

# POST-CRASH



Post-Cthulhu is Written by Brett Fitzpatrick but the game system is very heavily based on Dark O.R.E, a game engine that is copyright 2006 y Dennis Detwiller and Greg Stolze.

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## INTRODUCTION

This game is about the end of the world, a Cataclysm brought about by a battle between huge alien monsters. One of these monsters is named Cthulhu, and he was released from his sunken prison as the stars “came right”. The Earth is now a ruined and depopulated Post-Cthulhu desert. Post-Cthulhu is a table top role-playing game, or RPG for short.

### What is an RPG?

An RPG, is a game where the players assume the role of a character that interacts with the game world. This is called role playing. Role playing, in essence, is putting yourself in someone else's place, and reacting to situations the way you think that person would react. There's no script and no one to tell you exactly what to do, you meet situations as they arrive, making it up as you go. The world is created in the mind's eye of the players using words and descriptions. All the players collaborate to describe events, helped by the rules. The rules provide a logical framework to make sure characters are given challenges, and provided with moments of tension and excitement.

### The GM

One of the players will act as a sort of leader. This player directs and plans the action and events that happen around the players, in effect creating their world. This player is called the game moderator, or GM. Leadership is only half the job of the game moderator, however. The other half is role playing. The GM must role play all the various characters that the players encounter. A GM is one part writer, one part actor, and one part referee.

However, the GM doesn't know exactly what the main characters will say or do. They must prepare each encounter, present it to the players, and let them react to it as they wish. Over the course of a number of adventures, things may gradually change. Some characters prosper and gain power and rewards. Some just run into more and more trouble.

Sometimes groups, erroneously, start to think of the GM as the enemy of the players. The GM is seen as setting up a world full of challenges for the players to explore and trying to kill the

characters every way possible. However, the GM is more of an arbitrator between the players and the game world. The GM reacts to what players do, rather than trying to actively challenge and kill them.

The GM is a chronicler of a common story, a mix between referee and storyteller, creating a living, breathing world around the players. So, if the GM is doing all this, what is left for the players to do.

### The Player Character

Each player, apart from the GM, has a single character called, naturally enough, a player character (PC for short). Player characters investigate stuff, get into fights and ask questions, but they only exist through what is said by their players.

The player tries to display their character's talents, traits, weaknesses, and goals. They take every opportunity to show the other players at the table what their character is about. They also react to each other. For example, if one player decides their character wants to punch some stranger, does your character rush to help the injured stranger? Do they apologize to the stranger's friends, or do they help administer the beating? Players describe their PC's actions, their emotions, hopes and dreams. Everyone in the game, GM and players, are all telling a story with each other, to each other, and the story comes first.

Role playing is usually more collaborative than competitive. This is one of the things that makes it so different to other games, and what makes it so much fun. In most games, player characters don't harm other player characters. PCs don't attack each other or steal from each other, unless there is some good reason.

## Terms

Like any hobby, there is some special jargon that gets use a lot in role-playing games. You can find a few of the more important terms in the following list.

### Scenario

A scenario is a story (sometimes long, sometimes short) involving the player characters in some sort of immediate conflict which they must resolve.

### Campaign

A campaign style of game is a series of connected scenarios where the results of each scenario move the characters toward long-term goals.

### Rounds and Turns

During conflict, action is broken down into rounds, and these are often further broken down into turns, where each player declares actions in a predetermined order.

### Encounter

This is a plot point within the adventure. It can be a scripted encounter with an important enemy, or quite random.

### Game Moderator

This is the referee of a role playing game, who creates and maintains the game background, and plays the role of all background characters not run by players. This is often abbreviated as GM. Other common terms for the same person are "gamemaster", "dungeonmaster" (or "DM"), "moderator", "storyteller" or just "referee".

### Miniatures

Small figures of metal or plastic, usually about an inch or so tall, representing characters. This game also benefits from miniatures to represent cars, if you like your post-apocalypse with a dash of Mad Max.

### Non-Player Character

An NPC is any character who is run by the game moderator rather than an individual player. These are the shopkeepers, monsters and enemy combatants of the game.

### Party

A group of adventuring characters, including both the characters run by players and any non-player characters who accompany them.

### Player Character

A PC is a game character who is run by a player. The player decides what the character says and does at all times.



## WHAT THE PLAYERS KNOW

One of the first of a player's tasks is to create a character. In order to create this character, the player needs to know a little about the world that this character will inhabit. As the game progresses, the players will learn more and more about the game world, so the player doesn't need to know everything straight away, but there are a few things the players need to understand before they even start to play.

The first thing a player needs to realize is that the Post-Cthulhu game takes place in a world that is very different from our own. In Post-Cthulhu, a cataclysm has taken place and the game is about survival in the aftermath of this cataclysm and, possibly, the later rebuilding of human society. This cataclysm wasn't caused by nuclear weapons or a zombie virus, it was unleashed by beings from the Cthulhu Mythos.

Don't worry if you are not familiar with the Cthulhu Mythos, there is a lot more about it later in this book. The point is that the world has been irrevocably altered. Everything has been destroyed in one single event, the Cataclysm.

cat·a·clys·m (kăt'ə-klīz'əm)

*n.*

1. *A violent upheaval that causes great destruction or brings about a fundamental change.*

2. *A violent and sudden change in the earth's crust.*

3. *A devastating flood.*

Since the Cataclysm, technology has collapsed. There is no internet anymore and there are no airplanes in the sky. There are still the trappings of the world we know, all around, but they are ruined, deserted and have been left to rot. The way that the wandering bands of crazies and cultists describe the destruction is that the Earth has been "cleared off".

There is no electricity in the world of Post-Cthulhu, but the strange thing is that electricity still actually works. The problem is that using electricity attracts faceless monsters, monsters that people call Nightgaunts, and so it is shunned.

## The Rip in the Sky

Apart from the destruction, the most obvious difference between the world we know and the world of Post-Cthulhu is the sky. The sky that is visible in the post-Cthulhu world is bisected by a giant, weeping wound. This wound is a kind of gate, through which horrible pulses of black goo flow. The black substance comes from a conglomeration of spheres, just visible through the rip, though it is unhealthy to look at this conglomeration for too long. The people call this entity made up of spheres the Lurker at the Threshold, and they call the flow of material it projects the Darkness from the Stars.

The globes that make up The Lurker at the Threshold are continually massing and moving toward the rip. As it approaches, the nearest globes break apart and dark, protoplasmic flesh flows outward, through the rip in the sky. Some of this mass just dissipates, unable to acclimatize to local physics, but some turns into dangerous monsters that float in the upper atmosphere and sometimes descend to earth. Rocks and other debris also rain down through the rip, cratering the landscape and demolishing buildings and other infrastructure.

## Blighted Land

Not only the heavens have been ripped asunder, but the earth below has been blighted, as well. The land has been ruined, reduced to rubble and bones. There are huge eerie planes with giant spikes growing from them, husks of cities, poisoned oceans and deep holes leading down to tunnels and chambers of horror below. The environment is a permanent storm that intensifies and lessens, but never entirely calms. The sky is full of evil, brooding clouds that prevent any but the most twisted of vegetation from growing.

The entire surface of the planet has been tainted and poisoned, many say by a battle between aliens. Nobody really knows who, or what, these aliens are, or why they fought, but the aftermath of the battle is all too easy to see.

## Broken Transport Routes



tilted walls, tangles of rusting metal, craters and collapsed underground spaces. Visual range is often very short and sounds echo around the ruins, confusing even the most perceptive scavenger. There are no buses, ships, or aircraft offering transportation for the general public. Those days are over.

The state of the nation's roads means that traveling by car is extremely difficult. There are large lakes caused by burst water mains, huge traffic jams of cars abandoned by their owners, fallen trees, mud slides, the list of hazards is endless. Having to clear hazards slows the distances that can be traveled to about 70-200km per day. It is very easy to become a car owner however. Serviceable vehicles are everywhere, and many of them were abandoned in a hurry, some still even have a tank of petrol in them and the keys in the ignition.

Traders travel the roads between major settlements, ranging in size from a few people in a single vehicle, to heavily armed caravans. Meeting a trade caravan along the devastated roads can be a great opportunity to replenish supplies or engage in some impromptu trade for weapons, equipment and ammunition.

Ruins of industrial complexes, shopping malls, schools and universities are obstacles to travel, making movement through them slow and dangerous amid the concrete slabs and twisted girders. Everywhere is a landscape of rubble,



# CHARACTER CREATION

The first step in starting to interact with this dark and dangerous world is for each player to create a character, and outfit this character with weapons, gear and a vehicle. Character creation is collaborative and is best done as a group activity. It can take a full session to do, as everyone talks about their characters, makes suggestions to each other, and establishes some of the detail of the setting. The character creation process is one of the most important steps at the beginning of any campaign. The ideas you come up with will provide inspiration for many game sessions. Making a truly memorable character requires a lot of thought, but is also a lot of fun. First the character needs some kind of overarching concept.

## Character Concept

What makes role-playing games so fun is the role playing. Developing and running a character that gradually develops over time is enormously rewarding. The best role playing comes from playing complex characters with a unique personality and concept. The goal of coming up with a concept is to determine a character's general mental makeup, and what drives them. These are the first broad strokes in fleshing out the character.

For example, if the character concept is a distrustful loner, what event was it that led the person to become this way. These ideas will start to be reflected as we go into more depth about the character.

## Character Name

Often the concept comes first and the character is then later named accordingly, but some players will have a name picked out before they even start generating the rest of the details needed to play a character. A character's name does a lot of heavy lifting. It creates a world and sets a mood. A name can reflect the character's destiny. Chance, for example, is a great name for a character who is shooting for the stars. There is the potential for idiosyncratic names to do half the work of character creation for you. On the other hand, deciding not to give your character a first name can be a powerful statement. It suggests intimacy denied, motives obscured.

Some players look for inspiration in mythology, a great source of powerful and enigmatic names. Some players look for inspiration in literature, astronomy or mythology. Another source for character names that many players use is popular novels. TV shows and movies are popular sources of inspiration too. You don't have to use TV character names directly, but can instead change and adapt them a bit.

You can draw on your past. You can use the name of your first boss, or the surname of a teacher, or take a look through your inbox. It sometimes helps to find some meaning within the names, especially with surnames. Combining two ordinary words can sometimes provide an interesting name, such as Darkraven, from dark and raven.

Whatever your 'process', naming a character is one of the most important steps in character creation. If all else fails, however, the Internet is full of name generators for sci-fi and fantasy characters.

## Character Careers

Another important part of the character background is the character's career. Since jobs have reverted to their most basic level, many inhabitants of this dark future are scavengers, hunters, or some combination of the two. A player character, however, can be something special, something more fun to role play. You can pick from the list below, or feel free to come up with your own ideas.

**Assassin:** a player character will likely be a reformed assassin rather than one who is actively plying their trade. A PC is therefore more likely an assassin who has blood on their hands, and feels, for whatever reason, it's time to hang up the knife.

**Mercenary:** this is the ultimate transferable skill in the Post-Cthulhu. Whatever community you want to join, they are all always looking for muscle.

**Gladiator:** these brutal fighters are the entertainment stars of this new dark age. A player character will likely be an ex-gladiator,

possibly a gladiator who earned their freedom in the arena, or one who escaped.

Scavenger: picking at the bones of a dead civilization is a surprisingly skilled job. You never know when defense systems are still online.

Entertainer: you bring cheer and emotional relief to groups of survivors in their compounds. Perhaps you are a juggler, or a clown, or perhaps you are just good at telling a story. People will gather round to hear you tell of your adventures, and they are likely to offer you food and shelter in return.

Raider: a player character will likely be a reformed raider, rather than currently engaged in attacking compounds, stealing stuff, and killing people.

Wandering Merchant: wandering merchants travel from compound to compound, hawking their wares to pockets of survivors, while buying other stuff in return.

Bodyguard: you are paid to interpose yourself between your client and extreme danger. A player character will likely be an ex-bodyguard, perhaps having left their erstwhile boss when they finally became too revolted by the boss's behavior to carry on protecting them.

Delinquent Motorcyclist: you and a small gang of other kids are bikers. All you care about is speed. A group of player characters could all be bikers, or a single biker could be an outcast looking for a new place in life.

Drifter: you are a nomad and you move from place to place with just what you can carry or wear, a drifter that can turn their hand to almost any job, no matter how dirty.

Hijacker: there are vehicles out on the roads, each worth a lot of money. You are one of the professional that jacks them and finds them new owners. A player character might be a hijacker who jacked the wrong car.

Once you have the character concept, buy the traits, stats, and skills to define your character, tailoring them to fit your vision. These traits, stats and skills are bought with Character Creation Dice.

### **Character Creation Dice**

Fifty-five dice are available for character creation. You assign them to stats and skills and other abilities. Character creation dice are an abstract shorthand used to calculate the cost of a character. Only when they are spent on stats, skills, or traits do they become real dice. Any not spent during character creation are lost.

Every character begins with a Madness Meter that is clear of Hardened and Failed marks in all four gauges.

### **Traits**

Traits are defining characteristics that, in most cases, can only be bought at character creation.

#### **Backup (1d/2d/4d)**

You have contacts that can bring in significant backup in dangerous situations. At 1d this just means more equipment; at 2d vehicles and equipment; at 4d it means people, equipment and vehicles.

#### **The Law (2d)**

You are the law in your area. This gives you authority to enforce the standard laws of your enclave. This is something like a lawman or sheriff. To increase your pull, add the Backup and Resources traits. For example, a local warlord's trusted agent might have The Law (2d), Backup (4d) and Resources (2d) for a total cost of 8 dice.

#### **Expert (4d)**

This allows you to purchase Expert dice in skills, or upgrade existing dice in skills to Expert dice. Without it, you cannot possess Expert Dice. This allows you to buy them in any skill through normal character development. Expert Dice cannot be purchased in stats.

#### **Money (3d)**

You're rich. For whatever reason your character doesn't have to worry about money. How much

you can buy and when remains up to the GM.

### **Statistics**

All characters have six stats: three governing physical actions (Body, Coordination, Sense) and three governing mental and social actions (Mind, Empathy and Command).

Normal humans have stats between 1d and 5d. A stat of 1d is dismal, 2d is sub-par, human average is 3d, while 4d and 5d are exceptional. Humans cannot normally exceed 5d in a stat or skill. Any stat with more than 5d, or with Trump dice, is a supernatural power. Stats cannot have Expert dice.

### **Physical Stat: Body**

Hand-to-hand combat uses the Body stat, which measures your sheer physical power. A character with a high Body stat can hit harder, and run faster than someone with a low Body.

Body	Base Damage
1d to 4d	Width in Shock
5d to 7d	Width in Killing
8d+	Width in Shock and Killing

### **Physical Stat: Coordination**

The Coordination stat measures hand-eye coordination, reflexes, and is used for ranged attacks.



### **Physical Stat: Sense**

The Sense stat indicates how observant you are and how alert you are to potential danger. With a high Sense stat you have keen hearing, clear vision, and a better-than-average shot at noticing things.

### **Mental Stat: Mind**

The Mind stat measures your natural intellect. With a high Mind stat you have a better memory, quicker math skills, and a better grasp of abstract concepts than someone with a low Mind stat.

### **Mental Stat: Command**

The Command stat measures your charisma and force of personality. With high Command you dominate conversations, sway opinions, and get listened to in a crisis.

### **Mental Stat: Empathy**

Empathy measures your humanity—how understanding, likable and insightful to the human condition you are.

### **Skills**

Skills are learned through practice or instruction, such as the ability to write a

program for a computer, or punch effectively. If you can't find a skill that fits, create your own.

Skills range from no dice (no training at all) to 5d (world-class mastery).

Every skill is governed by a stat. Brawling is a Body skill, for example. Add the stat and skill together to get your total dice pool. If your stat+skill exceeds 10d, you only roll 10d.

Some skills are more specialized than others, applying only to a particular type of action. If you have dice in the Firearms [Type] skill, choose what type of firearm you are skilled in: pistols, rifles, or shotguns.

### **Expert Dice**

Expert dice are unique to skills and represent an incredibly advanced skill level. A character cannot have more Expert dice in a skill than dice in the stat that governs the skill.

### **Rolling Without Skill Dice**

You can almost always attempt a skill roll with only your stat dice, even if you have no skill dice at all.

### **Body Skills**

**Athletics:** You excel at athletic feats and can do a passable job at a sport even if you've never played it before.

**Brawling:** You are a bruiser and know how to attack with your hands, feet, and head.

**Endurance:** You can pace yourself, hold your breath, run, or resist the ill effects of environment and exertion longer than most people.

**Health:** You eat well, have a strong metabolism and resist disease.

**Martial Arts [Type]:** You are extensively trained in the fine art of hand-to-hand combat. Example Types: Aikido, Boxing, Jeet Kun Do, Judo, Ju-Jitsu, Karate.

**Melee Weapon [Type]:** You are skilled with a particular type of hand-to-hand weapon. Example Types: Knife, Bayonet, Sword, Axe.

**Running:** You are an accomplished runner and can sprint for short distances or run for long distances without tiring or stumbling.

**Swimming:** You are a strong swimmer, trained to swim fast and help others in emergencies.

**Wrestling:** You can tackle, throw, and pin opponents in close hand-to-hand combat.

### **Coordination Skills**

**Acrobatics:** You are a skilled gymnast and can complete flips, rolls, and handsprings. You can also use this skill to fall properly and to retain your footing after being thrown or knocked back.

**Archery:** You know how to fire and maintain bows and arrows.

**Catch:** You can catch objects out of the air on a successful roll.

**Climbing:** You are a skilled climber, capable of scaling vertical faces, walls, and anything on which you can find purchase.

**Dodge:** You are adept at getting out of the way of attacks and danger you can see coming.

**Driving [Type]:** You can drive a particular type of vehicle. Example Types: Bicycle, Car, Motorcycle, Tank, Truck.

**Escape Artist:** You are skilled at escaping ropes, handcuffs, and other restraint devices.

**Firearms [Type]:** You can fire, repair, clean, and maintain a particular type of firearm. Example Types: Machine Gun, Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun, Submachine Gun.

**Lockpick:** You are familiar with how to force, pick or bypass locks.

**Pilot [Type]:** You can pilot a particular type of airborne vehicle. Example Types: Blimp, Hang-Glider, Glider, Light Aircraft, Jet Aircraft, Helicopter, Spacecraft.

**Pick Pocket:** You are skilled at sleight of hand

and are capable of stealing jewelry, wallets, and other personal effects from people without their knowledge. This typically means a dynamic contest of your Coordination+Pick Pocket vs. the victim's Sense+Hearing or Sense+Sight.

**Stealth:** You are light on your feet and know how to remain unheard and out of sight. This typically means a dynamic contest of your Coordination+Stealth against their Sense+Hearing or Sense+Sight.

**Throw:** You can throw hand-held objects farther than most people your size.

### **Sense Skills**

**Hearing:** Your hearing is keener than average.

**Sight:** Your eyesight is keener than average.

**Smell:** Your sense of smell is keener than average.

**Taste:** Your sense of taste is keener than average.

**Touch:** Your sense of touch is keener than average.

**Search:** The ability to combine all useful senses in examining an area for clues. Cannot be higher than your Sight skill.

### **Mind Skills**

**Archeology:** The study of ancient cultures.

**Anthropology:** The study of the origin, development and path of human civilization.

**Computer Hardware:** You can repair and build computers.

**Computer Programming:** You can program or reprogram computers.

**Criminology:** You can profile and track criminals by the evidence they leave behind.

**Cryptology:** You have a working knowledge of codes, ciphers, and encryption techniques.

**Education:** You have a solid overall education

and know all manner of basic facts about math, science, grammar, and social studies.

**Electronics:** You can build, repair, and disassemble electronics without electrocuting yourself.

**First Aid:** With the proper equipment, you can treat minor wounds in the field and help a badly injured patient survive long enough for more intensive treatment.

**Forgery:** You can forge documents and recognize forgeries.

**Language [Specified]:** You can speak, read, and write a particular language. Example: Arabic, English, Elder Thing.

**Mythos Lore:** this skill cannot be higher than the number of Failed or Hardened notches in your Unnatural gauge. Starting characters do not have access to this skill. This skill represents a character's understanding of the Old Ones and their ways and plans. It helps in identifying Mythos occurrences, conducting rituals, and identifying monsters. Mythos Lore is required before a character is able to do magic. A character with this skill is able to enter the Dreamlands voluntarily when sleeping.

As characters gain more understanding of the Mythos, their perspective on the world changes radically, often leading them to speak and behave in ways that others consider unhealthy or insane. Along with this creeping insanity, there are also physical prices to pay too. An understanding of the Mythos could result in a character developing a mysterious itch, a deformity, or a growth. They could start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed even though they don't have wounds. They can start to rot and they can start to transform, usually into something foul and insectile or reptilian. Every time the character gains Mythos Lore they have a small chance, determined by the GM of developing a physical "taint".

Being around Mythos Creatures rubs off on the sorcerers and adventurers that have dealings with them. After too much delving, characters

can sometimes gain a sickly aura that can incite the mob. Or, at the GM's whim, the character develops a terrible itch, a deformity, or a growth, or they start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed at random times, or they start to rot, or transform into something foul and insectile or reptilian.

**Mechanic [Type]:** You can repair, use, or build machinery of a particular type. Example Types: Cars, Light Aircraft, Jet Aircraft, Heavy Vehicles, Helicopters, Industrial Machinery, Watercraft.

**Medicine:** You can treat illness and wounds through surgery if you have access to the proper equipment. Your Medicine skill can't be higher than your First Aid skill.

**Navigation [Land]:** You can navigate using a map and compass or by dead reckoning on the ground.

**Navigation [Sea/Air]:** You can navigate by map, timing, and instrumentation, or by astrogation.

**Occult:** You have studied civilizations' attempts at cataloging and understanding the supernatural this is often just a thin skein of superstition hiding the actual truth. For actual world-changing occult information, you need the Mythos skill.

**Psychiatry:** The science of studying, understanding and correcting problems with human behavior

**Survival:** You're a quick-thinking survivor; always aware of the dangers and pitfalls of your surrounding environment.

**Tactics:** You are well versed in the arts of war and know how to use terrain, manpower, and equipment to coordinate attacks, prepare and avoid ambushes, and gain the upper hand in battles.

### **Command Skills**

**Inspiration:** You can cause people to feel optimistic despite any fears they might harbor. On a successful roll you can remove a single



Hardened notch from a Madness gauge of a person listening to your pep-talk. This can only be done once per person per day. It does not affect Failed notches.

**Intimidation:** You can cause a person to fear you through physical or psychological threats. This usually means a dynamic contest between Command+ Intimidation and Empathy+Resist or Empathy+ Equilibrium.

**Leadership:** You can effectively guide and direct others, even under fire.

**Performance [Type]:** You have an entertaining skill and the confidence to perform it in front of large groups. Example Types: Acting, Flute, Guitar, Public Speaking, Singing.

**Psychology:** The art of understanding and manipulating human behavior to cure mental illness.

**Seduction:** You're skilled at attracting and manipulating others, particularly in a romantic sense.

### **Empathy Skills**

**Bluff:** You can talk your way through most situations, though any falsehood you tell will probably fall apart under close inspection.

**Counseling:** You can talk down a traumatized individual.

**Lie:** You can contrive convincing falsehoods that will be believed until evidence to the contrary is discovered.

**Meditation:** You can attain greater calm and focus with ritual and mental exercises.

**Persuasion:** You can convince people to see your side of an argument.

**Resist:** You are unusually resistant to psychological and physical coercion such as torture, telepathic attack, and brainwashing.

### **Madness Checks**

**Equilibrium:** this is a specialized, unclassified, skill that is rolled during Madness checks. Each type of sanity gauge requires a different stat

rolled with it. For example, for a Violence check, Equilibrium is rolled with Sense, for an Unnatural check, Equilibrium is rolled with Mind

### **Equipment**

It is comparatively easy to find a huge selection of equipment to choose from for Post-Cthulhu. Any catalog of clothes, survival gear, stationary, or anything else you are interested in, will have thousands of options that you can use to equip your character. The short list below can be used to get an item or two on the character sheet without doing extensive research through online catalogs. The GM should take a look at character equipment lists from time to time to make sure that they can be carried without encumbering the character.

### **Clothes**

The right clothes are the difference between life and death. A character's clothes should be both functional and intimidating. Leather, for example, keeps you warm, protects you as you bounce down the road after being thrown from a vehicle covered in rusty spikes, and tends to be quite durable. Also, black leather covered in spikes is intimidating, which is very useful in the dark future of the world Post-Cthulhu.

Desert crazies often wear a leather mask or a bandanna to achieve just this intimidating effect, and get the farmers to hand over their stuff without putting up too much of a fight. Goggles are extremely popular and sought after because of the ever-present dust and almost constant sandstorms. Hockey pads and football shoulder pads have survived the fall of civilization in their millions, and are a common form of improvised armor. Chain mail has also become popular since kevlar isn't being manufactured any more.

Other clothing options include a good pair of sturdy boots, an oversize army jacket with patches, a simple gray shirtdress, hoodies, beanies, overalls, army pants and boots, all with stacks of belts and holsters. Warm, fleecy jumpers help during the relatively cold desert nights of winter, and don't forget to carry a strong bag with plenty of space for scavenged items.

Other useful features of the character's wardrobe are a massive hood, and layers of black clothing. Boots with steel toes, buckles and spikes are useful in combat. Harnesses and belts for an improvised holster and a pouch for a gas mask are extremely useful wardrobe items. Fingerless gloves are always a good idea.

Clothes tend to be quickly dirtied by all the sand and dirt, and caked with dust. They are patched and shredded, but they are too valuable to be simply discarded. Just because a leather jacket has some bullet holes, or even loses an arm, doesn't mean such a valuable and hard-wearing piece of clothing is going to be thrown away. It is much more likely to be patched, fixed, even armored with metal panels for added protection. Your character will then just shrug it back on and carry on with their adventures.

## Guns and Blades

Guns do a lot of damage, are comparatively compact, and fairly simple to use. Their only disadvantage is that ammunition might be difficult to come by in the irradiated deserts beyond civilization. Any gun that a character can get their hands on is going to be a prized possession, whether it is a powerful AK or just a sawed-off shotgun.

Blade: many different blades are carried by combatants of all kinds of skill level. A machete is one of the most common blades carried, while a more sophisticated blade, such as the katana, is somewhat more rare, and expensive. Most unskilled fighters are better off with a machete, which can hack and slash with ease, whereas a katana takes more dexterity to use properly. It takes a long time to become skilled with a katana, and anyone without much experience is likely to cut their own leg or foot off on a deflection or missed attack. This category of weapon also includes such items as tactical tomahawks, which are nimble weapons with tremendous cutting, slashing and piercing ability.

Bow: over the course of time, the world's ammunition supply has become low. People now save ammunition for situations where stopping power is vitally important, such as when facing down desert crazies. Ammunition is rarely abundant enough to be wasted on hunting. This is where a bow comes in handy. A bow won't just run out of ammo. Arrows do break, but usually after dozens of uses. And new arrows are relatively easy to manufacture. There are a few drawbacks to a bow, such as having to reload after each shot. But a reliable bow is useful for survival.

Combat Knife: as a backup to your main blade, it's a good idea to have something a little more concealable. From exotic Kukri knives to a good quality kitchen chopper, any sturdy knife will do.

Explosives: with only the most basic understanding of chemistry, a character can improvise explosives to use as traps or to slow down pursuers.

Heavy weapon: these are squad support weapons, such as heavy machine guns. They are often designed to be operated from a tripod by a crew of two, but can be conceivably used by a single operator. They are very popular additions for the roof of a vehicle before going cruising the highways that still cross the desert.

Improvised Weapon: a tire iron, a hammer, or a simple baseball bat with some spikes driven through it all make very effective weapons. The weapon doesn't have to be sophisticated to get its job done. If you can't get your hands on a gun or a butcher's knife, a blunt object will have to do.



Pistol: this type of firearm has fewer points of contact with the shooter's body than a rifle, which requires both hands, shoulder and cheek. This makes a pistol a substantially less stable shooting platform than a rifle. This is the main reason why an average shooter is far more accurate with a rifle than a handgun. A pistol requires training before it can be used effectively.



**Rifle:** a rifle requires less training than a pistol to achieve some degree of accuracy, but is cumbersome within the confines of corridors and small rooms. A rifle can hit targets out to 100 yards. The rifle is best for scenarios when you need a very precise shot to the brain stem, such as when destroying zombies.

**Shotgun:** these put multiple projectiles out the barrel at once. The shotgun is the most effective weapon in combat against humans (except when fighting troops in body armor, where a shotgun is not very effective, or at ranges past 50 meters).

**Taser:** it can be used at a distance, with the electrodes being shot at a target, or close in as a 'prod'.

### **Other Personal Equipment**

With clothes to keep you warm and a weapon to fight for survival with, you are almost ready to venture out into the monster-stalked wilds. There are a few more useful items of equipment you could take with you, however, if you are lucky enough to find them.

**Backpack:** durable and compact for carrying your stuff.

**Binoculars:** very useful when on a stakeout.

**Blanket:** if you are going to be out in the wilds.

**Bolt cutter:** for breaking and entering.

**Bug-out Bags:** keep your gear secure and ready to move with these large and robust paratrooper bags.

**Caffeine:** staying alert is a must in the world after the emergence of Cthulhu. Caffeine drinks are prized barter goods for this very reason, and as they become more scarce, they become more valuable.

**Chalk:** for marking your path through a building.

**Compass:** but you have to know how to use it.

**Cuffs:** these are little more than plastic strips that can be pulled tight around a captive's wrists. More sophisticated metal cuffs, with a key, are expensive and rare.

**Duct tape:** keeps captives quiet and is useful for the sort of "engineering" required to keep machines running, now that the world has ended.

**First aid kit:** much more useful if you've done the course. There are very few operational hospitals and sometimes first aid is the only healing you are going to get. A first aid kit can be the difference between life and death.

**Flares:** to see and be seen.

**Flashlight:** don't forget an extra bulb and batteries.

**Geiger Counter:** this detects radiation and is essential in the desert for the safety conscious. Most clans of desert crazies don't bother with them though.

**Insect repellent:** you don't know what diseases they have.

**Laptop computer:** broadcast, publish, home office.

**Lamp,** for example a Hand Crank LED Lantern: with 1 minute of cranking, the wind-up power generator will yield 20 minutes of light. Being powered by a hand crank instead of batteries or electrical outlets means this light is always ready when you need it. Cranking the lantern casts light for hours. In addition to being wind up powered, this light features solar

cells on top which can be used to charge the lantern during the day. Direct sunlight for 16 hours, provides 6 hours of light.

Lighter, windproof: to start a fire and keep warm.

Lock Picks: with monsters around it makes sense to get doors open quickly and quietly.

Military Paracord: this is really tough cord, used for snares, fashioning spears, shelter, support, restraints, splints and much more.

Military Type Flashlight: this is a rugged flashlight with high-density black plastic construction and metal belt clip. Requires increasingly-rare D-Cell batteries.

Night vision goggles: we share the night with monsters.

Notebook: a journal can be essential to keep notes of interesting places and potential scavenging spots. Finding another scavenger's journal is even more useful, all that research, all that treasure, all mapped out for whoever finds the notebook.

Pets: a good companion for a survivor is a dog, preferably a German Shepherd. Dogs give you a lot of bang for your buck. They'll eat or drink pretty much anything, they're loyal, hard working, make excellent alarms, and help to keep your spirits up. Also, if you get hungry enough, you can always eat them.

Pocket knife: tool, eating utensil, and weapon in one.

Satellite phone: no need to worry about provider coverage.

Shaving Razor: a shaving razor or straight razor has a blade that can fold up into the handle. They are also called open razors and cut-throat razors. Straight razors require considerable skill to hone and strop, and require more care during shaving.

Shovel: a good shovel can be used as a club, or to dig.

Still: a still is used to create methanol, ethanol, and grain alcohol. Just one still can become the foundation of a thriving business.

Survival Blanket: an 84in x 52in emergency blanket, constructed of polyester material that is 100 percent windproof and waterproof. It reflects 90 percent of body heat back to the sleeper. Great for quickly constructing a survival shelter.

Survival Matches: these survival matches will burn in the strongest winds and rain for approximately 12 seconds. They come packaged in 2 sealed plastic tubes, each with 25 matches. They are now very rare.

Water bottle: if you really go into the wilds.

Waterwheel: these are placed in fast moving streams or waterfalls to generate electricity. They must be combined with a storage battery to save the power for future use. This is dangerous because it attracts nightgaunts.

Water Purification: these tablets eliminate most bacteria, viruses and other harmful micro-organisms. Parasitic micro-organisms are present in the streams, ponds, puddles and still water that may be the only available water. Each box contains 30 packets and treats 8 gallons of water. They have a 3 year shelf life, with no more being manufactured now that the world as we know it has come to an end.

Zippo Lighters: wind proof and weather resistant lighters. These are prized barter goods.

## Vehicles

Every character has one seat in a vehicle at the start of the game. This usually means the party of characters band together to buy a 4x4 or a metal monster of a car, a vehicle durable enough to survive in the deserts. These are often painted ochre, rust orange or charcoal gray to blend in better with the tortured landscape. Most vehicles have a lot of modifications, such as roll cages, extra armor, and a roof-mounted machine gun. Most vehicles will either emphasize speed or survivability. Many are little more than improvised tanks. Any large, robust vehicle, such as a bus or ambulance, will make a good core for an improvised fighting vehicle. Plates of metal are added, a bunch of spikes and some gun emplacements. Other options include motorcycles, but no flying machines. A biplane or helicopter will be an extremely rare sight in the dust-choked atmosphere.

If they are alone, the character's single seat will only get them a motorbike, but if they band together with other players they can purchase a larger vehicle. Two players can band together to buy a compact car, One driver and one passenger. Four players can band together to buy a muscle car, or any other medium vehicle. Six players can band together to buy a heavy vehicle. In many devastated areas, ancient muscle cars with rams and spikes welded to them and a machine gun on the roof are the only line of defense the locals have.

### Extra Bits and Spikes

This equipment is not added to the players' vehicles according to any rules. Any extra bits can only be added to their vehicle if it is physically mounted on the model used for miniatures car combat. This is to encourage kitbashing and customisation.

It is a lot of fun to kitbash conventional model cars and turn them into post-apocalyptic monsters. Kitbashing, or model bashing, is where a new model is created by taking pieces out of other commercial kits and combining them. These pieces may be added to a custom project or to another kit. Commercial model kits are a ready source of detailing, providing lots of components that can be used to add fine

detail to an existing model.

One of the cheapest options is Hot Wheels-type cars, which are a good scale for post-apocalyptic car gaming. However, the small size really limits the possibilities for modification, and cutting apart die-cast models is quite difficult. Plastic kits are better for ease of modification, in a scale that's big enough to allow for lots of crazy details.

Good scales for use are 1:43 and 1:32. The muscle cars of the 50s, 60s and 70s make good starting points. The car can have a gun emplacement cut into the roof, a ram added to the front. The exhaust that often comes with the model can be attached to the side, instead of underneath.

Camouflage gray is a god color scheme, though some desert crazies don't care about camouflage at all, preferring candy-apple red, and then use sponge technique for sand weathering, dust, rust. Then just add bullet holes and lots of other extra bits.

### Vehicle Mounts

Weapons can be mounted on vehicles in various ways. Most crazies just poke their guns out the windows, but some compounds try to come up with something a little more sophisticated.

#### Turret

A turret allows the vehicle to have a gunner who can fire their weapon in any direction at other cars.

#### Remote Turret

This is the same as a turret, but it can be operated by the driver, with -1 to attack rolls.

#### Ring Mount

This is the same as a turret, but the operator is exposed, and can be targeted independently of the vehicle, including by passengers in other vehicles.

#### Fixed Mount

These weapons fire in a straight line out the front or sides or back. Front mounted weapons are -2 to hit while side and rear mounted



weapons are -5 to hit.

#### Roll Cage

This provides 2pts of protection for all internal equipment in a crash and full protection in a roll.

#### Side Door

The vehicle counts as closed or open, depending on whether the side door is open.

#### Spoilers

These provide +1 to drive rolls.

#### Armored Wheel Hubs

A set of four provides +1 armour point.

#### Bumper Spikes

These do +1D damage in any ramming or collision in the direction of the spikes.

#### Ram

1/2 damage to ramming vehicle and 2 times damage to rammed vehicle.

### **Character Approval**

The GM should look over every character, including all stats and equipment, before approving it for play. The GM will not allow any overpowered combination of traits that would take control of events out of the GM's hands and place it in the hands of a single player. The GM may edit it so that it can be fit more harmoniously into the game they are planning to run.

## GAME MODERATOR

Making sure the game is fun and runs smoothly is a shared responsibility between all the players, but the game moderator has a job that is a little different from everyone else's. The GM must build a world around the players, adjudicate the rules of the game, and tell a story that includes and reacts to the players. To do this, the GM will need the information in the Game Moderator Section. How much of the information from this the GM decides to share is entirely their choice.

### The Cthulhu Mythos

The Cthulhu Mythos is a group of powerful aliens who use Earth as a battleground and source of resources, with no thought for its inhabitants. Later additions to the Mythos tried to make it more than this, to make it an allegory for a fight between good and evil, but Post-Cthulhu resists this interpretation.

Post-Cthulhu strips away a lot of the bloat and reinterpretation that has built up around the Mythos. For example, August Derleth's addition of "friendly" Elder Gods has been completely removed, to bring the Mythos back to the unique cosmic horror that its creator, H P Lovecraft, originally intended. This means, for example, that there is no moral conflict between 'good' Elder Gods and 'evil' Old Ones. In Post-Cthulhu, the terms Elder Gods and Old Ones refer to the same unknowable beings. There are no benign deities to intercede on humanity's behalf, and the Elder Gods/Old Ones are for the most part not gods at all, but strange and unknowable alien entities.

Post-Cthulhu also gets closer to the original vision of the Mythos by doing away with most of the hundreds of different Old Ones imprisoned in various obscure locations, strewn around the world. Only one or two of the terrible creatures remain, though they are worshiped under many names so there still seems to be an awful lot of them.

In Post-Cthulhu, the Cthulhu Mythos is also not in any way analogous to the Christian system of beliefs. There is no expulsion of a Satan figure from any version of a heaven. August Derleth, for example, assigned elements such

as "water" and "fire" to the Old Ones and Elder Gods. This seems to be an attempt to align them with traditional occult ideas about demons and devils. He even invented new Old Ones to fill in elements that were vacant. Post-Cthulhu strips out all of this. The Old Ones are not demons or elementals. They have no connection to earth, air, fire, or water. They are utterly alien and resist any human attempt to project morality or myth onto them.

But I must add that although the game is based on this original, less cluttered, conception of the Mythos, as created by H P Lovecraft, which is full of ideas that are visionary and unique, it seeks to avoid including some of the more unsavory aspects of Lovecraft's stories. Specifically, this game makes a conscious effort to avoid the racism and misogyny that can be found in some of Lovecraft's original fiction.

### Can the GM Also Be a Player?

Game moderators have plenty to, but does that mean they shouldn't also run a non-player character as a 'regular' in a party of adventurers? By gaining a voice the GM can help avoid the game degenerating into a match of GM vs Players. The GM-PC can be extremely helpful for sorting out in game fights, helping keep the players focused on the task at hand, and they can play devils advocate and make for some interesting party dynamics. But a GM character may adversely affect leadership and problem-solving, and may disastrously shift the focus of the game away from the players.

The answer to this question really depends on the GM and players. Many GMs do it all the time, and it works well for them. In short, if a GM is able to accept a back-seat role for their character in the party, then a GM-PC can work well.

There are a few guidelines for the successful inclusion of a GM character. The first rule is that the GM-PC must not overshadow the other PCs. Give the character non-combat skills that the party lacks, to fill in holes, but avoid the character dominating. The GM-PC should have an easy-going personality. Their role should be as follower, not leader.

then give advice on how to expand on this material to fully flesh out the world.

Often, when the fit is right, a party will invite an NPC to join them in their adventure, to become a GM-NPC. This can be because the NPC expressed gratitude for the party's help or even pledged their sword, but the character should not be foisted on the party. The party should be allowed to refuse the character a place in their group. The GM-PC should not have all the answers. The GM-PC can nudge the party subtly back onto the right track sometimes, but only with more clues, never with answers.

If the players start to rely on the GM-PC, then the character should probably be retired, or nerfed. Nerfing is the noble art of rendering a story element, such as a character, an item, an enemy, ineffective, or less effective, by a change in the rules (such as the character's stats) or game system itself. The term nerf is based on Non-Expanding Recreational Foam, a substance used to make toy weapons. To nerf could be translated as "turn a real weapon into a toy weapon".

Another way to make GM-PCs work is to have them be a character at the PCs' base, back at the compound, for example. That way, the GM-PC isn't out adventuring with the party, but still gets regular screen time. Another option, if you miss the experience of being a player, is sharing the GMing role with your friends. Trade off every other week for example. This can be an extremely rewarding experience. It allows you to play the game from the other side, and helps bolster a party with very few players. In addition, in a group that rotates GMs, your GM-PC provides a vessel for you to later step in as a player.

### **Foundations of a World**

Of the GM's various tasks, one of the most rewarding and interesting is creating the world that the characters will inhabit. There is a lot of information about the world after the emergence of Cthulhu in this book but, inevitably, the GM will be required to extend and add to this material. The following section on the world after the emergence of Cthulhu will start by providing a lot of information that is not initially available to players, and will

## THE WORLD



The fall of civilization came suddenly. After the Cataclysm, came the dust. The dust came in a swirling blanket, carried by wind storms, gradually spreading across the whole globe, and blocking out direct sunlight. Even as the skies dimmed, temperatures climbed and then there came a time of destruction.

Crops failed without sunlight, wars over scarce resources spread across the surface of the planet. As harvests failed, human population numbers, what few were left, crashed to even lower levels. Governments fell and the old order was swept away. When the dust cleared, everyone who was left alive saw that there was now a rip in the sky, monsters now stalked the land.

On top of these supernatural menaces, food supplies quickly decayed as supermarkets turned into breeding grounds for insects and vermin. Toxic materials leaked into the environment. Spent nuclear fuel rods spontaneously burst into flame, chlorine gas spilled out of tanks and turned lakes into deadly

acid. Gas leaks turned many suburban homes into infernos. The world was transformed into a vision of hell on earth.

The uncontrolled encroachment of nature upon abandoned cities spawned deadly viruses as the populations of escaped pets and other animals exploded. These plagues reduced human numbers even more, as rats invaded buildings, drawn by the smell of decay.

Zoo animals escaped their enclosures, with hyenas being one of the most successful species in the new conditions. Most dairy cows died, but a few survived and adapted to life on America's plains alongside thriving herds of bison and longhorn cattle. Shepherd dogs continue to protect sheep, driven by centuries of instinct, even though their human shepherds had gone. Domesticated animals, like horses, returned to wild herds on the few grasslands that remain. Wolves and feral dogs now struggle for control of the spaces between human compounds.

In this future, dark world the machines of war have deteriorated. Nuclear submarines lie on the ocean floor, and navy ships in harbor rust and decay.



Cities and their static structures have survived and still rise above the desert sands, but they are ruined and empty. Sandstorms regularly sweep through these cities and coastal areas are regularly cleared by huge tidal waves.

Seeing civilization come to a sudden and abrupt end has made some survivors think back to simpler days. They no longer use electricity if they can help it, because it attracts monsters. They have embraced older ways of doing things, like living in fortresses, weaving tapestries, and wearing armor. Civilization has been plunged, both literally and figuratively, into a new dark age. Much of the population has once again fallen prey to superstition in their fight for survival. There is banditry, highway robbery and piracy, all making travel extremely difficult.

Food, water, shelter and transportation is difficult to come by. There are nomadic bands surviving on the fringe of the wasteland, scavenging for canned goods in the ruins of towns and cities. The world has been plunged into darkness, and there just isn't enough food to go around any more. Civilization is in ruins, and only the toughest, luckiest, and nastiest

have survived. The remnants of humanity are fighting, scavenging and struggling among ghost cities.

Technology has been abandoned by most, but there are enclaves where it survives, and where advancements are even still being made. Most of these enclaves are collections of fearful scientists, cowering in disaster-proof ruins. They sit in safety and observe, while others are forced to walk the face of a scorched earth.

A lot of infrastructure is needed to produce, distribute, and maintain much of what was once taken for granted. Cars need someone to mine and process the materials for the parts, someone to pump the oil, and so on. Guns need someone to produce the weapon materials, ammo, and someone to put it together. Refined foods need a large base in order to be accessible to a large number of people. Production of and access to such things is now almost completely impossible.

Vehicles, weapons, and other goods tend to be rusted out and made from all sorts of scrap. Dressed in leather, road warriors drive cobbled together vehicles, each in thrall to some warlord. Such bands have lots of weapons though, and often don't bother with things like training or discipline.

Often the warlord has to be horrifically cruel to maintain their grip on what little power they have.

Warrior-priests and other brands of dictator lead military enclaves hoarding weapons, food, and medicine, and they wage war. Whether for a cache of medicine, a source of clean water, or ammo, someone is always willing to wage war over something.

There is still widespread disease, poisoned water sources, disrupted weather patterns, contaminated soil. There are tar sands, potash mines, sulphurous springs and many areas have just been abandoned. There is still some oil drilling, all small scale, supporting only the local muscle cars, and plenty of tumbledown towns converted into walled settlements.

The few fertile zones are hotly contested theaters of war, where warlords fight battles from souped-up chop-shop cars. The mountains are very defensible and filled with valuable coal and oil, but almost impossible to move military forces around in, so they have turned into a horrific quagmire of constant guerrilla warfare, sprinkled with troops dependent on the central regions for supplies but able to demand constant reinforcements based on their waxing and waning control of the only fuel for hundreds of miles around.

### **Post-Cthulhu Economics**

Empires are difficult to build, and few manage to maintain something resembling territorial integrity. The countryside is divided into small spheres of overlapping influence, the borders in constant movement. But despite the lack of central government, something like currency has emerged.

Quality alcohol is probably one of the most important commodities in the wasteland. Without large-scale water filtration systems in place, it's safer than water. It's difficult but not impossible to manufacture, and it works as a sterilizer in a pinch, which is important when antibiotics aren't readily available.

Goats can withstand heat stress and can endure prolonged water deprivation. Additionally, they have great adaptability to adverse climatic and geophysical conditions, where cattle and sheep cannot survive. The goat eats little, occupies a small area and produces enough milk for the average family. This makes goats a very important trade good in the world as it is now, after the rise of Cthulhu.

### **Materials**

Glass tends to be too fragile to depend on when there's no police force keeping vandals and burglars from breaking windows. Plexiglass and other clear plastics have become very attractive options for windows.

Salted, brined, and dried goods such as fish, meat, and certain vegetables have replaced canned goods, which have all but run out - they last a good while and can be produced in your home with little special equipment. Salt is

incredibly economically important for these purposes. The age-old method of evaporating it out of the sea water is used, providing a source of wealth for coastal areas, attracting people there despite the tidal waves and Deep Ones.

People focus on making tools. Metalworking repair skills have become very valuable to keep equipment functioning. New metal is harder to come by. People craft rough metal and wooden tools as replacements. Medical supplies are scarce, people die from basic bacterial infections. Beer is used as a substitute for suspect water.

### **The New Dollar**

A currency does exist, the new dollar, but it hasn't entirely replaced barter. The stability needed to rediscover old knowledge of medicine, science, and technology is still lacking. People are simply trying to preserve what they remember before it becomes irretrievably lost.

### **Compounds**

Some small pockets of civilization have survived the cataclysm that destroyed their world. These are the last remaining enclaves of humanity. These tiny communities are sometimes built in the remains of once glorious cities, sometimes they are isolated outposts in the wasteland. They come in all shapes and sizes, but the vast majority are little more than clumps of buildings with some kind of defensible fence or wall.

Compounds provide shelter from the elements, and from bullets fired from hostile guns, nuclear fallout, and packs of wild animals. They can be as simple as a collection of shacks surrounded by a metal fence, or as complex as a well-constructed fortress with defensive towers and gun turrets. Compounds are designed primarily to provide security, and sustainability. Compounds have solar and wind generators, and sometimes an underground propane or natural gas tank.

Concrete is a popular construction material, along with steel shipping containers and the paneling of motor vehicles. Concrete can be mixed and poured by hand. Exterior walls are



embedded with shards of broken glass, to discourage climbing, and have a thickness of at least two feet.

### **Warlords**

At the helm of each compound is a warlord, cult leader or other form of dictator with a combination of charm, talent, leadership abilities, organization and a basic disrespect for the rights, opinions and feelings of their subjects. The people within the compound strive to make compound life as safe and easy as possible. Living in the compound means they don't starve to death and aren't ripped to shreds by crazies. People will give up many freedoms in order to be safe, and most warlords will run their compound with an iron hand.

For activities that are risky and benefit the compound, there are incentives. The brave warriors and scavengers who go out on raids, and who bring back the supplies needed for the compound to survive, are the nobility of the community.

## The Cataclysm

Most of the population are ignorant of what the Cataclysm actually was. Few would guess that it was a battle between two alien entities that each called Earth their home. Neither of these alien creatures saw humanity as being of the slightest interest or importance, and one of the creatures actively fed on the human population of Earth before the battle actually started.

The cataclysm came swiftly, and it was accompanied by much destruction. The first tsunamis arrived soon after a complex of ancient tombs and vaults burst through the surface of the Pacific, far from any land. Millions of tons of rock emerged in just a few hours, and atop this rock edifice was the city of tombs. Rivulets of water came running off it and through it, disappearing into the strange angles of its geometry, only to appear elsewhere in gushing flows. The stars, it seemed, were right and thus returned an ancient evil. It was a terrible time for coastal communities, battered by titanic wave after titanic wave, but this was just the beginning.

As fissures and splits appeared in the surface of the newly emerged city's architecture, something else was triggered, an ancient defense mechanism, set in place long ago. As the waves caused by the return of the evil one came thundering onto land from the center of the ocean, the defense mechanism was initiated.

In the far, far past, this day had been predicted by Elder Things, and they had contrived a defense. They had built huge cities, both underwater and on dry land – all now long gone – and they had created the entity known as Ubbo-Sathla to protect them. Ubbo-Sathla was the greatest of their shoggoths, their all-purpose slave constructs. Eventually the shoggoths had rebelled, of course, an event that hastened the decline and ultimate collapse of their civilization, but not Ubbo-Sathla. Ubbo-Sathla slumbered on, dormant in the last, deserted surface city of the Elder Things, located on a high plateau in the Antarctic, frozen in the ice, loyal and vigilant. It would protect its masters, the Elder Things, when the time came.

And now that day had indeed come. Ubbo-

Sathla sensed the threat from the old enemy of its masters' species and it awoke. Huge earthquakes were felt in the Antarctic. Millions of tons of rock and ice was thrust aside as the giant amorphous shape emerged. It was an incredibly advanced construct, far more powerful than anything human science could possibly produce. After its long sleep, The construct examined itself, trying to determine what it had grown to become. "I am Ubbo-Sathla," it thought, "and I am mighty."

It had grown powerful over the millennia it contentedly noted, but when it compared its power to projections of the power of the entity it would have to battle, it quailed. The enemy was projected to be very strong. Ubbo-Sathla decided it needed firm information, not just projections, and so it created shoggoths and sent them looking for information about the world around, and some it sent to the den of the enemy, to spy. The subunits it sent, its shoggoths, were created from its own body. They were designed and extruded in seconds, instinctively, almost without thought. Some were the usual shambling blobs, but some were created with hastily woven scramjet engines, and sent screaming into the sky. These shoggoths were small, little more than flying eyes, but they went around the world, to the furthest corners, within hours.

They were the first to arrive at the enemy's fastness, and they provided Ubbo-Sathla with a lot of information. They showed it that the enemy was already emerging. Ubbo-Sathla saw a squid-like head, a massive arm, forced through a widening crack in the tallest vault door of a city of tall tombs.

"Cthulhu," Ubbo-Sathla whispered, in recognition of the ancient fiend.

It was not one of Cthulhu's spawn, not one of his constructs, it was the creature himself. Ubbo-Sathla watched, and calculated the rate of emergence of the foe. There was some time, Ubbo-Sathla decided, some days before the entity would be able to fully emerge into this dimension. Ubbo-Sathla could attack now, while the enemy was still weak or Ubbo-Sathla could grow. The strategic calculations were

quickly completed, and Ubbo-Sathla decided to gorge itself on the local resources, in order to grow to even huger dimensions and make its internal structure even more complex. Only then would it be assured of victory, only then would it be able to send the intruder back whence it came.

### **The Feast**

Ubbo-Sathla cast about, looking for food, and its shoggoths brought back good news. There was a local infestation of organic life. Ubbo-Sathla's flying shoggoth eyes and shambling shoggoth troops told it of an entity calling itself Humanity. Ubbo-Sathla rippled in joy at the thought of this abundant source of psychic energy, and it started to consume Humanity.

Dark pseudopods of its body emerged from the ground around human cities, dividing and recombining to form shoggoths, and a dark rain of shoggoths fell from the sky, everywhere absorbing human life. Ubbo-Sathla feasted in an orgiastic frenzy, consuming as much of the local complex lifeforms as it could, especially humans. It grew, and grew as its shoggoths returned to be reabsorbed, transferring the resources they had harvested.

At last, Ubbo-Sathla felt ready and its main body rolled into the ocean, towards the enemy, towards Cthulhu and its spawn.

The Elder Things, Ubbo-Sathla's now long-gone masters, had fought Cthulhu and his spawn before, and the information from these battles was stored in Ubbo-Sathla's mind. Ubbo-Sathla planned its tactics. It released fresh waves of shoggoths, filled the atmosphere with dust and poison, bathed the world in searing rays of energy and disrupted the very building blocks of matter. It charged forward, surrounded by its shoggoths, confident of victory.

Cthulhu saw the oncoming horde of constructs and sent his own newly emerged constructs, the Spawn of Cthulhu, against them, Spawn against Shoggoth. He watched the battle, amid the boiling waters of the sea and the screeching of tears in reality. He identified the nucleus of Earth's ancient defender, the Ubbo-Sathla, and

he flew with might beats of his wings, towards it. None of his Spawn were mighty enough to stand against Ubbo-Sathla, but Cthulhu knew victory would inevitably be his, even against such a huge beast. Victory always came to Cthulhu, it was inevitable.

The battle was long, the sky was ripped open, unimaginable quantities of the ocean boiled away in giant clouds of vapor. At last there came a halt, as Ubbo-Sathla was so severely damaged that it went offline for a fraction of a second. It was a halt in the battle, but it was hard to say if this halt was just a pause or if the battle had come to an end.

A winner, if there was one, was difficult to discern. Cthulhu ascended into the sky, soon to return perhaps, or to continue on his journeys forever, Earth forgotten, never to return. And the remains of Ubbo-Sathla rebooted its systems and retreated back to the Antarctic to repair itself. One titan in retreat, one in recovery, the battle likely to resume at any moment, or after a pause of a thousand years, it was impossible to tell.

The armies of the two titans fight still, the Spawn of Cthulhu and Ubbo-Sathla's mighty shoggoths, still locked in battle here and there across the planet.

During this lull, however long it will last, humanity has emerged from the ruins, and it must now attempt to survive, perhaps even reestablish itself.

# HUMAN THREATS



The world that the characters now inhabit is very, very dangerous indeed. A party that takes a wrong turn can be wiped out in seconds by a rampaging shoggoth or a band of crazies, or just the blasted and poisonous environment. This section includes a list of threats, both human and non-human. Let's start with human threats, of which there are many.

The PCs' enemies are going to come in a variety of flavors in the post apocalyptic world. At one end of the spectrum you'll find crazy loners who travel around and cause trouble just because they can. At the other end you'll find organized gangs of marauders who operate with almost military precision. And in between you'll have everything from shell shocked survivalists who shoot first and ask questions later, to crazies who only think of blood.

A lot of the time characters are going to be outnumbered and outgunned in pretty much every encounter with the bad guys. Instead of bravely facing them down in a fair fight, where the characters will almost certainly lose and get turned into a quick meal, they will have to fight

dirty, or not fight at all. Avoiding confrontation all together is often the best way to go. Characters will need to role-play their way out of a fight, but for PCs to be able to do this, they will need interesting NPCs to interact with.

There are two types of NPCs. There are throw-aways and reoccurring ones. Don't sweat it too much on throw-aways because they aren't going to come up again. They'll probably be given one standout trait that is fairly superficial, such as a green mohawk. Then they are gone.

Reoccurring NPCs require some more effort but that doesn't mean you have to give any NPC a full sheet of stats like the ones the PCs have. Most of the time you're not going to need to know that much information, because the NPCs aren't going to be the center of attention. It's better to focus on writing down exactly what you need for that NPC's encounter with the PCs, and then fill in the blanks on the fly if that NPC ends up becoming more important in the future.

Less important NPCs, even ones that turn up again and again, need only one defining characteristic that's easy to remember and record, so you (and the players) will be able to identify them quickly. A single word, dictatorial for example, is often enough, but don't let these characteristics completely define the characters. Make them do something surprising sometimes.

More important NPCs, however, should be more memorable to the players and have some depth, though that doesn't mean they have to take a long time to create. Just record the character's name, their appearance, their goal, and perhaps work out how they fit into your greater story arc. This means you need to have a firm storyline connecting everything that happens. Maybe there is a plot to kill the boss of the compound, for some crime, secret or infamous. That will give your NPC motivations and actions that are more natural feeling, both for you and your players.

## Fiendish NPCs

The majority of the NPCs in your campaign world are nameless and insignificant to the story. The random shopkeeper the characters

pass on the street, the third patron from the left at the bar, the guards at the gate. A lot of these NPCs are neutral towards the PCs, but some will actively want to do harm to the PCs, for one reason or another. NPCs can be potential allies, but even allies can have different goals. That nice-mannered group who claim to be scientists, the ones living in the ruins of Arkham. What exactly are they doing in their experiments? Are they doing human experiments?

### **Crazies**

The monsters of the Cthulhu Mythos are served by human cultists, and these servitors have been irrevocably altered. There is no way back for them. They are so divorced from their original human concerns now, that they delight in the destruction of the entire planet, and everything they once held dear.

Many humans of the world after the cataclysm have lost their minds. Their minds have literally been taken over by another entity and their physical body is dedicated to doing its bidding. Some beings exert an influence that is particularly strong. Such a creature is capable of reprogramming and warping DNA, transforming the victim into a monster in a matter of days.

The victims of the signal, the cultists in thrall to their monstrous master, are damned to a robot-like life of following the god's mental bidding. Few are allowed any measure of free will or any time off. This makes them appear to be simply "crazies", dangerous bands of wandering bandits. The purpose in this is unclear, as with many of the actions of the monsters of the Cthulhu Mythos.

### **Mutated Sorcerer**



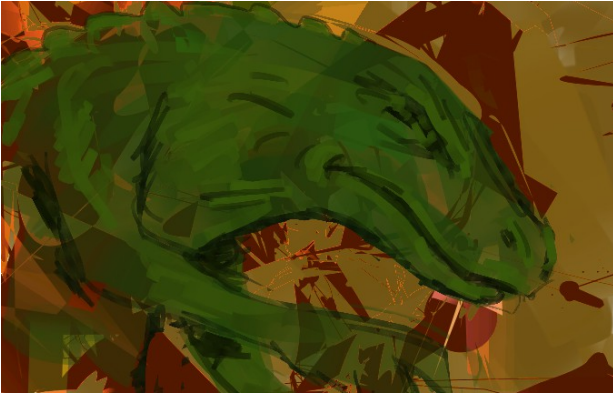
A servant of the creatures of the Mythos can eventually evolve into a mutated sorcerer or witch, powerful, but still unable to escape their lord's bidding. In place of blood, for example, the sorcerer has a greenish-yellow ichor. Yellow and black markings cover his or her back. From the waist down his body is covered in coarse black fur. A sort of rudimentary eye is positioned on each hip. When killed, his final words are an excerpt from the Necronomicon. Immediately after death, the sorcerer's corpse disintegrates into a sticky white mass, apparently having no true skeletal structure. This is just one example, the possible mutations such a foul and pitiful creature will be subject to are infinite.

The sorcerer will often resort to cloaks and masks to hide the hideous deformities of their body.



## DANGEROUS LOCATIONS

It isn't just humans who have survived the Cataclysm, other creatures have also lived on into the time after the return of Cthulhu. Some of these non-humans have even thrived among the new conditions. They live in caverns and cities and unhealthy places, making these locations very dangerous.



### Yoth

Yoth is a red-lit subteranean cavern once inhabited by the Serpent People who fled here to escape the destruction of their surface empire. In Yoth they built great cities, of which only ruins now remain. The downfall of the serpent people came when they abandoned their patron deity Yig to worship a new god. Explorers visit Yoth frequently to learn the serpent people's advanced scientific lore. There is a lightless cavern below Yoth. It is the home of the Great Old One Tsathoggua, and is the enclave of this creature's formless spawn.

Tsathoggua is an amorphous creature that rests in globur form, but can become sinuous when it, rarely, decides to move. It's dwelling place below Yoth is a squat, plain temple of basalt blocks without a single carving, and containing only a vacant onyx pedestal. Tsathoggua's will is carried out by the formless spawn, polymorphic entities made of black ichor. Formless spawn often rest in basins in Tsathoggua's temples and keep the sanctuary from being defiled by nonbelievers. Ghouls inhabit the pars of the city, much of its seeming to predate Tsathoggua, and being uninteresting to it.

### R'lyeh

R'lyeh is a city, now located on an island that has recently risen from the sea. This was the major event that precipitated the Cataclysm. The island is crawling with the Spawn of Cthulhu and is under constant attack from shoggoths. The city is created of exotic materials that bend and twist space-time, making the architecture behave in strange ways. A flat surface will appear to rear up to vertical as space-time curves, but will settle down to horizontal again when approached. Everything seems to writhe and shift as the observer moves around. The nightmare corpse-city of R'lyeh was built in measureless eons before history by vast, loathsome shapes that seeped down from the dark stars. Great Cthulhu and his hordes emerged from here, and his spawn still dwell here, hidden in green slimy vaults.

### Underdark

This is a huge cavern below the surface of Earth. It is bisected by a huge river. The river flows into pits and galleries of panic where poison springs feed frightful and remote waterfalls. There are various entrances, one of the biggest located in the ruins of Arkham. Another feature of the Underdark is a giant lake with a vast fungous shore lit by a belching column of sick greenish flame and cut by wide oily rivers that flow from deep abysses to join the blackest gulfs of immemorial ocean. The Necronomicon reports that the Underdark is extensive. The nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific.

### Y'ha-nthlei

This is one of the Undersea cities of the Deep Ones. It is the only Deep One city mentioned in the Necronomicon by name but it states that there are numerous others. It suffered extensive damage during the Cataclysm and the number of Deep Ones is very much reduced.



## MONSTERS

The existence of monsters was a terrible secret before the cataclysm, but now they are everywhere. They have emerged from the dark places of the world, and the depths of space. The surface of Earth is now wandered by giant slobbering creatures that can not be comprehended or reasoned with, and which are much more powerful than puny humans. Compared to these monsters, humans are quite fragile and short-lived entities.

Mythos creatures are alien to the point that they can not be predicted or understood. Their motivations and actions seem capricious and unfeeling. Even though they seem little different to bloodthirsty monsters, this is a misunderstanding. They are much more advanced and intelligent than any representative of humanity. Our inability to understand their cruelties and random behavior is a limitation of our intelligence. This, however, does not change the fact that humanity is preyed upon, a mere plaything for all kinds of extraterrestrial horrors. Creatures gibber in the tunnels beneath the character's

feet. Extradimensional phantoms hover unseen, overhearing and mocking humanity's every thought and secret. Perhaps some alien contamination lurks in the recesses of your own family tree, a genetic time bomb just waiting to go off.

### Common Characteristics

Old Ones and their spawn and servitors come in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes, but they have some characteristics in common. The first characteristic is that there is a hierarchy among them. Species of a lower rank on the hierarchy find it difficult to harm creatures from a higher rank. There is a penalty of -1D for every rank of difference between species. For example, Humans are Minor Things and are at -1D in any encounter with an Avatar, and -2D in any encounter with a Great One.

#### Power Hierarchy

All Powerful - eg Azathoth

Great One - eg Cthulhu

Avatar - eg Nyarlathotep

Minor Thing - eg Deep Ones and Humans

Mythos creatures are not immune to physical damage or firearms. They can be wounded by such things as bullets, dynamite or C4. Even mighty Cthulhu himself has been injured by a ship being sailed directly at his head as he emerged from the ocean.

### Supernatural Body

Many supernatural creatures possess Body stats in excess of 5d, as well as Trump dice. Keep in mind that you never roll more than 10d. Each extra die above 10d increases its damage. These extra dice are never rolled, but are used to calculate the results of the creatures' actions.

## BESTIARY

Now follows a very short bestiary of the very numerous creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos. If the GM prefers a game with even more variety of monsters for the players to interact with, it is quite simple to add monsters from a favorite Mythos horror book to the list.

### Amorphous Piper

These creatures squat amorously, far away from the light, piping noisomely on what looks like a separate device that resembles a flute, but is in fact one of the Piper's organs. Amorphous Pipers are popular at the courts of a large number of species. These creatures are also not above attending rituals initiated by a human cultist. They can also be communicated with by humans who master their piping language, or a complex system of sign language. Pipers are basically a brain, a teleportation and dimensional travel 'gland', a 'piping' organ, and an amorphous body wrapped in scaly skin. They can, when necessary, quickly exude a few legs arms and eyes to better interact with whatever environment they find themselves in. Their pipe interacts with the fabric of space and time to release power. This is what makes them so popular at ceremonies. The power they release makes the ceremony more likely to succeed. The ceremony is +1D for every attending Piper in attendance. Other than this bonus to magic, pipers do not interact with humans, and will fade away without doing battle if approached or challenged. They are musicians, not warriors.

### Azathoth

Azathoth is so powerful that even members of its court are considered god-like. Its minions include the avatar, Nyarlathotep, a dangerous and powerful entity, but little more than a lapdog to Azathoth. When not out in the universe causing havoc, the minions crowd around the royal throne, enjoying being close to their god. Azathoth is aware of the universe in its entirety at all times. Contacting Azathoth is a bad idea because even a glimpse of this giant construct can boggle the human mind. Providing stats for Azathoth would imply that humble PCs could in some way interact with this monster or challenge it. This is absolutely not the case.

## Blackness from the Stars



The Blackness from the Stars is a series of blobs of living, sentient darkness, torn from the primal fabric of the creature at the center of the rip in the sky. It is distinguishable in darkness only as vaguely shimmering oily pitch. Although intelligent, it speaks no known language and ignores attempts to communicate. Much of it dissipates as soon as it encounters our physical reality, but some coalesces and forms monsters. These are infinite in their size, shape and power. Ranging from minor things up to beasts that could challenge Cthulhu. None are visible, except by use of a Voorish sign or the Powders of Ibn-Ghazi.



## Cthulhu



Cthulhu is a scaly humanoid with an octopus head and small deformed wings. Pulpy and amorphous, it is a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face has a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. Cthulhu is a mix between a giant human, an octopus, and a dragon, and is hundreds of meters tall, with human-looking arms and legs. Cthulhu's head is similar to the entirety of a giant octopus, with an unknown number of tentacles surrounding whatever it uses for a mouth. Cthulhu is able to change the shape of its body at will, extending and retracting limbs and tentacles as it sees fit.

Cthulhu's body is maintained by some kind of symbiotic apparatus within it that sucks energy out of the universe itself. This might be zero point energy or dark energy or something else entirely, human technology is so primitive that humanity is never likely to know for sure. This energy can be seen entering the creature via the gills behind its octopus face tentacles and below the eyes. It breathes this energy in once every 1d6 rounds and reality seems to wither and warp around it as it breathes. This also creates a distortion field that destabilizes

human synaptic activity. Too long exposure often results in long-term episodes of mental illness and also sometimes an instant psychotic break.

Cthulhu is a Great Old One and is by far the most prominent member of this group. Cthulhu is colossal, but his exact size is changeable and difficult to determine. He can communicate directly with "the fleshy mind of mammals". Cthulhu is sometimes regarded as "evil", but this is a misunderstanding of his true nature. Instead, he is amoral, with an ethic that transcends conventional notions of good and evil. Common human laws, interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the vast cosmos-at-large. To understand beings such as Cthulhu, it is necessary to forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called humanity, have any existence at all.

Of Cthulhu it is said that, "He shall rise and His kingdom shall cover the Earth," and this is indeed part of Cthulhu's plans. He will return to Earth as soon as his Spawn have won their battle with Ubbo-Sathla's shoggoths, and there is no longer any entity on the planet capable of opposing him. The exact date of this return can be determined by the GM to suit their purposes.

Cthulhu's parent is an androgynous creature named Nagoob. Nagoob spilt from the Outer God Yog-Sothoth by a process of asexual reproduction, and then went on to later bear Cthulhu on the planet Vhoorl. Yog-Sothoth is therefore a kind of grandparent to Cthulhu, though there is absolutely no family feeling between any of these titanic alien beasts.

The characters have no way of winning any fight against Cthulhu and there is no need to even generate stats for the beast. By all means, the GM should roll dice as Cthulhu snatches characters up with his face tentacles and tosses them into his mouth orifice, but the characters' fate is sealed unless they can somehow escape the area.

## Spawn of Cthulhu

Cthulhu is served by an army of spawn. The Spawn of Cthulhu are octopus-like beings which colonized Earth sometime during the Paleozoic period and fought a long-lasting war against the Elder Things, a war that virtually destroyed both species. The Spawn of Cthulhu are not made out of ordinary matter and possess shape-shifting abilities. They are noted for the non-Euclidean geometry and strange angles of their architecture. The Spawn of Cthulhu do not age, nor do they need to eat or breathe. Only violence can bring about the death of one of these creatures. They can even survive in the void of outer space.

Each Spawn can be designed at whim by the GM as they are constructs and each one is created for a slightly different purpose. They are as numerous and diverse as the shoggoths they battle, even if they share the same rough body shape.

The Spawn of Cthulhu have warred with many other strange races out of time and space, including Elder Things. Guided by their knowledge of their master's great plan, and updated by his far-reaching dreams, the star-spawn of Cthulhu proceed inevitably toward their goals. They are tasked with destroying the shoggoths that seek to deny Earth to Cthulhu, but they have other tasks, too.

## Deep Ones



### Stats

Number of Dice: 62 to 100

Body: 3d to 7d

Coordination: 1d to 5d

Sense: 2d to 6d

Mind: 2d to 6d

Command: 2d to 4d

Empathy: 1d to 2d

Attack: Width+2 in Shock to width+2 in Killing

Armor: +2 wound boxes per hit location

Unnatural Intensity: 5

Skills: Brawling 3d, Climbing 2d, Mythos 2d,

Swimming 3d, Wrestling 2d

Traits: Ageless (4d), Extra Wound Boxes x2

(4d) Swimming 2d (Treated as half Flight in

Water), Inhuman Biology (3d), Supernatural

(8d), Special Attack: Claws (2d), Unnatural

Intensity 5 (5d)

Description: The Deep Ones are semi-aquatic creatures, a hybrid of human and fish, under the command of Cthulhu, who they worship as Dagon. They have acquired the technology necessary to manufacture and command shoggoths. They also have a liking for interbreeding with humanity to produce monstrous offspring. The offspring all

eventually return to the ocean to be with their own kind. They are at home in water, have a thick and horrid skin, and they reek of fish.

### **Dhole**

Dholes, which are also called Cthonians, live below ground, and some areas 'below' are festering with gigantic Dholes. They are huge, slimy worm-like creatures, of up to a thousand feet long and can rear up several hundred feet. They look bleached and viscous, and exist in the Underdark and in the Vale of Pnath in the Dreamlands, implying some deep physical connection between the two places.

### **Elder Thing**



Visitors to the planet include the Elder Things, who have tubular bodies and starfish-shape heads. They are six feet end to end, three and five-tenths feet central diameter, tapering to one foot at each end. Like a barrel with five bulging ridges. In furrows between ridges are curious growths – combs or wings that fold up and spread out like fans, which gives almost seven-foot wing spread. They are vegetable-like in shape, having radial symmetry instead of the bilateral symmetry of bipeds. They also differed in that they have a five-lobed brain. The Elder Things exhibit vegetable as well as animal characteristics, and reproduce using spores. The bodies of the Elder Things are incredibly tough, capable of withstanding the pressures of the deepest ocean. They have 360° vision, so it is very difficult to creep up on an Elder Thing. Elder Things are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness. Elder Things are immune to cold, resistant to fire, and can even survive in complete vacuum. An Elder Thing can survive in the void of outer space, and its wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days, the Elder Thing goes dormant while it travels



longer distances between the stars.

The Elder Things are also capable of hibernating for vast epochs of time. They look like two huge black cities, seen from a human perspective, but are just small scientific settlements from the perspective of the Elder Things. There is a staff of Elder Things and their servant shoggoths still entombed below their Antarctic research base. The Elder Things are sleeping with their faithful shoggoths tending their giant cold machines.

#### War with the Spawn of Cthulhu

Many millions of years ago, when the Elder Things were investigating the only other structure on the planet that they were aware of, the sunken city of R'lyeh. They triggered a war with the Spawn of Cthulhu. They realized that the Spawn were powerful constructs and extrapolated from them to form a projection of the power of the monster that had created them, at that time slumbering within the city. They fought a century of wars against the Spawn before giving up and leaving the sunken city in peace. They then started to design a huge shoggoth, to be named Ubbo-Sathla, that would be able to finally wipe out the Spawn and the monster controlling them. The slumberer within the city was only dimly aware of these events and the actions and strategy of the spawn were mostly automatic.

#### Shoggoth Rebellion

After the war with the Spawn of Cthulhu, the Elder Things lost control of their servitor constructs, the shoggoths. A brutal cull was required before control was restored, and many Elder Things fled from Earth, back to other more hospitable outposts among the stars. It's said that the Elder Things reined the Shoggoths back in by wiping most of them out, retraining them and only using them when absolutely necessary. Also, the reliefs studied show the Elder Things feared the mountains where Ubbo-Sathla, the greatest shoggoth on the planet was being constructed by autonomous machines, impossible now to halt. Ubbo-Sathla became a shadowy fear about which they did not like to speak. More shoggoth uprisings followed, and ever more Elder Things fled Earth.

## Ghoul



Number of Dice: 72 to 112

Body: 3d to 6d (6 to 12)

Coordination: 1d to 5d (2 to 10)

Sense: 2d to 8d (4 to 16)

Mind: 2d to 6d (4 to 12)

Command: 3d to 5d (6 to 10)

Empathy: 2d to 3d (4 to 6) (26 to 66)

Attack: Width+2 in Shock to width+2 in Killing

Armor: +3 wound boxes per hit location

Unnatural Intensity: 5

Skills: Brawling 2d, Climbing 4d, Mythos 2d, Sight 5d, Smell 5d (18)

Traits: Ageless (4d), Extra Wound Boxes x3 (6d), Inhuman Biology (3d), Supernatural (8d),

Special Attack: Claws (2d), Unnatural Intensity 5 (5d)

Description: Ghouls are seldom completely human, but often approach humanity in varying degree. Most of their bodies, while roughly bipedal, had a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine cast. The texture of the majority is a kind of unpleasant rubberiness. They can grow to colossal size. They have glaring red eyes, and bony claws. The less human-looking versions have dog faces with pointed ears, bloodshot eyes, flat nose, and drooling lips.

Some have scaly claws and a mould-caked body. They move on hoofed feet. Ghouls can be bargained with by those that learn their language. The language is a howling, gibbering mess to human ears. Only the most learned of ghoulish sorcerers usually bother to learn any human language. Ghouls are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

### **Glaaki**

Glaaki, Lord of Dead Dreams, is an avatar of Shub-Niggurath, another face of the dark God of the Woods. It can be summoned, but it will not survive for more than a few hours unless a lake has been specially prepared for it by members of the zombie plague it has unleashed. Any lake can become a home to Glaaki and the creature can move to any other lake, anywhere else in the universe, that has been similarly contaminated. A contaminated lake has trace elements of chemicals unknown to human science, which of course make all the fish die.

Glaaki has the shape of an enormous slug covered with metallic spines that, despite their appearance, are actually organic growths. Glaaki creates the 'patient 0' zombies by ramming these spines into their flesh. These victims rapidly zombify and begin to spread the zombie plague by the usual means of biting and scratching. Glaaki can also extrude tentacles with eyes at the tips, allowing it to peer from underneath the water.

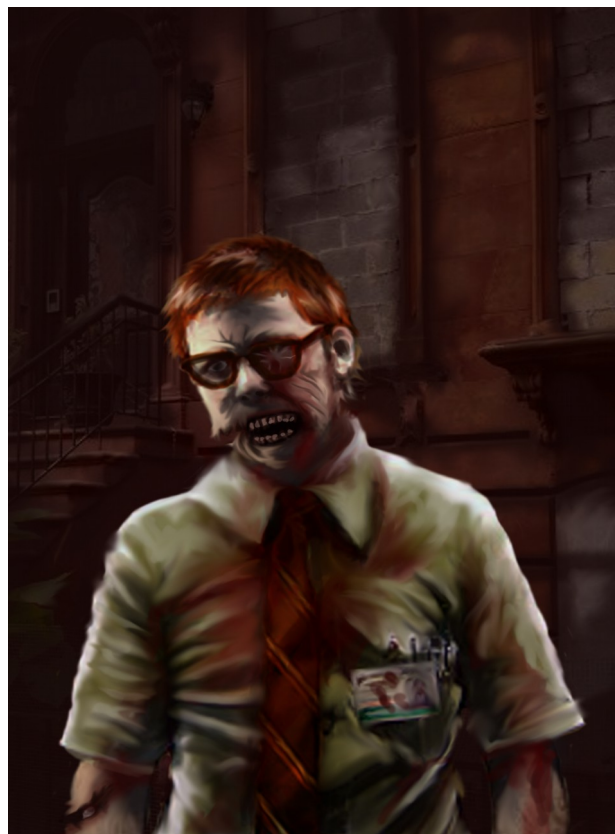
Glaaki quickly turns local life forms into zombies, which spend most of their time wandering and subsisting. When the zombies discover an uncontaminated lake they swarm there until they reach 1d100+20 in number, before walking into the water and dissolving. The uncanny chemicals that transform the lake are produced within the zombie bodies. The zombies completely dissolve during this process, finally released from their undead existence.

This entity can emerge from any lake or other large body of water. It must simply choose to be there, and it manifests. Glaaki can influence the minds of humans, but this power has a limited range. Generally, it can only influence

the unwilling if they live in the region next to the lake it is currently inhabiting for a length of time. This influence often takes the form of dreams. Glaaki has a round body with no discernible limbs. Its back is covered by long, sharp spines. On the front is a large mouth, above which are three yellow eyes.

Glaaki has a small cult following, though that may be the wrong term for it. It can create what are called Servants of Glaaki, which are humans who have been forced into a zombie-like state. This happens by Glaaki driving one of his spikes through the victim's chest and injecting a fluid, which keeps the victim from true death. Some have said that this impalement is the initiation to the cult of Glaaki, so it is not clear if he has any truly human worshipers.

### **Zombies of Glaaki**



Zombies are mindless, reanimated corpses with a hunger for human flesh. The worst aspect of zombies is that they can simply shrug off most things that would incapacitate a living person. Huge holes in their abdomen or missing limbs are of no consequence to a zombie. A zombie can only be stopped by a devastating, precision blow to the base of the brain stem, the destruction of over 90% of the brain, or catastrophic disintegration, such as caused by

acid, or the temperatures inside a kiln. Shotgun blasts to the torso will not stop them, they will usually survive a shotgun blast to the head, peppering them with machine-gun fire will only slow them down. Even a grenade is not guaranteed to incapacitate them. If the zombie has even one remaining attached limb, it will attempt to keep moving towards its target.

Zombies are extremely stupid, but do have enough cunning to lurk in shadows and ambush targets. If the target moves away, the zombie will, however, swiftly abandon this plan and shamle towards their target as fast as their atrophied muscles will carry them. This can be quite a fast walk, for a very recently deceased zombie, but is often much slower if the zombie died a few months ago and has not been able to feed, resulting in the virus metabolizing muscle tissue. Zombies can be stealthy, they never give up, they do not sleep, and when cornered by a zombie, with adrenalin pumping, it is very difficult to make the precise shot, or land the precise blow required to sever the brain stem.

## Hound of Tindalos



A Hound of Tindalos is lean and always athirst. They have thin and hungry bodies. They dwell in the distant past of the earth, when normal life had not yet advanced past one-celled organisms. They travel via the angles of time, while other beings (such as humankind and all common life) are constrained by curves. The Hounds are thought to be immortal and are believed to lust after something in humankind and other normal life, and will follow victims through time and space to get it. They have long, hollow tongues or proboscis to drain victims' body-fluids, and excrete a strange blue ichor. The Hounds are somewhat bat-like in appearance, but their tangential relationship with reality means that their entire form is never visible at one time. Layers of skin, muscle, and bone appear and disappear constantly as the creature moves. The reference to Hounds in their name refers more to the creatures' habits than their appearance.

Because of their relationship with the angles of time, they can materialize through any corner if it is fairly sharp. When a Hound is about to appear, it materializes first as smoke pouring from the corner, and finally the head emerges followed by the body. It is said that once a human is known to one of these creatures, a Hound of Tindalos will pursue the victim through anything. A person risks attracting their attention by viewing or traveling through time. Because the hounds are not true inhabitants of our reality, most attacks pass straight through without causing damage. Only 1 successful attack in 6, (on a roll of 6 on a d6), has its consequences recorded on the hound's sheet.



## Mi-go - (Fungi from Yuggoth)



Number of Dice: 107  
Body: 4d Lift: 400 lbs.  
Flight: 36 yards  
Coordination: 3d  
Sense: 4d  
Mind: 5d  
Command: 6d  
Empathy: 2d  
Attack: Width in Shock  
Armor: HAR 2  
Unnatural Intensity: 7  
Skills: Detection 2d, First Aid 3d, Imitate Human Speech 1d, Mechanic [Alien Devices] 2d, Medicine 3d, Stealth 2d, Telepathy 2d, Wrestling 2d.  
Traits: Ageless (4d), Flight (4d), Foresight (8d), HAR 2 (8d), Inhuman Biology [immune to temperature, pressure] (3d), Supernatural (8d), Unnatural Intensity 7 (7d).

Description: These creatures are not much bigger than human-sized, with wings and globular heads covered with cilia. While technically fungi, Mi-go bear a great resemblance to crustaceans with elongated bodies. These creatures arrived on Earth as an infestation among the alien stones used by

Cthulhu to build his city of tombs. They prefer the higher pressures found on gas giants and have almost entirely left Earth in favor of Saturn and Jupiter. Mi-go have mastered various fields of science, and are especially adept at surgery, and can do things such as extensively modify their own bodies and those of their victims. They seem to assume that other species are as keen on surgery without anesthetic as they are.

They are interested in humanity in much the same way as humanity is interested in ordinary animals. But the Outer Ones are eager to remain hidden from the prying eyes of man and are very careful in their "expeditions." They like to remove human brains then hook them up to special machines for interrogation, or make cybernetic modifications to captured humans. Mi-go can survive in the void of outer space, and their wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days. They must piggy-back on the travels of other species to travel between the stars. They are utterly inhuman, though many can affect human speech in an odd, reedy voice like that of a giant insect.

## Nightgaunt

Nightgaunts are black humanoids with bat-like wings, rubbery bodies, inward pointing horns, barbed tails, and no face. They now fly in the sky in huge numbers, but mostly fly too high to be seen and ignore humanity below. They are attracted to electricity and the use of any electrical device will attract 1d6, every ten minutes. They guard many of the entrances to the Underdark and to the Dreamlands. For example, they inhabit an entrance to the Dreamlands that is located on the mountain of Ngranek, and they are the reason people fear to climb too high on that mountain. They also guard the entrance to the Underworld at Sarkomand and the tops of the mountains that circle the plateau of Leng.

They sometimes attack at night, seemingly unprovoked, and are said to 'tickle' their prey into submission. The Nightgaunts have been known to take people and leave them in the Vale of Pnath, at the mercy of the Dholes that dwell there but are never seen. The Nightgaunt

can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h. If the gaunt succeeds in combat they cause a fit of laughter in their target that debilitates them for 1d6 rounds.

## Nyarlatotep



Nyarlatotep is best known by the name under which he was once worshiped in Egypt. He is a malign deity, a faceless god, who is also called the Crawling Chaos. It can assume a human form resembling that of an attractive Egyptian man or woman, and he (or often she) wanders the earth gathering legions of followers. He gains converts through demonstrations of strange and seemingly magical instruments.

Nyarlatotep is a kind of itinerant showman or lecturer who holds forth in hastily erected tents and arouses widespread fear and discussion with his exhibitions. These exhibitions consisted of two parts, first, a horrible — possibly prophetic — series of visions, followed by some extraordinary experiments on live subjects. Visitors to the shows whisper in awe of his horrors, and warn against going near him.

Before a show, throngs of people are seen plodding through the night, all whispering in fear and trepidation, all bound in one direction. They aren't yet cultists, they are still afraid, yet eager to see and hear the great, the obscure, the unutterable Nyarlatotep. These followers gradually lose awareness of the world around them, becoming enthralled cultists. It is possible for a very powerful sorcerer to make a pact with this entity, but they would be foolish to count on Nyarlatotep holding up his end of the bargain.

When not sporting with unfortunate human victims, Nyarlatotep rests among the Dholes at the Earth's core, taking the form of a huge but faceless god. Nyarlatotep can also take the form of a nocturnal tentacled, bat-winged monster. As well as his relationship with humanity, Nyarlatotep has built up a close relationship with the Mi-Go, where his cult has become their dominant religion. The Mi-Go venerate Nyarlatotep even above Cthulhu, whose influence is not felt as strongly on the outer planets of the solar system.

Nyarlatotep seems to serve the interests of Azathoth, and may be a fragment, an avatar or even an aspect of that deity. Nyarlatotep uses human languages and can be mistaken for a human being. While the other Old Ones are mindless or unfathomable, Nyarlatotep delights in cruelty, is deceptive and manipulative, and even cultivates followers and uses propaganda to achieve his goals. In this regard, he is probably the most human-like of the Old Ones.



## Reptilian Quadrupeds of Yoth



After the Serpent People fled to Yoth, they created reptilian quadrupeds as beasts of burden and adapted them with club tails for war. These beasts, the few that are left of them, now infest the caverns of Yoth. They are as large and strong as bears, but they have an array of natural weapons, from claws, to teeth to a club tail.

## Serpent People



Number of Dice: 98 to 110

Body: 4d

Coordination: 4d

Sense: 4d

Mind: 4d to 6d (8 to 12)

Command: 4d to 8d (8 to 16)

Empathy: 2d

Attack: Poisonous bite inflicts width in Shock+4 Shock and Killing

Armor: LAR 3

Unnatural Intensity: 6

Skills: Bite 2d, Dodge 3d, Endurance 3d, Mythos 3d, Psychology 3d, Smell 4d, Stealth 2d, Swimming 3d, Survival 2d, Wrestling 4d.

Traits: Ageless (4d), Inhuman Biology (3d), LAR 3 (3d), Poisonous Bite [+4 shock+killing] (4d), Shapechange [appear as a human except for its shadow] (1d), Supernatural (8d), Unnatural Intensity 6 (6d).

Description: The Serpent People are a species that arose before the dinosaurs and ruled the world for millions of years with arcane knowledge in degenerate worship of the Great Old Ones. Their bodies are serpentine, with large heads, but they have arms and legs and do

not otherwise resemble snakes. Sometime in the distant past their culture fell into ruin and only a handful of immortal, skilled individuals manage now to survive. Throughout human history these few have hidden in the cultures that have come and gone, using an unearthly disguise—a mental projection that makes one appear as a human (except for its shadow, which is always serpentine). They are dangerous, brilliant, calculating creatures who have had millions of years to study and manipulate humanity. They are never easy to locate or destroy.

Serpent People worship the Great Old One Yig, who, with its twin god, Tulu, is an aspect of Shub-Niggurath. The Serpent People believe they were created untold aeons ago by Yig. Serpent people have hypnotic gazes and lethally venomous bites, as well as terrible crushing strength. The Serpent people tried to conquer the world, and take it for themselves once again, around 20,000 years ago, but were unsuccessful and returned to their eternal hiding.

The ancient serpent empire was based on sorcery and alchemy, but collapsed about 225 million years ago during the Triassic era. They built subterranean cities, of which only ruins remain in the modern age. Their downfall came when they abandoned their patron deity Yig to worship a new god. As retribution Yig placed its curse upon them. Brave explorers now visit Yoth, if they can find it, to learn more of the serpent people's scientific lore.

## **Shoggoth**

Number of Dice (for a small one): 114

Body: 7d

Coordination: 2d

Sense: 4d

Mind: 2d

Command: 2d

Empathy: 1d

Attack: Width in killing+2d Area

Armor: Bulletproof

Unnatural Intensity: 8

Skills: Brawling 2d, Imitate Skill 4d+1td, Wrestling 3d.

Traits: Ageless (4d), Amorphous (10d), Area 2d (10d), Bulletproof (10d), Inhuman Biology (3d), Scale x4 (4d), Supernatural (8d), Unnatural Intensity 8 (8d).

**Imitation:** This skill can be substituted for any skill the Shoggoth does not possess, provided that it has seen the skill performed before. A Shoggoth could use Imitation to pick a type of lock it has already seen picked, or to mimic a phrase it has already heard, but could not use it to deal with a new situation.

**Description:** The Shoggoths are a kind of artificial life, robots created by the Elder Things from the most advanced biotechnology. They were created to function as slave labor and cannot reproduce unless the Elder Things initiate reproductive protocols. They are an example of an experiment that the Elder Things consider very successful. This is in sharp contrast to humans, which are considered by the Elder Things to be a joke or mistake. Since the time of the Shoggoths' creation, a very long time ago, the Deep Ones learned the secrets of creating and controlling Shoggoths. They served as beasts of burden for the Deep Ones in their cities, including Y'ha Nthlei. But when Ubbo-Sathla emerged, these shoggoths were called to it. They were reprogrammed, no longer following Deep One commands. They slaughtered the vast majority of Deep Ones and absorbed them. The Deep Ones have been just as badly hit as humanity by the emergence of Cthulhu and Ubbo-Sathla.

Shoggoths are terrible things, vaster than any subway train. They are shapeless conglomerations of protoplasmic bubbles,

faintly self-luminous, and with myriads of temporary eyes forming and un-forming as pustules of greenish light all over their bodies. They are massive amoeba-like creatures made out of iridescent black slime, with multiple eyes 'floating' on the surface. They lack any default body shape and instead are able to form limbs and organs at will. An average shoggoth measures fifteen feet across when a sphere, though they can grow to much, much greater size.

They are intelligent to some degree, but they tend to deal with problems using their great size and strength. The shoggoths build and maintain the underwater cities of their masters, first the Elder Things, then the Deep Ones, and now Ubbo-Sathla. Shoggoths can move objects much bigger than themselves and weld them in place with glue secreted from orifices that form in their skin.

### **Ubbo-Sathla**

One particularly huge and powerful Shoggoth is called Ubbo-Sathla, or Abthoth. When Cthulhu emerged, Ubbo-Sathla was also awoken to do battle with him. This was an ancient defense mechanism designed by the Elder Things. Ubbo-Sathla absorbed billions of humans, and other creatures such as Deep Ones, using them as fuel in its epic battle against Cthulhu. Ubbo-Sathla created many millions of shoggoths, which were sent to absorb humans and bring back the essential salts and psychic energy. It was an orgiastic feeding that took some time to complete, allowing some refugees to find sanctuary.

Human technology was completely impotent in the face of the creature, being much more primitive than the technology of the Elder Things. Human technology could not halt it, could not extract revenge, and could save precious few from the path it cut across the surface of the world. In the battle between the giant shoggoth and Cthulhu, what was left of humanity could only look on and quake in fear. It is not clear who won this battle, or even if the battle is truly at an end. It is now being fought

by the two behemoths' proxies, the shoggoths fighting for Ubbo-Sathla against the Spawn, who fight for their overlord, Cthulhu.

For those with a strong mind who observe Ubbo-Sathla, it resembles a huge protoplasmic mass. Now it is resting, licking its wounds, in a grotto deep beneath the frozen earth, but it has not ceased its eternal churning and bubblings. The being is of a monstrous fecundity, spontaneously generating primordial single-celled organisms that pour unceasingly from its shapeless form. It occupies a sort of pool with a margin of mud that is marled with obscene offal. It is a grayish, horrid mass that nearly chokes the pool from rim to rim. The gray mass quobbs and quivers, and swells perpetually; and from it, in manifold fission, are spawned anatomies that creep away on every side through the grotto. There are things like bodiless legs or arms that flail in the slime, or heads that roll, or floundering bellies with fishes' fins; and all manner of things malformed and monstrous, that grow in size as they depart from the neighborhood of Ubbo-Sathla. Anyone who doesn't swim swiftly ashore if they fall into the pool, are devoured by mouths that gape in the parent bulk. Obscene monsters constantly form in Abthoth's gray mass and crawl away from their parent. No two of Abthoth's children are alike. In general, they are complex life forms, but the majority of them are simple-minded, acting on impulse. Their forms can be anything from amorphous blobs and singular body parts, to queer humanoids and monstrous mutants. Abthoth's tentacles and limbs grab many of them, pulling them back and devouring them. Most of those that escape simply wander off, only a few of them tend to their sire's needs.

It will take some time to heal, after its battle with Cthulhu, but it is still more than a match for anything humanity can throw at it. Whatever its pseudopods touch is forever devoid of life.

## Sebek



The priesthood of the cults of Nyarlathotep often worship this god in lesser forms, to protect them from the mind-bending effects of seeing their god's real form. They worship gigantic beings who are half-beast and half-human, or a mixture of beasts, such as Sebek, who is a beast with the face of a crocodile and the body of a lion. The priests obtain great magical power from these beings, but have to offer them incense and human sacrifices.

## Shub-Niggurath

Shub-Niggurath is an evil cloud-like entity located somewhere in interplanetary space within our solar system. It has long, stretching tentacles and its main body is a pulsating mass of muscle. There are black shapes and many yellow eyes among the flesh. Shub-Niggurath is a bestial, flesh eating presence, interested primarily in eating and all other organic bodily functions, and also in the torturing and destruction of flesh. She cares little whether the flesh she is enjoying is snake people, human or some more exotic Mythos creature. She is a Great Old One with a long association with Earth. Her followers have changed over time, from the Serpent People, who knew her as Yig, all the way to her present day human followers. The serpent people have long since deserted

Shub-Niggurath, who was unworshipped and alone for thousands of years, until humans, and some other Mythos species, turned to her.

Shub-Niggurath is frequently mentioned or called upon in incantations, venerated with the words, 'Iä! Shub-Niggurath!' The centre of human worship of this deity is in the Crimson Desert, in the City of Pillars, where Shub-Niggurath is worshipped at underground shrines, and this City of Pillars still stands, though much was ruined during the emergence of Cthulhu.

Shub-Niggurath's most common incarnation, when encountered resting in interplanetary space is an amorphous form with long tentacles, but she has many incarnations, including the All Mother, the Lord of the Wood and, the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. The Black Goat is male and is the most common earthly form of Shub-Niggurath. The Black Goat knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

## Spawn of Dagon



Many creatures, including the Deep Ones, worship Cthulhu under the name Dagon. In response to their worship, Cthulhu creates spawn that more resemble frog-headed monsters than the squid-headed spawn who fought for him against the Elder things. They are a fishy, aquatic species that ruled the world before land appeared.

They have a giant toad-like face, the features of which are dim and unstable as those of a specter seen in a mirror of nightmare. Great pools of light that might have been eyes blink at the observer, and a cosmic lust can be seen in them. Only the blinking toad-like face stands out with any distinctness.

These demonic minions, the Spawn of Dagon, are regularly sent to the deep oceans of the world to become high priests of the evil aquatic monsters known as the Deep Ones. Cthulhu's cult, worshiped under the name of Dagon, has never really died out amongst humans in isolated villages, who secretly turn to his worship, sometimes on the promise of bountiful fishing or alien golden jewelery.

## Subterranean Raptor



They are hybrid winged things insectile, with black wings and a blunt lizard-like snout, they have the rotting flesh on legs and arms, with webbed hands and feet. They flop limply along, half with their webbed feet and half with their membranous wings. To control a raptor, the rider must hide their face. Only a cowled figure may seize and mount them, and ride off along the reaches of the unlighted rivers of the Underdark, into pits and galleries of panic where poison springs feed frightful waterfalls. The subterranean raptor can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h. Raptors can be tamed, and even trained but it is a sanity bending task that requires a great deal of Mythos lore.



## Talpeurs



These are minions of Shterot, the Tenebrous One. They are a species of mole-like humanoid burrowers. They seem dangerous because of their strength and sharp claws, but they are much more perilous than their fierce appearance would indicate.

They are as stealthy as an animal a fraction of their bear-like size and as intelligent as any human. They also have the uncanny ability to multiply whenever they receive damage. Should one of the limbs be severed, it simply regrows another.

They have been hidden in the Underdark for millions of years, but now they are being sent out by their overlord, to scout out the situation left by the battle between Ubbo-Sathla and Cthulhu, to see if any advantage can be gained from it.

## Tsathoggua

Tsathoggua (the Sleeper of N'kai) is an Old One, a supernatural entity described as an amorphous, toad-like creature. Its shape changes slowly, almost imperceptibly, but it retains some characteristics in most of its forms. It is very squat and pot-bellied, with a head more like a monstrous toad than a deity, and the whole body is covered with an imitation of short fur, giving somehow a vague sensation of both the bat and the sloth. Its sleepy lids are usually half-lowered over globular eyes. Its belly is of great girth and it has batlike furriness and the look of a sleepy black toad. But Tsathoggua can perform more radical transformations, for example moulding itself from a toad-like gargoyle to a sinuous line with hundreds of rudimentary feet.

It dwells in a temple of basalt blocks without a single carving, and containing only a vacant onyx pedestal. It was built in imitation of the temples depicted in the vaults of Zin. Tsathoggua does not rise from this place, even in the ravaging of hunger, but instead waits in divine slothfulness for sacrifice. It was once widely worshipped as a god, by species that came long before humanity. Tsathoggua knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

### Formless Spawn

Tsathoggua is served by the formless spawn, shape-shifting entities made of a black viscous substance. Swellings, as if by the action of some powerful yeast, often bulge forth to gradually produce perhaps an uncouth amorphous head with dull and bulging eyes on an ever-lengthening neck. Arms, alien looking and misshapen, likewise arise inch by inch. Or they can create tentacle-like appendages in lieu of claws or hands. They rest in basin-like beds, and when they are awoken the whole mass of the dark fluid of its body begins to rise and 'pour' over the rim of the basin like a torrent of black quicksilver.

They take on a snake form to move quickly, with dozens of short legs emerging from the undulating belly. They are surprisingly flexible

and plastic, and can quickly flow into a room through the tiniest of cracks. Formless spawn can take any shape and can attack their targets in nearly every conceivable way, cutting, slashing, biting, trampling. They are extremely resilient and very difficult to kill. One successful attack in 3 is absorbed by their body with no visible effect.

### **Yithians**

They, in their incarnation best known by humans, resemble tall, scaly cones with four arms. Two of the arms have claws, one has a trumpet-like organ, and the fourth is a yellow, globe-like organ. The Yithians are a prehistoric civilization that populated much of the Earth in the distant past, and will populate it again in the far future. Their great power derived from their mastery of time travel. They are almost omniscient. They set up exchanges with the minds of other planets, and of the past and future. They did not originate on Earth, but came here from an artificial planet, a black, aeon-dead orb in far space called Yith.

The Yithians are beings of enormous intellectual and psychic powers. They escaped the destruction of their home planet by transferring their minds to the bodies of a species native to the Earth in the far distant past. They lived on this planet for 200 million years or so, in fierce competition with the flying polyps, whom they initially subdued. However, this enemy over time increased in number and near the close of the Cretaceous era (about 66 million years ago), rose up and finally destroyed the civilization of the Yithians, forcing the Yithians to flee en masse to the bodies of the beetle people, located far in the future.

The unique ability of this scientifically advanced race is to travel through time by swapping minds with creatures of another era. This allows them to satisfy their interest in human culture, science, and occult beliefs. Occupied beings' minds transfer to Yithian bodies against their will. These captive minds are queried by skilled inquisitors while the Yithians, using the vacany human body, learn as much as possible.

### **Yog-Sothoth**

The rip in the sky was caused by a terrible Old One, and it is also a manifestation of this very same Old One, a creature called Yog-Sothoth. Yog-Sothoth is one with all time and space. Yog-Sothoth is the Gate, the Key and the Guardian. Yog-Sothoth knows all and sees all. Cthulhu summoned Yog-Sothoth during his recent battle with Ubbo-Sathla, as a source of magical energy, and this summoning created the rip in the sky.

Cthulhu was able to draw massive amounts of power from Yog-Sothoth, and to smite Ubbo-Sathla. Unfortunately, Yog-Sothoth is a creature that is older and more powerful than Cthulhu; Yog-Sothoth birthed the monstrosity that birthed Cthulhu. When Yog-Sothoth resisted being dismissed after the battle, Cthulhu did not have the strength to definitively send it back from whence it came. It is now trapped half in and half out of Earth's dimension in a geostationary orbit above the Pacific. Because of the way Yog-Sothoth warps space, the rip in the sky can be seen from anywhere on Earth and is experienced as being directly overhead, wherever the observer is actually located.

The rip in the sky and the frenzy of activity around and within it are glaring reminders, impossible to ignore, that the world has been irrevocably changed by the Cataclysm. The rip in the sky isn't only of interest to humans, it also fascinates the ghouls. The ghouls are wolf-like humans, newly emerged from their hiding places below ground. They make sacrifices to Yog-Sothoth to become even more warped and transformed. All transformation is easy to Yog-Sothoth. Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth.

## Coleopterous People



Because the Yithians traveled to the future as well as the past, they foresaw their own destruction by the flying polyps. Before the fateful day, the Yithians transferred their best minds forward through time into the bodies of the 'beetle folk' (the Coleopterous People), Earth's dominant species after humankind. The beetle folk are not a result of plodding natural selection but catastrophism, a combination of radiation, DNA tampering (accidental and designed), and other effects of the confrontation between Cthulhu and Ubbo-Sathla.

They are giant beetles with enlarged brains and cybernetic enhancements. They can not fly under their own power, though they still have vestigial wings used in display. Their mouths include cybernetic – pipe-like – mouth parts among curved pincers.

## Voormi



Number of Dice: 98 to 110

Body: 4d

Coordination: 4d

Sense: 4d

Mind: 4d to 6d (8 to 12)

Command: 4d to 8d (8 to 16)

Empathy: 2d

Attack: Huge claws inflict width in Shock+4 Shock and Killing

Armor: LAR 3

Unnatural Intensity: 6

Skills: Claw 2d, Dodge 3d, Endurance 3d, Mythos 3d, Psychology 3d, Smell 4d, Stealth 2d, Swimming 3d, Survival 2d, Wrestling 4d.

Traits: Ageless (4d), Inhuman Biology (3d), LAR 3 (3d), Huge claws [+4 shock+killing] (4d), Supernatural (8d), Unnatural Intensity 6 (6d).

Description: A Voormi (plural: Voormis) is a three-toed humanoid, often umber-colored or green. They are hunchbacks and stand only half erect. They claw at enemies with huge hook-shaped claws that catch and hold in the links of armor. The Voormis communicate by dog-like howls.



The Voormis consider themselves the chosen minions of Tsathoggua, and his direct descendants. Their ancestors were originally thralls of the Serpent-people who escaped their control. They began dwelling underground in an effort to imitate their deity, Tsathoggua. Their religious rites are excessively sanguinary and revolting.

The Voormis established a thriving culture before the coming of humans; establishing citadels in the island of Ta-Shon and adding to the arcane knowledge of the Pnakotic Manuscripts. Their civilization eventually fell into demise. With constant warfare with their former overlords, the Serpent-people, they grew smaller and smaller in numbers, until the remnants retreated out of human sight.

## ENCLAVES

The world is now full of threats, but it is not entirely devoid of sources of aid and support. There are enclaves of other survivors who have not yet degenerated into crazies, there are troves of supplies and there is knowledge, the most valuable commodity of all, waiting in the world to be found.

There is no longer any overarching government. All organizations and power structures, in the absence of any advanced communications, are very local. Some are quite impressive, such as entire towns, prisons and university campuses that have been walled off to provide a refuge for hundreds of survivors, (though all seem to eventually fall). But most are just small bands of survivors, in a camp behind barbed wire, or barricaded into a defensible building.

These enclaves are rarely run according to democratic principles, decisions have to be made too quickly, and danger is too ever-present. Usually these enclaves are run by a warlord, bandit queen, cult leader, or other figure able to inspire loyalty and keep a group together in the face of terrible odds. Not all of these leaders are benign, or loved, or even admired. Many are dictators. Some bands of survivors, led by psychotic dictators, are very dangerous indeed.

Some survivor groups are not so keen to share their resources, and will fight to protect what they have, but there are also ones that are out to save everyone, but lack the means to do so. They share what little they have, effectively dooming themselves, if the PCs accept their help.

### Miskatonic Region

The example enclaves below are all located in, or accessible from, the Miskatonic Region. This is a small region, located in the real-life Essex County of Massachusetts, USA. The most important section of this region stretches along the Miskatonic River valley, from Dunwich in the far west to where it enters the Atlantic Ocean between Arkham, Kingsport, and Innsmouth. Most of these settlements are now deserted ruins now.

There is a thrill of unutterable ghastliness in what remains of all the ancient, lonely farmhouses of backwoods New England; for there the dark elements of strength, solitude, grotesqueness, and ignorance combine to form the perfection of the hideous.

### Arkham's Ruins

Arkham is a town that is now deserted and destroyed. The ruins are located alongside the darkly muttering Miskatonic river. The ruins of the Miskatonic university are located in Arkham. It was a highly prestigious university, famous for its collection of occult books. The ruined library still holds one of the very few genuine copies of the Necronomicon. Other tomes include the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* by Friedrich von Junzt and some fragments of the *Book of Eibon*.

The university also has a small museum, still intact, with a collection of ancient and unusual artifacts. These include a sacrificial knife, the skeleton of a huge deformed rat with hints of human or primate anatomy, a bowl made of some metal that scientists are unable to identify, and a strange stone statuette of a star-headed god. There is an enclave of humanity within the ruins of Arkham, a band of dangerous sorcerers and witches, who make their home within the ruins of the old university buildings.

Within the ruins of Arkham is the Glass from Leng. This is a work of great antiquity, a great round window of a most curious clouded glass, which was brought to Arkham from Leng. This magical glass allows random visions of other places. Those that know protective magic are advised to inscribe a pentagram in red chalk (for protection), recite a brief verse, and then the glass will show a scene of beings from the Cthulhu Mythos. Unfortunately, such beings can also see through the glass to the user's side.

### Cerenovia

Cerenovia is a successful enclave. All that is left of the now ruined town of Cerenovia itself is a trading estate on the former town's periphery. The survivors of the Cataclysm who have made their home there use the previously industrial buildings as hall-like garages for their cars and trucks and also as their homes. The

trading estate had a wire fence round it, which is kept in good repair, and provides some measure of protection. The Cerenovians try to operate on something approaching democratic principles, but decisions are also often made by the group's leaders, a family called the Scrantons.

### **The District**

The District claims to be the continuation of the pre-cataclysm government. They are based in an old abandoned military base, where secret research on the Cthulhu Mythos was being done before the fall of civilization. The District takes pride in being the last known concentrated bastion of humanity, and being the most technologically advanced community in existence.

The District even has scientists who continue to research improvements in the very latest in armor and advanced prototype weapon technologies. Their warriors are better equipped and trained than any other known organization across the badlands. Some even have cybernetics that rival that implanted by the Mi-go. The scientists are attempting to perfect their cybernetics techniques. In order to do this, they need test subjects. They regularly go out into the badlands to snatch subjects for experimentation.

They also send drones to roam the deserts, scouting and carrying out random executions, spreading fear. As well as oil, they also control a supply of pure water, ensuring their control over their immediate surroundings, even outside the walls of the District.

### **New Arkham**

New Arkham consists of a few self-sufficient compounds who all look out for each other. It is located near Arkham's ruins, and the people are suspicious of the "scientists" who make these ruins their home. Each compound is home to a few hundred inhabitants. Each compound is surrounded by high walls and defenses, against the mutant monstrosities that stalk the surface of the wasted planet.

The people of New Arkham are aware that there is an alien structure on the surface of the

planet. They call it the 'Artefact' and they think that it was constructed recently. They little realize that it is Cthulhu's former resting place, and that it has existed for the entirety of human history.

### **Plateau of Leng**

A cold, arid plateau that has strange geological features. The strangest thing about it is that its position is not fixed, and it can be entered from numerous distinct places on the Earth's crust. Reality is so warped in Leng that people can arrive here from journeys starting in Antarctica, China and even North America. It can also be entered from the Dreamlands and is a gateway to that strange dimension. The plateau is covered in spikes, jutting up from the ground to enormous heights. It is a place where different realities converge, which might explain why its precise location cannot be pinned down. There is also an enclave there, ruled by the High Priest Not to Be Described. The people of the enclave are a cosmopolitan lot, though people with Asian heritage predominate. The enclave is very populous, in comparison with enclaves located in more mundane surroundings.

The High Priest Not to Be Described is the leader of the enclave, and is the most senior wise one. The temple occupied by the enclave is the size of a small town and is dedicated to the Crawling Chaos, Nyarlathotep. The temple architecture is a confusing tangle of dark corridors with disturbing frescoes that chronicle Leng's bloodcurdling history. Deep in the bowels of the building, inside a frightening domed room, the High Priest Not to Be Described sits on a throne of gold atop a stone dais in pitch-black darkness. Five steps down from the dais is a row of six blood-stained stone altars surrounding a yawning well that is rumored to connect with the Vaults of Zin in the underworld. The high priest is a lumpish figure, robed in red and yellow silk, with a yellow silken mask over its face.

The numerous other priests of the temple are human and communicate with the high priest using sign language. The high priest communicates via a disgustingly carved flute of ivory, held in its silk covered paws. It blows certain loathsome sounds from beneath its

flowing silken mask, and its orders are understood by its minions. The high priest, below its robes, is a creature that resembles a toad, certainly a servant of Nyarlathotep, the crawling chaos. It may even be one of Nyarlathotep's avatars.

### **Shermanton**

Another example of an enclave is Shermanton. This is a stockade that is home to a band of survivors. The stockade is led by Jake Sherman, better known as 'General'. He is a tall muscular man with a shaven head and brown eyes. The General is highly respected by his group members, most notably his second-in-command Milton who is fiercely loyal towards him, and who views him as a benefactor who saved his life. He is a driven individual, who has a strong desire to restore order and progress in the post-apocalyptic world.

Not much detail is known about his life before the apocalypse, other than he was an officer in the US Army. His group is mostly made up of surviving military personnel. They are extremely well equipped, with armored fighting vehicles and heavy weapons. They have however learned to avoid using them, for fear that supernatural monsters will be attracted to their stockade. The General also has a group of 'Rangers' that he sends out to gather supplies and track the movements of nearby threats.

The General is aware of the band of survivors at Cerenovia, and he is planning to incorporate the enclave as the first new possession of his planned empire. He will not be pleased if the inhabitants do not swear allegiance and provide resources in exchange for protection.

## MYTHOS BOOKS

Books of eldritch knowledge are a large element of the game in the setting before the fall of humanity. How important they are after the Cataclysm is a very different question. They were rare before, and now they are even more difficult to get hold of. Once a group realizes just how much information and power can be unlocked from these books, however, they are likely to be even more keen to find them.

It is possible to learn a few morsels of information 'first hand' in conversation with ghouls, Yithians and the like, circumventing the need for these Mythos books, but this is extremely dangerous, only to be attempted by the most powerful of sorcerers.

The main purpose of these works is to enable readers, including the PCs, to gain occult and eldritch knowledge. Searching for these books will take PCs into the way of adventure and peril. And sometimes the works themselves are sources of extreme danger. Characters can seal their doom by casting a spell from an arcane book.

The descriptions of the books below often mention spells and special powers that can be gained by reading the books. The game mechanics of these spells are explained later in the chapters of the book dealing with magic spells.

### **Book of Eibon**

The Book of Eibon is a strange and rare occult volume. It has gone through a series of translations from a prehistoric original written in a lost language. It is an immense text of arcane knowledge that contains, among other things, a detailed account of Eibon's journeys to the Vale of Pnath and the planet Shaggai, his veneration rituals of Zhothaquah (Eibon's patron deity, probably the entity that also calls itself Nyarlathotep), and his magical formulae. These include a spell for the summoning of some otherworldly horrors, Call Forth Those From Outside.

### **Cultes des Goules**

Cultes des Goules is a book of black magic written by Francois-Honore Balfour (Comte

d'Erlette) in 1702. It includes advice for contacting and making pacts with ghouls in exchange for treasures and magical power. The book also explains humanity's age-old, and very intimate, relationship with the ghouls.

It is quite easy for humans to actually become a ghoul, the book explains. Ghoul's are a separate species, but the seeds for the transformation into a ghoul reside within all of us. Becoming a ghoul does not require interbreeding, magic spells or surgical alteration. Ghouls and humans are so closely related that a human can become a ghoul by a fairly simple mental reprogramming, just some incantations and thought disciplines. These incantations and disciplines are contained in the book, but the book does not contain any other real spells. Physical changes, such as sharp digging claws, come later, triggered by the mental changes. The return transformation is also fairly simple. This can be tested by any character who learns the incantations of transformation. However, each transformation lasts longer, makes more deep changes, and is more difficult to return from, until the transformation becomes permanent.

There are also other consequences to trading with Ghouls. Ghouls are quite sick puppies indeed, fond of collecting corpses, and delving deeply into the exotic and macabre. They consider themselves to be artists of the macabre, creatures of grace and style who just happened to rob graves and use what they find there as ornamentation. It is impossible to transform into a ghoul without being tainted by this mindset.

Ghouls who have not yet fully transformed can easily pass for human, though on close inspection they elicit the impression that they are not quite human, the slight stench of someone who delves into forbidden things. Once the transformation is complete, there is little left of their humanity. Their human voices are replaced by the deep-toned baying of some gigantic hound, human teeth are replaced by long, firm teeth and their worldview is completely altered. Ghoul features are repellent in the extreme, savoring at once of death, bestiality and malevolence. They also have

large eye sockets, reflecting their preferred subterranean habitat.

Ghoul society has a symbol that they venerate, a crouching winged hound, or sphinx with a semi-canine face, often worn round the neck as a green jade amulet. Ghoul sorcerers are famous for triumphing over death and becoming immortal. As long as their skeleton is not disrupted, they can regenerate their flesh and return from seemingly mortal wounds. The process where the skeleton recovers itself with rotting flesh takes 1d6 days.

When not under ground, ghouls like to inhabit old churchyards, deep woods, cliffs by the sea, brick tunnels, and ancient paneled rooms. They inhabit a world beneath our feet, their tunnels connecting to graveyards, tunnels and vaults.

### **De Vermis Mysteriis**

This book is the work of Ludwig Prinn, an alchemist, necromancer, and mage who attained a miraculous age before being burned at the stake in Brussels. At the time of his execution for sorcery, Prinn lived in the ruins of a pre-Roman tomb that stood in the forest near Brussels. In this forest, there were old pagan altars that stood crumbling in the dark glens. These altars were found to have fresh bloodstains when Prinn was arrested. The book contains spells and enchantments, particularly those that can summon strange entities. One such spell summons a shambler from the stars. It also contains knowledge of Nyarlathotep.

One chapter of the book reveals secrets of various assassin cults and some information about making pacts with ghouls. It also describes 'The Star of Sechmet', a mysterious 'power' crystal. It provides instructions on how to compound aconite and belladonna and draw circles of phosphorescent fire on the floor when the stars are right. It describes melting tallow candles and blending them with corpse-fat. It describes their use in meetings with 'various parties', cold deliberate directions for traffic with the ancient evil that is Nyarlathotep. It also contains the recipe for a love potion. The book also contains protective magics. Cabalistical Sign of Protection, Call Forth Those From Outside, Create Pentagram of

Power, He Who Passes the Gateways, Plutonian Drug, Voorish Sign

### **Elddown Shards**

These are mysterious pottery fragments found in 1882 and named after the place where they were discovered, Elddown in southern England. The shards date to the Triassic period and are covered with strange symbols. They contain the spells, Bind Shoggoth, Dominate Mind, and The Elder Sign

### **G'harne Fragments**

This book presents a translation of a set of miraculously preserved panels of obsidian. The original panels were written in a language made of dot-formed runes and hieroglyphs, used by the Elder Things. It is primarily a collection of records from one of their African outposts, a city named G'harne. The lost city is located somewhere in the southern Sahara Desert.

Star charts are also discernible, indicating the locations of Algol, Yuggoth, and the now-destroyed planet Thyoph. Adventurers who follow the directions included in the book and find G'harne will discover a place of underground burrows inhabited by crawling chthonians led by a monstrous creature named Shudde-M'ell.

Chthonians are creatures with flowing tentacles and pulpy gray-black, with an elongated sack of a body. There is also a protrusion on the upper body, a container of sorts for the brain. Despite their squid-like appearance, chthonians prefer land to water. Chthonians are powerful burrowers which can live for more than a thousand years. A chanting sound accompanies every chthonian, which is loud enough to give away their position, even while underground and unseen. The book contains the spells, Banish, Bind Shoggoth, Dominate Mind, The Elder Sign, The Primal Lay, and the Voorish Sign

## **Necronomicon**

This book contains an account of the Old Ones, their history, and the means for summoning them. It is the work of Alhazred, a worshiper of Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu. He discovered the 'nameless city' below Irem and died under mysterious circumstances in 738. The very act of studying the text is inherently dangerous, as those who attempt to master its arcane knowledge generally meet terrible ends.

On the first page, it contains the lines, 'That is not dead which can eternal lie. And with strange aeons even death may die.' The 'unabridged' version of the Necronomicon is over 800 pages long. It is bound in leather of various types and has metal clasps. The book was banned during various passages of history, and there are numerous editions that have been disguised. For example, an innocuous looking book might be opened, for the reader to discover to their disquiet that it is actually the Necronomicon. It contains the following spells, Cabalistical Sign of Protection, Call Forth Those From Outside, Create Pentagram of Power, Dematerialize, Dho Formula, Dho-Hna Formula, Dominate Mind, The Elder Sign, Formula for the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, He Who Passes the Gateways, Spirit Bottle, Voorish Sign

## **On the Sending Out of the Soul**

This is a slight looking eight-page pamphlet on astral projection. The pamphlet first appeared in 1783 and circulated among occult groups. Many copies were destroyed in the wake of a series of grisly murders. The eighth page details a formula for effecting astral travel. Among the required ingredients are a brazier of exotic drugs. The formula is always successful but sometimes (one time in six) has an unforeseen side effect. It attracts the attention of local Mythos creatures. The book contains, Cabalistical Sign of Protection, Call Forth Those From Outside, The Primal Lay, and Plutonian Drug.

## **Parchments of Pnom**

The Parchments of Pnom is a manuscript in an ancient and forgotten language that contains a detailed account of the lineage of the creatures worshiped at the time as gods. These 'gods' are

in fact Mythos creatures, and the lineage includes the fact that Cthulhu is offspring of Yog-Sothoth. The book contains the spells, Banish, Create Pentagram of Power, Dematerialize, Dominate Mind, Formula for the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Formula to Raise from Essential Salts, Immortality, and Spirit Bottle

## **Pnakotic Manuscripts**

The Pnakotic Manuscripts is a tome that originates from a time before humanity. The original manuscripts were in scroll form and were passed down through the ages, eventually falling into the hands of secretive cults. The Yithians produced the first five chapters of the Manuscripts, which, among other things, contain a detailed chronicle of their history. They were kept in the Yithian library city of Pnakotus. They cover a variety of subjects, including descriptions of Mythos creatures, the location of Mythos sites, rituals, and other secrets. They were originally found by the people of Lomar, who studied them diligently. Later, additions were made in ancient times by a scribe in Zobna. The Manuscripts survived into historical times, protected by a secretive cult known as the Pnakotics, and an English translation was made in the 15th century. The spells contained are, Create Pentagram of Power, The Elder Sign, Immortality, Plutonian Drug, and the Voorish Sign.

## **Ponape Scripture**

A manuscript found in the Caroline Islands by Captain Abner Exekiel Hoag sometime around 1734. The pages were made of palm leaves and its binding was of an ancient, now-extinct cycadean wood. It was authored by Imash-Mo, high priest of Ghatanothoa, and his successors. This ancient tome, gives the reader an entirely new perspective on the world, but most importantly on humanity itself.

After reading the Ponape Scripture it becomes clear to the reader that humans are not the result of natural selection. It becomes clear that humanity was created accidentally, as a joke or mistake, a bi-product of more successful experiments. Humans were very likely created by the Elder Things and are among the weakest of their creations. But this is not even the most

startling secret about the nature of humanity that the book contains. Detailed consultation reveals that the Deep Ones are a servitor species that was produced at the same time as humanity, by the same creators, the Elder Things. In fact, the Elder Things inadvertently created almost all complex life on Earth. Their 'failed experiments' often crawled away and evolved on their own, gradually creating an entire biosphere.

Deep ones are hideous and look strikingly different to humans but, because they were created by the same species, the Elder Things, humans breed easily with deep ones, producing strong hybrid offspring. Hybrids between human and Deep One often give away their shared heritage. They often have bulging eyes and thick lips. Hybrids are human until some time after puberty and then transform into a deep one, when they feel compelled to 'return' to the ocean.

The book also explains that the written language of the Deep Ones looks like an aquatic version of hieroglyphics, formalized pictograms featuring fish, octopus and other more ancient forms. Study of the book allows the language to be learned. The book also has maps of huge Deep-One cities in the deepest parts of the ocean. The book contains the spell, Bind Shoggoth, used by the Deep Ones to control shoggoths found abandoned when the Elder Things almost completely withdrew from the Earth.

### **Nameles Archive**

This is a data dump from a hard drive that came from a government research facility investigating sleep and ESP. The drive is usually encountered as a zip file or targz file. It behaves strangely, unpacking itself and corrupting the host computer. Skilled data analysts can retrieve chunks of information however.

It reveals that humans can use mind powers, recognizable as Mythos Spells, to summon and interbreed with Old Ones. The sexual act, birth and offspring of such a mating are very different to the conventional biological mechanisms employed by humans and

human/deep one hybrids. A fraction of Shub-Nigurath, for example, is summoned produces 'hybrid' offspring with a human. The fact that something so alien is even possible points to something strange lurking within human DNA. This process is instigated by human sorcerers at the research lab, and does not, they believe, happen spontaneously, but their experiments hint at the strange powers that can be produced with just human flesh as a medium. Banish, Cabalistical Sign of Protection, Call Forth Those From Outside, Create Pentagram of Power, The Elder Sign, Formula for the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, He Who Passes the Gateways, and Voorish Sign are the spells contained, with instructional videos on how to cast them. Some of the videos show terrible events that happen when the spells are not performed correctly and a Sanity Check is required to watch them.

### **Revelations of Glaaki**

The revelations were written by an undead cult worshiping a creature they call Glaaki. This creature is undoubtedly a great old one, perhaps equal in might to Cthulhu himself. Whenever their master slept, the members of its cult had periods of free will, and they wrote down what they remembered of the strange dreams and thoughts that emanated from their deity. The text is nine volumes in length. The book contains the spells, Dho Formula, Dho-Hna Formula and The Primal Lay.

### **Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan**

The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan is a collection of writings with many secrets concerning the finding of Kadath. It relates primarily to the Dreamlands and seems like a work of fantasy to readers who are unfamiliar with this strange dimension.

### **Testament of Carnamagos**

The writings of an evil sage and seer named Carnamagos, which were discovered a thousand years ago in some Graeco-Bactrian tomb. The original is said to have been written in the blood of an 'incubus-begotten monster'. It is the chronicles of great sorcerers of old, and the histories of creatures that these sorcerers considered to be 'demons'. They describe different types of demons, earthly and ultra-cosmic, and the veritable spells by which the



demons could be called up and controlled and dismissed. Many copies are bound in shagreen and fastened with hasps of human bone. The demon described are, in fact, Mythos creatures. The book contains the spells, Banish, Cabalistical Sign of Protection, Call Forth Those From Outside, Create Pentagram of Power, and the Voorish Sign

### **Unaussprechlichen Kulten**

A tome written by Friedrich von Junzt. The first edition of the German text appeared in 1839 in Düsseldorf. The English edition was published by Bridewall in London in 1845, but contained numerous misprints and was badly translated. A heavily expurgated edition was later issued in New York by Golden Goblin Press in 1909. Original editions in German have a heavy leather cover and iron hasps. The text contains information on cults that worship pre-human deities, very likely to have been in actuality Mythos creatures. It includes the tale of the doomed heretic T'yog. T'yog was the high priest of Shub-Niggurath and a sorcerer in the province of K'naa in ancient Mu. In the Year of the Red Moon, which is 173,148 B.C. according to von Juntz, he sought to challenge the power of Ghatanothoa by confronting the god in its lair on a mountain called Yaddith-Gho.



Ghatanothoa is a huge, amorphous Great Old One. The book warns that the creature is so hideous that anyone who gazes upon it (or even a perfect replica) is petrified. It tells that the victim's body takes on the consistency of leather and the brain is preserved indefinitely, while fully aware. Only the destruction of the subject's brain can free it.

The creature was brought to Earth from the planet Yuggoth by an ancient, unnamed alien race. The description of these creatures closely resembles that of the Mi-go, or Fungi from Yuggoth. The Mi-go built a colossal fortress atop Yaddith-Gho and sealed Ghatanothoa inside the mountain.

To protect himself from the god's medusa-like ability, he prepared a special scroll. T'yog was defeated when Ghatanothoa's priests replaced his scroll with a fake. Banish, Dematerialize, Dominate Mind, The Elder Sign, Formula to Raise from Essential Salts, Immortality, Plutonian Drug, Spirit Bottle, and the Voorish Sign.

### **Zanthu Tablets**

These are twelve engraved pieces of black jade inscribed by Zanthu, a wizard and high priest. They are written in a form of Naacal, the language of the sunken continent of Mu. The tablets reveal a partial history of Mu, describing Zanthu's struggle against an upstart cult and his own religion's decline. Zanthu also describes his failed attempt to release his god, Ghatanothoa, from its prison. Upon witnessing three black, beaked, slimy heads, 'vaster than any mountain', rising from a gorge, he flees in terror when he realizes that they are merely the god's clawed fingertips. A rough translation was published in 1916. Ten years after publication the translator died in an asylum. The Elder Sign, Immortality, Plutonian Drug, Spirit Bottle, and the Voorish Sign.

### **Zhou Texts**

An ancient manuscript found in Asia, written circa in 1100 BC during Zhou Dynasty. It contains rituals to summon a 'Great Old One'. It contains the spell, Call Forth Those From Outside but, dangerously, does not contain any spells of protection or banishment.

## THE DREAMLANDS

The Dreamlands are a separate dimension, very closely aligned to that of Earth, and of several others. It is not complete in itself, and acts more as a hub. This hub connects the personal 'dream worlds' created by individual dreamers. Dreaming is a very rare skill, which means that, apart from fearsome monsters, the Dreamlands are relatively empty of inhabitants. The population of the Dreamlands is about the same as the Earth in 1066. The Dreamlands are now, more than ever, seen as place for skilled dreamers to escape to. They have been subtly disrupted and it is much more difficult to reach the Dreamlands than ever before.

It is easier to communicate with ghouls in the Dreamlands, and they can be pumped for information. Some books and other works of scholarship can only be found in the Dreamlands. Real world places are reflected in the Dreamlands, so there is a dreaming version of Arkham that has survived the ruin visited upon the Earthly version of Arkham. Technology doesn't function in the same way in Dreamlands, so only the technology of the early renaissance is possible, no electronics, or even electricity.

The Dreamlands are getting stronger, having more influence on the waking world, but this influence is sporadic and limited to small areas. It often takes the form of a Dreamland creature such as a Ghast, emerging from the Dreamlands into the waking world.

### Celephaïs

Celephaïs was created in a dream by Kuranos. Kuranos does not remember his real-world name. His real-world body is now long dead, but after its death he became the king and chief god of Celephaïs. The great dreamer has grown so homesick for his native Cornwall, he has dreamed parts of Celephaïs to resemble the land of his boyhood. The city is situated in the valley of Ooth-Nargai beside the Cerenerian Sea.

Its most remarkable feature is that it is unaffected by the passage of time, and does not decay or wear, so that a person may leave it and return many years later to find that nothing has

changed. Important landmarks in Celephaïs are the turquoise temple of Nath-Horthath and the Street of Pillars. Galleys from the port of Celephaïs go everywhere in the Dreamlands, but especially to the cloud-kingdom Serannian.

### City of the Gugs

The City of the Gugs is a colossal, horrifying cityscape of huge towers. It is located far below the surface of the Dreamlands, in the underworld. Its most prominent landmark is the Tower of Koth, which contains a legendary stairway that leads to the surface. Close by the city is the cemetery of the Gugs, its graves marked by huge stone monoliths. Ghouls often dine here on the huge carcasses of the Gugs.

### Crag of the Ghouls

This is a rugged cliff in the Peaks of Thok from which the ghouls of deeper dreamland pitch the leftover bones of their sepulchral feasts. Uncounted miles below the crag is the bone-filled vale of Pnath.

### Dylath-Leen

Dylath-Leen is built mostly of basalt, and its streets are dark and uninviting. It is one of the most mysterious cities in the Dreamlands. It trades in rubies transported in sinister black galleys (whose rowers are never seen).

### Enchanted Wood

The most numerous inhabitants of the Enchanted Wood are small rodent creatures called zoogs. It contains a unique, haunted tree whose seed originally came from the moon. This tree's sap can be fermented to create a potent drink. A stone trapdoor in these woods leads to the top of the Tower of Koth and from there into the kingdom of the Gugs in the Underworld.

### Great Abyss

This is a massive cavern within the underworld. It is home to a huge number of Nightgaunts.

### Kadath

Kadath is a huge castle atop a mountain and the domain of the Great Ones. These are referred to as Earth's gods, but are actually a group of particularly powerful dreamers.

## **Pnath**

Pnath is a vast pit in the underworld. It is flanked by the Peaks of Thok and is almost completely dark. The vale is filled with a mountain-sized heap of bones and is the place into which all the ghouls of the waking world cast the refuse of their feasting. Enormous worm-like creatures, known as Dholes, burrow through the vale. Nightgaunts often carry helpless victims to the vale, where they are left to die.

## **Sarkomand**

This is a ruined city on the northern shore of the Cerenerian Sea in the Dreamlands. The most prominent feature of Sarkomand is the Winged Lions guarding the trapdoor beneath which a spiral staircase descends into the Dark Abyss of the Dreamlands' underworld.

## **Underworld**

The Underworld is a subterranean region underneath the Dreamlands inhabited by various monsters, the most common being the ghouls. The underworld lies beneath the whole of the Dreamlands and has a few entrances to it in various places. It is dimly lit by a mysterious phosphorescence known as the 'death fire'.

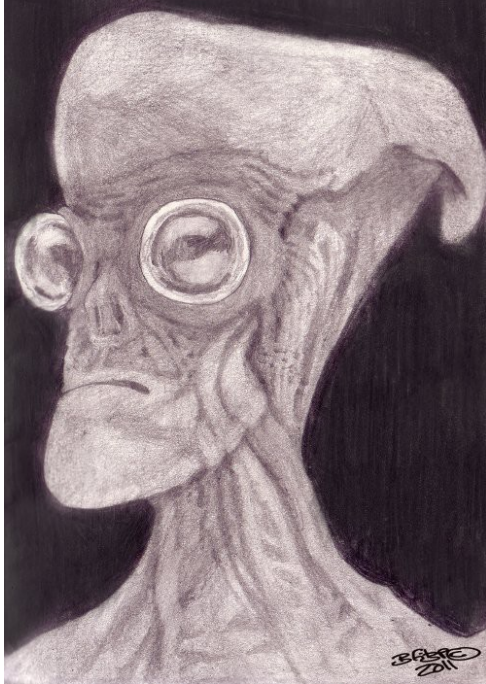
## **Vaults of Zin**

This is a huge cavern in the underworld. The Ghasts who dwell in the Vaults of Zin prey on Ghouls and Gugs, and sometimes even one another.

## DREAMLANDS DENIZENS

The inhabitants of the Dreamlands are drawn from many other dimensions, either completely, or in a shadowy dream incarnation. Very few species are confined to the Dreamlands, which is a kind of hub connecting several adjacent dimensions.

### Ghasts



Ghasts are about the size of a small horse with a scabrous and unwholesome hide. They have a curiously human face, despite the absence of a nose, a forehead, and other important particulars. They can see in the dark and have a strong sense of smell. They have a pair of hoofed, hind legs, and are swift, strong, and agile. Ghasts prefer to dwell in complete darkness and have no tolerance for natural light, sunlight will kill them in a matter of minutes. They prey mostly on Gugs, working in packs to bring down a giant Gug, but have no qualms about eating other denizens of the underworld. Ghasts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

### Gugs

Gugs are a race of horrifying giants. They are mute, and their method of communication is unknown. A single paw is fully two feet and a half across, and equipped with formidable

talons. Each arm has two paws, attached by short forearms to a great black-furred arm. The head of a gug is large as a barrel with two pink eyes. The eyes jut two inches from each side, shaded by bony protuberances overgrown with coarse hairs. But the head is chiefly terrible because of the mouth. The mouth has great yellow fangs and runs from the top to the bottom of the head, opening vertically instead of horizontally. The gugs reside in a terrifying, underground city, in tall, round, cyclopean towers. Nearby, colossal monoliths mark the cemetery of the gugs.

In the midst of the gug city, the Tower of Koth contains a stairway that leads to the Enchanted Wood in the upper Dreamlands. There it is sealed by a huge stone trapdoor with a large iron ring. Because of a divine banishment (a powerful wrading spell maintained by the dreamers of Kadath), no Gug may open that door. Gugs prey on the Ghasts that live in the Vaults of Zin. When in sufficient numbers, Ghasts may likewise prey on the Gugs. Though Gugs are much bigger and more powerful, for some unknown reason they nonetheless superstitiously fear Ghouls. The Gugs often indulge in great feasts and, once engorged, retire to their great towers to sleep. Ghasts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.



## TIME TRAVEL

The setting of Post-Cthulhu includes magics and advanced technologies that are capable of allowing travel through time. This is a dangerous business, especially during the period that the Hounds of Tindalos were present on the Earth, as these can pursue a time traveler through time to their home epoch and devour them.



### The Past

Just 380,000 years after the big bang:  
The fog of the early universe clears. The Old One known as Azathoth coalesces at the heart of the universe, a powerful survivor of a previous universe. His court of Old Ones starts to form around him.

30 million years after the big bang:  
Stars first appear in the universe. More Old Ones evolve, including Cthulhu, energised by the heat left over from the big bang. They carve out territories for themselves among the new stars.

200 million years after the big bang:  
The Milky Way, the Earth's home galaxy, forms. Old Ones from surrounding regions of space are drawn to its warmth, and they war over its inhabitants and resources.

8 billion years after the big bang:  
A species of beings, much less powerful than the Old Ones called the Elder Things evolve

and start to carve out an intergalactic empire.

9 billion years after the big bang:  
At last, after unimaginable stretches of time, the Earth and its solar system forms.

9.5 billion years after the big bang:  
The Hounds of Tindalos come to the newly formed planet Earth and dwell there. This is a primal time when normal life has not yet come into being, and the Earth is a terrible and alien place. The hounds, however, are no limited to traveling through time in the same way as most forms of life. They can travel into the planet's future from their lair in the past, and hunt for food.

10 billion years after the big bang:  
Cthulhu comes down to the young world of Earth from the sky, wounded in a terrible battle with a rival Old One. He establishes various cities, including R'lyeh. A much less powerful species called the Mi-go also arrive on Earth as an infestation among the alien stones used by Cthulhu to build his sunken city base. Cthulhu goes dormant, intent on healing and recouping his eldritch power.

12 billion years after the big bang (1 billion years ago):  
The Elder Things notice the Earth and they are the first extraterrestrial species since Cthulhu to come to the Earth, colonizing the planet about one billion years ago. They immediately start exterminating the Mi-go. Most Mi-go leave Earth in favor of Saturn and Jupiter. The empire of the Elder Things lasts for millions of years.

800 million years ago:  
Indigenous life on Earth begins as a bi-product of Elder Thing experiments and technologies. As well as direct genetic experiment where the Elder Things also used a process of unnatural selection to produce their servitor creatures.

250 – 200 million years ago:  
The Snake People are created by the Elder Things, as servitors. The Snake People spread quickly across the face of the planet, serving their masters. The Eltdown Shards are written during the Triassic period. They are covered with the strange symbols of the Snake People.

The ancient serpent empire then collapses with the rise of the dinosaurs about 225 million years ago during the Triassic era, when the Elder Things create a more useful servitor species, the shoggoths. The Elder Things retreat from the surface to live under ground, leaving the remnants of the serpent people empire in control of the surface of the planet.

145 to 66 million years ago:

The Yithians are the next species to arrive from space. They create a prehistoric civilization that populates much of the Earth, lasting millions of years. They swiftly reduce snake people numbers, though they fail to wipe them out entirely. The Yithians do not try to encroach on the territories of the Elder Things below ground.

66 million years ago:

The Yithin civilization is finally destroyed when an Old One arrives from space, accompanied by flying polyps. After lasting for almost a 100 million years, the Yithians are destroyed in a bout of orgiastic feeding. After the feeding, the flying polyps that accompany it retreat to an underground cavern.

200,000 BC:

The Elder Things create many useful organisms below ground, including humans. A batch of humans escapes from an African base, and infest the surface of the planet, in numbers high enough even to satisfy the bellies of flying polyps. Humanity proves better able to survive successive ice ages than the Serpent People, whose numbers are now reduced to an extinction level.

18,000 BC:

The Serpent people avoid extinction, build their numbers and try to conquer the world once again, opposed by brave humans that will go on to found the land of Mu. It proves to be the last hurrah of the serpent people before beginning their decline towards extinction.

10,000 BC:

Copper is first mined and used. Humanity develops its most ancient civilization on the now lost land mass known to secret prehistory as Mu. By the standards of the humans across

the rest of Earth the people of Mu are advanced. But by modern standards they are brutish and cruel. They have a custom of burning enemy prisoners alive, a ceremony usually presided over by their priests. These priests had a twisted philosophy and mindset. The people of Mu spend most of their history locked in battle with the remnants of the serpent people.

9000 BC:

Branat Mac Morna is the last king of Mu, before the land descends into chaos. The civilization of Mu is aware of the existence of the nameless god of R'lyeh, though they do not know this god by the name Cthulhu. They call this god, Dagon. Bran's kingdom is beset by the activities of a cult worshipping Dagon. The fate of this early human civilization is sealed when Bran's son joins the cult. The cult's plans come to fruition and the city of Mu is dragged beneath the waves. In an attempt to cheat death, king Bran's soul is bound to an idol and left on high ground to avoid the deluge.

7000 BC:

Agriculture and the Plough are developed. What's left of the land of Mu, the area that remained above the waves, becomes a land of bandits and sorcery, a pit of evil. A cult of worshipers is attracted to king Bran's idol. They refer to it as the Dark Man.

6000 BC:

Mu now sinks completely below the waves. The survivors migrate and form small minorities within human populations across the globe. The serpent people, hiding in a few subterranean refuges such as their city Irem, finally became extinct, go dormant or hide within human society.

4000 BC:

The wheel is invented.

1100 BC:

The Zhou Texts are written in China, containing rituals to summon a 'Great Old One'.

710 BC:

Alhazred, a worshiper of Yog-Sothoth and



Cthulhu discovers the 'nameless city' below Irem and starts work on the Necronomicon.

1783 BC:

A formula for effecting astral travel is discovered and widely distributed. The Cthulhu signal is strong at this time, causing many mass suicides.

### **The Future**

It's useful for a Cthulhu GM to know what the future will bring, in case characters gain access to time-travel technology, and decide to go there. It is just as terrible as the past, if not more so.

300,000 AD:

The Earth is repopulated by 'beetle people', a species evolved from cockroaches, while humanity has all but died out.

500,000 AD:

Nyarlahotep hunts down and destroys the last remnants of humanity. The minds of the Beetle People are usurped by the Yithians. The Yithians again rule Earth in the far future, as they did in the distant past, this time with the Beetle People as their physical hosts.

1,000,000 AD:

Yithian culture carries on developing, becoming incredibly advanced. The Yithian's perfect space travel, wipe out the Mi-go in long-fought war and challenge even the huge start empire of the Elder Things. Planet-sized computers now dominate the Local Group of galaxies, built by the Yithians.

7,200,000 AD:

Mount Rushmore has eroded away. The continent of Zothique forms, and becomes the center of the Yithian Star Empire, which they rule from Earth.

7,600,000 AD:

Phobos is ripped apart by Mars' gravity. Cthulhu finally returns and rips apart the Earth, oblivious of Ubbo-Sathla's attempts to stop him. The Yithians, also powerless to stop him, have already left Earth in a giant mental migration.

10,000,000 AD:

The rubble that is all that remains of Earth is sterilized by lethal levels of gamma radiation.

5,000,000,000 AD:

Sol becomes a red giant and swallows up any remaining trace of Earth.

12,000,000,000 AD:

Sol shrinks to become a black dwarf.

1,000,000,000,000 AD:

Star formation declines across the universe.

20,000,000,000,000 AD:

Even red dwarf stars start dying.

Much later:

The dark era of the universe. Cthulhu finally considers himself powerful enough to challenge Azathoth for rule of the universe to come. This is the next universe, the one that will form in a new big bang, after the final heat death of the present universe. He girds himself for battle, and Azathoth rises to the challenge.

## SPACE TRAVEL

Space travel is not only possible in the world of Post-Cthulhu, it is quite commonplace. Spaceships, as humans would recognise them are, however rare. Most space travel is done on the back of creatures capable of space flight, after taking strange alien drugs that provide immunity to vacuum. Or space travel is possible via mind transfer with an alien on a distant world, or via travel through the Dreamlands. It is also possible to find or create "gates" that allow space travel.

Some of the locations that may be visited by intrepid space travelers include the following celestial bodies.

### Abbith

A planet that revolves around seven stars beyond Xoth. It is inhabited by metallic brains, wise with the ultimate secrets of the universe. Nyarlathotep dwells or is imprisoned on this world.

### Argo Navis

Somewhere between Hydra and Argo Navis is an extrasolar planet orbiting three Suns, each of different hue, inhabited by Elder Things

### Bzlah-ech'ya

A planet with pale red sky orbiting three Suns. There the "Sealed Tower of N'kung" is located, likely the tomb or prison of a three-eyed demonic entity of impossible horror.

### Gnarr-Kthun

A wandering black hole located in "the Seventh Dimension beyond the Utmost Rim". It is orbited by Phphun, a hollow comet which hosts a crypt occupied by an eternal sentient entity called H'hphu-Yys-Echrr.

### G'yoth & Yg'giath

A pair of twin red suns located near Castor and orbited by a steamy hellish planet where damned souls bound to the cult of Y'gonac relentlessly whirl and cavort.

### Haddath

Haddath is a fiery planet, possibly found near the "eye" of the constellation Hydra, and is believed to be inhabited by the chthonians.

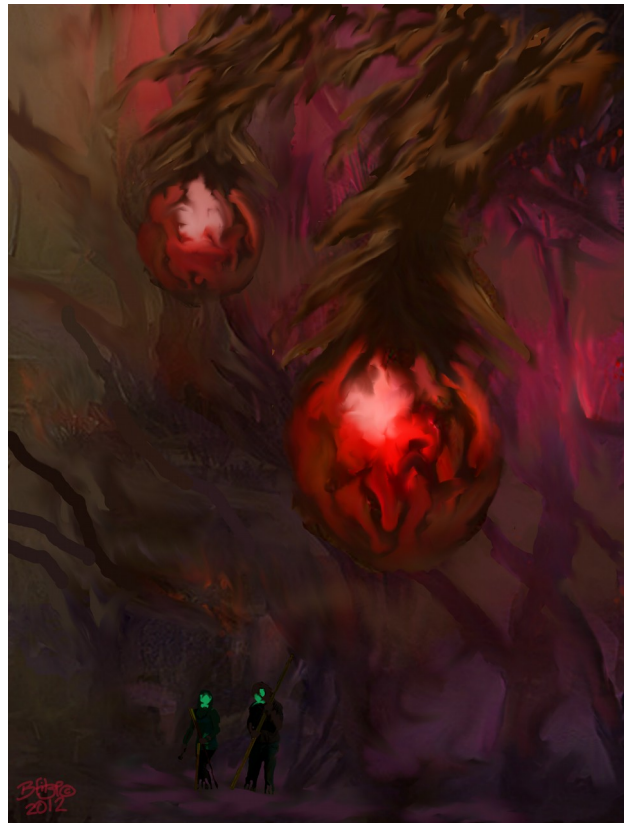
### Hchab

A green-litten planet located beyond our Galaxy where the "leaden hillside of Pnapf" is located.

### K'gil'mnon

A distant ammonia planet orbiting a dying star.

### Kr'llyand



A jungle planet orbiting a binary star system, composed of a green star and a brown dwarf. Kr'llyand is the homeworld of the plant-like Great Old One Ei'lor.

### Ktynga

Ktynga is the name of a bluish comet that is currently near the star Arcturus. On the surface of the comet is a huge building, wherein dwell the fire vampires. They can guide the comet to travel between the stars, and will visit our Solar System four-centuries from now.

### K'yi-Lih

A dark-litten and mist-shrouded planet which is a source for the monstrous minions of Nyarlathotep.

### Kythanil

Kythanil is a double planet orbiting the star Arcturus and is the place where Tsathoggua's formless spawn originated from.

### L'gy'hx

The planet Uranus. It is inhabited by metallic, cube-shaped beings with multiple legs. These creatures worship a minor deity known as L'rog'g (another aspect of Nyarlathotep), whose rituals require a yearly sacrifice.

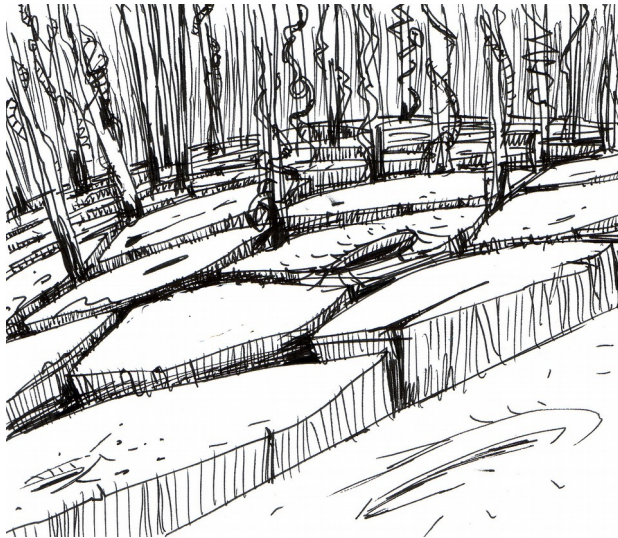
### Mthura

Dark planet inhabited by crystalline beings, where can be found a magical formula that will defeat the Dholes.

### Shaggai

Shaggai is a planet orbiting a binary system made of twin green suns, homeworld of the alien race known as the Shan or Insects from Shaggai. The being known only as The Worm that Gnaws in the Night also resides there.

### Tindalos



A far-flung planet orbiting a black hole, mentioned as birthplace or abode of the Hounds of Tindalos, and described as a lightless world spotted with corkscrew-shaped towers.

### Vhoorl

A planet in the "twenty-third nebula" and the supposed birthplace of Great Cthulhu.

### Vix'ni-Aldru

A black hole orbited by a dark planet hosting the monolith city of Thalu, made of titanic blocks, and homeworld of lizard or leech-like

aliens.

### V'zath

An alien planet orbiting a red giant and orbited by at least two orange cratered moons. This world has been visited by mages from Earth.

### World of Seven Suns

A planet near Fomalhaut. Its inhabitants created seven artificial suns to replace their dying natural sun. Nyarlathotep, in his true incarnation, will one day come down to Earth from the World of the Seven Sunst.

### Xecorra

A dark star, homeworld of the Zorkai, bat-winged ravenous horrors.

### Xoth

The spawn of Cthulhu came down from remote and ultra-telluric Xoth, the dim green double star that glitters like a daemon eye in the blackness beyond Abboth. Xoth is the green binary star where Cthulhu once lived before coming to earth.

### Yaddith

Yaddith is a distant planet that orbits five suns, and itself is orbited by five moons. Yaddith is located thousands of light years from the Sun, near the star Deneb. It is a black planet with basalt cities inhabited by a serpent-headed species.

### Yaksh

Yaksh is the planet Neptune, and is inhabited by the Mi-go.

### Yamil Zacra

A distant binary star made up of a bright white Sun and a brown dwarf, orbited by Pnidleethon, a planet larger than Earth, with luxuriant tropical jungles extending up to the polar regions and inhabited by savage alien life.

### Yarnak

A Planet with three moons that orbits Betelgeuse in the mysterious Gray Gulf of Yarnak. The fabled, deserted city of Bel-Yarnak is located here.

### Yekub

A planet in a distant galaxy. It is inhabited by a race of technologically advanced beings which resemble huge centipedes, that are slightly larger than a human.

### Yilla

A giant ocean planet orbiting a blue-green oval star, similar in color and oblateness to Achernar. Yilla is also orbited by Xithor, an airless moon surrounded by a golden ring, whose hollow mantle is inhabited by a species of aliens that are powerful dreamers and very populous in the Dreamlands.

### Yith

The original homeworld of the Yithians, according to the Eltdown Shards. A black, aeon-dead orb in far space.

### Yuggoth

Yuggoth is the dwarf planet Pluto. It is home to the Mi-Go, a race of fungi-crustacean.

### Zaoth

A planet near Xoth. It is home to metal brains and houses a great library of Yuggothian books.

### Zlykarlor

The Doomed Nebula of Zlykarlor is a planetary nebula where the Temple of the Infra-Red Vapor is located.

## EXTENDING THE SETTING

These NPCs, monsters, dangerous places and enclaves are plenty of background to use to start a game of Post-Cthulhu but, inevitably, the world will expand during play. The players will ask questions that are not covered by the background setting in the book, and they will want to go to areas that are not mentioned. When this happens, the GM will have to start expanding and extending the world to accommodate the inquisitive players and their adventurous characters.

### Scanty Planning vs World Building

A useful thing to remember about world-building is that the less detail you start with, the more options you have in the future. This might seem counterintuitive, and you might want to make sure you have all behind-the-scenes plotlines mapped out from the start. However, less planning gives you more chances to construct elaborate plots, not fewer.

Putting off detailed world building until you need to gradually expand the background setting, as the players discover it. Defining something from the start makes it harder to change as the plot dictates.

On the other hand, defining a basic framework for events and deciding on the power relationships in the area allows you to do clever things like a bit of foreshadowing. You can make sure that players hear whispers about some local warlord and their expanding reach, before being thrown into a scenario that involves the warlord as an enemy.

### Take Notes

Whether you plan everything out beforehand, or improvise based on some basic ideas, you will have to take good session notes as you go along. If you haven't written a particular detail down before it is needed, such as how many days travel it is between two particular enclaves of humanity, you'll have to write it down afterwards. This means the two enclaves don't move further apart and nearer together from session to session, just because you can't remember this relatively minor detail.

### Limit Your Palette

Just because there are numerous Mythos creatures detailed in the Monsters section of this book does not mean that the PCs have to fight them all, one after the other. You don't have to tell the players what monsters are present in the world. The example adventure includes ghouls, and ghouls could be used in numerous following adventures, with just hints that more powerful creatures are lurking behind the scenes. You don't have to include all these creatures if you don't want to. Feel free to prune back the number of monsters if you want a gritty game, or to add more monsters if you want to give the game the menagerie of mind-bending monsters that hints at infinite dimensions just beyond our senses and understanding. There are a huge number of Mythos monsters described in other RPG books and Internet resources that can be easily added to the Post-Cthulhu setting.

### Mapping

This game pretty-much assumes that the PCs' adventures will take place in what remains of the USA. It can just as easily be played in any other Earth location, without much adjustment to the rules. The USA setting has the advantage that most people are familiar with the rough outline of the geography, and there is plenty of territory to adventure across. The map of the USA that we are familiar with will, of course, be very different now. There will be huge areas of devastation, and even the coastline has been impacted by the battle that took place out at sea. You don't need to map any of these changes if you don't want to. You can easily decide on the new power relationships, enclaves and kingdoms of the USA as the PCs discover it during their adventures.

Choose a starting area for your players, inviting their input, and concentrate your world building here. This area will need the most detail. The area near the ruins of Arkham is a good place to start because the game includes a handful of enclaves that are located in this area.

### Collaboration

If your players need more information to flesh out their backgrounds than you've provided, consider a bit of collaborative world-building.

## **GAME RULES**

It's your job, as GM, to make most of the moment-to-moment decisions about what is allowed and what's not regarding the rules. Most often, obviously, you're going to decide when something in the game deserves a roll, and how difficult that roll is. The system helps you do this and keeps game play fast and exciting by extracting all the information you need—speed, level of achievement, hit location, damage; everything you need to know—from a single roll of the dice.

### **Unchanging Elements**

Most of the following rules can be changed or dropped easily, but if you change these two cardinal rules unforeseen problems might crop up.

**Rule #1: Roll Only When a Task is Difficult or the Outcome is Significant.** This means you should only roll a dice pool if the action is difficult enough that a regular person with no training probably couldn't pull it off. If an action is trivially easy, there's no point in rolling it. Similarly, if you try something absurd ("I'm going to shoot down the sun!") there's no point in rolling, because no matter how well you roll it's just not going to happen.

### **Rule #2: Never Roll More Than 10 Dice**

The more dice you roll, the better the chance of success. If you roll only one die, there's no chance of success. But if you roll 11 dice or more, there's no chance of failure. Even if your stat+skill adds up to more than 10d, the excess dice are lost.

## **BASIC RULES**

The basic framework of Dark ORE is captured by the following elements.

### **Statistics**

Statistics (stats for short) describe the basic qualities of every character. They tell you how strong and smart your character is, among other things. The stats are Body, Coordination, Sense, Mind, Command and Empathy.

Stats are measured in dice. In normal humans they range from 1 die to 5 dice; in inhumans or

supernaturally enhanced humans they can range up to 10 dice.

### **Skills**

Every skill is based on a stat. For example, driving a car fast around a corner requires balance and hand-eye coordination as well as the Driving skill, so the Driving skill is based on the Coordination stat.

### **The Madness Meter**

Each character begins with four categories of mental stability the four pillars upholding sane and productive thought and these are the basis of the Madness Meter. These categories are: Violence, the Unnatural, Self and Helplessness. Each represents a resistance to a certain kind of madness. When a character is subjected to such influences, they must resist or lose stability from one (or more) of these categories. Lose a bit, and you become unstable. Lose them all and you lose your mind.





## The Supernatural

While nearly every character has stats, skills and a Madness Meter, only particular characters have access to the supernatural. There are three kinds of supernatural scores: boosted stats, boosted skills, and spells. (Inhuman creatures may have other supernatural abilities.)

Supernatural stats and skills are ordinary stats and skills exaggerated to incredible levels. For example, a Supernatural stat in Body grants you superhuman strength; a supernatural skill in guns makes your shooting impossibly accurate.

Spells, the third variety, are abilities that tap some outside power to perform amazing actions, and only those with access to the supernatural can possess them. Flying under your own power and the ability to turn people into dust are spells. Spells are measured in dice,

from 1 to 10; but unlike skills they are not based on any stats. Spells stand alone.

## Dice Pools

Whether you're using a spell, a stat by itself, or a stat and a skill, any important and challenging action is resolved with a roll of 10-sided dice called a dice pool. No dice pool ever has more than 10 dice. If any dice come up matching, the action succeeds. The more dice that match (called the "width" of the roll), and the higher their face value (called the "height"), the better. (A matching set of ones is good, but a matching set of tens is a lot better.)

In combat, an attack roll's width determines the amount of damage and which attack goes first. An attack roll's height determines which part of the target takes the damage. Outside of combat, a roll's width determines how long the action takes (and sometimes other things, like how much damage is healed with a Mind+First Aid roll). A non-combat roll's height determines the quality of the success.

## Hits, Wounds, and Damage

Hit locations are where you take damage when an attack hits you. Most characters have six hit locations: left leg, right leg, left arm, right arm, torso, and head. Each hit location has a number of wound boxes that are filled when you take damage. If all a location's boxes are filled with light shock damage, it's temporarily disabled or unconscious. If all boxes are filled with Killing damage, it's permanently maimed or dead.

## Dice Pools and Matching

When a character tries to do something, you roll a number of ten-sided dice ("d" for short—so "6d" means six dice) to see if the action succeeds. The dice you roll are called a dice pool. When you roll, look for matching dice. If you get a matching set—a set of two or more dice with matching numbers—your action succeeds.

The higher the matching numbers, and the more of them that are the same, the better. There are several small tweaks that can make success more likely or improve a successful roll, but for the most part, that's it. If you don't roll any matching dice, your action fails.

Of course, sometimes it's important to know how well you succeed, especially compared to others. For some kinds of actions we use special dice that are reserved for important characters, inhuman monstrosities or the supernatural, called Expert dice ("ed"), and Trump dice ("td").

### Resolving Basic Dice Pool Rolls

The goal of rolling a dice pool is to get a match—to have two or more dice in the pool turn up the same number. If you do, the action succeeds. However, there are different levels of success—some successes are faster, deadlier, or just plain better than others. Sometimes other people or forces are working against you, to stop your success; so even if you would ordinarily succeed, their success cancels yours out.

Every dice roll has two measures of success—height and width.

Height is the quality of the action.

Width is the speed of the action.

Height is the number that shows on the matching dice. If you roll two 5s, the height of the roll is 5. The higher (or "taller") the roll, the better the success. A successful action with a height of 10 is more effective than one with a height of 5.

Width is the number of matching dice. If you roll four 6s, the width of the roll is 4. Width is usually speed: the wider the roll, the faster the success. But in combat, width also determines damage. An action of width of 4 happens quicker (and in combat causes more damage) than one of width 3.

The shorthand for these results is written as "width x height".

Note that height—quality—is essentially random, while width—speed or power—is rarely greater than 2. Also, interestingly, the benefit of raising a pool from 8d to 10d doesn't even come close to the payoff of raising one from 3d to 5d.

Certain rules require you to divide points or dice pools, sometimes leaving you with less than whole numbers. In this case, always round down.

### Time

The width of a roll tells you how long the action takes. Depending on the action, the time scale for a task can be measured in combat rounds, minutes, hours, days, or even longer. The GM sets the time scale based on the specifics of the action. For example, breaking down a door might take rounds, picking a lock, minutes, fixing a car, hours, and decoding a complicated cipher, days.

Once the time scale is determined, make the relevant roll: Body+Brawling to break down the door, Coordination+Lockpicking to pick the lock, Mind+Mechanics to fix a car, Mind+Cryptography to decode the cipher.

Subtract the width of the successful roll from 5 to find out how many units of time it takes to complete the task. If you roll a 2x3 on your Mind+Mechanics pool and the time scale is hours, it takes three hours to fix the car: 5 hours minus the width of 2 equals 3. If your Body+Brawling roll is 3x7, it takes two rounds to smash down the door (5-3=2). If your Mind+Cryptography roll is 4x2, it only takes one day (5-4 = 1) to decode the message.

No matter how wide you roll, a task always takes at least one unit of time. If you get a width of five or wider, the job still takes one day, hour, minute, or round.

### Expert Dice and Trump Dice

The game uses one die type (the d10) for all rolls. But there are also two special ways of rolling dice: Expert dice and Trump dice.

Expert dice and Trump dice are significantly more powerful than regular dice. Use regular dice to resolve regular actions; Expert dice to resolve highly skilled actions and Trump dice to resolve supernatural actions. As such, Expert dice are available only in skills and Trump dice are available only in supernatural abilities—boosted stats, boosted skills and spells.

Expert dice are abbreviated “ed,” so seven Expert dice is “7ed”. An Expert die is special. You can either assign it any height you want, before you roll all the other dice in the pool; or choose to roll it regularly as a normal die. When you assign a number to the Expert die, there’s a catch: each Expert die in your pool must be set to a different number. Expert dice represent a level of ability not easily achieved by the normal human.

Like every other die, Expert dice count towards the ten-die maximum. Expert dice also have another advantage—they automatically “buy off” dice penalties. Each Expert die buys off a -1d penalty. And they have another bonus, even after buying off the penalty, the Expert die is not lost, but instead is rolled as a regular die. This is mandatory. If you face a dice penalty and you have Expert dice, you must use an Expert die to buy off a penalty.

The downside of Expert dice is that while they’re effective at directing dice pool rolls to a certain outcome, they’re blind. You won’t know what roll you’re getting when you pick the number—you could roll a match, or not.

A Trump die is like a wild card in poker: You assign it any number you want, after you’ve rolled all the other dice in your pool during the resolution phase in combat. This makes Trump dice even better than Expert dice—any dice pool roll with even a single Trump die succeeds, and if you have two Trump dice you can choose any level of success you like! You can even choose not to succeed or to succeed up to a certain level, if you want—a luxury that other dice don’t have.

Like every other die, Trump dice count towards the ten-die maximum. They’re abbreviated “td,” so six Trump dice is “6td”. Trump dice represent a supernaturally versatile ability.

### **Static and Dynamic Rolls**

There are two different types of dice pool rolls—static and dynamic contests. A static contest is when you’re struggling against an inanimate object or situation. The situation is static—it isn’t actively changing in response to you and

trying to make life more difficult. Just roll the dice. If you get a match, you succeed.

A dynamic contest is when you’re competing against another person who’s trying to confound or surpass you. Running a race, having a knife fight, playing chess, interrogating someone for information, or lying to your interrogator—these are dynamic contests. In a dynamic contest, you’re rolling against someone else’s roll. The widest set finishes first, but the highest set wins. If width is a tie, the highest set goes first.

Which is more important—height or width?

That depends on the contest. If it’s a foot race, width (speed) matters most. A racer that rolls a 4x2 outruns someone with a 2x10; he might not run with the grace of the guy that rolled a height 10, but he finished first. The winner with a wide but short result might be out of breath and disoriented compared to the loser with a high but narrow roll, but he still came in first, and sometimes that’s all that counts.

If time is no object, the victor may simply be the person with the tallest roll. In a chess match—where what matters is the move, not how quickly you choose it—someone with a 2x10 beats the fellow with a 4x4. The 4x4 player moves more decisively but not as wisely.

### **Simplicity or Difficulty**

There are two types of modifiers to rolls to reflect easy or complex tasks. The GM can set a simplicity rating, a number of dice added to the dice pool before it is rolled; or a difficulty rating, a minimum height necessary for the particular action to count as a success.

Simplicity ratings range from +1d to +3d. The GM assigns a Simplicity Rating to any action they feel is so simple it should almost assure success, depending on the character, situation and circumstances.

For example a master swordsman trying to show off by performing a complicated sword maneuver might gain a +2d dice pool bonus due to its relative Simplicity (since he’s used to doing much more complicated things with a sword), while a normal Joe trying the same

gains no Simplicity dice (since he has no experience with a sword). Dice gained in this manner are rolled normally with the dice pool (up to the 10d maximum) and only for that particular action; they may be combined with any normal bonuses up to 10d. When and where this bonus is available is up to the GM.

Difficulty ratings work a lot like an opposing height in a dynamic contest—if your match isn't equal or greater than the difficulty number, you fail. The GM assigns a minimum height necessary to succeed based on the circumstances.

If a door is extremely thick, the GM can decide that a Body+Brawl match equal or higher than 5 is needed to break it down. If an aroma is somewhat subtle, he can decide that your Sense+Smell match must match a height of 2 or you don't detect it.

Level of Difficulty	Sample Rating
Challenging	Difficulty 1
Difficult	Difficulty 3
Hard	Difficulty 5
Extremely hard	Difficulty 7
Almost impossible	Difficulty 9

#### Dice Penalties

Tasks that require exceptional finesse, luck or effectiveness get a difficulty rating: but some tasks are difficult because circumstances are so chaotic, that they reduce your overall ability to succeed. Instead of a difficulty rating, such actions suffer a dice pool penalty. A dice penalty removes a die (or multiple dice) from your pool before it's rolled. When dice are removed, they are always removed in this order: regular dice first, then Expert dice and only then Trump dice.

Keep in mind that each Expert die negates a -1d penalty (but in turn it must be rolled as a normal die).

#### Minimum Width

Sometimes a task is difficult because you have to accomplish it quickly. After all, blasting a car before it rounds the corner is harder than if it's parked at the curb. Since width indicates speed, the GM can assign a minimum width necessary for a roll to succeed.

Bear in mind, requiring a width greater than 2 substantially reduces the chance of success. A width of 3 is improbable with a normal dice pool, while a width of 4 is nearly unheard-of without special dice. When width is used as difficulty, a width of 3 is usually sufficient to make a task very, very hard.

#### Taking Your Time

This only works on a task with a difficulty rating. With the GM's permission, if you're not under threat of attack and you have some time to think, you can take your time and reduce the difficulty of a task. Every extra unit of time you spend concentrating on the problem reduces the difficulty by 1. This is different than simplicity—the task doesn't get easier, you just have more time to figure it out.

For example, say cracking a code is measured in days, and the code you want to break is difficulty 3. If you take three days of concentration on the problem and then roll, you roll against difficulty 0. (The time it takes after all that preparation is still 5 – width days; just add the time spent preparing to the total.)

Even better, with the GM's permission, you can take an automatic success in an action without rolling, by taking the maximum amount of time the task requires. For example, if the action normally requires 5 – width hours, and you take 5 hours to attempt it, with the GM's permission you automatically succeed with a 1x1. This is the only way to succeed without a matching set.

If you do take your time, you don't gain any character advancement benefits from a success.

#### Cooperating on a Task

Two or more characters can cooperate on a single static contest. All characters involved combine the appropriate dice pools, up to 10 dice. For dynamic contests where timing

doesn't matter, combine dice pools in the same way—just add all the pools together, up to 10 dice.

If the contest is dynamic and time does matter, it gets a little more complicated. The people working together roll their dice pools separately. If one gets a match and another rolls that number on any die in his pool, this person adds it to the first person's match, expanding the width. If both score matches, use the tallest roll but the lowest width, because the faster guy has to wait for the slower one to catch up. Expert and Trump die work normally when cooperating. (In this case Trump dice are exceptionally good, since they can be made to match the other guy's pool.)

Example: As the Twilight Hourglass counts down, Michael and Dr. Mann attempt to push open the hatch to the cultists' chambers. The GM says both need to roll Body+Brawling, and their pools are 4d each. Michael rolls 2, 2, 3, and 5, for 2x2. Dr. Mann rolls 3, 3, 4, and 9, for 2x3. They use the taller roll, Dr. Mann's 2x3—but since Michael rolled a “loose” 3 in his pool he can add it to the set for a 3x3.

#### Multiple Matches

If you roll 5d and get 1, 1, 1, 10, and 10, then you actually have two matches—3x1 and 2x10. Which do you use?

The answer: whichever you prefer, but not both. If your character is running a race, the 3x1 is a good idea because it's faster. If quality is more important than speed, the 2x10 is best. Sometimes, however, you roll a dice pool specifically looking for multiple matches so you can perform more than one action at the same time. That's called attempting multiple actions.

#### Multiple Actions

Doing two challenging things at the same time is possible—but it's not easy. To attempt multiple actions, first declare that you are attempting two (or more) things at once, and calculate the dice pools for the tasks. If you're driving and shooting, for instance, the two pools are Coordination+Driving and Coordination+Firearms [Pistol].

Now roll the smallest of the pools—and drop one die from it per extra task. So if you're performing two actions, take -1d from the smaller pool and roll. If you attempt three actions at the same time, take -2d from the smallest pool and roll.

Expert dice work the same as always: Each Expert die buys off a single penalty die, but in exchange that Expert die becomes a normal die and is rolled regularly. (So if you have 1ed and attempt two actions, you do so at no penalty, but instead of picking the height of the Expert die you roll it normally.)

Example: Michael Rook has Coordination+Firearms [Pistol] at 3d+3d+1ed. He's an expert with the Mauser pistol—a crack shot. He wants to attack twice in the same round (a multiple action). Usually this attack would suffer a -1d penalty, but instead he rolls the whole 7d dice pool—even the expert die, since it buys off the penalty and becomes a regular die.

If you roll more than one matching set, assign the matches to each action however you like. If you get only one match, choose which task succeeds. If you fail to get any matches at all, both fail.

If you possess Expert dice or Trump dice, you still roll the smallest of the pools, even if your Expert dice or Trump dice are in the smaller pool. However, you can only use those dice to make a match for their particular stat, stat+skill or supernatural power. If you have 5d+2td in Coordination+ Driving and 9d in Coordination+Firearms [Submachine Gun], roll the lower pool minus 1d, or 4d+2td—but the Trump dice can only be assigned to Driving, not Firearms. Same goes for Expert dice.

If you score an exceptionally wide single match—meaning four or more dice match—you can split that into two (or more) successes. You can't perform multiple static tasks at the same time if they're on different time scales. If one action takes combat rounds to accomplish and another takes minutes, don't bother with multiple actions; just do the shorter action first

and then the longer one.

Example: Dr. Mann, under attack by a dozen cultists of the Twilight Campaign is dodging and using the Twilight Hourglass to freeze his opponents in time. His Coordination+Dodge is  $3d+2d$  and his Manipulate Time spell is  $4d+1td$ . The dice pools are the same size, so he opts to roll the  $4d+1td$ —which drops to  $3d+1td$  after the dice penalty. He rolls 3, 7, and 7, and sets the Trump die to 3, giving him a  $2x3$  and a  $2x7$ . He must use the  $2x3$  for the Manipulate Time spell, since that's the pool with the Trump die. He uses the  $2x7$  for the dodge.





## COMBAT

Here's where we get into some of the most important rules in the game—the things that can injure or kill your character. Because combat and other threats change the game so drastically, the rules for them are quite specific.

Sure, it may be important for you to crack the Aklo cipher with your Mind+Cryptography dice pool, but usually you don't need to know too many details; just whether it worked or not. But if some cultist swings at you with a machete, you need to know exactly when, where, and how well he does it.

### Phases

Each round of combat is broken into three phases: declare, roll, and resolve. When all three are done and every character in combat has acted, the next round begins and the cycle starts all over again.

#### 1) Declare

Describe your character's action. The character with the lowest Sense stat declares first, because a character with a higher Sense is more aware of what's going on in the fight and is better able to respond. Non-player characters declare in order of Sense just like players. If

two characters have the same Sense stat, the NPC declares first; or use the Sight skill and the Mind stat (in that order) as tiebreakers. When you declare, make it short and specific.

Expert dice are "called" at this point: Declare what height you want each to have. And if you're doing something special—dodging, attempting two things at once, aiming at a specific body part, helping a teammate with some action, casting a spell or using a martial arts maneuver—say so now.

#### 2) Roll

Each character rolls the dice pool appropriate to the declared action—usually a spell, a stat, or a stat+skill dice pool. Since all characters have already declared their actions, all roll at the same time and figure out their actions' width and height.

#### 3) Resolve

Before the dice are "read," anyone with Trump dice assigns them. Then the character with the widest roll always acts first. If two sets are equally wide, the taller roll goes first. All actions are resolved in order of width. If five characters roll 5x5, 3x6, 4x6, 2x3 and a 3x10, their actions are resolved in the following order: 5x5 first, then 4x6, then 3x10, then 3x6, and then 2x3. This means any action wider than your roll happens before your action—even if you're trying to dodge or defend against that attack.

If it's wider, it happens before you can act or react. When an attack hits, it immediately inflicts damage. If you suffer any damage before your roll is resolved, you lose a die out of your highest match—since being punched, stabbed, or shot is very, very distracting. If your set is ruined (reduced to no matching dice), the action fails, even if you rolled a success. You lose a die every time you take damage. That's all there is to a combat round. Everyone says what they're doing, they roll, actions happen in width order, and then the whole thing starts over again.

## Hand-to-Hand Combat

Fighting hand-to-hand—whether it's kung fu, a sword fight, or just rolling around in the mud—is a contest between opponents with the vague goal of “getting the upper hand.” It's a messy business. Strength, speed, and aggressiveness are everything.

Hand-to-hand attacks use the Body stat. If you're unarmed, use the Brawling, Wrestling or Martial

Arts skill. Generally it's your choice, unless the GM decides a particular skill is required—if your opponent has wrestled you to the ground, you may be forced to use your Wrestling skill instead of Martial Arts [Karate].

If you have a weapon, use its Melee Weapon skill. As usual, the height of your roll determines the hit location: Roll a 3x1 and you hit the guy in the leg. Roll 2x10 and you smash him in the face. Width determines initiative (who goes first) as well as damage. Base damage for hand-to-hand attacks is based on your Body stat (see Body for details.)

Hand-to-hand weapons amplify this damage, depending on how effective and deadly they are; as noted in each weapon's description.

### Called Shots

Just getting the edge on an opponent in hand-to-hand combat is hard enough—trying to hit a specific body part is truly tricky. Here's how it works: Lose one die from your dice pool because it's harder to target a specific hit location (skill dice can offset this penalty, but are lost or you can take the penalty and use the skill die normally). Next, set a die in your remaining pool to the hit location you're hoping to hit. Now roll the remaining dice. If you score a match and it beats your opponent's roll, you hit. If you score a match with the set hit location die, you've successfully struck that particular hit location. Expert dice buy off the dropped die penalty—as usual—but must be rolled normally.

The most popular hand-to-hand called shot is the knockout, a jab or blow to the head of a target (hit location 10) hoping to knock him unconscious. Be careful, though—if the target's

head fills with Killing damage, that's it, he's dead. Another popular attack is choking or strangling, which usually also involves a called shot to the head.

### Disarming

If someone's coming at you with a weapon, you're probably going to want to knock it away from him. Good luck. Make a called shot on the arm holding the weapon. If you succeed, and you beat or match your target's Body stat as a difficulty number, you do no damage but force the target to drop the weapon. If your width is a point or more greater than the width of your target's attack, you can choose to either knock the weapon away or snatch it from the target—and if you snatch it, you can use it normally the next combat round.

If you fail to beat the target's width and the weapon has an edge, you suffer 1 point of Killing to whichever limb you're using to disarm, even if you succeed in knocking the weapon away. If that seems harsh, just remember that when someone's trying to use a sword on you there's not much to grab but the pointy bits.

### Wrestling and Pinning

The standard hand-to-hand attack is a punch or kick, but many fights start out with an exchange of blows and end up with both fighters rolling around on the asphalt, each looking to hold the other guy down. To pin someone, first announce that's what your doing in the declare phase. Then roll your Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts dice pool. If you beat your target's roll, you inflict 1 point of Shock to the indicated hit location and knock the target down. The target is now pinned until he escapes.

When pinned, you can't dodge or take cover, and you can't attack anyone—including using firearms or Supernatural powers—except the character that pinned you. Even worse, while you're pinned any hand-to-hand attack made against you gains +1d to its dice pool. You remain pinned until one of three things happens:

- Your attacker declares he's doing something else and lets you go.
- Your attacker is knocked out or killed.
- You beat your attacker's Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts roll in a dynamic contest with your own Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts dice pool. You can attempt this once per combat round.

### Choking and Strangling

Smothering, choking, and drowning are all the same thing: First you can't breathe, and then you pass out and die. The cause of death is lack of oxygen. To choke someone with your bare hands (outside a pin), use your Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts pool. First, declare a called shot to the head. If you succeed, you inflict 1 point of Shock and continue doing 1 point of Shock to the target's head per round, until one of the following things happens:

- You declare that you're doing something else.
- You take damage from any source.
- The victim beats your Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts roll in a dynamic contest with his Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts. The victim may attempt this roll once a combat round.

You can begin choking a pinned opponent with any successful Body+Brawling, Body+Wrestling, or Body+Martial Arts roll—you don't need to make a called shot to location 10. But if you attempt a choke and fail, the target automatically escapes your pin.

Strangling a target works just like choking, but it cuts off the flow of blood to the brain instead of

just air. Strangling inflicts 2 points of Shock to the head per round and requires a Body+Martial Arts attack or some form of garrote.

### Throwing Large Objects

Throwing something heavy at an enemy is pretty simple. Roll Body+Throw to attack. You inflict damage based on your Body stat just like

a hand-to-hand attack, regardless of the size of the object. A supernaturally boosted character with 9d Body does width in Shock and Killing with a thrown rock or with a thrown dumpster; the dumpster may be bigger than the rock, but it's going a lot slower.

But throwing a large object has one advantage. If it's big enough to cover more than one hit location of the target, you can hit with multiple sets in your roll even if you didn't declare multiple actions. If you nail a thug with a dumpster and roll 2x7 and 3x10, he takes damage to the torso and the head!

### Knockback!

Knockback is the wonderful art of sending your opponent flying through the air with a single supernatural punch, kick, or blast. If you're struck with a supernatural attack of 6d+, you're knocked back. Keep in mind, it requires a boosted stat or a blasting spell at 6d or more, not just a dice pool of 6d—a normal human with a Body+Brawling pool of 8d from Body 4 and Brawling 4 can't knock you back, but a supernaturally boosted individual with a Body of 8d can send you flying. A boosted skill only causes knockback if the GM thinks it makes sense.

Knockback is determined by the width of the attack roll and the total damage inflicted. The formula is simple:

Width of the roll x Shock damage = yards knocked back.

So let's say you have Body 9d and hit a target with a roll of 3x10, for 3 Shock and 3 Killing. 3 width x 3 Shock = 9 yards. You send your opponent flying 27 feet. Ouch!

Blocking, Dodging, and Supernatural Defenses  
Most people don't like being hit, stabbed, or strangled, and the attack rules assume the target is trying his or her best to avoid it while still trying to get an attack in. But there are some times when you don't care about attacking back—you just want to survive.



skill, the more bonuses you can choose from. At character creation, select one bonus from the list below for each die in the skill. When you gain a new die in Martial Arts, pick a new bonus for your repertoire. You can choose one bonus for an attack from the available bonuses during the declare phase.

- +2 damage
- +2 height or -2 height
- +2 width for initiative only
- Upgrade Shock damage to Killing
- Attempt multiple actions without a 1d penalty
- Make a called shot with any successful roll
- Disarm with any successful roll—no called shot required
- Strangle instead of choke
- Escape a pin
- Knock the target down without falling yourself or having to wrestle him

However, Martial Arts training is specialized. You must define the type of Martial Arts you possess when you buy it. Different types of martial arts emphasize different maneuvers, from the holds and escapes of ju-jitsu to the hard strikes and kicks of karate. Martial Arts [Ju-Jitsu] is fine, or even Martial Arts [Eclectic Mix of Styles], but just plain Martial Arts is too broad. The specific type of Martial Arts skill dictates what kinds of attacks you can use it for; at the GM's discretion you might be able to use Martial Arts [Ju-Jitsu] just fine for a wrestling attack but not, say, to kick a fallen opponent in the head.

Work with your GM to choose the best maneuvers for your Martial Arts type. Want more bonuses? Take another type of Martial Arts skill! You can also use the Martial Arts skill for other combat-related actions as allowed by the GM, such as making a Coordination+Martial Arts roll to land on your feet after falling or being knocked back.

At your GM's discretion, you can take Martial Arts for a specific weapon, such as Martial Arts [Zen Archery] or Martial Arts [Three-Section Staff]. It works the same as regular Martial Arts, but for that particular weapon only.

## Ranged Combat

The nasty thing about getting shot at is that once the bullet is in flight, there's not much you can do about it. Bullets are fast; people are slow. The first clue many people get that they're being shot at is the sensation of hot lead plowing through their flesh.

That means gunfire is almost always a static contest. The target isn't interacting with your bullet once it's in flight; if you shoot before the target can get out of the way, you either hit or you don't. Don't want to get shot? Get behind cover before the shooting starts.

To keep every fight from stagnating into endless repetitions of "I shoot him. I shoot him. I shoot him," there are various tactical options that skew your chances a bit. As always, these options must be chosen during the declare phase of combat, before you roll.

Most of these rules can also be used for any distance attack—be it a stinger missile, a Rend Flesh spell, or a bow.

### Aiming

By taking your time and sighting your target carefully, you can improve your chances of hitting: For every combat round spent squinting down the barrel at the target, add +1d to your dice pool. You can't take any other action while aiming, or add more than +2d in this fashion. And if you're distracted (i.e., you have to roll another dice pool) or you suffer any damage while aiming, the bonus is lost.

In addition to normal aiming, shooting or attacking a large or stationary object at close range automatically grants a +2d bonus to the attack. After all, it's simple to shoot a house at 20 feet—much easier than, say, shooting a gibbering alien spitting acid at you.

### Called Shots

Sometimes you want to shoot a target in a specific body part. This is known as a called shot. It works pretty much the same way as in hand-to-hand attacks: Drop 1d out of your dice pool, set one other die in your pool to the number of the hit location you're targeting, and roll the remaining dice looking for a match.

Sometimes you want to call a shot at an object worn or held by a target, not the target itself—like the fuel tank on a flamethrower, a mystic amulet, gadget, or doomsday device. In that case, make a called shot for hit location 9.

### Multiple Shots and Spray Attacks

Sometimes you fire more than one shot at someone (or at more than one person). With weapons designed to fire once per combat round (like many pistols or rifles) this is handled by the multiple actions rules—in other words, it's very hard to pull off. Automatic weapons such as machine guns are built to make multiple attacks, and they have a large advantage—they have a Spray rating measured in dice that you add to your dice pool, and you don't lose the usual penalty die for attempting multiple actions. Any and all matches that come up are hits. You can't combine this trick with aiming—if you spend a turn aiming and decide to use a weapon's Spray dice, the extra die from aiming is lost.

Spray attacks use a number of bullets (or energy charges, or whatever) equal to the number of dice in your pool (including the Spray rating); if your Coordination+Firearms+Spray pool is 9d, when you roll you shoot 9 bullets in a single combat round. Usually you can attempt a Spray attack only against a single target or targets that are right next to each other. If they're spread out, you can attack only with suppressive fire.

### Suppressive Fire

Suppressive fire means you're putting as much lead as possible (or fire or whatever) in the general direction of a target. Instead of the stat+skill dice pool, roll a flat 2d plus your weapon's Spray rating, if any. For each matching set, everyone in the targeted area who's not behind cover must roll a single die. If that die comes up the same as the height of one of your rolls, that character is hit in the indicated hit location for normal damage. In addition, every potential target must make an Empathy+Equilibrium roll or immediately seek cover. Once under cover, they can act normally again, but until they find cover they must do their best to go to ground.



Suppressive fire empties your weapon's ammunition. You can't attempt suppressive fire with weapons that fire less than 1 shot per combat round (in other words, weapons with a Slow rating). But you can use suppressive fire on weapons designed to make a single attack per round, like a pistol. The intent of suppressive fire is to make the enemies keep their heads down (and more importantly, their guns), but a lucky hit is always possible.

Example: Michael Rook unloads a submachine gun (Spray 4d) in the direction of a gang of cultists, using suppressive fire. He rolls 2d for suppressive fire + 4d Spray, for a total of 6d. His dice come up 3x6. Each of the cultists rolls 1d. One of them comes up 6, matching the height of Rook's roll. So he takes a hit at width 3 to the left arm. The rest of the cultists now must make Empathy+Equilibrium rolls or dive for cover.

### Sniper

Any time you shoot at someone who doesn't know he's going to be shot at, add +1d to your dice pool in addition to any other bonuses. It's one of the benefits of shooting at someone that isn't screaming, dodging, or firing back. Depending on the circumstances, your GM might give other advantages for firing at a helpless target, if your character can stomach it. Doing so is an Intensity 3 check on the Violence gauge for the shooter.

### Range

The default attack roll assumes medium range. Because this game is abstract, "medium range" covers a lot, and differs from weapon to weapon. Weapon ranges are listed in Close/Long range in yards, defining three distinct ranges—close, medium, and long range. The first number is close range; the second number is long range; everything in between is medium range. Maximum range is usually unimportant—a miss is a miss—but for the record, guns usually have an effective range of less than a mile.

The range to the target modifies the attacking dice pool:

- At close range, add another die to your pool.
- At medium range, your dice pool is unaffected.
- At long range, reduce your dice pool by one die.

## Vehicle Combat



Each player will need a measuring car, used for measuring moves in car lengths. The measuring car is used for measuring movement and attack ranges. Make sure all the players have the same length of measuring car. A ruler or sheet of paper ripped to the required length can also be used.

Place a yellow or brown cloth or board down on the table, the bigger the table the better. Now make a road, about 6" wide and as long as possible. Any dark material will make a good road. This size is ideal for Hot Wheels, Matchbox, or other small toy cars and trucks.

All vehicles have a size value. This size is how many dice they roll to cause damage in a crash, and how much damage they can take before becoming a wreck. A Mini Cooper or motorbike is a light vehicle while a Hummer or armored bus is a heavy vehicle. Muscle cars come somewhere in the middle and so count as medium vehicles.

Small vehicles have 6 hits, medium vehicles have 12 hits, large vehicles have 18 hits.

Armour provides an extra 6 hits.

Passengers in closed vehicles may not make melee attacks. However, they get +1 die when defending against attacks. At least one character or NPC must be in the driving position for the vehicle to do anything. If the vehicle is destroyed, the crew are not lost. They may stay with the wreck and use it for cover. If the crew are all killed, any gear stays with the vehicle.

### Turning

Turning requires a roll for keeping control of the car while in the turn.

### Ramming

The attacker rolls a drive roll. If the roll succeeds, the defender takes a dice of damage and is also forced to roll on the skid table.

If a vehicle loses all its hits it is immobilised and becomes a wreck. If it takes double its hits it detonates in an impressive fireball and becomes debris. The vehicle is turned upside down to show it is wrecked, it is removed and replaced with a debris marker if destroyed. Any equipment on board a wreck is still on the vehicle, and can be picked up.

### Immobilized

To get an immobilized vehicle moving again, simply spend one round in place, gunning the engine, before screeching back into action next round. The immobilized vehicle is moved backward when the road scrolls, just like the other scenery.

### Nitro

Cars equipped with nitro may make a double move in a straight line forward (or until they hit something). They must also roll a 1d6, on a 1 the nitro kit blows, destroying the engine.

### Off Table

If a vehicle moves off the table at the back it has been left behind and may not return. A vehicle that leaves from the front may return on any subsequent round.

### Off Road

Going off road at any point requires a drive roll

to avoid a skid or crash. Specifically designed off-road vehicles do not have to make a drive check when going off road.

### Road Scrolling

When a vehicle moves, it is really just moving around relative to the other cars. At the end of every turn after all the players have gone, cars should start to fall behind as the road "scrolls". Working from the rearmost vehicle to the front, all units are moved backwards two car lengths.

Immobilized vehicles, wrecks, pedestrians and scenery such as bridges and turnings are moved five car lengths directly backward. If the piece of scenery makes contact with a vehicle at any point during this movement, the vehicle has crashed into it, potentially damaging or destroying the vehicle.

Once all the scenery has been moved, roll 1d6. If a 6 is rolled, some item of scenery appears at the front end of the road.

Roll the six-sided dice again to see what scenery has appeared. The GM can adapt these results to reflect the area the road is traveling through.

- 1- Oil patch: Any vehicles that touch the patch of oil must make a driving check.
- 2- Debris: Any vehicles that touch this will crash into a size small obstacle.
- 3- Wreck: Any vehicles that touch this will crash into a size medium obstacle.
- 4- Bridge: Driving round this requires a drive check, even for off-road vehicles.
- 5- Tunnel: Any vehicles that miss the tunnel entrance take damage from crashing into an obstacle size large and are immediately immobilized.
- 6- Turning: Cars may leave the road and follow the turning. If the majority of cars take the turning, this becomes the new road.

A vehicle can move up to one vehicle length in any forward or sideways direction. If the move contacts any other vehicle, the player must end the move, and is considered to be ramming their target.

A vehicle may also move up to one vehicle

length in any backward direction. This is considered to be braking, and can also be used for ramming attacks.

Passengers in open vehicles may fight passengers and attack the driver in any adjacent open vehicles. All passengers attack at the end of their vehicle's move.

Any character at a weapon's mount may shoot a weapon at another vehicle within one vehicle length. The driver may also shoot any remote weapons.

Passengers may attempt repairs during combat. This however is very difficult.

### Failed Drive Rolls

Failed drive rolls can have lots of different effects, but they also always require a roll on the Skid Table. If the drive roll is failed, roll 1d3 on the skid table.

### Roll

0 The vehicle moves one vehicle length in a random direction. 1-2 left, 3-4 right, 5 backwards, 6 forwards. This may result in a RAM or another drive check. The vehicle may move as normal next round.

1 The vehicle moves one vehicle length in a random direction. 1-2 left, 3-4 right, 5 backwards, 6 forwards. This may result in a RAM or another drive check. The vehicle is then immobilized.

2 The vehicle moves one vehicle length in a random direction. 1-2 left, 3-4 right, 5 backwards, 6 forwards. This may result in a RAM or another drive check. The also takes a dice of damage.

# DAMAGE

Damage in Post-Cthulhuis is quite specific. When you're hit, the attack roll tells you exactly where you're hit and for how much damage.

## Types of Damage

There is a world of difference between getting punched in the gut and getting stabbed there. A punch aches and bruises, but unless you're pummeled for a long while you're unlikely to suffer any lasting harm. Being stabbed or shot is entirely different—your internal organs are re-arranged and exposed to all kinds of germs, viruses, and pollutants. Damage that penetrates the skin is serious.

In these rules there are two types of damage: Shock and Killing.

Shock damage dazes you and can be dangerous in the short term, but is usually shaken off. It represents bruising, blunt trauma, concussion, shallow surface cuts, or light bleeding.

Killing damage is just what it sounds like—damage that can quickly end your life. It represents puncture wounds, deep cuts, organ trauma, ballistic damage, heavy bleeding, or burning. Sometimes Killing damage is reduced to Shock damage due to armor or other effects; when this is important, 1 point of Killing damage is equivalent to 2 points of Shock.

## The Damage Silhouette

Every character sheet has a damage silhouette with a bunch of wound boxes representing how much

Shock and Killing damage a character can sustain. On a normal human, the damage silhouette is shaped like a human body, with hit locations split into legs, arms, torso, and head. The height of an attack roll determines which hit location takes the damage (see Hit Location).

If you're hit, mark off a wound box for each point of damage sustained. If it's Shock, put a single diagonal line through each box. If it's Killing damage, put an "X" through each box.

The GM should decide how to describe the

damage and assign any penalties. Taking 5 Killing to the torso might not be immediately fatal, but it will probably kill you eventually if you don't get medical treatment; the GM might call it broken ribs or maybe a punctured lung. It might be worth a -1d penalty on most actions to reflect shock and pain; or maybe the damage itself is penalty enough. It's up to the GM.

When new damage strikes a hit location, always fill unmarked boxes first, if there are any. Shock damage becomes Killing damage if all a hit location's wound boxes are filled. Once all the wound boxes are marked with Shock, any further damage to that location is automatically counted as Killing damage.

## Hit Location

The location of an injury is usually much more important than the amount of damage—given the choice between having someone stomp on my foot or on my face, I'll pick the foot every time. Because location is so important, the height of an attack roll (i.e., the quality of the attack) defines the hit location, while the width of the roll (speed and power) determines damage as well as telling you who goes first. The higher the attack roll, the more dangerous the attack.

That poor little damage silhouette on the character sheet has numbers representing each of its locations, from 1 (left leg) to 10 (head). Look up the height of the attack roll on the silhouette to find out where you were hit.

### DAMAGE SILHOUETTE:

Height Hit Location (Wound Boxes)

1 Left Leg (5)

2 Right Leg (5)

3-4 Left Arm (5)

5-6 Right Arm (5)

7-9 Torso (10)

10 Head (4)

Once all the wound boxes in the head (sometimes called "brain boxes") are filled with Shock damage, you're unconscious. If your head boxes fill with Killing, you're dead.

When your torso fills with Shock, your Body

and Coordination are reduced by -4d until you recover at least 1 point of Shock. If your torso is filled with Killing, you're dead.

When a limb is filled with Shock damage, you can't use it to perform any skill or action. If a leg is filled with Shock damage, your running speed is cut in half; if both are filled, your movement is reduced to 1 yard per minute. If a limb is filled with Killing, it's seriously damaged and may never be quite as good again. The GM decides the exact effect based on the nature of the attack and injury and the quality of medical care you receive. Maybe it reduces stat+skill rolls using that limb by -1d because it never quite heals properly, or you lose a wound box from that location permanently; or the attack cuts the limb clean off. It's up to the GM.

Once all wound boxes in a limb fill with Killing, any further damage to that limb goes straight to the torso.

#### Non-Human Hit Locations

Some supernatural creatures—and many mundane ones—have bizarre body configurations and more or fewer wound boxes than a human. There are several ways to reflect this. A quick and dirty solution is to take the creature's Body stat, multiply it by 10, and split that figure between six hit locations as wound boxes. As a matter of course, the largest portion of the body should take the torso slot (7 to 9), the smallest should take the head slot (10) and the limbs should be split between the remaining numbers. To reflect even more bizarre configurations you can simply spread the "head boxes" throughout the body of the creature in odd locations (say, one in the torso, one in the arm and one in the head). This makes knocking out such a creature nearly impossible without extensive knowledge of its body structure.

## HEALING

Damage is nasty stuff, so you're naturally wondering how to get rid of it.

### Healing Shock damage

Shock can be healed with the First Aid skill, if you have the right tools—a complete first aid kit with bandages, splints, and painkillers usually does the trick. The character performing first aid makes a Mind+First Aid roll with the total amount of damage in the hit location as a difficulty number, up to a maximum of 10 (so if a limb has 2 Killing and 4 Shock damage, the difficulty is 6). Each successful use of the First Aid skill heals a number of Shock points equal to the width of the roll; a failed roll, however, inflicts 1 point of Shock.

First aid can be used once per wound. To keep track, simply put a check mark next to the hit location each time you take a wound and erase it when you get treated with first aid. First aid can never heal Killing damage—only real medical treatment can do that. Shock can also be healed with rest. Every game day, if you get a good night's rest, you recover half the Shock damage on each hit location (if you have only 1 point of Shock on a location, it heals completely).

### Healing Killing damage

Killing damage takes a lot longer to heal. Short of some kind of supernatural intervention it can only be cured by serious medical attention—meaning surgery and a hospital stay—or prolonged bed rest. When you get real medical treatment, the doctor rolls a Mind+Medicine dice pool. The procedure converts a number of Killing points to Shock equal to the height of the successful roll, taking 5 – width hours. Treat each hit location with a separate operation.

You can also recover Killing damage with extensive bed rest. For each week of complete rest, 1 point of Killing is converted to Shock on each hit location. If it's in a hospital, roll the doctor's Mind+Medicine pool and convert width in Killing to Shock instead. Keep in mind that healing Killing damage varies due to time period. In the 1920's, a gangrenous limb would

be severed, while in the modern era the patient would be pumped full of exotic antibiotics in the hopes the limb could be saved. In the days before antibiotics, a wound with a few points of Killing damage may grow worse over time thanks to infection, taking Shock damage each day rather than healing.

The particulars of what can and can't be healed remains up to the GM to decide; if in doubt, resolve it with a Body+Health roll and set the difficulty based on the environment and circumstances.



## THE MADNESS METER

Some of the strange behavior exhibited by adventurers who truly understand the mysteries of Cthulhu is often mistaken for madness, but it is not. It can not be 'cured' by counseling, psychiatry, medication or any other form of therapy. It is actually the insane investigator who has a better grasp of the realities of the world and it is their behavior that is better adapted to these realities. On the other hand, some of the crazy things they do is just evidence of them being driven round the bend by the things they have seen.

There are four categories of mental stability—the four pillars upholding sane and productive thought. These categories are: Violence, the Unnatural, Self and Helplessness. It's perfectly possible to have one piece of the foundation crumble while the other three are solid.

Horrific experiences can erode a person's ability to cope, and someone who has seen too much loses control over some aspect of his personality. Perhaps the person develops a crippling phobia of something that reminds them of their traumas. Perhaps the person obsesses about what they saw, or creates an elaborate rationale that shields them from accepting the truth. Perhaps the person simply fades into catatonic passivity.

On the other hand, some people resist madness by becoming rigid and inflexible. While they retain control over themselves, it's a control that comes at the high price of increasing distance from the world and the people in it. It is possible to become so experienced—or numb—that just about any stimulus, no matter how alienating or nauseating, can be handled calmly and with equanimity. The downside of treating a mangled corpse as if it's as ordinary as breakfast is that you also treat breakfast with the caution and reserve most reserve for mangled corpses.

Strength of this sort is a burden as much as a blessing, because those who possess it are, by necessity, alienated from their fellows and from themselves.

### The Gauges

**Violence:** This gauge dictates how you handle violence; whether inflicting or suffering from it.

**The Unnatural:** This gauge deals with things that fall outside of the status quo—supernatural events beyond the normal human range of experience.

**Self:** This gauge deals with internal conflict, especially guilt. Commit a crime, injure someone you love, lie to your best friend, this is all covered by the Self gauge.

**Helplessness:** This measures your reaction to traumatic events that you can't control.

### Hardened and Failed Notches

The four gauges of the Madness Meter measure how damaged or hardened your character has become to their particular influences. When confronted by a shocking event that falls under a particular gauge, you must make a Madness check by rolling a dice pool that represents how resistant you are to that stimulus.

When you succeed at a roll in a particular gauge, you gain a Hardened notch in that gauge. Hardened notches represent your mind coping with the stimulus stimulus, leaving you resistant to it in the future. When you fail a roll, you gain a Failed notch, and suffer some ill effect as your mind fails to cope with the stimulus. That means one of three trauma reactions—fight, flight or freeze. See below for more details.

### Confronting the Horrific

There are many strains and trials that can threaten someone's mental equilibrium. Not only are they divided by type, they differ by intensity. Having someone shoot at you is clearly a stress in the Violence region, but getting shot and then having to drag yourself a mile to the nearest farmhouse is a lot more difficult to internalize and overcome. Threats to sanity have Intensity ratings from 1-10. This works exactly like a difficulty number—your roll must match or beat the Intensity to succeed.

Sanity checks are managed with the Equilibrium skill. Unlike most skills, Equilibrium does not fall under a single stat.

Rather, the stat that couples with it varies depending on the situation. Those without an Equilibrium skill simply roll their stat and hope for the best.

For Violence checks: Roll Sense+Equilibrium as your instincts kick in to preserve your skin in a circumstance that is clearly not safe. It's a razor-thin margin between using animal instincts to survive and succumbing to animal hysteria. Characters in tune with their surroundings can maintain that balance.

For Unnatural checks: Roll Mind+Equilibrium. Clearly unnatural events and entities are beyond common experience, and the only hope for putting it into a framework to which a character can relate is logic and abstract thought. Even if the reasoning turns out to be mistaken, it's better than nothing.

For Self checks: Roll Command+Equilibrium. The same force of belief that bends others to your will can help you stay the course even when you no longer recognize yourself.

For Helplessness checks: Roll Empathy+Equilibrium. Just as compassion for others allows you to relate and forge connections, understanding your own needs and trials can maintain hope, keep you from shutting down in despair—and keep you from turning into a ruthless automaton.

Hardened notches in a gauge offer powerful protection against challenges of that type: you do not have to roll if the Intensity is equal to or lower than your Hardened rating on a gauge.

Example: Dr. Mann has four Hardened notches in his Violence gauge, while his companion Michael has none. When someone pulls up a car and starts firing at them that's an Intensity 2 Violence check. Dr. Mann doesn't need to roll—he's a tough character who can keep his head under fire. Michael, however, must roll

Sense+Equilibrium.

This means that every time you confront a challenge with Intensity equal to or less than your Hardened rating, your gauge won't change. Every time you face one greater than

your Hardened rating, your gauge is going to change—you'll either get a Hardened notch or a Failed notch. Either way, you won't be the same.

The Equilibrium roll is made against a difficulty equal to the situation's Intensity: A matching set with either width or height at or above the situation's Intensity is sufficient to keep you in control. If the roll succeeds, you get another Hardened notch in the appropriate gauge. If the roll fails, you get a Failed notch in it. Furthermore, if you fail you also suffer a trauma reaction as described below under "Failed Rolls".

Keep in mind, Intensity 10 situations are extremely rare. They represent the absolute most terrible events you might see in your life. Hopefully you'll encounter them only once in a blue moon.

### **Sample Situations and their Intensities**

Violence (Sense+Equilibrium)

- The sight of blood: Intensity 1
- Being shot or shooting somebody: Intensity 2
- Seeing a dead body: Intensity 3
- Seeing a mutilated corpse: Intensity 4
- Being shelled by artillery: Intensity 5
- Being attacked by the undead: Intensity 6
- Suffering the effects of a spell: Intensity 7
- Being consumed by a Shoggoth: Intensity 8
- Being consumed by an Old One: Intensity 9

The Unnatural (Mind+Equilibrium)

- Hearing disembodied voices: Intensity 1
- Seeing an unattended object move: Intensity 2
- Being struck by invisible attacker: Intensity 3
- Seeing a monster come alive again: Intensity 4
- Seeing a Deep One: Intensity 5
- Seeing a Serpent Man: Intensity 6
- Seeing an Elder Thing: Intensity 7
- Seeing a Shoggoth: Intensity 8
- Seeing a Great Old One: Intensity 9

Self (Command+Equilibrium)

- Lying to your best friend: Intensity 1
- Stealing: Intensity 2
- Stealing from your family: Intensity 3
- Cheating on partner with a friend: Intensity 4
- Defrauding everyone you know: Intensity 5
- Murdering a loved one: Intensity 6
- Killing a child: Intensity 7
- Mass murder: Intensity 8
- Betraying humanity itself: Intensity 9

Helplessness (Empathy+Equilibrium)

- Locked in a pay-toilet for a night: Intensity 1
- Being mugged: Intensity 2
- Being locked up for long periods: Intensity 3
- Being kidnapped and ransomed: Intensity 4
- Suffering from a fatal illness: Intensity 5
- Having hours to live: Intensity 6
- Waiting on death row: Intensity 7
- Being herded to your death: Intensity 8
- Seeing Azathoth: Intensity 9

### Successful Madness Saves

If your Equilibrium roll succeeds, you get another Hardened notch in the appropriate gauge. You only ever get one hardened notch per roll, no matter how intense the situation was.

It's possible, albeit difficult, to completely fill a gauge with Hardened notches. Characters with full gauges have pretty much seen it all and are immune to further shocks. This sort of callousness has additional effects, however, as that sort of alienation from mainline humanity impedes one's ability to function as a person.

Characters with 10 Hardened notches in Violence get an automatic +2d bonus to Intimidate rolls.

However, no skill rolled with the Empathy stat can ever have a width greater than 2. Any additional points of width are discarded.

Characters with 10 Hardened notches in Unnatural get an automatic +2d bonus to Mythos rolls. However, no skill rolled with the Mind stat can ever have a width greater than 2. Any additional points of width are discarded.

Characters with 10 Hardened notches in Self get an automatic +2d bonus to Lie rolls. However, no skill rolled with the Sense stat can ever have a width greater than 2. Any additional points of width are discarded.

Characters with 10 Hardened notches in Helplessness get an automatic +2d bonus to Dodge rolls.

However, no skill rolled with the Command stat can ever have a width greater than 2. Any additional points of width are discarded.

### Failed Madness Saves

When you fail an Equilibrium roll, you get a Failed notch in the relevant gauge. No matter the relative Intensity of the situation, it's just one more Failed notch—really horrific experiences are not necessarily more scarring than minor ones. After all, a hallmark of decaying reason is a lost sense of proportion.

In addition to the Failed notch, however, you must immediately choose one of three trauma reactions. A trauma reaction means the conscious and logical part of the mind is unseated. You may be reacting with pure instinct, or just be stunned and dumbstruck. There are three trauma reactions, and once one is chosen you're trapped in that reaction until the situation changes and you have a chance to gather your wits.

The trauma reactions are:

**Flight:** You run away at top speed from the terrifying stimulus. If you're carrying anything that weighs more than a couple pounds, you drop it. If there's a choice of direction, you move away from what terrified you—if there are multiple paths that go straight away, you take the closest, safest or most familiar route. You run until you can no longer hear, smell, see, scent or feel the threat, or until you've failed enough Endurance rolls to collapse.

**Fight:** You attack with primal, berserk fury until you either obliterate the stimulus, fall exhausted from failed Endurance rolls, or are destroyed (or just knocked out). You cannot voluntarily stop fighting until the offending object, creature or person is clearly destroyed.

Freeze: You either hide and don't come out until you're sure the danger's passed, or you simply freeze like a deer in headlights. Freezing may mean perfect paralysis, or weeping in the fetal position. Characters who freeze in response to an unresponsive situation (for example, someone who freezes after coming upon the mangled remains of his beloved greyhound) can snap out of it if the situation does not change for an hour.

### **Psychopaths and Cultists**

Those who manage to gain 10 Hardened notches in a gauge are immune to that stimulus. Some individuals remain highly functioning in society even while suffering from multiple filled gauges. Others don't cope so well. Some examples of aberrant human behavior are listed below. Those who have 10 Hardened notches in the Self gauge are criminally insane—they fail to understand or care how stealing, lying, deceit and cheating negatively affect society.

- Those with 10 Hardened notches in the Violence gauge are psychopathic—they hold no value to any life except their own. This is a common trait in mass murderers and serial killers.
- Those who have 10 Hardened notches in the Unnatural gauge are cultists—they either worship or obsessively seek to fully comprehend the supernatural. Worshipers of entities such as Cthulhu and Nyarlathotep often suffer from this.
- Those who have 10 Hardened notches in the Helplessness gauge are paranoid. They trust no one—not even themselves, really—and are sure others are after them.

### **Mental Collapse**

Every time you get five Failed notches, in any combination of gauges, you develop a serious mental problem. Getting Failed notches always represents mental discomfort, just as Hardened notches represent isolation and alienation. Every five Failed notches means that inner pain has gotten so severe that it impinges on your ability to function. You have developed an aberration. You suffer its ill effects until you lose a Failed notch. If you get another Failed

notch, the problem recurs. Another five Failed notches and you pick up another.

If you get an aberration, work with your GM to pick something that makes sense. Don't just try to get something that won't come into play: Believe it or not, mental aberrations can be fun to play. This is your chance to reveal your character's nature through actions. Don't waste it.

The adventurer acquiring Mythos knowledge is irrevocably changed, and to outsiders, these changes can resemble madness.

The levels of insanity.

1 - you develop a debilitating fear of something—typically something that was present during the trauma, or more rarely something that you associate with the issue. Someone who saw her husband torn to pieces by wild dogs might reasonably develop a fear of dogs. Someone who was attacked by Deep Ones might develop a phobia of fish, or water. Whenever in the presence of the feared object, roll Command+Equilibrium. If you're in a fight, you have to take an action doing nothing else to make this roll as you steel yourself for the confrontation. This roll is not a Madness check, inasmuch as it doesn't change your Madness Meter. If you fail the check, however, you have to either freeze or flee. Fighting is not an option.

2 - hearing voices - roll 1d6 voices that will try to persuade the character to do their bidding

3 - catatonia - the character suffers 1d6 hours of catatonia per week as their mind learns to travel to other places and times

4 - pyromania - the hideous significance of some patterns of urban development become clear. They are invocations of summoning inscribed over the landscape. One such will be discovered per month that must be dealt with by dynamite or fire.

5 - personality change - the host body becomes able to host visiting psyches, transferring the intrinsic psyche of the adventurer to some alien body far removed in time or space. These

personality swaps last 1d6 hours and the adventurers behavior can be very bizarre, because it is not the adventurer at all, but some other creature inhabiting their form

6 - transcendence - the character moves on from Earthly concerns, babbling and gibbering, they confine themselves to contemplation of the true nature of the universe. They have periods where they crave human company and become lucid, but these are short - only 1d6 hours per day.

## REGAINING SANITY

Morbid and miserable experiences alter a character's personality chart for the worse, one way or the other. There are some skills that allow characters to manipulate the gauges in a more controlled fashion.

### Counseling

The Counseling skill lets a character talk down someone who's just emerged from a trauma, providing immediate psychological triage. The counselor rolls Empathy+Counseling against a Difficulty equal to the character's current Failed or Hardened notches (whichever the counselor's addressing). With a success, a Failed or Hardened notch is erased (this can only be attempted once per traumatic event). However, the counselor has to be able to talk with the patient, hear the patient's answers, and have a meaningful exchange of ideas (or, at the minimum, comforting platitudes). The final limit on Counseling is that its immediate, empathetic nature makes it useless after a reaction has become ingrained. Thus, once a day has passed since the trauma Counseling can't alter the Hardened or Failed notch. After that, you need to go a little deeper.

### Psychiatry

This Mind skill is the dry and intellectual science of reshaping the thoughts of others. With a successful roll the psychiatrist can remove Failed and Hardened notches—or add them. It is not easy, however, and it is not quick. To apply Psychiatry, the patient has to spend time in therapy. The more extreme his attitude, the more time is required to dig it out and restore him to a normal range of function. Fixing Failed notches takes longer than erasing

Hardened notches. Patients in residential therapy—isolated from the cares and stresses of everyday life (even if such a place can still be found after the collapse of the entire world) and doing nothing but concentrating on getting well—have to spend a number of weeks there equal to their Failed notches in the gauge they're trying to fix. If they're trying to get rid of a Hardened notch, they have to spend that number of days in intensive recovery.

If the patient is only coming for an hour-long session once or twice a week, it takes a number of weeks of therapy equal to the patient's Hardened notches before the psychiatrist can attempt a roll. A character getting gradual treatment for Failed notches needs to spend months of weekly sessions before the roll gets made. Once the time has been put in, the psychiatrist rolls Mind+Psychiatry. If the character being treated has done good roleplaying indicating someone who is really struggling with her issues and trying to get well, the psychiatrist may add a die to the pool (GM's discretion). If the character has resisted therapy, the roll is at a -1d penalty. Passive patients neither add nor subtract from the pool. The roll is made without a difficulty rating. Any success alters the gauge as planned.

All this assumes the psychiatrist is trying help the patient get well, pushing her towards the mainstream middle of the chart. The system works just as well for an unscrupulous psychiatrist who, for whatever reason, wants a patient to get sicker. In that case, the psychiatrist has to invest time appropriate to the Failed notch he's attempting to inflict. Similarly, training designed to inure people against trauma require days or weeks equal to the Hardened notch desired.

### Psychology

Psychology relies on many of the same techniques, theories and approaches as psychiatry, but it's more responsive, more personal and less clinical. Psychology often depends on the therapist's strength of character and force of personality. It is therefore a Command skill rather than a Mind skill. Forming a tight and intense bond with a therapist can allow rapid progress—but unlike

the repeatable methods of psychiatry, it depends on the patient as much as the therapist. Psychology does not make people better, but it can help them get better. It can provide emotional triage, just like the Counseling skill—same time frame, same effects, same requirements, same difficulty rating. It can also remove notches from gauges like the Psychiatry skill, with the same investment of effort. (It cannot be used to add notches to any gauge, however.)

Psychology is quite versatile, but there's a catch. A successful Psychology roll does not change the patient's attitude. It allows a new Equilibrium roll, of the same type that was failed (or successful) before, only now the difficulty is the number of hard or failed notches in the gauge you're trying to affect.

## CHARACTER DEATH

There's not a whole lot keeping the victor of a combat from administering a 'death blow' and killing a player character. But a decision like this might be pretty controversial depending on what kind of players are involved in the game.

### Circumspect vs Fundamentalist

Some people are fundamentalists and think that character death should always be on the table, if the rules allow it. Others are more circumspect, and consider it very damaging to their fun if they lose a character upon whom they've invested hours and hours of gameplay. They don't think a character should die just because someone got lucky with their attack rolls or their character was particularly unlucky in their defense.

We recommend the latter approach, also because, sudden character death is a pretty boring outcome when compared to putting the character through hell. On top of that, all the story threads that character was connected to just kind of stall with no resolution, and you have to expend a bunch of effort and time figuring out how to get a new character into play mid-adventure.

That doesn't mean there's no room for character death in the game, however. We just recommend that you save that possibility for

conflicts that are extremely pivotal, dramatic, and meaningful for that character. If, as a GM, you've got the feeling that you're in that kind of conflict, talk it out when you're setting the scene and see how people feel.

At the very least, even if you're in a hardcore group that invites the potential for character death on any taken out result, make sure that you telegraph the opponent's lethal intent. Players then know which NPCs really mean business, and can concede to keep their characters alive if need be.

## OBJECT STATS

The game abstracts the properties of equipment, armor, and weapons into a number of different qualities—general concepts that define the game effects of the object or device—such as Heavy Armor, Light Armor, Penetration, Area, Burn, Slow, and Spray.

### Armor

Armor is any substance that protects against physical attack. Anything that absorbs any amount of incoming damage is, by definition, armor. There are two categories of armor: light armor and heavy armor. Both types are defined by an armor rating: light armor rating (LAR) and heavy armor rating (HAR). Armor absorbs a number of damage points equal to its rating from incoming physical attacks. If the armor eats up more damage than an attack inflicts, the armor deflects the attack. Any damage that gets through the armor is inflicted on the target normally. What kind of damage is absorbed depends on the type of armor.

Light armor absorbs 1 point of Shock damage per point of LAR. Light armor represents cushioning of some sort, such as pads, foam inserts, leather, or any other type of light shielding. If you have a light armor rating of 3, it absorbs 3 points of Shock from incoming attacks. Light armor doesn't defend against Killing damage—even 1 point of Killing punches right through it.

Heavy armor absorbs 1 point of Killing damage and 1 point of Shock per point of HAR. Heavy armor represents strong, usually rigid material, such as ceramic plates, metal, or stone. If you



have a heavy armor rating (HAR) of 5, it absorbs 5 Shock and 5 Killing. Don't convert one type of damage to the other; if you have HAR 3 and you're punched for 4 Shock, you take 1 Shock—the unused Killing protection does you no good.

You can stack different types of armor—heavy armor with light armor underneath, for example, or light armor with heavier pieces built into it. Damage is absorbed in the order they're stacked—so if you wear heavy armor on top of light armor, the HAR protects you first and whatever damage is left over is blocked by the LAR.

#### Armor or Barrier Level (Type)

Full body padding (all hit locations) 2 LAR  
Riot helmet (hit location 10) 1 HAR + 1 LAR  
Kevlar vest (hit location 7-9) 2 HAR + 2 LAR  
Plate armor (all hit locations) 3 HAR + 2 LAR  
1" wood door or shield 2 HAR  
1/2" concrete wall 2 HAR  
2" wood wall 3 HAR  
6" wood wall 5 HAR  
.25" aluminum 5 HAR  
1' sandbags 5 HAR  
Bulletproof glass 5 HAR  
8" concrete wall 6 HAR  
.25" titanium 6 HAR  
1" steel plate 6 HAR  
2" steel plate 7 HAR  
4" steel plate 8 HAR  
M1 tank armor 8 HAR  
8" steel plate 9 HAR  
10' earth 10 HAR  
10' concrete bunker 10 HAR  
16" steel vault door 10 HAR  
Neutron star 25 HAR

#### Stacking Armor

Modern body armor is just too bulky to allow much stacking: You can't wear more HAR points than your Body+Coordination stats and still move around and fight effectively. Each point of HAR in excess of your Body+Coordination subtracts -1d from your Coordination while wearing the armor.

That means an average human (2d Body and Coordination) can wear up to 4 points of HAR at one time (say, a riot helmet, a Kevlar vest,

and 1 more point of armor for any hit location).

Note that it's the armor rating of the item that matters, not the size of the hit location—so a Kevlar vest with HAR 2 counts as 2 points, even though it protects three hit location numbers.

Supernatural armor (like enhanced or superstrong materials) doesn't suffer this limitation.

#### Armor, Cover, and Hit Locations

Modern body armor typically offers protection from hand-to-hand attacks on all hit locations, and limited protection from firearm attacks to particular hit locations, such as the head and torso—but it's only useful if an attack hits a protected location. If you're wearing a helmet and you're shot in the leg, the attack is obviously not blocked.

Similarly, sometimes you're shooting at someone that's hiding behind something with an armor rating. Shots that otherwise might hit concealed hit locations strike the cover instead. If you're shooting a target with only his head and arms showing, your shots hit the cover unless you manage to hit his head (location 10) or one of his arms (locations 3 through 6). Even if you miss an exposed hit location, any damage that makes it through the armor is inflicted on the target normally.

By the way, a human body is equivalent to HAR 2—the victim being used as cover takes full damage from the attack, but only stops 2 Shock and 2 Killing from getting to whatever is on the other side.

#### Damaging Objects

What happens when you inflict damage on an inanimate object such as a pistol, house, helicopter, or aircraft carrier? How much damage can an object suffer before it's inoperable or destroyed? Good question.

Objects have wound boxes, just like people have wound boxes, representing how much punishment they can stand before they're destroyed. Just like characters, damage beyond the object's armor rating fills up its wound

boxes with Shock or Killing damage. When an object's boxes are filled with Shock damage, it's inoperable. If it's a computer, for example, it's broken; if it's a room of a house, it's uninhabitable.

Once an object or location is filled with Killing damage, it's demolished beyond repair.

Vehicles and Structures Large objects like vehicles and buildings have wound boxes, just like small objects. If you want to keep things simple, just assume that any hit on an object damages it, and don't concern yourself with hit locations.

But if you want a little more detail, vehicles and structures can have multiple hit locations, just like people have limbs, each with its own wound boxes. It's up to the GM to assign hit locations, and to decide whether each location has the full armor rating of an object, as well as what happens to it when a location is damaged or destroyed.

### Weapon Qualities

Most weapons do damage in the ordinary way—you attack with a stat+skill roll and the weapon does width in Shock damage, or width in Killing damage, or both.

But some weapons do more damage than others, and some have special properties, like being able to penetrate armor or exploding over a certain radius. The five weapon qualities that define what a special weapon can do are Penetration, Area, Burn, Slow, and Spray. There are also non-lethal attacks that reduce a target's stats and skills.

#### Penetration

Penetrating weapons are designed to pierce armor. Their effectiveness is measured in points. They reduce the HAR of a target by their point amount before applying damage, for that attack only. If they reduce the HAR to 0 or less, the target suffers full damage. Penetrating weapons automatically ignore all light armor. If a penetrating weapon is explosive (that is, it has an Area rating), it permanently reduces the HAR of the target. An armor-piercing bullet reduces heavy armor for that attack only, but a LAW rocket or artillery shell makes a big

enough hole to reduce the armor on that hit location permanently.

#### Area

A weapon with the Area quality explodes when it hits, inflicting extra damage to the target and everything within a certain radius. Dynamite, grenades, and artillery shells are examples of Area weapons. The Area quality is measured in dice. The specific target of the attack takes the non-Area damage, as usual. In addition, the target and every character within the radius takes 2 Shock to every hit location. Also, the target and every character in the radius rolls a number of dice equal to the weapon's Area rating during the resolve phase of combat. Each die indicates the hit location that suffers 1 point of Killing. Don't look for matches here—just take the damage from each die on the appropriate hit location.

If you're the GM and a bunch of NPCs get caught in an Area blast, you may want to roll the dice just once and apply the same results to every character. This means that they all take the same damage to the same hit locations, which is unrealistic—but it's a lot easier than rolling 3d over and over for each NPC.

When an Area weapon physically injures you, it forces you to make a Madness check against the Violence gauge equal to its Violence Intensity—this represents the traumatic nature of large explosions. Area weapons are particularly good at destroying structures and vehicles. When an Area weapon scores a hit on a vehicle or structure and does damage past its armor, all Area dice are focused on that specific hit location.

Weapon	Penetration	Violence	Intensity
Dynamite	2d	3	2
Grenade	3d	4	2
Nuke	20td	35	9

#### Burn

The Burn quality has no points or dice pool associated with it—it simply takes effect. Targets damaged by a Burn weapon are on fire. When a Burn weapon strikes, it does normal damage. In addition, every hit location of the target except the head is now on fire and takes

1 point of Shock damage. Burning hit locations suffer an additional point of Shock damage each round until the fire is extinguished. Typically, only full immersion or lack of oxygen will do it—most fire-based military weapons use a sticky fuel that is particularly difficult to extinguish.

Weapons with both Burn and Area qualities have a different sort of Area effect than usual. Instead of causing an explosion; Burn/Area weapons blanket a radius in flame. Rather than taking 2 Shock to every location and Killing damage from the Area dice, affected targets only suffer 1 point of Shock damage to each hit location rolled on the Area dice. But those areas are now on fire. Any target set on fire must make an Empathy+Equilibrium roll against an Intensity 4 once per round to avoid panicking. A target that panics may do nothing except run around swatting at the flames until they succeed in the Empathy+ Equilibrium roll.

The Burn quality can also be used to simulate other threats that stick with you, such as acid or a swarm of insects. The game effect is the same; just describe it differently.

### Slow

A weapon with the Slow quality can't be fired every combat round. Instead you must spend a number of combat rounds equal to its Slow rating to prepare it before you can fire again. If your gun is Slow 1, you can only fire it every 2 combat rounds. If it's Slow 3, you can only fire it once every 4 combat rounds. If the weapon is already prepared, you can fire it on the first combat round, but after that it takes time to reload.

Note that Slow is different than a basic reload time. Most weapons without a Slow rating require a single combat round to reload its ammunition to maximum capacity.

### Spray

Spray weapons are designed to fire very rapidly and “spray” an area with bullets or blasts—they are fully automatic or possess some other factor making it easy to fire at many targets at once. A shotgun firing dozens of pellets and a machine gun spraying hundreds of bullets per minute are

both Spray weapons. Spray weapons can make multiple attacks with no dice pool penalty. Instead, a number of dice equal to the weapon's Spray level are added to the dice pool for the attack roll. Each match is a successful hit by the weapon on the target inflicting normal damage. Spray weapons fire a number of bullets each round equal to the number of dice in the stat+weapon+Spray dice pool.

If you are performing multiple actions (firing while diving for cover, for instance), Spray weapons give another advantage—you still roll the lower of the two dice pools, but don't suffer the normal multiple actions penalty.

Most Spray weapons can either be fired as single-shot weapons or as Spray weapons, but they must use their full Spray rating if they use it at all. If you're firing a weapon with more than one Spray rating (representing a weapon with multiple settings, such as 3-round burst or fully automatic), choose which one to use during the declare phase of combat.

### Weapons' Rounds Per Minute Spray Rating

300 rpm = 1d  
400 rpm = 2d  
600 rpm = 3d  
800 rpm = 4d  
1000 rpm = 5d  
1500 rpm = 6d

### Non-lethal Attacks

There are many “less than lethal” weapons out there designed to incapacitate without killing. Sensory or nerve impulse attacks—such as a flash bang grenade or an electrical stunner—overwhelm the target's nervous system, reducing all stats and skills by the width of the attack roll. The effect lasts width in rounds. At the GM's discretion, this effect can be resisted with a successful Body+Endurance skill roll. Chemical attacks such as tear gas or pepper spray reduce all the target's stats and skills by -2d each for width in minutes. At the GM's discretion, this effect can be resisted with a successful Body+Endurance roll.

### Basic Weapons

Weapons do different amounts as well as different types of damage. Some weapons cause only Shock, some only Killing, and some a combination of both. All are based off the width of the attack roll. Damage is listed in shorthand: Width+1 in Killing and Shock is W+1 in KS. Width in Shock +1 Killing is W in S+1K. Got it?

Basic Weapon	Damage
Axe, spear, sword	W+1 in K
Baseball bat	W+2 in S
Bottle, brass knuckles, billy club	W+1 in S
Fists and feet	W in S
Large knife	W in K
Piano wire	strangling, but damage is K

### Basic Ranged Weapon

Weapon	Ammo Capacity	Damage
Pistol	6 to 17	W in SK
Shotgun	6 to 8	Shot: W+1 in SK Slug: W+2 in SK
Carbine	10	W+1 in SK
Rifle	6 to 25	W+2 in SK
Assault rifle	25 to 50	W+2 in SK
Machine gun	100 to 500	W+2 in SK
Compound bow	1	W+1 in K
Tank cannon	40	W+6 in SK+Burn
Field artillery	1	W+8 in SK +Burn
Bunker-buster	1	W+10 in SK

Melee Weapon	Damage	HAR/W
Battle axe	W+2 in K	3/5
Katana	W+2 in K	4/4
Knife (combat)	W in K	3/3
Knife (ordinary)	W in S + 1K	3/2
Saber or sword	W+1 in K	4/4

## ENVIRONMENTAL PERILS

Life outside the compounds is short and brutal. Only strong and well-equipped player characters have much chance of survival. This is because of the blasted, cursed earth and its various types of environmental and terrain hazards as much as the marauders that wander the badlands.

Debris raining down from the rip in the sky has created huge numbers of craters. Crater walls provide excellent cover, but they often contain deep pools of murky slime and other hazards.

There are radiation zones, often miles in diameter. Sometimes these zones show some signs of their radioactivity, such as mutated animals, but it is often impossible for a character to tell that they have wandered into a radiation zone until they start to develop symptoms.

Where Ubo-Sathla's body rolled, huge fields of finely ground gravel have been left behind. Few plants grow among the small rocks and high winds blow across these fields of destruction. These are mostly stable, but there can be dangerous areas where a thin covering of gravel covers deep crevasses and pits.

There are also poison zones, with gas clouds billowing through. Liquid poison can also be found, in craters and small flowing streams. Pools of corrosive acid are not uncommon among the ruins of industrial complexes, and can even be found in the badlands. The fumes from these pools of acid are inhaled poisons.

Want to know what happens when your character freezes, drowns, is electrocuted, falls, is poisoned, or is irradiated? You came to the right place.

### Impact

There are all kinds of ways to slam into things, and none of them are fun. Since they are all pretty similar, these rules cover falling, smashing into something and being smashed into. Impact damage hurts your whole body; you automatically take 2 Shock to each hit location. That's just for starters.

In addition, impact does damage based on your

speed (or, say, the speed of the jet smashing into your face). For each increment of speed (see the chart below), you suffer one point of damage to hit location 10.

If you run into something soft like water or padding, are strapped into a vehicle when it crashes, or are thrown into a soft pile of dirt, that point is Shock damage. If you run into something harder like earth or a brick wall, it's Killing.

Some skills help reduce that damage. If you see it coming (that is, you have a round or more to react and your Coordination stat dice are equivalent to the speed of the impact) you get a single dice pool roll with a relevant stat+skill as a defense against the damage. This has to be a declared action in a combat round—you can't just freely scrap something else you're rolling to reduce impact damage. Some relevant stats and skills include Body+Endurance, Body+Jumping, Coordination+Acrobatics, and Coordination+Martial Arts. A successful roll has three benefits. First, you reduce the impact damage by 1 per point of width. Second, if you're falling, you can deliberately take the damage on any one or two hit locations of your choice. This has two benefits. First, you can choose to suffer damage on your strongest or most armored hit location, or you can divide the damage (not the 2 Shock per location, but the rest of it) between any two locations however you want. Third, if you're falling and land on your feet (or equivalent limbs), subtract your jumping distance (as determined by your Body stat) from your yards per-round speed to determine how much damage is inflicted on you. If your jumping distance is greater than your speed, you suffer no damage at all—not even the 2 Shock per location.

### Cold

Extended exposure to cold can be lethal. Wetness only compounds the problem. The rate at which you take damage from cold weather depends on how prepared you are and how cold it is; but if you're trapped in extreme cold without cold-weather gear, you probably won't last long. There are two ratings for cold—Freezing (32° to 0° F), and Sub-Zero (everything 0° F and below).

For each time interval in either type of cold, suffer 1 Shock to each arm and leg. That's not so bad— but you can't recover this damage until you find some source of warmth. If you find warmth before the next time interval passes, 10 minutes at a source of heat will shake off any Shock damage suffered by cold. If not, it's real damage, and remains there until healed normally. When your limbs fill with Shock, you begin taking Shock to your torso and head and keep taking damage to your limbs, turning the Shock there to Killing.

Freezing is much more forgiving than Sub-Zero environments. In Freezing, you can act normally without a successful Body+Endurance or Body+Health roll for the time interval. After that, you must rest at a heat source or begin suffering damage. In Sub-Zero environments, you must roll a successful Body+Endurance or Body+Health roll to do anything more than 1 minute/1 hour/1 day before returning to a heat source. If you fail the roll, you can do nothing but rest for an entire time interval, suffering appropriate damage all the time. Then you get to roll again.

That's not all: Every night you spend in a subzero environment—even in shelter—without access to warmth you must make an Intensity 3 or 4 Helplessness check.

### Suffocation and Drowning

You can hold your breath for a number of minutes equal to your Body stat. You can extend that with a Body+Endurance roll by the width of the roll in minutes. After this grace period, you must roll Body+Endurance each round to avoid taking damage, and you lose a die from your Body+Endurance dice pool for each round after the first. When you fail the roll, you begin to suffocate.

Each round of suffocation damage inflicts one point of Killing damage to your torso and one point of Shock to your head. When your head fills with Shock damage you pass out. When your head or torso fills with Killing damage you're dead. Ordinarily you stop taking damage as soon as you start breathing again. Drowning is

a special case, however, because once you inhale water it doesn't do you any good to come up for air—the water's still in there. You keep taking damage until someone succeeds with a Mind+First Aid roll to get the water out of your system and resuscitate you.

### Electrocution

Electrical hazards have a dice pool representing their danger, rated from 2d to 10d. When you're zapped, roll the electric dice pool. If a match comes up, you suffer width in Shock damage. However, the hit location is determined not by the height of the roll but by the circumstance of the electrical attack. If you're poking at wires with a stick, the Shock starts in your arm. If you're hit by lightning, it either starts in your head or in the highest point of your body.

Electrical damage doesn't stay in one place, though. It starts wherever it made contact and goes to the ground by the shortest route. Grab both ends of a live wire with one hand and you only take damage in that one arm. Grab an end in each hand, and the jolt travels from one hand, through the torso, and out the other arm, doing the same damage to all three locations. If you're hit by lightning, it goes straight down your head, through your torso and out one or both legs. (This is why lightning victims sometimes have their shoes blown off.)

That's what happens with a one-time shock, such as getting hit by a bolt of lightning or sticking your finger in a light socket and blowing the circuit breaker. It does damage, you go "Ouch!" and that's it. If it's a steady current, that's a bit nastier—it can lock your muscles so you stick around and keep taking damage. You have to make a dynamic Body+Endurance roll against the electricity dice pool to let go. If you fail, your muscles have locked shut on the current source and you get juiced again the next round. This happens each round until you make your Body+Endurance roll, someone knocks you free, or you die.



## Poison

Poisons are substances that cause illness, injury, or death if ingested, inhaled or if the victim is subjected to prolonged exposure to them. All poisons are different, but their effects are similar. Poisons include everything from hemlock to gamma radiation. Each deadly substance has an onset time and either a dice pool value or a flat damage value. Biological or chemical poisons have a damage rating for a lethal dose of the toxin—the amount consistently lethal to humans—and the specific hit location that it affects.

Toxin	Damage	Location
Potassium cyanide	5 SK	Head
Fugu venom	5 SK	Head
Sarin gas	7 SK	Torso
Radiation (Dice Pool)	Damage	
Gamma (2d to 10d)	Shock	
X-ray (2d to 5d)	Shock	
Neutrons (5td to 10td)	Shock	

Radiation poisoning works much like chemical and biological toxins, but a radiation source has a dice pool that inflicts width in damage. Radiation damage is always Shock, but all damage from radiation is automatically inflicted as damage to the head (though in actuality it affects the whole victim). When poisoned, you can make a Body+Health or Body+Endurance roll. Each point of width reduces the Shock and Killing damage by 1. If the poison is radiation, your roll must beat the height (but not the width) of the radiation dice pool's roll.

If you're continuously exposed—trapped in a room filled with poison gas, for instance—you suffer the poison's effects once per minute. Chronic exposure—exposure to nonlethal levels of the toxin over a long period of time—usually has long-term effects that aren't measured immediately in the game; their effects remain up to the GM to decide.

Symptoms of radiation poisoning include weakness, loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. Chronic radiation poisoning generally causes no direct damage, but produces long-term consequences such as increased risk of cancer and birth defects in offspring. As with other chronic effects, they remain up to the GM to determine.

## TELLING THE STORY

Now the GM knows all about the PCs, the world they inhabit and the rules that govern the interactions between the two. Now it is time to weave all this into a story. Telling the story requires a lot of work from a GM, but it also very creative and rewarding. Then the only missing ingredient is the players, who will help bring it all together and determine which direction the story goes, towards tragedy or triumph.

### Starting Point

The world could do absolutely nothing in response to Cthulhu emerging, and the breakdown of society was almost total, and almost instantaneous. The characters will have little to no information about the world about them. Their world shrinks to just the town or compound they start out in. Some groups don't even have that. Some groups are unable to find a safe place to stay. Instead they have been continually moving on, trying to outrun the ever-present threat of Mythos monsters.

Any town, or any camp site, in any country can be used as a setting, as the entire Earth has fallen into ruins. The GM and players are free to choose any setting they desire, on any continent, as their starting point. The example starting point presented in this book, using the area around the ruins of Arkham, can be used with the least effort on the part of the GM.

### Scenarios

A common technique in telling the story is to break it down into scenarios. Each scenario is a mini-adventure with a goal, a setting and some obstacles. Write down a few notes for each scenario you come up with, and it is important to keep your scenario notes nearby when you GM, especially if you are not good at making things up on the fly. Organize your notes so that all of the descriptive portions of each area and character are in one place. When you go to describe something, refer back to your notes whether you need to or not.

Writing scenarios is one of the most creative parts of the GM's duties and many find it very rewarding. A common writing style uses technical jargon and tight, spare prose, like

describing stage directions. Unlike a novel or short story, scenarios focus on describing the literal, visual aspects of the story, rather than on the internal thoughts of its characters, except for the major characters and NPCs.

A scenario often has three parts. These is the setup of the location and characters, confrontation with an obstacle of some kind, and resolution. This can also be thought of as before the action, during the action, and after the action. This basic structure is fleshed out with plot points, such as encounters with random crazies or natural disasters to make things even more difficult for the players.

Writing scenarios combines storytelling with the conventions and tropes of science fiction in the post-apocalyptic environment, mixed with the Cthulhu Mythos. Luckily, there are a lot of post-apocalyptic novels, stories, and films to provide inspiration, and there is a lot of support in getting to grips with the cosmic horror of the Cthulhu Mythos. The main things to keep in mind when penning a scenario are settings, NPCs, and an outline of the plot.

For most settings, such as buildings, rooms, clearings in the forest or patches of desert, a one-paragraph description will suffice, but you can compact a lot of information into that paragraph.

Howard Lovecraft is very florid in his descriptions, so keep a thesaurus handy when you are writing descriptions of the sites that characters will visit during a scenario. Don't be frightened of giving individual rooms their own descriptions, and it helps the atmosphere to describe what the characters see, of course, but also what they hear, smell, the temperature etc. "You are in a dimly-lit bar," is fine but, "The smell of unwashed bodies and moonshine mixing with the clack of billiards balls assail you as you step into the dimly-lit bar," packs a lot of punch for one sentence, and will instantly put your players in a place they recognize and will understand immediately. After the mood has been established you need only mention important details in later areas, like the fact that there is a safe hidden in a wall.

Statistics for NPCs are much less fun if they are simply laid out for the players to browse through. When fighting some desert crazy it is much more of a challenge to the players if they don't know how many damage boxes he or she has. It is also a good idea to write some snatches of dialogue and potential actions that important NPCs might take. Their motivation should come from the scenario. A villain with a motive is always more interesting than one who is simply a mindless killing machine.

The scenario will include details about what the PCs are experiencing, but remember that this does not mean they have to know the numbers and mechanics behind the scenes. As with NPCs, descriptions of anything game related should never, under any circumstances, include statistics. "The door appears to be weak" sounds much better than "the door has 10 damage boxes."

Also, when writing scenarios, remember that there should be a bubble of action around every player. The GM should try to make the action interesting for every player, and give each something significant to do.

### **Incorporating Mythos Monsters**

One of the disadvantages of games in a Mythos universe is that you can't just send PCs down a dungeon full of monsters and expect them to survive. Most Mythos creatures are tougher than humans and this is an easy way to get all the PCs killed. The GM has to spend some extra time trying to come up with ideas that will allow the players to interact with monsters, but also be able to run and hide when they inevitably get into deep trouble. A few plot ideas follow to help you come up with challenging situations for your players.

### **Oops!**

Remember that no matter how much you prepare, a few mistakes are inevitable. There were supposed to be ten crazies in the back of the truck, but you only put three figures on the gaming table. This sort of thing is inevitable and you shouldn't let it bother you too much. Try to learn how to smoothly deal with and recover from mistakes. If the mistake or omission isn't critical to what's going on, don't

worry about it.

### **Multiple Scenarios**

Players can be very unpredictable. Things you thought would take a long time end up happening quickly, or the players just ignore them all together. Therefore it's good to have more than one scenario ready at hand, to use to fill unexpected gaps.

### **Mundane Scenarios**

Not every scenario will involve monsters from the Cthulhu Mythos. A significant number can be centered on the quite mundane requirements of surviving in the Post-Cthulhu world. Keep track of players commodities such as bullets, gas, food and water. If they can run out of it, write down who has it and keep track of when they use it. When a player knows you are keeping track of something, they tend to be much more cautious about wasting it.

**Survival:** the key to the campaign is survival. Even the most basic necessities become a matter of life and death in the campaign. Food, water and medical supplies will all need to be secured.

**Shelter:** finding fortified buildings with good exits, defensible, isolated, etc. Without Shelter you are at the mercy of the elements as well as wandering monsters and crazies. From Shelter you can pick off attackers with ranged weapons.

**Ammo:** the characters will constantly have an eye out for likely places to find bullets, arrows, and grenades. When ammo runs out, their guns are just expensive clubs.

**Transport:** it's imperative to have access to cars, trucks, or bikes. With transport a group can move to new locations fast enough to avoid being eaten by some of the slower and more shambling monsters.

**Low Resources and Improvisation:** the PCs need to use anything and everything to survive. The PCs will often have to spend a few rounds scavenging for useful items before monsters or crazies turn up. Players should need to record their supplies, but you should keep scavenging

light and fun, and part of the action. Improvisation is good, and this can often be aided by a GM who is more than willing to say yes to the player's cool ideas.

### **Generic Encounters**

It's also a good idea to build up a store of generic encounters which can be tossed in almost anywhere. These can be used to lengthen a scenario if it looks like it is going to run short. Encounters are such things as a broken down vehicle with suspicious looking passengers, where all the action is self-contained within that one setting.

## CAMPAIGNS

A campaign is a series of linked scenarios. Campaigns develop sub-plots, characters develop, and the setting moves from location to location. This is the GM's chance to involve the players in an epic plot that starts as something small and grows. About half of the sessions will involve the "plot" of the campaign - the conspiracy the players are fighting. Other sessions can be dungeon crawls that don't advance the plot at all. These offer fun diversions and they allow the players to catch their breath before the next part of the main plot.

In campaign play the characters will simply roll out of one adventure into the next. If you have been planning ahead, the new adventure may even have been foreshadowed in the action the characters just survived. In Post-Cthulhu, the scenarios at the start of a campaign will likely be very different to those at the end of the arc of a campaign.

### Early Scenarios

At this early point in their adventures, the characters will likely still be very confused about what the Cataclysm was. The characters encounter minor Mythos creatures such as ghouls and deep ones, and they are gradually increasing their knowledge of Mythos things and their uncanny powers.

### Mid stage

After several sessions, and after they acquire a Mythos tome or two, the characters become armed with more knowledge. They can learn spells and become more powerful. They start to learn what happened during the Cataclysm and become less confused. They can move confidently around the blasted remains of Earth, and start to encounter other realms, such as the Dreamlands and the Underdark.

### Late stage

At this stage characters move beyond simple survival, and try to rebuild human civilization from the wrecked planet. They have probably by this time become local warlords themselves, and have risen high within the hierarchy of their enclave. As the characters learn more about the Cthulhu Mythos it is possible that they may

become regular travelers to the Dreamlands, the ancient past, the far future and other dimensions. This is an opportunity to share the game moderator duties. One player could be the GM responsible for present-day Earth adventures, another for the Dreamlands etc.

### Let the World Reveal Itself

The world of Post-Cthulhu is vastly different to the world of today. Luckily, you don't have to present it to the players all in one go, you can let it emerge over the course of an entire campaign. As long as you are consistent about your world, the players will gradually learn about it as they play. You don't need to explain anything until it is encountered by the PCs. The characters will work it all out for themselves. From the player's point of view, there's almost no way to know what you've made up beforehand and what you're inventing in the moment.

### Allow Party Dynamics to Play Out

Not all the horror and conflict comes from the dark, Post-Cthulhu world and the scenarios you, as GM, plan out. Instead how the PCs respond to the state of fear and violent chaos brought about by the Cataclysm can be just as horrific.

There is often dissent in the ranks of the survivors, which can easily descend into violence. Even the most innocuous of decisions about where to camp can be second guessed and lead to bad blood. As a worst case, this could lead to a power struggle among any band of survivors. Groups are also going to have to deal with medical emergencies, disease, psychological breakdowns, and even romantic triangles, and other complicated love affairs.

Stress makes people bicker and fight, and paranoia spreads. With no external society to check their actions, normal people may commit terrible crimes. The group must then to decide if there should be a trial, or a punishment. Your group will have to deal with all of this, along with the challenges you cook up for them in your scenarios.

## Scenario Seeds

These are ideas that can be expanded, with maps, NPCs and area descriptions, to create scenarios to form part of an ongoing campaign.

### Teleportation Stones

These are two obelisks placed on Earth by the Elder Things in the prehistory of the planet. They are located near the summit of two adjacent rarely climbed mountains. There is only one pair of teleportation stones on the planet. They can be operated only by those steeped in Mythos lore, and a roll must be made for every use. The obelisk allows teleportation between Earth and millions of other planets, throughout this galaxy and many others. Aliens can sometimes be seen emerging from one of the obelisks, flying over to the other and teleporting away again, all in the space of a few seconds. The aliens have no interest in Earth and are merely passing through on the way to whatever horrible destination they seek. If one of the stones is operated it will take all the adventurers to the same location as the adventurer operating the stone. If the adventurers do not mentally command the stone with a specific location the stone will send them to a random Mythos location.

### Guides Needed

The PCs are members of a small but prosperous compound. A stranger, with lots of pre-fall items, comes to the village and is looking for guides through the great dunes that have claimed the ancient industrial complex to the east. He is paying with valuable medicines and weapons, and soon a small expedition, including the PCs, is on its way. However, it doesn't take long for the PCs to learn that the old man is a District scientist, who needs to reach a certain laboratory. Then he will be able to finish his unwholesome work.

### Assassins

The PCs must get an important message to the charismatic leader who is attempting to unite a series of compounds into a pitiful little empire. It could be the first glimmerings of hope that society could one day be rebuilt. The party has discovered an assassination plot and must get the message through to humanity's last hope.

### Entrance to the Underworld

One day the PCs are exploring nearby old ruins when they came across a door in the floor. The interior of the hole is a smooth, round tube leading straight down, featureless except for ladder rungs. The bottom of the tube remains in darkness. A wide, smooth tunnel dimly lit with red light stretches to the north and south, as far as the eye can see. This is what remains of a vast subterranean transportation network. The system once spanned the entire city. Access shafts may be found about every five kilometers along the route. There are areas of flooding, foul air, many types of blockages and obstructions, and the lairs of crazies may be found at various points along the complicated network. There are a number of wrecked of trains, some with fantastic cargoes.

### Warping Storm

The PCs encounter an isolated compound. When a dust storm comes, the peaceful compound inhabitants turn into something else entirely. Some evil sorcerers are summoning a Mythos Monster who's playing havoc with the weather. Perhaps the inhabitants turn into cannibals, perhaps a cult wishing to sacrifice the PCs to their Mythos Creature overlord, whatever they are, they're dangerous.

### Downed Copter

It is late one night. Blinking lights are seen in the sky, along with the thumping sound of rotor blades. A helicopter. The lights disappear behind a hill, going down. The PCs will want to go investigate, but every raider group in the region saw those lights too.

### The New Temple

A local warlord is building an elaborate temple, the plans for which appeared to her in a dream. The players have to decide if she is crazy and must be stopped before she brings down Mythos doom on their heads, or if there is something in the things she says.



## PC DEVELOPMENT

As characters adventure through scenario after scenario they will be exposed to a lot of opportunities to learn, develop and become better at what they do. If their minds don't snap, they also might be able to turn the secrets of the Cthulhu Mythos to their advantage, and become much more powerful. Whatever happens, adventures in the strange world left after Cthulhu awakens will start to leave their mark on a character, for good or ill. Characters will become good at surviving in this world, or they will die. They may also be changed in more permanent and strange ways. Developing your character over time is half the fun of role playing.

### Pips

Character development is regulated using a mechanism called, Pips. There are two ways to gain Pips; through successful rolls in difficult situations and by GM reward. Individual Pip rewards number from 1 to 10, and accumulate over time.

You can spend 10 Pips to “buy” a die in a skill; you can spend 20 to “buy” a die in a stat. (If you have the Expert or Supernatural trait, you can “upgrade” a regular skill die to an expert die for 20 pips, a regular skill die to a Trump die for 40 pips, an Expert skill die to a Trump die for 20 pips, or a regular stat die to a Trump die for 80 pips). All upgrades require the GM's permission.

The GM awards Pips at the end of a game session to represent how well your character did in the trials and tribulations of the game. Usually it's a number between 1 (for minimum player effort) and 10 (for a role-playing dynamo who also keeps the game running smoothly).

You also gain Pips by matching or beating a difficulty rating in game. When you successfully match or beat a difficulty rating you gain that difficulty number in Pips.

Example: Michael Rook succeeds at a Difficulty 3 task with his Coordination+Firearms [Pistol] roll. He gains 3 Pips. If he beat a Difficulty 9 task, he'd gain 9

Pips. There's one important limitation, though. Dice pools with trump dice never award Pips.

### Spending Pips In-Game

With the GM's permission, you can spend saved-up Pips in the game to “buy off” damage before it takes effect. Eight Pips buy off a point of Killing and four pips buy off a point of Shock. These must be spent during the resolution phase of combat right when the damage occurs, otherwise the damage “sticks” and can't be bought off.

Another use for Pips is altering rolls. With the GM's permission you can spend 10 Pips before you roll to expand the width of a successful roll by 1, or 5 Pips to increase the height of a successful roll by 1. If the roll fails, you still lose the Pips.

## LEARNING SPELLS



Spells are not available to starting characters. They can only be acquired by characters through arcane researches in Mythos tomes, and other unhealthy ways. If they are willing to delve into Mythos mysteries, spells can be learned by any character.

Sorcerers and witches' spells are just a copy of the true invocations of the Old Ones. Their mimicries of true magical spells are a pale imitation of course, but they do work. What sorcerers call spells are not spells at all, of course. They are a permanent rewirings of their psyche and sometimes their body. They are powers that can snap the caster's mind and warp their physical form. The magic of Post-Cthulhu is concerned with cosmic things. Spells are used for opening gates between dimensions and commerce with monsters.

The time required to learn spells is unpredictable. Some spells can be learned quickly, especially if they are not particularly difficult to memorize, but the consequences of learning them can be severed indeed. A resurrection formula can be learned by simply paging through a diary, but that does not mean

the resurrection will be successful, or that the creature resurrected will resemble what it was supposed to be. The spells necessary to banish Yog-Sothoth can be committed to memory in short order, but actually having the psychic power to force the Old One back to whence it came is questionable in the extreme.

Some of the most dangerous spells can be learned in less than a day from a few scribbled notes. Other effects take longer, such as the frustration of needing to learn "all the angles of the planes and all the formulas between the Yr and the Nhhngr" in order to open a gate to another dimension. It can take years to master the techniques of dematerialization, even though the time to learn the spells required is relatively short.

Spells are a way of tapping a power source (whether it is the human soul, an alien entity or some cosmic pulse) and turning that energy into an effect. However the human mind must force itself to think in alien ways in order tap into those energies and cast the spell. They can be extraordinarily traumatic to the human psyche.

Spells are rolled on their own. They are not skills or stats; their dice pool stands alone. If you learn a spell, you gain its dice pool, however many or few dice it has. More powerful spells have more dice. Spells also have another advantage: They can possess trump dice, even if the spell caster does not. You can possess a number of dice in a spell up to the number of Hardened notches in your Unnatural gauge; or a number of dice equal to twice the number of Failed notches in your Unnatural gauge. If a spell exceeds this limit, you cannot learn it. For example, if the Rend Flesh spell has a  $5d+1td$  dice pool, you have no chance of learning it unless you have 6 Hardened or Failed notches in the Unnatural gauge. Once it is "learned" this dice pool does not change—unlike a stat or skill it cannot be advanced using the normal character advancement rules.

Spells are learned either by teaching or by reading. Learning a spell usually requires a particular skill, such as knowledge of the

esoteric language in which it's written. With a teacher you must see the spell intoned or used and make a Mind+[appropriate skill] roll to gain the spell. Learning a spell from a written source also requires a Mind+[appropriate skill] roll, which takes 5 - width days, weeks or months.

Once a spell is learned, using it is as easy. Make a successful Mind+[appropriate Skill] check and intone the spell (and/or complete the actions necessary to activate it) and finally make a check against the Unnatural gauge of the Madness Meter. Normal effects apply. Some spells require other acts (human sacrifice or bloodletting, for instance) to "activate." These actions may require additional checks against the Madness Meter to succeed. Failure indicates you could not complete the actions, and therefore the spell fails. Some spells take 5 - width rounds, seconds, hours or days to intone (this remains up to the GM).

Generally speaking, the more powerful the spell, the more damaging to the Madness Meter and longer it takes to activate. Spells affect either the user or a target, and some affect both. Some spells inflict damage, others heal it. Some spells temporarily grant traits such as Heavy Armor, Light Armor, Resilient, Psychic, Inhuman Biology, and so on.

Spell dice pools usually interact normally with other dice pools (at the GM's discretion). If a spell inflicts (or heals) damage, at 5d or less it inflicts (or heals) width in Shock; at 6d and above or with trump dice it inflicts (or heals) width in Shock and Killing. Spells last a specific time frame: rounds, minutes, hours or days. Such details are always up to the GM.

### **Banish**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin.

Madness Check: Intensity 5, 7 or 9 in Unnatural (depending on the alien being or entity). See table.

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 - width seconds or minutes depending on what is being banished.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: This spell banishes alien beings and entities to whence they came. The height

of the roll determines what type of creature can be banished. Note that when casting you have a choice of how "far" you want to push the spell, since the trump die gives some measure of control.

Height	Alien Entity
4 or less	The being is not banished
5 or more	e.g. Fungi from Yuggoth
7 or more	e.g. Cthulhu
9 or more	e.g. Azathoth

Banishing a creature is a Command+Intimidation check. Resisting banishing is an Empathy+Resist check. Wise casters of this spell will set the trump die to the height of the desired alien being. The incantations that are used to banish the otherworldly creature cause characters casting this spell to look ridiculous, shouting spells and waving their arms.

### **Bind Shoggoth**

Prerequisite Skill: Language of the Elder Things. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Intensity 5 in Unnatural.

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 - width minutes.

Dice Pool: 3d+1td.

Description: This spell can be used on a nearby shoggoth, even one that is not in line of sight or within human earshot. What constitutes nearby is determined by the GM. The height of the roll must be 5 or more for the shoggoth to start to respond. This spell takes some time to learn as it requires some knowledge of the commands and gestures used to command shoggoths and other servitors of the Elder Things. These commands can be learned by humans and the shoggoth will obey commands, even very complex ones.

### **Cabalistical Sign of Protection**

Prerequisite Skill: Occult. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: One building.

Activation Time: 5 - width rounds

Dice Pool: 3d+1td

Description: The caster must compound wolf's bane and belladonna and draw circles of phosphorescent fire on the floor. This spell only

works when the stars are right, but luckily they are now or Cthulhu would not be flying around the solar system as if he owned the place. This spell will protect a single building, no matter the size. Any structure, such as a shed or gatehouse that is not connected by at least a covered walkway requires another sign, or it will not be included in the effect.

### **Call Forth Those From Outside**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin. Other Requirements: Pentagram of Protection (optional).

Madness Check: Intensity 5, 7 or 9 in Unnatural (summoning an alien being or entity). See table.

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 - width minutes or hours depending on what is being called.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: This spell summons alien beings and entities outside our world. The height of the roll determines what will respond to the call. Note that when casting you have a choice of how "far" you want to push the spell, since the trump die gives some measure of control. Subterranean Raptors are popular subjects of this spell, as Raptors can be tamed, and even trained, allowing them to be kept as "pets" even after the duration of the spell has expired.

Height	Alien Entity
4 or less	Nothing responds
5 or more	e.g. Fungi from Yuggoth
7 or more	e.g. Cthulhu
9 or more	e.g. Azathoth

Once an alien being has responded to the call it must be bound to the caster's command. Binding a creature to the caster's will is a Command+Intimidation check. Resisting binding is an Empathy+Resist check. Wise casters of this spell will set the trump die to the height of the desired alien being. There is a risk that the alien being will bind the caster to its will instead; the caster should take protection against that eventuality by only "calling" from within a Pentagram of Power (see below). This spell takes some time to learn. The caster must memorize all the angles of the planes and all the formulas between the Yr and the Nhhngr.

### **Create Pentagram of Power**

Prerequisite Skill: None. Other Requirements: A sacrifice (the bigger the better); marking material such as chalk, paint, etc.

Madness Check: Intensity 3 in Self (or 6 for sacrifice of an animal or 7 for a person).

Spell Affects: Target area.

Activation Time: 5 - width hours.

Dice Pool: 3d for an animal sacrifice, 7d for a human sacrifice.

Description: Creating a pentagram in a circle surrounded by four circles, then imbue the design with power by sacrifice. Roll the spell's dice pool. A successful roll allows adds 1td to your Command+ Intimidation and Empathy+Resist checks when binding summoned alien beings. If the spell roll's width is 4 or greater you gain +2 td instead.

### **Dematerialize**

Prerequisite Skill: None. Other Requirements: None

Madness Check: Intensity 5 in Self.

Spell Affects: Self.

Activation Time: 5 - width seconds.

Dice Pool: 3d for an animal sacrifice, 7d for a human sacrifice.

Description: A successful roll allows the caster to observe without being observed in return, and without being vulnerable to attack. The dematerialized caster can walk as normal, allowing them to escape dangerous situations. This spell is quickly learned, but can take years to master. The success roll must be made every round, but every month that the spell has been known for adds another round. Casters who have had more time to master the spell therefore roll less often.

### **Dho Formula**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 2

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 - width minutes.

Dice Pool: 4d

Description: The spell reveals the inner city at the two magnetic poles, after casting with a successful Sense+skill check. This is the great city of Agartha, located within an area of the vast complex of caves known as the Underdark. The revelations made available to the caster by

the formula include the history of Agartha and visions of daily life there, and are received via a process the spell description calls, attainment. Agartha seems from the visions to be a paradise for humans, but the GM is free to make sure that something sour lurks below the surface.

### **Dho-Hna Formula**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: The ingredients of the transportation drink.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 – width minutes.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: This spell can only be used when the Earth has been cleared off. Luckily it has been, by the beast Ubbo-Sathla when it absorbed the vast majority of humanity in preparation for its battle with Cthulhu. The caster mixes a drink and this allows them to be magically transported to Agartha, the inner city at the two magnetic poles (Mind+Chemistry or Alchemy).

### **Dominate Mind**

Prerequisite Skill: None. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Intensity 3 in Self.

Spell Affects: One creature.

Activation Time: instantaneous.

Dice Pool: 7d.

Description: This bends the will of the target to that of the caster. There is a contest which consists of a Command+Intimidation check to dominate. Resisting domination is an Empathy+Resist check. With a success, the target obeys the commands of the caster until the end of the round. Dominate can be cast and recast, allowing a target to be controlled without interruption for long periods of time.

### **The Elder Sign**

Prerequisite Skill: Occult. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 3

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 - width rounds

Dice Pool: 3d+1td

Description: The Elder Sign is a mystical sigil that is either drawn in the air by gesture or

inscribed upon a convenient surface. An Elder Sign may even be formed into a leaden seal, carved in rock, or forged in steel. When carved beside an opening or Gate, it makes that path unusable to minions of the Great Old Ones. Without the spell, the symbol itself means nothing and has no effect. It is the rough shape of a star, in the center of which there is a caricature of a single giant eye; but it is not an eye, rather a broken lozenge in shape with certain lines suggestive of flames or perhaps a solitary pillar of flame.

The Elder Sign commands respect from many of those from Outside. Most such beings leave the caster alone for a number of rounds equal to the height of the roll, provided that the caster takes no hostile action against them. The spell may not affect a being twice in a single day.

Unbeknownst to most casters, the Elder Sign suggests that the caster is allied with a specific group of powerful beings from Beyond, and may also be used for bonus dice when summoning such beings. The GM should decide beforehand if any particular monster will be warded off, ignore, or be encouraged by the Sign. If the caster recognizes a creature, a Mind+Mythos roll should let him know the effects of the Elder Sign upon it.

### **Formula for the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: Chemicals and a lab.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 – width minutes.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: This powder is sprayed, by blowing a small pile from the palm of the hand and it reveals the physical form of otherwise invisible presences. (Mind+Chemistry or Alchemy).

### **Formula to Raise from Essential Salts**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: The “essential salts” of a corpse.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 – width minutes.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: A person or animal can be

resurrected from their essential salts. The target's entire body has to be incinerated by alchemical processes into their essential salts (Mind+Chemistry or Alchemy). The resultant ashes are a dry, dull greenish powder. If any part of the corpse is missing the raising will not succeed and a hideous abomination may result. A person unfortunate enough to be brought back to life in this manner suffers a Helplessness check, Intensity 7. Being dissolved back to dust again is a Helplessness check, intensity 8.

### **He Who Passes the Gateways**

Prerequisite Skill: Mathematics. Other Requirements: A casting area of five concentric circles of fire or phosphorus.

Madness Check: Unnatural 3

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 – width hours.

Dice Pool: 6d

Description: This spell consists of a litany that must be intoned within the casting area. The caster's spirit leaves its sleeping body and travels alien realms. The caster's spirit must concentrate—requiring an Unnatural check—to not stray and sever the link between spirit and body. This spell allows traffic with ancient evil. Meetings can be arranged with various parties most people don't even believe in.

### **Immortality**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: A subject, willing or restrained, to provide a new host body, and an elixir that is fed to them.

Madness Check: Unnatural 6

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 – width hours.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: The spirit of a person is forced from their body, to make way for that of the caster. The target must be forced to drink the correct elixir (Mind+Chemistry or Alchemy). The person unfortunate enough to be banished from their body suffers a Helplessness check, Intensity 8. Being somehow returned to their body is a Helplessness check, intensity 7. The caster's old body falls to the ground and, depending on its age, may suffer accelerated decomposition or even fall into dust.

### **The Primal Lay**

Prerequisite Skill: Mathematics. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 2

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 - width hours.

Dice Pool: 4d

Description: This spell opens your senses to time and space. In effect you can experience “a little of the past and a little of the future” in any given location after casting with a successful Sense+skill check. How far back and far forward you can experience equals the width of the spell roll in tens of minutes. What you experience may trigger further Madness checks. Unfortunately, this spell often attracts the attention of other-dimensional creatures. They can never be seen but at least one will always dog the caster's footsteps afterward.

### **Plutonian Drug**

Prerequisite Skill: Chemistry. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 - width hours.

Dice Pool: 6d

Description: This spell opens your senses to time and space. In effect you can experience “a little of the past and a little of the future” in any given location after casting with a successful Sense+skill check. How far back and far forward you can experience equals the width of the spell roll in tens of thousands of years. What you experience may trigger further Madness checks. Unfortunately, the drug sometimes sends back users so far that they encountered the hounds of Tindalos, entities capable of traveling up and down time via its "corners." The hounds are attracted by such intrusion and soon appear to devour the interloper. The drug can be made in liquid or tablet form.

### **Spirit Bottle**

Prerequisite Skill: Latin and Chemistry. Other Requirements: A corpse, recent and fresh or mummified and ancient, it doesn't matter as long as it is complete.

Madness Check: Unnatural 4

Spell Affects: Single target.

Activation Time: 5 – width minutes.

Dice Pool: 5d+1td.

Description: The spirits can be extracted from a dead body and trapped in a bottle. (Mind+Chemistry or Alchemy). The bottle contains a pendulum which the spirit can swing to tap the side of the bottle, allowing basic communication. The spirit can answer questions with one tap for no and two taps for yes.

### **Voorish Sign**

Prerequisite Skill: Occult. Other Requirements: None.

Madness Check: Unnatural 3

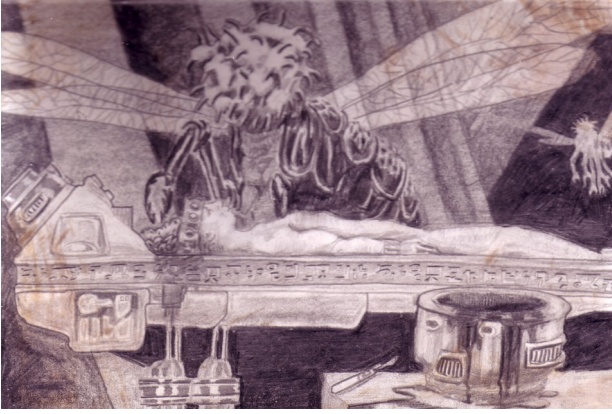
Spell Affects: Caster.

Activation Time: 5 - width rounds

Dice Pool: 3d+1td

Description: The Voorish Sign consists of a few magical hand gestures, which can make the unseen visible for a few moments when performed. The madness check required for casting the spell is usually followed by further checks upon seeing what the sign reveals.





## CYBERNETICS

Cybernetic alterations to a person's physical and mental abilities are rare, and the unfortunate subject will usually acquire them at the claws of the Mi-go, often without anaesthetic. Implants include both cybernetic and organic additions – sometimes quite large ones – to the basic humanoid frame. Any item of equipment can be added as a cybernetic enhancement, and the Mi-go are quite inventive about what they add to their subjects and where it is located.

Cybernetics are treated just the same as any other personal equipment, except that it is now part of the person's physical form and can not be removed by Earthly science without killing the subject. The Mi-go sometimes also use their science to give humans supernatural traits.

### Supernatural Traits

During adventuring, it is sometimes possible for a human to develop a supernatural trait. They are normally gained through sanity-bending procedures at the hands of psychotic alien creatures, and are not something sought after or greatly prized except by the most dedicated of witches and sorcerers.

#### Ageless (4d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You are effectively immortal and will not die from old age. You can die from other causes however.

#### Amorphous (10d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You have no discernible body structure;

you're an amorphous blob. You have a single hit location that contains all of your wound boxes, except for 4 "head" boxes. Any successful attack that strikes you in hit location 10 damages one of your four "head" boxes; if they are filled with Shock damage, you are knocked unconscious; if they are filled with Killing damage, you're dead.

#### Area Attack (8d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural, Scale (3d+)

Effect: Your attack does Area damage of 1d. For each additional 2d placed into this trait over 8d, you do an additional 1d of Area damage, up to a maximum number of Area dice equal to your Body stat.

#### Blood Drain (8d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: After you have an opponent pinned, you can make a Body+Brawling roll to begin draining his blood. If you fail this roll, the victim escapes the pin. If you succeed, make a Body+Brawling roll each round and deal the width in Killing damage. This damage is distributed equally throughout the victim's hit locations. Blood also sustains you. For every point of damage done, you may heal one point of Shock damage, or for two points you may heal one point of Killing.

#### Bulletproof (10d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: All firearms are useless against you; they cause no damage. However, Area and Burn weapons (along with poison, radiation and everything else) inflict normal damage.

#### Extra Dimensional (10d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Your body is extra dimensional in nature—you phase in and out of real-space second to second. This means you're exceptionally hard to hit and don't suffer damage normally. Every time you're attacked, your Body stat is automatically rolled as a supernatural defense, no matter what other action you're taking. If it gobbles an incoming attack, the attack fails to injure you.

#### Extra Wound Boxes (2d per level)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Each level of this trait purchases 1 extra wound box for each hit location on your body. These wound boxes take damage and heal normally.



#### Flight (4d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You can fly at a rate double that dictated by your Body score. Double your Body dice pool for resolving resisted contests, so long as enough open space exists to allow flight.

#### Foresight (8d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You have a limited ability to see the future. Any time you are engaged in a dynamic contest, you receive a bonus of one Expert die. This applies strictly to actions that affect you, not your companions.

#### HAR (4d per level)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Each level purchased in this trait grants you a Heavy Armor rating. Buy 5 levels (20 dice) and you have HAR 5. You can buy any amount of HAR.

#### Ignore Decapitation (6d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Even if your head is filled with Shock or Killing damage, you continue to act. All of your Sense skills (save Touch) and all Mind skills drop to 0, and your Sense stat itself drops by -4d (minimum 1d). Before you can make a melee attack, you must succeed with a Sense+ [combat skill] roll to locate the target. Forget about ranged combat. If your torso is filled with damage, that's it, you're dead.

#### Inhuman Biology (3d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Your body is not human. You possess abilities that make your form more resilient; for example, you can survive in a vacuum, breathe water, or eat raw flesh without risking illness. You and your GM must define the limits of this ability at character creation.

#### LAR (1d per level)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: As HAR above, but you are purchasing LAR instead.

#### Not Quite Dead (3d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Treat any part of the body filled with Killing damage as if it were filled with Shock instead.

Only when your head fills with damage are you truly "dead".

#### Poisonous (1d per point of Shock and Killing damage)

Prerequisites: Supernatural, Special Attack

Effect: Your special attack delivers an injected poison.

#### Psychic (3d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You must link this trait to Mind, Empathy or Command at character creation. Its effect differs for each. With Mind it allows you to make a Mind roll to get an impression of a target's thoughts; with Empathy it allows you to read a target's emotions; with Command it allows you to influence a target's choices. Since psychic abilities are difficult to control, the outcome of a successful roll is up to the GM. If you use a psychic power near an event of

Unnatural Intensity 1 or more you automatically suffer a Failed notch in Unnatural. If this event is happening to someone well known to you, you suffer the loss no matter how far away it is. In addition, any Unnatural event of Intensity 9 or 10 causes all psychics to gain a Failed notch in Unnatural, regardless of relationship, even if the power is not being actively used. (Whether a “safe” distance applies in such a case is up to the GM.)

Scale (2d and up for a x2 to x multiplier in size)\*

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: You are supernaturally large; each level multiplies your size from average human height (use 6’ as the standard). So if you purchase 12d in Scale, you are 72 feet tall. There is no limit to the number of dice that can be spent in this trait.

Shapechange (1d/4d/8d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: At 1d you can appear to be a single other type of being—for instance, you can look like a human, even if you are a giant coleopteran. Some visual cue will give you away—maybe your shadow or reflection shows your true shape. At 4d, you can physically change between your native form and a single other form. At 8d you can physically become any living thing you can see—although to impersonate a specific person you may need the Persuade skill to fool people who know him. For all three types, statistics do not change unless the GM decides otherwise.

Special Attack (1d to 10d)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Each 1d in Special Attack adds a point of a type of damage to a particular attack defined at character creation. If you normally do only Shock, it only adds Shock; if you do Shock and Killing, it adds a point to both Shock and Killing.

Slow (-2d per point of Slow)

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: This is a negative trait that actually adds dice that you can spend on other traits. Each point of this trait applies a Slow rating to all

physical actions (for instance, with Slow 2 all actions take three rounds to attempt). In addition, each point of Slow removes 10 yards from your sprint speed (to a minimum of 1 yard per round).

Supernatural (8d)

Prerequisite: GM’s permission

Effect: This allows you to purchase Expert Dice (for skills) or Trump Dice for any ability. Or to upgrade existing dice to these die types through character advancement. It also allows you to buy stats and skills in excess of 5d, as well as other supernatural abilities and traits. The GM may place limits on what exactly you can get with the Supernatural trait. Unless the GM says otherwise you do not need this trait to learn spells.

Unnatural Intensity (1d per 1 level of Intensity up to 10)\*

Prerequisite: Supernatural

Effect: Seeing you causes targets to make a Madness Check against the Unnatural gauge up to the level of Intensity you purchase (for instance, if you buy Unnatural Intensity at 5d you trigger a check against Intensity 5).

Alien Angles (2d)

Prerequisite: Mythos Skill at 1d or more

Effect: You know how to think in the alien ways needed to cast spells and can unconsciously slip into the correct mindset without effort. With this trait you automatically succeed at the Mind check required to cast spells.

Mythos Skill (no cost, see prerequisite)\*

Prerequisite: A Hardened or Failed notch in the Unnatural gauge.

Effect: Each Hardened or Failed notch in the Unnatural gauge automatically grants you a +1d to your Mythos skill (up to 3d), in addition to granting you the standard dice to spend on Character creation. At character creation you must define what supernatural creature or experience you have encountered.

## EXAMPLE SCENARIO

The world has seen better days. Life is harsh and unmerciful. Roving bands of cultists and crazies compete for survival in a world gone mad, where monsters lurk in the shadows. This is a short adventure intended for use with a small group of players which exposes them to the new environment they must learn to survive in.

### Treasure Trove

The GM should choose one of the PCs to be their way of introducing this adventure. The GM could choose the character with the least fleshed out background, to make that character more interesting or just choose one of the PCs at random. The player chosen will have to do some drawing later in the scenario, do it might be fun (for the GM) not to choose the player with the best drawing skills.

The GM tells the players that the chosen character remembers that a relative of theirs, a guy called Ronan, was a survivalist. The character remembers that Ronan was a survivalist and that he would have a large stash of ammo, weapons and other useful equipment. The character was fond of Ronan and hopes that Ronan was one of the lucky ones, who survived the Cataclysm. But, whether Ronan survived or not, there will be a lot of useful equipment in the bunker. If Ronan survived, the party can barter for some of the equipment, or pay in New Dollars, if they have them. Or, if Ronana didn't make it, the party can simply gain entrance to the bunker and take what they want.

It is up to the GM how far away the bunker is from the compound where the PCs start their adventure, and also whether the PCs will have to get permission from whatever warlord runs the compound to be allowed to go on a mission to get supplies from the bunker.

The bunker could, for example, be located six days drive from the compound, with the last day spent on dirt roads. The GM is then free to confront the PCs with an encounter with a group of crazies driving some vehicle, or the PCs may happen upon a camp where cultists are carrying out human sacrifice. Having

wounded PCs among the party will make them all the keener to get to the bunker, where the character you have chosen to be Ronan's relative assures them they will most likely find medical supplies.

The last part of the journey will require some map reading or navigation skills because so much has changed since the last time the character visited the bunker that they are not sure if they can find it again. For each failed roll, they will have to spend another day searching the dirt roads of the area, and perhaps having to deal with more encounters with wandering crazies and cultists.

At last, when the roll is made successfully, the player character who is a relative of Ronan's recognizes a gate. It's okay for the GM to put some words into the PC's mouth at this point.

"Here it is," he or she says, "I'd recognize that gate anywhere, it's Ronan's bunker."

In fact the PC thinks they can draw a map of the bunker and its position, which the PCs can use to plan their approach. There is a farmhouse, but it isn't on the road. The old route of the road, back in the 40s, passed close to farmhouses and through the farmyards. This was probably because, in the old days, the farmers needed to cart their produce to market and were major users of the route. Ronan's grandfather, however, wasn't comfortable with the ever increasing amount of through traffic and decided to re-direct the traffic away from his front door and around the edge of his fields and lands, and thus created a road with sharp corners.

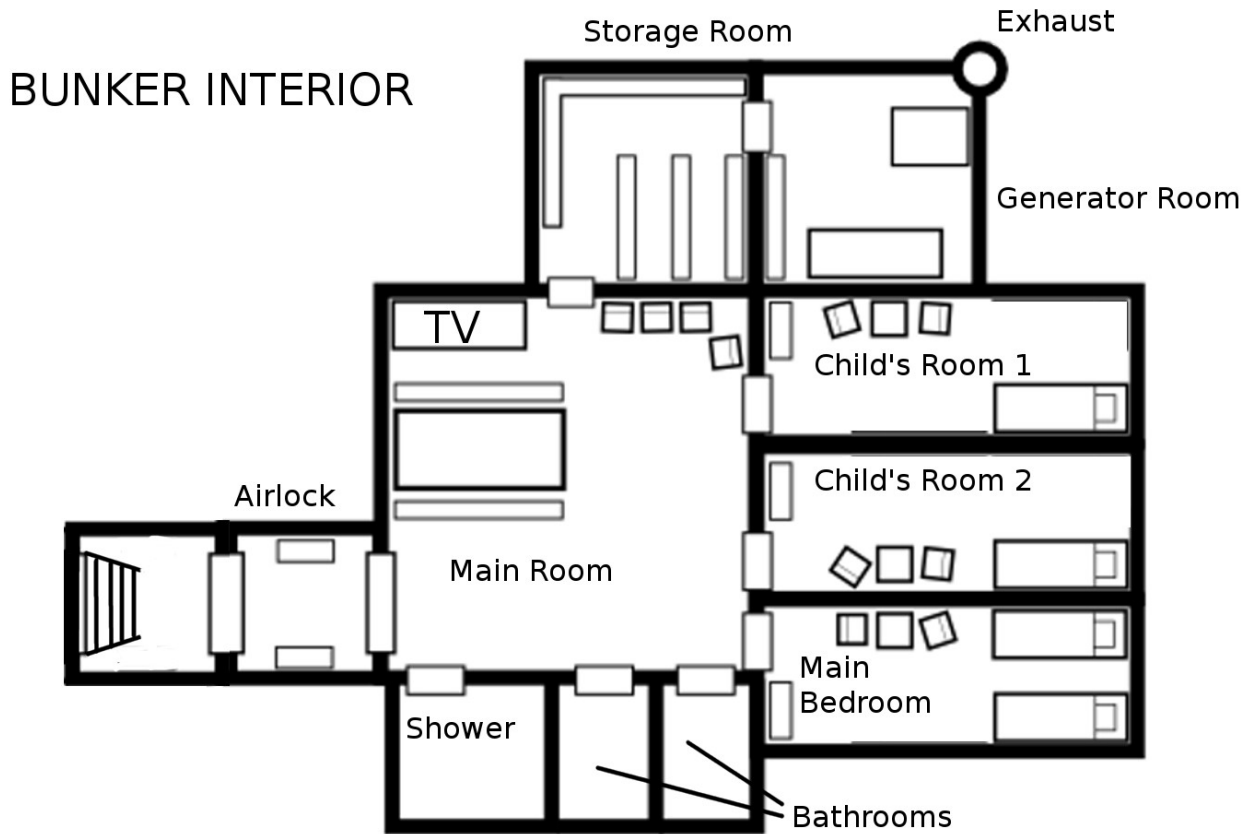
The Bunker is not located near the farmhouse, which Ronan and his family have now left mostly deserted and which they now think of as more of a decoy than the place they used to live. To simulate that the character is drawing the map from memory, allow the PC who is related to Ronan to see the Bunker Area Map, for a period of time based on how well they make a memory roll. After the period is over, the player will then have to draw the Bunker Area Map from memory.

BUNKER AREA MAP



## The Bunker

The PC who is related to Ronan has also visited the bunker, and will be able to draw a map of the internal layout of the various rooms and other spaces.



To simulate the fact that the character is creating the map from memory. The GM should show the character the Bunker Interior map for a period of time based on another memory roll. When that period of time is over, the player will then have to try to reproduce the map from what they remember.

The bunker is entirely below ground and therefore does not have any windows or other sources of natural light.

The bunker, if and when the characters decide to take up the family's offer of hospitality, or if they are captured, also shows signs of the family's new ghoulish habits and proclivities, though it will take a perceptive character to notice. The interior spaces of the bunker include the following:

#### Airlock

The bunker is reached via a hatch and ladder. The hatch uses the latest technology available before the Cataclysm, and is operated using a numeric keypad to punch in a code. At the bottom of the ladder is a small airlock, and this then leads directly into the main room. Once the inner airlock door opens, before they even look through it, a smell assails the PCs' noses. It's an unhealthy smell, musty, full of mold and decay. "The filters need changing," Ronan explains, when he sees the looks on the PCs' faces.

#### Main Room

This is a large space that doubles as living and dining area. There is a hole in the bunker floor in the center of this room. A perceptive character might notice that there is a hollow sound, or that the carpet dips down. It is also very dim inside the bunker. When the characters first arrive, it will take some time for their eyes to acclimatize to the limited illumination. "Candles," Ronan explains, "We had electricity for a while, but the generator attracted the flying horrors. The Nightgaunts. It would only have been a matter of time before they got in."

There is a kitchenette and a dining table with two benches in the room. There are also four chairs in a corner. Next to the dining table is a large television with hunting trophies decorating the wall behind it. Some attempt has been made to make the space cozy, and there are strips of peeling wallpaper on the walls.

The light is very dim in the corner of the room but a perceptive visitor (skill check) will notice that, among the hunting trophy's on the wall

above the television, two of the skulls on display look strange. They are a weird mixture of animal and human (they are actually Ghoul skulls). A third trophy is a fish, but it is horribly mutated, like some mixture of fish and human head (it is actually the decaying head of a Deep One).

When the PCs first enter the main room for the first time, they see that Ronan's wife has been busy at the hotplate and has just finished making spaghetti Bolognese. She would be the epitome of a domestic goddess in her little apron, if it weren't for her thinning hair and glassy eyes. Her eyes are even worse than her husband's, much more bloodshot and glassy.

"There is plenty to go around," she says, as she ladles the food out into chipped plates on the dining table, ready for the PCs to eat. Anyone who tries the spaghetti Bolognese will be pleasantly surprised, at how delicious it is compared to the slop they are forced to eat back at the compound. A perceptive character might notice that she has been forced to make it with chicken.

Bathroom 1, Bathroom 2, and the Shower are utilitarian and dirty, but otherwise unremarkable. A perceptive character may notice blood stains on one of the sinks. Beky used this sink to prepare the "meat" for the spaghetti Bolognese.

#### Storage Room

There are shelves of ammunition on the walls of the bunker and racks of weaponry alongside. On one of the shelves, among back issues of guns&ammo from before the Cataclysm is an old book. It will require a skill check for a perceptive character to notice it. This book is a copy of *Cultes des Goules* (see the section on Mythos books).

#### Generator Room

The generator room no longer serves its purpose of generating electricity. Instead, there are plastic bags of meat stacked in a corner. Any character who opens one of these bags will quickly realize that this is not the meat of an animal. Each bag has badly decomposed human hands, feet and other nasty surprises. Ronan



and his family only use this cooking. They have not degenerated to the point where they will sink their teeth into raw and decayed human flesh. It is only the fact that this room is kept closed and has a chimney, originally from the generator, that prevents this pile of flesh from stinking out the entire structure.

#### Child's Room 1

This is a little girl's room, with lots of cuddly toys. A perceptive character will notice that many of the cuddly toys have blood stains, missing arms or legs, or scorched patches. They aren't perfect, but they are the best toys Mat and his pack of ghouls have, so far, found.

#### Child's Room 2

This is a little boys room, a boy with an interest, it seems, in science. There are lots of animal bones that have been cleaned and arranged into diorama's. A perceptive character will notice that some of the animal skeletons have been augmented with human finger bones, where the animal was missing pieces.

#### Main Bedroom

This is the room that Ronan and his wife share. They no longer sleep on the bed, but now curl up in a pile of bedclothes in one corner of the room. This is now filthy and stinking and surrounded by finger and foot bones.

On a small altar in another corner of the room is a jade idol, a crouching winged hound, or sphinx with a semi-canine face. It is a holy symbol among the ghouls and the idol has been given a few pitiful offerings by Ronan and his wife, a few rings and necklaces, taken from dead bodies.

### **Oh. The Humanity!**

When the characters arrive, everything at the bunker seems normal – at least at first sight – and the family seems happy, secure and well fed. The players are exposed to the humanity that still remains to them, and will, hopefully, start to like Ronan and his wife, Becky, and children, young Graham and Sam (short for Samantha).

The whole family group is enthusiastic about life in the bunker, and Ronan loses no

opportunity to say, "I told them. I told them the world was going to end."

Conversation should turn to how the family is doing so well, and Ronan will explain that he has made a network of alliances with "other groups" of survivors. He won't give away supplies, but he will barter for them. He says that he barter with his other allies, such as a group led by a guy called Kleitos, which Ronan pronounces as Cleetus, located way on the other side of town. Ronan invites the PCs to wait until his friends arrive. He tells them that his allies are sure to have treasures that the PCs will be interested in bartering for.

### **About That Other Group**

The reason the family is doing so well is that they have struck an alliance with another group. This other group is a pack of ghouls led by an ancient ghoul named Kleitos. The family were very wary of the ghouls at first, but became more enthusiastic with each present the ghouls brought. Ronan was never much of a reader, but when Kleitos brought a book for him – *Cultes des Goules* – he found he couldn't put it down. He soon started chanting the rhymes in the book, and also taught them to his family. Ronan is the furthest along in the transformation brought on by the rhymes, but the whole family have already started their transformation into ghouls.

All of the family share a feral look. Like many people since the Cataclysm, their clothes are ragged and need repair. They look healthy for the most part, but their hair is thin and their eyes look glassy. They have unusually large and strong-looking teeth and, tellingly for those with experience of ghouls, they have an unmistakable smell of decay, sweet and rancid at the same time. If anyone is confronted about the smell, they blame it on Becky's cooking.

When Kleitos and his group arrive, they do not arrive at the front door of the bunker, but through a hole dug through its concrete foundations. First a scabbling can be heard below the floor. "They're coming," Sam says, in a creepy, little-girl whisper. The noise becomes a slobbering a skittering, and then the ghouls throw the carpet aside and climb into the

main room.

Don't be afraid to gross out your players a bit, and remember to lead the tension. The first time the party encounters ghouls is much more terrifying if they hear the murmurs of conversation while crunching and slurping of bones and marrow before they encounter the monsters.

Giving a monster the appropriate feeling of terror is more important than making an enemy statistically capable of killing the party. By the time the party actually encounter the ghouls, they should already be afraid of them.

### **Cultes des Goules**

Cultes des Goules is a book of black magic that contains advice for contacting and making pacts with ghouls in exchange for treasures and magical power. The book also contains incantations for transformation into a ghoul. Each transformation lasts longer and makes more deep changes, until the transformation becomes permanent.

### **Escape**

The PCs should be forced to escape from the bunker. If they defeat Ronan and his family, and the family's ghoul allies they should be allowed to explore the bunker, looking for loot, as a little reward. But then an even bigger group of ghouls should arrive, and if these are defeated, an even bigger group, until the players get the message that this is ghoul territory, and they should go.

With any luck, the players will defeat or drive off Ronan, and his family. Then they should have a little time to look around, and pick up their first Mythos book, Cultes des Goules, before Kleitos and his pack of ghouls send them running for their lives.

You can then throw in a situation where the player character's escape vehicle (or just one of them, if the party has more than one vehicle) is low on gas and won't "turn over". A successful mechanic roll, or something similar will be required to get it going.

### **It's Not Over Yet**

As the car finally turns over and the PCs start to escape the area around the bunker, the ground starts to cave in. The whole area is riddled with tunnels and some of them have collapsed due to the unaccustomed number of ghouls running through them, coming to get the PCs. As the PCs drive away, a hole opens up in the road, and the driver of the lead car or truck will have to make a drive roll to avoid planting the front of their vehicle into a ghoul tunnel. The front wheels and front of the cab will be trapped down in the tunnel, while the back of the vehicle will be sticking up in the air, back wheels spinning. The PCs in the vehicle will have only few short minutes to get it out, before ghouls come creeping out of the collapsed tunnel the vehicle just fell into.