

Masks of Nyarlathotep

Trail of Cthulhu Conversion notes

Masks of Nyarlathotep is the all-time great *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. Monsters, cultists, globe-hopping pulp adventures, it has pretty much been the penultimate Cthulhu adventure since 1984. It was only a matter of time before I would run this for my group.

So keep in mind that this conversion's purpose is, first and foremost the conversion document for my playing group. I'm a busy guy, and I may forget or omit details that really won't be relevant for my play group. I don't know how to make an editable online document (as I'm sure this will be useful for someone else), but I think, in the future, that's probably the best format for this document.

This conversion has been done by Stevens Dustin, July 2008 for *The Complete Masks of Nyarlathotep* published in December 1996. All page references are for that specific document, unless otherwise indicated. Each major section corresponds with each location chapter.

Spells

Many of the antagonists of *Masks* are powerful sorcerers, and have laundry lists of spells they know. Of course, not all the spells can be found in both *Trail* and *Call*. Some spells that seem somewhat superfluous have been dropped. In the NPC descriptions, the remaining spells not to be found in *Trail of Cthulhu* are italicized. Their descriptions are below, split into Incantations and Rituals.

Incantations

Create Zombie

Contact Sand Dweller

See "Contact Creature Spells" sidebar on p. 113 in *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook.

Contact Yig

See "Contact Diety Spells" sidebar on p. 112 in *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook.

Hand of Protection

This spell creates a disembodied hand that deflect harm from the caster. He calls upon the Outer Gods, spends 1 Stability point and raises his own hand. The disembodied hand then absorbs 1 point of damage for every point of Stability the caster places in it. Once the caster reaches 0 Stability, the disembodied hand vanishes.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 for a Scuffling spend)

Cost: 1 Stability plus 1 Stability for every point of damage absorbed.

Mists of the Dreamer

This spell allows the caster to send Sanity-blasting dreams to his victim. The caster requires a bowl made from "the copper from above," etched in alien runes, and filled with herbs from the hidden places upon the earth. The caster sacrifices at least 1 Stability point and a dram of his blood. The mixture then begins to give off a green smoke that the caster breathes deeply, and hallucinates.

For every 1 Stability point the caster puts into the dream, the victim must make a d6-point Stability test at Difficulty 5. Therefore, if a caster puts 3 Stability points into the dream, the victim makes a 3d6 Stability point test. The nature of the dream is always of some Mythos vista or entity.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 for a Hypnosis spend)

Cost: 1 Stability plus points placed in the dream

Quicken Fog-Spawn

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This spell requires a fog-spawn larva and a drop of the caster's blood smeared on the larva. It is cast within a lightless dense fog. The larva grows into a Thing in the Fog, upon which the caster maintains command of it until 3 hours or 200 feet away.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Cost: 8 Stability points

Rituals

Call/Dismiss Azathoth

See “Calling and Dismissing Deities” sidebar on p. 120 in *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook.

Clutch of Nyogtha

In this attack spell, the caster pays the upfront cost of 5 Stability to initiate. Everytime the caster succeeds in a Stability against Stability contest, the victim loses 1d6-1 Health. Once the victim reaches -11 Health, he feels his chest rupture, and his/her smoking heart appears in the caster’s hand.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with a First Aid or Forensics spend)

Opposition: The caster engages in a contest of his/her Stability against the victim’s Stability.

Cost: 5 Stability

Mesmerize

This spell allows the caster to mentally dominate the victim, who must have human blood in its veins. The caster pays the cost, and then must succeed at a contest against the victim’s Stability. The caster can then command the victim for a minute for every point of Cthulhu Mythos the caster possesses. The victim must be able to see the caster’s eyes, which will glow malevolently. The victim can only spend 1 point from a general ability for each test while under the command of the caster.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with a Hypnosis spend)

Opposition: The caster must succeed in his Stability against the victim’s Stability.

Cost: 2 Stability

Time: 1 round to cast

Tendrils of Quachil Utaus

This spell causes slightly transparent black tendrils to seep from the caster’s fingertips toward the victim. The tendrils steal the life vitality from the victim, transferring it to the caster, making him/her younger. After the initial cost is paid, each round the caster succeeds in the opposition contest, he/she drains 1 Health and 1 Health *rating point* from the target. The target makes a 5-point Stability test on any successful attack. For each Health rating point taken, the caster grows younger by one week, while the victim ages 1d6+4 years. For every ten years the

victim ages, they lose one point in each of their general abilities. The victim turns into a flaking dry-husk once his/her Health rating is completely at 0.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Opposition: The caster must succeed in a test of Stability versus the target’s current Stability for every attack made.

Cost: 2d6 Stability points, which is paid before the first attack.

Time: one round to cast, then an attack on each subsequent round.

Chapter I: New York

New York

Our group ran through the New York section using a heavily modified BRP. New York section will be completed once the other sections have been completed. Unfortunately (fortunately?) our group did not finish off Mukunga M'Dari and the Chakota, and I want them to make a comeback.

Statistics

Bloody Tongue Member

Athletics 5, Health 7, Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 3

Weapon: -1

Mukunga M'Dari

High priest of the God of the Bloody Tongue (NYC)

Athletics 7, Health 9, Scuffling 7, Weapons 6, Stability 7

Mukunga knows these spells: Bind Byakhee, Contact Nyarlathotep, *Create Zombie*, *Dread Clutch of Nyogtha*, Dread Name of Azathoth, Shrivelling, Howl of Pan, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Lion Claws)

Chakota

Athletics 4, Health 19, Scuffling 10

Each bite is a mouth that has attached to the investigator. Keep track of the number of mouths attached. When the investigator attempts to escape, use either Athletics or Scuffling against a Difficulty set by the number of mouths.

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: -2 + 1d6 for number of bites

Armour: immune to weapons, the Chakota only takes damage from fire, magic and electricity. It can also be suffocated.

Stability Loss: +2/+0 for first hearing the Chakota's cries.

Chapter II: London

Penhew Foundation

(page 45)

- When interviewing Edward Gavigan, **Assess Honesty** reveals he lies about not knowing Jackson Elias's London activities.
- **Archaeology** reveals the artefacts have no significance

Surveillance

- When Gavigan has the investigators tailed, players make Sense Trouble against Difficulty 4 to notice cultists shadowing them.
- Tailing Gavigan to Tewfik's shop is a Shadowing against Difficulty 6 test.

The Penhew Foundation Building

- Athletics or Scuffling against Difficulty 7 breaks down the door. Locksmith against Difficulty 4 opens the padlocks.
- On a roll of 5 or 6 on a die, men are picking up items from the building in the back.
- Tailing the men to the Limehouse docks is a Shadowing against Difficulty 5 test.

The Main Floor

(page 47)

- **Library Use** in the Penhew Library reveals the existence of a shadowy sorcerous Pharaoh in early history of Egypt. **1-point spend** reveals this information in less than an hour.
- **Architecture 2-point spend** reveals hidden panel in the back of Gavigan's closet.
- **Evidence Collection** reveals worn section before the mummy sarcophagus.
- **Mechanical Repair** reveals mechanism to open mummy case and reveal stairs.

The Secret Room

(page 47)

- **Architecture, Mechanical Repair, or Electrical Repair 1-point spend** reveals electrical cables, water pipes into secret room in basement.
- **Archeology** reveals the artwork to be Egyptian or proto-Sumerian. **Cthulhu Mythos** reveals them to show Mythos beings. This causes a 1-point Stability test.

- **Evidence Collection (core)** reveals the shipping address to Ho Fong imports on the crates. The statue of the Bloated Woman causes a 1-point Stability test.
- **Evidence Collection (core)** reveals the shipping address to Randolph Shipping Company on the crates. **Cthulhu Mythos** reveals the statue as Cthulhu (causing a 1-point Stability test). Touching the statue decreasing the difficulty to cast spells by 1 for 24 hours.
- **Locksmith 2-point spend** allows access to the bookcase. Inside are copies of the *Livre d'Ivon*, *G'harne Fragments*, and *Book of Dzryan*. *G'harne Fragments* reveals that Nyarlathotep is the god of the Bloody Tongue.

Gharne Fragments

Translation of shards found in North Africa.

Skimming provides a dedicated 1-point spend in Archeology or Occult while examining African customs, items or folklore or while visiting Africa. Poring over it adds +1 to Cthulhu Mythos, and bestows an extra 1-point spend in addition to the skim's 1-point.

Book of Dzryan

Helena Blavatsky's tome of Atlantean knowledge.

Skimming allows a 1-point Occult spend. Poring over it adds +1 to Cthulhu Mythos.

Slaughter in Soho

(page 59)

Inspector Barrington

- **Cop Talk (core, floating)** reveals the Blue Pyramid is a popular Egyptian club. Furthermore, one victim reported to have said, "Hotep!" before they died.
- **Cop Talk 1-point spend** reveals his conversation with Jackson Elias and Edward Gavigan.
- **An additional 1-point Cop Talk spend** for his conversation with Tewfik al-Sayed.

The Blue Pyramid

- **Flattery or Reassurance (core)** gets access to Yalesha's story

- Tailing the men to Gavigan's estate is a Shadowing against Difficulty 6 test. Failure results in the cultists ambushing the investigators on the island.

The Shop of Tewfik al-Sayed

- Athletics or Scuffling against Difficulty 6 breaks down the door. Locksmith against Difficulty 4 allows entry.
- Locksmith against Difficulty 4 opens the desk. **1-point Evidence Collection spend** reveals the hidden drawer.

The Mirror of Gal

The mirror has two abilities, both requiring 1 point of Stability for each use:

- **Scrying.** This ability allows the user to see anywhere within 200 miles of its location, but see full description on page 62.
- **Attacking.** When using this ability the caster makes a Stability test against the target's current Stability. For every point by which the caster succeeds at that test, the target loses 1 Health, showing as "heart strain." Being attacked this way may require a Stability test from the victim.

Other Leads

The Limehouse Docks

(page 63)

- **Reassurance or Streetwise** gets the locals around the Limehouse warehouse to discuss the tough customers and the late night escapades going there.

The *Ivory Wind*

- **Physics 1-point spend** identifies the machine components heading to Ho Fong for reaction motor control, but others are just plain baffling.

Rites of the Brotherhood

- **Arabic** points out that Egypt means "Misr"

Entrances to the Estate

(page 66)

- **1-point Evidence Collection spend** points out that the bridge can be opened and closed, and in turn trap the investigators on the island, if need be.

The Manor House

- **Architecture or Geology** to find the moveable bricks in the fireplace of the great hall.

Gavigan's Country Workroom

- **Cthulhu Mythos** shows that the items in the room are related to the Black Pharaoh.
- **Accounting (core)** shows that the fat ledger contains the details of many shipments to Ho Fong and Randolph Shipping.
- **Evidence Collection (core)** finds the unfinished letter to Sir Aubrey.
- **Occult** points out the spell ingredients are magical. **Biology** identifies the contents of some of the containers (but not all).

The Rites

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- **Geology** shows the stele to be made from unearthly stone
- **Egyptian Hieroglyphics** can reveal that the writing on the stele is a poem praising the Black Pharaoh.

Statistics

Cultist of the Brotherhood

Athletics 4, Health 5, Scuffling 3, Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: +0 (club)

The Thing in the Fog

Athletics 10, Scuffling 13

The thing cannot be hit, it can only be dispelled with light. Therefore it has no Health, or Hit Threshold. Each tendril that hits causes suffocation damage to its victim (see *Trail* page 68).

Stability Loss: +1

Shantak

Athletics 6/30*, Health 15, Scuffling 18

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: +5 (bite)

Armour: -5

Stability Loss: +0

*flying

Edward Gavigan

High Priest of the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh

Athletics 5, Health 8, Firearms 4, Scuffling 3, Weapons 4, Stability 8

Gavigan knows these incantations: Contact Ghoul, Contact Nyarlathotep, *Contact Sand Dweller*, Dread Name of Azathoth, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, *Quicken Fog-Spawn*, Shrivelling, Sign of Eibon, *Tendrils of Quachil Utaas (Steal Life)*, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Vach-Viraj Incantation

Gavigan knows these rituals: *Call/Dismiss Azathoth*, *Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth*, Contact Nodens, Curse of the Stone, *Mists of the Dreamer (Send Dreams)*

Hit Threshold: 3

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: -1 (club), +1 (shotgun)

Tewfik al-Sayed

Athletics 5, Health 6, Scuffling 4, Weapons 6

Tewfik knows these spells: *Body Warping of Gorgoroth*, Contact Nyarlathotep, Curse of the Stone, *Tendrils of Quachil Utaas*, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (club)

Lesser Other God

with names like Dhuyghash and Yko

Athletics 7, Health 21, Scuffling 5

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: -1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: +5 (gruesome pseudopod)

Armour: -5

Stability Loss: +1

The Police**Inspector Barrington**

Athletics 3, Health 6, Scuffling 4, Firearms 5, Weapons 5, Stability 8

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (weapon, nightstick)

Constable

Athletics 5, Health 7, Scuffling 3, Firearms 2, Weapons 6

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (nightstick)

The Two Scepters

Both Gavigan and Tewfik possess magic sceptres that when crossed before their bodies, increase their spell-casting ability and defend against spells. The scepters give the caster an increase in 1d6 temporary Stability points, and has a pool of 2d6 points which absorbs spell attacks meant for the holder of the scepters (example: a spell takes 2 Health points, the points are instead taken from the scepters' pool).

A Serpent in Soho

(page 49)

Breaking and Entering

- Athletics or Scuffling against Difficulty 4 breaks down the door.
- **Evidence Collection** shows that there is a skylight at the top of Miles' house. The window can be broken in with Athletics or Scuffling test against Difficulty 2.

Knocking at the Door

- **Credit Rating or Reassurance** convinces Ssathasaa to allow the investigators in to buy a painting.
- **Biology** points out that the house smells like the reptile house at the zoo.

The Painting in the Closet

- **Evidence Collection** leads to the padlocked closet. Locksmith against Difficulty 3 unlocks the padlock.
- Upon viewing the painting when it becomes three dimensional, investigators make Stability checks against the painting's Inertia of 4. Each minute of viewing adds 1 to the painting's Inertia level. A failed roll sends the investigator into the painting. This causes a 4-point Stability test.

The Ground Floor

- Locksmith against Difficulty 3 opens the bedroom door. **Evidence Collection** to find the Plutonian drug.

Basement

- **Architecture** to find the secret door in the basement. The dead bodies cause a 1-point Stability test.

Ssathasaa

High Priest of the Serpent People

Athletics 8, Health 6, Hypnosis 8, Scuffling 11, Stability 9, Weapons 7

Ssathasaa knows the spells *Contact Yig*, *Hand of Protection*, *Mesmerize*, *Tikkoun Elixir*, *Voorish Sign*

Hit Threshold: 4

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: -2 (knitting needle), +0 (bite)+venom (*Trail* page 147)

Armour: -1

Stability Loss: +0

Miles Shipley

Athletics 3, Health 6, Scuffling 3, Stability 5, Weapons 5

Hit Threshold: 3

Weapon: +0 (meat cleaver)

The Derbyshire Monster

Lesser-Edale

(page 54)

- **Reassurance or Flattery** allows the villagers to open up at the Laughing Horse about the monster
- **Assess Honesty** reveals the constable is worried that he might lose his job if he states that he actually believes in the locals' gossip
- **Reassurance or Flattery** to interview the families of the victims.
- **Reassurance (core, floating)** for John Parkins to admit he thinks that Lawrence Vane was involved.

A Visit to Castle Plum

(page 56)

- **Assess Honesty (core, floating)** shows that Eloise suffers greatly

The Main Hall

- Scuffling or Weapons against Difficulty 8 to break down the oak door to the wine cellar.
- Scuffling or Weapons against Difficulty 10 to break down the iron doors in the dungeon.

The Vicar of Lesser-Edale

(page 58)

- **Reassurance (core, floating)** gets the Reverend Stratton to talk to the investigators
- **Assess Honesty (core)** reveals that the Reverend is holding something back.
- **Locksmith (core)** to open Stratton's desk drawer
- **Flattery or Reassurance** for Sarah Bright to admit the Vicar has been acting queerly.

Constable Hubert Tumwell

Athletics 5, Health 6, Firearms 5, Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (rifle), +0 (nightstick)

Reverend Jeremy Stratton

Languages 2, Health 4, Stability 5

Townsfolk

Athletics 5, Health 5, Scuffling 4, Weapons 1

Weapon: -1 (torch)

Lawrence Vane

Athletics 3, Health 7, Firearms 4, Scuffling 5,
Weapons 4, Stability 5

Hit Threshold: 3

Weapon: +0 (fencing foil), +1 (shotgun)

Sir Arthur Gordon Fitzhugh Vane

Health 5, Firearms 2, Stability 3

Eloise in Werewolf Form

Athletics 12, Health 7, Scuffling 4

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (bite, claw)

Armour: -1

Stability Loss: +0

Chapter III: Cairo

Trail of Cthulhu Conversion notes

NPC and creature stats blocks follow this template, removing unnecessary entries:

[Name of NPC/Creature]

[List of abilities]

Hit Threshold: [...]

Alertness Modifier: [...]

Stealth Modifier: [...]

Weapon: [...]

Armour: [...]

Stability Loss: [...]

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