is so. He half-suspects the character might be an agent of his personal demon, come to check up on his collection (this makes for an excellent *Mistaken Identity* subplot and could be a big help to the characters down the road).

THE CLOWN TENT

The clowns occupy a very small tent, which serves as their dressing room. As the characters enter, one of the clowns is comforting another, who seems to be on the verge of a breakdown. He is rubbing his face furiously with a rag, as if he were trying to remove his make-up, but it's not having any effect. The older clown is trying to calm him down.

When Nason asks what's wrong, the older clown explains that something must have been wrong with this batch of greasepaint. Roscoe (the younger clown) can't get his make-up off and he's starting to panic. Sure enough, he's scraped the skin so raw it's bleeding, but the white paint won't come off, and neither will the red around his lips. Nason says he'll go get the doc, and suggests that the characters go see the freak show — "It's the biggest attraction we've got."

THE FUNHOUSE

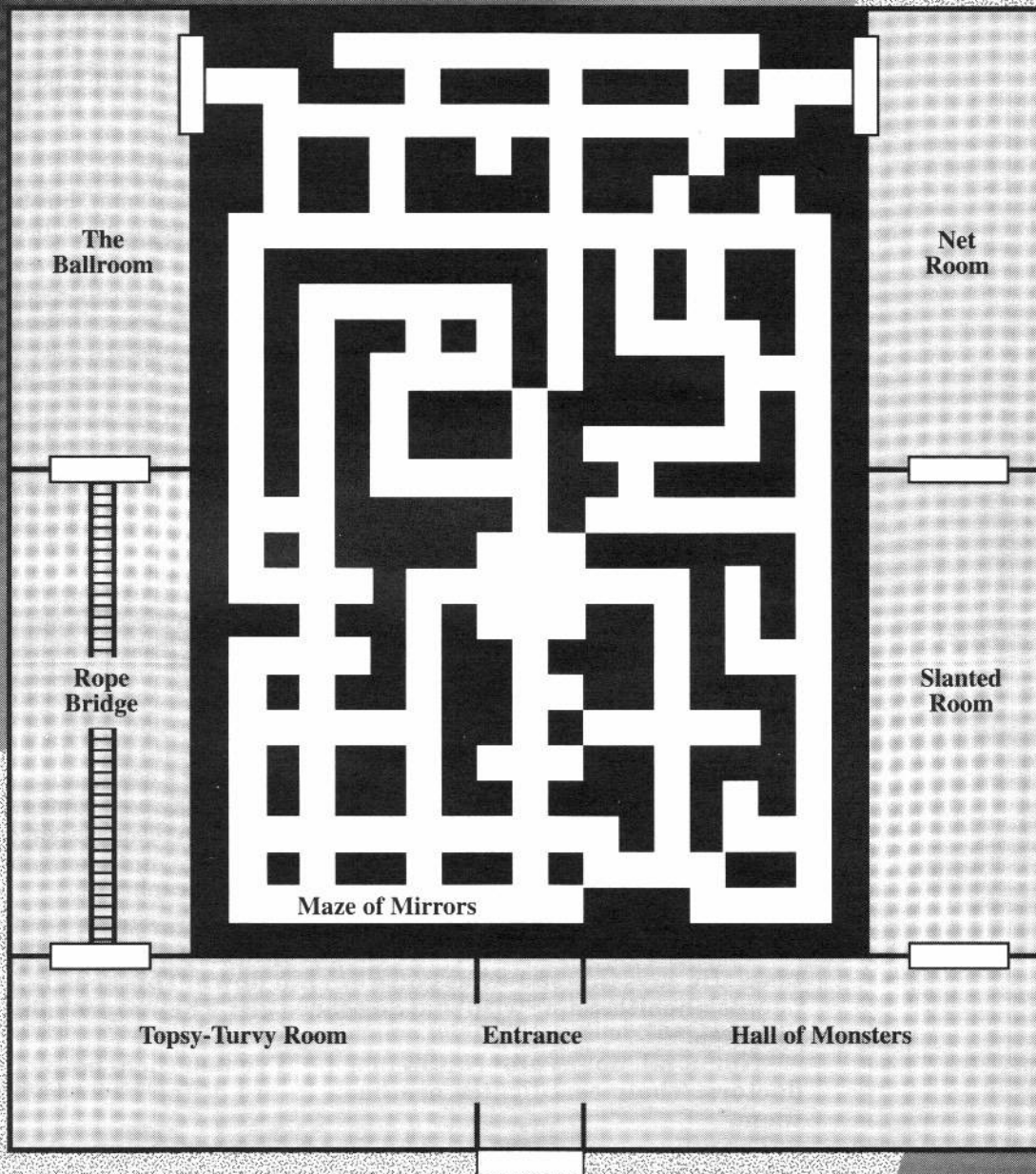
This is a little pre-fab house of horrors that the circus throws up wherever they go. Not terribly impressive to look at ... but there sure are a lot of performers hanging around it.

THE FREAK SHOW

The freak show occupies a series of tents at the far end of the midway, where most of the lights have burnt out. Fading placards on the outsides proclaim the eerie contents within. The characters can enter any of the tents they want (they'll be recognized as circus performers and allowed in without paying). Keep in mind that it is very dark inside each exhibit. Among the tents are:

Serena the Snake-Charmer: Young and lovely, with strangely mesmerizing green eyes, Serena wears a loose golden blouse and sits at a table, upon which there rests a basket filled with cobras. Play-

THE FUNHOUSE



ing a pipe, she makes the snakes dance, then holds them transfixed with her stare as they sway back and forth. Her legs are hidden beneath the table. She will not acknowledge or speak to the characters, lest she break her hold on the snakes.

The Geek: A wandering bum picked up by the circus, the “geek” is essentially a man-animal. A few times a day, live animals are tossed into his “pen” — chickens, rodents, etc. — and he makes a show of devouring them. When the characters enter, he’s huddled in a corner, dirty and half-naked, sleeping. Chicken feathers litter the floor. (When the characters reach this point, cut to “Event” below.)

Mr. Bones: Billed as “half man, half living skeleton,” Mr. Bones is a tall fellow wearing a long grey coat. His head and shoulders are normal, but beneath the coat is what appears to be a skeleton (it’s obviously just a black bodysuit with bones painted on it).

The Dog-Faced Girl: Either a freak of nature or an excellent makeup-job, the dog-faced girl is a young woman with hair on her face, a wild hairstyle, and oversized incisors (which look pretty fake). She barks and scampers and howls when the characters enter.

Schmidt the Sword Swallower: A short fellow with a beard and moustache, Schmidt can seemingly swallow swords, rapiers, daggers, and other sharp instruments without any harm to himself. There’s nothing particularly unusual in here, except for the fact that Schmidt gives much the same “off” feeling that the Amazing Harmon did, and the sight of a dozen or so knives buried in a pegboard, as if hurled there with great force.

Pyro the Flame-Eater: Pyro swallows fire with the ease that Schmidt does swords. He sticks flaming torches into his mouth, then breathes out the flames. An ugly scar along the left side of his face reveals that at least once he missed with his torch.

EVENT

When the characters are in the geek tent, they hear a commotion outside. An instant later, a Gainesford policeman shoulders his way past some roustabouts and into the tent. With a look of disgust, he steps into the geek pen and begins prodding the poor soul with his foot to wake him up.

Nason shows up right after that. Read aloud or paraphrase:

“What’s the problem, Officer?” the circus owner says.

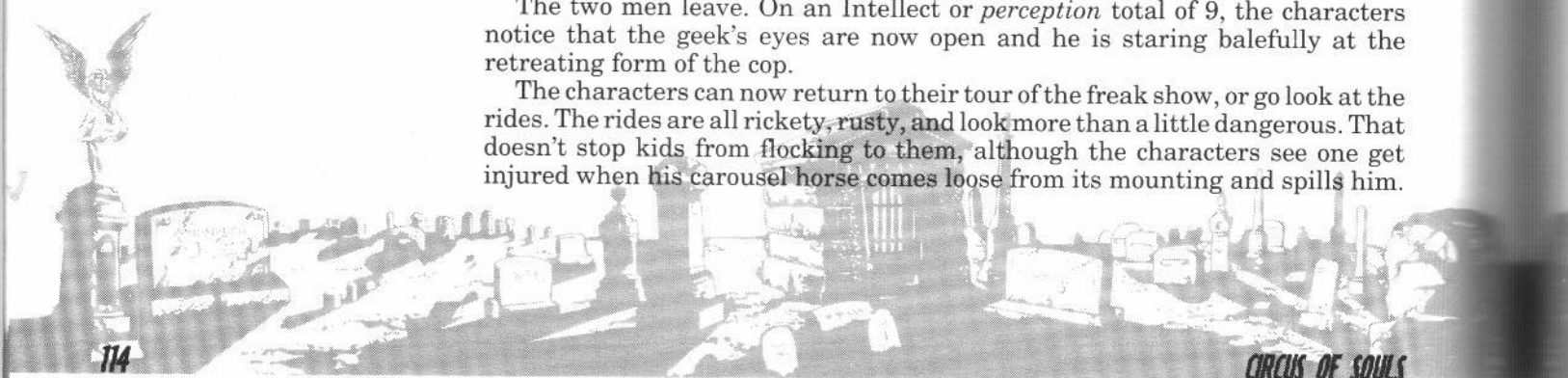
“Orders from the Sheriff,” the officer, replies, without turning from his task. “He says this show has gotta be shut down. This geek is a threat to people’s health. Same with that dog-faced girl. They’re probably carryin’ diseases.”

“Not at all, not at all,” Nason insists. “I’ve had them both checked by doctors. Their certificates are back in my office if you’d like to see them.”

The officer shrugs. “Well, okay. But if they’re not right, the two of ’em are gonna spend the night in jail. You might, too.”

The two men leave. On an Intellect or *perception* total of 9, the characters notice that the geek’s eyes are now open and he is staring balefully at the retreating form of the cop.

The characters can now return to their tour of the freak show, or go look at the rides. The rides are all rickety, rusty, and look more than a little dangerous. That doesn’t stop kids from flocking to them, although the characters see one get injured when his carousel horse comes loose from its mounting and spills him.



NOW YOU SEE HIM

Let the characters wander around a bit more and soak up the atmosphere. Eventually, they'll wind up by Nason's office and see the owner walk out with the policeman (who now has a hint of cash sticking out of his breast pocket). Nason will approach them and invite them to join him to see Randolpho's performance.

The characters enter a large tent about half-filled with people. Some of the other performers, most notably Mandini, are also milling around in the back. Read aloud or paraphrase:

Randolfo steps out onto the makeshift stage with a great flourish, accompanied by the lovely Julie. He bows to the audience, does a few simple tricks, and then two roustabouts wheel a large cabinet onto the stage.

"This is no ordinary cabinet, ladies and gentleman," Randolpho says. "It is a doorway to another world — perhaps a better world than this, perhaps not. It is the world that lies beyond the grave, and once it was said it was the land from which no traveler ever returned. But with the aid of my beautiful assistant, I am about to prove that one can pass through the gates of death ... and return."

Julie steps into the cabinet, which is closed behind her. Randolpho turns it around, tapping on the sides to show there are no secret panels. Then he walks off stage and returns with an armful of sabres, which he proceeds to plunge into the cabinet, one by one. Finally, he pulls the swords out. All the swords are covered with blood, which makes the audience gasp (Randolfo does not seem concerned — "stage blood" is built into the sides of the cabinet to produce this effect). Then he opens the cabinet and beams at the audience ...

It's the look on their faces that makes him turn to look inside the cabinet. Julie is indeed gone — but she's been replaced by the Gainesford policeman, very, very dead. He pitches forward on to the stage, a dagger buried in his back.

The audience panics. An *Intellect* or *perception* total of 8 reveals that Mandini is missing. Another one of 9 reveals that the back flap of the tent is moving as if someone just passed underneath it.

If the characters choose to pursue, cut to "The Lady Reappears." If they don't pursue, someone else will make the discoveries and relay the information they would otherwise have found. If they remain in the tent, Nason will kneel over the body. Randolpho is white as a sheet and taking a drink from a flask he had in his pocket.

If the characters examine the body, an *Intellect* or *perception* total of 11 will show that the blood from the knife wound in the back is fresh. A *first aid* total of 10 or *medicine* total of 8 will reveal that there's a great deal of bruising on his skin, as if he were suffering from internal bleeding, but there are no outward wounds on his body. An *Intellect* or *perception* total of 9 will show that the blood on the sabres is real, not fake. And the knife in his back matches the kind Mandini uses in his act.

THE LADY REAPPEARS

If the characters check behind the tent, they'll find Julie on the ground, semi-conscious, a bruise on her head. She'll tell the characters that she had just slipped out of the back of the cabinet and was catching a quick smoke when someone slugged her. The next thing she knew, the characters were picking her up off the ground.

An examination of the ground reveals no tracks, but there are signs of something heavy having been dragged into the tent. There's also a rock with a few traces of blood on it near where Julie lay.

AFTERMATH

The police will have to be called, of course, led by Sheriff Willie McFee (see Chapter One). They'll nose around and interrogate anyone who comes within arms' length, but not find out much. Mandini is the prime suspect, but he insists he had left the tent because Randolph's act was boring and gone to see Serena the snake-charmer. She'll confirm his alibi, showing off a bottle and two glasses they had been using (note, though, that she will still be sitting at her table when the police question her. Allow her to stay there, as the characters shouldn't learn her secret until Scream Two.)

At any rate, the crowds have all been shooed home, and eventually the police will follow them, with their colleague's body. Darkness and quiet settle over the circus ... but peace? No, there's no peace to be found here ...

CUT TO...

When the circus has shut down for the night, cut to Scream Two.

SCREAM TWO: A FRIGHT IN THE LIFE

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters get to spend their first night on the circus grounds. By now, it's likely they're a little rattled by what they've seen, and they may even be thinking about slipping out of their tents and making a run for it. If they choose to do that, let them — they can make it into Gainesford, but if they try to pass beyond the town limits, they'll wind up back in the Crypt. They'll be in a vaulted chamber, to be precise, with three doors, all locked tight. The floor will begin to disappear beneath their feet, revealing nothing but darkness below. When the floor is all gone, they'll fall into the darkness ... and land back on their cots in the circus.

It's likely the characters may think that they have to solve the murders to escape this setting — do nothing to discourage this, since it is at least a minor goal of the adventure. There are a few major avenues they can pursue toward doing this, and these will be covered in this scene, along with some events going on at Nason Bros. tonight, both major and minor.

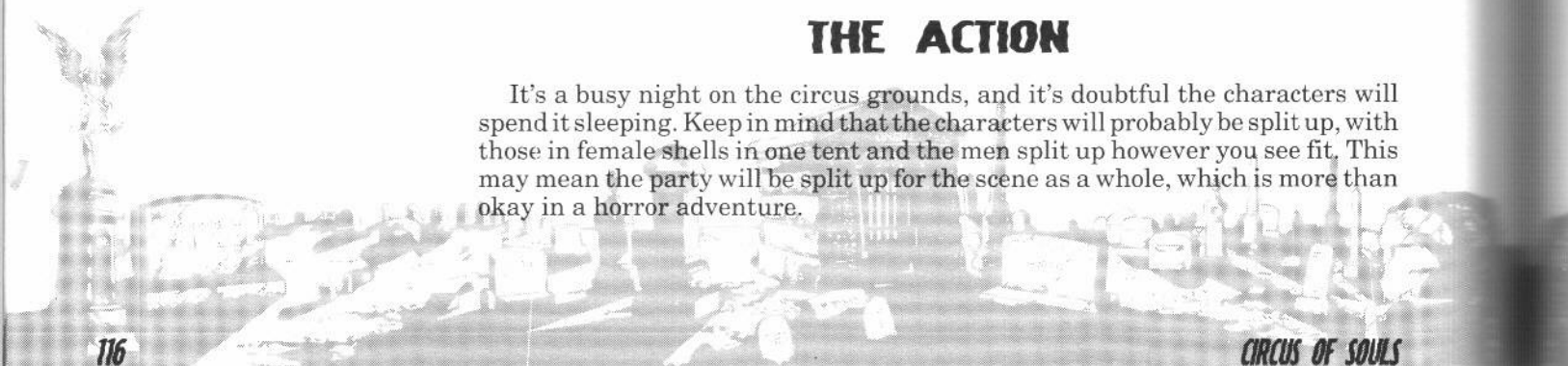
Read aloud or paraphrase:

After the chaos of the evening, an almost unnatural stillness settles over the circus in these late hours. Now and again, the lions begin to roar, as if they've been spooked by something. Somewhere, a woman is crying. Lights are still on in some of the tents, but they've been doused on the midway and near the freak show.

There's something unsettling about the circus by night. The make-up has all come off (well, except for that poor clown's), the glitter has been packed away, and the performers are asleep, off in their own little corners, or gathered together around a bottle. If they speak, it's in a hushed whisper out of respect for the dead.

THE ACTION

It's a busy night on the circus grounds, and it's doubtful the characters will spend it sleeping. Keep in mind that the characters will probably be split up, with those in female shells in one tent and the men split up however you see fit. This may mean the party will be split up for the scene as a whole, which is more than okay in a horror adventure.



So let's take a look at what's going on at Nason Bros. after dark:

THE LIONS

The lions are restless, and if one of the characters is in the lion tamer's shell, she's almost certainly going to be asked to check on them. If not, the characters may still want to see what has them spooked.

There are four lions, two in each cage. They reacted to the presence of a strange animal near their cages, which left tracks — bipedal, clawed tracks, accompanied by splatters of blood. One of the lions has a deep scratch on its flank and blood on its jaws (the intruder reached through the bars and clawed him, only to get bitten in return).

An Intellect or *tracking* total of 8 will allow the characters to follow the trail, which winds its way back toward the midway. The trail finally ends at Randolph's tent. If the characters follow the trail and go inside the tent, cut to "Open and Shut Case."

If one of the characters present is the lion tamer, she may be expected to get into the cages and calm them down. Won't that be fun? She'll need to speak softly and soothingly and not make any sudden moves, and maybe make a few *charm* totals against the lions' *willpower*. She has one advantage — the lions can sense she is not what she seems to be, and are confused by this. They can be considered to be *setback* for the first two rounds she's in the cage. After that, all bets are off (and she'll discover there's a claws in her contract ... and I ain't lion! Hehehehehehe!)

LIONS (4)

AGILITY 11

Dodge 12, long jumping 13, maneuver 14, running 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 6

ENDURANCE 12

Resist shock 14

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 13 (12)

INTELLECT 6

Perception 9, tracking 10

MIND 5

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 15, willpower 13

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: None

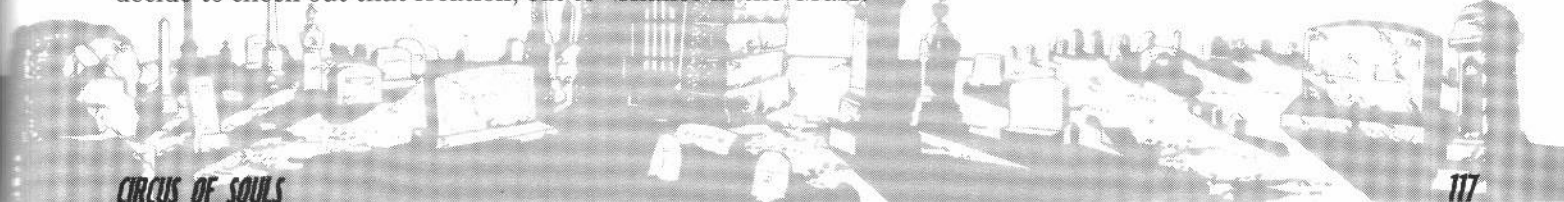
Natural Tools: Fur, armor value TOU+1/13; claws, damage value STR+4/16; teeth, damage value STR+3/15

THE CRYING WOMAN

The woman in tears is Julie, who is now sporting a matching bruise to the one delivered by the rock. She is weeping alone in her tent, having had a fight with Mandini. She'd been shocked to find out he was spending time with Serena, and when she confronted him about it, he hit her and stormed out.

She goes on to say that she hadn't wanted to believe it before, but maybe Mandini did kill the policeman. He feared and hated the law because of something in his past and might have thought the cop was looking for him. She suspects that he and Serena cooked up that alibi between them.

She doesn't know where he's gone — maybe to Serena's tent. If the characters decide to check out that location, cut to "Snakes in the Grass."



JULIE LEVERTON

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee combat 10, stealth 12

DEXTERITY 9

Thrown weapons 11

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Perception 10, tracking 10, trick 11

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 11, intimidation 10, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, disguise 14, persuasion 11

Life Points: 5

Equipment: Julie has a hidden cache of Mandini's throwing knives, damage value STR+2/17, range 3-5/8/15

Description: Julie always wanted to be an actress, and she's a pretty good one, too, but she never got a break. So she hooked up with Nason Bros. when they passed through her home state of Washington and has been with them ever since. Although Randolph and Mandini have fought over her, it's Mandini she's always been attracted to.

Julie has been keeping busy lately. She's the one who stole Mandini's knives and killed the policeman and the roustabout. The reason? The Amazing Harmon informed her that, using his divinatory abilities, he had discovered that some of the circus performers had sold their souls and that killing them was the only way to save them. Not being too mentally stable to begin with, Julie believed him — never realizing he was using her to eliminate anyone who might be a threat to him. The roustabout had overheard too much about what was going on, and the policeman threatened to shut down the lucrative freak show, so both had to be eliminated. (Julie struck herself with the rock to provide an alibi.)

Julie is convinced she is on the side of the angels, but this business with Mandini has broken her heart and she's now perfectly willing to pin the killings on him.

NURSE'S TENT

The circus nurse is busy tonight, too. That unlucky clown has had a breakdown and wound up in the infirmary. One of the roustabouts is there also — he was feeding the geek and the attraction took a chunk out of his arm. The roustabout is willing to talk to anyone (the clown is lousy company), and is more surprised than angry about what happened. He and the geek had always gotten along well, but lately the guy had seemed ... changed. Colder, somehow. And now this — Nason might have to have him put away. The roustabout had heard tell there was a mental asylum near here someplace.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS

You can have some real fun with this section of the Scream. The freak show is dark and unnerving at this time of night, and the closer the characters get to Serena's tent, the more they have the feeling they're being watched. Call for *perception* rolls, alert them to little noises, pause every now and again and say, "Did you hear that?" If it's working, feel free to drag this out and spook the players.

The truth is, they are being watched — by Serena's cobras. Along with some other talents she acquired through a deal with Harmon and his "benefactor," she now has much greater control over her snakes. They're acting as sentries for her.

right now, so though she won't act to stop the characters' approach, she's certainly aware of it.

As the characters draw closer to the tent, they will hear two voices, a man's and a woman's. After a moment or two, they can identify the man's as Mandini's (the woman's they'll probably assume is Serena's, since they've never heard her voice before).

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you come up to the tent, you can hear that the voices are raised slightly in argument. Mandini is insisting that he owes Serena nothing for simply telling the truth about his being with her during the murder. She replies coldly that she doesn't want his money — merely that he listen to what she has to offer.

The feeling that you are being watched is almost unbearably strong now.

If the characters don't peer under the tent, all they'll hear is the voices stop abruptly; a strange series of popping noises; and then silence. If they do peer under the tent, read aloud or paraphrase:

Looking through tent flap, you see that the room is lit by candles. The snake basket is off in a corner, open, with no sign of the cobras. Serena, looking lovelier than ever, sits behind the table, Mandini sitting across from her. Their argument continues for a moment, and then suddenly he stops talking, merely staring at her.

Serena has succeeded in hypnotizing Mandini. Even though she was supposed to talk Mandini into surrendering his soul, her newfound predatory instincts have overwhelmed her better judgment. Now the knife-thrower is only prey.

The characters can choose to intervene at any point during what happens next, or they might just watch. If they intervene, Serena will turn on them, but she will not pursue them outside of her tent. If they just watch and then steal quietly away (or run in panic), she'll let them go.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you watch, Serena's expression begins to darken, and then her skin follows suit. Scales begin to appear on it; her eyes become slitted; she writhes, rather than stands, up from her chair, and you see that, in place of legs, she has the long coils of a serpent!

Mandini sits transfixed as she draws nearer. She comes closer ... closer ... with a series of horrible popping noises, her jaw dislocates and her mouth opens wider than should be possible, revealing gleaming fangs. She sways back and forth, finally striking, taking his



head into her mouth and tearing it free of his body. Gouts of blood cover the inside of the tent as she moves away, letting his body slump to the floor.

If the characters try to flee, they'll notice that the ground seems to be shifting underneath them. There's a reason for that — they're running on snakes! Serena's fanged brethren are all over the place now, added incentive for the characters to make tracks.

SERENA

AGILITY 12

Dodge 15, maneuver 14, stealth 17, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 9

Perception 11, psychic: telepathy 11, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 8

Hypnotism 11 (23)*

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 15, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Charm 11, persuasion 9

Life Points: 4

* Parenthetical value represents Serena's enhanced hypnotic ability, derived through the loss of her soul.

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+4/15; tail, damage value STR+3/14; venom, damage value 18 every 10 minutes until treated. Serena must cause at least one wound with an *unarmed combat* attack for the venom to be introduced into the character's bloodstream.

Special Abilities: Serena has the ability to control her cobras at an *animal control* value of Confidence +10. She must generate an *animal control* total versus the Mind of the snake (more than one can be targeted, though this is a multi-action). The results are read on the "General Success" column of the Success Chart on page 13 of *MasterBook*. If Serena gets a high enough success (gamemaster's option), the animal is controlled for a time value equal to the *animal control* skill total, as read on the Value Chart. A controlled animal will serve its mistress faithfully, even sacrificing itself on her behalf. The power has a range of sight or voice.

Serena also enjoys a limited telepathic link with her snakes. While she cannot command them in this manner, she can see what they see, making them effective spies.

Serena has also been gifted with enhanced hypnotic abilities, and now has the skill at a value of MIN+15. The *hypnotism* skill still works as described on pages 109–110 of *MasterBook*.

Description: Serena has always wanted more than circus life had to offer. She wanted money ... she wanted power. Harmon offered her the chance at this, and she accepted, making her one of the few to willingly go along with his soul-selling scheme.

COBRAS

AGILITY 11

Maneuver 12, missile weapons (spitting) 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 1

ENDURANCE 6

STRENGTH 3



TOUGHNESS 5

INTELLECT 6

Perception 8, tracking 9

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 13, willpower 12

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+4/7; venom, injected on an *unarmed combat* attack that causes at least one wound. Venom causes damage value 18 every 10 minutes until victim dies or is treated.

Description: The cobra is one of the deadliest snakes known to man. It is capable of spitting its venom, which works quickly on a person's nervous system, causing blindness and death.

The best cure for snakebite is to make an incision and apply mild, even suction until the venom is removed.

WHAT TO DO. WHAT TO DO?

How are the characters going to react to the revelation that Serena has made Mandini into a main dish? Are they going to run for help? Maybe — but by the time they convince anyone to come back with them, the body will be gone (guess where?) and the snake-charmer's tent will have caught fire (*fried snake, anyone? Tastes like chicken ... for that matter, so did Mandini! Hehehehehe!*)

The fire is sure to start a panic among people and animals both and the characters can count on lots of confusion. Serena is nowhere to be found. Once Harmon got wind of what she had done, he packed her off to the woods and proceeded to cover her tracks. (If one of the characters remained behind as a lookout, Harmon will first dispatch Mr. Bones and the Geek to take care of him — feel free to kill this player character if you're so inclined, as a wake-up call to the others about just how bad things are. Then, just for fun, have the Cryptkeeper "accidentally" drop him into another shell — say, the dead policeman on the morgue slab back in Gainesford, maybe as he's about to be autopsied! Give him a few moments to panic and then shove him back into someone in the circus. (Or, if you don't feel like being merciful — and why should you? — leave him dead until the next adventure.)

Of course, the characters might have chosen to attack Serena. If that's the case, and they subdue her, they'll have some evidence to show. If Mandini is still alive, he's in shock and won't be of much help. But Serena's bizarre body should suffice, right? Sure, it will ... as long as she's dead. If she's still alive, Harmon will release her soul and let it go back to her body, effectively removing her extra powers and turning her back into a whole woman. A woman, by the way, who will accuse the characters of attacking her and her lover (Nason will let them off with a warning this time, but they can expect some hard looks from the other circus folk).



UM ... HELP!

About now, the characters are beginning to wish they were armed and armored. Well, the latter isn't too likely, but they can certainly lay their hands on weapons if they want to. Among the items that can be found around the circus are knives, axes, swords, torches, a few rifles (in the possession of the roustabouts), and three or four pistols (one belonging to the ringmaster, one in the lion tamer's tent, the rest with the roustabouts). Characters can buy or steal these for their own protection.

Try, though, to keep the characters away from guns — knives, hatchets, axes and the like are much more Cryptish.

If the above happens and Mandini is dead, the characters will have it a little easier. At the least, the blood all around Serena's mouth and the missing head will give everyone pause before making up their minds about what happened ...

Regardless, Nason will regard the events of the night as one more sign that this Gainesford run is cursed. The circus, he announces, will pull up stakes and move on tomorrow night, after the customary post-show party in the funhouse.

OPEN AND SHUT CASE

Following the paw prints from the lion cages will lead the characters back to Randolph's tent. The magician is dead drunk — probably a good thing, otherwise he would simply be dead. The trail leads to his magic cabinet — the same one in which the dead body was placed — and the cabinet is closed and locked tight. A small stream of what looks like blood is leaking out from underneath it.

If any of the characters touches the blood, he'll be cursed. How? Well, the blood is that of a werewolf, so it might carry infection. Or perhaps there's some other horrid side-effect of contact with it. Regardless, it need not manifest itself right away — give it an adventure or two, then spring it gradually on the player character. See how long it takes him to figure out just what he did wrong ...

If the characters can rouse Randolph or search him thoroughly, they'll find the key to the cabinet. Inside, they'll find ... nothing. No blood; no marks; no means of explaining the trail of blood that continues to run from the bottom of the cabinet.

(What was here? Well, the dog-faced girl is now more wolf than dog and was prowling around the grounds tonight. And as for where she went ... Randolph's magic cabinet has been tainted by the goings-on here too, and now serves as a gate from one place to another, if you know how to use it. Harmon has seen to it that the freaks do, just in case they need a quick escape.) (Oh, and if the characters are smart enough to make off with the cabinet — or at least figure out its secret — the Cryptkeeper will be pleased with them and you can erase a Cryptkeeper Point.)

WORDS TO DIE BY

When the characters return to their tents, they'll find the "mailman" has been by. The character whose palm was read by Harmon will have a note reading simply, "I know what you are. Midnight, behind the clown tent." There will be no signature.

Another character (gamemaster's choice) will receive a note saying, "If you want to know the truth, meet me at midnight on the outskirts, north of the main tent." It's signed "Galliana."

Looks like it's time to split the party again (with an axe, maybe?)

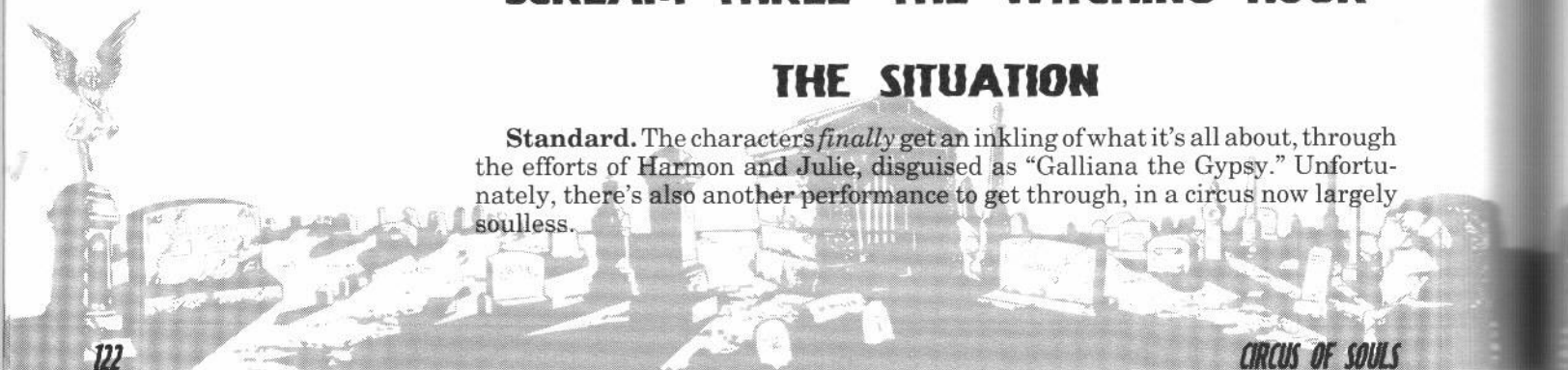
CUT TO...

When the characters are ready to keep their respective "dates," cut to Scream Three, "The Witching Hour."

SCREAM THREE: THE WITCHING HOUR

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters *finally* get an inkling of what it's all about, through the efforts of Harmon and Julie, disguised as "Galliana the Gypsy." Unfortunately, there's also another performance to get through, in a circus now largely soulless.





The party has two dates at the same time — it's likely they'll have to split up. Combining their knowledge at the end of those meetings should give them a pretty good idea of what they are here to accomplish. And maybe they'll even survive long enough to do it ... but don't bet on it.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The circus is dark and quiet as you slip out of your tents. No one appears to be watching you leave ... but if you've learned nothing else in your brief time with Nason Bros., it's that appearances don't mean much. Somewhere out there, secrets are waiting to be revealed ... the question is, are you ready to hear them?

THE ACTION

For the sake of clarity, this Scream will be broken up into two major sections, one for the character/characters meeting Harmon and one for those meeting Galliana. We'll start with the man behind the madness ...

MIND OVER MURDER

When the character(s) reach the rear of the clown tent, read aloud or paraphrase:

There seems to be no one about. You stand uneasily for a moment or two, and then there comes a rustling of cloth. The tent flap lifts and the unfortunate clown you met earlier emerges, still in full make-up. His hysterical tears have been replaced by a strangely empty grin. He carries an assortment of cleavers and, without taking his eyes from you, he begins to juggle them with practiced ease.

A moment later, there is movement behind you. Mr. Bones, the "see-through man" from the circus, stands there, trenchcoat securely buttoned against the night. He stares impassively at you, an axe resting across his arm.

Finally, a third figure appears and the other two move to flank him. It's the Amazing Harmon, an expression of supreme confidence on his face.

Harmon will address only the character whose palm he read. If any others are present, he will assume they are only minions of the person he perceives to be a demon in disguise. He will gesture proudly toward the clown and Mr. Bones and say, "As you can see, everything is going very well."

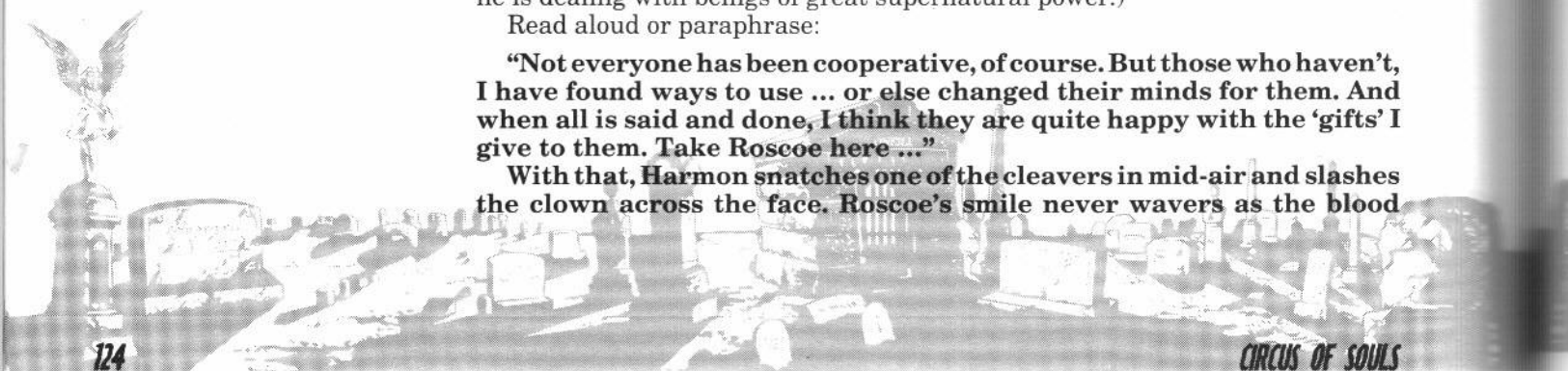
Naturally, the character is going to be nonplussed by this ... but showing it would be a bad idea. It should be obvious that Harmon has mistaken the character for someone else, and playing along would be healthy as well as informative.

(By the way, there's another reason besides that palm reading why Harmon is so convinced the newcomers all work for his "employer." You see, he tried to forcibly sell the soul out from under one of the characters earlier and it didn't take. The reason? The characters' souls don't belong in those bodies to begin with, so the deal couldn't go through. This failure convinced him more than ever that he is dealing with beings of great supernatural power.)

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Not everyone has been cooperative, of course. But those who haven't, I have found ways to use ... or else changed their minds for them. And when all is said and done, I think they are quite happy with the 'gifts' I give to them. Take Roscoe here ..."

With that, Harmon snatches one of the cleavers in mid-air and slashes the clown across the face. Roscoe's smile never wavers as the blood



begins to flow, in stark contrast to the dead-white make-up he wears. "A clown laughs through pain," Harmon continues. "Far easier to do if you don't feel it. As for Mr. Bones ..."

At a nod from the mentalist, Mr. Bones undoes his trenchcoat. From the shoulders down, he is naught but a living skeleton. "Free at last from all the ills that flesh is heir to."

Again, showing shock or surprise is a bad thing. The character has been mistaken for someone exceedingly nasty ... someone who would *enjoy* these sorts of demonstrations. If it appears he doesn't, he's going to have to do some fast talking to explain why not.

Harmon goes on to explain that there have been a few setbacks — Serena, for one — but all things considered, this has been a profitable tour. As soon as the circus is on its way from Gainesford, he will release the souls he's collected from the chest in the proscribed manner and then begin to fill it again at the next stop — perhaps with the spirits of audience members. For now, he has the chest securely hidden.

There are a few things the characters should definitely *not* ask. One is, "Where's it hidden?" Another is, "Why don't you just let me have it now?" Either one of those will set off alarm bells in Harmon's head and guarantee hostile action by Mr. Bones and Roscoe. As it is, all it takes is one blown *con* roll by the character to bring their wrath down on him ...

ROScoe THE CLOWN

AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee combat 11, stealth 11

DEXTERITY 9

Prestidigitation 11

ENDURANCE 9

Resist pain 12, resist shock 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Disguise 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 4

Equipment: Cleaver, damage value

STR+5/20



Special Abilities: Roscoe is now completely insensitive to pain. While he will still accumulate shock points and wounds as normal, he will suffer none of the action penalties normally associated with these conditions. He will still go unconscious when shock points equal Endurance and will drop dead at six wounds — other than that, he keeps on coming.

MR. BONES

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, maneuver 9, melee combat 11, stealth 9

DEXTERITY 4

ENDURANCE 13

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 12 (18)

INTELLECT 8

Perception 9, tracking 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 11, willpower 9

CHARISMA 7

Charm (15), persuasion (15)

Life Points: 3

Equipment: Axe, damage value STR+7/22

Natural Tools: Natural armor, TOU+6/18

Of course, in the end, it's entirely possible the character(s) may blow their cover. You can either take an aggressive approach (have Harmon ask questions regarding the disposition of souls, etc. that they don't know the answers to) or take a passive approach (let the characters talk until they've let out enough rope to hang themselves). If Harmon does figure out they're not who they seem, he *will not* let on he knows. Mr. Bones and Roscoe will not attack unless they are attacked or Harmon is. Instead, Harmon will simply take note and plan to eliminate the character later on.

Keep this scene going, but cut away to the meeting with Julie. It's important that the rendezvous with the young lady end before the meeting with Harmon ends, even if only by a moment or two. The reason for this is so that Julie should see the character or characters leaving a conference with the murderous mentalist and jump to the wrong conclusion.

Note: At some point during this scene, another clown comes up and whispers something in Harmon's ear. Harmon nods and sends the clown on his way.

WHO WAS THAT GHOUL I SAW YOU WITH?

The characters answering "Galliana's" summons will find themselves at the edge of the woods. Galliana is Julie Leverton in disguise — during Harmon's distraction with Serena, she has "come to her senses" (well, what's left of them) and realized how she was being manipulated. Now she wants revenge, and she's guessing newcomers to the circus would be less likely to be under the mentalist's sway.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

There's a chill in the air, but you're not sure if it's from the wind or your own fear. In the distance, you can hear a wolf howling — and somehow that's no surprise. Suddenly, you see a flash of bright color out of the corner of your eyes, and the next moment, an aged woman clad in bright silks hobbles over to you.

This is Julie in disguise, which she has adopted just in case the characters are



not who they seem to be. If the players choose to, they can generate *perception* totals to try and see through her disguise (the difficulty number of the check is 13. Julie achieved a Good success in creating this disguise. If a character's *perception* check beats 13, he can tell the gypsy is someone in disguise. If he achieves a Good success or better on the check, he will be able to tell it is Julie.)

The gypsy will look the characters over for a moment and then speak:

"There is a great evil in this place. The man called Harmon has stolen the souls of so many here and ... and driven others mad. If another day and night should pass, it will be too late for everyone here, and perhaps for you as well. He must be stopped before the circus leaves Gainesford."

If the characters ask for suggestions on how to go about doing this, she says:

"He's too well-protected. But he stores something of great value in the funhouse, something of importance to him. Find it and perhaps it can be used against him."

That "something," of course, is the chest of souls. Julie is actually guessing here — all she really knows is that Harmon has made a point of having the funhouse watched. He had told her it was to protect something from those who had been corrupted, but now she knows it must be something dark that waits inside there. She tried to get in but was spotted by Schmidt and had to leave. She's hoping the player characters will have better success.

If the characters expose her disguise, she'll admit to her identity and state that she only adopted it because she wasn't sure who she could trust anymore. She'll ask again for the characters' help.

If the characters ask about the murders, Julie will brush them off. She won't admit to committing the murders.

Once the characters have the information they need from this scene, things begin to happen. Harmon had Julie watched and knows what's going on. He's dispatched three of his clowns to take care of her, all, like Roscoe, immune to pain. (Remember that clown who whispered in Harmon's ear? Well, now you know what that was about ...) Of course, the clowns won't hesitate to knife anyone who gets in their way.

CLOWNS (3)

Use the stats for Roscoe given above.

Equipment: Cleaver, damage value STR+5/20

The characters' goal here is pretty simple: survival. They should also be trying to protect "Galliana," but her death means only a minor alteration to *Scream Four* (hey, in the Crypt, life is cheap). Once the characters have defeated the clowns or escaped, they can hook up with their fellow travelers and learn what they got from Harmon. Putting the pieces together, they should be able to deduce that it's the chest of souls that is hidden in the funhouse.

AFTERMATH

Okay, what happens next? Well, the characters may decide to go straight to the funhouse and start searching while there is still some darkness left to hide their movements. If so, cut directly to *Scream Four* — the only change you need



make is that the funhouse will be guarded tonight, and not be tomorrow night during the wrap party. But the characters should have little trouble getting in ... in fact, *too* little trouble.

The characters may decide to wait until morning and try to get into the funhouse during the day. Bad idea. Freaks and clowns will be all over the place and it will be pretty much impossible to get inside. However, Nason will make sure everyone knows that after that night's performance there will be a party in the funhouse for all the performers.

If the characters decide to wait for the party, they'll have to endure another performance. There are two options: they can perform, or they can feign illness and use that as an opportunity to sneak into the funhouse. If they do the latter, cut to Scream Four.

If they perform and Harmon does not yet know they are not servants of his unearthly employer, they can do so unmolested. If he does know they are not who he at first believed, various attempts will be made to kill them during the performance. Trapeze ropes will be cut through, same with high wires, fireworks explosions will pack a little more punch than unusual, all sorts of subtle attempts to off them while it still looks like an accident.

Once the performance is over with, cut to Scream Four.

SCREAM FOUR: FUNHOUSE OR FEARHOUSE?

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters search the Nason Bros. funhouse for Harmon's chest of souls. But the mentalist's freaks are searching for them in turn, and if they find them ... well, let's just say something other than ticket prices will be getting slashed at the circus in the future.

If the characters are sneaking into the funhouse on their own, read aloud or paraphrase:

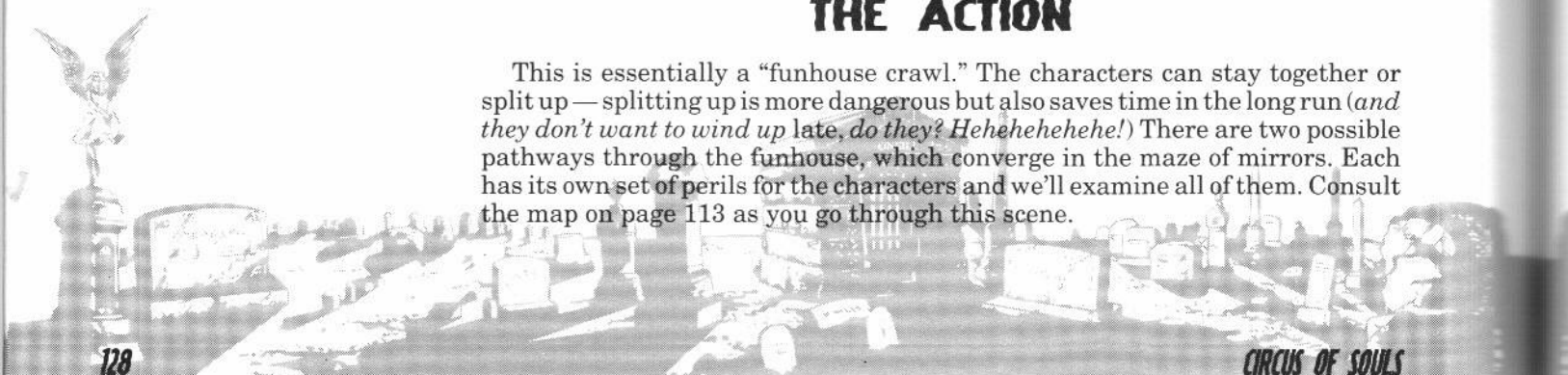
The funhouse is dark and quiet, the great devil head whose mouth forms the entrance leering at you. Inside is the key to this whole nightmare ... and maybe the key to escaping it for good. But first you have to find it, and somehow you know you have not yet begun to fear.

If the characters are going in as part of the wrap party, read aloud or paraphrase:

You join in the trickle of people wandering into the funhouse. Nason is there, so is Julie, even Randolpho ... a number of others you can't identify, who dutifully march in but seem more like sleepwalkers. The great devil head whose mouth forms the entrance leers at you. Inside is the key to this whole nightmare ... and maybe the key to escaping it for good. But first you have to find it, and somehow you know you have not yet begun to fear.

THE ACTION

This is essentially a "funhouse crawl." The characters can stay together or split up — splitting up is more dangerous but also saves time in the long run (*and they don't want to wind up late, do they? Hehehehehe!*) There are two possible pathways through the funhouse, which converge in the maze of mirrors. Each has its own set of perils for the characters and we'll examine all of them. Consult the map on page 113 as you go through this scene.



The characters are being stalked, or will be ambushed by, Mr. Bones, Schmidt the Sword-Swallower, Pyro the Flame-Eater, Roscoe, the Dog-Faced Girl, and the Geek. Harmon is heading for the maze of mirrors. In addition, Julie (if she survived *Scream Three*) is also in the funhouse, and armed, trailing any character who met with Harmon last *Scream*. She's convinced that person is in it with the mentalist and must die.

If the characters have Harmon completely fooled, the freaks will still go after them in the funhouse. Why? Because Harmon has decided to get rid of anyone whose souls he hasn't already got. He's not particularly worried about any of the characters getting caught in the crossfire — after all, demons don't die that easily.

Got it? Let's get started:

TOPSY-TURVY ROOM

This room is actually shaped like a large barrel with openings at both ends. It's painted in multi-colors and shifts wildly from side to side as the characters walk through it. The characters will need to generate Agility totals of 9 every other round to keep their footing. In addition, they'll suffer +3 to the difficulty of all Agility and Dexterity totals while in this room.

It will take the characters a minimum of three rounds to get through this room, and that's assuming none of them fall and have to get up again. Oh, and did we forget to mention that Roscoe is hiding in the shadows here, cleaver at the ready? We did? Well, he is ...

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Suddenly, the world becomes a kaleidoscope of shifting colors and lights, and you feel the floor shift underneath you as you walk. You fight to keep your balance, your eyes fixed on the opening at the other end that will get you out of here.

ROPE BRIDGE

Read aloud or paraphrase:

A rickety rope bridge extends across an inky black abyss. Normally, the floor is almost directly underneath in a place like this, covered with mattresses. But at Nason Bros., who knows?

The rope bridge swings underneath the characters, adding +2 to the difficulty of any Agility or Dexterity rolls. The floor is three meters below (a value of 2 on the Value Chart), and rock-hard — if a character gets knocked off for any reason, an Agility total of 8 will allow him to catch himself. If



he falls, he takes damage (see page 91 of *MasterBook* for details on falling damage).

That's not the only problem the characters have. Pyro is waiting in the next room and will step out onto the bridge when they are halfway across. It's going to be a hot time in the funhouse tonight ...

PYRO THE FLAME-EATER

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9

Missile weapons: fire 12

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

Perception 9, trick 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 4

Natural Tools: Pyro is no longer just a fire-eater ... thanks to Harmon, he's now a fire-breather. His flame breath has a maximum range of two meters, and does damage value 18. He can muster a flame jet every other round.

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19

THE BALLROOM

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You find yourself walking on top of a "floor" consisting of multi-colored rubber balls, which shift constantly underneath you. At least, though, there seem to be no other threats in this room.

Wrong! The Geek is hiding beneath the balls and will reach out from his refuge and grab player characters as they pass overhead. He's gone completely savage and won't hesitate to take a chunk out of a character with his teeth.

The room adds +3 to the difficulty of all Agility and Dexterity rolls.

THE GEEK

AGILITY 11

Climbing 12, dodge 13, long jumping 12, maneuver 12, running 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13, unarmed parry 13

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 6

Perception 9, tracking 11, trick (10)

MIND 5

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 12, willpower 8

CHARISMA 5

Charm (15), persuasion (13), taunt (10)

Life Points: 4

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+2/13; teeth, damage value STR+3/14

Description: The Geek went from being a pseudo-savage to being a real wild man. His body is covered with coarse brown hair, his hair and beard are matted with filth, and it's likely his bite is septic. His tastes have changed enough that the characters probably look like a good between-meal snack at this point.

THE HALL OF MONSTERS

This is a standard in funhouses, a room with pressure plates in the floor and hidden "monsters" in the walls. Step on the right board and a skeleton or other obviously fake creature of the night leaps out at you. In this case, though, the Dog-Faced Girl — now gone werewolf — is hiding in one of the secret compartments herself. She'll wait until one or two of the fakes have shown themselves before attacking.

THE DOG-FACED GIRL

AGILITY 10

Dodge 12, long jumping 11, maneuver 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 6

Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 7

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 12

CHARISMA 7

Charm (11), persuasion (11)

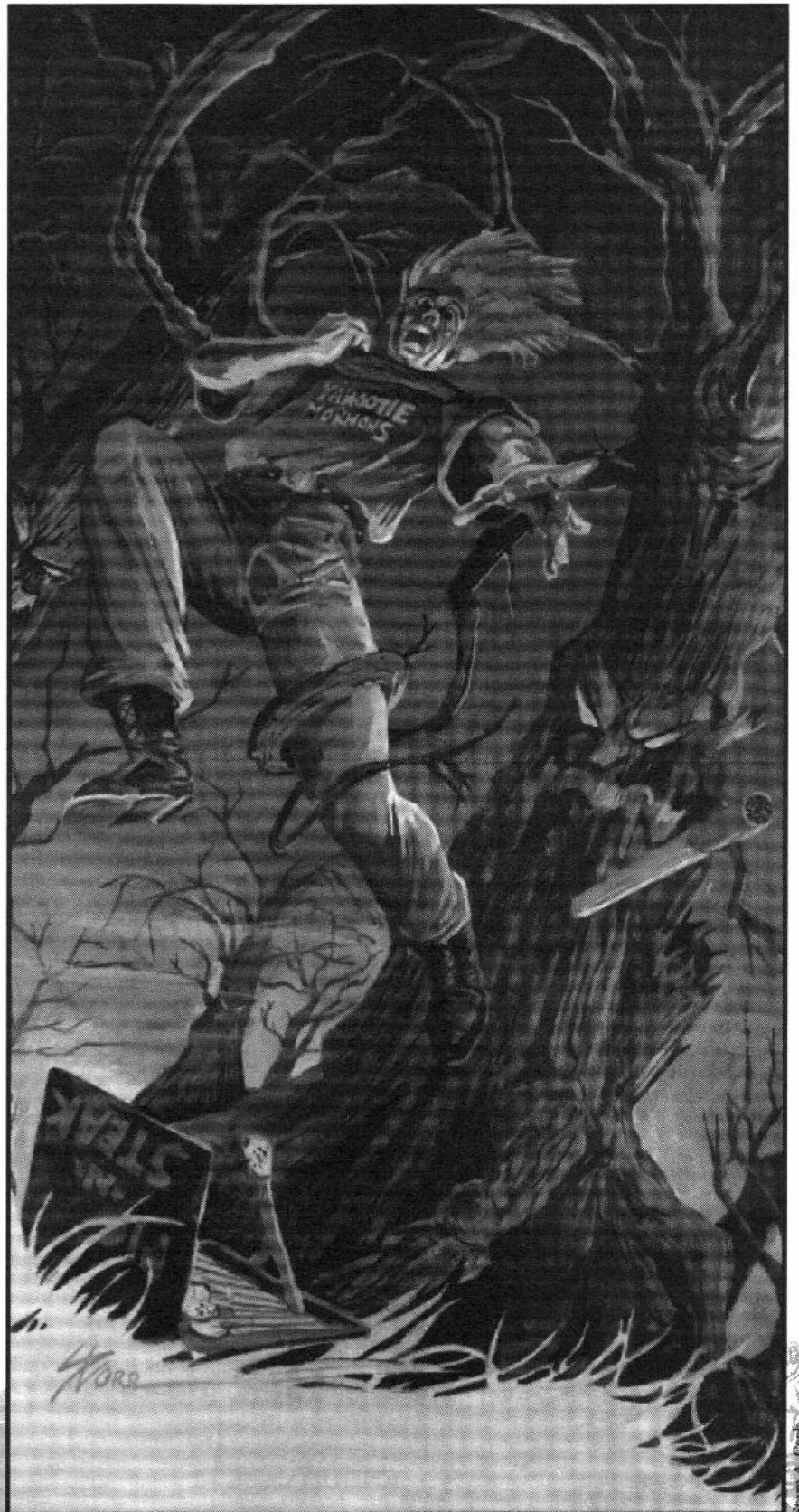
Life Points: 2

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+2/14; fangs, damage value STR+4/16; hide, armor value TOU+6/17

Note: Since she is not a standard werewolf, the Dog-Faced Girl can be wounded by normal weapons and does not have any special vulnerabilities to silver, etc.

THE SLANTED ROOM

Judging from the furniture in the room, the eye says this place is on the level. But in fact it's built on a slant, and the difference between what the eye sees and what the brain knows is



enough to upset equilibrium. Add +3 to the difficulty of Agility and Dexterity rolls.

Schmidt the Sword-Swallower waits for the characters in here. He not only can swallow swords now, but he can throw them with deadly accuracy, too. And each time he throws one, another appears in his hand ...

SCHMIDT THE SWORD-SWALLOWER

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 10

DEXTERITY 10

Thrown weapons: swords 13

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 3

Equipment: Short sword, damage value STR+5/20

THE NET ROOM

This room's "floor" consists of netting, and three Agility or *climbing* rolls of 7 are required to get across it. Failure means the character's hand or foot gets tangled in the net and a round is required to extricate it. Like the rope bridge, the net hangs suspended over a three-meter drop.

Mr. Bones and his axe are in here, and in this case, a miss is as good as a murder. His wild swings may not hit the characters, but they will do a number on the net.

THE MAZE OF MIRRORS

This is not a terribly complex maze, as the map makes clear. At its center is Harmon, in the process of removing his precious chest from behind one of the mirrors. Seems nice and simple, right?

Only problem is, the mirrors in this maze are the distorting kind. And at random, warped versions of the characters (tall and stretched out, short and bulky) will emerge from the mirrors to attack the characters. These are illusions, and can be disbelieved on an Intellect or *perception* total of 9.

The distorted reflections have no ability to use interaction skills or to be affected by them, and their base physical stats and skills are identical to the character they are mimicking, with the following modifications:

TALL AND THIN

AGILITY +3

DEXTERITY +3

ENDURANCE -3

STRENGTH -3

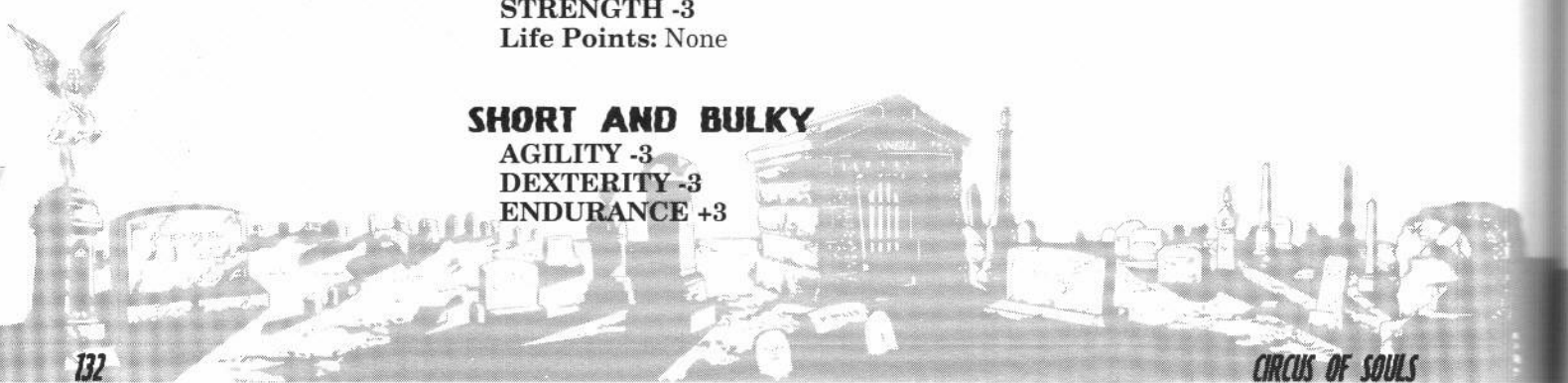
Life Points: None

SHORT AND BULKY

AGILITY -3

DEXTERITY -3

ENDURANCE +3



STRENGTH +3

Life Points: None

Throw however many of these things as you want against the characters, depending on how tough of a time they have had up to now. Keep in mind that this is the last scene of the adventure, so pull out all the stops and make them work for their victory.

If Julie is stalking one of the characters, she'll make her attack in this portion of the funhouse as well.

SOUL SURVIVORS

This is it. Harmon has the chest and the characters want it. Even if Harmon thinks the characters are working for his demonic benefactor, he's going to know something is wrong when they show up, bloodied and beaten. For all intents and purposes, their cover is blown.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Harmon wheels on you, a mixture of shock and fury on his face. He clutches an ornate wooden chest in his arms, recently freed from its hiding place behind one of the mirrors. And he doesn't look likely to give it up.

Harmon has no weapons to threaten the characters with, except one ... the chest. As soon as he spots the characters, he'll open it just a crack — and their souls will be sucked inside! (How did you think he got them away from everyone?)

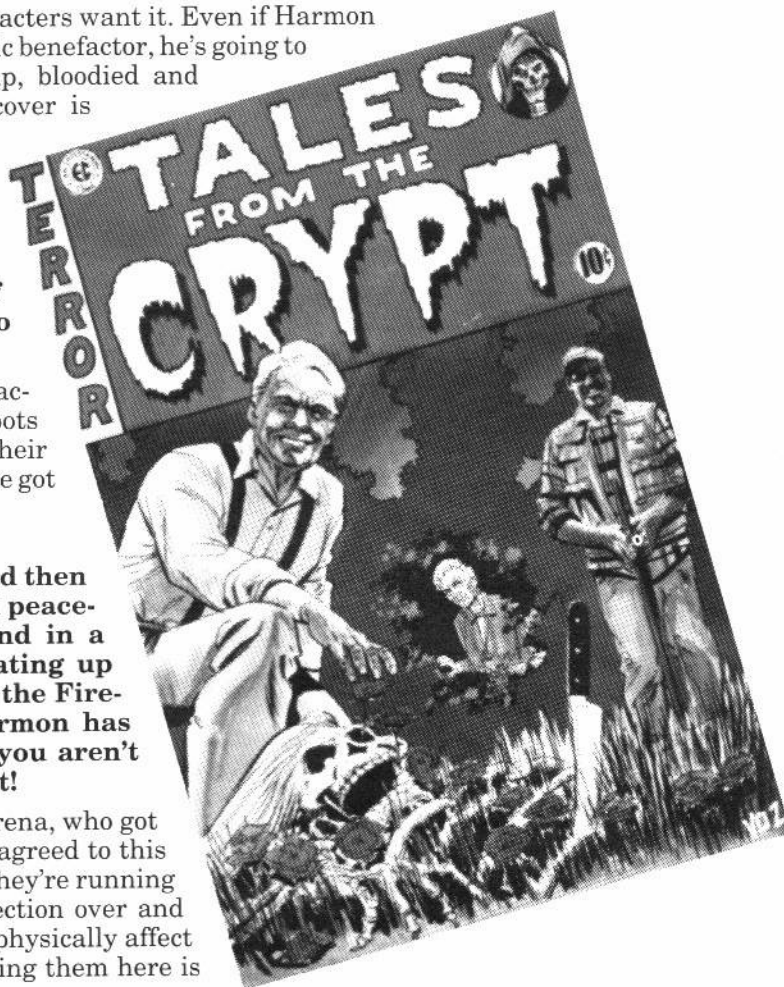
Read aloud or paraphrase:

There is an instant's blinding light ... and then you are floating in darkness. It's quiet and peaceful somehow, but still it feels wrong. And in a moment, you know the reason why. Floating up ahead of you are Roscoe the Clown, Pyro the Fire-Eater, Mr. Bones, and all the others Harmon has corrupted. Slowly, it dawns on you that you aren't dead, not really — you are inside the chest!

No one wants to be in the chest (not even Serena, who got a little more than she bargained for when she agreed to this deal). But they don't know how to get out, and they're running out of time: Harmon is about to turn his collection over and they'll be lost forever. Being spirits, they can't physically affect the chest, but Serena knows that what is holding them here is Harmon's will, and that alone.

Hopefully, the characters will see that is the answer. If their willpower is stronger than Harmon's, they can free themselves. If the characters don't think of it, Roscoe will point out that some of them have tried before to will their way out, and failed. The only way it will work is if everyone works together.

There are about a dozen spirits in the chest with the characters. The coordination difficulty of this *willpower* attempt is 10 (see the rules for coordinating actions on pages 93–94 of *MasterBook*). The difficulty of the *willpower* check itself is 14.



LEARN OR BURN

If the characters fail in their attempt, they will eventually get handed over to Harmon's employer. The Cryptkeeper will let them get close enough to the eternal fires to get their feet singed ... then summon them back to the Crypt for a little lesson in pain before their next adventure.

If they succeed, the force of the multitude of souls escaping will destroy the chest. The souls will return to the bodies in which they belong ... all save those whose bodies are dead and the characters'. As for Harmon ... read aloud or paraphrase:

Harmon stands in the center of the mirror maze, holding the splinters of the chest in his hands. Tears are running down his face, but no sound comes from his mouth. Then, one by one, the mirrors begin to crack, to crumble, to shatter, all through the maze ... and Harmon follows suit, cracks running the length of his body until he explodes into shards. They settle to the ground without a sound.

THE END... FOR NOW

Whether they win or lose, the characters wind up back in the Crypt. If the characters fail, the Cryptkeeper welcomes them back with:

Well, kiddies, that was impressive! You make enough noise to wake the dead — and I should know — and still don't accomplish anything! Tsk, tsk, tsk. Well, maybe a little stretch on the rack will give you a chance to reflect on the terror of your ways, hmmm? Hehehehehe!

If the characters succeed, the Cryptkeeper says:

Well, hello there, creeps! Back from the circus so soon? And you didn't bring me any popcorn ... or cotton candy ... or ice cream ... not even some soul food? Hehehehehe! Enjoy this little victory while you can, suckers, because I have something even worse planned for you next time. After all, there's no rest for the eerie! Hehehehehehe!

ADVENTURE AWARDS

Award the characters three skill points apiece for surviving this adventure. Each character can also be awarded from 2 to 4 Life Points each, depending on how tough this adventure ended up being for them.





TALES FROM THE CRYPT

AMATEUR OCCULTIST

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9 DEXTERITY 8 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 10 Divination (Tarot 11), first aid 11, linguistics 11, perception 12, trick 12 MIND 9 Artist: pen and ink 11, scholar: occult lore 13 CONFIDENCE 10 Con 11, intimidation 12, willpower 12 CHARISMA 7 Taunt 8		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 9 TOUGHNESS 9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 6 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 4 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) LIFE POINTS 5 SKILL POINTS		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skills Adds (CI), +1 to *scholar: occult lore* 13; Equipment (CI), Tarot cards (these may travel with the character regardless of shell); Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to bonus number of *divination, perception* and *willpower*; Cultures (CII), you have a fair amount of knowledge about those who dabble in the occult; Trademark Specialization (+3 when drawing with pen and ink); Special Effects (CIII): Magic-Wielder.

Compensations: Bigotry (CI), you harbor some prejudice towards those who consider you "strange"; Prejudice (CI); Price (CI), your interest in the supernatural means the Cryptkeeper often puts you in especially horrific situations; Advantage Flaw (CII), your hobbies and affectations put off those who don't share them — add +2 to any attempts to *charm* or *persuade* them; Quirk (CII), you believe yourself responsible for your brother's death; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

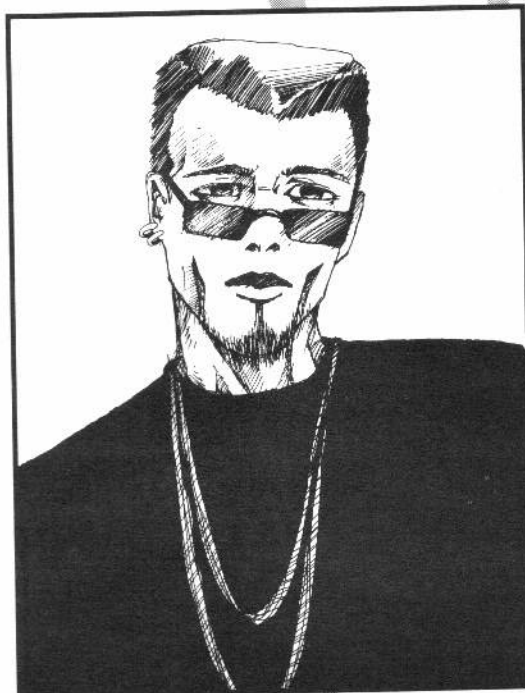
What the Cryptkeeper Knows: One day you wished your brother dead ... and he died. You're not sure whether to believe you did it or not — or, if you did do it, whether to feel guilty or be thrilled it actually worked!

DESCRIPTION

You've always relished being an outsider. Your wardrobe is all black; you avoid spending time in the sun; you think being an Undead bloodsucker would be really cool. Strangers may be put off by you, but your friends know life is all about attitude and you've always wanted to be the star in a little plasma play ...

EQUIPMENT

Tarot deck; Ouija board; candles; copy of *Nosferatu: The Pretentiousness* roleplaying game.



Tom O'Neill

"Scared? I'm too cool for that."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+1



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

MEDIUM

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX	
AGILITY 7 Dodge 8, maneuver 8, unarmed combat 8		9 TOUGHNESS		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	
DEXTERITY 7		9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor)			MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
ENDURANCE 8		5 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground)			
STRENGTH 8		3 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming)			
INTELLECT 10 Deduction 11, divination (crystal ball 13), forgery 12, perception 12, trick 12		2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)			
MIND 8 Psychic: medium 11		2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)			
CONFIDENCE 10 Con 13, willpower 11		LIFE POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY	
CHARISMA 10 Charm 11		5		SHOCK TAKEN	
		SKILL POINTS			

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to con; Equipment (CI), crystal ball (this travels with you regardless of shell; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *divination*, *perception* and *psychic*; Special Effects (CIID): Magic-Wielder; Special Effects (CIID) Psychic.

Compensations: Infamy (CI), you are a minor con artist; Price (CI), your newfound mediumistic abilities make it far easier for the Cryptkeeper to communicate with you, and he receives a +3 to *taunt* efforts; Quirk (CI), you are convinced your predictions lead to disaster; Advantage Flaw (CII), as a medium, you are constantly having to listen to spirits griping and moaning; Bad Luck (CII); Enemy (CIID), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: Just last month, you predicted a guy would come into money, and he sure did ... he spotted a wallet in the street, went to grab it, and got hit by a truck. In fact, a lot of the people you've prophesied for lately have met messy ends. Maybe you were better off as a fake ...

DESCRIPTION

You were a two-bit con artist with a spook act, until somebody put you on to the Cryptkeeper. You cut a deal for real powers — a little divination, a little mediumistic ability. Ever since then, your predictions have been leading people to their deaths ... or so it seems. Maybe the Cryptkeeper is calling in your grave marker?

EQUIPMENT

Crystal ball.



Tom O'Neill

"No... the vision is too cloudy to relate for only 25 bucks."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+1



TALES FROM THE CRYPT™

UNFAITHFUL WIFE

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX	
AGILITY 8 Beast riding: horse 9, improvised weaponry 9		9 TOUGHNESS		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	
DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9		9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor)			MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
ENDURANCE 7		5 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground)			
STRENGTH 7		3 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming)			
INTELLECT 9 Perception 11, trick 10		2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)			
MIND 8		2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)			
CONFIDENCE 10 Con 12, intimidation 11, streetwise 11, willpower 12		LIFE POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY	
CHARISMA 11 Charm 15, persuasion 14		5		SKILL POINTS	SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *charm*; Cultures (CI), you grew up in Paris; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *con*, *trick* and *persuasion*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *improvised weaponry*; Wealth (CII); Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII).

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), your beauty and charm means you attract men even when you *really* don't want to; Bad Luck (CI); Quirk (CI), mid-sized bodies of water — pools, ponds, etc. — cause you to flash back to your husband's murder; Price (CII), you killed to get your wealth — but your late husband keeps shambling back into the picture; Quirk (CII): Fatal Flaw, your greed often overwhelms your common sense; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: You're not only unfaithful, you're downright murderous. Your husband made a great addition to the duck pond — now if only he had stayed there. As it is, he keeps shambling by at inopportune times. Six months dead, and he's still going all to pieces over you.

DESCRIPTION

You married for love and for money — one ran out, but fortunately the other didn't. Getting to it was another story, but you were always a woman who could do what was ... necessary. Roger found that out, thanks to a well-swung paperweight and a convenient duck pond. Too bad he keeps wanting to come back ... er, *back*.

EQUIPMENT

You're wealthy enough to afford whatever you want, and greedy enough to want whatever you can get.



Tom O'Neill

"Don't mind Roger — he's just stubborn."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1	



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

RELUCTANT INVESTIGATOR

NAME

HEIGHT

WEIGHT

AGE

SEX

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 11

Dodge 13, stealth 12, running 15

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 11, perception 12, trick 13

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 11, streetwise 11

CHARISMA 7

Disguise 8, taunt 8

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

9 TOUGHNESS

9 TOUGHNESS

(w/armor)

7 MRG

(Movement Rate, Ground)

4 MRS

(Movement Rate, Swimming)

3 MRC

(Movement Rate, Climbing)

3 MRJ

(Movement Rate, Jumping)

COMBAT BOX

K

O

WOUND LEVEL

☐ Light☐ Moderate☐ Heavy☐ Incapacitated☐ Mortal

MODIFIERS

no modifier

-2 to physical skills

-4 physical & -2 all other skills

-8 to all skills

automatic KO; see text

LIFE POINTS

5

SKILL POINTS

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skills Adds (CI), +1 to *running*; Equipment (CI), van; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *trick*, *con* and *disguise*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *stealth*; Luck (CII); Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to *Agility*.

Compensations: Age (CI), you are slightly younger than your prime; Poverty (CI), other than the used van you "inherited" from your dead pals, you have zip; Quirk (CI), fear makes you hungry; Enemy (CII), the spectres of your former partners are none too happy with you; Quirk (CII), you scare extremely easily; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: You were running away from the umpteenth "ghost" in the umpteenth "haunted house" — only this time the spectre was real and your three friends wound up dead. Now whenever you try to run out (which you do all the time), they show up and do their best to scare the wits out of you.

DESCRIPTION

You've always been more of a follower than a bleeder. And now you're saddled with those three ghosts ... yes, they're real, not just products of too many super sub sandwiches before bed. At any rate, you're getting lots of chances to do what you do best: run and hide.

EQUIPMENT

Van, max. speed 120 mph, TOU 20, pass. 5.



Tom O'Neill

"Me? Scared? Heck, no, I always shake this way!"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

REPORTER

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX	
AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, melee combat 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9		TOUGHNESS 9		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	
DEXTERITY 7		TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 9			MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
ENDURANCE 8		MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 6			
STRENGTH 7		MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 4			
INTELLECT 9 Computer ops 10, deduction 10, perception 11, trick 10		MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 2			
MIND 9 Research 12		MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) 2			
CONFIDENCE 10 Bribery 11, con 11, interrogation 11, intimidation 11, willpower 11		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS	
CHARISMA 10 Persuasion 13				SHOCK CAPACITY	
				SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *research*; Fame (CI), you are well known as a journalist; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *deduction*, *perception* and *interrogation*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *persuasion*; Luck (CII); Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII).

Compensations: Quirk (CI), you never stop working — you're always looking for a story, regardless of how dangerous the circumstances; Advantage Flaw (CII), as a result of the death you caused, electrical devices never seem to work right around you; Burn-out (CIII), if the truth about the story you wrote ever came out, you would be ruined; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: You once wrote a prize-winning story that sent a guy to the chair. Too bad the story wasn't true ... too bad, when you found out, you didn't tell anyone, or it might have saved him from frying. No wonder lights flicker whenever you're around.

DESCRIPTION

You're an award-winning reporter for a major newspaper, but you got there in part by writing a story that sent someone to the electric chair. You could have revealed the story was false when you found out, but then your rep would have been damaged. Now lights go on and off when you're near and nothing electrical ever seems to work quite right. Guess you just have the juice ...

EQUIPMENT

Notebook; pen; camera.



Tom O'Neill

"And how did you feel when you were shot?"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

PETTY CROOK

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 10 Acrobatics 11, climbing 11, dodge 12, maneuver 11, melee combat 11, running 11, stealth 13, unarmed combat 11 DEXTERITY 10 Lock picking 12 prestidigitation 11 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 9 INTELLECT 8 Perception 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 8 Con 9, streetwise 9, willpower 10 CHARISMA 8		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 10 TOUGHNESS 10 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 6 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 4 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) LIFE POINTS 5 SKILL POINTS		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *stealth*; Contacts (CI), you have contacts among the local underworld; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *climbing*, *dodge* and *maneuver*; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility; Equipment (CIII), dragon amulet (this comes with you in any shell).

Compensations: Bad Luck (CI); Prejudice (CI); Quirk (CI), you ascribe every bad thing that happens to you to a "curse" on the amulet; Infamy (CII), you are wanted for multiple counts of burglary; Quirk (CII), you are obsessed with finding a way to get rid of or destroy the amulet; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: Six months ago, you swiped an amulet with a dragon on it out of this ritzy apartment. After you got it home, it started to glow. You panicked and threw it away, but it keeps showing up again. You don't know what it is or what it does ... just that you can't get rid of it or destroy it.

DESCRIPTION

You are a small-timer with dreams of the big time, but that heist six months back netted you more than you bargained for. You may not know what that amulet does, but your gut tells you it can't be good. It's almost enough to make a guy go straight ...!

EQUIPMENT

Dragon amulet; blackjack, damage value STR+3/18.



Tom O'Neill

"This stuff? I ... found it. Yeah, that's right."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

EXECUTIVE

NAME _____ HEIGHT _____ WEIGHT _____ AGE _____ SEX _____

ATTRIBUTES	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES	COMBAT BOX	K	O
AGILITY 8 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9 ENDURANCE 7 STRENGTH 7 INTELLECT 10 Computer ops 11, deduction 12, perception 12, trick 12 MIND 11 Business 16, research 12 CONFIDENCE 9 Con 11, intimidation 11, willpower 13 CHARISMA 9 Persuasion 10	9 TOUGHNESS 9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 5 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 3 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	
			SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *willpower*; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *deduction*, *business* and *research*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *business*; Fame (CII), you are a leading citizen of your community; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Mind.

Compensations: Employed (CI), you have responsibilities as an executive; Quirk (CI), you are deathly afraid of spiders; Advantage Flaw (CII), your high reputation in the community means you must do your dirty work in secret; Quirk (CII), you have a fear of blackmailers that borders on paranoia; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: You have a fine reputation as an upstanding pillar of the community. Good thing no one knows about the people you've ruined ... that second family you have ... the competitor you had murdered ... or that terrible fear of spiders you have. No one but the Cryptkeeper, that is ...

DESCRIPTION

You worked hard to get where you are, and if a few people had to be stepped on along the way ... and ground into the dirt ... so be it. The only problem is you can't escape the feeling that everyone around you knows just what you've been up to and they're planning to tell unless you pay (or polish) them off.

EQUIPMENT

Glock 17, damage value 17, ammo 17.



Tom O'Neill

**"Don't take the gun personally.
It's business."**

BONUS CHART

DIE																	21	26	31	36	41				
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

ASYLUM ESCAPEE

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX	
AGILITY 9 Dodge 10, escape artist 10, improvised weaponry 10, melee combat 10, stealth 10		10 TOUGHNESS		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	
DEXTERITY 8		10 TOUGHNESS (w/armor)			MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
ENDURANCE 9		6 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground)			
STRENGTH 9		4 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming)			
INTELLECT 10 First aid 11, perception 13, trick 12		3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)			
MIND 7		3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)			
CONFIDENCE 9 Con 12, willpower 13		3		SHOCK CAPACITY	
CHARISMA 7 Disguise 8, persuasion 8, taunt 9		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS	
				SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *con*; Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *trick*; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonuses of *dodge*, *improvised weaponry* and *melee combat*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *willpower*; Luck (CII); Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII).

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), you are excellent at conning others, but frequently trick yourself at the same time as well; Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI), you're not used to being "out" yet; Poverty (CI); Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper; Quirk (CIII), you are hopelessly insane.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: You have an intense phobia regarding the dark and the color red. Why, you've even been known to attack people wearing red ... which of course just leads to even more red leaking out.

DESCRIPTION

They say you're crazy, but you know the truth. You hear the voice, the one that makes all those bad puns and cackles insanely, and you know you have to follow it to its source. You'll gladly travel with anyone along the way ... as long as they don't wear red ... or expect you to stay in the dark by yourself ... or ask too many questions about where you've been the last few years.

EQUIPMENT

Knife, damage value STR+4/19.



Tom O'Neill

"It's not me that's crazy. It's them.
How about you? Are you them, too?"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

HORROR NOVELIST

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX
AGILITY 8 DEXTERITY 8 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 9 Computer ops 10, deduction 12, perception 12 MIND 11 Artist; writer 14, research 16, scholar: the occult 13 CONFIDENCE 9 Intimidation 11, willpower 12 CHARISMA 8		9 TOUGHNESS 9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 6 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 4 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal
		LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
				SHOCK CAPACITY
				SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds, +1 to scholar: the occult; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of deduction, perception and research; Wealth (CI); Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to research; Fame (CII); Additional Attribute Point (CI), +1 to Mind.

Compensations: Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI), you are a little out of your element virtually anywhere outside your own house; Quirk (CI), you are painfully shy; Handicap (CII), add +3 to the difficulty of Confidence and Charisma and any related skills; Quirk (CII), you are plagued by visions of the man you killed; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

What the Cryptkeeper Knows: Your first successful horror novel was blatantly stolen from the idea of another author. When he threatened to expose you, you caved in his skull with a paperweight and buried him in your basement.

DESCRIPTION

You had a very nice life — a best-selling book, enough money to be comfortable — until that Addison fellow started making trouble. He had to be disposed of, but you can swear you still see him out of the corner of your eye sometimes.

EQUIPMENT

Word processor.



"Don't judge me by the books I write. They scare me, too."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

GAME DESIGNER

NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, improvised weaponry 9 DEXTERITY 7 ENDURANCE 7 STRENGTH 7 INTELLECT 9 Perception 11, trick 10 MIND 9 Artist: writer 12, research 11 CONFIDENCE 9 Intimidation 11, willpower 11 CHARISMA 13 Charm 17, persuasion 14		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div>9 TOUGHNESS</div> <div>9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor)</div> <div>5 MKG (Movement Rate, Ground)</div> <div>3 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming)</div> <div>2 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)</div> <div>2 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)</div>		COMBAT BOX <div><input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i></div> <div><input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i></div> <div><input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i></div> <div><input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i></div> <div><input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i></div>	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
		LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	
				SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *charm*; Fame (CD); Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonuses of *artist: writer*, *research*, and *perception*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *willpower*; Luck (CH); Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to *Charisma*.

Compensations: Employed (CI), as a freelance writer; Price (CD), your reputation for luck leads others to consistently expect the impossible from you; Debt (CII), the Cryptkeeper considers you to owe him a debt; Enemy (CII), the spirit of your former editor stalks you; Enemy (CIII), the Cryptkeeper.

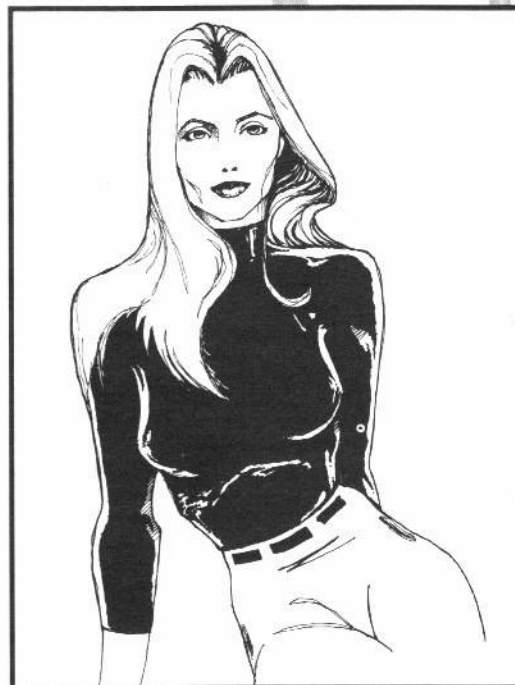
What the Cryptkeeper Knows: Your last editor fell madly in love with you ... accent on the *madly*. The good news is he was killed trying to escape the asylum — the bad news is he still wants to possess you ... even if it means *possessing* you.

DESCRIPTION

You were working on a horror game, got stuck and decided you needed some help ... good idea. You tried to get it from the Cryptkeeper ... bad idea. He promised his aid, but you got stiffed ... now you're in the Crypt, trying to keep it from becoming a permanent condition.

EQUIPMENT

Collection of roleplaying games; laptop computer.



Tom O'Neill

"It'll be done next week ... really ... I promise."

BONUS CHART

DIE	9 11																21 26 31 36 41							
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5	
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1	

West End Games MasterBook/D6 System Conversion

This system converts *MasterBook* characters and adventures to the *D6 System* rules (used in other roleplaying games produced by West End). Of course, since the conversion translates logarithmic values to linear values, you have to exercise good judgment. If something doesn't look right after you convert it, alter the value or die code to what seems more realistic.

The conversion involves one simple formula: divide the *MasterBook* value by three. The quotient becomes the *D6* die code and the remainder becomes the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* value of 14 becomes a *D6* code of 4D+2 ($14/3 = 4$, remainder 2). Using this equation allows you to convert statistics on the fly. You don't have to convert all the numbers in a particular adventure beforehand. For example, your characters encounter a thug who immediately opens fire. You convert the thug's *fire combat* skill value of 8 to a die code of 2D+2 and start rolling.

To convert from *D6* to *MasterBook*, simply multiply the die code by three and then add the pips. For example, a *D6 planetary systems* skill of 4D+2 has a *MasterBook* skill value of 14 ($3 * 4 + 2$).

The main sections of conversion are characters, difficulty numbers, modifiers, and damage values.

Characters

MasterBook and the *D6 System* have different character Attributes. The first task in translating a character, then, is mapping the Attributes from one system to the

other. The chart below shows the correlation between the two sets of Attributes.

Attribute Values/Die Codes

In instances where multiple Attributes in one system convert to a single Attribute in the other system, the Attributes are averaged. For example, the *MasterBook* Strength and Endurance Attributes translate to the *D6* Strength Attribute. To determine the *D6* Strength, first determine the average of the two *MasterBook* Attributes and then convert using the standard conversion formula.

Note that the *MasterBook* Intellect Attribute is used to determine the *D6* Knowledge and Technical Attributes.

To convert Attributes, divide the *MasterBook* Attribute value by three. The quotient represents the die code and the remainder represents the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* character with a Mind of 11 would have a *D6* Mechanical of 3D+2 ($11/3 = 3$, remainder 2).

Skills

There is no direct correlation between *MasterBook* skills and *D6 System* skills. First, try to find a skill with a similar name. For example, the *MasterBook* *energy weapons* skill would translate to the *D6* *blasters* skill. If you can't find a match, just list that skill beneath whatever *D6* Attribute seems appropriate. For example, the *MasterBook* *archaeology* skill would fall under the *D6* Knowledge Attribute since the *D6 System* does not have a corresponding skill.

Example: Using the conversion formula, a *MasterBook* *espionage* skill of 10 becomes a *D6 espionage* skill of 3D+1.



Attribute Conversion

<i>MasterBook</i> Attribute	<i>D6</i> Attribute
Average of Agility & Dexterity	Dexterity
Average of Strength & Endurance	Strength
Intellect	Knowledge
Intellect	Technical
Mind	Mechanical
Average of Confidence & Charisma	Perception

D6 System Damage Chart

FIREARMS

Weapon	D6 Damage Value
Holdout pistol (.22 caliber)	3D
Small pistol (.25 caliber)	3D+1
Light rifle (.22 long)	3D+2
.38 Special	4D
Ingram SMG	4D+1
Colt .45	4D+2
.44 Magnum Pistol	5D
.30-.30 Lever Action Rifle	5D+1
AK-47 Assault Rifle	5D+2
M16 Assault Rifle, Grenade	6D
7.62 HK21 Machinegun	6D+1
7.62 Maremont Lightweight M60	6D+2

7.62 "Chain Gun"
GE Minigun M134

7D
7D+1

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	D6 Damage Value
Pocketknife	STR+1
Small knife	STR+2
Knife	STR+1D
Dagger, Club	STR+1D+1
Short sword, baseball bat	STR+1D+2
Quarterstaff, rapier	STR+2D
Light sword, warhammer	STR+2D+1
Broadsword	STR+2D+2
Morning-star, pike	STR+3D
Two-handed sword, battle axe	STR+3D+1

MasterBook/D6 Skill Conversion

MasterBook Skill

D6 Skill Equivalent

AGILITY

<i>Acrobatics</i>	<i>(Acrobatics /Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Beast riding</i>	<i>Beast riding (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Climbing</i>	<i>Climbing/jumping (Strength*)</i>
<i>Dance</i>	<i>(Dance/Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Dodge</i>	<i>Dodge (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Escape Artist</i>	<i>(Escape Artist/Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Flight</i>	<i>(Flight/Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Improvised Weaponry</i>	<i>Melee Combat (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Long Jumping</i>	<i>Climbing/jumping (Strength*)</i>
<i>Martial Arts</i>	<i>Brawling (Strength*)</i>
<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Maneuver (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Mechanical Maneuver</i>	<i>Powersuit Operation (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Melee Combat</i>	<i>Melee Combat (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Melee Parry</i>	<i>Melee Parry (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Running</i>	<i>Running (Dexterity*)</i>
<i>Stealth</i>	<i>Sneak (Perception*)</i>
<i>Swimming</i>	<i>Swimming (Strength*)</i>
<i>Unarmed Combat</i>	<i>Brawling (Strength*)</i>
<i>Unarmed Parry</i>	<i>Brawling Parry (Dexterity*)</i>

DEXTERITY

<i>Energy Weapons</i>	<i>Blaster</i>
<i>Exotic Weapons</i>	<i>Lightsaber, Bowcaster</i>
<i>Fire Combat</i>	<i>Archaic Guns, Firearms</i>
<i>Gunnery</i>	<i>Vehicle Blasters, Capital Ship Gunnery, Starship Gunnery</i>
<i>Heavy Energy Weapons</i>	<i>Blaster Artillery</i>
<i>Heavy Weapons</i>	<i>(Heavy Weapons)</i>
<i>Lock Picking</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Missile Weapons</i>	<i>Bows, Missile Weapons</i>
<i>Prestdigitation</i>	<i>Pick Pocket</i>

MasterBook Skill

D6 Skill Equivalent

<i>Security</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Thrown Weapons</i>	<i>Thrown Weapons, Grenade</i>
<i>Vehicle Piloting</i>	<i>Archaic Starship Piloting, Capital Ship Piloting, Ground Vehicle Operation, Hover Vehicle Operation, Repulsorlift Operation, Space Transports, Starfighter Piloting, Swoop Operation, Walker Operation</i>

ENDURANCE

<i>Resist Pain</i>	<i>Stamina (Strength*)</i>
<i>Resist Shock</i>	<i>Stamina (Strength*)</i>

STRENGTH

<i>Lethal Strike</i>	<i>Strength*</i>
<i>Lifting</i>	<i>Lifting</i>

INTELLECT

<i>Apportation</i>	<i>(Apportation/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Camouflage</i>	<i>Hide (Perception*)</i>
<i>Cantrips</i>	<i>(Cantrips/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Computer Hacking</i>	<i>Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)</i>
<i>Computer Ops</i>	<i>Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)</i>
<i>Counterfeiting</i>	<i>(Counterfeiting/Perception*)</i>
<i>Counter-Intelligence</i>	<i>(Counter-Intelligence/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Data Analysis</i>	<i>(Data Analysis/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Deduction</i>	<i>Search (Perception*)</i>
<i>Demolitions</i>	<i>Demolitions (Technical*)</i>
<i>Divination</i>	<i>(Divination/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Espionage</i>	<i>(Espionage/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>First Aid</i>	<i>First Aid (Technical*)</i>

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	D6 Damage Value
Small Rock	STR+1
Throwing stars	STR+2
Throwing knife	STR+1D
Small slingshot	STR+1D+1
Sling, short bow	STR+1D+2
Medium bow, throwing axe	STR+2D
Composite bow	STR+2D+1
Long bow	STR+2D+2
Light crossbow	STR+3D
Heavy crossbow	STR+3D+1
Compound bow	STR+3D+2

ARMOR

Type	D6 Armor Add
Heavy "adventurer's clothing"	+1
Heavy furs	+2
Heavy padding, metallic woven fabric	+1D
Leather armor	+1D+1
Leather armor with metal links	+1D+2
Chain link, "light" bulletproof armor	+2D
Light Kevlar	+2D+1
Plate & chain armor, flak jacket	+2D+2
Plate mail, standard Kevlar	+3D
Plate armor, Kevlar ceramic	+3D+1

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent**

<i>Forgery</i>	<i>Forgery (Perception*)</i>
<i>Inventor</i>	<i>(Inventor/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Journalism</i>	<i>(Journalism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>(Linguistics/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Navigation</i>	<i>Astrogation (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Perception</i>	<i>Investigation (Perception*)</i>
<i>Performance Arts</i>	<i>(Performance Arts/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Photography</i>	<i>(Photography/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psionic Manipulation</i>	<i>(Psionic Manipulation/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Radio Ops</i>	<i>Communications (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Safe-Cracking</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>Sensors, Capital Ship Shields, Starship Shields, Computer Programming/Repair, Droid Programming, Droid Repair, Armor Repair, Blaster Repair, Capital Starship Weapon Repair, Starship Weapon Repair</i>
<i>Smuggling</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Super-Science</i>	<i>(Super-Science/Technical*)</i>
<i>Teaching</i>	<i>(Teaching/Perception*)</i>
<i>Tracking</i>	<i>Search (Perception*)</i>
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Vehicle Mechanic</i>	<i>Capital Starship Repair, Ground Vehicle Repair, Hover Vehicle Repair, Repulsorlift Repair, Space Transports Repair, Starfighter Repair, Walker Repair</i>

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent****MIND**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>(Artist/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Bureaucracy</i>	<i>Bureaucracy (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Business</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Conjuration</i>	<i>(Conjuration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Hypnotism</i>	<i>(Hypnotism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Languages (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Medicine</i>	<i>Medicine (Technical*)</i>
<i>Research</i>	<i>(Research/Perception*)</i>
<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Alien Species, Cultures, Law Enforcement, Planetary Systems, Value (Knowledge*)</i>

CONFIDENCE

<i>Alteration</i>	<i>(Alteration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Con</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Curse</i>	<i>(Curse/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Faith</i>	<i>(Faith/Perception*)</i>
<i>Interrogation</i>	<i>(Interrogation/Perception*)</i>
<i>Intimidation</i>	<i>Intimidation (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psychology</i>	<i>(Psychology/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Streetwise</i>	<i>Streetwise (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Survival</i>	<i>Survival (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Willpower</i>	<i>Willpower (Knowledge*)</i>

CHARISMA

<i>Charm</i>	<i>(Charm/Perception*)</i>
<i>Disguise</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Persuasion</i>	<i>Persuasion (Perception*)</i>
<i>Summoning</i>	<i>(Summoning/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Taunt</i>	<i>(Taunt/Perception*)</i>

On the previous pages you'll find a list of the *MasterBook* skills and their *D6 System* equivalents. Where no *D6* skill matches, the skill and/or its base Attribute (if different from the *MasterBook* Attribute) are listed in parentheses. Skills placed under a different Attribute in *D6* than in *MasterBook* are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Miscellaneous Character Information

MasterBook Life Points equate to *D6* Force Points, and *MasterBook* Skill Points equate to *D6* Character Points. Bonuses or penalties resulting from *MasterBook* Advantages and Compensations can be converted using the standard conversion formula.

Difficulty Numbers

Since there is no linear formula that will accurately convert difficulty numbers, use the chart above to translate them between systems.

Modifiers

Divide the *MasterBook* modifier value by three. Treat the quotient as the die code and drop the remainder. For example, a *MasterBook* trick shot has a modifier of -4, which translates to a *D6* modifier of -1D (-4/3 = -1, remainder 1).



Difficulty Conversion

MasterBook Difficulty Level

Routine, Nearly Routine (1-2)
Very Easy, Easy (3-5)
Average, Complicated (6-10)
Difficult, Hard (11-13)
Very Hard, Extremely Hard (14-18)
Incredible, Nearly Impossible (19+)

D6 Difficulty Level

Very Easy (1-5)
Easy (6-10)
Moderate (11-15)
Difficult (16-20)
Very Difficult (21-30)
Heroic (31+)

Damage Values

Since *MasterBook* damage values tend toward the high side, you must first subtract five from the *MasterBook* value and then apply the conversion formula. For example, a light rifle in *MasterBook* has a damage value of 16. In the *D6 System*, the damage value is $3D+2$ ($(16 - 5) / 3 = 3$, remainder 2).

Miscellaneous

Conversions for other areas of game play (vehicle and starship combat, magic, psionics, *et cetera*) are left to the gamemaster. In each case, the standard conversion formula should provide you with a basis for translation. For example, characters from the *Bloodshadows*™ game who have magical spells at their disposal, may attempt to cast a spell by generating a skill total and comparing it to the spell's difficulty (the skill value and the difficulty number can both be converted using the guidelines presented above).

Refer to the previous two pages for charts of converted skills and damage values.

MasterBook Games

Bloodshadows™
Indiana Jones™
Necroscope™
Shatterzone™
Species™
Tales From The Crypt™
Tank Girl™
The World of Aden™

D6 System Games

Star Wars®,
the Roleplaying
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TM

By Greg Farshtey and Teeuwynn Woodruff

Welcome, kiddies, to my cozy Crypt. Have I got a story for you! It's time for another terror tale from your old pal, the Cryptkeeper — only this one stars you and your fiendish friends! It's a sickening little saga that promises to plunge you into malice, madness, murder and mayhem! So take a seat, boils and ghouls, the show's about to start ... the credits are rolling ... and it's curtains for you! Hehehehehehe!

From out of the Cryptkeeper's "diebrary" comes a roleplaying game guaranteed to provide frightseekers with twisted tales, sickening stabs at suspense, and chunks of chilling charnel chatter. The Cryptkeeper is looking for someone to play with, so he's sending you and your players spiraling into a world of bloodcurdling horror, in search of sinister secrets, murderous mysteries, artifacts too awful to name, and the answers to his own "cryptic" riddles. The rules of his little game are simple: win ... or die.

His players are people with dark secrets, hidden fears, and here and there a hint of madness. Dropped into strange settings (and sometimes other bodies), they must confront countless horrors, all the while at the mercy of the Cryptkeeper ... and the Cryptkeeper has no mercy.

Included in this WorldBook are tips on designing and running *Tales From The Crypt* adventures and campaigns, new background options, new skills, source material on the terrifying little town of Gainesford, adventure hooks, character templates, and a mini-adventure, "Circus of Souls."

You must have *MasterBook* to play this game.



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Included in this box set are the *Tales From The Crypt* Worldbook; the *MasterBook* rules system; the *MasterDeck*; and two ten-sided dice.



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