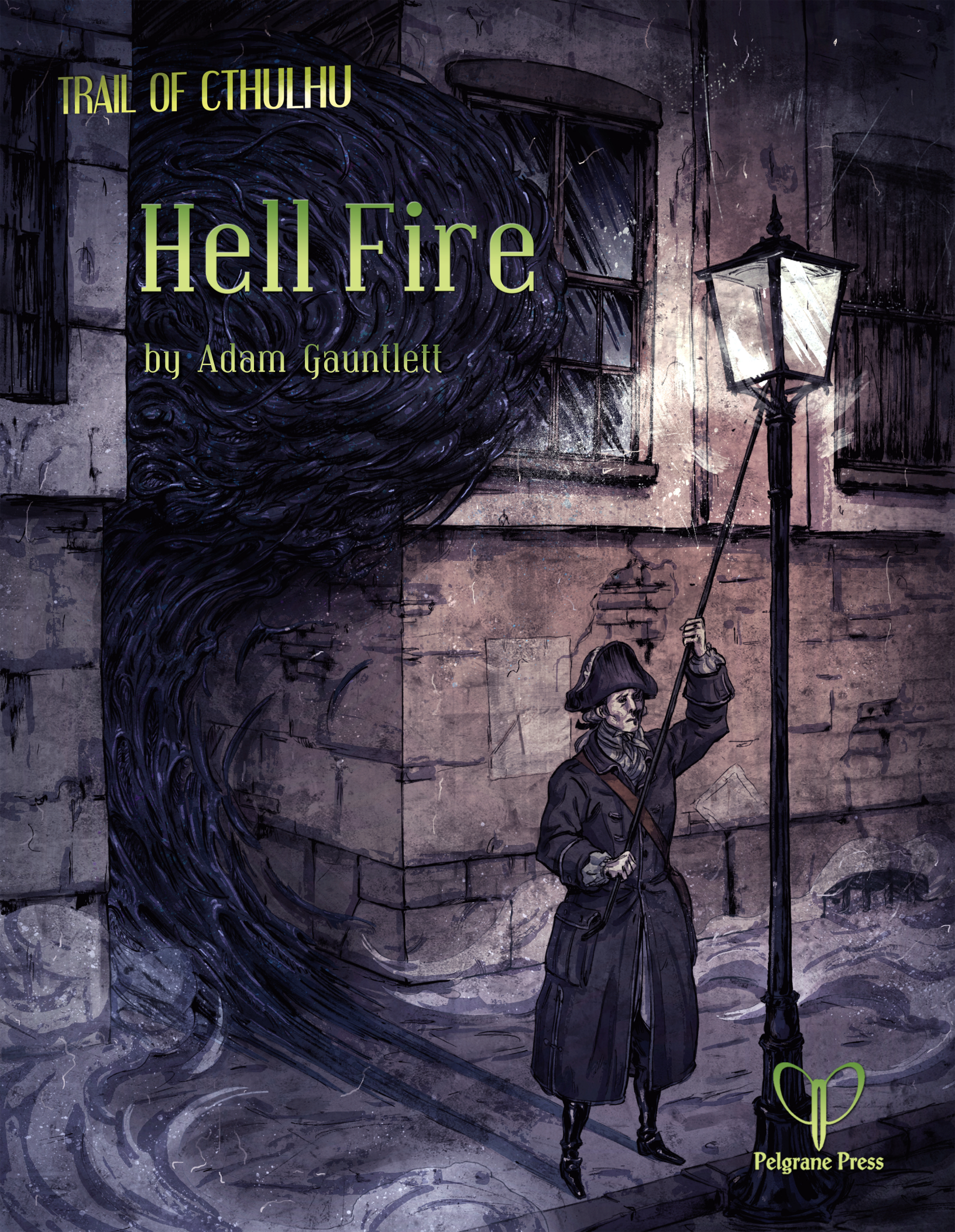


TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Hell Fire

by Adam Gauntlett



Pelgrane Press

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TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Credits



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TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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Hell Fire is a scenario set in 18th century London, with a side trip to the Colonies. The exact date is unspecified, but is assumed to be sometime from 1760 to 1770.

Hook

The protagonists are members of an exclusive Hell Fire Club, with an interest in fine (pornographic) literature and Rational debate. God is dead, and Man may prosper. One of the Club's most trusted members is involved in a Breach of Promise suit, in which the protagonists are peripherally involved, but before the case can be heard the Club member vanishes and the woman is found dead. Inquiries are being made; Club secrets could be revealed. If that happens, the Club members, and the protagonists, could be socially ruined. Where has their Brother gone? Who – or what – killed his alleged paramour?

THE AWFUL TRUTH

There are two tracks of inquiry. The first involves another Club whose interests parallel the protagonists, save that this second Club is in the Americas and has its own agenda. They know that war is coming, and can see great benefits for them in remaining politically neutral; pledging allegiance to the Crown while smuggling goods into the Colonies. They were intriguing with the now missing Brother to this end, trying to get him and his fellow Club members to vote their way in Parliament. At the same time, they are also deep in discussions with the French, hoping that if the English plan didn't work out they could switch flags and still make a fortune. The Americans

have as much to lose, socially, as their English brethren, since their Club affiliation won't win them any friends in the Colonies. Untangling this web of intrigue may keep the protagonists occupied, and ultimately lead to a confrontation in the Bermudas with the American branch of the Club.

However the problem goes deeper than simple political intrigue. The missing Brother didn't vanish because he was worried about a lawsuit. In fact, thanks to his Club-inspired sexual experimentation, he became infected with the essence of Y'gonolac. The Old One's psychic assault drove the unfortunate man mad, and he fled, but by that point Y'gonolac had found out a great deal, both about him, and about his activities. Y'gonolac learned about the Americas, and the Club's connection with the Colonies. Nothing would please the Old One more than to establish a new cult in the New World. At first using his initial victim, and later transferring his essence into others, Y'gonolac works towards one goal: using the American Hell Fire Club as a base from which the Old One can establish a Colonial branch of his own.

To achieve success the protagonists must avoid social disgrace, preferably by covering up the crimes committed by their fellow Club members, while at the same time dealing with the threat posed by their American colleagues, and the Old One Y'gonolac.

THE SPINE

The Lady Fornicator: The protagonists are tasked with stealing Mary Protheroe's letters. Once done, they are to return the letters to Bubb

Pearce, their fellow Club member. However by the time they get to Pearce's townhouse, Protheroe is dead and Pearce is nowhere to be found. Clues found in this section lead to **Our American Brethren, The Jezebels and Emergency Meeting.**

Emergency Meeting: The protagonists, along with the other Club members, are summoned to an emergency meeting of the Club. Bubb Pearce's disappearance, along with the record books and other important Club papers, is discussed. The journalist John Wakes may have them by now; if he does, the Club could be exposed, to the ruin of its members. Clues found here lead to **Our American Brethren, Muckraker, Pearce's Progress.**

Our American Brethren: The protagonists encounter Benjamin Wilcox, leader of the American contingent. He denies all knowledge of Pearce's whereabouts. Clues found here lead to **Muckraker, The Jezebels and French Fancies.**

Pearce's Progress: If the protagonists track Pearce, they discover his links to Y'gonolac. This may include the first antagonist reaction, if the Jezebels have not previously been encountered. Clues found here lead to **The Jezebels, American Intrigues and Vauxhall Funeral.**

The Jezebels: This all-female Club is Y'gonolac's current cult in London. They are the main London antagonists, and will do their best to mislead (or if necessary kill) the protagonists. Clues found here lead to **Vauxhall Funeral, The Dying Lover.**

Hell Fire

Clubbable Men

The 18th century was an enlightened age. The superstitions and near-medieval beliefs of the previous centuries were cast off, replaced by an age of science and discovery. Man was moving towards his perfected state. Received wisdom was little better than folklore; experience was the only way to true knowledge.

In that age, Clubs of all kinds prospered. Men (and women) of similar tastes, professions or stations in life would gather together to exchange their experiences with one another. Perhaps the club's aim was purely social, or perhaps it was political, or for men of business, or for seekers of antiquarian artefacts. 'An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions,' according to Samuel Johnson, and in a social age, the important thing was that they met, regularly, to exchange ideas. They flourished in the new urban environment, battenning on the Enlightenment precept that happiness was a virtue. They sought as much happiness as possible, in the company of their fellows. There were as many different types of Club as can be imagined, and most who belonged to a Club at all belonged to more than one. Benjamin Franklin, who may or may not have brought Hell Fire to America (certainly he was on close and friendly terms with Sir Francis Dashwood), was a member of three Clubs, not including the Royal Society and the Academe Francaise.

Some Clubs probably did not exist. The Farting Club, whose members 'tuned their arses with ale and juniper water' to speed up the natural process, is probably an invention of the satirist Ward, as is the No-Nose Club, an assembly of syphilis sufferers. However those were perhaps among the least bizarre. The Beggar's Benison of Scotland, whose records and artefacts are held by St. Andrew University, had as its motto 'may your prick and your purse never fail you'; to join, the initiate had to perform a feat of masturbation. The Hell Fire Club of Sir Francis Dashwood had broadly similar philosophies. Though their initiation ceremony was not nearly as forthright as the Beggar's Benison, one of the Club's interests was life studies, for which female models were sought. Sir Francis built himself a garden, the centrepiece of which was a Temple of Venus; the hill or mound represented the female genitals, with the grass being pubic hair, and an ovoid entrance at the base led to a central underground room. The gardens at West Wycombe are currently held by the National Trust.

These Clubs spread, and not merely within the borders of the kingdom. Wherever Englishmen were, there were Hell Fire Clubs; Ireland, the West Indies, colonial America. Wherever the children of Empire went, they took their Club culture with them. There were even rumours of Clubs further afield, in Russia, France, and elsewhere, inspired by the English original.

To outsiders, the Hell Fire Clubmen were blasphemers, men of ill fame who gathered to worship Satan and promote the Devil's philosophies. Truth be told, the Medmenhem Friars (the real name of the original fraternity) were more devoted to their dinners than their devils, and far more interested in pornography than Satan's scriptures. However they were also men of power and privilege, who could ill afford to have their nocturnal activities made public. When a disaffected former Friar, Wilkes, threatened to do just that, it was the beginning of the end. By 1766, the Medmenhem Friars were no more.

Of course, their reputation lived on. Their original name was forgotten, soon replaced by the more fascinating title Hell Fire Club. It was this title that their imitators frequently adopted, spreading like satellite cults all over the known world. Their reputation grew far larger than the reality, and even today Sir Francis Dashwood is more associated with spirits and devils than he is his public roles as Chancellor of the Exchequer, or Postmaster General. In fiction he regularly appears as a warlock-cum-rakehell, ready for any dark deed, whereas in life he was more of a sceptic than believer, who founded his Club as a reaction against the follies and hypocrisies of organized religion.

In game, the protagonists will be much like Sir Francis. They may be accused of wizardry and occult knowledge, but in fact they've nothing to do with such things. Their reputations, however, may be ruined by association, which is why they need to act quickly.

Muckraker: This leads to conflict with John Wakes. The protagonists may be able to stop the Hell Fire rumors before they start. Clues found here lead to **American Intrigues**.

French Fancies: The American links to French agents, and the cross-dressing Chevalier d'Eon, are revealed. Clues found here lead to **American Intrigues**.

American Intrigues:

The protagonists piece together the American plot, to take advantage of revolution in the colonies for their own personal gain. They also discover the Americans' intent to board ship for Bermuda soon. Clues found here lead to **Prospero's Cell**, possibly via the optional scene **Full Fathom Five**.

Vauxhall Funeral: The final encounter with Bubb Pearce, the Jezebels and possibly Benjamin Wilcox, set at night in the fantastical gardens at Vauxhall. Clues found here may lead to **The Dying Lover**.

The Dying Lover: The protagonists track the Jezebels to their lair, where they discover the scheme to infect

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Hell Fire

the Americas with the Y'golonac cult. Clues found here lead to **Prospero's Cell**, possibly via the optional scene **Full Fathom Five**.

Full Fathom Five: In this antagonist reaction scene, the protagonists are attacked while en route to Bermuda. This may not occur, if the protagonists have been successful in eliminating the Y'golonac cult in London.

Prospero's Cell: The protagonists arrive in Bermuda only to discover that the Americans have yet to step ashore; their ship is in quarantine, with a suspected infectious disease. However Benjamin Wilcox has found his way ashore, and will be about to spread the Y'golonac cult. Clues here may lead to **The Hell Ship** and **The Tempest**.

The Hell Ship: The protagonists sneak aboard the American's ship and find out what's really going on. Clues found here lead to **The Tempest**, but with some added advantages to the protagonists.

The Tempest: The final encounter with Benjamin Wilcox, in which the protagonists have a chance to eliminate the Y'golonac cult before it has a chance to take root in the Americas.

RULE ALTERATIONS

The setting requires several changes to the *Trail* character sheet.

The following skills do not exist and are not replaced by another skill: **Archaeology, Cop Talk, Driving, Psychoanalysis.**

Anthropology, Biology, Forensics and Geology do not exist. Their function is taken over by a new Academic ability, **The Sciences**. The Sciences functions as a much-reduced version of the specialist abilities; the user is a dilettante, not a dedicated observer, and while they may attend lectures at the Royal Society and read all the latest books, as well as reports from the New World, ultimately there are many facts of which they are unaware, as well as discoveries that have not yet been made. The Theory of Evolution, to name one, has yet to be formulated. There is also plenty of misinformation posing as established fact. In some cases (eg. Forensics) possession of the requisite knowledge is tainted by association; the Anatomy Act won't be law until 1832, and meanwhile the only corpses allowed to be dissected were

The Printing Press is for Porn

The explosion of (relatively) cheap, mass produced books and prints meant, among other things, an exponential increase in pornography. Books like Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders* were the least of it; those stories were mildly diverting, but they could be found in anyone's library. On the other hand, there were other, less socially acceptable titles:

The School of Venus.

The Fifteen Plagues of Maidenhood. This was followed by other books on the same line, viz. *The Fifteen Plagues of a Wanton Wife*, *The Plagues of a Whore*, and so on.

A Dialogue between a Married Woman and a Maid.

Secrets of the Convent.

The Rule of Taste.

A Complete Set of Charts of the Coast of Merryland. Beloved of the Beggars Benison, the Charts described female anatomy using nautical terminology.

Memoirs of a Lady of Pleasure, also known as Fanny Hill. While Cleland's version is the accepted text, it's likely that there were other versions with that title, written by authors long since forgotten.

Common topics include nunneries, school girls, and flagellation. While they seem positively quaint in the age of hentai, at the time this was the very height of sexual deviancy. Moreover these are just the books; there were thousands of prints published at the same time, with very similar subject matter.

The class system kept the pornography trade flourishing. So long as dirty books could only be afforded by the upper classes, all was well. These were the same upper classes who believed in the Enlightenment, followed scientific advances, and on whom the church had a very weak grip. They couldn't be shamed into abandoning their habits, and they had enough money to indulge them. However as the middle classes became more prominent and powerful, the porn trade began to encounter difficulties. The middle classes, as a rule, were much more devout than their social betters, and more inclined to join Societies for the Suppression of Vice. The 18th century, hedonistic and addicted to sex, would be replaced by the repressed Victorianism of the 19th century; the aristocrat's role in society usurped by the educated middle classes.

The protagonists, as members of the Club, certainly own one or more pornographic books in their personal library, as well as having access to the Club's own extensive collection.

condemned criminals. Cutting up the human body is still a dubious practice, in an age when religion preached resurrection of the flesh.

In game terms, treat **The Sciences** as an amalgam of the named abilities.

History and **Art History** do exist, but the Keeper should interpret these skills as being Europe-specific. Educated and wealthy people go on the Grand Tour, and learn the Classics; they know that China is somewhere far to the East, but know little of its history or culture. What they do know is via exaggerated or distorted Chinoiserie, which bears only superficial resemblance to the original. Similarly only people who have been to the colonies are really going to know much about the American states or the islands of the Caribbean, though they may choose to believe any number of unsubstantiated rumours. See also **Traveller**.

Photography does not exist. Protagonists determined to use a camera obscura should use **The Sciences**. The same applies to **Electrical Repair**; the protagonists know that electricity exists and have probably seen scientific experiments that utilize its power, but that's a long way from being able to deal with (or build) complex electrical devices.

Hypnosis does not exist. Protagonists interested in Mesmerism should use **The Sciences**. Mesmerism would not be able to replicate any of the effects listed as part of the **Hypnosis** skill.

Piloting only refers to boats and ships, not aircraft. While lighter-than-air balloons could theoretically be available, **Piloting** does not cover their use. Nothing does; at this point in history no man has gone aloft. The Montgolfier 1783 flight is slightly after the scenario date. **The Sciences** would allow a protagonist to understand the basic principles, but anyone foolish enough to put them to the test is risking catastrophic, potentially fatal failure.

There is a new Interpersonal skill: **Politics**. The world in which the protagonists operate is rife with political intrigue. Knowing who to talk to in order to get something done, knowing how to manipulate the system, how to further your own career or that of your friends, all fall under politics. Like **Locksmithing**, **Politics** can either be a straight spend or a Difficulty test; this is at the discretion of the Keeper, always bearing in mind that Difficulty tests are reserved for dramatic events rather than clue finding.

There is a new Academic ability: **Traveller**. A well-travelled protagonist has been to many unusual places, far from the usual Grand Tour. Mechanically this is similar to **Languages**, in that each point spent means that the spender has been to, and knows about, a country or colony other than England and the classical world. Only someone who spends the appropriate **Traveller** point can use **Politics** outside their usual zone without penalty. **Traveller** also allows the user to know most things about the places they've been to: the currency, a rough idea of the geography, the languages spoken, the state of trade, the recent history. **Traveller** does not automatically convey a **Languages** benefit; the **Languages** point must be spent separately.

In addition the protagonists each gain a 3 point pool, **Evidence**, which affects each scene after *Emergency Meeting*. This is discussed in more detail in *Muckraker*. **Evidence** is a negative pool; it is 'proof' of their guilt, which Wakes uses to blacken their reputations. So long as this pool exists, the Keeper can at any time call for a penalty to each Contest roll, the penalty being equal to the number of **Evidence** points remaining, (ie. from -3 to -1).



Duelling

In period, it is quite common for gentlemen to resolve their differences by personal combat, often by swordplay. Most gentlemen will know at least the basics of weapons handling. Duelling by firearm is less common, in period, since there is still a stigma attached to the ungentlemanly flintlock, but it is not unheard of.

The Code Duello is very formal. Some Codes permit the aggrieved to cancel the duel if the instigator repudiates his insult, but not all. The Keeper should always allow a protagonist to back out if the protagonist wants to, but NPCs as a rule won't voluntarily back down.

There are usually three seconds for each opponent. The role of the second is to negotiate on behalf of his principle, either to settle the terms of the duel (location, weapons) or to seek reconciliation, if the Code permits it. There is always a doctor present, to tend the stricken.

On the field of honour, the combatants fight until certain conditions are met. Usually these conditions demand that the fight not end until one combatant is unable, through wounds, to continue. In game terms, any combatant reduced to -6 or lower Health can legitimately claim to be unable to continue, which would end the duel. This surrender is known as giving quarter. If quarter is not allowed in this combat, (this can be announced before the duel begins) then the duel is to the death. The movie Rob Roy (1995) features a duel without quarter in its climactic scenes.

To simulate the cut-and-thrust of skilled swordplay, the Keeper should consider using this optional rule: at the beginning of the round, the defender can opt to spend some or all of his remaining Weapons pool points to increase the Hit Threshold. This points spend represents a Parry. However the points spend must be declared before the aggressor's attack roll. At the Keeper's option, to increase tension, the number of points spent by the defender need not be openly declared; only the Keeper needs to know how many points are used. All attacker spends are declared openly.

Example: Warwick and Perthshire meet on the field of honour. Neither has **Athletics** equal to or greater than 8, so both have base Hit Thresholds of 3. Warwick is the aggressor. Perthshire opts to spend 2 Weapons pool points in a Parry; he writes down the number, and hands it to the Keeper. Warwick, not knowing whether a Parry was declared or not, opts to spend no pool points, and rolls a 4. This does not equal or exceed Perthshire's improved Hit Threshold of 5, so Perthshire's Parry was successful. If Perthshire then rolls equal to or greater than 3, he beats Warwick in this contest. Dramatically, this could be described as a parry-riposte.

Now it's Perthshire's turn to be the aggressor. Warwick opts to spend no points in Parry, but hands a note to the Keeper anyway just to keep Perthshire guessing. Perthshire decides to spend 2 points, and succeeds on a roll of 6 (4+2, versus Hit Threshold 3). He may have won the contest, provided Warwick rolls poorly, but of course he's also spent 4 pool points, and the duel isn't over yet . . .

In a duel, one combatant may have a significant advantage over another, due to their superior weapons handling. In game terms, a combatant with **Weapons** score that is 4 or more points above the opponent's **Weapons** pool has the advantage. The combatant with the advantage lowers the Difficulty number needed to succeed.

Example: Warwick has **Weapons** 10, while Perthshire has **Weapons** 6. Warwick therefore has the advantage over Perthshire. In game terms, this means Perthshire's Hit Threshold drops from 3 to 2. Warwick only needs a 2 or better to succeed, while Perthshire still needs a 3 or better.

A rapier or smallsword counts as a +0 weapon for damage purposes. A sword cane, sometimes called a life preserver, is also a +0 weapon. The +1 sword listed in the main rulebook refers to larger weapons, (eg. cavalry sabre, claymore, medieval longsword).

Firearms cannot be parried. The advantage rule does apply to **Firearms**, so a duellist with 4 or more pool points in excess of his opponent's pool can gain the advantage, thus lowering the Hit Threshold. This advantage only applies during a duel, which is more formal and mannered than a free-for-all.

Outside of the field of honour combat is handled normally.

Scenes

THE LADY FORNICATOR

The scene opens on a dark, cheerless autumn day in London. The protagonists are gathered at a coffee house not far from Lady Mary Protheroe's fashionable home. Most of the other people in the coffee house are connected with shipping in one form or another. Ship captains meet here to exchange information and discuss matters with their merchant customers. Insurance men have their offices here; they wait in the booths with the other customers, for clerks to come bidding for their services, and then go out to the docks to survey the cargoes. All manner of folk, many of them transient, meet here and discuss the day's events, and nobody pays attention to a few new faces.

The protagonists have been asked to meet here by their friend and fellow Club member, Bubb Pearce. Pearce is the last to arrive.

Pearce is a tall, fleshy man. He normally has a ruddy complexion, but today he is pale as cheese. Assess Honesty shows he is deeply troubled, even frightened, but he doesn't say by what. He greets everyone, and sits at table.

"Tonight's the night," he says. "You all know the position Lady Mary has put me in. The damnable witch thinks she has me by the short hairs! Were I not to do as she bids, she'd have me before the Justices on a Breach of Promise suit — and what's more, she has letters of mine that would prove monstrous difficult to explain. Yet I think I have her cozened. For this very night she has agreed to meet with me at my house in Greenwich, to talk sweet and agreeable, or so she thinks. Gentlemen, I must have those letters. I bid you, as Club members, get me them, whilst I keep Lady Mary tarrying

in Greenwich. Her house will be abandoned; you can be in and out before anyone knows you're there. I appeal to you!"

The protagonists will know that Mary Protheroe has attended Club gatherings several times, as a life model and Pearce's guest. Her claims to be of high birth are politely disbelieved; she's a fashionable woman often seen in high society, whose outgoings are funded by wealthy men. While she's undoubtedly a handsome woman, she's also notorious, and would be a very unsuitable wife. Yet wife she means to be, unless Bubb Pearce can somehow wriggle out of it.

If the protagonists seem unwilling, Pearce tries emotional blackmail (*'surely my friends would not abandon me?'*) and bribery (*'curse you, if loyalty can't be had, perhaps it can be bought!'*) up to 2 **Credit Rating** pool points. An **Assess Honesty** spend shows that Pearce believes everything he says, but is perhaps being overoptimistic in his desperation.

If the protagonists agree, Pearce arranges for them to come to his house after the deed is done. Night or day, it doesn't matter; the sooner Pearce gets his hands on the letters, the better he will like it.

If they don't agree, Pearce leaves the coffee house, very upset. The scene could pass to *Emergency Meeting* (page 12), always remembering that the clue elements (American delegation, Jezebel) need to be dealt with first.

According to Pearce, the only people who live in the house are Mary Protheroe, her maidservant Rose, and 'a Moorish boy', servant to them both. Pearce thinks it unlikely that the boy will be at home, since it is usually his habit

to sneak out of doors when his mistress isn't in. *"That just leaves pretty Rosie, and if you fine gentlemen can't think of a way round her, I feel sorry for you!"* The streets roundabout are quiet. Mary's parlour and rooms are on the first floor, while Rose and the Moor have rooms in the garret. Pearce thinks it likely that the letters are kept in a cedar box in Mary's parlour, but if not, they're bound to be in her rooms somewhere.

While the protagonists talk with Pearce, they notice (**core clue**) three men come into the coffee house, but as soon as they spot Pearce, they walk out again. The men are dressed in fashionable clothes, but not of English cut; **Traveller** or **Politics** (0 point) realizes that they are American merchants, recently arrived, part of a delegation sent out from the colonies to present a petition to Parliament. Bubb Pearce's ships regularly conduct trade in the colonies, which may be how they know Pearce, but if so they don't seem eager to continue the acquaintance.

A 1 point **Politics** spend knows that the American delegation has also been angling for new trade contacts while in London, and the petition was something to do with tax problems in the colonies. They've been talking to all kinds of people, including the French. The spend means the protagonist knows where the Americans are staying.

As Pearce is leaving, the protagonists notice (**core clue**) a young woman, flashily dressed, start shadowing him. She looks like a hardened lady of leisure, her face thickly powdered, and it's impossible to guess at her age. She makes sure to stay several paces behind Pearce, but keeps him in sight at all times.

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Pearce, if his attention is drawn to her, starts as if he's seen a snake. He claims never to have seen her before, and moves off as fast as he can. **Assess Honesty** realizes that Pearce is lying, possibly out of fear, though why he should be afraid of someone half his size is difficult to make out.

The odd thing about her is her hands, which seem somehow much fatter than might be expected from such a dainty woman. At first it appears she is wearing yellow gloves, but in fact the garish, saffron colour is her natural skin. She rests one hand briefly on the door frame, and leaves behind a mark; a rough blemish, as if stained by acid. **Stability 1.**

If the protagonists attempt to follow her, she soon notices and does her best to give them the slip. She won't engage in violence unless provoked, but if that happens she attacks to kill.

Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

Any protagonist who sees her could use **Streetwise** or similar to find out more about this striking, odd woman. See further *The Jezebels* on page 19.

Mary Protheroe's house is not far from the meeting place. It is, as Pearce said, on a quiet street. In period, there are no police patrols. Public order is kept by parish constables. There aren't many of those and their stupidity (and cupidity – constable is an unpaid job) is well known.



The house is a red brick town house that probably was built just after the Great Fire. It has a walled garden at the back, and is on the end of a row of houses. The ground floor windows, facing the street, are all shuttered. Entrance is best had either by jimmying the front door lock (**Locksmith** Difficulty 4) or climbing over the garden wall to get at the rear (**Athletics** Difficulty 4). If the protagonists search around, a house two doors down is having work done and the builders have carelessly left a ladder behind, which negates the need for an **Athletics** check.

The back garden is where the earth closets are, and as the protagonists arrive, the house servant, Robert, is unluckily closeted therein, with a bad case of indigestion brought on by overindulging. He has a candle for a light. Robert can be **Intimidated** or bribed (**Credit Rating**) but not **Reassured** or **Flattered**.

Robert

Athletics 4, Fleeing 6, Health 7, Scuffling 7, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 4, Hit Threshold 3, Damage -2 (fist), -1 (stout stick)

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Robert has recently bought a bulldog, a plucky hound that he intends to train for fights. This dog, as yet a bit unmanageable, is also in the garden, tied to a stake.

Dog

Athletics 10, Health 6, Scuffling 9, Hit Threshold 4, Alertness Modifier +3, Weapon 0 (bite), Armour -1 vs. Any (fur), Stability Loss 0

The maid, Rosie, is asleep in her rooms in the attic. Though she won't fight (**Fleeing** 6) she has impressive lungs and may scream the house down, if startled. However she is a little weak willed, and can be **Flattered**, **Reassured**, **Intimidated** or bribed.

The letters are, as Pearce predicted, in a cedar box in Mary's parlour, on the first floor. **Evidence Collection** (0 points) if necessary, to get the letters.

If the protagonists unluckily manage to attract the attention of a constable (perhaps Rosie yelled), then bribery (**Credit Rating**), **Intimidation** or **Reassurance** (*'surely, constable, you can see we are all respectable men who'd never dream of breaking into a lady's house'*) may avoid trouble.

Constable Tugwell

Athletics 2, Fleeing 8, Health 7, Scuffling 6, Sense Trouble 6, Weapons 4, Hit Threshold 3, Damage -2 (fist) -1 (club)

Once the mission has been completed, one way or the other, the protagonists will need to get to Pearce's house in Greenwich. That means crossing the Thames. In period, this is easiest done by boat, and boatmen can be hired at any time of day or night. The Thames will be very busy, a veritable forest of ship's masts, all the way along the dockside. It takes perhaps an hour or so to make the crossing and get to Greenwich.

When they get there, Pearce is not at home, though his front door hangs open.

His house appears to have been abandoned. None of his servants are at home. There is a fire burning low in the grate in his parlour, but that is the only sign of life.

Mary Protheroe lies dead on the bedroom floor. She is half-dressed. Though there are bruises on her arms and shoulders, the main (and probably lethal) damage was done to her face. The flesh is burnt away, as if by strong acid. There are tiny marks in the muscle of her exposed face, which resemble bite wounds. The jaw that made those wounds would have to have been small, perhaps as small as a cat's. Both her eyes are gone, melted in their sockets. **Stability** 3.

Evidence Collection (0 points) realizes that some of Pearce's clothing is gone, and his strong box is open. Mary's purse is also missing. This suggests that Pearce fled with some few clothes and as much money as he could quickly lay his hands on.

The Sciences or Medicine (1 point) cannot suggest a cause of death for Mary. Corrosive vitriol would seem to have been the weapon used, and the face is so thoroughly destroyed as to suggest a large quantity of the stuff. Yet there are no splash marks, no other dots of damage on her clothes, her body, nor the room. It seems unreasonable to suggest that someone flung that much acid into her face, and hit only her face. However it also seems unlikely that she was killed elsewhere and moved to that spot. The bruises indicate that she struggled with her assailant. Moreover the teeth marks indicate some kind of scavenger, but they do not match any of the obvious suspects – a rat, or domestic animal. Never mind that the marks were made post-mortem; a natural animal would probably avoid the stinking, acid-tainted flesh.

Pearce has not taken any of his papers or books, and that includes the record books and specialist literature that he held on behalf of the Club. That much is clear from a glance at his library (**Library Use** 0), and the protagonists may wish to take them now before anyone else finds them.

Keeper's note: Bubb really wanted to cozen Mary Protheroe, and didn't intend for any of this. However he's been ducking the Jezebels for some time, and they've finally caught up with him. Mary was the unfortunate victim, when the Jezebels turned violent, and Bubb fled. Afterward he tried to eliminate all evidence of his connection with the Jezebels, which is why he tries to retrieve the book from Sir George. When that doesn't go according to plan, he goes into hiding. See also *Pearce's Progress*, page 17.

Once the protagonists leave Pearce's house, the scene ends. See further *Emergency Meeting*.

EMERGENCY MEETING

This follows on *The Lady Fornicator*.

The protagonists are summoned to Eversham Abbey, the usual meeting place, in a letter by the Abbot, as follows:

"Though it is out of our usual time I pray you attend services at the Abbey this Friday, for reasons which, if you are not already aware of, you will be made so."

The 'out of our usual time' refers to meeting dates. The Club prefers to meet in the summer, when they can expect warmer weather and enjoy the outdoors. Eversham Abbey is owned by Sir George Somerset, also known to the Club as the Abbot of the Right Worshipful Penitents. The 'Penitents' is a play on words; it can be said, in Latin, as *Peni Tenti*, or *Erect Penis*.

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The Abbey is Sir George's estate, half a day from London, and in addition to the building itself (neoclassic, with interesting murals by Hogarth) the Abbey has extensive grounds, over 60 acres of gardens and forests, with a stream running through it. The Club usually meets at their Temple of Wisdom (actually a folly built to resemble a pagan shrine, with statues of the ancient philosophers) in the grounds, but when the protagonists arrive Sir George invites them into his home instead.

'The Temple is not fit; the weather is too chill,' he says, but **Assess Honesty** indicates that he's stretching the truth. Whether or not the weather's poor, he doesn't want people looking too closely at the Temple.

He invites the Club members to a supper of cold meats and wine, before formally opening the meeting. He tells the assembled Club members:

- Pearce is missing. The protagonists may already know that but the other members don't. Sir George doesn't know where Pearce has gone.
- Government officials are very keen to trace Pearce and have been asking his friends and acquaintances for information. He's suspected of murdering Mary Protheroe.
- Some of the investigators have been asking about the Club; its business, meeting places, activities, and so on. While none of the things the Club has been doing are illegal, they could be very embarrassing if they were publicly known.
- A journalist, John Wakes, seems to have acquired papers which detail Pearce's involvement with the Club, as well as other unsavoury activities. He's threatening to publish. In fact, some of the allegations will already be in a broadsheet published that week: Wakes alleges that 'important men', among them Pearce, meet in an unhallowed Abbey to hold demonic

sabbats. *'He claims outrageous things, but the danger is that the corroborative detail he gives about our meetings may make these devil stories more believable!'*

- For all these reasons, the Club shall be temporarily suspended. All papers, pictures, diaries and other materials concerning the Club's activities should be handed over to Sir George, who will keep them under lock and key. The less Wakes can get his hands on, the better for the Club.

The meeting is then adjourned. Sir George offers a room for the night to anyone who doesn't fancy the long journey back to London.

Potential clues:

- **Core.** Pearce may have fled because of his involvement in Protheroe's murder, but he had other pressing troubles. His businesses in the colonies had suffered and his creditors were becoming impatient. Rumour had it that some arrangement with the Americans recently arrived in London had gone sour. See further *Our American Brethren*, page 14.
- **Core.** Pearce may have been having health problems. One Club member recalls meeting Pearce outside a pox doctor's office. 'Cupid's measles, no doubt!' The Club member does remember where the office was. See further *Pearce's Progress*, page 17.
- **Core.** Wakes has been sniffing around for dirt on more than one Club member. Several others can testify he's been after their secrets as well, bribing servants and talking to former mistresses. The protagonists may be next on Wakes' list. See further *Muckraker*, page 22.
- **Assess Honesty, Reassurance, Evidence Collection, Outdoorsman.** If they talk to Sir George or go out to the Temple, they discover that someone has been there and carried out some kind of ritual sacrifice. There's a bloodstain soaked into the floor, and scattered coal-black feathers. Sir George will be

reluctant to talk, but if persuaded says the event must have happened a day or so ago, while he was in the city. Some of his servants reported seeing Pearce's carriage on the grounds at the time of the incident.

- **Library Use, Evidence Collection, Reassurance, Oral History.** Sir George's library has been recently raided. Someone scattered his papers and books. Either Sir George or his servants can reveal that this happened at the same time as the ritual in the Temple. Extra spend on Sir George gets him to reveal that he thinks it was Pearce, but that nothing was taken. However Pearce did lend Sir George an interesting book, *The Inner Mysteries of Venus*, which Sir George has not had time to read. Sir George had that with him when the break-in happened; he will give it to the protagonists if they ask for it.
- **Reassurance, Politics, Oral History.** The Americans have been very busy, talking to members of Parliament, political fixers, and the like. They were pushing to have new laws passed that reduced taxes on colonial trade, but that didn't work out. Recently they've been talking to agents of the French King, possibly trying to open negotiations for trade with the French colonies in the Caribbean. That would of course be illegal, but smuggling is rife in the colonies.

OUR AMERICAN BRETHREN

The protagonists may follow up on the American connection.

It doesn't take much digging (**Politics, Traveller, Oral History**, 0 points) to find out that the Americans are a twelve man contingent, mostly from

Virginia, who claim to represent the colonial government. As a crown colony, Virginia's ultimate authority rests with the King who administers through appointed representatives, but locally appointed councils also exist to put forward the colonists' point of view. These men are important landowners, merchants, and society blades. Though their manners are sometimes peculiar, their social standing is equal to the

protagonists. Some of them are staying at the home of Joseph Morgan, a scientist and theologian with a house in the city. Others are lodging in good quality rented rooms, close to Hans Town (Sloane Square). Their leader is a satirist, inventor and theologian, Benjamin Wilcox. Their chief aim to date has been to try and persuade Parliament to reduce the sugar taxes imposed on colonial trade, but they have been unsuccessful.

The protagonists may try to gather rumours and further information, or may approach the Americans directly.

Gathering rumours:

- **Core.** The Americans are hand-in-glove with broadsheet publishers and gutter press types. Many of them are directly connected to the newspaper trade in their own colony. The broadsheet publisher and satirist Wakes is often seen in their company. (*Muckraker*)
- **Core.** The Americans deny themselves few pleasures. No doubt this is their first experience of a civilized metropolis. They enjoy feasts and entertainment, and are often seen in company with willing women of questionable reputation. Some of them fit the description of the woman seen at the coffee house in Lady Fornicator. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** The Americans are on friendly terms with representatives of the French government. The Chevalier d'Eon, former plenipotentiary ambassador for the French crown, is often seen in their company. (*French Fancies*)
- **Politics.** Rumour has it that the Chevalier d'Eon is more than he seems to be. They say he's a member of a French spy ring that reports directly to Louis XV. Benjamin Wilcox may also be an intriguer; he's well connected in the colonies, and counts many important men as his friends. The Seven Year's War was only a few years ago; perhaps Louis intends to

The Inner Mysteries of Venus

This is a Mythos text. It can appear at several points in the scenario; once the protagonists have obtained one copy they should not be allowed another.

The book is limp leather bound with a plain cover. The bookbinder left no trade mark. The printing is of fair quality, with some staining that at first glance suggests an indifferent printer. Second glances show the stains seem somehow to move around, on the page and within the text. No matter how long the book is owned, the print always seems slightly wet, or tacky.

The novella is fairly standard lewd literature, and in parts quite dull. It follows the progress of Delight, a young girl who escapes from her overbearing family and, on the prompting of a kind spirit who calls herself Venus, climbs over the wall of Venus' garden to join Venus and her maids, who are having a summer party. The plot proceeds apace. However at times it is difficult to tell whether Venus is female, or male; this gender confusion becomes a major plot element when Venus asks Delight to penetrate to the centre of her/his garden hedge maze. There, Delight is told, she will find Venus' precious wand, which Venus wants returned to her.

Readers who skim the book notice that the mobile ink stains form themselves into pictures, pleasing at first, that disport among the pages. Laughing nymphs curl languorously along the top of a line. A shy creature hides, teasingly, behind the letters. Yet as things progress the pictures become more brazen, and more frightening. Some have teeth sharp as razors. Others have huge hands, that drip either blood or some kind of ichor. The maze of Venus forms itself towards the middle of the book, and dominates the imagery from that point onward. Moreover the images become more familiar. Londoners may recognize some of the landmarks, like St. Paul's; or perhaps the gardens look very similar to those at Eversham Abbey.

Skimming provides a dedicated 2 pool points to **Occult**. Poring over it provides +1 **Cthulhu Mythos**. It includes a ritual magic: Venus' Blessing.

Venus' Blessing: By carrying out a ritual involving blood sacrifice, the petitioner asks and hopefully obtains the blessing of Venus/Y'gonolac. The blood sacrifice can be human, but does not have to be. The petitioner daubs the blood on a parchment in the manner proscribed, which parchment he then carries with him. For 3 **Stability**, 1 **Sanity**, and a minor sacrifice, the petitioner gains 1 temporary pool point in any ability. For 4 **Stability**, 2 **Sanity** and a human sacrifice, the petitioner gains 3 temporary pool points in any one ability. Repeated petitions whether major or minor will eventually result in Contacting Y'gonolac, whether the caster intends to or not.

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foment another conflict, this time with his Canadian colonies working together with traitors in the American camp.

- **Flattery, Oral History.** They say the Americans are welcome at Madame Racine's salon. Madame Racine, a Frenchwoman who has lived in London for many years, has many pretty nieces who seem to come and go from France very regularly. Her nieces are very fond of Vauxhall Gardens, whose dubious reputation as a place of assignation is well known.
- **Oral History, Traveller.** The Americans are members of a Club, which they call The Honourable Mariners of Merryland. Though they seek pleasures in London it seems they are no strangers to vice; in many ways their hobbies mirror the protagonists'.
- **Streetwise.** Some of the American contingent are hard men to cross. So far there have been two formal duels and at least as many informal crossing of blades. Though rough-and-ready in their manners, their number includes several ex-military men who seem more accustomed to the battlefield than the salon.

Approaching directly:

- **Core.** The Americans admit to knowing Pearce, but say that they haven't seen him for several weeks. The last time any of them met Pearce, it was at Madame Racine's salon. Note: if the book *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* has already been obtained, the protagonists may spot one of the Americans reading a copy. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** When the protagonists arrive, they spot John Wakes sneaking out a side door. Clearly he doesn't want to meet the protagonists, and will hurry away if they try to force an acquaintance. (*Muckraker*)
- **Core.** When first approached, Benjamin Wilcox is enjoying a quiet luncheon with a woman who he introduces as Mademoiselle de

Beaumont. De Beaumont pays close attention to the conversation, and protagonists who later meet d'Eon will have the uncanny feeling that they've met him before. This is because de Beaumont is actually d'Eon, dressed as a woman. (*French Fancies*).

- **Politics.** The Americans are no longer interested in discussions with Parliament, as they feel there's no chance of changing Parliament's decision. *"Of course, this means trouble for us, gentlemen. You cannot imagine the disdain which these sugar duties are held in Virginia, and elsewhere in the colonies. There will be trouble yet over this short-sighted policy!"*
- **Assess Honesty.** The Americans are telling the truth about their negotiations with Parliament, but probably lying, or at least being circumspect with the truth, about everything else. They claim to have no interest in dealings with the French, and that d'Eon has no status with the French crown anyway; clearly they don't believe it. They also claim to have no interest in striking a deal on the tax issue, and that's also a lie. They'd do a deal tomorrow if they thought they could get one. They claim not to know who Madame Racine is, and that's untrue.
- **Credit Rating.** The Americans are keen to meet men of high standing in London. They want to make investments; as wealthy men, who can see trouble brewing, they want to spread their assets across several jurisdictions. That way, whoever wins the war, they come out on top. They'll ask for investment advice, but they'll also show themselves as Club members with very similar interests to the protagonists.

From this point forward, until American Intrigues, the Keeper should use the Americans as a free-floating group who can be encountered in many different locations. The following should be borne in mind:

- They are men of high society who enjoy having a good time.
- Their numbers include scientists and theologians, merchants and landowners, and colonial militia officers with battlefield experience both in the Seven Years and the Indian wars.
- They can be found staying at the houses of respected and influential men, in places where politics is done (eg. Parliament), around the docks, as well as in houses of dubious repute (eg. Madame Racine's salon).
- If threatened, they may manufacture a reason to fight a duel. They do this to shut up protagonists who might be dangerous. The pretext is that the protagonist somehow insulted the honour (probably their military record) of one of the officers.

American Scientist

The Sciences 7, Theology 4, Credit Rating 4, Politics 3, Astronomy 3.

American Merchant

Languages 3, Traveller 4, Assess Honesty 3, Bargain 5, Credit Rating 6.

American Officer

Athletics 6, Firearms 8, Health 8, Riding 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 6, Shadowing 7, Stealth 7, Weapons 10.

Benjamin Wilcox is their spokesman and leader. In his own country he's a satirist, newsman and inventor. His books have been published in France and England as well as the colonies. He presents himself as a humble man of the people, but enjoys sumptuous living and having well connected friends.

Benjamin Wilcox

Architecture 4, Assess Honesty 5, Astronomy 2, Bargain 3, Credit Rating 5, Conceal 2, The Sciences 10, Fleeing 7, History 3, Health 6, Languages 3, Library Use 5, Reassurance 4, Theology 4, Sanity 6, Stability 6.

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Encounters in this scene will take place in:

- The homes of respectable and influential men, especially those connected with the sciences. This type of scene can happen most often in Greenwich, near (or in) the Royal Observatory.
- Coffee houses and drinking places associated with the sea and shipping trade.
- Around (or in) the Houses of Parliament, discussing political issues with fixers and important government officials.

LOCAL COLOUR

This is a form of antagonist reaction.

The Keeper may want to use some interesting scenery in scenes set in London, to give the players a better sense of what life is like there. Consider using any of the following:

- **An Execrable Concert.** 18th century London's answer to the mime, these street musicians perform for pennies and won't take no for an answer. The noise they make is like caterwauling. One has a fiddle, another a viol, a third a washboard, and the fourth claps fire irons together in a kind of rhythm. The fiddler, 'Blind Ned', is the leader of the bunch, and probably the worst musician, though he does have a good line of invective against the French, whom he claims robbed him of his sight in a Seven Years War battle. They work in company with a band of dippers (**Fleeing** 8, **Filch** 7) so protagonists had best keep an eye on their money pouches.
- **Make Way There!** An NPC of interest to the protagonists (American, Jezebel, Wakes or similar) rides through a crowded street in a hackney cab. The cab driver, being London born and bred, is paying very little attention to pedestrians, being beneath his notice. The protagonists see to their horror that a small child is about to be run over; **Athletics** may be needed to save

the child. The cab hurries on without stopping, and the NPC doesn't even look back. **Stability** 1 if the child is run over; it is crushed beneath the wheels and will lose a leg.

- **Silvanus Wildblood's Paving Stones.** Possibly during a chase scene, the protagonists find themselves in a narrow alley. Pavement paving was the responsibility of the property owner and there was no standardization of materials. In this case, Master Wildblood has been particularly scant with his paving, using loose scabble and cinders as a kind of aggregate. On

a hot day the dust blows in every man's face, but on a wet one the ground is particularly boggy and slippery. Wildblood is known to the council and constabulary as a particularly fierce and obdurate man, who reacts angrily to any suggestion that his paving is no good. **Athletics** may be needed to keep upright; Wildblood has **Health** 8, **Scuffling** 10, and can't be Intimidated, though he can be **Flattered**.

- **The Swiney.** Many Londoners keep pigs, which are prone to escaping. The protagonists are confronted by a gang of snuffling pigs, one of whom



is a boar who doesn't much like the look of these preening protagonists. Athletics 8, Health 8, Scuffling 12; Hit Threshold 3; Alertness Modifier +0; Weapon -1 (bite, trample); Armour -1 vs. any (skin); Stability Loss: +0. The pigs' owner is out looking for them, and won't be happy if the protagonists have damaged 'poor John', her prize porker. The constabulary may get involved.

- **The Smoke.** London is a smoggy place at the best of times, but today it is absolutely foul. This black and greasy air leaves smuts of black dust on everything it touches; hopefully the protagonists aren't wearing their best clothes. **Athletics** or catch a very nasty cough which won't go away, penalizing **Stealth** rolls and doing -3 damage. The cough can be cured with **Medicine** and will go away in time (Keeper's discretion as to exactly when). Encounters in the smog are cloaked in mist, making it easier to **Flee** (+1) but penalizing **Shadowing** (-2).
- **Lamplighters.** This is a night-time event. The street lamps of London are lit by oil-fired lamps, filled and lit every day by independent contractors. This particular contractor has decided to supplement his income by shorting his lamp oil, selling the remainder. The result is the lamps gutter and die, at a time least convenient to the protagonists. This penalizes attempts to **Flee** (-1) and **Shadow** (-2), but is good for **Stealth** (+2). A failed Fleeing means the runner tripped over something in the dark and did himself an injury: -1 damage.
- **Contesting the Way.** A carter and a cabman are angrily debating who ought to have the right of passage, and their horses and vehicles are blocking the road. None can pass, and a crowd of angry citizens are gathering. A melee may break out at any moment. This might be an interesting time for a Jezebel or American encounter, sighted on the other side of the obstruction. If the protagonists want to get closer, they'll have to find some way past the roadblock.

PEARCE'S PROGRESS

The protagonists may try to find out what happened to Pearce.

He has not been seen since that night when he met the protagonists. He's not visited any of his old friends nor has he been seen in his usual haunts. The protagonists may try talking to Pearce's friends and associates, or go to places where Pearce can usually be found and discover what he's been up to.

Talking:

- **Core.** Several of his friends remark that Pearce seemed ill at ease these last few weeks, and some claim he was actually sick. He's been consulting a number of quack doctors, but whatever he had, it didn't seem to be responding to treatment. He may have picked up something nasty from his nocturnal escapades; he was often seen at Madame Racine's salon, which has a questionable reputation. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** Until recently, Pearce was deep in counsels with the American contingent. Nobody knew what it was about, but Pearce has many business interests in the colonies, so they may have had investments to talk about. They were often seen together at an inn in South London, in Greenwich: The Mitre. (*American Intrigues*).
- **Core.** Several sources claim Pearce visited Vauxhall Gardens frequently, in the company of one or more of Madame Racine's nieces. The Gardens are a notorious illicit meeting-place. Some sightings may happen after Pearce goes missing. (*Vauxhall Funeral*)
- **Politics.** Pearce had recently acted as go-between for the Americans, representing their interests in Parliament and attempting to sway votes in their favour. This didn't go at all well, and Pearce went from being one of the Americans' best friends to a pariah in a few short weeks.
- **Flattery, Reassurance.** Pearce's reputation with the ladies, until

recently, was at an all-time high. Despite Mary Protheroe's claim on him, Pearce has been spreading himself around the social circuit, dallying as he pleased. However two or three weeks ago it all stopped. Though he was still seen at Vauxhall Gardens, he no longer played the field.

- **Streetwise.** Most of the quacks Pearce visited were pox doctors of one kind or another. None of them have a good reputation, though they all promise miracle cures. Pearce seems to have visited nearly every quack in London, getting more desperate with each failure.

Places where Pearce can normally be found (business offices, coffee houses, social clubs):

- **Core (Business).** Pearce's financial position was rocky, but not unsalvageable. However his financial records show a lot of outgoings with no real attribution, as though he were paying bribes or owed money to dubious characters. Until recently he was corresponding with members of the American contingent, especially Wilcox, but that seems to have stopped. One of the most recent payments was to a 'Monsieur de Beaumaris', secretary to the Count of Guerchy, the current ambassador of the French King. (*American Intrigues*) Extra spend here (**Credit Rating, Politics, Flattery**) gets de Beaumaris, a languid young man hired for his political connections rather than ability, to admit that Pearce wanted to know more about the connection between d'Eon and the Americans. Since d'Eon is not beloved of the Ambassador (nor the Ambassador of d'Eon), the secretary was happy to tell Pearce that d'Eon was intriguing with the Americans, for 'some grubby financial reasons'.
- **Core (Business or Social).** Among the belongings Pearce left behind are a number of medals from Vauxhall Gardens. These tokens are normally

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used as entry passes. Pearce must have been going to Vauxhall often. (*Vauxhall Funeral*)

- **Core** (Business or Social). Among Pearce's letters are a number of notes, heavily perfumed, from Madame Racine's nieces. Most of them are innocuous, cheerful, flirtatious messages, but the more recent ones are demanding. *'You must pay your respects to Venus, my sweet.'* *'There comes a time in every man's life when he has to pay for his pleasures, my dear.'* *'We know all your sinful little secrets, my baby.'* *'When will you visit us, my jewel? We grow bored here in Venus' garden, all alone.'* **Note:** If the book *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* has not already been obtained, it could be found here among Pearce's private papers.
- **Evidence Collection, Art, Art History.** Among Pearce's possessions are some engravings produced by an anonymous printer. Though pornographic in nature (two gentlemen birching the bared buttocks of a voluptuous woman) the subject is somehow disturbing rather than arousing. This is because the artist got the woman wrong; her hands and head are out of all proportion to her body, and her smile has sharp teeth in it. Keeper's note: a protagonist who looks at the engraving too closely sees the woman turn her head towards the protagonist and leer, before pulling her bodice down to show another pair of eyes in her chest. This is over in a moment, and the picture reverts to its original subject. Stability 2.
- **Library Use, Accounting.** Pearce's financials are all a muddle, but study shows that his American investments were his most significant earners. Everything else was either worth less than Pearce paid for it, or had been lost in the Seven Years War. Two of his ships had been captured by privateers, one had sunk, and there was a lawsuit against him by a warehouse owner for unpaid fees. Pearce was keeping his head above water, but if something

were to go wrong with his American investments he'd have been ruined.

- **Medicine, The Sciences.** Pearce left behind a collection of quack remedies for sexually transmitted diseases. He seems to have dabbled with all of them, stinking ointments and noxious potions. None of them would have been prescribed by a reputable physician. Some of them were positively poisonous, or could have induced hallucinations. If Pearce wasn't a sick man before he took those drugs, he would have been afterwards. The pox doctor, if talked to (extra spend, **Flattery, Oral History, Intimidation**) says, *'Of course, the remedies I gave him could only have delayed the inevitable. When the frenzy is upon a man, what can stop it? He claimed his lesions were talking to him. Clearly he was marked by something greater than himself . . .'* The doctor is referring to a condition known (in his profession) as Buboes Dire, and claims that the disease leads to madness, bodily decay and death. However he hints at something more, though he will not say a word to those he does not know are marked by Y'golonac. (potential **Stability** 1). He does offer to sell Mrs. Phillips' Baudruches Superfines (condoms made of sheeps' gut and decorated with ribbon, which happen to be forgeries based on Mrs. Phillips' famous design) to those who do not wish to catch Buboes Dire.

Encounters in this scene can take place in:

- Pearce's house in Greenwich, an elegant new Georgian building not far from the Royal Naval Hospital. With Pearce missing, his creditors (and there are many) are camped out on his doorstep, awaiting a chance to invade and take his possessions as security against his debts.
- Pearce's favourite coffee house near the warehouses and docks, where he conducted most of his business.

- Aboard one of Pearce's ships, currently in the harbour awaiting orders. The ship is under lien by one of Pearce's creditors and cannot leave; the captain and crew grumble about unpaid wages.
- In dens of ill repute, where people of reputation go for illicit thrills.
- In the crowded offices of a pox doctor, where the shelves are full to toppling with bottles and nostrums of all kinds. The air is sharp and pungent, and the doctor is sly.

NPCs who might be encountered during this scene:

- **Captain Gantry**, a hard-bitten merchant sailor who's fallen, through drink, to working on whatever leaky tub he can find.
- **Emma Knox**, a woman of pleasure whose looks are beginning to fade. Ominous 'beauty spots' cluster on her face, indicative of the diseases that ravage her.
- **Charles Porter**, a fellow Club member who also does business in the Americas, rather more successfully than Pearce. He knows some of the American delegation personally.
- **Poll Waddle**, Bubb's cook and family servant for over twenty years, honest and hard-working but just a little deaf.
- **Rab MacNeil**, a moneylender's muscle who's been tailing Bubb for some time. Tall and sinister, but surprisingly intelligent for a hireling.
- **May Cooper**, a sprightly young woman, new to London, who Bubb met at Vauxhall. She remembers him fondly, but not his Jezebel friends, who were too overfamiliar.

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THE JEZEBELS

In this scene, the protagonists encounter the cult of Y'gonolac, that seeks to spread its influence to the New World.

The protagonists could encounter the Jezebels in the following ways: by trying to find out more about them (cf. *The Lady Fornicator*), by following up on The Inner Mysteries of Venus (various scenes), or by arousing their interest, in which case they may attack. Their base of operations in London is Madame Racine's Salon, described below.

The group can be investigated, can initiate an antagonist reaction, or can be encountered at the Salon.

Investigation:

- **Core** (following from *The Lady Fornicator*). Protagonists who ask further about the mysterious woman seen at the coffee house, perhaps

using Streetwise or similar, are told about Madame Racine's pretty nieces. They're seen at some of the most interesting parties, often found at Covent Garden, often met at Vauxhall. The nieces tend to come and go quite quickly, sometimes staying for as long as a season, other times leaving after a few summer weeks. Nobody's quite sure who Madame Racine is. There are those who swear she's Russian, or Polish, or Italian, though her name suggests French connections. She's lived in London for many years and is never seen outside her salon.

- **Core**. Madame Racine's nieces are most often seen at Vauxhall Gardens these days. They enjoy the pleasant atmosphere, though the Gardens must be chilly now that the weather has turned. (Vauxhall Funeral)
- **Core**. Pearce was last seen with some of Madame Racine's nieces, at Vauxhall. The friend who saw him

says Pearce seemed very ill, but, on questioning, claimed to be better than ever, and promised to take the acquaintance boating on the Thames the week after. (*The Dying Lover*)

- **Streetwise**. Madame Racine and her brood may be involved with some dangerous people. Some of her niece's paramours go missing and are never seen again. One turned up drowned, in the Thames, his face eaten away – presumably by rats.
- **Evidence Collection**, cf. *Pearce's Progress*. The nieces give their love notes to men all over London. If compared with the ones found at Pearce's place of business, the handwriting is identical. In fact, the writing on all the notes is the same, even though the writer must have been different each time. Stability 1
- **Languages, Traveller**. Among themselves, the nieces speak a foreign dialect. Several of their acquaintances

The Handmaids of Venus

This interpretation of Y'gonolac assumes that the Old One is a sexually transmitted disease of the body and the soul. Keepers who prefer not to use this version of the Old One should alter as necessary.

Y'gonolac has existed in the old world since time immemorial, but his cults tend to have short careers. They engage in orgiastic rituals that numb the mind and induce ecstatic, frenzied behaviour. The Bacchic cults of ancient Greece may well have been inspired by the Old One. However this was the apex of Y'gonolac's influence, and even then his priests were often persecuted. Since those times, the cults have dwindled, their influence diminished. Those who listen to the whispers in their blood, and talk with the pustules growing in their flesh, are denounced as madmen, not revered as touched by the Godhood.

They depend on encroaching urbanization and trade. Small, isolated communities are no good for transmitting infection. The Roman Empire spread their influence far and wide, but the Empire's collapse and the Dark Ages that followed reduced the following to almost nothing. For the longest while, the only extant group of worshippers was in England, where a small splinter group had been left behind by the Romans. They had carried the Godhood there and buried it deep below the earth, in a tumulus that had been raised for a barbarian chief. Since then the Godhood has been moved several times when its location was on the verge of being discovered; its most recent relocation was during the Civil War, when a troop of Parliamentarians was about to destroy it.

The current group in London follow the Bacchanal, with rites handed down to them by the priestesses of old. Madame Racine is the high priestess, who teaches her nieces how to spread the essence of Y'gonolac among their admirers. Through the lumps in Madame Racine's flesh, Y'gonolac speaks to its followers.

So far, Y'gonolac's efforts to spread further have met with mixed success. The new Empire has its uses, but the cult's progress has been consistently thwarted by war, which breaks up its groups and kills its followers. Y'gonolac has its eye on the emerging new world, hoping that re-establishing its Godhood there might avoid the strife that has prevented its spread.

Madame Racine's salon is the main bastion of the cult in London. There are two other groups in England, one in Scotland, and several more scattered across Europe, but communication between groups is difficult thanks to the constant state of diplomatic unrest. Since the Seven Years War things have been a little better, but even now it wouldn't take much to eliminate the cult. This vulnerability is why they want to relocate.

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have overheard it. Some think it Russian, others Greek. In fact it would appear to be no known language.

If provoked into an antagonist reaction, then:

- The Jezebel (with one or two of her sisters in support) meets the protagonist in a public place, to flirt with them. Clues could be obtained in the conversation; the Jezebels aren't particularly security conscious. However at an appropriate moment, a mouth with sharp teeth forms in the young woman's otherwise flawless shoulder. *'Do you like what you see?'* it whispers, and then vanishes. **Stability** 3, and the woman then attempts **Intimidation**, which can be a contested roll if the Keeper chooses. *'Perhaps, sir, you should mind your own affairs,'* she says, and walks away. From that point on, the target is at -2 on all rolls made that directly target a Jezebel (eg. combat). This effect lasts either for the remainder of the adventure (Purist) or until Confidence is restored (Pulp). If **Intimidation** is a contested roll, then the protagonist does not suffer the effect if he wins the contest.
- The protagonist is directly targeted by one or more Jezebels. They prefer to strike from ambush, and may soften a target up by getting a confederate to slip them a sedative (**Health** difficulty 4 or suffer -2 to all rolls for the remainder of this scene). The ideal therefore would be a coffee house, party, or other gathering where there are plenty of people. The Jezebels will wait until their target feels ill, and then **Shadow** them to a convenient ambush location. They strike to kill.

Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a

Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

Madame Racine's salon is an older building that must somehow have survived the Great Fire. It is a tottering Tudor dwelling on a street that was once fashionable, but has since been passed over. There is a strange, rich stink in the air, as of earth soil. One of the neighbouring properties is a gin house, and there is raucous singing and brawling at all hours.

The house is large and ramshackle. The door is guarded by Shankwell, an enormous bruiser, and his dog Hades. Shankwell is under instruction not to let anyone in who does not bear one of the nieces' notes (found in Pearce's Progress) and will start a fight if need be. He cannot be **Flattered**, **Intimidated** or **Reassured**. Bribes will not be accepted but visitors who seem very respectable (**Credit Rating**) may be asked to leave a visiting card. They won't be admitted and must await a reply, which will probably take a day or so. If Madame Racine then decides to meet with the protagonist, she will send one of her cards to the protagonist's residence. If not, she sends the protagonist's card back to them. The Keeper should decide which it is, taking into consideration the protagonists previous encounters with the Jezebels.

Shankwell

Athletics 9, Firearms 5, Health 10, Preparedness 3, Riding 5, Sanity 1, Stability 4, Scuffling 12, Sense Trouble 4, Weapons 10. Hit Threshold 4. Weapons available: Knife -1, Heavy Club +0, Pistol +0, Blunderbuss +1. A burly, dangerous man. In addition to guarding the door, Shankwell is sometimes found escorting Jezebels, as driver for their horse-and-trap.

Hades

Athletics 12, Health 8, Scuffling 10. Hit Threshold 4. Alertness Modifier +3. Weapons: Bite 0. Armour: +1 vs any (hair). Stability Loss: +0

The house is large and, in Tudor fashion, a rabbit warren of corridors and rooms, many of which have no windows and are dimly lit. It feels hot and humid indoors, no matter the weather outside. Madame Racine has sumptuous apartments on the first floor, while her nieces are in much smaller rooms on the second floor and up. The ground floor is where Shankwell has his rooms, but it is also where Madame Racine's callers are entertained, in richly decorated lounges filled with songbirds, expensive artworks, and books of lewd literature. The Inner Mysteries of Venus, if not already discovered, can be found here. The kitchens and cellars are underground. The cook is never seen by outsiders; the Jezebels call her (it?) Old Jessomy.

Old Jessomy

Athletics 8, Health 8, Scuffling 10; Hit Threshold 4; Alertness Modifier +1 (a multitude of eyes); Stealth Modifier -1 (moves with a glutinous, sucking motion); Weapon 0 (hooked extrusions). A lump of flesh that could be mistaken for a hunched woman, but with far too many eyes and arms.

The gardens at rear are small, dominated by an oak tree that must have been growing here since time immemorial. At night, colourful paper lanterns hang from its branches. There is a design laid out in mosaic in the garden that resembles a Troy Maze. These ringed labyrinths will be familiar to the protagonists; turf mazes, hedge labyrinths and the like are popular, and go back to antiquity. Many of them are intended to be walked through, sometimes as part of May games or meditative exercises. This maze, laid out in coloured tiles, seems small and simple. Madame Racine sometimes challenges guests to run it, or uses it to dispose of unwanted visitors. She can expend 3 magic per target and cause anyone standing in the garden to be transported to a high-walled hedge maze, with the oak tree at the centre. The tree now seems even larger than before, and its branches twist, though there is

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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no wind. A high-pitched giggling can be heard from the Jezebels, who now are pursuing the target through the maze. Contested rolls versus **Architecture** 8, **Art** 6, **Occult** 10 or **Theology** 10 must be made to get out of the labyrinth. **Stability** 4 for being caught in the maze. Failure in a contested roll means that the Jezebels close in, possibly getting close enough to attack (Keeper's choice). Three failures in a row mean that the victim has found his way to the centre.

There Y'gonolac awaits. At first the unfortunate may think the creature is a large tree, somehow pale-fleshed. It reaches a thick branch towards him

that resembles an arm, with a hand and fingers, but a wet orifice opens in the palm of that hand, and a thickened stalk (or tongue) protrudes from it. **Stability** 7 (2) (including the additional pool loss) and **Sanity** +3 (1) for the encounter. Immediately on seeing this entity, the victim is shocked back into the garden, lying, shivering, among the roots of the old oak tree. Some of the low-hanging branches brush the victim's face.

Madame Racine rarely shows herself to visitors. Her nieces do most of the entertaining. However she does invite favoured guests to her apartments, where they can gossip in private.

Madame is originally English, from the West Country, but adopted a foreign persona when she first became a courtesan, in the 1660s. She has lived a long life, and could live many years yet, with Y'gonolac's favour. Physically she is a massive, corpulent woman, with a pale, rouged face and oddly delicate hands. She never gets out of bed, and is incapable of doing so, but this is less to do with weight and more to do with the many buboes and pustules that encrust her flesh. They whisper to her at night. Her room is heavily perfumed, to cover the stink of her rotten body.



Madame Racine

Assess Honesty 9, Cthulhu Mythos 7, Conceal 5, Flattery 9, Intimidation 6, Health 9, Magic 10, Streetwise 3, Scuffling 10. Hit Threshold 2; Weapons 0 (touch); Armour -1 (unnatural flesh); Stability 0. Anything touched by Madame suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch. She may be able to cast other spells, as the Keeper wishes, but does know Shrivelling, Create Gate. Madame Racine and all the Jezebels communicate with each other in a strange language; it may seem like gibberish, or an unfamiliar tongue.

If questioned, Madame cheerfully admits that she knows 'poor Bubb', and wishes him 'nothing but health and long life. Very, very long life . . .' She does not know where he is.

Jezebels (who use personal names such as Marie, Theresa, Peg, Lizzie, Peonie, Clementina, Rose) can be encountered in the following locations:

- Houses of ill fame, or coffee houses and pubs with poor reputations.
- Any place in the city known to be a place of assignation (eg. Covent Garden) or where fashionable people gather.
- In back alleys and on ill-lit streets, sometimes riding in a horse-and-trap driven by Shankwell.
- In the company of the Americans, particularly Benjamin Wilcox.

MUCKRAKER

In this scene the protagonists deal with the journalist Wakes, as well as the damage to their own reputations.

In order to protect themselves, they need first to get rid of incriminating evidence. Each of them will have books, items and other things that prove their involvement with the Club. They also may face trumped-up charges from Wakes, who isn't above lying for the sake of a story. The protagonists should be allowed to discuss the nature of the evidence: it could be eyewitness reports of a Club meeting, tales spread by an ex-mistress, a broadsheet that names them as Satanists who attended Sabbath, and so on. Whatever the evidence is, it's important enough to ruin them.

The protagonists will suffer penalties to non-combat Contest rolls in each scene after *Emergency Meeting*, the penalties being equal to the number of pool points remaining in Evidence. If the protagonists want to reduce or eliminate the penalty, they need to get rid of the Evidence. As an option the Keeper can also use Evidence to increase the spend for Investigative abilities, with the proviso that Evidence should never prevent protagonists from getting clues. Make it more difficult, certainly, but never prevent.

Mechanically this can be done in one of three ways:

- On a 1 for 1 basis, spend Academic or Interpersonal ability pool points to eliminate the Evidence. For example, **Law** or **Politics** could be used to threaten to sue, or to use 'pull' to squash a story. **Theology** could be used to demonstrate how pious the protagonist is, thus scotching Satanist rumours. **Credit Rating** could be used as bribes. The points can be spent as the protagonist wishes; not all the points have to come from the same ability.
- On a 1 for 1 basis, use pool points to gather evidence against Wakes. These pool points would have to come from abilities such as **Library**

Use, Streetwise, Oral History, Evidence Collection or similar; abilities which would be no good at proving protagonist innocence, but great at proving someone else's guilt. For each point spent, a point of Evidence is negated. People won't know what to believe when the muck is flying thick and fast.

- Perform a public act so stunning that, in the Keeper's judgment, it negates 1 or more points of Evidence. Challenging an American or Frenchman to a duel and winning, performing some act of public service, or succeeding in some great scientific or political endeavour, are three examples. The protagonists may come up with others. Note that Wakes won't accept a duel challenge, and even if he did it would do no good, as Wakes is of a different social station to the protagonists. Fighting with him merely treats him like a gentleman, a status which he is not entitled to either by birth or behaviour.

As far as Wakes is concerned, he'll spend his time spreading scandalous rumours and publishing every scrap of damaging material he can get his hands on. He has the delicate task of avoiding the protagonists' attention while at the same time finding as much out as he can.

However should the protagonists corner Wakes, search his rooms (a dirty garret) or search his offices (a printer's shop in South London) they might learn some interesting information:

- **Core.** The Americans are up to something big. They paid Wakes handsomely to spread this disinformation against the Club, because they were worried that Pearce might spill what he knew about their plans to their political enemies. The protagonists and the Club were merely semi-innocent bystanders in the effort to smear Pearce. The Americans meet regularly with emissaries of the French crown, in Greenwich.
- **Streetwise.** Wakes is familiar with Madame Racine's salon. He's been

warned off from there before. They have powerful friends. Wakes knows that Pearce is in bad health, which he attributes to the salon. Pearce is only one of the men Madame Racine has ruined; Wakes knows of at least six others who, over the years, have crossed Racine's path, and vanished off the face of the earth.

- **Library Use, Evidence Collection, Occult** (searching offices). If the protagonists have not already found a copy of *The Inner Mysteries of Venus*, Wakes has one.
- **Interrogation, Intimidation.** Wakes knows that 'Mademoiselle de Beaumont' is actually the Chevalier d'Eon. He also knows that d'Eon is on bad terms with the current French ambassador, and is blackmailing the French crown, threatening to publish incriminating information about French spy activity in England unless d'Eon's demands are met. Wakes thinks the Chevalier's intrigues with the Americans are part of this same effort; by bringing them to the French, d'Eon proves the French ambassador is incompetent (since it was d'Eon, not the Ambassador, who pulled off the coup) while at the same time being paid handsomely for his efforts.

John Wakes, Muckraker.

Assess Honesty 4, Bargain 5, Conceal 2, Evidence Collection 4, Filch 4, Flattery 4, Fleeing 8, Health 5, Interrogation 3, Languages 3, Law 1, Locksmith 1, Library Use 3, Politics 6, Sense Trouble 2, Shadowing 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 6, Stability 5, Sanity 3. Weapons: -2 (fists). A tall, gangling man who dresses to ape his betters, but never quite pulls off the effect. He continually takes snuff from a small silver box.

Though Wakes is an inefficient brawler, he may decide to hire some brawny protectors, whose chief attributes are Athletics 4, Health 7, Sanity 4, Stability 6, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 2, Shadowing 4, Weapons 5; Weapon: -2 (fist, kick), -1 (knife, club).

FRENCH FANCIES

In which the protagonists further investigate the Americans' relationship with the Chevalier d'Eon.

The Chevalier, in his guise as Mademoiselle de Beaumont, is often seen in Greenwich these days. She pretends an interest in Science and attends lectures at the Royal Observatory, but her real objective is to meet clandestinely with the Americans, and Benjamin Wilcox in particular, in Greenwich. They often meet at an inn called The Mitre, not far from St Alfege, a newly built Hawksmoor church. The inn is a rough-and-ready place, frequented by townsmen and sailors alike. It's just rough enough for new faces to be anonymous, while not being too dangerous a meeting place. When the conspirators don't meet at the inn, they can sometimes be found in the church graveyard.

D'Eon is playing a duplicitous game. He isn't on good terms with the French crown right now; plans to invade England, which d'Eon was meant to be obtaining information for, came to nothing. However d'Eon isn't ready to retire just yet, at least not as a man. He wants his de Beaumont persona to be recognized formally by the French crown, something which Louis XVI is reluctant to do. The Chevalier has threatened to publish secret correspondence, hoping to embarrass Louis into doing d'Eon's bidding. However the Americans have presented d'Eon with another option: give Louis a grand military coup, and go back to France a hero.

The American intrigues are simple treachery. The Americans think war is coming, and have promised the French their allegiance if the French will give them military backing. They claim to have agents in all the American colonies and also in several Caribbean outposts, among them Bermuda. In

effect, the conspirators will be giving the French favoured trading status with their own colonies and handing over the Caribbean colonies to the French crown direct. However d'Eon doubts that the Virginians have the popular backing that they claim to have. To commit to a war with England, the French would have to be absolutely sure of their American allies, and d'Eon is demanding proofs. The Americans claim they have letters and documents showing that their allies are in positions of power within the colonies, and thus are able to do as the Americans claim. Hence the secret meetings, for while the Americans don't mind making promises, they won't let the documents out of their sight.

To obtain clues the protagonists will either have to confront d'Eon directly (a risky prospect) or conduct covert surveillance of his meetings with the Americans.

Covert Surveillance:

- **Core.** Mademoiselle de Beaumont pretends interest in the Royal Observatory, but is often seen in company with the Virginians. The Americans bring her documents – love letters? – which she studies with great interest. Benjamin Wilcox is often seen in her company.
- **Streetwise,** possibly **Filch 4.** The protagonists get a look at one of the documents. It's in some kind of code, clearly not a love letter. Though the code is indecipherable, the way the document is worded strongly suggests a list of some kind. Names, perhaps, or supplies. Perhaps to do with military defences?
- **Cryptography, History.** Only to be gained in conjunction with the above **Streetwise.** The code is based on the Caesar cipher, one of the oldest covert communication techniques. It is a list of men who pledge their allegiance to the French crown, in exchange for military

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help in overthrowing English rule in their colonies. Many important men in several Caribbean colonies are implicated.

Approaching d'Eon directly risks his 'taking offence' on behalf of Mademoiselle de Beaumont. If he chooses, he may challenge a protagonist to a duel, claiming that the protagonist besmirched de Beaumont's honour. He's only likely to do this if the protagonists become offensive, or if they learn too much. Alternatively one of the Americans may do the same, on the same pretext.

The direct approach:

- **Core.** Mademoiselle de Beaumont admits to admiring the Americans, especially Wilcox, whose achievements in the Sciences are well known. She has met with them several times; is that a crime? She takes offence at any suggestion that their acquaintance is improper.
- **Streetwise**, possibly **Stealth 4**. The conspirators are overheard talking about taking ship to Bermuda, 'the next stage', while de Beaumont mentions a number of warships and soldiers that could be made available, if the colony's fortresses were silenced.
- **Assess Honesty**, possibly **Sense Trouble 4**. Mademoiselle de Beaumont may be more than she seems. The protagonist won't be able to put his finger on it, but something seems not quite right.

Chevalier Charles-Genevieve-Louis-Auguste-Andre-Timothee d'Eon, aka Mademoiselle Lia de Beaumont, French spy.

Art History 8, Assess Honesty 6, Athletics 8, Bargain 8, Conceal 8, Cryptography 4, Disguise 10, Evidence Collection 5, Firearms 9, Flattery 8, Health 9, Interrogation 5, Intimidation 5, Languages 3, Locksmith 2, Riding 10, Sanity 8, Stability 6, Scuffling

8, Sense Trouble 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5, Weapons 14; Hit Threshold 4; Weapons: 0 (rapier), +1 (cavalry sabre), 0 (light pistol).

Though d'Eon has little backing from the French Ambassador, his shadier contacts in London can supply him with brainless brawn, when needed. These footpads have Athletics 5, Health 7, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 1, Shadowing 6, Weapons 5; Weapon: -2 (fist, kick), -1 (knife, club).

AMERICAN INTRIGUES

By this point the protagonists will be aware that the Americans are up to no good, and may even be planning to betray England's colonies to France in exchange for backing in a treasonous rebellion against the Crown.

Protagonists with **Duty**, **Arrogance**, **Adventure** or **Revenge** drives may be especially appalled by this. The Americans are betraying the Empire to its enemies, the hated French (**Arrogance**, **Revenge**), and depriving the Crown, and honest Englishmen, of the chance to explore the last great frontier (**Duty**, **Adventure**). Protagonists who have seen the Americans in close conversation with Jezebels, or who suspect a connection between Pearce's disappearance and their schemes, may be more worried that truly diabolic entities seek to infect the Empire, spreading throughout the colonies.

This scene can begin at any point after the protagonists connect all those dots. By this stage the Americans have done all they can to persuade d'Eon of their bona fides, and now need to get back to the Americas to tell their co-conspirators what transpired. In addition, Wilcox and several of his followers have been entranced by the Jezebels, and will transport some of those cultists back to the new world, where they can spread their infection further.

Ideally this scene will begin with the protagonists attempting to confront the Americans. As an alternative it could begin with the protagonists learning of the Americans' departure. This scene may happen before or after Vauxhall Funeral, with the proviso that if it happens before then Wilcox's role in Vauxhall Funeral will have to be altered or abandoned.

Sequence of events:

Either the protagonists confront the Americans direct or bring their information to the attention of the authorities. Note: the latter is only possible if all protagonists have disposed of the Evidence against them. The authorities will not listen to anyone accused of Satanism or worse.

Alternatively the protagonists do not confront the Americans. If that happens then they read of Wilcox's departure in the broadsheets, possibly published by Wakes. The news reports confirm that 'two fair ladies' embarked with Wilcox and his supporters, presumably emigrants. The ship's destination is Bermuda. This modifies the delivery of the Core clue, but the information is the same.

- **Core.** Wilcox has enough friends in Parliament to (temporarily) defy his critics. Thus he avoids arrest, but slips away and is last seen on a Bermuda-bound schooner, the *Pembroke*. Troubling rumours indicate that among the ship's company were two women – most likely Jezebels, members of the Y'golonac cult. (*Prospero's Cell*)
- **Traveller.** Once in Bermuda, Wilcox and his people would be among friends. The colony is broadly sympathetic to the American cause, and the Royal Navy has a weak presence there. Even if the Governor were to arrest Wilcox, it's likely he'd be helped to get away, probably fleeing to Virginia.

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- **Occult, The Sciences.** Letting the Jezebels loose in the colonies would be like introducing an infectious agent. The health of the body politic would be at risk; the disease would spread throughout the colonies. Even if the Americans' rebellion failed, the cult plot could still imperil the Empire.
- **The Sciences, possibly Piloting** difficulty 4. The Americans have a head start, and their ship is a fast one. However it might be possible either to catch them en route or to get them in Bermuda, provided the pursuit starts now.

VAUXHALL FUNERAL

This scene takes place in the scenic pleasure gardens of Vauxhall.

Vauxhall is a private enterprise that grew out of an urbanite desire to get away from city bustle and enjoy a quiet few hours in scenic gardens. This is an age when access to parkland was limited; the Royal Parks, the only other substantial open space in London, became public access in the Victorian era. The other parks (some very small) in London were private. Those without access to such places had to buy their time in arcadia.

In period Vauxhall is open each evening; semi-darkness is part of the attraction. Access is by token, which can be bought at the front entrance. Once inside, the visitor is greeted by an overwhelming array of souvenir sellers, food stalls, magicians, jugglers and performers. The grand rococo Turkish Tent is the largest and most striking structure; a creation of clapboard and painted canvas, designed in a vaguely Arabian Nights style. That is where most of the entertainers are, and the musicians. Often, late in the evening, there are fireworks, and the area close to the entrance is ablaze with gas lighting. However the Gardens are best known for their Walks, the dark tree-lined avenues where young lovers can go

to entertain themselves. The Gardens have a well-deserved reputation for debauchery. People come here to find companionship, or bring companions with them.

Protagonists may come here looking for Pearce or to find out more about Wilcox and the Jezebels. The Keeper should play this scene as an extended chase sequence or flirtation. There are many people here who have come looking for a fleeting romantic encounter. The protagonists may stumble over young couples while chasing someone else, or mistake a Jezebel for a flirtatious woman. **Shadowing, Fleeing, Flattery** and **Disguise** will be important skills.

- **Core.** Garden vendors, food stall merchants and entertainers all recall seeing someone matching Pearce's description in the Gardens that very night, arm-in-arm with a pretty young companion. 'He looked sick as a dog, to be frank, which surprised me. I'd have been happy to be a-wandering in the dark with the likes of her!' (The Dying Lover)
- **Reassurance, Oral History.** Several visitors to the Garden recall seeing Pearce going in the direction of the Dark Walks, beyond the well-lit entrance. They also saw someone matching Wilcox's description hanging around the Turkish Tent, but he's not there now.
- **Outdoorsman, possibly Shadowing** 4. This allows the protagonists to follow Pearce's trail through the Dark Walks. See also the encounters below.

The Dark Walks are paths laid out through the Gardens, surrounded on all sides by trees. Sometimes they lead to small open spaces where there are benches and statues; other times they meander past water features or small ponds. They're intended to be interesting strolls where people can enjoy privacy. They are dimly lit, with the occasional paper lantern, but the moon and stars provide the main illumination.

Potential encounters:

- **Wandering lovers.** A besotted couple walk arm in arm. They go masked, so it's impossible to see their faces. They have eyes only for each other. **Fleeing** 6, if it becomes relevant.
- **Crying girl.** A young woman has been deserted by her lover, and weeps bitterly beside a fountain. If accosted, she **Flees** 4.
- **Drunken lads.** Two merry boys wander the paths, swords drawn, clearly drunk out of their minds. They're looking for trouble, but can be talked down or Intimidated. **Weapons** 3, **Health** 5; **Weapon:** 0 (rapier) if it becomes an issue.
- **Sense Trouble.** The protagonists find themselves in a deserted clearing. Something has happened here. A paper lamp has been smashed and lies smouldering on the ground, the bench has been overturned, and there are drops of blood on the grass.
- **Naked.** A young person suddenly springs out of the undergrowth and runs across the path, before vanishing on the other side. Though stripped naked, it's impossible to tell, in that quick glimpse, whether it was a youth or a girl. Whoever it was, they can't be found.
- **Jezebel.** Having sensed the protagonists' approach, the Jezebels try an assault, perhaps luring them in by pretending to be a lost girl before attacking. This may involve more than one Jezebel.
- **Wilcox.** The American is seen dallying with a woman, the scene lit by a paper lantern hanging overhead. The woman turns her head towards the protagonist; a misshapen lump of flesh suddenly rises out of her neck, hisses through fanged teeth, and vanishes as quickly as it arose. Wilcox and the woman both **Flee** if approached.
- **Statue.** In a moonlit clearing, a young voice whispers love poetry to a statue of Venus, standing in the centre of the space. Whoever is speaking cannot

be seen. Those who look closer see that ‘Venus’ is actually a headless, misshapen creature, and the youthful, high-pitched voice is coming from the thing’s hands. **Stability 5**, as a cloud obscures the moon, throwing the scene into darkness [if the protagonists carry light, it should gutter for a moment]. When the protagonists can see again, the statue is gone. Two empty bottles of wine and scattered parchment, on which someone scrawled indifferent verse, lie in the centre of the clearing.

- **Pearce.** The protagonists spot Pearce on his own, stumbling off the path, perhaps drunk. He doesn’t respond to anyone who calls to him. He mumbles incoherently and staggers away. This can either become a chase at **Fleeing 4**, an **Outdoorsman** spend, or the Keeper can allow them to catch up to Pearce without incident. See further *The Dying Lover*.

THE DYING LOVER

In this Core scene the protagonists finally catch up with Pearce.

Ideally this happens in the dark at Vauxhall. If the protagonists don’t go that route then the Keeper will need to rearrange the setting. In theory it could also happen at Madame Racine’s salon, or in some hiding place Pearce has run to. If the latter, then Pearce will have to summon the protagonists to his sickbed, probably by sending a message via a courier or servant.

When found, Pearce is in a terrible state. Whatever sickness he contracted is causing his great pain, difficulty in movement, and trouble breathing. His eyes are red and rheumy. His body, (if his clothes are taken off), is covered in weeping sores and buboes.

He says he was forced to do it. What ‘it’ was is left unsaid. *‘They wouldn’t stop. They kept at me and at me until I had to. They want Wilcox next, and after him the world and all its pleasures ...’*

Clues to be had from Pearce:

- **Core.** Pearce’s death is imminent. His body is wracked with disease. Small sores and lesions have opened up. His ramblings indicate that whoever did this to him now wants the Americans, and through them intends to spread to the new world. The colonies could be at risk!
- **Medicine, The Sciences.** No one disease is killing Pearce. He is suffering from several plagues, most of them familiar pox-doctors’ laments: shankers, cordee, buboes, dore, syphilis, the itch. What makes them odd is their sudden cumulative spread, as if his whole body was under assault. Several of the lesions resemble no known disease, and the fully formed teeth that apparently grow in these cavities gives pause for thought. **Stability 3**.
- **Occult, Cthulhu Mythos.** Some of the drawings in *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* take on new meaning when viewed in the context of Wilcox’s afflictions. These strange revelations suggest that Pearce is no longer master of his own body; that something else is trying to break through, using his sickened flesh as a kind of mould, in which it shall shape a form of its own. A Mythos user would know the entity’s name: Y’gonolac. **Stability 2**.

Once the scene reaches its conclusion, Pearce begins reciting love poetry. Something – several somethings – join his voice, in chorus. The lesions all over his body have opened up and are chanting with Pearce, his voice getting more and more shrill, until finally a gush of bloody phlegm chokes him, and he dies. The other voices slowly fade away into silence. **Stability 5**.

FULL FATHOM FIVE

This optional antagonist reaction scene occurs while the protagonists are en route to Bermuda.

If the protagonists were able to destroy or severely disrupt the Y’gonolac cult in London, then this scene will not take place. The cult needs a certain amount of power to pull off this stunt, and without the cult’s backing the two aboard the Americans’ ship won’t be able to do it.

The protagonists’ ship, the *Falkirk*, is three weeks from landfall, by the captain’s calculations. They have a following wind and the weather has been good, almost since the ship left port.

Keeper’s note: if the protagonists were able to convince the authorities that the Americans were up to no good, then the *Falkirk* is an eight-gun sloop with a small compliment of marines, ostensibly sent to assist in the collection of sugar duties but in fact sent to apprehend the traitors. If not, then the *Falkirk* is an ordinary trading vessel on its way to the colonies with a hold full of manufactures.

The weather picks up dramatically. Dark clouds gather and the wind rises. The captain orders all passengers below decks, out of the way of the crew. Unless the protagonists have sailing skills, they shouldn’t be topside when the attack begins.

The first indication is the irregular, thudding impact of objects on deck. Larger than hailstones, the rain might be mistaken for fish at first, but these creatures have legs, or at least small, misshapen limbs that resemble legs. Many of them die on impact but many more do not, and those which don’t swarm over the crew. The tiny creatures are pale-fleshed with long, wriggling tails, leave a gelid slime as they move,

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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and are eyeless. They have mouths larger than their bodies would seem to support, filled with needle-sharp fangs.

Stability 3 for witnessing the unnatural rainfall. The creatures move and attack in much the same way as rat swarms, and there are scores of them. The crew won't be able to defeat the creatures, unaided. However the things are vulnerable to fire, so attackers with

sufficient combustibles can beat them off. There is a risk that the fire will also engulf the ship, of course. The Keeper should call for **Athletics** 3 tests each time fire is used, and failure means the ship catches fire. A further **Athletics** 3 will be needed to put out each fire. Each round a fire burns without being put out lets another fire start, so in round 2 there are 2 fires, in round 3 there could be 4 fires, and so on. 10 fires means the

ship cannot be saved, and at that point the protagonists have 3 rounds to get aboard a lifeboat before flames get to the gunpowder store (even a cargo ship will have some powder) and blows the Falkirk to glory.

If the protagonists don't fancy their chances in combat, they can always try to take to the lifeboats, which means first getting the boat overboard (**Athletics** 6, possibly an assisted roll), then boarding it in high seas without capsizing the boat (**Athletics** or **Fleeing** 4, with two failed rolls indicating a capsized lifeboat). Anyone who gets flung overboard needs to start making **Athletics** 4 to swim, and may need to be rescued, bearing in mind that a fully clothed human can't swim as fast as a boat can move.

Y'gononac's Swarm

Athletics 5, Health 3/5/7/9, Scuffling 3/5/7/9; Hit Threshold 3; Weapon: -1 (bite); Armour: none, but vulnerable to fire, which does +2 damage to them; Stability: 0

The swarms cap at 40 individual creatures, but there is more than one swarm on board. The protagonists will need to defeat at least two swarms to save the ship. The Keeper may opt to increase the difficulty (number or size of swarms) if the protagonists have too easy a fight (eg. if they can get marines to help them). If not helped, the crew will be overwhelmed in five combat rounds, at which point the ship will be hit by a wave that proves too much for it. The Falkirk heels over, doesn't right itself, and starts taking on water. At that point the lifeboats are the only option. Two rounds after that, the Falkirk capsizes, and the weight of the guns (or cargo), together with the water intake, is enough to sink her. Anyone who isn't aboard a lifeboat at that point goes down with the ship.

Protagonists who take to the lifeboats can either **Pilot** the boat to shore,



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(possibly with **Health** or **Athletics** checks to represent exposure and sunstroke, which may have modified difficulty if they don't have water or food aboard; otherwise difficulty 4), or if the Keeper chooses, they can be rescued a day or two after the sinking of the Falkirk and be taken to Bermuda.

Royal Naval Marines

Athletics 6, Firearms 6, Fleeing 3, Health 7, Preparedness 1, Sanity 8, Stability 7, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 8; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: 0 (light firearm), +1 (cutlass). Well disciplined and ready for action.

PROSPERO'S CELL

The protagonists arrive at the port of St. Georges, Bermuda, the chief township of the colony. See also *A Sign of the Times*, page 28.

Most of the rest of the 25 square mile island is devoted to agriculture, and its importance to the Empire is largely positional; it's the last potential landfall for any ship making its way from the colonies to Europe, and the first any ship inbound from Europe can get to, making it a useful resupply point.

If the protagonists did not come to Bermuda with support of their own, then they find that the Governor, George James Bruere, is sympathetic but unwilling to offer help. He hasn't got soldiers to lend them, and even if he had, he knows that local sympathy is with the Americans. If the protagonists do have support then Bruere gives his blessing but little practical aid, except for lending them a local pilot to help their ship navigate the nearby reefs.

The protagonists soon discover that the Americans have not arrived. In fact their ship is at anchor some distance from the port, and is under quarantine, as an infectious disease has broken out. Nobody is allowed to board the Pembroke without the Governor's

express permission, and he won't allow the protagonists aboard unless they have medical expertise.

Protagonists who make a real nuisance of themselves may be threatened with arrest. The Governor may dispatch some of the local militia to put them under lock and key. He would then wait for a Navy ship to come in, put the protagonists on board, and send them back to England. Of course, it could be weeks before a Navy ship arrives.

Potential clues:

- **Core.** The Pembroke is at anchor a short distance from the guns of fort St. Catherine. It can easily be seen from shore. In theory, the protagonists could slip aboard under cover of darkness. (*The Hell Ship*).
- **Core.** Rumours persist that someone (possibly more than one person) came ashore from the Pembroke shortly after it arrived. If anyone's harbouring the Americans, it's probably one of the local merchants, as they're sympathetic to the American cause.
- **Medicine, Oral History.** Whatever struck the crew of the Pembroke down, it must be serious. The pilot who met the sloop as it was on its way into the harbour claimed that half the crew were sick, with fever and noxious boils.
- **Traveller, Medicine.** Someone familiar with the island's history could make a shortlist of the people most likely to be harbouring the Americans, with John Gibbons, an importer of food, at the top of that list. Alternatively someone with medical skills might notice that one household in particular, belonging to the merchant John Gibbons, is ordering a significant amount of medical supplies, as though someone in the household had similar symptoms to Bubb Pearce in London.

Bermudian Militia

Athletics 3, Firearms 4, Fleeing 5, Health 6, Piloting 5, Sanity 7, Stability 6, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 5, Weapons 4; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons 0 (light firearm), -1 (club), +1 (cutlass). Low morale and low pay makes Jack an unwilling soldier.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

This scene describes the Island, and what happens if the protagonists try to find out what is going on in St George's. It includes potential antagonist reaction.

The colony was founded accidentally, by shipwrecked colonists on their way to Virginia, and was initially attractive to get-rich-quick investors who believed that ambergris, valuable to the perfume trade, could be found here in quantity. In period, the colony is small, sleepy, and only remarkable for the sheer number of fortifications that surround it, built to defend the resupply point from enemy attack. Most of the houses in St. Georges are made of wood or stone and the streets are cobbled, which makes the town seem a miniature London, only with far fewer amenities. The Governor has only a very small militia and no ships at his disposal. Only when the Royal Navy has a ship in port does the colony have anything like a military presence, which makes it perfect for the Americans' purposes. They've been intriguing with the prominent people of the colony for some time now, hoping to seize the colony's supplies (particularly gunpowder and shot) as soon as the rebellion starts. The merchants of the colony know their trade depends more on the Americans than the Empire, so they're willing participants in the venture.

St George's is very small, no larger than a modest English market town. It has its own church, St Peter's, a stone-built Parliament house, and the most important merchants all have their

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homes there. The island is devoted largely to agriculture and fishing; some of the more prominent families have 'country' homes and 'town' houses, and travel from one to the other as the seasons change. Primary transport is by boat, and scores of small craft can be seen on the water each day.

Economically the island relies to some extent on agriculture, fishing, and salt gathering, but its main business for many years has been ship building and privateering. Privateers are often pirates one day and loyal citizens the next, and as the trade is usually very profitable, Bermudians have developed a flexible attitude to high seas lawbreaking. Another habit the locals are known for is wrecking; luring ships onto the reefs with false lights, then murdering anyone who survives and stripping the ship down to the waterline. A wrecked or reef-caught ship, even if not lured there deliberately, is a windfall, as though everyone living nearby just won the lottery, and while survivors can expect a sympathetic welcome so long as it wasn't wreckers who lured them in to begin with, their possessions and everything on board the ship is fair game. Theoretically the Governor is meant to take charge as a representative of the Crown. As soon as he learns about a wreck he'll turn up with militia to 'protect people's belongings' and claim his own share of the booty, so the first few hours or days of a wreck are the busiest, as everyone else tries to strip the ship before the Governor gets there.

Demographically the island is majority black. These slaves tend to be more highly skilled than elsewhere in the colonies, since agriculture here doesn't need a huge amount of manpower. Instead, they are skilled artisans, carpenters, builders, blacksmiths, and also sailors. Historical note: later, when Bermudian privateers start attacking American ships during the War of Independence (business is business, after all), the ship

Regulator, when captured by American forces, was found to be almost entirely crewed by slaves. When offered their freedom, the Regulator's crew refused it, instead capturing the American vessel Duxbury, which they took back to Bermuda as a prize. Protagonists unused to living somewhere where they do not represent the majority view will be further shocked to find how independent – relatively speaking – these slaves are. Though they cannot openly defy the protagonists, anyone who annoys them will have a very rough time of it, since the slaves control almost every aspect of public life, by virtue of being the ones who do all the work.

The people swear allegiance to the crown fervently in public, but in private they have other views. The Americas are their primary trade market, and for many years Bermudians have been emigrating to the significant colonial port towns. There isn't a township on the east coast without a link to at least one Bermudian family. Consequently Bermudians favour an American perspective on politics, but business is business, and the island is divided as to whether to back the growing American consensus for self-determination, or to remain loyal to the Crown.

The protagonists will need to be circumspect. Forceful action will only upset people and probably provoke an antagonistic response. The most likely reaction if the protagonists aren't careful is an assault.

Tavern Drunks or similar unruly persons

Athletics 6, Firearms 1, Fleeing 5, Health 7, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 6, Weapons 3; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock, bottle), -1 (club), 0 (light firearm).

Wreckers, sneak thieves and plausible rogues

Athletics 4, Firearms 3, Fleeing 5, Flattery 3, Filch 4, Health 7, Piloting 5, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 7, Stealth 4, Shadowing 2, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 2; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock), -1 (club), +1 (cutlass), 0 (light firearm).

1 point Clues which can be had include:

- **History, Traveller:** The Americans are favourably thought of here, and American views generally get a warm reception. Though everyone is careful not to speak out openly against the Crown, nobody thinks the current tax regime is any good and they all warn the protagonists that unless something is done there will be trouble.
- **Streetwise, Oral History:** Some are looking at the Pembroke with covetous eyes. A ship like that probably has all kinds of valuables aboard. Were it not for the plague, and the Pembroke's anchorage directly under the fort's guns, wreckers would have been aboard long ago. However if the protagonists need someone to help them get aboard, talking to wreckers is the way to do it.
- **Credit Rating, Politics, Assess Honesty:** Nobody admits to having seen Wilcox or any of the American contingent. However the whole island knows him by reputation and it's an open secret that he's hiding somewhere amongst the merchants of St. George's. Nobody wants to be the one to let slip his location, as it will hurt their local reputation, so a certain subtlety is called for. However if approached in the right way, a prominent merchant, local politico or similar might be persuaded to tell what he knows.

THE HELL SHIP

This optional scene takes place aboard the quarantined schooner *Pembroke*.

The ship is anchored off of a strong fortification, with guns trained on it. Anyone sneaking out to it will need to make **Stealth** checks (muffled oarlocks) at difficulty 4. Failure means that the attempt was spotted from shore, but it will take a while before any organized response can be made. The colonists won't waste the fort's cannon and shot on anything less than an invasion, so the most likely reaction is a ship coming out from shore to intercept the blockade runners. Treat the crew of that intercepting vessel as 12 Militia (*Prospero's Cell* page 28), and the sloop they are in has a small-bore swivel-gun (damage point-blank +3, Close +2, Near -2, no Long) which can only be used with a **Firearms** check, failure indicating that the fuse blew out before the gun could go off. They will want to arrest rather than kill, but will resort to violence if need be. If this ship is somehow sunk or its crew injured (treat the ship as having 20 **Health** and can only be injured with cannon or similar) the Island will be in an uproar, making the protagonists' job much more difficult.

The *Pembroke* won't respond. Nobody on board is capable.

The ship's crew are below decks, for the most part. Some of the American passengers are lying on deck, trying to get some relief from the heat and smell. All of them are sick, some worse than others, and the symptoms are all very similar to Bubb Pearce. Terrible swellings and growths, fever and delirium predominate, and most of the ship's complement are out of action. Some of the Americans and the ship's officers are sick but not disabled. They warn people off the *Pembroke* and make half-hearted efforts to drive the curious away, but they haven't the strength to organize a resistance. The worst that may happen is a stray gunshot.

Protagonists who inspect the sick see the same odd lesions that Pearce had. The unnatural teeth champ on inquisitive fingers, and the sweat is rank, foul and almost acidic. **Stability** 3.

Clues:

- **Core.** Among the papers in the Americans' cabins is a list (in code) of names, probably co-conspirators. **Cryptography** or **History** will be needed to decipher the list. John Gibbons, a merchant, is the main conspirator in Bermuda, and probably the one harbouring Benjamin Wilcox now.
- **Occult, Cthulhu Mythos.** The Jezebels on board had to leave some of their belongings behind when they fled ashore. In addition to a copy of *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* and an impressive collection of pornography, they also left several unlabeled bottles, possibly containing medication. **Pharmacy** or **Medicine** on the bottles show the contents to be much like the remedies pox doctors use. This could be a cure for the disease, but if so, there isn't nearly enough to treat everyone on the *Pembroke*.
- **The Sciences, Medicine.** The disease is spread by contact with the Jezebels. Clearly they infected the ship's crew during the journey to Bermuda. Given that Bermuda is a significant port, if the pestilence spreads here it could infect thousands of people, spreading throughout the New World. It would be the black death all over again, a miasma spreading throughout the shipping lanes. However there's enough information now to diagnose the disease and as yet no proof that Bermuda has been irreparably contaminated. Keeper's note: anyone using **The Sciences** at this point may be tempted to get a look at the microbes under a microscope or similar, a technology that's over a century old at this point. Those who do get a close look at the infection

that is Y'gononac, minute organisms that somehow resemble the creatures from *Full Fathom Five*. **Stability** 3, **Sanity** 1

In theory, the protagonists could use the information gained here to stop the infection from spreading in Bermuda. Only a very few people have been infected on the island so far. Though there isn't enough medication to save the crew of the *Pembroke*, there's enough to treat the afflicted on the island. There aren't sufficient supplies on the island to duplicate the substance, so no more can be manufactured.

As the protagonists attempt to leave two (or more) of the sick struggle to their feet. Though they seem mobile, they are not in control of their actions; their heads loll to one side, as though their necks are broken. They stretch their hands out towards the protagonists. The lesions in their palms open wide, revealing the teeth inside.

Servitors of Y'gononac

Athletics 7, Health 7, Scuffling 10; Hit Threshold 3; Weapon: -2 (fist), and on a successful hit the mouths latch on, doing a further -1 damage per round unless the target beats the Servitor in an Athletics contest; **Stability** 1. These creatures cannot last long (only 10 rounds), and require the death of their host body before they can act.

When the protagonists finally leave the *Pembroke*, they do so realizing that unless they act now, what happened to the ship's crew could happen all over the New World. The colonies would be poisoned by the disease, Y'gononac. This insight could shake their self-confidence; **Stability** 4, **Sanity** 1.



THE TEMPEST

In this final scene the protagonists trace Benjamin Wilcox to his hiding place and confront him and the Jezebels.

Wilcox is hiding in the home of John Gibbons, a respected merchant who lives on Duke of Kent Street, some distance from the centre of the town. His stone house is one of the grander on this quiet street, and he, his wife, two daughters and two servants live there.

The house is a one story structure surrounded by a wall. Within the walls are the main house and a second, separate servant's dwelling, with

an herb garden and water tank in between the two. None of the servants are armed; of the inhabitants of the house, only John Gibbons might put up a struggle (Athletics 3, Firearms 3, Health 5, Scuffling 6, Weapons 6; Weapon damage: 0, light firearm, rapier). He is also the only person infected by the Jezebel's disease, so far.

Benjamin Wilcox is ill, and can only move with difficulty. The Jezebels, if they had brought some of their medicines with them, would be treating him themselves, but the drugs were left behind in the rush to get ashore. This may yet frustrate their plans, since ideally they and Wilcox would travel to a much larger port in America

where the infection could then spread over a wider area. However their own obsessions led them to infect the crew of the *Pembroke*; not having travelled so far before, they did not realize how difficult it would be to keep their urges in check throughout the voyage.

Wilcox's bloated body lies in the second bedroom. Gibbons has been doing his best to keep his guest alive, but he hasn't dared call in a physician. Only the Jezebels have treated him.

If the protagonists openly confront Wilcox, Gibbons yells for his neighbours, hoping to start a riot. He claims the protagonists are murdering Wilcox in his sickbed. Unless the

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protagonists are careful or have powerful support on their side, they could get caught up in a brawl. **Stealth** or overwhelming force are the best two options.

In any conflict, Wilcox stays out of the fight unless the Jezebels are both defeated. If that happens, Y'gonolac takes over Wilcox's body for one last assault. This will probably kill Wilcox, unless the fight ends very quickly. Encountering Wilcox in his Y'gonolac form is a Sanity-shattering experience; **Stability** 5 (2) (including the additional pool loss) and **Sanity** +2 (1) for the encounter.

If the Jezebels are not prevented, they will eventually try to sneak aboard a ship bound for America, preferably with Wilcox, but if they have to they will leave him behind. Once there, they begin establishing a cult of their own.

If the Jezebels and Wilcox are defeated, the sick can be cured with the medicines taken from the Pembroke. Wilcox and Gibbons are the only two the protagonists have to treat; Wilcox's life can be saved, if the protagonists first incapacitate him and then cure him with the drugs.

Innocent Bystanders

(Gibbons' wife and family, other civilians): Athletics 3, Fleeing 6, Health 4, Sanity 5, Stability 6.

Rioters

Athletics 5, Firearms 2, Fleeing 4, Health 6, Sanity 6, Stability 6,

Scuffling 7, Weapons 3; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock), -1 (club), 0 (light firearm)

Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

Wilcox (Y'gonolac form)

Athletics 6, Fleeing 6, Health 9, Scuffling 14; Hit Threshold 3; Armour -1 (unnatural flesh); Weapons: -1 (fist), and on a successful hit the mouths latch on, doing a further -1 damage per round unless the target beats Wilcox in an Athletics contest.

If obviously overmatched, Wilcox will try to escape, but otherwise makes a fight of it. If he escapes, Y'gonolac will try to force him to board a ship to America as quickly as possible. In this form, the creature can be 'damaged' by the drugs taken from the Pembroke; treat any attack as **Scuffling**, but with +2 damage. The sudden application cures Wilcox's affliction, if his Y'gonolac form is reduced to -6 **Health** with the drugs.

Any rioters will run away (failed **Stability**) the minute Wilcox/Y'gonolac makes an appearance.

EPILOGUE

Should the protagonists prevail, then Y'gonolac's attempt at poisoning the New World is prevented. Meanwhile the events in Bermuda become a historical footnote, remembered by few. It happened far from London, and the great and the good have little interest in anything that happens in such a backwater. The powers that be, if they remember the event at all, assume that a political crisis has been averted and that the rebellion has failed before it could start.

This is not true. Soon after the events of the scenario the rebellion starts in earnest, and this time there is no stopping it. After a bloody conflict, the American colonies gain their freedom. Meanwhile the trade routes carry people back and forth each year, bringing new goods and wealth, and also spreading diseases. The protagonists may have salvaged their reputations and fought the good fight. Yet their contribution shall go unremarked, and thanks to Wakes and tattling rumour, in the years to come they will be remembered less for what they did than for what they were not: the blaspheming Hell Fire Club, that worshipped devils and put all London to shame.

Some victories are their own reward.



PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The players may wish to create their own characters, and should be allowed to do so with the proviso that they be provided with a reasonable spread of the new skills. The following skills do not exist and are not replaced by another skill: **Archaeology**, **Cop Talk**, **Driving**.

Psychoanalysis, strictly speaking, does and does not exist. The skill is too useful (for regaining **Stability** mid-session) to drop altogether. Though it wouldn't be known under that name, which belongs to the twentieth century, it does exist in-game. The pre-generated protagonists have low **Psychoanalysis** scores; the Keeper may want to allow NPCs to use **Psychoanalysis** on protagonists, in certain circumstances.

Anthropology, **Biology**, **Forensics** and **Geology** do not exist. Their function is taken over by a new Academic ability, **The Sciences**.

Playtest Notes

Some players resisted the urge to globetrot. Players who wonder why they should go to Bermuda should be reminded that their goal is to save the world – as they know it. To modern eyes, a desire to save the Empire from American conspirators may seem odd, bearing in mind the Revolution a few years later. The point is, none of the protagonists know about the Revolution. As far as they're concerned, the colonies are and will always remain colonies, and it is right and proper that they do so. Moreover some of them have the Empire as pillars of sanity, or have relatives and friends in the Americas. A threat to that part of the world affects the protagonists directly; the players need to bear this in mind.

Timing was another issue that cropped up. The players weren't sure how long they had to complete some scenes, and wondered whether their investigations might be jeopardized if they failed to complete certain objectives by a certain time. The key point for the Keeper to take away is, the action moves 'at the speed of plot.' There isn't a deadline to meet. The Keeper should bear in mind that, as stated in *American Intrigues*, the scene doesn't begin until the Keeper deems it appropriate to begin it. The Americans don't flee London until the protagonists have connected all the clues in previous scenes, and are (presumably) about to shut down the American conspiracy. A similar rule of thumb applies for the other scenes. Any deadline the players impose on themselves is entirely their doing; the Keeper should neither encourage nor discourage it.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Peter Quinell*

Drive: *Arrogance*

Occupation:² *Lawyer*

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: *1) The Law, 2) The Empire*

Academic Abilities

Accounting - 1

Law - 1

Languages - 1

Library Use - 2

Occult - 2

Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 1

Interrogation - 1

Politics - 2

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1

General Abilities

Conceal - 3

Firearms - 2

Filch - 4

Fleeing - 6

Health - 7

Preparedness - 3

Riding - 5

Shadowing - 2

Scuffling - 4

Stability - 8

Sanity - 8

Sense Trouble - 4

Weapons - 4

Stealth - 4

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁵ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁶ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁷ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁸ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁹ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

¹⁰ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Notes:

You have done quite well for yourself. You are a notable barrister, a member of Clifford's Inn, one of the Inns of Chancery in Holborn, and trust that in the fullness of time you will become a magistrate. Your Masonic contacts have helped there; indeed were it not for your Masonry you would not have much of a career, as your legal knowledge is lamentably poor. However since you know the right people and can be counted on to say the right things when necessary, your career thus far has been exemplary. You are a known 'ambidexter' – that is, you take fees from both plaintiff and defendant - and have been able to make substantial sums this way. Much of your money is spent on your younger brother, Edward, whose Naval ambitions – he currently holds a Captaincy – are incommensurate with the family purse, but you take the longer view. An Edward without position will always be a drain on your fortunes, but Rear Admiral Quinell could be quite a useful man to know. The long view is always soundest, you've found; it pays the greatest dividends.

Sources of Stability - Edward, your brother, and Emily, your wife.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Martin Pinchbeck*

Drive: *Adventure*

Occupation:² *Gamester*

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: *1) Boxing, a true test of manly skill, 2) Women, the fairest and damnably captivating sex*

Academic Abilities

Art History - 1
History - 1
Theology - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2
Bargain - 2
Credit Rating - 2
Politics - 2
Reassurance - 3
Streetwise - 1

Technical Abilities

Outdoorsman - 2

General Abilities

Athletics - 2
Firearms - 3
Health - 10
Psychoanalysis - 3
Riding - 6
Stability - 9
Sanity - 7
Scuffling - 10
Shadowing - 5
Sense Trouble - 1
Weapons - 5

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³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Notes:

Odds fish, m'boy, if there's no sport in it, there's nothing. Life is meant to be lived! As it happens you've been doing quite a bit of living. Technically, of course, you're a churchman, a curate, inasmuch as you have a parish with a fat living of several hundred a year, but you pay some of that to the vicar so he reads the sermons for you. The rest is spent on more important things, such as cards, cock-fighting, and especially boxing. You are well acquainted with the gents at John Broughton's boxing academy at Marylebone, and have been known to take a turn or two. Not during the Battles Royale, of course, since those are bare knuckle and damned dangerous, but you know the ways and means, and are a keen judge of fighters. So far your betting hasn't come to the ears of your Bishop; it could mean rather stringent economies, if you were to lose your living. Charity Manning is one of your regular Club guests; she knows almost as many of the gambling fraternity as you.

Sources of Stability - Roger Boddingley, a fellow gamester and your best friend; your mother Faith; Edgar Worthy, your vicar.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Sarah Farthing*

Drive: *In the Blood*

Occupation:² *Adventuress*

Pillars of Sanity: *1) your fighting skills, which has never failed you 2) Horses; which are just as strong and courageous as you - though you have yet to meet one you cannot tame.*

Academic Abilities

Languages - 3

Library Use - 2

Occult - 2

Traveller - 2

Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 1

Credit Rating - 2

Intimidation - 2

Streetwise - 2

Technical Abilities

General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Firearms - 6

Health - 8

Piloting - 4

Riding - 4

Stability - 8

Sanity - 6

Sense Trouble - 6

Weapons - 15

Notes:

You tell people your father's father was hanged for witchcraft, and that might even be true. In Sussex, where you were born, your family are quite notorious, but you ditched all connection with them when you came to London and changed your name. Since then you've done many things, from artist's model to highway bandit, and only two years ago you were 'Jack,' gunner on the privateer Gorgon. However some bad experiences in the colonies, and an encounter with sea-devils, made London a more attractive prospect, and you returned to petticoats and stays for a while. You now earn your way as entertainer (of a dominating sort) for men like Sir Warwick Shaw, treading him under foot like a worm. You're also on good terms with Charity Manning, one of the other regular guests of the Club, who affects a more retiring disposition than you but may be more than she seems. Your sea-devil encounters stirred something in your blood you'd rather not think too much about, but you're using your time in London to learn a little more about such things. Perhaps one day you'll return to settle the score.

Sources of Stability - Captain Richard Waddell, your former commander on the *Gorgon*; bold John Fox, your former road agent partner.

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TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Sir Warwick Shaw*

Drive: *Scholarship*

Occupation:² *Physician*

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: *1) The Kings 2) The Empire*

Academic Abilities

History - 1
Library Use - 1
Medicine - 2
The Sciences - 3
Traveller - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2
Credit Rating - 4
Politics - 2
Reassurance - 2

General Abilities

Fleeing - 8
Firearms - 6
First Aid - 8
Health - 8
Preparedness - 3
Psychoanalysis - 3
Riding - 7
Scuffling - 6
Stability - 7
Sanity - 7
Weapons - 6

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1

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Notes:

You are a founding member of the Right Worshipful Order; you and Sir George Somerset are the oldest of friends. Your income is largely derived from your position at Greenwich Naval Hospital, but you supplement that with several other Government contracts as well as investments in several shipping companies. You also own a small estate in Virginia, managed by your younger son Edwin. Rather a useful thing to have, under the circumstances; Edwin needed somewhere to hide his head, else he might have ended up at Newgate. The colonies were the best place for him. Meanwhile you affect the outward appearance of a jolly former Naval man, all bluff heartiness and heavy drinking, while hiding a secret predilection for vice and submission. You always felt you were capable of something more, some great discovery or advancement, but so far this has eluded you. You are a man of many enthusiasms, and sometimes you find it difficult to focus on one thing when there are so many other, equally interesting pursuits.

Sources of Stability - Sarah Farthing, who has captivated you; Edwin, your scapegrace younger son.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

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0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
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Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
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Health

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-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Charity Mannings*

Drive: *Ennui*

Occupation:² *Adventuress*

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: *1) The supremacy of chance,*

2) Your beauty

Academic Abilities

Languages - 1

Occult - 1

Traveller - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 3

Bargain - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 2

Reassurance - 2

Streetwise - 1

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 3

General Abilities

Athletics - 4

Conceal - 8

Filch - 8

Fleeing - 8

Health - 8

Stability - 6

Sanity - 7

Scuffling - 6

Stealth - 6

Sense Trouble - 6

Notes:

Once you were a farmer's daughter, but that was long ago. An old bawd stole your clothes when you first came to London ten years past and your father, fearing the worst, disowned you. Since then you've done many things to make ends meet, and now tell people you're a widow, the former wife of a British East India Company colonel, dead in the Carnatic Wars. You've never been to India, but can bluff your way past most, who've seen no more of the subcontinent than you. You have many friends, and spend a lot of time gambling, particularly at cards, which is how you know Martin Pinchbeck. In his company you've attended several Club meetings. The problem is, it's all so fearfully dull. Not just the Club; all of it, whether cards or public hangings. You've tried opium, hoping it might cut through the gloom, but it just made you ill. If only you could find something really interesting, something worth your time and energy! In the meanwhile you seek out gambling dens and games of chance, hoping to rekindle that familiar thrill. Perhaps you really ought to travel. There might be something more interesting over the horizon.

Sources of Stability - Bessie Hadwick, your former business partner; Roger Martinsdale, a handsome young clerk who knows nothing of your real life and thinks you are a virtuous woman.

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Hit Threshold ³			

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0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: *Captain Aethlestan 'Toby' Jugs*

Drive: *Bad Luck*

Occupation:² *Middleman*

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: *1) The Empire, 2) Your virility and strength*

Academic Abilities

Languages - 1

Traveller - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 2

Bureaucracy - 1

Credit Rating - 3

Flattery - 2

Politics - 1

Streetwise - 3

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 2

Locksmith - 1

Outdoorsman - 1

General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Fleeing - 4

Firearms - 7

Health - 10

Shadowing - 3

Scuffling - 6

Stability - 7

Sanity - 8

Weapons 12

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Notes:

Your family are Norfolk squires, and your father intended you for a glorious military career. That ended when you duelled against the son of a Duke, and won. The popinjay came through alive, but that did you no good; you had overreached yourself, and your semi-retirement from your regiment became permanent when your father cut off funds. It's an open question whether you have the right to call yourself Captain, but sometimes you do, depending on the company. Since those days you've done very well for yourself, in a small way, your hearty typical English outward face masking a cunning mind, and you always keep an eye on the best advantage. You take your nickname, Toby, from the Toby Jugs, as you rather resemble the cheerful little things. You're the man who knows everyone and how to get anything, and you've made yourself indispensable to the Club. You can't seem to catch a break, no matter how deserving you may be. Your latest problem is you've suddenly discovered you've been spying for the French. Damnable! You didn't think your contact was connected with the Froggies and you didn't ask questions, just accepted coin for services rendered. Now you find you're up to your neck in conspiracies! You've salted away a little money which you've put into colonial securities; the Empire's always a sound investment, and your holdings in the Americas have earned a reasonable profit. Perhaps you'll retire there one day; it could be your bad luck won't follow you.

Sources of Stability - Pretty Nan, your favourite paramour; Captain Norrys, your old friend from your army days.