

**The Bet**©1997, 2001  
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*Call of Cthulhu*

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### **Introduction**

This adventure seems to be ideal chance for some easy cash. All the investigators have to do is stay the night in a haunted house. While the players might think they will be in for an easy time, they will (of course) face horror. The Keeper should imply that the adventure is designed to give the investigators some easy money and a chance to have a little fun exposing a fake haunted house.

Two alternative approaches to the adventure are present below.

### **History of the House**

The house where the adventure takes place has a bit of a reputation, but the truth is that most old houses have similar histories. As noted below, the history of the house will be embellished quite a bit.

The house was first occupied by the Reverend William T. Smythe. His family died of tuberculosis. He later died from undiagnosed colon cancer. The second owner of the house, David Olsen, was accidentally shot by his brother when he was cleaning a loaded gun.

The only murder that took place in the house was the murder of Mrs. Victoria Edgewise. She was stabbed to death in the kitchen by her husband Sam. Sam, a heavy drinker, thought she was having an affair. He later died in prison.

A rather bad poet, Malcolm Warner, died while renting the house. He was prone to taking opium and fell down the stairs and broke his neck while under its influence. He was trying to imitate the works of Poe, but lacked talent.

An urban myth, with no basis in fact, says that a man killed his allegedly unfaithful wife in the house by drugging her and burning her to death in the furnace.

### **Getting the Investigators Involved**

At some point the Investigators will be short on cash and will be looking for a quick source of money. An investigator will come across an ad that attracts their attention. This ad claims that the person placing it has a real haunted house that no one can stay a full night in without fleeing in terror. The owner is so sure of this that he is willing to match

any amount of money at 5 to 1 (for each dollar the person puts up, he'll match it with five). The ad has a number at which the person may be reached.

If an investigator calls the number, the phone will be answered by a woman who say "Haunted House Enterprises, how may I help you?" If the investigators want to make a bet, she will tell them that there will be an event this weekend and that they are to come to the office to make the arrangement.

If the Investigators go to the office, they will find it to be well appointed, with several secretaries and officers. They will be asked to have a seat while they fill out forms and sign liability waivers (which makes Haunted House Enterprises responsible for nothing that happens to the investigators while they are in the house). Once they get the forms completed, they can place their bets, up to \$1,000. Haunted House Enterprises accepts cash, money orders, and major credit cards. They do not accept personal checks from first time customers.

Two alternative ways to get the investigators involved are given below.

## **Investigation**

If the investigators decide to check up on Haunted House Enterprises, they will find it to be entirely above board. It began a year ago when the company's founder, Nathan Paskin, inherited the house from his uncle. The house has always had a dark reputation and several people have been killed or have committed suicide within its walls (none since Haunted House Enterprises has taken over, however). Further checking will reveal several news stories about the house and the business. Most of the photos and films show terrified people fleeing the house. There are, however, no photos of the inside (no cameras or other recording devices are allowed in the house). The company is preparing a season's worth of TV shows-it is hoped that it will become the hot new reality show.

## **Haunted House Map**

The house is located in Maine and is about three miles from the nearby town. HHE has bought up the land around the house to guarantee isolation.

The house is a very frightening structure, its windows like the eyes of an empty skull. Looking at it gives rise to a feeling of fear in people. This is all the result of cleverly concealed images and patterns in the paint of the house that have been carefully designed to trigger a fear response in people. A roll against one quarter of an investigator's Spot skill (if one announces he is examining the house carefully) will reveal these patterns. The rooms inside the house also have similar modifications.

Everything is set up in an extremely subtle manner to disturb the human psyche. These modifications will make people edgy and nervous. Further the lighting is set up so that it always seems like things are moving in the corner of one's vision. The same roll is required to spot the other modifications inside as the roll required to spot the exterior modifications. If these modifications are spotted and the Haunted House Enterprises representative is told about them. He will say that they are the work of the spirits. Since there is no way to prove that HHE is guilty of modifying the house (there are, in fact, no records of such modifications being made anywhere), there is little the investigators can do. HHE will not refund their bet and if they leave, they lose.

The house's windows and external door are equipped with sensors which set off extremely loud sirens if someone attempts to open them once the event is in progress.

There are also infrared cameras set up around the house. A respected security company runs all of these systems. The guests are informed of the cameras and are told that tampering with the equipment results in automatic disqualification.

Concealed within the walls of the house are small speakers, projectors, and other gimmick used to create the illusion that the house is haunted. These devices have been professionally constructed and skillfully concealed (for example, some of the speakers are implanted behind the walls and use resonation devices to create an effect that makes pinpointing the sound difficult). Finding them will require a great deal of effort. The Keeper might wish to half or quarter the investigators' Listen and Spot skills for the rolls.

All the effects can be controlled from the control center.

## **Basement**

**1. Main basement area:** The basement is dark and smells of old mold and mildew. Speakers have been implanted in the stones of the walls and the floors. The stairs squeak and shake ominously when people are on them, although the stairs are perfectly safe. Tiny projectors are also in the basement.

**2. Storage Area:** This area contains a portable generator and two cans of fuel for it. The generator is rigged so that it will safely "stutter" and produce a reduced output. The area is equipped with speakers.

**3. Furnace:** This area contains the furnace, water heater and so forth. The furnace is kept running. The furnace is equipped with special speakers that produce the sound of someone screaming in the furnace. The furnace is a large coal-burning furnace. The guests will be told that a husband murdered his wife by drugging her and burning her alive in the furnace (this is not true).

## **First Floor**

**1. Kitchen:** The kitchen is stocked with food and has slightly outdated but usable appliances. The appliances have been equipped with chips that allow them to be turned on and off from the control center.

There is a block of knives in the kitchen that have been treated with a chemical that is sensitive to electric current. The block contains a battery, transmitter and transmission plates (they appear to be built in sharpeners in the knife slots). When triggered by electricity, the chemical will appear to be blood.

There are reservoirs attached to the pipes containing harmless chemicals that can be used to change the color, flavor and consistency of the water. The following effects can be produced:

Water colored like blood (even tastes a bit like blood).

A thick, gelatinous slime (green, yellow, black or red).

The taste and smell of rotten meat or fish.

Small black "worms" that reek of rotten meat.

The kitchen is equipped with speakers and projectors. The refrigerator is also rigged. The interior walls are equipped with microwave projectors (the fridge is shielded and meets all safety requirements for a microwave-the waves stop when the door opens). The projectors can be activated to cause the food inside to cook and burn. This will also cause

the liquids inside to boil. The fridge also has another trick-there is a container of roaches concealed in the fridge. The opening to the container is remote controlled and it is equipped with a device that will drive the roaches out en masse.

**2. Living Room:** This room is well furnished and has deep shadows that seem to move. The effect is created by subtle filters and shades on the lights. Noticing them requires getting up to the ceiling and taking the panels over the lights down. They are made of frosted Plexiglas and are bolted into place. This room is equipped with speakers and projectors.

HHE is testing a concealed scent producing device that can be used to create scents in a room. The scents vary from hints of perfume to the smell of rotted flesh.

**3. Dining Room:** The dining room has a large oak table with a dark spot on its surface with a knife mark in the center. The HHE representative will say that Sam Edgewise killed his wife on the table (this is true). The table has been rigged. Cuts in the table have been filled in with a chemical compound that looks like wood but melts into what appears to be blood. The compound is treated with ice packs before the guests arrive. This will make the table feel cold. During dinner the heat of the plates will cause the compound to melt and flow. The compound is well designed and tastes and dries like blood. The table also contains a heat activated "thumper"-when the thermometer on the table indicates that the table is warm enough for the "blood" to flow, the "thumper" mechanism will kick in, making a sound like something hitting the table (perhaps a knife) and causing the table to shake. A hidden speaker will create a muffled sound of a woman shrieking. The sound is somewhat surreal, as if coming from far away. The only way to expose the trick is to destroy the heavy oak table.

The walls of the room are decorated with animal heads. The heads seem somehow wrong (they have also been modified) and the lighting makes them seem to move when they are seen out of the corner of one's eyes. The eyes in the animals are made of plastic that was cast around a small light and a transmitter. The light creates a dim, sickly green glow when activated. The plastic is very strong and would require a great deal of force to break. This room is equipped with speakers and projectors.

**4. Bathroom:** A standard bathroom. The pipes have been set to produce eerie gurgling noises. As with the kitchen, the plumbing is rigged so that it can produce the effects detailed above. This room is equipped with speakers and projectors. Unlike the other rooms, it does not have a camera. It does have motion sensors, though.

**5. Laundry Room:** A standard laundry room.

## Second Floor

**1,2,4,5 Bedroom:** Each bedroom has two single beds, a dresser, desk and so forth. The floorboards have been set to creak when walked on. The rooms, which have the main lights under frosted Plexiglas sheets, are lit so that it appears that shadows move around.

The trees near the house have been grown so that they scrape against it when the wind blows.

**3, 6 Bathroom:** Each is a full bath, set up like the downstairs bathroom.

## **Action**

### **The Event Begins**

The Investigators will be picked up in the early evening of the day they are to stay in the house by a van driven by a HHE employee. There will be three others in the van. One is a Phobovore Vampire who is posing as a beautiful model who needs the money to start her career. The other two competitors are Bruce Huntington and Jill Weston.

The investigators and others will be brought to the house. There they will be searched for cameras and weapons by two security guards. All such items will be taken for safekeeping and returned later. Investigators who make trouble will be disqualified. The investigators and NPCs will be joined by a HHE representative, Jake Mobley, who will conduct them into the house. He will tell them the (alleged) history of the house and inform them that they will be served dinner by the HHE. The HHE representative will then leave.

Located behind a clump of trees is the command center for the house. It is partially underground and carefully concealed.

During the course of the evening, a staff of four HHE employees will monitor the situation and make the house appear haunted. They have monitors for the cameras and controls for operating all the remote controlled devices in the house.

### *The Speech*

Welcome to the house. As you might have heard, this structure has a grim and dark history. It was constructed over a century ago by the Reverend William T. Smythe to house his new family. Tragically, a scant month after they moved in, his wife and their three children perished from tuberculosis. Reverend Smythe, reportedly driven mad by the fate of his family, died under mysterious circumstances as short while later.

The house stood vacant for a few years until it was purchased by David Olsen. Six months after he purchased the house, Mr. Olsen was killed by his brother. The official story is that his brother was cleaning a loaded gun, which discharged by accident. Some people whispered of murder, but nothing became of the rumors.

A mere fifty years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Edgewise took possession of the house. Mr. Edgewise caught his wife cheating on him and stabbed her to death right in this very kitchen. It is said that sometimes the sound of the knife striking the table can be heard.

Twenty five years ago, a despondent poet, Malcolm Warner, perished in the house. His poetry was said to be quite gruesome and told of beings that watched us with malign eyes from beyond.

Fifteen years ago it is said that a man lured his wife, who he suspected of infidelity, to this house. Though the house was not occupied, the furnace was still well stocked with fuel. It is said he drugged her and burned her alive in the furnace. It is said that the sound of her screams can sometimes be heard.

Have a pleasant stay.

### **Dinner**

Dinner will be exceptionally good. The participants will be served the food they requested. The food has been treated with a harmless chemical that causes a slight sense of nausea. The main event for dinner is the placing of the warm plates on the table, which will cause the fake blood to flow. The HHE cook will say that she just got the job because the last person quit for some reason. She will say, in a conspiratorial voice, that she thinks it is all a big fake, but she is happy for the great pay for such little work. When the fake blood begins to flow and the sound starts, she will scream and run from the house. She is quite good at this performance as she has been doing the job since the beginning.

### **Hauntings**

During the night the HHE staff will use the features of the house to scare people. One of the main features of the house is a subsonic resonance system. This system creates a sound that cannot be heard by most humans, yet it is pitched so as to be extremely annoying and frightening to humans. The staff will gradually turn up the intensity.

The staff will start off slow with a few minor effects and then work their way up to the more dramatic effects (making the faucets run with slime, activating the microwave in the fridge, etc.). As noted above, the effects are of professional quality and will seem quite "real."

If the players are experienced, it is likely that they are at least a bit paranoid. The Keeper should be sure to play this up.

### **Things Go Wrong**

During the night, the investigator with the highest POW will have a strange feeling, as if something bad has happened. What she "sensed" was the Vampire feeding on the HHE staff in the command center. The Vampire will continue to "haunt" the participants, to amuse herself and to build up their fear before moving in to feed on them. She will continue feeding until she is stopped or kills everyone who remains. The Vampire will use careful and intelligent tactics and will pretend to be a ditzy, scared model. She is quite adept at persuading men to be alone with her.

Dealing with the Vampire will be rather difficult. Unless the investigators have smuggled in their own weapons, the only available weapons are the knives in the kitchen and pieces of furniture and the fuel in the basement, which could be used to create molotov cocktails.

### **Conclusion**

If the investigators flee the house, they will lose the bet and the Vampires will eventually take over HHE and use the house as her feeding ground. The investigators should lose 1D4 Sanity Points.

If the investigators expose the Vampire and drive it away or kill it, they will be rewarded by HHE for their actions (and to keep their mouths shut). They may even be

hired on to keep watch over the house so something like this doesn't occur again. They will also receive a 1D6 Sanity Point Award.

### **Alternative Approaches**

The following are two alternative approaches to the adventure.

#### **Alternative One: Search for Janet Robin**

This works best when at least one investigator is a private eye, ex-cop or someone who looks for missing people. The investigator will be contacted by Janet Robin's mother, Sarah Robin. Sarah is a well-known actress and humanitarian. She will say that she is afraid her daughter, a once promising model, has fallen victim to a heroin addiction. She will provide the investigator with photos of her daughter as well as information about her friends, typical hangouts and so forth. Naturally, Sarah has no idea that her adopted daughter is a vampire.

Sarah attributes Janet's recent change in behavior to a heroin addiction. The effects of the change are similar to that of drug addiction and many of Janet's friends believe the same thing. The investigators will, of course, not be able to turn up any signs of the alleged drug addiction.

The investigators will be able to learn about Janet's involvement in the haunted house. If the player doesn't think of it, Sarah will suggest that the investigators join the haunted house activity. Sarah has enough influence to make sure the investigators get in, even at the last minute.

Unless the investigators slip up, Janet will not know why they are there. In this case, she will stick with her original plan of feeding on the people at the house. If she learns that her mother has sent the investigators, she will assure them that she is okay and that she hopes to make a comeback that will make her mother proud. Janet still cares for her mother and does not want her to learn about her true situation. To keep her situation a secret, she will attempt to kill the investigators and dispose of their remains.

Naturally, it is up to the players as to what they do about Janet. The Keeper will have to decide how Sarah reacts, based on what the investigators do. Sarah loves her daughter and would do almost anything for her.

#### **Alternative Two: Missing Person**

This version of the adventure assumes that Janet Robin has infiltrated HHE and has been using the house as her feeding grounds. One of her recent victims was a friend or perhaps a relative of one of the investigators. While Janet is quite talented at erasing the trail leading from her victims to her, the investigators will be able to trace the friend/relative to HHE.

Naturally, the investigators will be drawn to the house to investigate. Janet, of course, intends to kill all the guests. If she suspects the investigators are looking for the missing person, she will focus her attention on them.

### **NPCs**

#### **Bruce Huntington, Investor**

STR: 15  
CON: 13  
SIZ: 15  
INT: 12  
POW: 11  
DEX: 12  
APP: 14  
EDU: 15  
SAN: 55  
HP: 14  
DB: +1D4

Important Skills: Accounting 37%, Bargain 44%, Credit Rating 35%, Fast Talk 43%, Law 23%, Persuade 41%, Psychology 33%

Weapons: Fist 52% 1D3+db

Description: Bruce is a reasonably successful investor. He makes his living off the money he invested, which he inherited from his parents. He presents himself as being entirely self-made, of course. Bruce lifts weights and sees himself as quite the ladies man. Despite his bulk, he is not terribly brave. However, his desire for money will lend him a degree of pseudo-courage.

#### **Jill Weston, College Student**

STR: 10  
CON: 12  
SIZ: 12  
INT: 14  
POW: 12  
DEX: 13  
APP: 14  
EDU: 13  
SAN: 60  
HP: 12  
DB: None

Important Skills: Acting 21%, Computer Use 6%, Fast Talk 19%, History 37%, Library Use 28%, Persuade 22%

Weapons: Fist 50% Damage 1D3+db

Description: Jill is a college student trying to get money to pay for college and to get a chance for some fame. She hopes to jump start her acting career by appearing on the show that is supposed to be made. Jill is mainly concerned with herself and her career. She lost a lot of money in some bad e-trades and hopes to regain it by staying in the house.



## Phobovore Vampire

### Phobovore Vampire, Eaters of Fear and Blood

Char	Rolls	Averages	Janet Robin
STR	3D6X2	20-22	21
CON	2D6+6	13	14
SIZ	2D6+6	13	14
INT	2D6+6	13	15
POW	2D6+6	13	15
DEX	3D6	10-11	13

Move 8      HP 13      14

Damage Bonus                  +1D6                  +1D6

Weapons: Claw 50% Damage 1D4+poison\*, Bite 50% Damage 1D6+Fluid drain\*\*.

\*The poison is a paralytic that has a POT equal to the vampire's CON. The poison lasts 1D6 rounds per effect.

\*\* If the vampire is able to maintain contact with the victim for a full round (the victim is paralyzed, unconscious or grappled)the vampire drains fluid (blood, brain fluids and such) from the victim's head. This inflicts 1D6 of physical damage, plus it lowers the victim's STR and INT 1 point. The feeding heals the vampire 1 point for each point of STR it drains. It gains no sustenance from the INT, but enjoys the experience. A survivor of the attack will regain 1 ability point per week, 2 per week with successful medical treatment.

**Armor:** None, but vampires regenerate 1 point each day.

**Skills** (this particular vampire): Climb 52%, Dodge 47%, Conceal 43%, Disguise 61%, Drive Auto 32%, Fast Talk 61%, Hide 53%, History 32%, Jump 41%, Law 22%, Library Use 42%, Listen 47%, Locksmith 21%, Martial Arts 22%, Medicine 22%, German 45%, French 35%, Persuade 65%, Pharmacy 22%, Psychology 31%, Sneak 63%, Spot Hidden 55%, Track 34%, Handgun 46%

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D6 When revealed.

**Description:** Phobovore Vampires are somewhat similar to "normal" vampires, with some notable exceptions. They are not undead and lack the powers and vulnerabilities of normal vampires.

It is believed that the first Phobovore Vampire arose from an experiment conducted on a human by the Mi-Go. Unfortunately for humanity, Phobovore Vampires can reproduce. After absorbing 500 point of INT and STR and Phobovore Vampire will go into a dormant state and a cocoon will form around it. Over the next 3-6 months the creature "dies" and divides into 1-3 new vampires, which will seem to be perfectly normal humans until they reach adulthood (18-22). In many cases the children die from starvation and exposure (after all, the vampire cannot go through this process in a location frequented by humans). Some of them are found by unsuspecting humans who rescue them. This process of reproduction keeps their numbers down. Vampires retain their normal human sexuality, but are infertile.

When a vampire reaches adulthood, the person will undergo alterations, costing 1D10 sanity points per week. In 3-6 months the person will be completely transformed. The

person's STR will double and she will grow retractable claws in her fingertips, which connect to poison sacks in the wrist. The sacks hold venom good for six attacks. The most horrible transformation is that the person grows a feeding mechanism in his throat. The person can extrude a muscular tube that ends in insect like boring and sucking instruments. The creature feeds by connecting its feeder to the victim's head and inserting its feeding tubes. They draw both sustenance and pleasure from the process. These creatures especially enjoy the chemicals produced by fear and extreme emotion. Hence they try to bring about the appropriate conditions before feeding. The person's altered body also enables it to heal quite quickly. The modifications in the physiology also slow down the person's aging process. Vampires age at 1/3 the human norm, but most die in their unusual reproduction method.

These creatures can easily pass as normal humans because they grow up that way. Some of them retain some human traits, but most eventually revel in the feeding.

The vampire in this adventure is Janet Robin. She had a promising career as a model and actress when she underwent the transformation. It is generally assumed that her problems were caused by addiction to heroin. The truth, is of course, worse. She still wants to be a model, but is driven by the overwhelming desire to feed. At times, she is just what she appears to be. But underneath it all hides a terrible monster with an insane mind.

**Handout #1***The Speech*

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The house stood vacant for a few years until it was purchased by David Olsen. Six months after he purchased the house, Mr. Olsen was killed by his brother. The official story is that his brother was cleaning a loaded gun, which discharged by accident. Some people whispered of murder, but nothing became of the rumors.

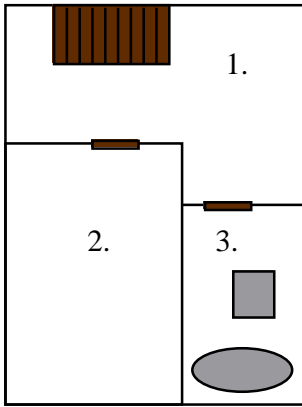
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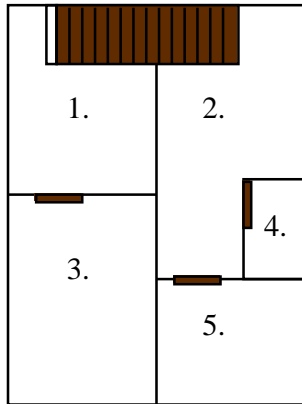
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Basement



First Floor



Second Floor

