

Horror and insanity are the rewards for those brave and foolish souls who dare to meddle in the dark worlds of *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition*. This tome is the latest and greatest rendition of the acclaimed live-action roleplaying game based on the horror mythology of H.P. Lovecraft and other authors. This book offers much more than a unique and richly detailed playable rules system: it incorporates twelve years of best practices and refinements from hundreds of the top live-action roleplayers worldwide.

Some of the features of this self-contained game include:

Tips on recreating your own tales of the Cthulhu Mythos

Extensive information on stagecraft, special effects, building your own monsters, and organizing events

* All new rules for skills, combat, Sanity, Magic, and Psychic powers.

Guidelines on role-playing Outsiders, agents of the otherworldly beings hell bent on destroying the world!

and much more!

Cthulhu Live

3rd Edition

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3rd Edition

Robert "Mac" McLaughlin

SKP0602



By Robert "Mac" McLaughlin
and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

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CYRILIC LIVE

3RD Edition

*To H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard,
Robert W. Chambers, Clark Ashton Smith,
and all the other bards of the Mythos
whose visions have inspired this work.*

*By Robert "Mac" McLaughlin
and the Skirmisher Game Development Group*

CTHULHU LIVE

3RD Edition

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and the Skirmisher Game Development Group*

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Introduction

C*thulhu Live* is the official live-action version of the immensely popular *Call of Cthulhu* tabletop role-playing game published by Chaosium Inc. This new 3rd edition set of rules, brings dynamic new changes to player skills, sanity tests, combat rules, and many other aspects of the game. The book incorporates best practices and ideas culled from live-action groups around the world.

Inspired from the stories of Howard Phillips Lovecraft and the group of writers known as the Lovecraft Circle, *Cthulhu Live* allows players to use skills, wits, and teamwork to combat dark and alien forces from the stars and from outside our known concepts of reality. These ancient horrors wait just beyond the perception of our science and our senses; waiting to reclaim what was once theirs.

Live-action role-playing is unlike many games you may have played before. The game comes to life around you, rather than on a table or in your mind, with numerous players, props, costumes, and locations. Players have the opportunity to handle ancient relics, page through tomes of blasphemous secrets, and face otherworldly horrors in real-time interactions.

Each session involves at least one game master — known as the Keeper of Arcane Lore — a variable number of players, and a few members of a support staff who assist the Keeper and perform the roles of Non-Player Characters (NPCs). The number of players, Keepers, and support staff vary from one adventure to the next, depending on the complexity of the adventure and the number of players available. For convenience, the masculine gender is used throughout most of this rulebook, but of course there are no such restriction on the gamer's gender.

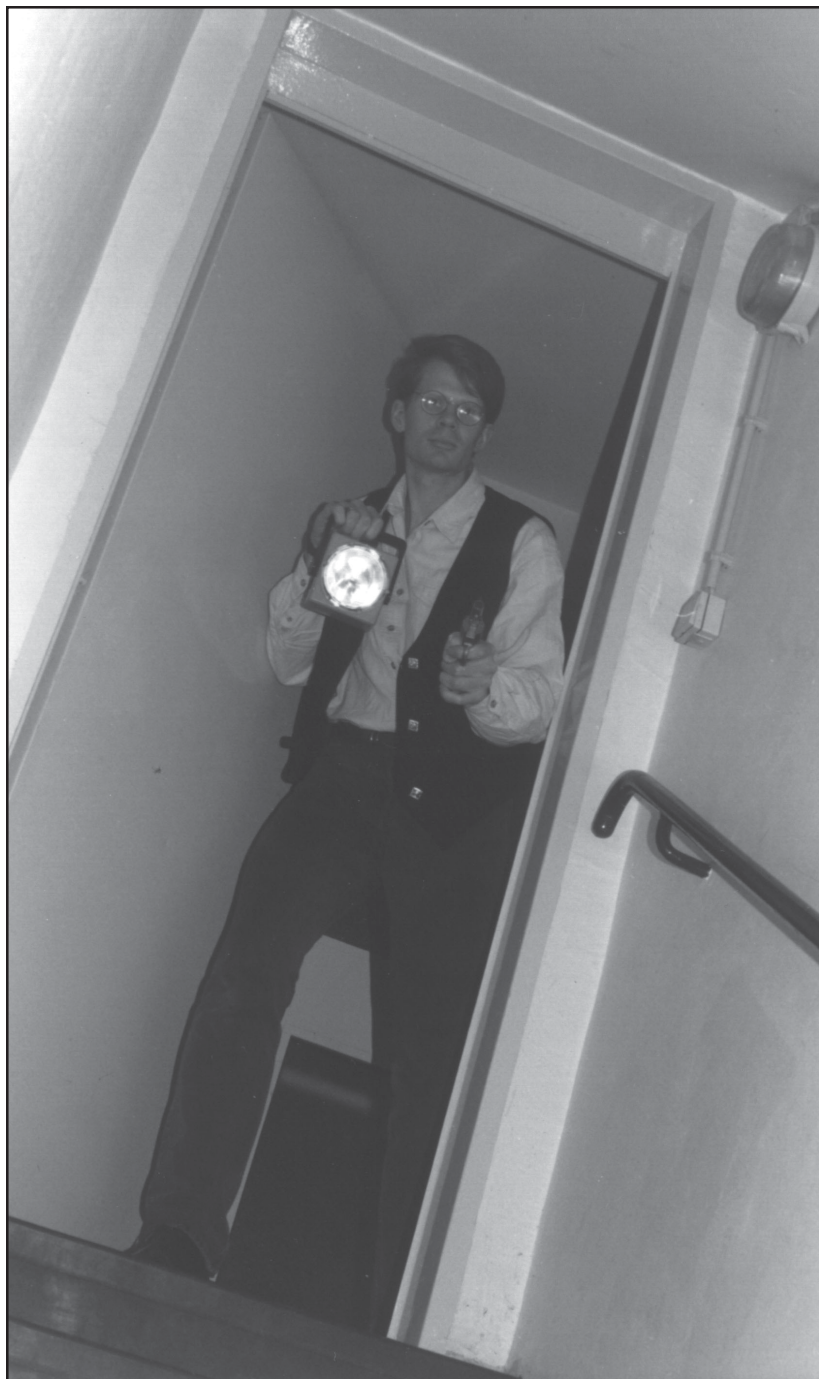
Adventures in *Cthulhu Live* are a form of interactive, improvisational theater. Adventure scripts are typically written to cover the most likely courses of action, but no one can foresee every eventuality. The unpredictability of the game is part of the fun. Players can often take the game in new directions and create interesting new twists to the established plot.

Cthulhu Live is based on the role-playing game *Call of Cthulhu*. Experienced role-players will notice that the rules of *Cthulhu Live* are streamlined and simpler than traditional role-playing games. The intent is to accommodate the requirements of live role-playing. Neither dice nor pages of complex tables are used in this game. The design of the entire rules system is to facilitate smooth, uninterrupted role-play. Even new actions not covered in the rules may be easily settled and adjudicated by the Keeper. Gamers may create new skills and tests they feel are necessary.

The horror of *Cthulhu Live* does not limit itself solely to the Lovecraft Mythos. The game system includes rules for psychic powers, insane killers, vampires, werewolves, living dead, demons, ghosts, and other terrors. *Cthulhu Live* is designed to fully support traditional horror and supernatural adventures. Many groups may even prefer to run a series of action-based, monster bashing adventures such as hunting vampires or fighting an army of the living dead.

Welcome to the world of *Cthulhu Live*!

Robert "P.L." Moberg 



Robert McLaughlin

Chapter 1

Character Creation

The character is your alter ego in the *Cthulhu Live* universe. During most games the Keeper provides you with a pregenerated character designed specifically for the adventure at hand. In other games you may have the chance to create your own character.

A character is defined by Statistics (or Stats), Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills. Stats are a series of numbers that indicate physical and mental capabilities. Advantages and Disadvantages are optional rules often used when players create their own characters. They represent unusual quirks, talents, or afflictions that add personality, special abilities, and personal handicaps that might arise during the game. Skills represent fields of knowledge and physical training your character has learned through life. Skills are purchased from a pool of available points derived from your character's stats.

Primary Statistics

Your character's mental and physical capabilities are defined by the following four Stats: Education, Dexterity, Constitution, and Power. A score of 20 is typically the maximum for a human. Average human ability scores are between 8 and 12. These four primary stats determine secondary statistics such as Wound Points, Magic Points, and Luck. Stats also help determine the number and quality of your skills. Be sure to choose your stats carefully and build them up according to your vision of the character you wish to create.

Most characters have Stat scores forming a bell curve around human averages. Exceptionally high or low scores are not as common but are not unknown. This is especially the case with extreme characters who typify strong but dumb, brilliant but sickly, fast but frail, or possessed of great psychic potential but physically disabled. Some players are terrified of having Stat scores less than 10 but having both strengths and flaws in characters make them more interesting. Play your character to his or her strengths and avoid situations that will trap you within your weaknesses.

A few Statistics seen in many role-playing systems have been omitted from *Cthulhu Live*. No Strength score is used; Constitution reflects the overall fitness and health of your character. No Intelligence score is used. You must use your own wits to solve the puzzles with which you're confronted. No Charisma score is used. You'll have to rely on your natural charm, or lack thereof, when interacting with other characters.

The Keeper defines how many points you have to distribute among the four stats. Most investigators are considered a cut above average when they begin. Depending on the type of game your Keeper has in mind, players may be asked to play very average characters or may be allowed to create seasoned adventurers.

Adventurer Experience Level

Average Person – 40 Points

A Cut Above – 45 Points

Experienced – 50 Points

Best of the Best – 55 Points

EDUCATION (EDU): Knowledge and learning capacity. EDU contributes to the pool of skill points available for academic and trade skills. EDU is a factor when determining the success of a great many actions in *Cthulhu Live*; translating foreign languages, recalling historical facts, diagnosing diseases, and all other Skill Tests when a character uses his acquired knowledge and “book-learning”. An EDU of 1 probably means the individual was raised by wolves. A 20 EDU is a certified genius.

DEXTERITY (DEX): Agility and manual dexterity, it is a factor in the pool of skill points available for combat skills. The Keeper considers your DEX when settling the outcome of all actions requiring agility, sleight of hand, or the performance of delicate operations. DEX-related actions include picking a lock and repairing miniature mechanical or electronic equipment. Someone with a DEX of 1 can’t walk and chew gum at the same time. A character with a DEX of 20 could be a phenomenal stage magician or an Olympic gymnast.

CONSTITUTION (CON): This is physical health, strength, and toughness. CON establishes Wound Points and is a factor in the pool of points available for combat skills. It is important when the Keeper determines the effects of poisons, electrical shock, radiation exposure, and other instances when you depend on physical toughness. A character with a CON of 1 passes out after one beer. Someone with a CON of 20 probably eats arsenic for breakfast.

POWER (POW): Your willpower, psychic strength, and spiritual awareness. POW comes into play when performing magical or psychic feats. It contributes to the pool of skill points available for academic and trade skills. The Keeper considers Power when judging tests of spell casting, mind reading, psychic combat, resisting possession, and other times when your character relies on his innate psychic and magical talent. Characters

with high POW have strong willpower and great self-control. They fare better when confronted with horror and the supernatural. A person with a 1 POW is frightened by his own shadow. Someone with a POW of 20 could be a celebrated psychic or march straight into the depths of Hell without flinching.

Secondary Statistics

There are several secondary stats that are used during the game.

MAGIC POINTS (MP): POW is a rating of your willpower and magical awareness; Magic Points represent personal reserves of magical and psychic energy. At the start of the game, MPs are equal to your POW. During the course of an adventure, you may attempt psychic or magical actions, expending MPs in the process. Magic points are regained through rest and meditation. Some magic items or ghastly rituals may boost a character's Magic Points to unnatural levels in excess of his POW score.



Celephais Foundation

WOUND POINTS (WP): Critical in combat, this is a rating of how many wounds you can sustain before falling unconscious or dying. Your Wound Points are equal to your CON score. If you are reduced to zero or fewer WPs, you fall unconscious to the floor. You are now in dire need of medical attention and will die if not treated soon.

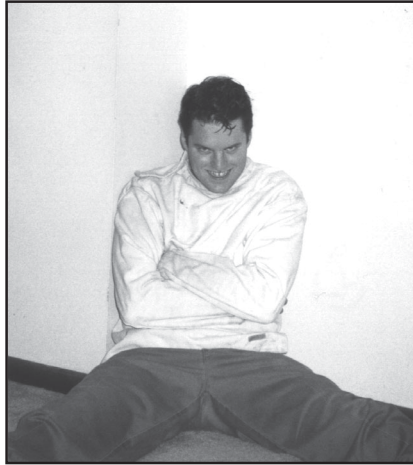
LUCK POINTS (LP): Luck Points are determined by your POW/4, dropping any fractions. You may choose to expend Luck during any skill test, allowing you to test at one level higher than your actual rating per Luck Point expended. This allows you to conduct a skill test at an effective level six or higher, or to give you a reasonable chance of success in what would otherwise be an unskilled test. For this reason, Luck Points are very precious and should be used wisely. They are regained between games if your character survives.

SANITY: Your mental stability and a guideline for how you react when confronted with arcane horror. There are six levels of Sanity, providing a guide for role-playing your character's state of mind. These should be

listed on your character sheet, allowing you to check off new levels as you move up or down in Sanity levels. Most start the game out as “Solid”, but some disturbed characters may begin the game further down the chart. Events and horrific revelations may rattle your Sanity and lower your level. The lower you go, the more erratic, frightened, and irrational you should play your character.

Sanity Levels

- Solid
- Shaken
- Spooked
- Scared
- Screaming
- Stark, Raving Mad!



PST Productions

A higher POW allows you to better cope with fear. Consult the chart below and note the indicated “Shade of Terror” on your character sheet. During the game, you may read unsettling truths or see horrific sights. Watch for one or more colored ribbons, colored pieces of paper inside or near the object or colored cards held up by the Keeper. If the room is dark or the action chaotic, the Keeper may also loudly call out several colors.

If confronted by your “Shade of Terror,” you are temporarily overcome with fear. You flee from the scene, freeze in terror, withdraw into a fetal position, wildly attack the object of your fear; whatever seems appropriate for your character and the situation in which the loss of control occurs. After several minutes, you typically regain some measure of self-control; however you drop one level of Sanity.

Your character also drops one level of Sanity for every three times he encounters something frightening but successfully retains his self-control. In other words, even if you don’t encounter your own Shade of Terror, seeing lesser shades of terror three times will still drop you a level of Sanity. Even the boldest adventurers suffer the gnawing effect of fear and stress on their nerves.

POW	Shade of Terror
18-20	Red
15-17	Orange
12-14	Yellow
9-11	Blue
1-8	Green

Remember that each shade of terror builds on the ones below it. A Yellow result panics Yellow, Blue, and Green players. An Orange result panics all players except those with the Red Shade of Terror. In most cases the Keeper will arrange for several colors to be displayed or called out, but remember that your character panics at his own Shade of Terror and all others higher on the chart.

Advantages and Disadvantages

After assigning basic stats, but before purchasing skills, consider if you wish to take any Advantages or Disadvantages for your character. These are entirely optional rules. Typically these are used when players create their own characters, imposing certain costs for character benefits but granting bonuses elsewhere for character deficits. When Keepers design pre-generated characters, these elements are usually taken into account within the script itself and Advantages and Disadvantages rules are not required. If the Keeper allows players to create their own characters, he may suggest that Advantages and Disadvantages be used to temper excessively ambitious character design.

Advantages and disadvantages directly affect your stat points. Each has a point value associated with it. Advantages are benefits to your character and you give up stat points to buy them. Disadvantages are handicaps for the player or problems that will likely affect them during the game. As a result, taking disadvantages for your character gives you a few extra stat points to allocate however you would like.

- There are a few guidelines players and Keepers need to keep in mind: Advantages and Disadvantages are optional, but the Keeper has the final word. If a Keeper wishes to have none of these in his game, or to not allow a specific advantage or disadvantage, that is his decision to make.

- No player should chose more than 5 points worth of advantages and 5 points worth of disadvantages.

- Keepers must make sure that players role-play any disadvantages they take. Players cannot conveniently forget their character's disadvantages during the game. This is the greatest potential for misuse of this rules option and Keepers should make sure that players are willing and able to abide by any disadvantages selected and role-play them faithfully.

Advantages

Following are a list of standard Advantages, along with the number of points a player must pay to gain each of them.

Artistic: 1 point

You are creative and imaginative. You have a natural affinity for art, mu-

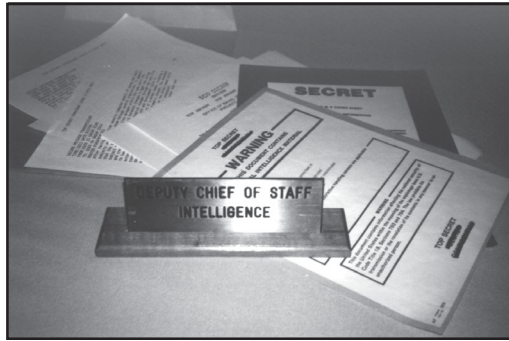
sic, or writing and can produce original and compelling works. It allows an individual to test at one level higher than their Fine Arts Skill would normally permit. It also allows the individual to make an unskilled Fine Arts test in a field they normally do not possess at skill level one.

Blessed: 3 points

At some point in the past, you or an ancestor did something that met with approval from some benevolent, supernatural intelligence. Perhaps you restored lost sacred stones to a shrine of Shiva, protected a Buddhist monastery from destruction at the hands of marauders or offered kindness to a stray cat that was a particular favorite of Bast. At some point in the near future, this entity may provide help when times are tough. You may detail the background history of this advantage, but your Keeper determines any specific effects during the game. Typically this will take the form of a miraculous twist of fate that saves the character's bacon on one single occasion.

Clearance: 1 point

You have been granted a high security clearance as a result of your job and a favorable background investigation. Typically a clearance will be granted to certain military and government employees, some politicians, and some various technology and engineering contractors working for a gov-



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ernment agency. Your character has clearance for Top Secret information and perhaps even certain special access programs. Having a clearance does not always mean you have a need-to-know specific information. Clearances do not grant unrestricted access to all classified material. Special permissions and a need-to-know are also required for approved access. Clearances can be fragile things. Overt signs of mental instability, erratic behavior, or the revelation of dark personal secrets that can be used for blackmail or to discredit the government will result in a clearance being frozen or potentially revoked.

Connected: 2 points

You may be the child of a U.S. senator, the nephew of a Mafia boss, or once saved the life of a federal agent. You have a powerful connection

with the law, government, or the criminal underworld and may be able to draw on this connection to aid you in times of need. This can be very helpful in gaining access to restricted files, bailing you out of jail, having judicial charges dismissed, getting your hands on special equipment, having a safe haven, or even having assistance concealing your transgressions. This advantage means you have a personal connection through birth or a chance happenstance, unlike the Networking and Streetwise skills that reflect years of developing relationships and culling personal favors to build these connections. Remember that this advantage is not a magic bullet; you must be able to communicate with your connection in order to request assistance. Even then it may be denied or not immediately available.

Daredevil: 2 points

With a flair for the dramatic and a risk-taking, devil-may-care attitude, you are not hampered by the doubt or hesitation experienced by most people. You perform test resolutions at one skill level higher than your actual level, provided they are recklessly dangerous acts or take place during dramatic scenes when you have an audience. Landing a damaged plane on a jungle strip during a tremendous rainstorm, disarming a bomb when only seconds remain, repairing a get-away car under hostile fire, bypassing an electronic keypad to escape a shoggoth flowing down the hallway, your character always seems to perform better when in dire physical peril. Your actual life-span may be limited, but your friends will always say you lived life to its fullest.

Fame: 1 or 2 points

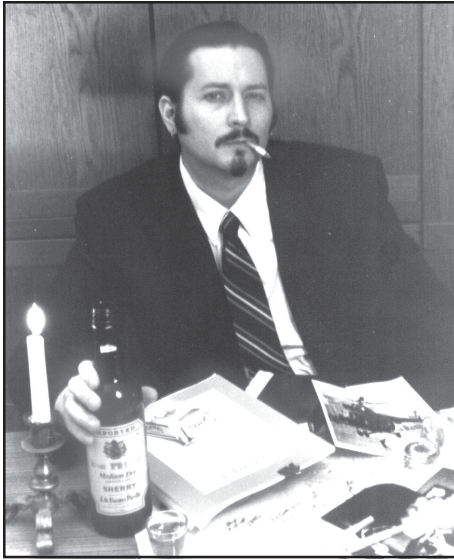
You are well known in your chosen profession (1 point) or possibly to the general public at large (2 points). Your name and face are recognized and many average people feel honored to make your acquaintance. You may be able to organize special favors or perhaps gain access to restricted areas or information if you encounter a fan and play your cards right. Of course being so widely recognized can sometimes work in your disfavor, attracting unwanted attention to your movements or being easily identified during times when anonymity is a blessing. During the player orientation and rules briefing, the Keeper makes a big deal about singling out the player and letting all the others know who the character is and what is publicly known about them.

Gifted: 2 points

You have a natural affinity for the invisible world and have 5 extra Magic Points than your POW would normally provide. This can be of great benefit for psychics or those dabbling in magic.

Gift with Languages: 2 points

Your character has a natural affinity for languages. When buying and increasing skill levels in language skills, you will pay only one skill point per level, regardless of the level purchased. For example most characters will spend three points to increase a language skill from level two to level three. Your character spends only one skill point to do so. You must still spend one extra skill point to buy a linguistic specialization.



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High Tolerance: 2 points

Possessed of a very hardy constitution, your character has a high tolerance for alcohol, drugs, and toxins. All tests against poisons, drugs, and similar substances are conducted with a +5 to the base CON score.

Keen Senses: 2 points

Your character makes skill tests benefiting from highly acute senses at one skill level higher. Keepers will rule on what tests can or cannot use this Advantage. Nearly all skill tests require some sort of sensory input.

Only certain ones should gain additional benefit from acute senses. This Advantage is very helpful for musicians, hunters, soldiers, fine craftsmen, locksmiths, and other professions in which sharper than average senses are a clear benefit.

Lucky: 3 points

Most characters receive Luck points equal to their POW/4 for use through the game. Your character is naturally lucky and is entitled to an additional five luck points in addition to their basic allocation. The careful use of luck points gives characters a better than usual chance of success or the opportunity to perform unskilled tests as if they were skilled.

Nerves of Steel: 3 points

Your character is a rock, a model of discipline and self-control. Unflinching in the face of danger, he'll steadfastly charge into a hail of gunfire or square off against the blackest denizens of Hell. Your code of honor, natural bravado, or innate death wish is such that you are allowed to make

Sanity tests at one Shade of Terror higher than what would normally be permitted by your POW. If your POW already places your character in the highest level for Sanity tests, you are allowed to ignore the first failed Sanity test of the game. If the character's POW exceeds their CON score, they may use their POW to calculate Wound Points for combat. The character stubbornly resists pain and the effects of blood loss by virtue of their iron will. They may collapse in dire need of medical condition when the danger has passed if the lost wound points exceed their natural CON.

Owed a Favor: 1 point

Someone owes you a favor, typically a non-player character of the Keeper's choosing although it might be another player character. At some point during the game, you may ask for help within their means.

Psychic Talent: 3 points

Your character possesses a rare natural potential. Mysterious powers, lying dormant within most humans, have been awakened in your own mind. This ability is the basic potential of using Psychic powers. A great deal of training is required to develop specific psychic skills and use them in the game. Psychic skills will be addressed later in the rules.

Robust: 2 points

You have always enjoyed a robust health and resistance to injury. Your character gains +5 to his or her Wound Point total. Wound points regenerate normally, but you have a higher maximum score than your CON would typically provide.

Stinking Rich: 3 points

You have the benefit of a fat bank account and a nearly endless supply of wealth. Perhaps you were born into money or are a self-made millionaire. Although envied or resented by some, you are able to bankroll many elements of a Mythos investigation and have a certain amount of influence by throwing your name and money around. Flashing your wealth in certain settings may attract a dangerous criminal element, hungry for what you possess. This advantage means that you have full control of your financial assets. A dilettante character without this advantage, for example, may live off a trust fund that takes care of



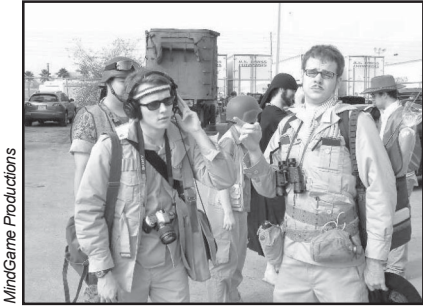
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his or her needs but may be unable to divert Daddy's millions to fund some cockamamie expedition into the Sahara. Details of your wealth and its capabilities should be negotiated with the Keeper.

Strong: 2 points

Your character is stronger than expected for his size and adds +5 to his CON score on any test measuring physical strength against an inanimate object or comparing strength on strength test with another character.

Well Traveled: 1 or 2 points



You have been around the world and back again. As a result, you may call upon regional knowledge gathered in your travels. At 1 point your traveling experience is limited to a single continent (specified at the beginning of the game). With 2 points you have traveled the entire world. During the game you may ask the Keeper some basic questions about objects, names, and locations encountered.

It will be up to the Keeper to decide if you know anything related to your question and generally it will just be cursory information. The Keeper will give you any basic facts that you know, but you should embellish the details considerably in a rambling discourse when relating the information to other players. "I'm no expert in the matter, but this looks like a Mesoamerican carving from the Olmec culture. You know, I was in Mexico a few years ago, hiking in the Tuxtla Mountains and experimenting with peyote when I ran into this old Indian shaman ..."

Disadvantages

Following are a list of standard Disadvantages, along with the number of extra points a player gains for acquiring each of them.

Abused: 2 points

You suffer from the effects of past physical, mental, or sexual abuse. You may determine the details of the abuse, but you have difficulty interacting with others in various social settings. Certain actions, words, or sights may trigger outbursts of violent rage or tearful collapse. Sights and situations that may not affect other players will begin to lower your condition on the Sanity chart. Players are encouraged to role-play elements of a hidden or repressed emotional disturbance; otherwise your Keeper will direct loss of sanity levels to reflect your troubled emotional state.

Amnesia: 2 points

Your long-term memory is gone and only functional memories like abilities, skills, and basic social competencies remain. The Keeper picks one additional disadvantage, for no additional points, and keeps it secret until this unknown disadvantage suddenly manifests itself during play. Those seeing this as an easy way to pick up stat points should be forewarned; the secret disadvantage picked by the Keeper will usually be a major one and manifest itself at the worst time possible.

Optionally, the Keeper may keep some skills secret from the player until such time that they are required and at that time reveal the “forgotten” skills and their levels.

Bad Eyesight: 1 point

You need corrective lenses to have functional eyesight, and even then it is still not the clearest. You will perform vision related skill tests such as translations or knowledge and recognition tests at one skill level lower unless you are able to be just a few feet away from the object. You are practically helpless if you lose your glasses or contact lenses.

Blind: 3 points

You are totally blind or retain very little sight. Any test resolution requiring sight is automatically “unskilled.” The Keeper will expect you to role-play this disadvantage appropriately during the game. This can be a fascinating challenge for an experienced role-player. Safety concerns permitting, the best way to play this during a game is to provide a set of blackout glasses for the player and let him or her truly play the game without sight.

Code of Honor: 1 or 2 points

You live by the tenets of a strict code of conduct, morality, and personal honor. You will never willingly act contrary to this code, even if it means injury, imprisonment, or death. If accidentally tricked into betraying this code, you suffer an immediate loss of one Sanity level and perform all skill tests at one level lower until the transgression is righted. Your Keeper determines the exact point cost of this limitation, depending on how stringent your code of honor may be.

Examples such as “never kill the innocent or an unarmed opponent,” “never tell a lie,” or “always protect the helpless” are excellent codes for a character to select. Codes such as “never harm a bunny” or “always look both ways before crossing the street” are not likely to be approved.

Dark Past: 2 points

Sometime in the past, you committed an awful transgression: a dark crime, a terrible betrayal, or perhaps even an affront to humanity itself. Details of



your past may be worked out with the Keeper, but you are concealing a dark secret from the other players. You must always be alert, for one day your past is likely to catch up with you; most likely during this game! Be careful choosing this limitation, it allows you several extra points in your ability pool, but your Keeper may have some fiendish ideas in store for your future.

Habitual Liar: 1 point

You are a pathological liar, habitually telling a lie instead of the truth whenever it seems practical, makes you feel good, helps you look important, or provides an immediate and easy way to get out of a negative situation. Of course you often end up having to spin more yarns in order to prevent your other lies from being discovered. Unless you are really good or really lucky, people will eventually figure you out and regard you with some mistrust. This can be quite a disadvantage when trying to tell other characters about something you've actually seen or when trying to get assistance from players or authorities that've already dismissed you as a consummate liar.

Illiterate: 3 Points

Regardless of how many languages your character knows, you cannot read or write in any of them. Typically you may not advance past level two in any academic & trade skill with exceptions determined by the Keeper. Despite the number of stat points this can provide, it can become a major handicap in learning many skills and should be taken only after careful consideration.

Intolerant: 1 point

Your character thinks everyone else is wrong. Their opinions, behavior, and backgrounds are all wrong. You vocally disapprove of people of the wrong sex, age, religion, race, economic status, or profession. Your Keeper will ask you to select a primary focus of your intolerance and it will need to be something that will become a point of contention during the game. While a hero amongst your bigoted friends, your statements and actions may make your character very unpopular with other player characters and NPCs.

Mythos Heritage: 3 points

A sympathetic connection to the Mythos exists at some point in your family's past. Perhaps your grandmother was a Marsh from Innsmouth, an ill-rumored sibling was always kept locked away in a shuttered room, an eccentric uncle was notorious for his strange old books and depravities, or your great-great grandmother was burned at the stake during the Arkham witch-trials. Sooner or later, this disadvantage will bring the Mythos to your doorstep and its implications may strike deeper than you might think. You may or may not want to reveal this heritage to your fellow players, especially when they have barricaded themselves in against the night and have grown just a little too trigger-happy.

Obsession: 1 point

Some goal, person, or object is a compelling fixation that drives many of your actions. This could be sex, money, an unnatural fetish, the love of a specific person, power over others, possession of occult artifacts, or numerous other obsessions as approved by your Keeper. You are constantly compelled to pursue your desire, and you must make at least one serious attempt to acquire this during the game. Failure to pursue your obsession during a key moment may result in the loss of a Sanity level.

Odious Habit: 1 point

Your character has a particularly annoying habit that is likely to rub others the wrong way or prove to be a disadvantage during the game. Examples may include chain-smoking cigarettes or foul cigars, laughing hysterically or whistling off-key during any stressful situation, a predilection for picking fights regardless of the odds, alcoholism, or perhaps an illegal drug habit. You will be expected to role-play this odious habit throughout the game.

Owe a Favor: 1 point

You owe someone a favor, typically a non-player character of the Keeper's choosing or it might be another player. At some point during the game, he or she will ask you to help them in some way within your means. When they approach, you will decide how to repay the debt or if you choose to renege on the favor and earn their animosity.

Persecuted: 1, 2, or 3 points

Your character belongs to a persecuted minority that is mistrusted and generally hated by society as a whole. The source of this persecution may be a result of your ethnicity, politics, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or other sources approved by the Keeper. The point value of this disadvantage varies according to the location and setting of the game, how

obvious your membership is to this minority, and to what degree this persecution may actually affect you during the game. For example, an openly Jewish character in Nazi Germany should be given a three-point disadvantage. You may only be given a one-point disadvantage if you have cleverly concealed your identity and remain in hiding.

Phobia: 1, 2, or 3 points

You have an unreasonable fear of something and can pretty well count on experiencing it during the game. As a one-point disadvantage, you make all skill tests at one level lower when in the presence of what you fear. As a two-point disadvantage, you immediately drop one Sanity level and suffer the same skill test penalty as described above. For a three-point disadvantage, you drop two levels of Sanity and must flee the area or risk going catatonic with fear as long as you are in the presence of what scares you. The exact phobia and point value will be negotiated with the Keeper.

Physically Handicapped: 1, 2, or 3 points

Your character is physically handicapped to a degree that affects your movement and motor coordination. You may be an amputee, a victim of Polio, or confined to a wheelchair for the game. The Keeper determines the exact point value for this disadvantage, based on the obstacles the player may face with such a handicap. Requiring a cane and being unable to move at faster than a walk may be a one-point disadvantage. Being confined to a wheelchair may be worth a three-point disadvantage during game play. As with all disadvantages, you are expected to faithfully role-play any limitations and difficulties your character would experience.

Psychosis: 2 Points



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Suffering from a condition of mental illness, your character begins the game with acute paranoia, manic-depression, multiple-personality disorder, or another psychosis. You also lose one maximum level of Sanity and may never rise to the “Solid” level on the Sanity chart. Whatever is chosen should be role-played throughout the game and be an ever-present part of who you are and how you interact with others.

Sickly: 2 Points

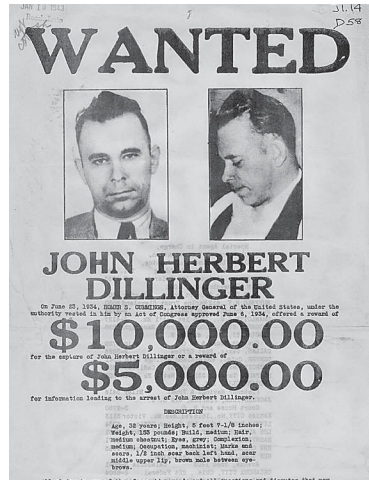
Physically weak and sickly, you begin play with 5 Wound Points less than your CON score would normally provide.

Unlucky: 2 Points

Born under a bad sign, you have no luck points at all to use during the game.

Wanted: 2 points

You are a known felon or somehow wanted by the authorities. You may be a criminal on the run, an escaped con, or perhaps wanted by a powerful and dangerous government conspiracy. Whether you actually perpetrated the crime, are wrongfully accused, an innocent patsy, or a mere victim of circumstance, your identity is known to the authorities and they are looking for you. Details should be worked out with the Keeper. Other players may or may not know your fugitive status, but police, bounty hunters, and government agents will be dogging your trail.



Skills

Skills are specialized fields of knowledge learned by your character. Many are connected with your chosen profession, while others reflect hobbies, special interests and odd bits of knowledge acquired through life. Some skills may be applied with more than just one of the primary statistics during the game; however skills are broadly divided into Combat skills and Academic & Trade skills for the purposes of character creation.

After assigning Stats and choosing any Advantages or Disadvantages for your character, it is time to purchase skills. You have two separate pools of purchase points, one for Combat Skills and one for Academic & Trade Skills.

$$\text{Academic \& Trade Skill Points} = (\text{EDU} + \text{POW}) \times 2$$

$$\text{Combat Skill Points} = \text{CON} + \text{DEX}$$

Skills are divided into five levels of knowledge. Each additional level you raise a skill increases your chance of success, speeds the time a task

can be accomplished and may even provide specialized areas of expertise within the skill category.

Skill Levels

1 – Novice: A basic knowledge, equivalent to what one might learn about a subject in a mediocre grade school, a hobby-level interest, or with some rudimentary training in the field.

2 – Apprentice: What one might call a “solid grounding” in an area of knowledge, perhaps after a little more education or on-the-job training.

3 – Journeyman: This skill is something the character could probably do professionally. Their level of knowledge could obtain a full-time job in a related industry.

4 – Expert: A recognized expert in their field. They absolutely know what they’re doing and are sought after for their experience.

5 – Master: The character is among the top individuals in that area of knowledge.

Skill levels are purchased at a cost equal to the new level of the skill. A level one skill costs one skill point. Level two skills cost an additional two points. Three points are spent to rise to a level three skill, and so on. Remember that this escalating skill cost is paid for every level purchased. Thus, a character starting the game with a History skill at level 4 must pay a total of 10 skill points ($1+2+3+4=10$)

These skill levels are ratings approximating your character’s training and experience. The list of skill levels describes general rules of thumb to consider when equating your level to actual capabilities. The Keeper always has the final decision as to whether or not a task is within your abilities to perform or how difficult the action will be to accomplish. This is discussed in greater depth in the Test Resolution rules.

How are skills used in the game? Skill levels are used as multipliers for your base four stats when attempting a skill test. EDU and DEX are the most common stats used during tests but CON and POW may be used on certain occasions. The Keeper may ask for the total of your DEX multiplied by your level in the Locksmith skill when picking a lock. You might apply your EDU times your History skill when trying to find out more information about the Knights Templar. Occasionally the same skill may be called upon to modify different stats for different tests. A player may use his Medicine skill with EDU to diagnose a rare disease, but may apply his Medicine skill level with DEX when performing a delicate surgical operation.

Skill levels represent capabilities based on common knowledge in the culture and era of your character. A character with a Medicine-3 from the early 21st century is generally more knowledgeable and capable than a

character with Medicine-5 from the 17th century. More information, better training and superior resources allow advanced cultures to learn more facts and achieve greater success. But just as a modern doctor spends years of training to become a master in his field, a 17th century doctor would also require the same years of study to become a master during his own era. The costs to increase skill levels remain the same; the capabilities and difficulty ratings to accomplish specific actions may be different.

Some skills may be purchased at will. Other skills have pre-requisites before they may be learned. On rare occasions this is a minimum Stat score, but most requirements are basic entry skills that must be learned before a more advanced skill can be purchased. The Accounting skill, for example, requires a minimum level of 2 in Mathematics. Very challenging skills may have more than one pre-requisite. Pre-requisite skills have been developed to make advanced and complicated skills more expensive to acquire than simpler ones. They also help ensure that your character has a sound, logical collection of basic knowledge they would have learned on the way toward more advanced education.

Skill Specializations

Nearly all skills will have a suggested list of specializations. Skill specializations represent individual areas of interest and personal focus, a professional area of expertise. Players may purchase one specialization at level 3 (which is considered to be a basic professional-level of knowledge) and may purchase one additional specialization at each level thereafter. It costs one extra skill point to purchase a specialization.

If you choose to purchase a specialization within a skill, any skill tests that fall within this personal field of expertise will be taken at one skill level higher. A player with a History skill of 3 and a specialization in Mediterranean history conducts a skill test at 4 x EDU when trying to identify an Etruscan artifact. This allows a character with a skill level of 5 to actually test with a skill modifier of 6 if the test falls within an area of skill specialization. You are not required to purchase specializations, but they allow greater personalization of your character and can prove valuable investments when chosen wisely.

Virtually any skill may have areas of specialization. Several specialty examples are listed with most skills. Any player wishing to develop a new specialization must have Keeper approval. While Combat skills also allow specializations, they are employed differently in the game and discussed in greater detail in the Combat rules.

The following pages list a broad array of skills with an explanation of how they can be used. Any pre-requisite stats or skills will be detailed in the description. The last part of this chapter presents a collection of professional skill packages and their purchase cost. Using professional pack-

ages is a quick and easy way to build your character. Additional skill points are frequently left over so that you may increase some skills or learn others to personalize your character.

Academic & Trade Skills

Following are the most commonly used skills for *Cthulhu Live*. Keepers may allow additional ones if needed or desired.

Accounting

This covers general accounting and bookkeeping procedures, analyzing business deals, and checking financial ledgers for inconsistencies and embezzlement. Conversely it can also be used to try and cover up financial misdeeds and appropriations of funds. The investigator understands complex monetary transactions and may search contracts and accounting books for clues to how a person or business made its money and how the money was spent.

Requirements: Mathematics-2.

Example Specialties: Tax Shelters, Embezzlement, Spot Fraud.

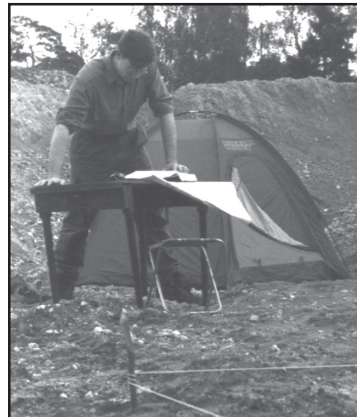
Anthropology

This skill pertains to the study of human culture around the world. It is used to glean information on the practices and beliefs of various societies, to recognize prominent cultural and religious icons, as well as to identify the cultural or ethnic origins of a particular individual. The anthropologist may make simple predictions of an individual's behavior based on what the character knows about the person's background and beliefs.

Example Specialties: African Culture, Chinese Culture, Polynesian Culture.

Archaeology

A character uses this skill to identify the time period and source of ancient and pre-historic artifacts and human remains. Elements overlap with the History skill but Archaeology extends more into physical remnants than just the historical overlay of who did what and when it happened. An archaeologist has a better chance of identifying ancient relics or guessing at the purpose of unknown artifacts. The skill includes the organization and operation of archaeological digs and the recovery, care, and



Robert McLaughlin

limited restoration of delicate remains. If the character has the opportunity to study an archaeological site thoroughly, he may make deductions about the culture of the former inhabitants.

Requirements: History-2, Anthropology-2.

Example Specialties: Imperial Rome, Ancient Mesoamerica, Burial Sites.

Astronomy

With this skill you can calculate which stars and planets are overhead at a particular date or hour of day or night, when eclipses and meteor showers occur, and the orbits of planets in our solar system. You know the names of important stars, stellar life cycles, the formation of galaxies, and current perceptions about life on other worlds. At lower levels, this skill represents a basic back yard Astronomer. Advanced levels move into the prediction of cosmic and planetary cycles, and the identification of unseen stellar bodies by the behavior of surrounding stars and planets.

Requirements: Mathematics-2.

Example Specialties: Mars, Black Holes, Comets.

Biology

A broader study of life sciences than Botany or Zoology, Biology is a wider spectrum discipline of all living things and how they interact with one another in their native ecosystem. Information gleaned from biology skill tests is much less specific than tests through Botany or Zoology and the specializations chosen should be broader. Nevertheless, Biology is a prerequisite for advanced life-science skills.

Example Specialties: Microbiology, Mammals, Reptiles.

Botanist

You have devoted great effort to the study of plants, flowers, molds, and fungi. You know information on the natural habitat and growth cycles of most plants, and you recognize which are toxic, safe to eat, or may have special medicinal or commercial properties. You can recognize most flowers, leaves, and plants known to mankind and make educated guesses about those that are unknown.

Requirements: Biology-2

Example Specialties: Orchids, Fungi, Succulents.

Brewing

You are skilled in the ancient craft of brewing and distilling. With the right raw materials and equipment, you may produce beer, lager, spirits, or any other alcoholic drink in quantity. For game purposes, winemaking will also be considered part of this skill. A master brewer is required to over-

see a proper, factory scale brewery. Low levels of the brewing skill allow one to produce bootleg alcohol and moonshine. Alcohol distilled by an amateur can be potentially dangerous. Distilled spirits are assigned a toxicity of 30 minus (EDU x Skill Level) of the brewer, tested against the drinker's CON to avoid severe intoxication, temporary blindness, or worse from even a small sample.

Example Specialties: Beer, Wine, Whiskey.

Chemistry

Given time and the proper equipment, you can analyze and identify a host of unknown chemical compounds. You can make predictions regarding the chemical reactions of various compounds before they occur. With the proper chemicals and equipment, you can concoct explosives, poisons, gases, or acids. The skill can also be used to manufacture drugs.

Example Specialties: Petrochemicals, Acids, Designer Drugs.

Civil Engineering

You are familiar with materials, load bearing capabilities and design elements of large, man-made objects. You can examine blueprints and construction documents for design

flaws or unusual techniques and materials used in the construction. You can identify structural weakness and damage that may not be obvious to the general public and can suggest means to repair or support these weak-points. The civil engineer plans construction projects above and below the earth, ensuring proper materials and supports are used to prevent collapse and that adequate facilities and flow exist for light, water, air, and power.

Requirements: Mathematics-2 and Physics-2.

Example Specialties: Subterranean Architecture, Bridges, Urban Planning.



Communications

This skill represents knowledge of modern radio, telecommunications, and satellite technology. You are able to set up and repair communication arrays, establish satellite up-links, and maximize the range of radio trans-

missions. Given the appropriate equipment, you can track and establish line of bearings to signal emitters, intercept and jam radio transmissions, and set up telephone wiretaps. At higher levels, you can construct your own bugs and listening devices. With enough time and the right technology, you can digitally alter videotapes and voice recordings or may tell if others have tampered with or altered such recordings.

Requirements: Electrical Engineering-2.

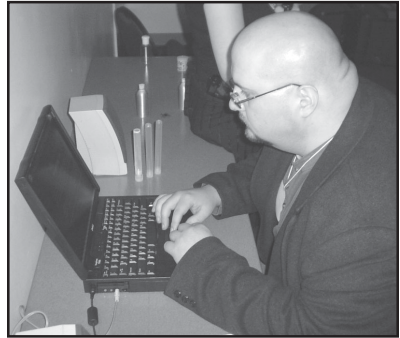
Example Specialties: Satellite, Signal Tracking, Electronic Encryption.

Computers

Low levels of the skill represent a basic comfort level with computer use, simple programming, and Website construction. Advanced skill levels take the character into advanced programming and hacking techniques. The character can access guarded files, bypass computer security programs, and plant elaborate computer viruses.

Requirements: Mathematics-2.

Example Specialties: Hacking, Network Security, Artificial Intelligence.



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Conspiracy Theory

You are an authority on modern conspiracy theories. It is left up to the player if your character actually believes these dark, hidden truths behind the governmental machine or merely enjoys these paranoid fantasies as intellectual games and curiosities of urban folklore. Skill tests generally take the form of knowledge checks. What role did the Mafia play in Kennedy's death? What is the significance of the Holy Grail to the Merovingian dynasty? What does the Skull & Bones Society have to do with the New World Order? The Keeper never tells you if you fail a test, but will instead provide erroneous information that may mislead or confuse the investigation.

Requirements: History-2.

Example Specialties: Secret Societies, Assassinations, Secret Histories.

Cryptography

You are trained in the complex craft of secret codes and ciphers. Studying an unknown cipher, you can make educated guesses to the nature or technique of encryption. Your character is familiar with the best tech-

niques for deciphering a coded text. Given enough time, you have a reasonable chance to decode most secret messages coded by normal ciphers in any language known to your character. Many occult texts are written in ancient ciphers, and may require knowledge of older dialects to be properly translated. It should be noted, however, that some codes simply cannot be cracked through conventional cryptographic analysis.

Requirements: Mathematics-2.

Example Specialties: Medieval Ciphers, Enigma, Navajo Code.

Cryptozoology



This skill defines speculative theory of unknown animal life. The study of the Sasquatch, the Loch Ness Monster, the Jersey Devil, the Kraken, and other mysterious creatures fall into this skill, as do theories of sentient aquatic and subterranean races. Cryptozoology is generally dismissed as a crackpot field of science and not respected in most academic circles. If provided with solid facts regarding a strange or hostile ecosystem, such as the depths of the ocean or even an alien planet, you may develop theories about life forms that could

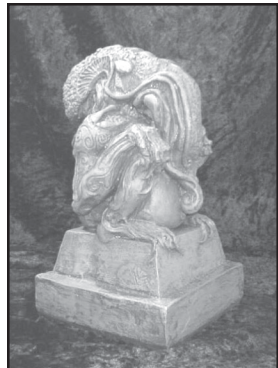
survive in these environments. What they might eat, their life cycle, capabilities, and weaknesses. This skill may provide valuable insight into the biology and life cycles of some lesser Mythos races.

Requirements: Biology-2.

Example Specialties: Yeti, Lake Monsters, Extinct Species.

Cthulhu Mythos

This is a special skill that may only be purchased with the Keeper's permission. New characters are rarely allowed to buy this skill during character creation. Only between adventures, after surviving an encounter with the eldritch nightmares of the Cthulhu Mythos, may a character typically learn this arcane branch of study. The Keeper will also require the player to have a source of knowledge: ancient writings, a deranged sage, membership in a cult or secret society. The character loses one maximum Sanity level at Mythos skill levels 2 and 4. Thus a character with Cthulhu Mythos-2 can never rise higher than "shaken" and a character with Cthulhu Mythos-4 will never rise above



Richard Alan Poppe

“spooked” on the Sanity chart. This skill is often used to recall details about specific entities, cults, and non-human races.

Example Specialties: Ghoul Lore, Xothic Cycle, Elder Things.

Demolitions

This skill represents knowledge of the manufacture and use of explosives. Like the chemist, a character with the Demolitions skill may attempt to prepare simple explosives with the proper material and equipment. The knowledge goes further, to include the construction of bombs, booby-traps, and shaped charges. As a demolitions specialist, you understand how to shape and place explosive charges to achieve their maximum destructive effect, while minimizing unwanted damage. You may identify advanced explosive compounds and may attempt to disarm bombs and explosive traps.

Example Specialties: Improvised Explosives, Disarm, Structural Demolition.

Electrical Engineering

Possessing experience with the construction and repair of electrical equipment, your character can build, repair, or modify electric gadgets. You have a reasonable chance of identifying the purpose of an unknown piece of technology, or at least how to turn it on! In modern adventures, this skill also encompasses basic Electronics. This skill is used to bypass alarm systems, repair damaged radios and transmitters, hot-wire cars, and similar actions. Special tools may be required for some attempts, but a skilled electrician can improvise basic tools.



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Example Specialties: Radios, Alarm Systems, Household Electrics.

Espionage

Your character has been trained in the art of espionage by a national intelligence service or secret society. You are familiar with the capabilities and use of cutting edge surveillance technology. You are not necessarily able to repair or construct these devices on your own. You know the best techniques and locations for planting these devices and may use this same knowledge to sweep a room for bugs and hidden cameras. You can set up and operate a traditional cell-structure secret organization. You are familiar with the use of cutouts, dead-drops, and warning signals to minimize

compromise of the organization and to keep members anonymous to those outside their own cell. You may use your skill to test for basic knowledge pertaining to military and political science: certain weapon capabilities or details about a particular group of political radicals, for example.

Example Specialties: Surveillance Devices, Counter-Terrorism, Military Intelligence.

Fine Arts



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Not a single skill, but a number of different ones related to the history and techniques of the arts. Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Literature & Drama, Music, and Cooking are all examples of Fine Arts skills and must be purchased separately. The character can identify works of art and recall basic facts on the person or culture

that produced it. He knows the nuances of technique and performance.

Example Specialties: Painting – Impressionism, Realism, Modernism; Sculpture – Marble, Bronze, Clay; Architecture – Art Deco, Baroque, Bauhaus; Literature & Drama – Shakespeare, Beat Poets, Improvisational Theater; Music – Violin, Piano, Guitar; Cooking – French, Middle-Eastern, Japanese.

First Aid

This skill is a basic understanding of how to treat shock, bind wounds, set broken bones, and other simple medical tasks. A successful use of First Aid restores 1 + Skill Level Wound Points. One additional point may be healed if the type of injury falls within a medic's areas of specialization. A character may benefit from this treatment only once per combat encounter or accidental injury and may not be healed for more points than were inflicted by that most recent injury. First Aid can be used to revive unconscious characters.

Example Specialties: Burns, Gunshot Wounds, Lacerations.

Forensics

You can perform autopsies to identify the manner and general time of death of a corpse. The longer the body has been deceased, the more difficult the task will be. With the proper equipment, you are capable of making ballistic tests of murder weapons, chemical analysis of powder residue, and trajectory analysis. Prints lifted from a crime scene may be

traced through hard files and online data banks. Fibers, tissue samples, and other trace residue may be chemically analyzed to help identify the circumstances of the crime or nature and identity of the perpetrator.

Requirements: Police Procedures-2

Example Specialties: Trace Evidence, Fingerprints, Ballistics.

Forgery

Your character is capable of forging most documents, faking signatures, and is a competent draftsman. You are also adept at spotting forged or otherwise unusual documents. A successful forger is a remarkably skilled individual who simply chooses to apply his talents to less than legitimate pursuits. An incredible amount of detail and knowledge is required on the part of the forger to fool officials and experts examining his work.

Requirements: Fine Arts (Usually Engraving or Painting)-3

Example Specialties: Art Forgery, Currency, Identity Papers.

Gambling

The professional gambler studies the major games of chance with an eye to making a living. You are able to play in such a way as to substantially increase your chance of winning, and know how to cheat if you feel your luck needs a little extra help. Your character is given one gambling “benefit” for every skill level, plus one extra benefit if the game is one in which you have taken a specialization. You may expend one benefit in order to do one of the following: draw one extra card in poker, move a roulette ball up to two slots from its final position, get another throw in craps, add or subtract up to two points in blackjack, or check to see if another gambler is using his skills to cheat.

Expended benefits are regained at a rate of one benefit per half-hour of game-play. You may elect to cheat by calling “phantom” benefits if you have used your allotted number, or if you want to increase the odds and keep your real benefits held in reserve. When you want to cheat, you may call a benefit as normal, but must cross the fingers of one hand and keep that hand in your pocket throughout that particular game/hand. Another professional who suspects a gambler of cheating may ask to see the concealed hand at the cost of one of his own benefits.

Example Specialties: Roulette, Black Jack, Poker.



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Geology

This skill permits your character to tell the approximate age of rock stratum, recognize fossils, and identify rocks and minerals. You recognize potential landslide areas, earthquake zones, and places that are likely to contain caves, underground springs, and oil deposits. You can identify unusual mineral deposits or physical phenomenon and draw conclusions that may indicate ancient water flow, seismic activity, meteor strikes, and other events that created singular effects and interruptions of long term geologic progress.

Example Specialties: Dating Stratum, Aquifers, Fossils.

Gunsmith

You can identify the make and capabilities of just about any firearm. Given a proper workshop and machine tools, you are capable of repairing, altering, or building firearms. You may produce specialty weapons and ammunition such as incendiary, armor-piercing, and hollow-point rounds. Your character may produce accessories such as silencers, brass catchers, and oversized magazines. You may perform illegal gunsmith operations such as converting semi-automatic weapons to fully automatic, removing serial numbers, and reactivating deactivated weapons.

Requirements: Mechanical Engineering-2

Example Specialties: Ammunition, Automatic fire conversions, Gun Repair.

History

You are knowledgeable about important events through recorded human history. Your character can recall background information on personalities, cultures, artifacts, or events. Knowledge of a culture's history requires that it be recorded somewhere. Your knowledge fades on extremely remote and primitive cultures or civilizations with few or even no written records. Anthropology and Archaeology are complimentary skills that help fill in missing gaps and you will generally find professionals in each field working on a major find.

Example Specialties: U.S. Civil War, Medieval, Third Reich.

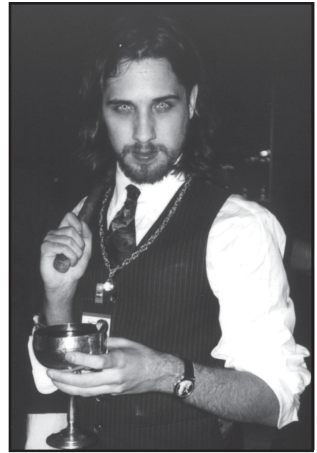
Hypnosis

Hypnosis is a limited but potentially effective skill for psychiatrists, therapists, and stage magicians. A character must either willingly submit to hypnosis or have his will weakened by drugs. They may remember experiences pushed into their subconscious, perform funny tricks, and be given limited post-hypnotic suggestions to help overcome their fears or hang-ups. Hypnosis can be very helpful when treating the insane and for recalling forgotten memories and details about past events. It could be

potentially dangerous if there are good reasons that the person pushed certain memories into the dark recesses of his mind! Coupled with experimental drugs, brain-washing techniques, and mental and physical torture, Hypnosis may serve darker ends for interrogation and post-hypnotic suggestion to produce “sleeper” agents and assassins. Past-life regression is an unproven and controversial Hypnosis therapy that could easily be tied into a game.

Requirements: Psychology-2.

Example Specialties: Repressed Memories, Suggestion, Trauma Therapy.



Jury-Rig

Your character has a knack for figuring out quick, makeshift repairs when time or proper parts are in short supply. He is not able to build new pieces of equipment, but can figure out quick fixes and temporary solutions from scraps, cannibalized parts, and other odds-and-ends. The jury-rigged piece of equipment will not be functioning to its optimal levels and is in danger of breaking down again at any time, but this skill can be very helpful in a tight spot.

Requirements: Mechanical Engineering-1, Electrical Engineering-1.

Example Specialties: Duct Tape, Rewiring, Motors.

Law

Your character has an extensive understanding of the legal system. You may ascertain the legality of various actions, cut through legal paperwork and red tape and research former case decisions. You can use your knowledge of Law to gain access to certain restricted areas and filibuster with the best of them.

Requirements: Library Use-2.

Examples Specialties: Business, Personal Injury, Criminal.

Library Use

Use of this skill enables you to find a given book, newspaper, or reference in a library, assuming that the reference exists. You may need to employ charm or bribery to get into certain restricted cases or rare-book collections. Higher levels of the skill increase the amount of information generated in a search and may provide additional connections and clues beyond the basic query. In modern games, it may be used to search for information on the Internet as long as the player has Computers-1 or higher. This

skill also may be used to test for knowledge about rare books, bookbinding, and limited information about authors and publishers.

Example Specialties: Rare Books, Periodicals, Specific Libraries.

Linguistics



This skill allows your character to speak and read a foreign language, selected when the Linguistics skill is acquired. A level one language is extremely basic. By the time your character reaches level three he is reasonably fluent but retains a slight accent. Characters are assumed to speak their native language at level three with no skill

point expenditure required. Modern speakers of a language typically have difficulty with translations more than 500 years old. The Keeper may require a medieval or ancient dialect to be learned as a specialty. Some geographic regions have dialects that can be difficult for even a native speaker to follow without additional study.

Example Specialties: Medieval German, Old English, Cajun French.

Locksmith

Your character has studied the assembly and design of mechanical locks. With the proper tools (or reasonable improvised ones) you may attempt to pick any mechanical lock or crack the tumbler sequence of combination locks. Higher levels of the skill decrease the time needed to pick the lock, depending on the difficulty category of the task set by the Keeper. Electrical Engineering and/or Computers would be needed to defeat electronic lock systems. If the lock resists your attempts to pick it, at least you will also be familiar with more drastic approaches such as drilling and shattering the bolts and tumblers.

Example Specialties: Safes, Padlocks, High Security Locks.

Mathematics

Basic levels cover fundamentals of math, geometry, algebra, and calculus. Higher levels move into the realm of abstract equations, non-Euclidean geometry, and advanced theoretical mathematics. Many other skills require some basic mathematics training.

Example Specialties: Statistics, Geometry, Calculus.

Mechanical Engineering

You have a special understanding of mechanics. You can identify and

repair a variety of machines and mechanical devices. Expertise may be applied to large items such as motors, hydraulics, and large machines, down to fine mechanical items such as clocks and watches. In addition to constructing or repairing mechanical items, your character will have a pretty good idea of ways to sabotage machines so that the source is difficult to locate or may take a period of time to occur. Special tools may be required for some tasks.

Example Specialties: Hydraulics, Internal Combustion Engines, Clock-works.

Medicine

While the First Aid skill is applied to physical wounds and trauma, Medicine deals with disease, internal illness, and more specialized forms of health care. Your character may diagnose diseases, treat poisoning, deliver babies, and has knowledge of drugs and their effects on the human body. Regular use of this skill assumes access to basic equipment and drugs that might be required. Using the skill in a very well equipped medical facility might increase the success rate of the skill, while attempting skill tests without proper equipment or in sub-standard and unsanitary conditions will increase the difficulty.

Requirements: Biology-2, Chemistry-2, First Aid-2.

Example Specialties: Surgery, Radiology, Orthopedics.

Military Science

This field of study represents familiarity with military history, tactics, and equipment. Your character has been trained in the tactical application of combined arms strategies, may create competent battle plans and analyze friendly or hostile plans for obvious weaknesses. Historical queries may be made in the scope of battles, military forces, equipment, and personalities. Booby-traps and crude, improvised munitions may be constructed by the character. It is a multi-disciplined field, with a very narrow focus. Your character recognizes and identifies the capabilities of all manner of military hardware; weapons, vehicles, special equipment; and the fundamentals of their use. Additional skills may be required for competent use of the equipment, but you understand how it works and its basic capabilities.

Example Specialties: Artillery, Unconventional Warfare, Bio-Chemical Operations.



U.S. Army

Mysticism

Your character has pursued advanced esoteric studies that allow his mind to exert greater control over his body and perhaps even the world around him. This skill allows the character to enter a meditative state that regains one Magic Point per skill level every 10 minutes. The character may also reduce his heart rate and body functions to slow the effect of poisons or resist the effects of drugs. Advanced levels of the skill allow the mystic to enter a comatose state that may be mistaken for death and to survive an extended period of time without food, water, and on limited oxygen. It is said that mysticism opens doorways to manipulate the world around the mystic through magical traditions.

Requirements: Occult-3.

Example Specialties: Body Control, Divining, Animal Empathy.

Navigation

Your character is familiar with map reading, polar coordinates, and compass navigation. Successful use of this skill allows pilots to correctly plot their course and scholars to identify and decipher ancient maps. It is indispensable for military operations. If you become completely lost, you may become reoriented through the use of this skill.

Example Specialties: Cartography, Naval Navigation, Land Navigation.

Networking

Your character has developed networking to a fine art. You make a point of seeing and being seen, making connections with influential people, making sure you are remembered and always try to help connect people with others in order to build favors and appreciation of your talents. Skill tests will be made to see if you know someone who can do something for you or your friends. Even if there is no favor owed and some manner of payment is required, you may know someone really good at the task that can get on it as quickly as possible. Networking is similar to the Streetwise skill, but Networking draws upon professional contacts while Streetwise tests against the underworld and criminals. The job requested may be illegitimate in nature, but the contacts the character knows are notionally legitimate.

Requirements: Psychology-2.

Specializations: Politics, Media, Business.

Occult

Beyond the primary world religions exists the world of the occult. Your character recognizes occult paraphernalia, rituals, magic grimoires, and codes. You may link them with specific cultures, cults, and secret societ-

ies. You may know the origins of an occult artifact, for what it was intended and what its presence signifies. This skill does not include knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, but it can be very useful since the Mythos often is intertwined with traditional occult beliefs or may be at their deepest roots.



Robert McLaughlin

Example Specialties: Voodoo, Alchemy, Hermeticism.

Operate Heavy Machinery

This skill represents familiarity with the operation and maintenance of heavy machinery and vehicles to include tractors and farm equipment, bulldozers, and other construction vehicles. It also includes the operation of tanks and large military trucks. While the actual application of this skill is very uncommon in game-play, it may reflect part of the professional education of many characters.

Example Specialties: Earth Movers, Military Vehicles, Agricultural Vehicles.

Paleontology

A paleontologist studies prehistoric life forms. You are familiar with the animal and plant life common millions of years ago, their life cycles, and place in the pre-historic ecosphere. The skill includes the organization and operation of paleontology digs and the recovery, care, and limited restoration of delicate fossils and remains. You can study the remains of unknown pre-historic creatures and make educated guesses about their life cycle, capabilities, and weaknesses.

Requirements: Biology-2, Geology-2.

Example Specialties: Cretaceous Era, Jurassic Era, Pre-Cambrian Era.

Paraphysics

During the 20s and 30s, parapsychology was still a fledgling field. The psychological researchers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were most often occultists or dilettantes with no formally established norms for experiments or research procedures. As a paraphysicist, you are the true scientist of parapsychology, specializing in non-Euclidean geometry, hyper-dimensional physics, extra-sensory perception, psychokinesis, and life

energy fields. This doesn't necessarily mean you are a believer. You may be a skeptic and spend your time studying spoon benders and other psychic claimants before dismissing them through careful experimentation. Paraphysics provides the ability to perform modern experimental parapsychology in the lab and in the field.

Requirements: Mathematics-2, Physics-2.

Example Specialties: Psychic Powers, Spirit Manifestations, Genetic Memories.

Photography

Nearly anyone can take snap-shots and turn them into a lab for development. Your character has an extensive understanding of the science and application of photography. You may develop your own film and enlarge or enhance photographic prints. You may be able to develop special photographic lenses or film emulsions that catch invisible light waves and radiation, photographing things not always visible to the naked eye. Your character may also try and determine if a photographic image has been altered or faked.

Example Specialties: Infrared, Trick Photography, Low-Light.

Physics

You have an excellent knowledge of the scientific principles that move and shape our universe. You are familiar with laws of gravity, mass, velocity, and inertia. Higher levels may expand into nuclear physics, applications of the theory of relativity, space-time theories, quantum mechanics, chaos theory, and a host of other fields on the cutting edge of modern science.

Requirements: Mathematics-2.

Example Specialties: Quantum Physics, Unified Field Theory, Astrophysics.

Pilot Aircraft

This actually represents three separate piloting skills that must be purchased separately: Pilot Airplane, Pilot Helicopter, and Pilot LTA Craft (Lighter than Air). Actual skill tests against EDU and DEX are typically required for all basic maneuvers until you reach skill level 3, at which time basic maneuvers and functions may be considered automatically successful during daylight hours and clear weather conditions.

Example Specialties: Stunt Flying, Night-flying, Dog-fighting.

Pilot Boat

This skill represents seamanship and the proper handling of water-borne craft. Canoes and rowboats do not require this skill, but larger sailing

vessels, steamships, and other powered craft require this field of study. Your character is familiar with ocean currents, the sounding of depths, and the handling of large vessels through storms and into canals and harbors.

Example Specialties: Speedboat, Tanker, Submersible.

Police Procedures

This is the science of detective work. Your character is familiar with standard police procedures and crime scene analysis. You can properly seal off crime scenes, photograph, collect, and catalog evidence in accordance with proper procedures for admission into a trial. You can dust for prints, identify potential clues, and have a sharper than usual eye for fiber, residue, and trace remnants. You character can properly bag and protect fibers and trace evidence to minimize contamination, although someone with the Forensics skill must conduct the actual analysis. You are familiar with most criminal modus operandi and the legal requirements for setting up a clean arrest. Your character can recognize and is familiar with the capabilities of a wide variety of firearms and melee weapons, although not necessarily skilled in their use. You are also familiar with the basics of the legal system, but not to the extent of a character with the Law skill.

Example Specialties: Vice, Homicide, Narcotics.

Professional Skills

This is a catch-all for any profession which requires specialized knowledge and training to perform but might not be addressed in any of the other skills listed in this book; grade-school teachers, butchers, home-makers, fishermen, magazine editors, gardeners, and countless others. Remember that a skill level of 3 is considered to be a basic professional competency in a skill. Your Keeper should be sure that when you select skills, you include skills that justify your character's continued employment. Sometimes creative players can come up with surprisingly intelligent and entertaining uses of their professional skills in game.

Psychiatry

Psychiatry and psychoanalysis are long-term treatments and therapies of mental illness. In time, it may allow individuals to control their phobias,

DAKOTA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE CORONER FORM 0-522 PRELIMINARY AUTOPSY REPORT				AUTOPSY FILE NO. 2007-3887	
VICTIM'S NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) Unknown M/F - 5'00"/140 lbs. 2				Cause of Death Blunt force trauma	
SEX	AGE	RACE	WEIGHT	HT	
M	35	Cauc	140 lbs	5'00"	
DESCRIPTION OF CORPSE Body well kept. No obvious trauma. No signs of decomposition. No signs of injury. No signs of disease. No signs of infection. No signs of poisoning. No signs of drug use. No signs of alcohol use. No signs of tobacco use. No signs of other substances. No signs of other trauma. No signs of other injury. No signs of other disease. No signs of other infection. No signs of other poisoning. No signs of other drug use. No signs of other alcohol use. No signs of other tobacco use. No signs of other substances.					
EXTERNAL INJURIES None. No signs of trauma. No signs of injury. No signs of disease. No signs of infection. No signs of poisoning. No signs of drug use. No signs of alcohol use. No signs of tobacco use. No signs of other substances.					
INTERNAL INJURIES No signs of trauma. No signs of injury. No signs of disease. No signs of infection. No signs of poisoning. No signs of drug use. No signs of alcohol use. No signs of tobacco use. No signs of other substances.					
MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS No signs of trauma. No signs of injury. No signs of disease. No signs of infection. No signs of poisoning. No signs of drug use. No signs of alcohol use. No signs of tobacco use. No signs of other substances.					
INVESTIGATING OFFICER Agent Smith, 456		RECORDING OFFICER Agent Jones, 123		TYPED BY Agent Smith	
CORONER Agent Smith, 456		FURTHER ACTION None		DATE AND TIME 10/10/07 10:00 AM	
ROUTED BY Agent Smith		RECEIVED BY Agent Jones		ROUTED TO Agent Jones	

No Good Deed Productions

fetishes, and even more serious conditions through better understanding themselves, their experiences and factors that contributed to their mental illness. Within the context of a game, characters may use this knowledge of the human psyche to temporarily calm a neurotic or psychotic patient and permit the individual to regain some degree of rational control. Successive treatment over a long period of time may gradually cure phobias or neurosis.

Requirements: Psychology-3.

Example Specialties: Phobias, Sexual Disorders, Multiple Personality Disorders.

Psychology

This skill represents an understanding of the workings of the human mind and emotions. It is knowledge of how outside influences affect a person's behavior and how to manipulate the emotions of a person or a group of people. This skill allows your character to study an individual and tell if he is overtly psychotic or unbalanced. It may be used to detect mannerisms that indicate when someone might be lying. Given time to conduct observation, you guess an individual's unspoken desires and needs. Not only in the realm of the academic, such professions as detectives, writers, and artists also use Psychology.

Example Specialties: Profiling, Lie Detection, Detect Motivations.

Sleight of Hand

Your character has developed his manual dexterity and speed to a remarkable degree. You may perform elaborate card-tricks and feats of legerdemain. This skill may be used to pick pockets or steal small items unnoticed. You also use this skill when attempting to escape from ropes, handcuffs, straitjackets, or other physical constraints. If the player has the Gambling Skill, he may add one extra gambling benefit per level of Sleight of Hand when gambling with cards.



Geoffrey Weber

Requirements: DEX 11.

Example Specialties: Pick Pocket, Escape Artist, Card Tricks.

Sports

You are an athletic individual with a skill-set developed for a specific sport. Like Fine Arts, this represents a number of different skills that stand by themselves such as Baseball, Basketball, Golf, Soccer, Lacrosse,

and others. A Sports skill defines some of the hobbies of a more physical character or may even serve as the professional skills of an athlete. Since it requires not only knowledge of rules and scoring but also a substantial amount of coordination and physical skill, the Keeper may allow creative, alternative uses of the Sports skill in select combat situations. A player may use his Baseball skill when throwing small objects or fighting with a large club, for example. A Rugby or Football player may use his skill as an alternative to Brawling. A Fencer may be allowed to use his skill when armed with a rapier or sharpened epee. The Keeper decides if such creative skill use may be employed and if any penalties will be applied in these circumstances.

Example Specialties: Baseball – Pitcher, Slugger, Catcher; Football – Tackle, Receiver, Kicker; Golf – Putter, Long Drive, Chipping.

Streetwise

Years of rough living in the asphalt jungle have given you an intimate knowledge of the criminal underworld and how to get things done outside the law. This skill is used to test for knowledge of criminal personalities and the infrastructure of local mobs: their business fronts, reporting chains, and local hangouts. Your character knows the names and properties of street drugs. You are capable of distinguishing people by “type” — you recognize the junkie, the undercover cop, the dealer, and others by small clues that others wouldn’t notice. Your character has limited knowledge of statutes and the legal system, but also how far beyond the boundaries of the law the local police are allowed to go. At the Keeper’s discretion, you may test your Streetwise skill for knowledge about the local black market and how to obtain illegal weapons, drugs, stolen goods, and more. Upon a successful skill test, your character either knows the information or knows of a street contact that does.

Example Specialties: Russian Mob, Street Drugs, Italian Mob.

Survival

This craft represents the skills and knowledge required for wilderness survival. You know how to hunt and scavenge for food. You can improvise shelter and clothing, find potable water, and recognize dangerous flora, fauna, and natural hazards such as quicksand, rockslide areas, and glacial cracks. You may build simple traps and snares and find cardinal directions from the sun and stars. Unskilled characters suffer 1 Wound Point every day they remain exposed to the elements without proper food, water, or shelter. They may not regain Wound Points through rest. Very harsh environments like the desert or arctic may cause even more damage at the Keeper’s discretion. With a successful use of the Survival skill, a character avoids damage from exposure and is able to regain Wound Points

as normal while living off the land. The character may also extend the benefit of his skill to as many as five unskilled companions.

Example Specialties: Desert, Arctic, Tropical.

Theology

The Theology skill represents a detailed familiarity with the character's religion of choice and should be included in the templates of any learned holy men. Your character knows special symbols, traditions, holy places, and notable historical figures. It includes a general knowledge of all primary world religions; Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu & Buddhist but specializations may be taken to enhance tests for a specific faith.

Example Specialties: Catholicism, Sunni Islam, Greek Orthodox.

Torture

Interrogators typically employ a hail of loaded questions, accusations, and twisting logic to trick prisoners into revealing information against their will. Such interrogations are role-played out between players. Depending on the urgency of the situation and the personal ethics of your character, torture may be used to wring information from sealed lips. Drugs increase the chances; the Keeper or the game script determines modifiers. The Keeper assigns modifiers based on what you intend to do, and assigns appropriate Wound Point loss to the prisoner. Both interrogator and prisoner are likely to drop Sanity levels from a torture session. The Keeper or game script should detail this loss. Note that information obtained via torture, especially physical torture, isn't necessarily the truth. The prisoner may lie in an attempt to stop the torture. It will be up to you to decide if you believe the information or choose to continue.

Example Specialties: Forced Confessions, Electro-Torture, Drugs.

Track

Your character uses this skill to follow trails left by passing animals, monsters, or humans. Many factors influence the success of this skill. Weather and soil conditions, vegetation, size of the creature, and the time elapsed will all affect your success.

Example Specialties: Big Game, Humans, Predators.

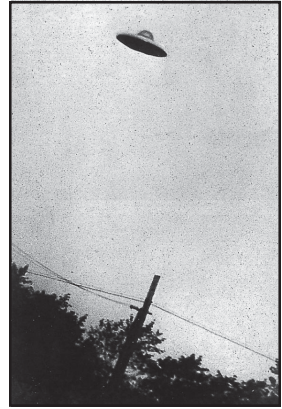
UFology

Generally regarded with suspicion and subject to ridicule, modern UFology is fast becoming a serious academic discipline. This is the scientific study of UFO theories and reports. UFologists are often split into diametrically opposed camps: those who support the extra-terrestrial hypothesis, the geophysical and earthlights hypothesis, the Persinger-LaFroniere Field Fluctuation hypothesis, and others. While they may disagree on the nature of

UFOs, all pursue their research with scientific precision and objectivity, carefully giving a wide berth to paranoid ravings and conspiracy theories that discredit the academic value of their work. UFOlogists will be familiar with the various theories and possible causes behind these sightings, to include theories that they themselves do not support. This includes a smattering of knowledge in such diverse fields as Physics, Geology, experimental science, and hyper-spatial theory.

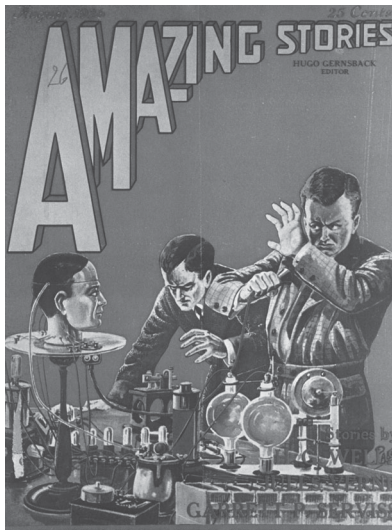
Requirements: Mathematics-2, Physics-2.

Example Specialties: Abductions, Aliens, Theoretical Technology.



Weird Science

Inspired by the weird science of pulp fiction, this skill represents a twisted genius and inspiration found nowhere else in the field. At the Keeper's discretion, your character may use Weird Science to design and create bizarre and fantastic applications of traditional scientific skills. Whether transplanting brains from humans into gorillas or creating golems from mixed body parts, building faster-than-light rocket ships or intelligent robots, inventing death-rays or harnessing anti-matter, designing radios to converse with lost civilizations deep within the earth, or bending time and space through non-Euclidean geometry, the Weird Science skill is a must for all mad scientists and misunderstood geniuses. It reflects the special



spark of inspiration that catapults your character far ahead of his colleagues. Typically this skill is more at home in a pulp-genre game, but it could be used with the Keeper's approval in a more serious game to justify dramatically advanced scientific developments beyond the boundaries of conventional science.

Requirements: Level three in at least two of the following skills- Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Medicine, or Physics.

Example Specialties: Time Travel, Interdimensional Vortex, Artificial Life.

Zoology

This skill represents the study of living creatures from amoebae to zebras. The zoologist can identify animal species known to mankind, their behavior, tracks and habitat. With this skill you may study an unknown species or individual creature and make educated guesses about its lineage, diet, and habitat. You may also identify any unusual physical changes or aberrant behavior in a species and try to determine the source. Information gathered from the Zoology field is even more detailed than what could be learned through the Biology skill as your character is much more focused on the animal kingdom and specific species.

Requirements: Biology-2.

Example Specialties: Marine Mammals, Arachnids, Simians.

Combat Skills

Information on combat rounds and combat resolution may be found later in the rules. Here we present a basic overview and description of combat skills. Specialties are purchased in the same way as those for academic and trade skills, although they operate differently in the game. Standard skill specialties are listed with each skill but their use will be detailed in the combat rules.

Archery

This skill covers the use of bows and crossbows.

Specialties: Marksman, Trickshot.

Brawling

This skill represents rough street fighting and the use of small, improvised weapons such as bottles, mugs, rocks, bar stools, and other handy objects.

Specialties: Mighty Blow, Trip, Knockout, Improvised Weapon.

Evade

The Evade skill is used to gain a burst of speed and extra distance when escaping combat situations or trying to avoid melee combat.

Exotic Weapon

Unusual and complex melee weapons are covered by this skill; whips, nunchaku, three-sectional staves, hooked swords, weighted chains, flails, etc. Typically this skill encompasses more unusual martial arts weapons or multi-sectional and flexible weapons whose use is more complex than rigid melee weapons.

Specialties: Disarm, Throw Weapon, Lightning Strike, Trip, Two-Weapons.

Handgun

Your character is familiar with the use of all manner of contemporary pistols.

Specialties: Two Weapons, Marksman, Double-Tap, Trickshot, Quick Draw, Run & Gun.

Large Melee Weapon

Swords, axes, large clubs, spears, and other large melee weapons fall into this category.

Specialties: Disarm, Throw Weapon, Mighty Blow, Lightning Strike, Trip, Knockout, Two Weapons.

Long Gun

Your character is familiar with contemporary rifles and shotguns.

Specialties: Marksman, Run & Gun, Trickshot, Auto-Fire.

Martial Arts

The character has studied karate, kung-fu, or another formal martial art. He has trained his body into a very effective weapon.

Specialties: Disarm, Mighty Blow, Lightning Strike, Trip, Knockout.

Small Melee Weapon

The character is skilled in the use of small, fast melee weapons such as knives, hatchets, nightsticks, sword canes, etc.

Specialties: Disarm, Throw Weapon, Mighty Blow, Lightning Strike, Knockout, Two Weapons.

Professional Templates

The following Professional Templates speed character creation and build realistically designed skill sets for characters. They are very useful when building characters for both Keepers and players. Rather than define a complete set of stats and skills for each archetype, a basic package of common skills and the requisite point cost for the set is presented. Skill point cost will be listed in academic & trade (A&T) skill points and Combat (C) Points, if applicable.

Keepers or players creating characters for the game may allocate stat points as they wish, calculate the skill point pools available and purchase one of these professional archetypes from their available skill points. In most cases, ample skill points will still remain to increase these skill levels higher, buy skill specializations and purchase additional skills of personal interest. These archetypes may be modified as desired and are merely suggested skill set guidelines.

ACCOUNTANT (A&T: 18) Skills: Accounting-3, Law-2, Library Use-2, Mathematics-3.

ACTOR (A&T: 18) Skills: Fine Arts: Drama-3, First Aid-1, History-1, Library Use-1, Linguistics-2, Networking-2, Psychology-2.

ARCHAEOLOGIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Anthropology-2, Archeology-3, Geology-2, History-2, Library Use-1, Linguistics-2, Navigation-1, Photography-1, Survival-1.

ARTIST (A&T: 17) Skills: History-1, Library Use-1, Psychology-2 (Two of the following: Fine Arts: Drawing-3, Fine Arts: Painting-3, Fine Arts: Sculpture-3).

AUTHOR (A&T: 22) Skills: Fine Arts: Literature-3, History-2, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Networking-1, Psychology-2, (Three of the following: Anthropology-1, Conspiracy Theory-1, Law-1, Occult-1, Physics-1, Police Procedures-1, Theology-1).

BIG GAME HUNTER/ EXPLORER (A&T: 24 C: 10) Skills: Anthropology-2, Biology-2, Linguistics-2, Long Gun-3 (Marksman), Navigation-2, Small Melee-2, Survival-3, Track-3.

BIOCHEMICAL RESPONSE & CONTAINMENT TEAM (A&T: 23 C: 10) Skills: Biology-2, Chemistry-2, Demolitions-1, First Aid-2, Handgun-2, Law-1, Library Use-2, Long Gun-3 (Auto-Fire), Medicine-3, Military Science-1, Photography-1, Psychology-1.

BOOTLEGGER: (A&T: 19 C:7) Skills: Brawling-1, Brewing-3, Chemistry-1, Evade-2, First Aid-1, Gambling-2, Long Gun-2, Mechanical Engineering-2, Psychology-1, Streetwise-2, Survival-1.

BURGLAR (A&T: 21 C:9) Skills: Electrical Engineering-2, Evade-3, Handgun-2, Jury-Rig-2, Locksmith-3, Mechanical Engineering-2, Sleight of Hand-2, Streetwise-2.

BUSINESSMAN (A&T: 22) Skills: Accounting-3, Mathematics-2, Law-1, Library Use-2, Networking-3, Psychology-2.

BUTLER (A&T: 21) Skills: Accounting-1, First Aid-2, Fine Arts: Music-1, Fine Arts: Haute Cuisine-1, Library Use-1, Linguistics-2, Mathematics-2, Networking-1, Professional Manservant-3, Psychology-1.

CHAUFFEUR (A&T: 20) Skills: Electrical Engineering-2, First Aid-2, Jury Rig-2, Mechanical Engineering-2, Professional Manservant-1, Navigation-1, Professional Driver-3.

COMMANDO/ SPECIAL OPS (A&T: 23 C: 16) Skills: Demolitions-2, Electrical Engineering-1, Espionage-2, First Aid-2, Handgun-2, Locksmith-2, Long Gun-3 (Auto-fire), Martial Arts-2, Mechanical Engineering-1, Military Science-3, Navigation-1, Psychology-1, Small Melee-2, Survival-1.

CON MAN (A&T: 21) Skills: Gambling-2, Networking-2, Psychology-3, Sleight of Hand-3, Streetwise-2.

CONSPIRACY THEORIST (A&T: 23 C:7) Skills: Computers-1, Conspiracy Theory-3, Espionage-1, Evade-3, Handgun-1, History-2, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Military Science-1, Occult-1, Photography-2, Police Procedures-1.

CULT DEPROGRAMMER (A&T: 22) Skills: First Aid-1, Hypnosis-2, Library Use-1, Occult-1, Psychiatry-3, Psychology-3, Streetwise-2, Torture-1.

CULT LEADER – POP CULT (A&T: 21) Skills: Anthropology-1, Chemistry-1, Conspiracy Theory-1, History-2, Hypnosis-2, Occult-2, Psychology-3, Sleight of Hand-1, Streetwise-1, Theology-1.

CULT LEADER – MYTHOS CULT (A&T: 33) Skills: Anthropology-1, Astronomy-1, Cthulhu Mythos-3, History-2, Hypnosis-2, Library Use-2, Linguistics-2, Mathematics-2, Occult-2, Psychology-3, Torture-1.

DILETTANTE (A&T: 21) Skills: Gambling-1, History-2, Library Use-1, Linguistics-2, Networking-2, Occult-1, Psychology-2 (Two of the following: Fine Arts: Fashion-2, Fine Arts: Literature-2, Fine Arts: Music-2, Fine Arts: Painting-2).

DOCTOR – GENERAL PRACTICE (A&T: 22) Skills: Biology-2, Chemistry-2, First Aid-3, Library Use-2, Medicine-3, Psychology-1.

DOCTOR – MEDICAL RESEARCH (A&T: 24) Skills: Biology-3, Chemistry-3, First Aid-2, Library Use-3, Medicine-2.

DOCTOR – SURGEON (A&T: 24) Skills: Biology-2, Chemistry-2, First Aid-3, Law-1, Library Use-2, Medicine-3 (Surgery), Sleight of Hand-1.

EXORCIST (A&T: 23) Skills: History-1, Hypnosis-2, Library Use-1, Linguistics-2, Mysticism-2, Occult-3, Psychology-2, Theology-2.

FARMER (A&T: 16) Skills: Biology-2, Botany-2, Mechanical Engineering-1, Operate Heavy Machinery-3, Zoology-2.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT (A&T: 24 C: 12) Skills: Accounting-1, Espionage-2, Handgun-3, Law-2, Library Use-2, Locksmith-1, Mathematics-2, Martial Arts-2, Photography-1, Police Procedures-3, Psychology-2, Small Melee-2.

FEMME FATALE/TORCH SINGER (A&T: 21) Skills: Fine Arts: Music-3, Gambling-1, Linguistics-2, Locksmith-1, Psychology-3, Sleight of Hand-2, Streetwise-1.

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST (A&T: 25) Skills: Biology-2, Chemistry-2, First Aid-2, Forensics-3, Library Use-2, Medicine-2, Photography-1, Police Procedures-2.

FORGER (A&T: 21) Skills: Chemistry-1, Fine Arts: Engraving-3, Forgery-3, History-1, Library Use-2, Mechanical Engineering-2, Streetwise-1.

GANGSTER (A&T: 25 C: 10) Skills: Accounting-2, Brawling-1, Gambling-2, Handgun-3, Law-2, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Police Procedures-1, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-3, Psychology-2.

GUERRILLA (A&T: 20 C: 13) Skills: Brawling-2, Demolitions-1, First Aid-2, Gunsmith-1, Linguistics-1, Long Gun-3 (Auto-fire), Mechanical Engineering-2, Military Science-2, Small Melee-2, Navigation-1, Operate Heavy Machinery-1, Survival-2, Track-2.

HISTORIAN (A&T: 20) Skills: Anthropology-2, History-3, Linguistics-2, Library Use-3, Psychology-1, Theology-1.

HITMAN (A&T: 24 C: 16) Skills: Demolitions-2, Electrical Engineering-2, Espionage-2, First Aid-1, Gunsmith-2, Handgun-3, Locksmith-1, Long Gun-3 (Marksman), Mechanical Engineering-2, Police Procedures-1, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-3.

HOOLOGAN/ GANG MEMBER (A&T: 18 C: 12) Skills: Brawling-2, Electrical Engineering-1, Evade-2, Gambling-2, Gunsmith-1, Handgun-2, Locksmith-1, Mechanical Engineering-2, Sleight of Hand-2, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-3.

INTELLIGENCE AGENT – CASE OFFICER (A&T: 24 C: 9) Skills: Communications-2, Cryptography-2, Electrical Engineering-2, Espionage-3, Evade-2, Handgun-2, Library Use-1, Mathematics-2, Photography-1, Psychology-2, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-1.

INTELLIGENCE AGENT – IMAGERY INTELLIGENCE (A&T: 23) Skills: Computers-2, Espionage-1, Geology-1, Library Use-2, Mathematics-3, Military Science-1, Navigation-1, Photography-3, Physics-1.

INTELLIGENCE AGENT – SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE (A&T: 23) Skills: Communications-3, Computers-2, Cryptography-2, Electrical Engineering-2, Espionage-1, Linguistics-2, Mathematics-2, Military Science-1.

INTELLIGENCE AGENT – NON-OFFICIAL COVER (A&T: 24 C: 15) Skills: Anthropology-1, Demolitions-1, Electrical Engineering-1, Espionage-3, First Aid-1, Handgun-3, Linguistics-2, Locksmith-2, Martial Arts-3, Military Science-1, Photography-1, Psychology-2, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-2.

LAWYER (A&T: 24) Skills: Accounting-2, Law-3, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Networking-2, Psychology-3.

LIBRARIAN (A&T: 20) Skills: Accounting-1, Biology-1, Fine Arts:Literature-2, History-1, Library Use-4, Mathematics-2, Theology-1.

MECHANIC (A&T: 20) Skills: Electrical Engineering-3, First Aid-1, Jury-Rig-2, Mechanical Engineering-3, Operate Heavy Machinery-2, Streetwise-1.

MILITARY OFFICER (A&T: 21 C: 10) Skills: First Aid-2, Handgun-2, History-2, Long Gun-3 (Auto-fire), Mechanical Engineering -1, Military Science-3, Navigation-2, Operate Heavy Machinery-1, Psychology-2, Survival-1.

MORTICIAN (A&T: 20) Skills: Biology-2, Chemistry-1, First Aid-1, Library Use-2, Professional: Funerary Arts-3, Psychology-2, Theology-2.

MYSTIC (A&T: 20) Skills: History-1, Hypnosis-2, Mysticism-3, Occult-3, Psychology-2, Theology-1.

PALEONTOLOGIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Biology-2, Geology-2, History-

2, Library Use-1, Navigation-1, Paleontology-3, Photography-1, Survival-1, Zoology-2.

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR (A&T: 22) Skills: Anthropology-2, Electrical Repair-2, History-1, Hypnosis-1, Library Use-1, Mysticism-2, Occult-3, Photography-1, Psychology-2.

PARAPSYCHOLOGIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Anthropology-1, Hypnosis-1, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Occult-1, Paraphysics-3, Photography-1, Physics-2, Psychology-2.

PILOT (A&T: 18) Skills: Electrical Repair-2, First Aid-1, Jury-Rig-1, Mechanical Repair-2, Navigation-2, Pilot Aircraft-3, Survival-1.

POLICE DETECTIVE (A&T: 24 C: 6) Skills: Handgun-3, First Aid-2, Law-2, Library Use-2, Locksmith-1, Photography-1, Police Procedures-3, Psychology-2, Streetwise-2, Track-1.

POLICE OFFICER (A&T: 18 C: 9) Skills: Handgun-3, Law-1, Library Use-2, First Aid-2, Mechanical Repair-1, Police Procedures-3, Psychology-1, Small Melee-2, Streetwise-2.

POLITICIAN (A&T: 21) Skills: History-2, Law-2, Library Use-2, Networking-3, Psychology-3.

PRIEST (A&T: 21) Skills: Anthropology-1, First Aid-1, History-2, Library Use-2, Linguistics-2, Occult-1, Psychology-2, Theology-3.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR (A&T: 24 C: 9) Skills: Brawling-2, First Aid-1, Handgun-3, Law-2, Library Use-2, Locksmith-2, Photography-1, Police Procedures-2, Psychology-2, Streetwise-3, Track-1.

PROFESSOR: (A&T: 26) Skills: Library Use-3, (Two of the following: Anthropology-4, Biology-4, Chemistry-4, Geology-4, History-4, Law-4, Linguistics-4 Mathematics-4, Psychology-4, Physics-4, Theology-4).

PSYCHIATRIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Anthropology-1, First Aid-1, Hypnosis-2, Law-1, Library Use-2, Networking-1, Psychiatry-3, Psychology-3.

PSYCHIC CHARLATAN (A&T: 22) Skills: Electrical Engineering-1, History-3, Hypnosis-1, Library Use-1, Mechanical Engineering-1, Occult-2, Psychology-2, Sleight of Hand-3.

REPORTER (A&T: 22) Skills: Library Use-3, Linguistics-2, Networking-3, Photography-2, Psychology-2, Streetwise-1.

SCIENTIST – ASTROPHYSICIST (A&T: 23) Skills: Astronomy-3, Computers-2, Geology-1, Electrical Engineering-1, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Physics-3.

SCIENTIST – BIOCHEMIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Biology-3, Botany-1, Chemistry-3, Computers-1, Electrical Engineering-1, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Zoology-1.

SCIENTIST – CHAOS THEORIST (A&T: 22) Skills: Computers-2, Cryptography-2, Library Use-2, Mathematics-3, Paraphysics-1, Physics-3.

SCIENTIST – GEOPHYSICIST (A&T: 23) Skills: Chemistry-2, Computers-1, Geology-3, Library Use-2, Mathematics-2, Paleontology-1, Physics-3.


SECRET POLICE (A&T: 22 C: 12) Skills: Espionage-2, First Aid-1, Handgun-3, Locksmith-1, Military Science-1, Police Procedures-3, Psychology-2, Small Melee-3, Streetwise-2, Torture-2, Track-1.

SOLDIER (A&T: 18 C: 10) Skills: Brawling-1, First Aid-2, Long Gun-3 (Auto-fire), Mechanical Engineering-2, Large Melee-1, Military Science-2, Navigation-2, Operate Heavy Machinery-2, Small Melee-1, Survival-2.

STAGE MAGICIAN (A&T: 23 C:7) Skills: Demolitions-1, Fine Arts: Drama-2, Hypnosis-2, Locksmith-2, Mechanical Repair-2, Occult-1, Psychology-2, Sleight of Hand-3, Small Melee-3 (Throw Weapon).

STREET PREACHER (A&T: 23 C:8) Skills: Brawling-1, Conspiracy Theory-2, Evade-3, First Aid-1, History-2, Occult-2, Psychology-1, Small Melee-1, Streetwise-2, Survival-2, Theology-3.

THEATRICAL/ LITERARY AGENT (A&T: 20) Skills: Accounting-2, Fine Arts: Literature or Drama-2, Library Use-1, Mathematics-2, Networking-3, Psychology-2, Streetwise-1.

UFOLOGIST (A&T:23) Skills: Astronomy-1, Computers-1, Conspiracy Theory-1, History-2, Hypnosis-1, Mathematics-2, Photography-1, Physics-2, Psychology-2, UFOlogy-3. 



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Chapter 2

Playing the Game

You may assume the role of an investigator probing the blackest realms of madness and alien horror. Or, the role of one who willingly embraced the bleak despair surrounding the Mythos and serves an insane cult or a dark, inhuman master. You may even play an everyday person thrust unwillingly into a terrible situation in which horrific revelations threaten your life and sanity. You'll work with the other players, using your wits and skills to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

This is live-action role-playing, and you'll immerse yourself in your character to a greater degree than in most role-playing games. The less you act like yourself, and more like the character you play, the more fun and realistic the game will be for everyone. Set your day-to-day world behind you and lose yourself in these few hours of illusion.

During free-play periods when the investigators roam and explore at will, don't break the spell by talking to your friends about the latest movies. Stay in character and think about what your investigator would do in such situations. Discuss the impact of early 18th century witch trials upon modern views of pagan religion with your colleague, "Professor Armitage." Ask "Captain Johnson" about his experiences with the American Expeditionary Force in France. Encourage others to live-out their alter egos in a similar fashion.

The Keeper

The Keeper of Arcane Lore is the grand puppeteer of the evening's story. He and the game staff put a great deal of effort into preparing each adventure. The Keeper is the narrator, often describing subtle feelings and impressions intruding into the investigators' minds. He resolves skill use and answers questions about persons or objects encountered. Sometimes the Keeper becomes an "inner voice," leaning over your shoulder and whispering thoughts, doubts, or facts known only to your character.

During most of the game, the Keeper shadows the players, takes notes, and ensures monsters don't miss their cues. He ideally steps in only from time to time to resolve special actions; letting the players drive most of the story development. The Keeper is an "invisible" entity and his presence should be ignored. You may suddenly find him beside you, listening to your conversation with another player, before moving on to another part of the room. If he's been tied up with other players or another situation for awhile, he may make a quick "reality check" and quietly ask what

your character thinks about the situation or may be planning to do. He is just keeping his finger on the pulse of the game to anticipate any upcoming situations that may require his presence. If you want to use a skill, or if you have game related questions, talk quietly with the Keeper.

If members of the game staff are playing the roles of non-player characters, you can always ask them for help with rules issues in a pinch. It is preferred to let these NPCs remain in character and to ask your questions of the Keeper. Besides helping the NPCs stay in their roles, it allows the Keeper to know what is happening between the players and what information has been released. If the Keeper is unavailable and you can't wait for him, you can ask an NPC an "out of game" question about the rules or to help you with a skill test. That NPC should try to update the Keeper at their first opportunity about what happened and what information was passed to the player.

The Keeper must be recognized as the ultimate authority in the game. If you have a legitimate problem with one of his decisions, take the Keeper aside and discuss it without disrupting play. He'll be fair, but his judgments are final. Don't get involved in pointless arguments.

If the Keeper calls a freeze on play, stop everything and wait. The Keeper may have observed a dangerous act and must address the situation. He may call a freeze on play and ask all players to close their eyes. This may be used from time to time as a "blink of time" staging device if creature has suddenly materialized and needs to be led in from a side room before allowing the players to open their eyes and resume normal play. The game staff should minimize freezes on play since they interrupt the flow of the event. The most common occasion when normal time ceases and frozen or artificial time begins will be during a combat situation. The Keeper or any player can loudly call out "combat!" and all play freezes. The Keeper then leads the players through combat in a slow motion, artificial time detailed in the combat rules.

Other Characters

Most of the characters with whom you interact are players just like you. They might have created their own alter ego for the game, or more likely have been provided one by the Keeper, complete with abilities, skills, motivations, and background information. Interact with these individuals as the character they are playing. React to them in the same way your own character would react. In most games there will be personal relations, goals, desires, jealousies, fears, and even hatreds scripted into the background of characters to drive the plot forward. Every character is a potential ally or enemy depending on their motivations and how they connect with your own persona.



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During some adventures, members of the game staff may be used to play the roles of non-player characters. The staff members may play several NPCs, so don't be surprised if you later see the same person in a totally different role. NPCs provide clues, local color, and valuable background information. Other NPCs might be the villains, plotting the destruction of the prying characters and hatching plans to unleash ancient evils on an unsuspecting world. NPCs are generally used for minor parts too small for a player character, or for the roles of individuals with too much knowledge or power to be fairly assigned to players. If the game script permits, many Keepers assign malevolent or insane characters to experienced players or first time gamers they believe can maturely and fairly play such roles.

Using Skills

A Keeper or cooperative member of the game staff is needed for most skill tests. Explain the intended action. Perhaps you want to use your Lockpicking skill to open a locked room, or your Anthropology skill to gain information from an unusual tribal relic. The Keeper asks you for your skill level and one of your stat scores he will use to resolve the test. Be sure to have your character card handy if you haven't committed your scores to memory. Don't waste time fumbling for your character card when the Keeper asks for this information.

The Keeper assigns a difficulty category to your skill test or it may be detailed in the game script. Players never know the exact difficulty category for a test. The Keeper may consider a specific piece of information to be very obscure or there may be hidden modifiers at work. If your stat

score multiplied by your skill level equals or exceeds the target number for that difficulty category, you will have succeeded in the skill test.

EDU and DEX are the most common stat scores used for tests, although CON and POW are used on some occasions. This is fairly intuitive. EDU will be used for tests requiring a check for nearly all knowledge related questions and tasks; identifying a relic, preparing a complex chemical compound, translating a document. DEX is used on most tests in which manual dexterity and minute physical details may be involved; picking a lock, repairing a delicate piece of equipment, surgically removing a strange larva nestled inside a living patient.

CON will be used for tests that require an evaluation of strength, endurance, or health but is rarely paired with skills. It is more commonly used as a score to score comparison such as several players trying to push a door closed against a creature or a poison resistance test comparing a player's CON against a toxicity rating of a drug or poison. POW generally will be used for tests involving willpower or supernatural acuity. It is paired in the game with the Cthulhu Mythos or Mysticism skills when players attempt to use magic and with various other skills related to psychic abilities.

Sometimes it is obvious if you fail a skill test; the door remains locked, the machine is still broken or your patient dies. In some cases you may fail a test but not realize it; the machine breaks down five minutes later and now the gears are totally stripped, the forensic samples you tried to analyze are now contaminated and inadmissible in court, the old diary you translated as saying that the basement contains a buried treasure was actually a warning against a terrible undying horror buried in the root-cellar. It is up to the Keeper if he simply lets tests succeed or fail or if he prefers more imaginative failure results.

Some characters have at least one foreign language, or Linguistics skill. Keepers resolve skill use to translate documents, but occasionally two or more characters want to speak in a shared language to hide their conversation from other players. Or, a character cannot speak the common language of the others and requires interpretation. Players speaking in this manner form an "L" with upraised index finger and extended thumb and raise it beside their face. Those who lack the proper language skill are asked to not listen in and role-play as if they could not understand the words spoken. While an artificiality, this is a reasonably effective means of simulating foreign languages in game.

Unskilled Attempts, Team Efforts, and Luck

It is possible to attempt unskilled actions in the game. If you are locked in a cell by a group of mysterious men, you can try to pick the lock even if you don't have the Locksmith skill. You may not have much success

unless the lock is a very simple one or you have an exceptionally high DEX. If making an unskilled test, the Keeper applies only one half of the appropriate stat towards reaching the required success score. There is no skill multiplier for unskilled attempts. Although a level one skill isn't much of a multiplier, at least the character will use his



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full stat score. This means that usually only the very simplest of unskilled tests have much hope of success.

There are two ways to increase your chances. You can sacrifice some of your luck points when making either skilled or unskilled tests. Each luck point you put into a test allows you to make it as if you were one level higher. If a player without the Electrical Engineering skill spends two luck points, he can attempt to restore power in the old house as if he had a level two in the skill. This even allows a player to test at higher than level five, such as a level three chemist burning three luck points in a heroic effort to develop a critical vaccine and making the test against his EDU with a multiplier of 6 (Chemistry-3 + 3 Luck points). Players don't have very many luck points, however, and even someone who purchased the Lucky advantage should spend his luck wisely.

Another way to increase your chances would be to have more than one player work together on the same skill test. Team efforts apply additional points toward success on a very difficult problem. The most challenging skill tests are virtually impossible for one player to accomplish on his own. Some skills and tests may not be conducive to a team effort approach. It's hard to "team-pick" a lock, for example. Rules covering team efforts are discussed in greater detail later in this book, but two or three heads are usually better than one when it comes to problem solving.

As a tip to players, the Keeper often increases your chance of success if you're doing a really good job of role-playing. It may not be a huge increase, but a little nudge in the right direction is always welcome. Don't just point at a mysterious statue and announce that you want an Archaeology skill test. Pick it up and examine the craftsmanship. Test how hard

the material is with a thumbnail, tap to see if it's hollow, and pull a notebook from your pocket to check your "journal." This applies to all skills. Putter around for a while with that electrical or mechanical device; get down and scratch around that lock with a paper clip; tie some rags around your wounded friend's arm and help him drink some water. An excellent acting job enhances the illusion that the Keeper and support staff worked to create. The Keeper rewards good role-players when they need just a little help to succeed.

Being a Better Role-Player

Before the event, speak with your Keeper and his staff about the game and your role. You occasionally can create your own character from scratch. Most of the time, you will be assigned a pre-generated character woven into the game script. By getting your character in advance, you'll have a better opportunity to have a role that suits your preferred style of play and a greater chance to make small changes or adjustments with your Keeper's approval.

Pre-assigning characters before the game is strongly recommended. Keep bugging the Keeper for your character if he or she is dragging their feet. Pre-assignment allows time to study the abilities, skills, and motivations of your character. You will be able to find interesting costume items and personal props. If you create your own alter ego for the game, discuss your character concept with the Keeper in advance so you can arrive fully costumed and prepared for the event. Be sure the Keeper has approved your character and any special props and equipment you had in mind. Otherwise you might spend all week building a mini-gun and rocket launcher, just to be told that your vision of a parapsychologist mercenary won't be allowed in the game!

Although the Keeper and game staff will not want to release too many details about the game, you can certainly find out the time period and geographic location in which the event is set. A little creative browsing at consignment shops might provide a great deal of your basic costuming needs.

Try to wear clothing to the event that is appropriate for your character concept. Even if you don't have convincing vintage clothing to wear, a simple white dress shirt, slacks, and a nice jacket are much more convincing for a character in the 1920s than jeans and a tee-shirt. If your character is a motorcycle rebel in the 1950s, a gang member, or even a contemporary college student, jeans and a tee-shirt may be appropriate. Be sure that costumes reflect the correct geographic location. Your professor of archaeology will be in completely different attire when on a dig in North Africa than when in between classes at Miskatonic University!



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An attempt at costuming goes a long way into putting yourself into the role of your character and bringing other players into the excitement and atmosphere of the event.

In addition to the clothing your character is wearing, consider various small personal props. Small items such as cigarette cases and lighters, flasks, pocket-watches, handkerchiefs, fountain pens, eyeglasses, pocketknives, and other items are perfect for gentlemen. Small personal props for ladies include purses, make-up mirrors, eyeglasses, cigarette cases, small sewing kits, and similar items that are easy to carry and may even prove useful during the game. Some characters may carry tools, a magnifying glass, handcuffs, lock-picks, a medical bag, and other professional or unusual items on or near their persons.

You don't need to be an expert with the *Cthulhu Live* game rules to enjoy the game. Players need only a basic understanding of ability scores, skill tests, and combat basics, while the Keeper and game staff handle rules issues. Become familiar with your character's ability scores, and skills. You should always carry a small reference card with the full character data. Although the Keeper carries character data sheets, you can save him a great deal of time by having your character card handy, and telling him your requisite scores during skill tests. "I'd like to use my level two Arabic to translate this parchment. I have an EDU of 14," or "I want to try to pick the lock on this door. I have Locksmith at level three, and a DEX of 12."

Fall into the magic of role-playing. Try to become your character. Think as he might think, and react as he might react. If you see your Shade of Terror when finding a dismembered corpse, perhaps you are

overcome with nausea, and flee the scene. If your Shade of Terror is encountered on a lumbering monstrosity from the stars, you are likely to scream in horror, run away, or huddle in a corner, wild-eyed, and sobbing in fear. Don't wait for the Keeper to remind you that you lost your Sanity test. Your role-playing will make the game much more fun for yourself, and inflame the other players with a sense of the dramatic.

Affect an accent if appropriate. Consider mannerisms or habits that reflect cultural origins, professions, or unusual personal quirks. Put yourself in the head of that character, working in his specific profession, and living in that particular time period. What observations, comments, or concerns might be characteristic of a doctor, a lawyer, a military officer, or a reporter? How might these change between a person in the modern day, the 1940s, or the 1920s? What historical events might be going on outside the immediate game that impact the life of your character or peak his interests? An economic depression? A foreign war? Internal political troubles? Recent scientific or medical breakthroughs? All these things outside the sphere of the game still bear a significant impact on your character. It is not unlikely that elements of these "current events" will drift into conversations with other players.

Absorb details about your character's background. If your character information mentions specific allies, enemies, desires, or goals, you would do well to study them. They are likely to make an appearance. It helps to know your friends, and foes. But human nature is a fickle thing. Circumstances, and secret agendas might well cause assumptions, and beliefs to change.

Always remember that this is just a game, a work of interactive fiction with certain rules and constraints. Never forget basic rules of safety. Unless the game is held in a very secluded location, don't forget that there may be other people around who are not involved in the game. Respect the property in which the game is played and respect the peace and quiet of neighbors or chance passerby. Abide by the rules and requests of your game staff, since these are made in the best interests of all players.

Be responsible for your actions and never forget where the game ends and reality begins. If you've panicked from the sight of a ghoul in the cellar of an old house, it is fine to run screaming up the stairs and hide in another room. It might even be all right to flee outside, unless something in the game world prohibits your leaving. It's not a good move to continue running across the yard and race down the street waving a toy shotgun and screaming at the top of your lungs. Immerse yourself in your character, but know where acceptable limits are drawn. But have fun with the game. Play your role to the hilt, delve into the mysteries of the unknown, face alien horrors, and emerge shaken but victorious or go down in a gory and dramatic end.

Combat!

Combat in *Cthulhu Live* is not a major portion of the game, but it is as important as skill tests and sanity checks. Many of the horrors encountered during the game cannot be vanquished physical violence, but the human servitors of the Great Old Ones bleed as red as any investigator. Many of the lesser Mythos races are vulnerable to physical injury as well.

Safe replication of combat is a challenge in all live-action games. *Cthulhu Live* runs combat in combat rounds, slow motion, artificial time units divided into a Declaration and Resolution Phase.

Any player can announce the initiation of combat by loudly shouting “Combat!” Others who hear the call should freeze what they’re doing and echo it so that all players know artificial time has commenced. It is important to stop your actions and conversations to prevent groups of players from becoming out of synch, and so that the Keeper and the combatants can be heard. Combat can be resolved fairly quickly if everyone cooperates, so please freeze your actions and stop conversations to allow the action to be handled quickly and efficiently. Even if you are not involved in a combat action, be courteous to those who are by allowing them to finish the combat quickly.

Combat rules in *Cthulhu Live* are brutal and deadly. Players should consider alternatives to violence whenever possible. They may be shocked at how fast bodies start dropping once combat is initiated. Players can always threaten each other in normal, real-time game play; brandishing knives, shouting orders at gunpoint, threatening to harm a hostage. Many games develop tense stand-offs in which players talk each other into lowering their weapons. But as soon as any player pulls that trigger or swings that weapon, combat rounds must be announced and action freezes.



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Combat Rounds

Each combat round is divided into two phases: Declaration and Resolution. The Declaration Phase is when players announce their intended actions during that round. The Resolution Phase determines the results of the actions.

Declaration Phase

When the Keeper or any player calls combat, everyone freezes. The Keeper announces the Declaration Phase for the first round of combat. The Keeper slowly counts from 1 through 20 or more, passing from the lowest to the highest DEX scores. When the Keeper calls out your DEX score, you declare your intent for the combat round. Lower DEX players must declare their actions first, rising up to the highest DEX score among the combatants. It is important that the players around you hear your declared action for the round.

After the first round or so, the Keeper will know the range of scores and may start his count at 7, 8, or at whatever the lowest DEX score happens to be.

You can declare the following combat actions:

Attack: A ranged or melee combat attack. This also includes use of special attacks that will be discussed later in this chapter. If a special attack is being used, it must be declared during this phase so that the intent is clearly communicated (Trip, Knockout, Disarm, etc.). The target of the attack should be identified through aiming your firearm or indicating a melee opponent with whom you are engaged.

Defend: You place your efforts into defending against a melee attack. You may defend against a thrown weapon, but not bows or firearms.

Move: You intend to move during the combat round and possibly engage another target in combat.

Evade: You intend to break away from a melee opponent or flee from the combat encounter. The Evade action adds a burst of speed, allowing your character to move sooner and farther during the Resolution Phase. This action may be taken a number of times equal to your Evade level until your character is winded. After combat and a short rest, the character is restored.

Hold: You hold your attack up until the end of the Resolution Phase, waiting for a target to enter your field of fire or within melee combat range. If the attack is not taken before the next Declaration Phase it is lost.

Aiming: Available only for firearms and bows, the aiming action signals a slower and more deliberate missile attack that might inflict additional damage in exchange for taking place later in the resolution phase. The target must be in a direct line of sight from the time the action is

declared until the instant the attack is resolved.

Perform Action: A catchall term for drawing weapons, skill tests, casting spells, or other complex actions. These are assigned a number of rounds to complete by the Keeper. In some cases, a player attacked before the action is completed loses their place and must restart the action from the beginning.



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Resolution Phase

When the Keeper has counted from lowest to highest DEX and all characters have declared their actions, then it is time to move to the Resolution Phase. The Keeper starts at 20, or whatever the highest DEX score happens to be, and begins to count downward. When your character's DEX score is reached, you attack or begin performing your action. Remember that the Declaration Phase counts up from lowest to highest for announcing intent. Then the Resolution Phase counts down from highest to lowest in performing the action. This does mean that high DEX characters have an advantage in initiative and reaction over those with lower DEX scores. Players must faithfully abide by the declared action. They must not change their action when the Resolution Phase arrives.

Attack: The basic attack action inflicts a variable amount of Wound Point damage on your opponent. When the Keeper reaches your DEX during the Resolution countdown, you announce “Bang!” or “Slash!” and the number of points damage the attack causes your opponent. Remember that YOU have to announce the damage caused. Your target won't know how much damage you inflict and the Keeper can't keep track of everyone. It is up to you to tell them. Normal attacks inflict Wound Points equal to the base damage of the weapon plus your skill level.

There are a few advanced attack options available as skill specializations. These may inflict extra damage, allow you to strike sooner, or create a special outcome such as knocking out or disarming your opponent. The special attack must have been announced during the Declaration Phase. You can't switch from a standard to a specialized attack when the Resolution Phase arrives. Specialized attacks and their effects will be discussed later in this chapter.

Defend: If you have chosen to defend, you apply the points normally used for an attack toward blocking incoming damage. You may block melee and thrown weapon attacks but not ranged attacks by firearms and bows. Take your weapon's base damage and add your skill level. This is deducted from the next incoming melee attack with an announcement such as, "Defend! Six points!" If more than one opponent is attacking, you may put all your points into a single defense or divide them between multiple foes. Incoming Wound points that exceed your defense are taken as normal damage.

You may apply your defense anytime in the resolution phase, allowing you to also defend against an opponent with a higher DEX than your own. If you block a melee attack with a rifle, it will be considered a large melee weapon for defense point calculation. Pistols are considered small melee weapons when used to block attacks.

Move: By declaring a move action, you intend to change your position during the Resolution Phase with the possibility of making an attack of opportunity. When the Resolution Phase countdown reaches your DEX level, you may take one normal step. You can take one step at each count until the Keeper ends the Resolution Phase or you come within melee range of a hostile opponent. Melee range is defined at just slightly more than arm's length distance.

If there are at least five counts remaining in the Resolution Phase countdown when you enter melee combat range, you may attack at your base weapon damage. No skill modifiers or special attacks are allowed as this is considered an attack of opportunity.

It is possible for fast (high DEX) individuals to take several movement steps and position themselves behind cover before a slower opponent is able to fire. If this occurs, the opponent's ranged weapon attack is lost for this phase. They are unable to shift quickly enough to a new target and must aim their weapon again during the next combat round.

Evade: When you don't think a move action will be enough to save you from attack, you might consider an Evade. Evade is a combat skill that may be purchased like any other. During a fight, Evade is used to provide an extra burst of speed. If an Evade action was declared, you begin moving during the Resolution Phase at the count of your DEX plus your Evade skill level. Thus, a character with a DEX of 12 and an Evade skill level of 3 will begin moving on Resolution Phase count 15 instead of his usual count of 12. He also moves three steps farther during the phase. Hopefully the quicker action and extra steps might be just enough to move him behind cover before an opponent fires a weapon, or enough to out-distance his opponent. Unlike the Move option, Evade is a purely defen-

sive action and a character may not make a melee attack of opportunity if he comes within melee range of an opponent. The Evade action may be used a number of times equal to your Evade skill level before a short rest is required.

Hold: When declaring a Hold action, you signal the intent to save an attack until later in the Resolution Phase. You might be covering a doorway with a firearm or waiting around a corner to clobber any opponent who walks up. The attack may be taken any time during the Resolution Phase following your standard DEX count of action. Base weapon damage only will be inflicted. The attack is lost if not taken by the end of the Resolution Phase.



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Aiming: If an Aiming action is declared, you commit to a slower and more deliberate ranged attack. Your attack will not take place on your standard DEX count during the Resolution Phase, but at a later count of your choosing. Unlike the Hold action, which waits for targets of opportunity, your target must be sight from the time the action is declared until the attack is resolved. If enough time is spent aiming, additional Wound Points are inflicted. The Aiming bonus can only be applied to firearms and bows. Since aiming is a unique action, it cannot be combined with any other special attack rules.

Your character begins to zero on the target starting at your normal DEX count in the resolution phase. You may fire at any subsequent DEX count, but no extra damage is inflicted until you hold the aim for a number of counts greater than your normal attack score total. One additional WP is inflicted for every count spent aiming past this total, limited to a maximum of five additional Wound Points.

For example: a character with a DEX of 13 and a Handgun-2 skill might normally inflict 6 Wound Points damage with a 4-point pistol. When aiming, he can fire on his regular DEX count of 13 for normal damage. He begins to inflict additional damage if the aim is held for more than six counts. If he fires at DEX count 7, he inflicts 7 WP damage. If he fires at DEX count 6, he inflicts 8 WP damage. He would be able to inflict a total of 11 WP damage, the +5 maximum, if he held his aim until DEX count 3.

Perform Action: Performing a skill test, starting to cast a spell, drawing

weapons, or other miscellaneous actions may be declared and given a number of rounds till completion by the Keeper. Typically if a player moves, attacks, or is attacked before the action is complete, the effort is disrupted and must begin again.

Combat Skills & Specializations

During character creation, all characters have the opportunity to buy skills. In addition to the academic and trade skills, there are a variety of combat skills available to learn and pursue to advanced levels. Combat skills are also ranked from a level-one novice, to a level-five master of the art. At levels three and above, players may purchase combat skill specializations that offer special tactics and abilities. Each specialization costs one extra skill point beyond the base cost needed to reach the new level.

You do not need a combat skill to use a weapon in combat. Any character can pick up a melee weapon and attempt to strike an opponent. It is even easier to aim a firearm and squeeze the trigger. Learning combat skills increases the damage your character inflicts by improving their control and accuracy. Combat skills also open up a number of special combat tactics through skill specializations.

Every weapon in the game has a base damage value. This will usually be written on a piece of tape or a label stuck on the handle of the weapon. If you do not have a specific combat skill for a weapon, your character only inflicts the base damage when using it. If you have learned the appropriate combat skill, you cause the base damage plus your skill level when attacking with the weapon. The following chart lists a few example weapons, but others may be introduced into the game with Keeper approval.

Weapon	Base Damage	Skill Requirements
Unarmed Attack	1	Brawling or Martial Arts
Club/Wrench	2	Small Melee
Knife	3	Small Melee
Hatchet	3	Small Melee
Baseball Bat	3	Large Melee
Fire Axe	4	Large Melee
Sword	4	Large Melee
Pistol	4	Handgun
Rifle	4	Long Gun
Shotgun	5	Long Gun
Automatic Weapon	6	Long Gun w/Automatic Weapon Specialty

Thus, any character picking up a pistol can attack with a base damage

of 4 points. If a character had learned the Handgun skill at level 3, he would be able to inflict 7 points of damage with his attack (Base 4 + Skill Level 3). The Evade skill may be purchased like any other skill. It adds an additional burst of speed



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in combat for breaking out of melee or fleeing. It is described in greater detail in the next section.

Characters advancing to higher skill levels may begin to purchase weapon specializations. These allow advanced attacks not available to an unskilled character. The following chart lists a number of weapon specializations and their effects. Others may be created with Keeper approval.

Only one special attack may be used at a time. A player with both the Marksman and Two Weapons skills with a handgun may not use them in the same attack, but must chose one or the other.

Specialization	Available For*
Disarm	MA, SM, EW, LM
Throw Weapon	SM, EW, LM
Mighty Blow	Br, MA, SM, EW, LM
Lightning Strike	MA, SM, EW, LM
Improvise Weapon	Br
Trip	Br, MA, EW, LM
Knockout	Br, MA, SM, EW, LM
Two Weapons	SM, EW, LM, HG
Marksman	HG, LG, Ar
Double-Tap	HG
Run & Gun	HG, LG
Trick Shot	HG, LG, Ar
Automatic Weapon	LG
Quick Draw	HG

* Br-Brawling, MA-Martial Arts, SM-Small Melee, EW- Exotic Weapon, LM-Large Melee, HG-Handgun, LG-Long Gun, Ar-Archery.

Disarm: This is a special attack on an opponent's weapon or weapon hand that forces them to drop their weapon. Unless your opponent per-

forms a defend action that would completely block one of your normal attacks (base damage plus your skill level), he must drop his weapon. No damage is caused by this attack.

Throw Weapon: You may accurately throw a small or large melee weapon for full damage at opponents up to 20 paces away. The Keeper may request that you carefully toss your weapon underhanded near, not at, your opponent so that the weapon is out of your hands and close to the target.

Mighty Blow: This special attack may be used only once per combat encounter. It allows you to inflict the weapon's base damage and twice your skill level as a damage modifier.

Lightning Strike: You strike faster than usual in the Resolution Phase countdown, attacking at your DEX plus your combat skill level. You only inflict the base damage of the weapon with no damage modifier from your skill level. It may allow you to land a blow before your opponent attacks or flees from the encounter.

Improvise Weapon: A specialty of the Brawling skill, you are able to use almost any substantial object as an improvised weapon. The base damage will typically be two or three, as dictated by your Keeper, but you can now apply your Brawling skill to this improvised weapon to inflict more damage than with your fists alone.

Trip: This is a special attack designed to trip or sweep an opponent's legs from under them. Unless your opponent performs a defend action that would completely block one of your normal attacks, he falls to the ground and forfeits any action that round. Some creatures may be invulnerable to this attack due to their size, weight, no legs, or benefit of many legs.

Knockout: A strike to your opponent's head with a fist, foot, blunt object, knife pommel, etc. Unless your opponent performs a defend action that would completely block one of your normal attacks, he falls unconscious. Base weapon damage is caused by this attack. Most non-human creatures are impervious to this attack.

Two Weapons: Your character can fight effectively with a melee weapon or handgun in each hand. The attacks may be directed at a single target or two different ones. Only the base damage of the weapons is inflicted by the attack.

Marksman: Only applicable for ranged weapons, you are able to inflict



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the weapon's base damage and two times your skill level as a modifier. This attack may be used only once during each combat encounter. Remember that it cannot be used in addition to an aiming action bonus, since aiming cannot be combined with a special attack.

Double-Tap: Your character is trained to be able to snap off two rapid shots at a single target. The first shot causes base damage plus your skill bonus and the second shot causes base damage only. This can be a very effective combat technique, but it may only be used with the handgun skill. Naturally two shots are expended from your weapon's ammunition.

Run & Gun: You are trained to fire your weapon while moving and still retain a reasonable degree of accuracy. From the time you begin movement until the end of the resolution countdown, you may take one single attack at base weapon damage. This is ideal to use for aggressively entering a room or flanking a target behind cover.

Trick Shot: You may use this action for special effects shots that are not specifically at a living opponent such as a fuse-box, a rope, an object in another player's hands, etc. It may also be used as a "called shot" to an opponent's arm or leg that inflicts base damage and disables the limb.

Auto-fire: This specialization represents training and experience with fully automatic weapons. It is required to effectively control bursts of fire. The higher than usual base damage of an automatic weapon already takes a burst of shots into consideration. This specialization allows you to fire an accurate burst, inflicting the base weapon damage of an automatic

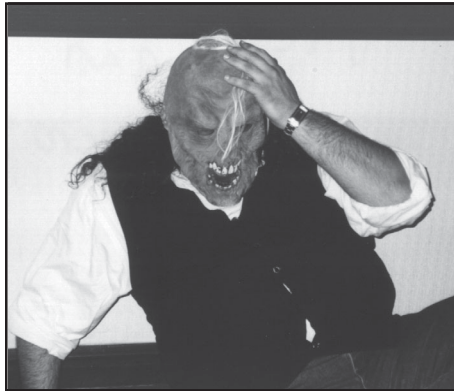
weapon plus your Long Gun skill level. Without this specialization a character can only cause the base damage of the automatic weapon, even if they have the Long Gun skill.

Quick Draw: Your reflexes are so developed that you can snatch your weapon from its holster and fire from the hip in the blink of an eye. Instead of requiring a separate special action to draw your weapon, you can draw and fire in a single combat round. You draw on your normal resolution count and fire on the next count at your base weapon damage.

Damage and Healing

Incoming Wound Points damaged are subtracted from your character's total. When a player reaches zero wound points, he drops unconscious and bleeding. He may die if not treated with First Aid within three minutes of collapse. If a player has suffered cumulative damage to take him below negative five wounds or if an opponent takes the time to administer a coup de gras, the character is dead.

An application of the First Aid skill will heal Wound Points. A character may heal 1 WP plus his First Aid skill level. An unskilled player may still heal a single point after binding the wounds. Only one application of First Aid may be applied per combat encounter. In other words, if your character was struck three times during a single combat, he may only have one First Aid treatment, not three. If the medic has a skill specialization related to the type of injury; burn, laceration, blunt trauma, etc; then one additional WP may be healed during the treatment. After First Aid has been applied, additional Wound Points are regained at a rate of 1 per week or 1 per three days of straight bed-rest. This typically is relevant only during campaigns of multiple games with the same characters.



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Armor

Although uncommon, armor may occasionally appear in some games. It may be old-fashioned metal plate and chainmail or it may be modern ballistic armor. The following chart lists a variety of armors that might appear during a game and the number of WP absorbed. This amount is deducted from an incoming attack.

Armor	Defense	Notes
Leather	1	No defense against firearms
Chainmail	3	No defense against firearms
Plate Armor	4	Defense 1 against firearms
Light Ballistic	3	No defense against melee
Heavy Ballistic	4	Defense 2 against melee

Armor adds an additional level of complexity and Keepers might want to minimize its presence in the game. The Keeper may have armor lose one point of defense value per attack taken, regardless of the amount of damage penetrating the armor.

Explosives and Grenades

When confronting Mythos horrors, there is an established tradition for the use of high explosives. Access to explosives is uncommon, although some individuals can obtain them through their jobs or underworld contacts. Skills such as Chemistry and Demolitions allow other characters to create homemade explosive compounds with access to the right equipment and chemicals. Nevertheless, explosives are not that common in *Cthulhu Live* games. Keepers should not lightly allow their introduction.

Rules for large explosions are intentionally kept loose. Generally, players near a high explosive detonation are killed immediately. Creatures are typically more resilient to physical trauma but may suffer injury or death from explosions. The Keeper may always permit some characters to survive a blast. Perhaps they are badly injured or shielded from the worst of the explosion by a column, heavy furniture, or pure dumb luck. If the Keeper grants such a lucky escape, he may require the player to sacrifice some or all of his remaining Luck Points.

Smaller explosives and incendiaries are easier to detail in the rules. Hand grenades and single sticks of dynamite may be thrown during combat. Lighting a dynamite fuse or readying a grenade and pulling the pin require a special action that takes a full combat round.

If you light a stick of dynamite, the fuse is now burning. It will explode at the end of the next combat round, so getting rid of it quickly would be a good idea. Declaring a throw action, you may toss the dynamite prop at your normal DEX count during the Resolution Phase. You may also wait to throw until a later count as the fuse burns down. When throwing the dynamite prop at another player or a creature, throw it near your target but not directly at them.

Allowing the fuse to burn down decreases the likelihood your target might move out of the blast area. It also creates a personal risk for the thrower. If you are attacked and suffer more than three WP damage, you drop the dynamite at your feet. You will be unable to move for a number

of counts equal to WP suffered, but then may take a step on each subsequent count. Try to put as much distance as possible between yourself and the explosion.

Grenades have an extra safety besides the pin, a “spoon” or lever that flies off when the grenade is thrown or can be released when still holding the grenade in your hand. The spoon enables you to pull the pin in one phase, but does not obligate you to throw the grenade during the next phase. If you suffer 3 WP damage and drop the grenade, or otherwise release the spoon, the countdown begins.

Once the countdown begins, the grenade countdown and subsequent explosion function like the dynamite countdown discussed earlier. You may delay throwing the grenade, releasing the spoon and allowing it to “cook-off” before throwing. If you are attacked and suffer more than three points of damage, you’ll drop the grenade and better hope you have time to get away before it blows.

On the “zero count” of the Resolution Phase, the grenade or dynamite stick explodes. Anyone standing directly on top of the prop suffers 21 WP damage. The damage drops by three WP for every pace between a player and the center of the explosion. The Keeper may reduce damage if he feels the player is protected or covered by walls, heavy furniture, or other objects sheltering him from the blast.

Ammunition

Tracking expended ammunition is an optional rule in *Cthulhu Live*. The combat rules are harsh enough that extended gun-battles are rare. It is usually easiest for Keepers to assume that reloads happen automatically when needed without limitations on ammunition or reloading times.

If a scenario benefits from limited ammunition and a more realistic approach to firearms, Keepers have the option of introducing ammunition and reloading rules into the game. Each firearm should have a number of shots noted on the prop, typically on the same label or piece of tape noting the base damage of the weapon. Remember that the base damage of automatic weapons assumes a three-round burst.

A special action taking a full combat round is required to reload a semi-automatic pistol, submachine-gun, or assault rifle. Three combat rounds are required to fully reload a revolver or shotgun.

Luck in Combat

Players can use luck points to adjust their success in combat. Guidelines for applying Luck in combat are looser than with skill tests and the Keeper evaluates each instance to see if it will be allowed.

Common applications include using luck to increase damage inflicted or reducing damage taken. It is up to the Keeper if he prefers a straight 1:1

ratio for Luck and wound points, or if he will allow an adjustment of several WP per luck point. A bullet striking a flask in the character's breast pocket and reducing the damage taken by five points is a typical example of the later. Final decisions by the Keeper are best guided by what is dramatically appropriate.

Luck points may be burned to increase a character's DEX for one round at a 1:1 ratio. It's not economical, but might allow a player to squeeze off a shot a split second before his opponent. Luck could be used for a specialization attack if the character normally lacks it. Shooting out a light or managing to trip an opponent are two examples.

As the rules for applying luck in combat are looser, there is more room for crazy ideas and incredibly unlikely circumstances. The Keeper is expected to maintain balance in all aspects of the game and should never feel bad about telling a player that his requested use of luck is too unlikely or unrealistic to be allowed.


Sudden Death

Beyond the basic combat rules, players should respect the principle of sudden death. When one player so completely gets the drop on another that there can be only one outcome. This is fairly subjective. But if a player you fully trusted places a pistol to the back of your head and says, "Combat!," or if your character is drugged and another player kneels down to cut your throat, you should consider conceding the kill without going through the full mechanics of combat. It's harsh when it happens to you, but the *Cthulhu Live* universe is a harsh and unforgiving place.



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Poison & Drugs

Characters are at risk to dangers besides just physical injury. Poison, radiation, drugs, and other toxins may be encountered during the course of a game. These will be assigned a strength and effect by the Keeper: a Toxicity Rating. The strength of the toxin is compared to the character's CON score. If the CON score is higher than the toxicity rating, the character suffers reduced damage or effects. The script details the results of toxins and results may include lost Wound Points, blindness, unconsciousness, hallucinations, a penalty to skill tests, or other effects. 



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Chapter 3

Running the Game

This chapter is designed primarily for Keepers and members of the game staff, but there is nothing wrong with players learning more about the inner workings of the game. It will discuss the details of Test Resolution, Keeper and Staff responsibilities, and some tips on staging and organizing game events,

Test Resolution

The rules of *Cthulhu Live* are designed so there is no dice rolling. This would slow the game to a crawl and be a distraction from live role-playing. Most skill-related actions are resolved by Tests, as are a host of special events that impact the characters' bodies and minds. Skill Tests, Sanity Tests, Health Tests, Resistance Tests, and Magic Tests are all examples of tests the Keeper and players may resolve during a game.

Skill Tests

When a player wishes to test for the success of skill use during the game, he notifies the Keeper. In many cases, the player may be expected to role-play the skill use, especially if there are physical actions involved. The Keeper considers the test attempted, how relatively difficult such an effort would be, and any outside influences and elements such as darkness, weather, high-stress situations, lack of proper equipment, and similar factors.

Depending on how difficult the Keeper ranks the attempt, a "success score" for the test can be determined using the chart below. These success scores are approximations, but helpful for the Keeper in deciding if a player succeeds in his attempt. Consider ranking the attempt between 1-10 with 5 being what you might consider an expected performance level by an individual performing the skill professionally.

Difficulty	Success Score	Difficulty	Success Score
1 — No Sweat	5	6 — Challenging	45
2 — Simple	11	7 — Difficult	56
3 — Easy	18	8 — Extreme	68
4 — Routine	26	9 — Superhuman	81
5 — Average	35	10 — Impossible	95

The Keeper multiplies the player's skill level by the most logical Statistic to support the test. Most knowledge-based tests such as translating a language, identifying a relic, or breaking a code use the EDU stat. Tests that would require fine motor skills and careful coordination such as picking a lock, performing delicate surgery, or repairing a watch use the DEX stat. POW and CON are rarely used in skill tests, although they may be appropriate in unusual circumstances.

Sometimes different stats may be applied to the same skill. A player may use his Mechanical Engineering skill and EDU stat to determine why a car engine won't start. He may need to apply his DEX against the same skill to repair it. A player may use his Military Science skill and DEX to build an improvised booby-trap. His EDU stat would be used with the skill to remember the capabilities of a particular military aircraft.

While uncommon, it is possible for EDU and Combat skills to be applied for unique and specialized knowledge tests. For example, a character watching a Buddhist Monk fighting off bandits applies EDU and Martial Arts skill to identify the Monk's style of fighting and what that might indicate about his order. Or, a character might apply his EDU and Long Gun skill to learn about the Martini-Henry rifle, its history, and its capabilities.

Remember that unskilled attempts have no skill modifier and test at only half of the character's supporting stat. Luck Points may be used to effectively increase skill level on a specific test, allowing unskilled attempts to test as skilled or allowing some players to effectively test at a level higher than five if enough Luck Points are spent. If the test falls into an area of a skill specialization, the player is allowed to test at one level higher. The Keeper decides whether or not a test falls into a player's chosen specializations.

Bonus for Good Role-Playing

An exceptional role-playing job can earn the player a helping hand by the Keeper. It helps motivate players to help support the illusion of the game

and rewards those who really contribute to the experience. It's disappointing to have a player say, "I'm going to use my First Aid skill," then he stands around twiddling his thumbs. If the player cleans a comrade's wounds with a damp cloth, tears up rags to bind the injury, and calms his patient with reassuring words, he makes a far greater contribution to the at-



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mosphere of the game. If he is repairing a motor, let him rattle tools, tighten bolts, chip away at some corrosion, and actually pretend that he's doing something constructive.

The bonus should not be so high as to unbalance the game. Typically a five-point bonus to a character's skill test result is a fair offering from the Keeper.

Complex Skill Tests

Some actions are fairly specific and success or failure can be determined by a single test. Keepers may require a series of tests to complete very complicated tasks. A doctor may be required to test against his Medicine Skill and EDU to diagnose a condition, against Medicine and DEX to perform surgery to



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address the problem, and against First Aid and EDU to prevent subsequent infections and complications from the surgery.

Complex tests add much more realism, but they are an optional game element. You may prefer to keep the game running faster and smoother with a simple approach to test resolution, or you may prefer a much more realistic and intricate game with many skills and multiple tasks to achieve results. The vast majority of actions in a typical *Cthulhu Live* game can be resolved with a simple, single skill test. The Keeper should consider splitting extremely elaborate, ambitious, or critical tasks into a series of complex tests. If one of the tests in the sequence is failed, the players may not be immediately aware of it. The project may have a critical mistake in its results or a flaw may manifest later. Don't let players find a chunk of raw plutonium and think they can build an improvised nuclear device with a single Physics test!

Critical Failures

Best intentions aside, players sometimes try to perform tests they simply have no business attempting. A Good Samaritan with no First Aid or Medicine skill tries to remove a spear lodged in his friend's belly. A klutz with a DEX of 5 and no Electrical Repair or Computer skills attempts to repair a

badly damaged computer system. An armchair anarchist with only a smattering of Chemistry decides to prepare his own nitroglycerin from a recipe found in a book.

A difference of 50 or more points between the success score and the character's skill test results in a critical failure. The test fails and something bad happens. The equipment might be irreparably damaged or burst into flame. Toxic fumes may fill the room. Additional damage points may be inflicted on a patient or he simply dies. Your knowledge check resulted in information that will get you in serious trouble or create a major incident if acted upon. The players should never know Success Scores required for tests, but their own common sense should help them decide if they should attempt something or not. The results of a critical failure will be left for the Keeper to decide, but should be unpleasant.

Team Efforts for Skill Tests

Team efforts increase the chance for players to succeed in very difficult tests. The player with the highest skill level always becomes the team leader. He can coordinate the efforts of a number of assistants equal to his skill level. The team leader multiplies his skill level and supporting stat as normal. Assistants without the correct skill may contribute only three points to the team's total. Assistants with the correct skill add half their supporting stat score to the team's total.

A group of players wish to repair a short-wave radio damaged in combat. The leader is a player with an Electrical Engineering skill of 4 and 12 DEX. He can coordinate the efforts of four other players. The leader contributes 48 points (4x12) to the effort. Two of the assistants have the Electrical Engineering skill, only at a lower level than the team leader. Their DEX scores are 10 and 13, so they contribute 5 and 6 points toward the total. Two other assistants do not have the correct skill and only contribute three points each to the total. The team effort generates a success score of 65 points (48+5+6+3+3).

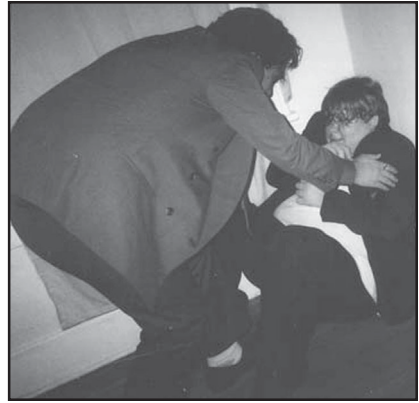
Sanity Tests

Certain terrifying visions or revelations may require players to make a Sanity Test against their Shade of Terror. This is commonly resolved with the use of colored ribbons attached to a creature or corpse. It may be a colored tab of paper stuck onto an ancient document or in an envelope tucked between the pages of a tome. In low-light situations or if there may be color-blind players in the group, the Keeper can help things out by calling out the appropriate Shades of Terror when needed.

The Sanity Test should be one of the easiest tests in the game as each player handles the resolution and results. Everyone is assigned a specific Shade of Terror based on his or her POW score. When confronted by the

appropriate shade during a Sanity Test, the player panics.

After players calm down, they will have dropped one level on the Sanity Chart. As the game progresses, they become increasingly jittery and erratic until eventually descending into madness. Players with high POW are less likely to confront their Shade of Terror and lose control, but they still feel the build-up of fear. If a player is confronted by three Sanity Test situations without confronting their own Shade of Terror, they will drop one level of Sanity and be expected to role-play their new state of mind accordingly.



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Regaining Sanity Levels

After a brief period of time, usually five to 10 minutes, a player suffering a panic result from confronting his Shade of Terror will calm down and resume normal play. Of course his Sanity Level has dropped one category. Regaining Sanity levels is possible during game play, but generally requires a longer process of rest and recuperation. Once a player is removed from the threatening or fear-inspiring situation, typically between games, he or she could be assumed to recover Sanity levels at one level every six hours.

The Keeper may allow limited opportunities to recover Sanity levels during the game. Players with the Psychoanalysis skill may be allowed to restore one Sanity level per game session for each skill level they possess. Another system the Keeper might use would be “pink cards,” tokens that restore Sanity levels tied to certain special props in the game. These may be items such as a bottle of scotch with three small pink cards taped to the bottom, representing three doses of liquid courage to bolster a player’s nerves. Alcohol and some drugs are the likeliest candidates for pink card props.



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In a less serious game, or in an unusual game setting such as having players cast in the role of children, a pink card prop could even be a teddy bear! Keepers should be very judi-

cious in their use of pink cards. If used at all, very few should be found in the game. No player should be allowed to regain more than two Sanity levels through pink card restoration.

Curing Insanity

When a player dips to the level of Stark, Raving Mad, he or she is virtually unable to function in any normal or helpful capacity in the game. The player will not begin to recover Sanity levels until undergoing psychiatric treatment. The extent of treatment required and its success is left up to the Keeper. Some characters may be deemed incurably insane or only exceptional care and treatment may be able to bring any hope of improvement.

Once a player has been treated for his madness and begins to recover Sanity levels, he will have lost one maximum level of Sanity. In other words the first time a player is institutionalized and recovers, his maximum Sanity level will be Shaken. If he loses his mind again in another game and is once again put under psychiatric care, his maximum level of Sanity will drop to Spooked.

In other cases, the character may end up surrendering to the darkness.

He or she may become a slave of Mythos-related horrors or their own evils consuming their soul. In time, these characters may be reintroduced as villains in a game, using the Facade chart instead of conventional Sanity levels. These character types are called Outsiders and will be discussed later in much greater depth.

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The Health Test

When investigators are exposed to toxic substances, radiation, or electrical shock, the Keeper makes a Health Test to determine the outcome. A Health Test is really nothing more than comparing the CON score of the character to a toxicity rating of the specific threat. This toxicity rating is assigned by the Keeper or detailed in the game script. If a player's CON is equal to or greater than the toxicity rating, he will suffer reduced damage or perhaps no ill effects at all.

Health Tests come in an endless variety. A drug may be tested against CON to determine if the player falls unconscious or merely suffers a penalty of minus one skill level on all skill tests until the drug wears off. Poisons may inflict wound points equal to the toxicity rating minus the character's CON. A severe radiation leak may permit players to operate for a number of minutes equal to their CON before going blind and an-

other five minutes past that before succumbing to a lethal dose.

In essence, the Health Test is a very flexible and quick means for a Keeper to measure a character's CON against their physical health and well-being.

Resistance Test

Whenever the Keeper needs to resolve a variety of miscellaneous actions, from applications of brute force to competing efforts between player skills, the Resistance Test can be used. Very simple Resistance Tests can be made by direct comparisons of stats. If several ghouls try to force their way into a room, the Keeper may compare the total of their CON scores versus the total CON scores of players holding the door. If players wish to roll a boulder away from a cave entrance, the Keeper may assign a number that the players must beat on a total of CON scores pushing against it.

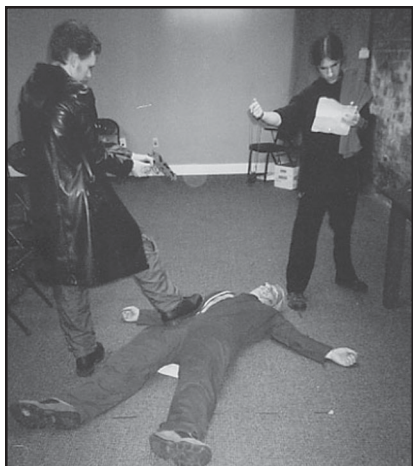
When players wish to enter competitive skill tests that cannot be resolved through role-play or verbal exchanges, the Keeper may use the Resistance Test to compare skills and stats. One player may wish to encode a secret message and the Keeper instructs him to write the actual message and a second piece of paper with a string of letters and numbers. The Keeper keeps the original message and makes a note that the players Cryptography skill level 3 and EDU stat of 13 yielded a result of 36. Later another player finds the coded message and attempts to translate it. His Cryptography skill of 4 and EDU stat of 12 yields a result of 48. He cracks the code of the first player and the Keeper presents him with the original message text.

A similar application works well with building and disarming bombs, designing computer security measures, or even playing a game of chess between masters. The basics are simple and the Keeper is free to adapt the Resistance Test however he perceives the situation.

The Keeper of Arcane Lore

If you're the Keeper, you'll have the toughest job in the game. You ensure that NPC actors understand their roles, keep players under control, make sure monsters are awake before their big scenes, and constantly resolve Skill Tests and rules issues. It is a lot of work but very rewarding when your efforts pay off in a good game session.

Know the Rules - Understand the *Cthulhu Live* rules system. Players look to you as the ultimate authority. Test Resolution rules are fairly simple and flexible. Very few skill tests are detailed in the script. Players come up with their own ideas and questions. You need to be comfortable enough with game mechanics to make quick judgment calls.



Know the Adventure — Understand the adventure and how each character contributes to the plot. The script is a valuable tool, but it's only a guide. Don't be afraid to make changes and modifications based on player actions. A comprehensive understanding of the adventure is critical to make these changes logical and believable. Always keep other Keepers and the staff informed of changes!

Be Flexible — *Cthulhu Live* is as much of an interactive, improvisational theater piece as it is a

role-playing game. The Keeper and staff adapt and improvise to cover gaps during plot changes. If players choose unanticipated actions, try to move the game in a direction that supports their choices. Try to maintain a free-play environment whenever possible. Allow the characters greater control over their own lives and deaths.

Be a Decision Maker — You are the Keeper and you are the one who makes rules decisions, modifications, improvisations, or exceptions. Never feel confined by the rules if they are getting in the way of the game flow. Don't be afraid to make a decision and run with it.

Remain in Control of the Game — Make sure players don't get out of hand and commit foolish, destructive, or dangerous acts. You're the guy holding this show together. The Keeper is the master of the game and his decisions are final. Always be open to player input but don't allow yourself to be pressured by players when you know you're right.

The Keeper and Game Preparation

The Keeper and staff members work together to prepare for a game event. The script is modified to suit the play area, props are built, diaries and letters are written, costumes are selected, and special effects are tested. Everyone takes part in recruiting players, but the Keeper is a reliable point of contact for questions. The Keeper is a good person to negotiate issues outside of the game. Arranging for the use of a building or wooded property, and negotiations with a game convention staff for function space and promotion are fine examples.

Planning should begin at least a couple weeks prior to a game's execution. Give the staff time to study the script. Discuss the game, take a look at the play area, and become familiar with special effects, costumes, and props required. If the adventure calls for scene changes at a single loca-

tion, rehearse the changes so everything runs like clockwork. Test special effects and practice costume changes to avoid unpleasant surprises. Don't expect to pull everything together overnight. Just as with a theatrical play, it's important to rehearse before you present the adventure to the players. They are your interactive audience.

With convention games, the Keeper and support staff may not be able to see the play area until they arrive on site. Communicate with the convention staff well in advance to learn where the game will be played. Is the game in a number of adjacent guest rooms or in one or more function areas of the hotel? Contact the hotel prior to arrival and ask for maps or diagrams of the function rooms. Make the most of this information to plan your game before arriving at the convention.

The Keeper During the Game

The Keeper usually speaks for a few minutes at the beginning of each game. You set the stage and introduce the adventure to the players. Spend time explaining the rules and be certain everyone understands how skills and combat are resolved. If time permits, consider running volunteers through a few rounds of combat so players see how the combat and combat skill specialties work.

During the rest of the game, retire into the shadows. Stay with the players but don't get in their way. Drift from room to room, checking on how the game is progressing. Remain alert to scheduled special events. Keep in touch with your staff. They will provide you with information that may cause a plot change. Quietly describe certain sensations and feelings to the players as required. Provide background material that they suddenly "remember" during the game.

The basics of tests and skill resolution are fairly straightforward. The Keeper must decide whether or not to apply modifiers to a player's chance of success. Players frequently call for the Keeper's attention and ask details about certain objects and people. This is where the Keeper's creativity comes into play.

Only a handful of Skill Tests are really outlined in a game script, however there are endless opportunities for skill use by creative and inquisitive players. An imagi-



Robert McLaughlin

native Keeper brings excitement and mystery into a game through skill test results.

For example, there may be a small watercolor of a church hanging on the wall. It has nothing to do with the game. It's just there. When a player asks about the picture, make something up. With the Fine Arts skill, the player might recognize it as the work of one Allison Kinkaid, a Rhode Island artist of the last century. She went mad after her husband was lost at sea. She spent her final years in an asylum, cursing unseen spirits she claimed were circling and taunting her. The History skill may identify the old Ashton Hill Church in Boston that burned down under mysterious circumstances in 1896. The church housed a rather obscure sect who had more in common with medieval Gnosticism than any contemporary faiths. Feel free to make up interesting facts and background information to encourage players to use their skills. Tell other Keepers and staff members about any major improvisations of which they should be aware.

The Keeper and Combat

The Keeper or any player can call for combat rounds. Once combat is announced, the Keeper takes control and moves the action forward. Players freeze actions and stop conversations so everyone can hear the Keeper. The Keeper should conduct the combat sequence as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Call out the phases and time counts loudly and clearly. After the first round or two, you'll learn the range of DEX scores. At that point you can start counting Declaration phases from the lowest and Resolution phases from the highest scores to save time. Guide players if they are confused with possible combat actions. If they have special ideas, you may try to accommodate and improvise if you feel the ideas are good and in keeping with the general intent of the rules. The most important thing is to move combat along very quickly and minimize the amount of time spent in combat rounds.

As you detect that combat is about to wind down, ask at the end of a Resolution phase if the players are ready to re-enter real time play or if another round of combat is required.

Character Generation

If the game allows for players to create their own characters, oversee the process and help any players having difficulty. The steps for creating a character are actually quite easy when using the templates included in this book. The Keeper guides players who want to design their own templates. New templates should make sense in terms of professional education and skills.



PST Productions

Prompt players to detail the background history of their characters. How and where did they grow up? What are their political and religious beliefs? What led them into their current profession? Did they experience notable successes or failures during their life? These questions and others help players better understand and identify with the roles they have chosen to play. When players create their own characters, consider employing the optional Advantages and Disadvantages to help them create characters in balance with the game.

Be sure that players select a variety of professions and skills to best tackle the challenges ahead. If certain professions need to be represented to logically connect the players to the game, or if certain skills will be critical for survival, advise the players accordingly.

Pre-Generated Characters

It is fun for players to create their own characters and backgrounds, but most *Cthulhu Live* games use pre-generated characters. After years and countless games, the use of pre-generated characters has proven successful time and again. The complete abilities and skills of the characters, personal possessions, background history, and knowledge are all detailed on sheets ready to hand out.

The use of pre-generated characters allows for a richer gaming experience, interweaving character goals and desires into a lush tapestry of hopes, dreams, secrets, and intrigue. Many pre-generated characters have dark secrets they are afraid to reveal or personality flaws that surface at inopportune times. Other characters have goals and agendas different from their comrades that bring about conflict. A few characters possess special knowledge and insight into the adventure at hand, allowing them to guide their fellows through the pitfalls and horrors that wait during the game.



The Keeper has the luxury of being intimately familiar with pre-generated characters. This is impossible with characters created by players shortly before the game. Familiarity with the characters helps the Keeper make better decisions on skill use and when providing hints, comments, or special insights during the game. Because pre-generated characters have strengths and weaknesses already interwoven with the script and the other characters, Keepers need not feel obligated to use the Advantages and Disadvantages rules.

Pre-generated characters reduce the size of the game staff

by casting players in roles that would otherwise be reserved for non-player characters. This allows better and more complicated games to be played by smaller groups.

If the Keeper already knows the players, he can decide who is best suited for certain roles. Assigning pre-generated characters in advance allows time for players to digest the information and ask questions about their history and motivations. Players also have a chance to find costumes and small personal props for their role.

Running Campaigns

Campaigns are a series of related adventures with the same set of player characters. More complex plots can be developed over the course of several games, and campaigns permit players to build up their skills and abilities through experience. Certain villains or allies may reappear in subsequent adventures. Players can devote their efforts to hunting down and destroying a particular cult. They may find themselves led deeper into plots and conspiracies of cosmic proportions.

Not all adventures in a lengthy campaign need to be interrelated. It's good to throw in something new as a wild goose chase or simply as a break in the campaign. Special items and bits of information obtained in one adventure may not be fully utilized until much later. Start with an overall concept of the campaign before detailing individual adventures.

If the campaign is a long and dangerous one, not all characters will live to see it completed. In fact, very few original characters may survive to the end. Allow players to generate new characters or introduce other gamers into the campaign. It's a smart idea for players to keep a diary that details their adventures. Even if the entire party is wiped out, a relative or police-detective might acquire the journal. You now have a starting point for a new group of investigators to continue the campaign. If the player is a decent writer, it is also a really cool item to have and may become a key prop in a future game.

Experience Points

Players in campaigns welcome the chance to improve their characters with Experience points. Some Keepers don't allow players to purchase new skill levels or increase stat scores without a certain amount of downtime between adventures. Or, you may rule that the character was already pursuing his studies and the extra experience finally allows him to formally raise his skill level or add new skills. Use whatever method best suits your campaign.

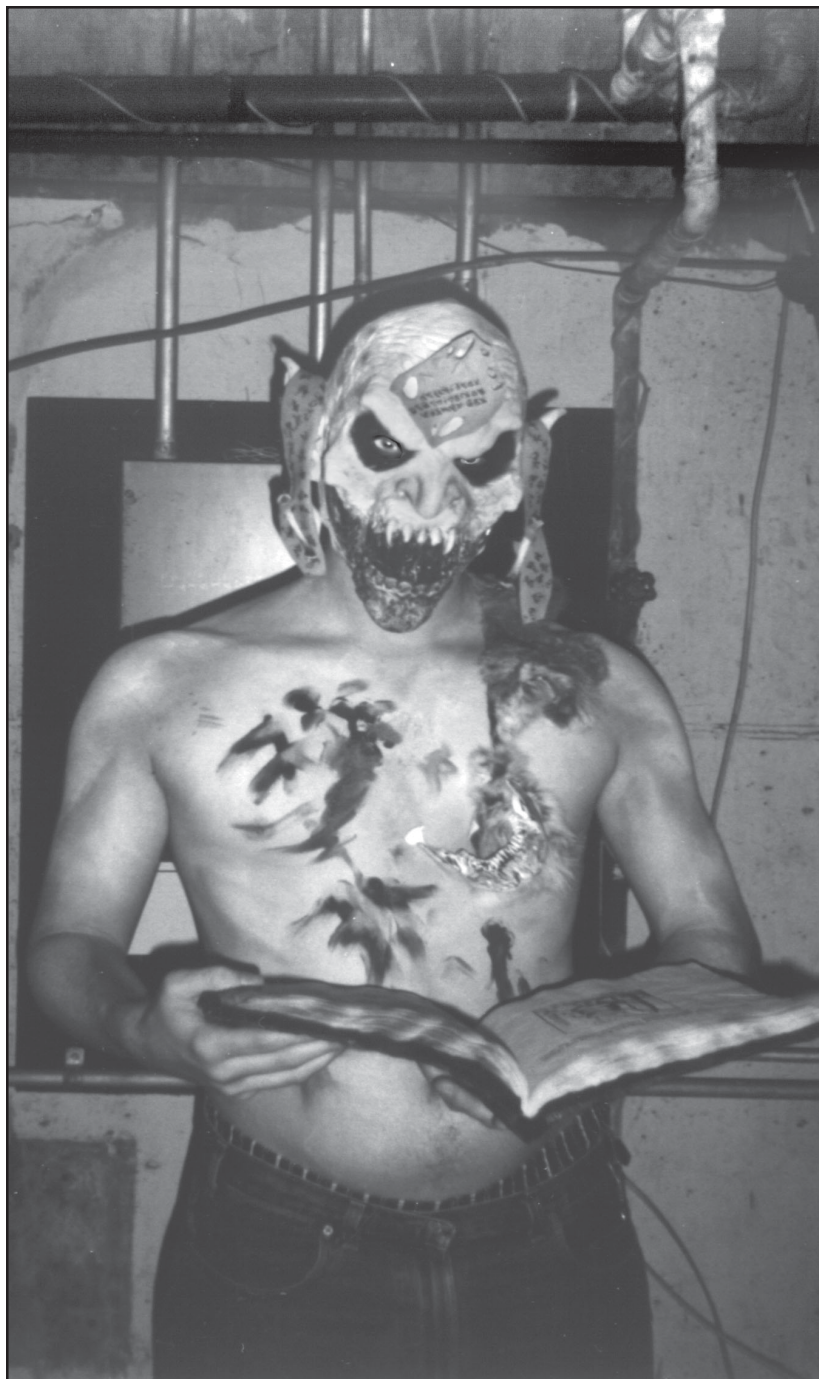
Keepers may assign experience points as they wish, based on the degree of contribution each player makes and the challenges they overcome. A general guideline of 1 to 5 experience points per game is suggested with 3 being an average reward for most players. Only the players who really did an excellent job role-playing or contributed a great deal to the success of the group should be awarded four or five points.

Experience points may be used to increase skill levels in the same manner that skills were purchased during character creation. Three experience points may raise a skill from level two to level three. The same three points may buy three new skills at level one or one skill at level two. Three experience points may buy a new skill at level one and raise a level one skill to level two. Again, the experience points function like skill points during character creation.

Stat scores may be raised by one point by spending three experience points. Experience points not spent after a game may be saved for use at a later date. ✨



Mindgame Productions



Robert McLaughlin

Chapter 4

Magic

Arcane magic and superhuman psychic feats are part of the alternate reality of *Cthulhu Live*. Magic draws on applications of bizarre alien science and hyper-geometry to bend and reshape what we know as reality. Psychic powers are generated from the unexplored recesses of the human mind and will be addressed later in the rules.

Powerful NPCs or very select player characters are likely to use magic. These powers are beyond the reach of most humans. Players may resort to magic when battling horrors from the Cthulhu Mythos, but this always comes with a price. No human may keep his sanity if he delves too deeply into eldritch sorcery.

The Magic Test

The Magic Test is resolved much like any other Skill Test in the game. It is a skill test requiring knowledge of arcane traditions and alien super-science to effectively perform. Magic in *Cthulhu Live* is not the sort of magic familiar to fantasy role-players. Characters don't fling fireballs or lightning bolts with gay abandon. Magic is the manipulation of the very fabric of reality. It is brought about through non-Euclidean geometric constructs, projecting the mind through maddening channels of alien logic, and bold petitions to unimaginably powerful beings existing beyond space and time.

All spells require the expenditure of Magic Points, even if the spell fails. Magic Points measure a character's reserves of spiritual energy. If a character expends all of his Magic Points, he may use Wound Points in their place. This represents a character reaching into the deepest reserves of his strength to perform the ritual. The player may opt to role-play this through a simulation of ritual scarring and self-mutilation as he literally pours out his life-blood to complete the spell.

Magic Points are regained through meditation and sleep. The Mysticism skill allows a character to regain one point per skill level for every 10 minutes of meditation. Otherwise, all Magic Points are regained after eight hours of sleep.

Some spells may impose a Sanity test on the players. Very disturbing and powerful rituals may cause an automatic loss of a single Sanity level.

Cthulhu Mythos and Mysticism are the modifying skills for the Magic Test. POW is the supporting stat. For the purposes of the test, the two skills are used interchangeably. A character with both skills will use the

higher of the two when testing for the success of a spell. The Cthulhu Mythos skill provides more information on the mechanics behind the spell being cast. The mental and physical discipline of the Mysticism skill enables a player to effectively interpret and follow the directions to perform a Mythos ritual.

As with common skills, there is an expectation to role-play the effort. Many scripts incorporate the ritual as a major part of the game itself. Glyphs and sigils are chalked onto the floor, complicated lines drawn in chalk or powder, and tongue-twisting invocations will be read aloud. An enterprising game staff might prepare for a bloody sacrifice depending on the ritual performed, the desires of the staff, and the relative seclusion of the game environment.

That last factor is something to always be considered. Simulated rituals for *Cthulhu Live* should not be performed in public view. You will really scare and disturb individuals who may not be aware that what they are seeing is just part of a game. Rituals should be planned to occur in the game when the Keeper is confident of privacy.

Controlling What You Call Up

A significant difference between Magic Tests and conventional Skill Tests are that many spells may require two separate skill checks. There may be two levels of success on a single spell. Simpler spells require a single success score. The spell works or it doesn't. More complicated and powerful spells may require two different target scores against which the skill level and POW are compared.

In these cases of two skill tests for a single spell, the first determines basic success or failure. The second test determines if the caster is able to control the results. Therein lies the great danger of Mythos Magic. Sometimes it is much easier to call something forth than it is to control what you unleash.

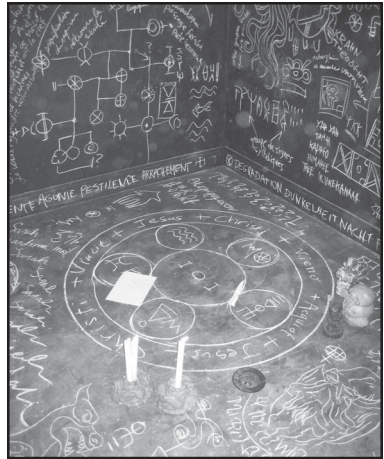
For example, a player discovers an ancient scroll. It contains the ritual to breach a dimensional gateway and summon a servitor of the Outer Gods. He has a Cthulhu Mythos Skill at level two and Mysticism at level three. His POW is 14 so he feels he has a pretty good chance of success. According to the Keeper's notes, this spell does require two tests. Casting the spell is an average test with a success score of 35. Controlling the results is a difficult test with a success score of 56. Since Mysticism is the higher skill, the test is conducted with $\text{Mysticism} - 3 \times \text{POW}$ 14. The resulting score of 42 handily allows the player to open the dimensional gateway and call out into the void. Unfortunately the player does not have a high enough score to effectively control the results. The spell may conjure forth a very angry servitor with no intention of even listening to the

player. The servitor may attack the caster or go on a rampage through the local community. In extreme cases, the spell may have summoned multiple servitors or something much more powerful and dangerous than the player ever imagined.

Because of the difficulty in controlling the results of Mythos Magic, sorcerers devote years of study in developing their skill levels. Many assemble a coven or inner circle of cultists to draw upon the benefit of team efforts and combined POW in controlling spell effects. It is the unwary

or incautious individual who casts a spell beyond his means to control. He might have just enough skill and POW to open the gateway, but be unable to control the effects. Few player characters have advanced magical skills, making team efforts in attempting rituals a wise choice.

There is a second level of defense for the players in the form of Binding/Dismissal spells. These spells only affect certain types of creatures and obviously the players must have the spell in their possession in order to use it. The types of spells often appearing in a *Cthulhu Live* game will be discussed in greater detail after we take a look at what makes magic work.



Celephais Foundation

Principles Of Mythos Magic

Powerful magic rituals pulled from terrible old books of forgotten lore — as archtypified by the *Necronomicon* — are a mainstay of *Cthulhu Live*. Servants of the Great Old Ones cheat death, project their minds through time, create magical gateways to distant places, and rip the fabric of reality itself to draw horrific beings into our physical universe. But what power fuels Mythos magic? How can strange symbols and tongue-twisting phrases bring unspeakable horrors into our universe? How can these glyphs, angles, and curves chain them with invisible bonds?

Very little in the Mythos universe is supernatural in the classic sense. The magic of the Cthulhu Mythos is a highly advanced alien science with a set of laws, theories, and applications far beyond the understanding of humanity. It relies on the precise manipulation of hyper-dimensional fields, barriers, energies, and gateways through the application of non-Euclidean geometry, alien logic, and untapped powers lying dormant within the mind. Just as marvels of our own science might seem like magic to primitive

cultures, equally magical to us is the alien super-science of the Mythos.

Hyperspace is a fascinating branch of theoretical science. Science-fiction films and novels often touch upon these concepts as a convenient means to break the limits of Relativity and facilitate interstellar travel. There is much more to hyperspace theory than zipping back and forth between distant stars via wormholes or extra-dimensional folds in space. Mythos magic and the “secrets” of the Great Old Ones rely on the existence of multiple spatial and temporal dimensions coexisting with our own.

Living within three spatial dimensions, our senses perceive objects or entities that share at least two physical dimensions and at least one temporal dimension with us. Something sharing just one of our physical dimensions would be difficult if not impossible for our naked eyes to perceive, although it could conceivably effect some limited change within our universe. Many Mythos entities exist in more than three physical dimensions, often dwelling partially or completely in spatial dimensions that are to us unknown and unseen.

Just as we have the capability to move through our three spatial dimensions, extra-dimensional entities (EDEs) can move through the alternate dimensions in which they exist as easily as we would walk across the street. This allows EDEs to appear or disappear in our three-dimensional universe at will, perhaps even taking a person or object with them into hyper-spatial realms.

Remember that to be perceived by a human being or to affect objects within what we know as reality, a physical object or entity must exist in one or more physical dimensions and at least one temporal dimension. What may be a temporal dimension for us may be a physical one for certain EDEs, allowing them to move forward or backwards through time as easily as we might move along a straight line drawn in the earth. This is certainly the case of the dreaded Hounds of Tindalos, whose physical substance is so alien to our own. In this manner they travel from the misty depths of eons past in relentless pursuit of their prey. It may take days or even weeks, however, for them to physically traverse the countless miles that are measured as millennia in our temporal dimension. For those who really enjoy baking your brain with hyperspace theories, consider how some EDEs may exist in several temporal dimensions at once.

Fun in Two, Three, and Four Dimensions

Consider a universe that exists in only two physical dimensions, a flat world of flat inhabitants. As three-dimensional beings, we can stand back and watch events unfold in this universe without being seen by the inhabitants of this 2D world or being detected by their scientific instruments. Only when we cross through the plane of their two-dimensional universe,

do they become aware of our existence. Even then, they only can see a mere cross-section of our total selves and never see us in our entirety. To them, we might seem as gods due to our seemingly miraculous powers.

If you were to stick your hand through a two-dimensional universe, the inhabitants would only see a series of four flesh-colored circles materializing and growing in size. They would see a fifth circle appear for an instant as your thumb breaks into their world, then almost immediately afterwards the first four circles would melt together into a single oblong form beside the newest circle. Then these shapes would unite into a single, larger blob that would suddenly constrict as your wrist passed through their world. At no time can they see the entirety of your hand, only that which crosses their own physical dimensions.

What might a creature existing in four or more physical dimensions look like as it crossed into our world? The answer is always good for a shudder. The creature would appear as an assembly of shifting, shrinking, and expanding spheres. Exactly the way Yog-Sothoth's physical manifestation in our world is described. One could imagine such a conglomeration of shifting, translucent bubbles as a colorless, many-tentacled horror intersecting with our spatial dimensions.

Remember that mere existence within a specific spatial dimension does not necessarily mean that travel into or through that dimension is easy. The two dimensional world previously described may be difficult or impossible for your hand to enter. Perhaps some natural force within that 2D world prohibits or hinders your efforts to pass through. A clearer example exists all around us. Although we are three-dimensional beings, we can only travel easily in two dimensions. An invisible natural force, in this case gravity, bends space into a gravity well. It hinders our movements through the third spatial dimension but does not entirely prohibit it. We simply need some form of assistance to travel in that other spatial dimension we inhabit.

In the same manner, an EDE may exist in multiple spatial dimensions, but have difficulty entering or moving about within our universe. It may be able to look into our world, watching us and hungering for the life it sees within. But it may not be able to enter our three dimensional spaces without assistance.

Consider how many spells and rituals petition Yog-Sothoth, dwelling not within the spheres we know but between them, to facilitate opening hyper-dimensional gateways and bridges. That phrase alone, "the spheres we know," reinforces the idea of our three-dimensional existence and the unknown mystery of anything that dwells beyond those dimensions.

Imagine a bold sorcerer living within our model of a two-dimensional world. He performs an elaborate ritual for those "outside", attracting our attention to his cries for assistance from beyond. Curious, we look closer

and find him locked within the confines of a two-dimensional cell. He can see no visible means of escape in his flat universe. To his two-dimensional viewpoint, the solid square surrounding him is inescapable. Perhaps other inhabitants of his 2D universe imprisoned him as a result of his blasphemous claims of invisible extra-dimensional entities and his attempts to traffic with these beings.

We laugh from our vantage point, because these four simple walls are no boundary or limitation to beings that move through more than his two spatial dimensions. Amused by his efforts, we reach down, lift him from his two-dimensional prison, and deposit him back into his world outside the cell. To his jailers, the sorcerer has suddenly vanished from his locked room and miraculously reappeared on the outside. Not magic, just movement through a higher dimension.

But oops ... in the course of moving him, we accidentally turned him over in the third dimension. Our two dimensional sorcerer used to be right-handed, but now he's left-handed. He's perfectly healthy, but his body has been flipped and turned over in a higher dimension.

A similar accident could occur to a human sorcerer traveling through an imperfect dimensional gateway or after being transported elsewhere by an EDE. The sorcerer could be inadvertently turned over in an extra-spatial dimension. When he is deposited back into our world, the sorcerer is fine, except that his motor skills, physical features, and even his internal organs have been flipped as if in a mirror image. Any written documents he had in his possession are now reversed, although his thought and speech patterns are probably unaffected. The effect is irreversible unless he is again taken outside our three dimensions, turned back over the right way in a dimension that physically does not exist for us, and then returned to our own world.

A somewhat greater stretch of the imagination, but conceivably possible in the strange world of hyperspace, is that a person was somehow turned around in a temporal dimension. Perhaps the individual now knows the horrid truth of everything that is to come, but seems to know nothing about the past. Forgetting events that have transpired just after they happen, but bearing a sanity blasting vision of all that the future holds. Or, perhaps, his mind is unaffected by the change, but his body is now growing younger every day rather than older.

Bizarre details like this can be great introductions into a *Cthulhu Live* game that probes into the mysteries of Mythos magic and science. Perhaps a murder investigation finds a victim with letters, business cards, and a driver's license in his pocket all in some strange, mirror-image writing. An autopsy reveals his organs to be on the wrong side of his body. Or, a new inmate in the local asylum begins foretelling a string of events that actually take place, screaming of terrible horrors yet to come.

He knows nothing of his past and even forgets his predictions after they occur.

Mythos Magic in Action

Certain drawings, glyphs, or constructs involving principles of non-Euclidean (hyper-dimensional) geometry may effect unseen changes outside our three-dimensional space. Certain shapes may create folds, buckles, or holes within space that we are unable to see.

If some players are exploring the weird world of hyper-dimensional science, perhaps they may discover a strangely angled polygon that creates an invisible bend in space. Placing an object such as a bottle on a table, they proceed to sketch the strange symbol around it in chalk. As soon as they close the polygon, the bottle winks out of existence. Actually the Keeper snatches the bottle away, but this is a game after all.

There is no sign of the bottle within the symbol, just the uninterrupted tabletop. Perhaps there is a faint shimmer in the air where the bottle once stood, like heat off a summer sidewalk. Reaching into the space above the symbol, your hand seems to disappear. There is no pain, just a slight tingling. You can feel the bottle, even grab it and pull it back into our world. By smudging the chalk and breaking the lines of the polygon, the bend is disrupted and the bottle reappears on the table.

Certain symbols, when used in the correct combinations, may create gates to other points in space. Perhaps they weaken the forces keeping Them outside. Lifting the fence, so to speak, just enough to allow Them to crawl beneath it. Complex incantations in a strange alien tongue may be merely a calling out to those beings, a faint voice drifting through the bends in space and drawing Them to where the gateway has been prepared.

A great deal may rely on the power of the individual. Whatever untapped potential lies within the depths of the human mind. It is known that these alien intelligences are far older and more advanced than mankind. Psychic powers that lie dormant within most of humanity are fully developed in their ancient and terrible minds, allowing them to channel the raw energy coursing through the universe into bending and warping physical space. What is merely a matter of thought to Them is all but impossible to our untrained and underdeveloped minds.

These graphic symbols and alien words may be nothing more than aids to focus our intellects down twisted paths of alien logic and a means to force open new doors within our minds. Such rituals may have been passed down in eons past by the Great Old Ones themselves. Offering our ancestors the tools to alter reality and serve the whims of the Great Old Ones. Offering us the seeds of our own destruction.

Mythos Magic and the Supernatural

As you can see in these examples, much of what seems magic or supernatural to our eyes is actually the workings of an advanced alien science. Just as certain occult mysteries are confused or misinterpreted truths of the Mythos, it logically follows that elements of occult magic may have their roots in this same alien science. This understanding is important if you intend to introduce elements of traditional occultism into an ongoing Cthulhu Mythos campaign.

The dark arts of Demonology or Voodoo may have direct roots in the contact and appeasement of EDEs. Swaying them to doing the sorcerer's bidding with all the weird and unearthly powers granted by their hyperspatial forms. Numerology, Hermeticism, and other traditions may contain 99% superstition, but perhaps 1% of a forgotten alien science that causes certain rituals or spells to actually accomplish what they are reputed to do.

What about the human soul? While humanity plays an insignificant role in the Mythos, the human soul logically plays a central role in occult traditions created by mankind. What exactly is the human soul, if you attempt to minimize the supernatural and look at it through the conception of alien science and multidimensional space?

Could the soul be a manifestation of sentient energy, existing on a plane just beyond our three-physical dimensions? Bound to a physical body and giving it a unique intelligence and personality in life, but severed from this tether and left free to wander after the death of the body? Perhaps seeking a new host for reincarnation? Stubbornly pressing itself for brief periods into two or three of our physical dimensions and giving rise to the stories of disembodied spirits?

Perhaps this energy construct that is the human soul is just as solid and appetizing in a higher dimension as a choice cut of meat is in our own world. Our souls may literally be the sustenance upon which certain EDEs must feed in order to survive. This perfectly explains the practice of human sacrifice in occult and Mythos rituals. The sacrificial cut frees the soul from the body, releasing it to be devoured by the waiting EDE lurking on the other side. An appeasement to the creature, a tasty appetizer with a promise of more to follow.

Researching too deeply into the fate of the human soul after death, investigators may find sanity-searing revelations about the "after-life." After the soul is severed from the body, there may be nothing but a grim and unceasing flight from the ravenous pursuit of terrifying EDEs through higher dimensions. The mad, desperate souls ever seeking a place to hide from their hungry and relentless foes, or some means to escape back into our world through reincarnation in a new body, possession of another, or

forcing their way into our dimensions as bitter and haunted spirits.

This could actually form the basis of a series of terrifying games. Spirits forcing possession of human bodies in an attempt to escape the horrors of the afterlife, but the grim hunt relentlessly pursuing these souls. The revelation of the nightmares following the death of the body would be a sanity-blasting revelation to the players. Who ever said there was peace or comfort in death? There may be no escape, with only the comforting embrace of madness or utter oblivion waiting as solace for the human soul.

Spell Classifications

There are several broad classifications of Mythos Magic. A number of variations exist of each type, but a general understanding of major spell types is helpful when Keepers design magic and rituals for their game.

Calling Spells

These rituals call to nearby creatures physically living in our world. The spell appeals for them to approach in friendship and to speak with the caster. These are fairly simple, low-powered spells and the player needs to be near an area frequented by the creature he is attempting to call (e.g., near a cemetery infested by Ghoul warrens or on a hilltop near a Mi-Go colony). The rituals are primarily verbal, calling out phrases of recognition and friendship in a language understood by the creature.

If the words must to be transported over great physical distances to a creature that can easily traverse them, a few symbols, glyphs, or runes around the caster may be required which open a worm-hole to carry the words farther than the player's voice could travel. Sometimes an enchanted instrument may be used in place of this, such as a special whistle that calls to Byakhee. A common Calling spell for Deep Ones involves casting a large stone carven with symbols of intent into the ocean near one of their sunken cities. If the spell is performed correctly, the creatures approach with at least a neutral attitude toward the caster, curiously approaching to see what the player wanted. Occasionally some sort of sacrifice or gift may be prepared to curry additional favors with the creature(s). If the players panic and attack or if the creature discovers it was called for no good reason at all, the attitude may quickly turn hostile.

Contact Spells

Sometimes the terms Call and Contact are used interchangeably, but the term is used here to note spells to establish a non-physical communications link with a distant being or a being in another dimension of existence. Some spells may create a telepathic bridge or a temporary posses-

sion like one might see from a spiritual medium. Other spells may conjure an incorporeal manifestation or allow communication in dreams. In this context of visions or mental communication with a Mythos entity, Contact spells provide less physical danger to the player. There is still a very real threat to character's mind.

Summoning Spells

These are powerful spells performed via elaborate rituals. Complicated lines, symbols, and verbal components are usually part of all summoning spells. The player is trying to open a dimensional gateway to where the being resides and call it forth into our world. Summoning spells are used for beings that are not naturally a part of our universe, creatures that exist outside of our time and space continuum. In almost all cases, two success levels are required; one to open the gateway and the second to control what comes forth. If the control test is successful, the being will be at least neutrally disposed to the caster. A sacrifice or gift might improve their mood. Although beings conjured through summoning spells are typically more powerful than creatures brought forth by a Calling, the hyper-dimensional nature of these beings provides a weakness the player can exploit for his own safety if he has the appropriate binding/dismissal spell.

Binding/Dismissal Spells

These spells are separate rituals from summoning spells. A player may successfully cast a summoning and "control" the results of the spell; but the creature is still free to wreak havoc if the initial contact and negotiations go poorly. The B&D spell uses lines and symbols to create a hyper-dimensional barrier extending into several dimensions occupied by the creature. The B&D spell should be cast first, and then the entity is summoned inside the containment area. Even if the "control" part of the summoning is failed, you might still be able to contain what you called forth inside the hyper-dimensional barrier. It is also a protection in case the interaction with a summoned creature goes badly, or if it decides it just doesn't want to return from where it was summoned. By adding or changing a few additional glyphs to the binding construct, the player collapses the hyper-dimensional prison into a singularity, forcing the creature back out of our universe.

Gateway Spells

Spells that bridge remote distances through hyper-dimensional folds and singularities, gateway spells typically require very complicated non-Euclidean geometric constructs and symbols. Many magic points must be spent and usually permanent points of POW must be invested into a gateway. Due to the time and investment of POW, most gates are built to be

permanent constructions with stone, metal, or concrete. Gateways typically remain open only a brief period of time before closing. Provided that the geometric or physical construct remains intact, the gateway requires only an incantation and expenditure of magic points to pass through again.

Protective Spells

Some of the most useful spells for players are protective spells against extra-dimensional entities or to deflect physical harm. The Elder Sign is one of the best-known protective spells, used to create a ward against mythos horrors. The Barrier of Naach-Tith and the Pnakotic Pentagram are other protective wards designed for different threats. A dangerous assumption that may cost some players their lives is to think that magical wards affect all mythos creatures. Since the wards create hyper-dimensional barriers, creatures that exist only with our own dimensions are unimpeded by these wards unless it is merely respect and fear of an individual with apparent skills in Mythos Magic. Other protective spells may deflect wound points from the player or defend against certain types of damage.

Offensive Magic

Curses are an option, whether caused by a spell or by close association with some evil object. A curse may manifest as a penalty to stat scores during Tests or a slow, creeping sickness. Offensive magic spells are rare, but they do exist. Shriveling is a common offensive spell used to blacken and wither an opponent.

Miscellaneous Spells

A number of minor spells appear in the game. Spells to heal injuries, resurrect the dead, and reveal hidden or invisible creatures. As mentioned earlier, mythos magic is unlike the magic of fantasy games and literature. It is more subdued in results and darkly horrible in effect. A healing spell may quickly repair traumatized tissue, but leave it discolored, pockmarked, or scaly. The resurrection spell may bring life back to a player, but if the spell is botched or portions of the essential salts are lost, only a twisted and horrific mockery of the individual will be brought back to life.

The Elder Sign

Elder Signs appear frequently in *Cthulhu Live* games. Usually they are relics found by the players and used to combat the encroaching horrors of the Mythos. Also known as the stones of Mnar, these star-shaped soapstone relics are not from this Earth. They are potent weapons and seals against Those from Outside. Falling in the realm of protective magic,

these are common and important enough to warrant a separate discussion.

One version of the Elder Sign is depicted as a star-shaped figure with a strange glyph that resembles an eye with a pillar of flame as the pupil. When found as a true stone of Mnar, the stone itself is star-shaped with the flaming eye glyph graven in the center. Some sources claim this represents the Elder Gods themselves, who reputedly took the form of giant flaming pillars when they warred against the Great Old Ones. Other versions of the Elder Sign look more like a stylized fern frond in the center of the star-stone. Other sources depict the Elder Sign as a much more complex symbol of intersecting curves and angles, perhaps engraved on a star-shaped or circular stone.



Although many claim the stones of Mnar channel the power and magic of the Elder Gods as a ward against the Great Old Ones, the real source and extent of the stones' power is unknown. The tombs of many dormant Old Ones are reputedly sealed with Elder Signs. Organizations such as the Wilmarth Foundation report the stones to be effective in turning the effects of dream sendings, psychic probing, and baleful magic. Large numbers of these star stones have proven useful in physically containing certain Mythos entities long enough for more direct means of their destruction to be brought to bear.



If the Keeper prefers the colder universe envisioned by Lovecraft as opposed to the kinder, gentler Mythos of Derleth and Lumley, he should downplay the importance and power of the mysterious Elder Gods. The stones of Mnar exhibit some sort of influence over certain Mythos entities, but you might not want players flashing Elder Signs like crucifixes and regularly calling down the wrath of the Elder Gods to help them in their crusade against the darkness.

Apply the cardinal rule of Mythos magic; it is nothing more than an incredibly advanced alien science beyond the grasp of humanity. The Elder Sign is a strange geometric construct, whose angles and curves create a disturbance or barrier in hyper-dimensional space that is significantly larger than the symbol as it appears in our own three spatial dimensions.

The barrier extends in dimensions other than those we inhabit. It is invisible and creates no tangible effects to humans or other creatures

dwelling solely within our three spatial dimensions. The basic glyph may create a circular barrier radiating out in a plane parallel to the surface upon which it is inscribed, extending a distance directly or exponentially proportional to the size of the symbol. The gravitational signature or specific atomic weight of the star stone of Mnar may warp this circular barrier into a hyper-dimensional sphere, providing an invisible zone of protection around any human who holds or stands very close to the stone.

Many of the Great Old Ones, a few alien races, and almost all beings originally from outside our dimensions are composed of a non-terrene flesh that extends into our own dimensional space but also into one or more dimensions unknown and unseen. The hyper-dimensional disturbance created by the Elder Sign becomes a physical barrier to this non-terrene flesh, hindering the movement of these creatures or forcing them to move around its area of effect.

Creatures summoned from outside our universe and those composed of a non-terrene flesh can be slowed or even trapped by the placement of these glyphs. Some Keepers may want to develop geometric formulas by which players can estimate the effective size of the barrier created in order to strategically place their signs or calculate the size of the glyph needed for their purposes. Creatures who dwell entirely within our three spatial dimensions — such as Deep Ones, Ghouls, elder things, and others — are not affected by Elder Signs, but recognize and respect the science and power behind them.

The power of an Elder Sign may have nothing at all to do with the Elder Gods. It is merely a manifestation of advanced scientific principles. The same idea can be extended to explain the powers of the Pnakotic Pentagram, pentacles, and other “magical” glyphs and wards.

Rituals of Mythos Magic

Although Mythos Magic may be a precise and defined science, it is still alien and barely comprehensible to even the most brilliant of human minds. Elaborate rituals have been passed down through time, via cults, ancient books, and word of mouth. How much of a ritual is directly related to accomplishing the task and how much reflects accumulated elements of superstition and theatrical drama may never be known. Certain occult scholars have undertaken systematic studies of the principles of Mythos magic, although this is a dangerous venture. Experimentally altering or deleting elements of ritual in order to isolate the alien science at its core could create unexpected and disastrous results.

Ritual magic can be divided into the three phases of preparation, ritual, and effect. Preparation includes inscribing the proper circles, angles, and glyphs, donning the appropriate vestments, performing any ritual

cleansings, consecrations, or desecrations, and preparing any protective magic against the forces called upon. The second phase is the ritual itself. All manner of ritual chants, drumming, murmurs, dances, or sacrifices may be required, along with the addition of specific ingredients and spell components.

Much of the ritual reflects accumulated superstition grown up around the key components of the alien science. Some elements may be necessary to alter the participants' thought patterns or actually communicate with the beings on the other side. Other ritual elements create the proper timing for sequential actions to take place while others are merely there to amuse the cult leader or the entities summoned forth. What parts are necessary and what parts are not? More importantly, do you really want to take the risk of omitting certain elements just because you think they might not be critical?

If it looks like magic, sounds like magic, smells like magic, it is magic for all practical purposes. Few human minds can truly understand the intricacies of hyper-spatial theories and applications. Most practitioners safely abide to the letter of the ritual. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

The final phase of ritual magic is the effects phase. What happens now is based on how well the ritual was performed and the actual Magic Test. Magic points are deducted, any necessary Sanity tests and losses are taken, and the Keeper determines the results of the ritual.

Keepers are encouraged to design their own rituals for games, making them as straightforward or elaborate as they wish. The following list contains a number of ideas and component elements that may be incorporated into traditional rituals. Some games may feature uniquely different rituals that are worked into musical performances, stage-plays, elaborate puzzle-boxes, or even architectural designs that complete a summoning or open a gateway when someone walks the corridors and stairways in a certain pattern.

Skyclad — Participants are naked or nearly so. Can be combined with layers of veils or in combination with clever body painting.

Blinded — The participants are blindfolded or hooded. Some of the greater deathless sorcerers have long since blinded themselves or sewn their own eyes shut in the conviction that every action is in performance of a vast ritual.

Cleansed — The participants have undergone some sort of ritual purification: this can be as prosaic as drinking only bottled water for a day before the ritual, or as elaborate as a bathing rite.

Fouled — The participants taint themselves, perhaps by drinking the blood of an unclean animal, smearing their bodies with filth or engaging in vile sexual degradations.

Earthborn — The participants may bury one of their number alive for a period before the ritual. Generally, this practice is restricted to the leader of the group. For this effect lay the player in a shallow hole. Cover him with a plastic sheet, leaving a clear path for air or a breathing apparatus like a snorkel. Spread a thin layer of dirt or leaves. Don't forget where you bury your friend.

Inscribed — The participants paint their bodies and faces with elaborate invocations, glyphs, or stylized representations of the entities with which they have allied themselves. Use kohl makeup pencils or actual body paints for the best effect.

Scarred — The participants let their own blood and elicit their own pain. Can be done with a toy dagger with red ink on one edge or a prop knife with a squeeze bulb of stage blood.

Candles — Perfect for setting the ritual mood. Use with extreme care and be alert to fire hazards.

Powders — For burning or drawing circles, glyphs, and angles.

Incense — Never neglect the other senses in creating a ritual experience.

Sacrificial Blood/Victim — This book contains several wonderful formulas for do-it-yourself theatrical blood. On the other hand, you'll have to find your own sacrificial victims.

Veils/Hoods — For shielding the identity and ritually represents mysteries of the unknown and the inherent blindness of humanity.

Bones — Gives a good fetish effect when strung on a thread or bound into strange figures.

Special Artifacts/Relics — Can be used to improve spell success, provide a reservoir of magic points, or provide other advantages such as an increase in effective skill level.

Effigies/Idols — May provide conduits to the entity represented, but beware. Such artifacts may be elaborate, ancient traps.

Knives — Toy knives are best for ritual use in game rituals. Real blades should be carefully handled.

Chalice/Cauldron/Bowl — Filled with vile concoctions or the blood of a sacrifice.

Ritual Scripts — Glyphs inscribed on thin, brittle paper for burning or eating during spell casting, or nailing to the door of an enemy.

Kohl/Cosmetic Dyes — Used to cover the wizard with wards or to inscribe invocations on the flesh of a sacrifice.

Ritual Sword/Staff/Wand — Can be used to strike a beat for group chants or to mark circles with the tip or a piece of sidewalk chalk set into the base. Also looks mighty impressive.

Stones/Crystals/Mirrors — Are excellent components for scrying or projecting curses.

Occult Traditions for *Cthulhu Live*

Although the alien horrors of the Mythos lie at the core of most games, the trappings and traditions of the occult underground are found in abundance. The relevance and power of occult traditions is left to the discretion of individual Keepers. In games grounded in the Mythos universe, traditional occult practices are mere superstitions. At best they are confused, corrupted, and veiled understandings of the true nature of reality. Other games may step back from the Mythos and explore alternate realms of horror steeped in occult power, and symbolism. Game scripts, and ideas for cults, and secret societies may be drawn from these traditions. Ripe with mystery, symbolic imagery and emotional triggers, the occult world is a fertile grove of imagination, and the human spirit.

The Occult skill is common among player characters. A general knowledge is assumed with the Occult skill, these specific traditions are ideal for skill specializations.

Alchemy

Alchemy has been an important bridge between magic, and science ever since the days of Francis Bacon, and Leonardo DaVinci. Occult revelations are sought through elaborate scientific experiments. Echoing the correspondences of hermetic magic, base metals and chemical substances are used as symbols within mankind, the animal kingdom, and the entire physical and spiritual universe. The reactions and results produced in these experiments reveal deeper occult truths. By learning how to purify, combine, and manipulate these metals, reagents, and symbolic cardinal elements, the alchemist seeks truth and the power to change himself and his environment.



Astrology

Astrology is one of the oldest forms of occultism and perhaps the most widely practiced type of divination. Astrologer and magician once meant the same thing in the ancient Middle East. Astrologers study the movement of stars and planets, trying to establish a link between events on Earth and celestial phenomena. Many ancient cultures based elements of their religion and life cycle on the stars, building tremendous structures aligned to the seasonal movements and positions of heavenly bodies. Astrology as it is primarily known today in western occultism is derived from the Chaldean and Babylonian systems, as revised by the Greek,



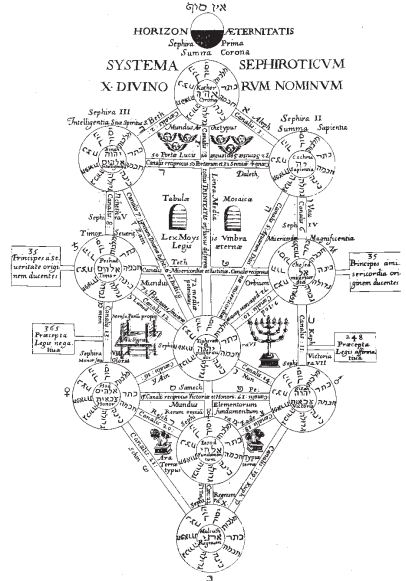
Renaissance, Victorian, and New Age sages. Other cultures such as the Aztecs, Incas, Olmecs, Chinese, Celts, and others developed their own astrological systems, although only fragments have survived to the present day. The star cycles and planetary alignments have long been used to foretell the future, personal fortunes, great

events, and terrible disasters. Considering the importance of the star cycles to many Mythos entities, astrology may hold the key to shattering revelations.

Cabala

A key element of multiple occult traditions, the Cabala (also Kabbala or Qabalah) is a mystical Jewish tradition originating in the interpretation of scripture and language. Through complex numerology and permutations of the Hebrew alphabet, Cabalists extract startling revelations and occult correspondences from the Torah and other religious texts. The Cabala employs a unique symbol called the Tree of Life as an occult mystery describing the relationships and interactions of the universe, man, and the majesty of God. Ten spheres, or sefiroth, connected by 22 lines, form the Tree of Life. The sefiroth are arranged in three triangles, with the tenth sefira left over at the bottom. Corresponding to the spheres of the earth, the seven planets of antiquity, the fixed stars, and the sphere of the Prime Mover, the sefiroth also represent the basic building blocks of all numbers. The Tree is also a symbol of the body of Adam Kadmon, the “universal” man and ideal form of humanity. The right-hand side, or pillar, of the sefiroth corresponds to the positive and the male, while the left-hand pillar corresponds to the negative and the female. The central line is the uniting elements from the Prime Mover, through the power and majesty of God, down to the physical world. Each of the sefiroth and every connecting line of the Tree are

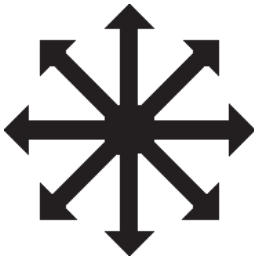
Arbor Cabala summus continens incedendum et totum et filii N' q' est de Cabala Hebraeorum, et explicatur a f'oli 299 usq' ad 317



full of occult significance. From the crown to the base, the spheres are named Kether, Hokhmah, Binah, Tifereth, Hesed, Geburah, Yesod, Netsah, Hod, and Malkhuth. The Tree of Life is richly symbolic and the ideas of the Cabala permeate nearly all western occultism.

Chaos Magick

Considered to be one of the youngest offshoots of the New Age tradition, chaos magick is a stylish new trend that rethinks the “laws” of magic and



manages to end up pretty much where many Shamans or Voodoo practitioners have been for centuries. Chaos magick draws together diverse personal and cultural symbols that bear strong meaning to the user, focusing his willpower to the manipulation of the world around him. There are no ancient disciplines and laws of chaos magick. It is a raw and unstructured tradition in which the practitioner creates his own magical theories, rituals, and talismans from whatever sources or inspirations bear personal relevance and interest.

Whether these are bits and pieces culled from older occult traditions, rituals, and power words taken from films and television shows, symbols and personifications of universal forces drawn from pop culture icons and dead celebrities, or even oddball names and beliefs derived from the pulp horror fiction of an obscure writer in the 1930s, chaos magick opens itself to any elements that are of personal significance to the magus. The strange diversity of chaos magick and its potential for inadvertently piecing together bits of dissociated knowledge offers great possibilities for games set in the modern era.

Demonology

Demonology as it is known today is an offshoot of medieval scholasticism. Not originally intended as a system of magic, medieval monks assembled extensive studies of demons as a means to identify and expose the agents of Satan. These manuscripts explored the hierarchies of Hell and catalogued the powers and spheres of influence of the evil ones. Original sources are suspect, and many demons listed in these books are the deities and spirits of earlier pagan religions or clearly products of the fanciful and often lustful imaginations of the clergy. Demonology was later abandoned



by the Church and become part of occult superstition in such tomes as the Goetia and the Key of Solomon. Conjuring demons for unholy bargains or using secret names to force them into service is a long-standing tradition of demonology. Who knows how many Mythos entities the monks may have come across during their research and what truths and key information may lie buried in the pages of demonology.

Hermetic Magic

The Hermetica is a collection of forty-two books written by various authors but fancifully attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, “Thrice Great



Heremes.” Heavy with complex symbolism and open to multiple interpretations, the Hermetica sets forth a series of complicated correspondences that connect all aspects of the universe together. “As above, so below”, is the statement from the Hermetic Smaragdine Tablet, which is echoed throughout the traditions of western occultism. Legends state that the Hermetica contains information from the destroyed library of Alexandria, the lost magical secrets and revelations of ancient Greece and Egypt. Hermetic traditions are derived from The Hermetica, Greek and Middle-Eastern astrology, Neo-platonic thought (knowing the true reality behind illusions of the flesh), and Gnosticism

(a highly refined secret and personal knowledge of the divine) brought back to Europe by the Crusaders. Hermetic magic is steeped in ritual and complicated actions and observances based on earthly and heavenly correspondences. It forms the basis of almost every “high-magic” ritual system of the western world.

Magick

Magick is the western ritual magical tradition refined by several major occult organizations during the last two hundred years. Francis Barrett’s *The Magus*, published in 1801, sparked a renaissance of hermetic thought during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Order of the Golden Dawn, the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), Eliphas Levi, and Aleister Crowley were instrumental in refining the lore and traditions of ritual magick and laid the groundwork that defines many occult organizations that exist today. The political intrigues, scandalous affairs, melodramatic posturing, and “magical wars” fought be-



tween these occult societies were quite a sensation in their day. The rivalry and competition between these magickians and occult groups continue into the 21st century.

New Age

The most modern form of western occultism, New Age magic is a blend of multiple traditions from around the world. New Age occultism takes many forms. The Cabala and spiritualism are parts of the movement, but there are also strong influences from Hinduism, shamanism, and witchcraft. There is a marked trend of returning to primitive roots. Finding a common ground and new direction that unites ancient traditions into a movement for the new millennium or the Aquarian Age. High or ritual magic usually plays a very minor part. The New Age movement concentrates on low and sympathetic magic, and on the magic of personal willpower. The use of crystals and geomancy are common elements.



Numerology

An integral part of the Cabala, as well as a discipline unto itself, numerology seeks occult revelation through mathematics and cryptography. Hidden meanings and magical potential may be identified in art, architecture, language, science, and the natural world through numeric correspondences. Numbers and equations may be extrapolated from virtually anything and analyzed by a numerologist to reveal secret meanings and indications of the true nature of a person, place, or thing. A complex branch of the occult arts, Occult skill tests in numerology may lead characters to all manners of strange conclusions or valuable insights. A basic understanding of numerological significance on the Keeper's part is very helpful to add a greater believability to such tests. A player who enjoys the symbolism derived from Numerology may learn the basics of this tradition and apply it during the game. He can keep himself busy and grate on his comrades' nerves throughout the evening by continually analyzing the numeric symbolism of names, dates, and measurements in search of an occult revelation.



Satanism

Satanism in the traditional sense involves service to the forces of darkness. This is often in terms of a formalized pact for mutual services rendered, and the perversion and defilement of Christian rites and symbols. It represents the image of Gothic witchcraft, the Black Mass, human sacrifices, and pacts with Satan. Some bloody crimes coupled with perversion of the Christian rites undoubtedly occurred in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and into the present day. The fear of Satanism spread by the Church has reached



tragic proportions throughout history, resulting in the torture and death of countless innocents. Modern Satanism includes groups who claim descent from anti-Christian cults, while others follow pre-Christian practices and represent themselves as a natural religion and philosophy oriented toward strength, dominance, and an aggressive evolution of the inherent power of man.

Shamanism

A common name for primitive, ecstatic occult traditions found throughout the world, Shamanism combines rhythmic music, dancing, meditation, and often drugs in order to establish contact with spirits and gods. Shamans are the medicine men of many primitive cultures or tribal religions still found in the present day. Putting himself in a trance, the shaman opens himself to channel the spirit powers. He can walk between heavens and hells, exorcise evil spirits, heal the sick, see through the eyes of totem animals, and — in some beliefs — assume their physical form. The raw, primitive emotions and emphasis on trances and dream states may open many Shamans up to Mythos insight and revelations.



Spiritualism

A 19th century refinement of traditional shamanism, Spiritualism is an occult tradition that remains popular to the present day. The spirits of the dead are among us, watching over surviving loved ones, shadowing their

enemies, or bound to places that held great significance in their life or circumstances of their death. Invisible to most of us, certain people known as mediums are attuned to the spirit world and can communicate with the restless dead. At seances, mediums voluntarily open their bodies to possession so that others may hear the words of the spirits. Spiritualism reached its heyday in the 19th century, although its reputation has suffered greatly from the work of charlatans and confidence artists.



Tantrism

An Indian yoga tradition, Tantrism draws power from the spiritual polarity between male and female, represented by the gods Shiva and Lakshmi (a variant form of Kali.) Ritualized sexual techniques transfer energy through the various chakras of the body, freeing latent powers within the practitioners. Although the effects of traditional Tantrism produce only personal or very localized effects, Tantric traditions were imported into western occultism during the 19th century and form the basis of modern sexual magic.



Voodoo and Santeria

African religions went underground in the slave cultures of the Americas, resulting in a strange blend of African, Native American, and Christian deities and occult traditions. Common elements include drumming and dancing to induce trance, blood sacrifice, and possession by spirits. The Voodoo cult of Haiti incorporates Dahomean, Ibo, and Mago tribal influences, acknowledging a remote supreme being called Gran Met and a huge pantheon of lesser gods called loas. Necromancy occupies a key role, to include the well-known Haitian zombie rituals and traditions. Although not inherently a path of black magic, the sinister reputation and superstitions surrounding Voodoo make this Caribbean tradition particularly popular among horror writers. The use of Voodoo as a weapon of psychological terror by “Papa Doc” Duvalier dur-



ing the 60s and 70s did little to improve this reputation. The Santeria tradition developed largely from the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria and is found primarily in Spanish-speaking areas. The spirits known as orishas include both ancestral spirits and many Catholic saints altered and adopted into the Santeria faith. Macumba comes from Yoruba roots, but is found in Portuguese speaking regions such as Brazil, and includes many tribal elements from the Amazon. Of particular interest would be Quimbanda, or the black magic tradition of Macumba, calling upon the dark lord King Exu.

Witchcraft

Classical witchcraft combines small spells, charms, herbalism, divination, and many types of healing and natural medicine, especially midwifery. It is rooted in the traditions of shamanism, which grew into the pagan religious traditions of ancient European civilizations. Vilified by Christianity, these pagan traditions were hunted to near extinction. These traditions have resurfaced in the modern Wiccan faith and neopaganism occupies a key position in the New Age movement. Most modern witchcraft movements date from the last century and are drawn from a collection of sources rather than a true historical pedigree. Few factual details or unbiased accounts survived the centuries of inquisition and witch-trials.



A Mythos Magic Grimoire

The following pages list a sample selection of spells that occur with some regularity in *Cthulhu Live* games. Many more spells exist. The specific details of the spell or ritual are left up for the Keeper to design according to the needs of the game or just how hard he wants his players to work for their magic. Rituals should be a chance for players to get involved drawing or chalking symbols, circles, and angles, burning incense and grasses, chanting, and drumming. The more immersive the Keeper makes the ritual, the deeper the players will sink into the game.

The suggested MP costs, Sanity tests and difficulty scores are simply



suggestions and may be changed by the Keeper. Some spells have two difficulty scores listed. These are suggested scores for basic success and full control of a ritual. Rituals may be cast in many different ways with different costs and penalties. Ultimately it is up to the Keeper, his ideas, and the needs of the game. Remember that the Sanity Test listed is for performing the ritual. The appearance of a creature from the ritual may result in additional Sanity loss. You may think the difficulty

categories seem low. Remember that few characters have the Cthulhu Mythos or Mysticism skills. A routine ritual for a student of these mysteries may need a team effort and a lot of luck from unskilled characters.

Baneful Dust of Hermes Trismegistus — 5 MP to prepare. Green. Difficulty 26. Yields 5 applications of a golden, magical dust that causes damage and great pain to creatures of non-terrestrial origin. Dust causes 8 WP per attack to creatures not native to Earth.

Banishment of Yde Etad — 25 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 45. Complicated and lengthy ritual involving concentric circles, symbols drawn with special powders, and the destruction of a sigil representing a specific entity by fire. Sends home most lesser and some greater trans-dimensional entities if their personal sigil, their secret name, is known.

Bind/Dismiss Great Old One — 5 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18. Not all Great Old Ones can be summoned from their resting places; most of them can be called or contacted but not actually summoned. Those that can be summoned will have spells unique to each of them for binding and dismissal.

Bind/Dismiss Outer God — 10 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 26. A spell to contain and dismiss an Outer God. Each of these entities has its own unique spell and set of symbols which must be found and learned separately.

Black Binding — 15 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18/26. A complicated liquid compound is prepared and poured over a corpse or grave. After a week, the Black Binding is recited and the corpse rises as a zombie

servant to the caster's will. A simpler variation of this spell, the Gray Binding at difficulty 18, rouses the corpse after five minutes but it will be mindless and uncontrolled.

Bless Blade — 5 MP & 1 point of POW to cast. Green. Difficulty 26. Enchants a blade of elemental metal, such as iron or silver, to be capable of injuring or killing entities immune to normal weapons.

Call Byakhee — 3 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18/26. Requires enchanted whistle and should be cast on nights when Aldebaran is above the horizon. The Byakhee will flap down, still icy from the depths of space.

Call Dark Young — 10 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 26/35. This spell should be cast in the woods during the dark of the moon. The sacrifice of a large animal through a series of ritual cuts is required. If successful, a single Dark Young emerges from the forest to hear the supplicant.

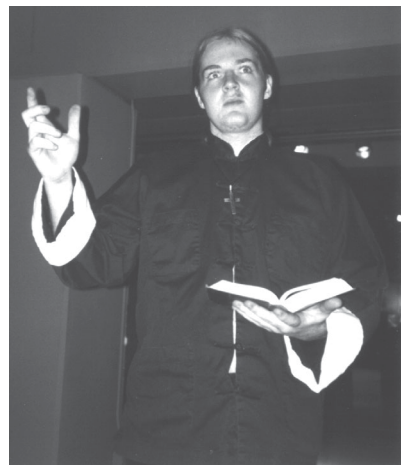
Call Deep One — 3 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 11/18. Should be cast near at edge of ocean, ideally near a deep one city. Requires specially inscribed stones to cast in the water.

Call Ghoul — 5 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 11/18. Cast near graveyards and crypts, especially those over a century old. Moonlit nights are the best time.

Call Mi-Go — 5 MP to cast. Green. Difficult 18/26. Cast at base or top of a mountain range mined or visited by the Mi-Go, such as Appalachians, Andes, Himalayas, and some Central African peaks.

Cast Out Devil — 10 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 35. Involves many components of African tribal magic. Matches POW of Exorcist against possessing entity in an attempt to cast it out of the body. Willing assistants may add half their POW.

Cause/Cure Blindness — 8 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 18. No sanity loss for curing, but Blue test for causing blindness. Ritual takes up to an hour and requires POW vs. POW resistance test for success.



Robert McLaughlin



Cause Disease — Variable MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 26. Ritual requires five minutes, during which time a personal object of target is buried beneath a specially carved stone. Caster may invest as many MP as he wishes, used in a resistance test against target's POW. If successful, target afflicted with a feverish illness that may or may not prove fatal. Retrieving buried object or counter-magic breaks spell.

Circle of Nausea — 4 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18. Creates a powerful protective circle around caster. Requires five minutes to in-

scribe circle on ground and fortify with four enchanted stones at cardinal points. Stones must have been previously enchanted with 4 MP spent on each. Breaching circle requires resistance test of POW against POW of caster. Failure causes the individual to vomit uncontrollably and be helpless for several minutes. The spell collapses when the circle is successfully breached.

Cloud Memory — 5 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18. Requires resistance test between POW of target and caster. Success blocks the memory of a specific event, although nightmares may linger if the event was especially terrible. May be extracted through hypnotism.

Clutch of Nyogtha — 1 MP to cast then 3 MP per round. Yellow. Difficulty 35. If caster overwhelms POW of target on resistance test, target feels a large hand slowly crushing his heart. Target is paralyzed during attack and suffers 3 WP per combat round. Caster expends 1 MP to cast spell then another 3 MP per round until target dies, the caster stops, or has his concentration broken.

Contact Cthulhu — 5 MP & 1 point of POW to cast. Blue. Difficulty 35. Often requires idol or other image of Cthulhu. Response is typically at night in terrible dreams and nightmares.

Contact Y'Golonac — 5 MP & 1 point of POW to cast. Blue. Difficulty 35. A dangerous trap, as willful contact with this malevolent being usually results in a psychic attack and attempt to possess the individual.

Create Barrier of Naach-Tith — Variable MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 35. Each MP expended gives the barrier 2 points of POW. It takes one minute to cast and the barrier lasts 3 hours. The barrier is a sphere 20 yards in diameter and be cast around the caster for protection or used to enclose an enemy. No creature may cross the barrier without defeating it on a POW resistance test. POW may not be combined for this resistance test, but the barrier falls when it is breached, the time expires, or the caster chooses to end the spell.

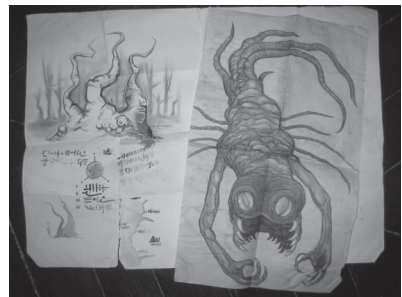
Create Gate — Variable sacrifice of POW to create. Blue. Difficulty 56. Gates may take many forms. The greater the distance traversed, the greater the cost in permanent POW sacrificed. Keeper to determine cost. Traversing a gate costs MP equal to POW needed to create the gate and causes a Green Sanity Test.

Death Spell — 3 MP per round. Yellow. Difficulty 45. Target must be within 10 yards. During first combat round resolution phase, victim begins to blister and suffers 2 WP. During second combat round victim begins to smoke and suffers 4 WP. During third combat round victim bursts into flames and suffers 6 WP that round and every round thereafter. Spell may be broken if caster suffers damage and has concentration broken.

Deflect Harm — 1 MP to cast then variable. Green. Difficulty 18. Caster invokes names of Outer Gods and extends hand toward attacker. Until dropping hand, caster deflects successive attacks by expending MP equal to damage deflected. Caster may attack with his or her free hand after the spell has been cast, as long as one hand is kept up to deflect attacks.

Dominate — 6 MP per minute (or 1 per combat round). Green. Difficulty 26. With successful POW resistance test, caster may direct the actions of the target. Only one individual may be dominated at a time.

Dust of Suleiman — 5 MP to create. Green. Difficulty 18. Required the dust from an Egyptian Mummy, this spell creates 3 doses of a gray-green powder that can harm beings from other dimensions. An incantation is required while throwing the dust, which inflicts 10 WP per attack.



Celephais Foundation

Elder Sign — 2 MP to activate but 2 POW to create. Green. Difficulty 11. The spell activates a previously drawn or sculpted Elder Sign, or may be used to create a new Elder Sign with the sacrifice of 2 points of POW. The activation of an Elder Sign, using the spell but at 2 MP cost, is required to obtain full effect from this eldritch ward.

Knit Flesh — Variable MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18. The caster is able to heal wounds in a matter of minutes, spending one MP per WP healed. The restored flesh takes on unnatural colors and features, the more WP healed the more extreme the change. Hair, warts, scales, and other attributes may develop. In time, an individual may have difficulty hiding these disfigurements from the outside world.

Powder of Ibn-Ghazi — 1 MP per dose to create. Green. Difficulty 11. Creates a silvery powder that makes invisible things visible for the span of about 10 heartbeats. The powder is blown from a tube or sprinkled over the subject.

Resurrection — 3 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 26. This spell and alchemical ritual reduces a corpse to its essential salts, a bluish-gray powder. A complete corpse is necessary. The spell will reconstitute the salts and resurrect the person. If only part of the powder is available, a monstrous and incomplete horror will rise. Reciting the spell backwards returns the resurrected entity to the salts once again.

Shrivelling — Variable MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 11. The spell takes two combat rounds to cast. On the resolution phase of the second round, a POW vs. POW resistance test is made. If successful, the caster blasts and blackens the victim. One WP is caused per MP invested into the spell.

Summon Dimensional Shambler — 8 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 18/26. The spell may be cast in any location, in day or night. A dagger made from a pure metal, not an alloy, is required. If successful, a Shambler gradually assembles itself from thin air.

Summon Azathoth — 20 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 45/68. Only the truly insane would ever consider summoning the Daemon Sultan into our world. It must be cast at night, outdoors, but few other preparations are needed. If control is lost, the caster takes the risk of destroying the planet.

Summon Cthugha — 10 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 35/56. Must be cast on a clear night when Formalhaut clears the horizon. Typically this falls between September and November in the northern hemisphere.

Torches are required for this ritual to summon this being of living fire.

Summon Hastur — 15 MP and 9 POW to cast. Blue. Difficulty 45/56. Nine monoliths of stone or concrete arranged in a “V” are required to cast this spell. It should be cast on a clear night when Aldebaran is above the horizon, typically between October to March in the northern hemisphere. A point of POW must be sacrificed to enchant each of the nine blocks.

Summon Shub-Niggurath — 15 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 35/45. This spell should be cast in the dark of the moon and within a deep forest. A special stone altar must be consecrated prior to the summoning by bathing it in at least 200 CON points of animal blood. During the summoning spell another 40 CON points worth of fresh blood must be spilled to appease the goddess.

Summon Servitor of the Outer Gods — 10 MP to cast. Green. Difficulty 35/56. An enchanted flute is required for this spell, which should ideally be cast on traditional ritual nights: Midsummer’s Eve, Mayday, Halloween, Walpurgis Night. If successful, a single Servitor appears, taking up the piping call itself.

Summon Yog-Sothoth — 15 MP to cast. Blue. Difficulty 45/56. A stone tower, at least 10 yards high, must be constructed in a wide, open area and cast under a cloudless sky. A human sacrifice must be designated for the god’s taking. ✠



Robert McLaughlin



Will Thrasher

Chapter 5

Creatures of the Mythos

Throughout most of Lovecraft's stories, he develops a grim alternate reality lying beneath the surface of everyday life. These ideas put forth by Lovecraft — and later expanded upon by other authors — are collectively referred to as “the Cthulhu Mythos.”

Lovecraft's vision was a cold, unforgiving universe where man is but an insect beneath the feet of ancient evils striding between the stars. Legends of these creatures survive in occult traditions across the world, although most facts have been twisted and confused through the eons. Unable to bear the horrible, empty truth of his own pitiful existence, man wove a protective veil of ignorance and an exaggerated view of his own importance in the cosmos. When this veil is swept aside and man witnesses the awful truths of the universe, his mind usually plummets into the depths of blackest madness.

Powerful alien beings descended to Earth from the stars when the planet was still young. They built cities and dug their lairs in the infant Earth. Long-forgotten races served the Great Old Ones and worshipped them as gods. They warred among each other for eons and committed terrible abominations. But “after summer is winter, after winter summer,” and the domination of Earth slipped from the grasp of the Great Old Ones.

Many of the Great Old Ones fell into a state of hibernation, as the stars spun in the heavens to positions unfavorable to their waking existence. Others were apparently imprisoned by Elder Gods and various prehuman races. Some are still free, lurking unseen in the dark corners of the earth or just beyond the limits of our five senses.

Even though dormant, the Great Old Ones still exert their malevolent wills from their resting places. Many humans and non-human races built cults around the Great Old Ones. These ancient beings encourage their worshipers to set changes in motion that will free them once again from the sleep of millennia. Besides the Great Old Ones and their minions, this dark universe crawls with many other nightmare beings beyond man's comprehension or understanding.

Categories of Creatures

Cthulhu Live uses a special set of categories to define the creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos. Lovecraft was not quite so concerned with organizing his nightmares into any clear hierarchy, but these categories simplify matters for role-playing gamers.

Great Old Ones are alien beings of incredible power and malevolence. They are not true gods, but they are often worshipped as deities by lesser life forms. While immortal, many of them are forced into periods of dormancy by natural cycles in the stars. Cthulhu is the most infamous of the Great Old Ones, and lies dreaming in his sunken city beneath the South Pacific.

Outer Gods are the true rulers of the universe and have little to do with humanity. Meddling with the Outer Gods inevitably brings madness and death. The ruler of their hellish court is the demon sultan Azathoth, a blind, idiotic monstrosity the size of a planet or small star, writhing eternally in the center of the universe. Several Outer Gods take special interest in the affairs of mankind.

Yog-Sothoth is a being conterminous with all time and space. He is called the Key and Guardian of the Gate and is petitioned in almost every ritual of summoning. Yog-Sothoth desires to enter this plane of existence to feast on the life it contains, but may only do so when the way is opened to travel from his usual domains between the universes.

Nyarlathotep is an Outer God who has visited mankind throughout history. Delighting in spreading madness and despair, Nyarlathotep is often a bringer of dark secrets and forbidden knowledge man is not yet ready to know.

Elder Gods are rarely mentioned in the stories of the mythos. They seem to be a race of gods neutral to, and possibly rivals of, the Outer Gods. Few Elder Gods are known by name; Nodens, Hypnos, Bast, Kthanid, and Vorvadoss are a few exceptions. The five pointed Elder Sign, respected and feared by the Great Old Ones, may draw upon the strength of the Elder Gods or it may be named in their honor as a protective talisman. Some writers after Lovecraft used these deities as cosmic foils against the evil of the Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods. This isn't quite Lovecraft's original vision of a vast, cold, malevolent universe. Keepers wanting to add a ray of hope in the darkness of these adventures may choose to use this concept. The Elder Gods should not be abused as a *deus ex machina* to pull the investigators' bacon out of the fire whenever they run afoul of the Great Old Ones.

Non-human races are divided into Independent and Servitor races, depending on how strongly they are connected to a particular god or Great Old One. Servitor races carry out the bidding of various dark powers and often enlist humans into the worship of the Great Old Ones. Independent Races usually have agendas of their own. They maintain a healthy respect and sometimes a working relationship with other beings of the Mythos.

Finally, a few creatures in Lovecraft's universe don't clearly fall into any of these categories and are designated as Unique entities. Examples include Father Dagon and Mother Hydra.

Making Monsters

Simulating monsters requires some work. The game staff must pitch in to help the Keeper during pre-game preparations. A well-crafted monster is a matter of personal pride for the Keeper and staff. As the game progresses, the players are stressed by plot complications, a cultist ambush, and the loss of a few fellow investigators. Suddenly, the corroded portal in the basement swings open with a rush of smoke and they see an immense, heaving Shoggoth, 10 feet across, slither into the room. A half-dozen ropy tentacles lash about in the chaotic flickering of a strobe light, as the unearthly terror rushes down upon them. The screams of terror may well be genuine.

Basic Body Types

In *Cthulhu Live*, most creatures can be described as belonging to one of four basic body types. Monsters in each body type share physical similarities and common costuming techniques. These body-types are:

- anthropomorphic
- amorphous (alien)
- giant
- puppets

Anthropomorphic monsters include deep ones, ghouls, mi-go, nightgaunts, zombies, and similar monsters following the basic outline of a human form. These monsters are played by a single actor with appropriate make-up and costume pieces. They are generally the easiest creatures to make.

Amorphous creatures include flying polyps, formless spawn, shoggoths, and all entities that are blob-like or utterly alien. Creatures like the Great Race and cthonians have definite body shapes, but are included in this group since the costume techniques are very similar. Two or more actors usually play amorphous monsters.

Giant monsters include dark young, gugs, Dagon, Tsathoggua, Y'Golonac, and other creatures that have a loosely anthropomorphic body shape, but are much taller than an average human. Usually a single actor plays these creatures, but with special costume items and effects to increase his size. These are usually complicated creatures to replicate but are very dramatic when they appear.

Puppet monsters are large creatures whose design requirements necessitate the use of huge, three-dimensional puppets controlled by members of the support staff. Hunting horrors or a being such as Atlach-Nacha would best be simulated through the use of giant puppets.

Useful Items

Costume pieces are used in different combinations to create dozens of monsters. Don't throw anything away. As you play more adventures, you'll stockpile interchangeable costume pieces. These are a few useful materials for monster making:

- theatrical make-up
- latex masks
- large bed sheets
- military camouflage nets
- sheets of plastic bubble-wrap
- an assortment of scrap foam rubber
- foam "water noodles"
- cardboard
- spray paint

Before we start talking about specific creatures, we'll run through a few basic techniques. Once you know the basics, it's easy to mix and match effects to create an endless variety of unsavory beasts.

Makeup

Theatrical make-up is useful for human actors as well as monsters. You'll use make-up on most anthropomorphic entities encountered by the investigators. Base creams and powders of various colors, plastic fangs, stage blood, blood capsules, and liquid latex all prove valuable investments. There are several cost-cutting techniques to maximize a gaming group's budget.

Base Creams

The most common base creams you'll need are white, black, green, and brown. Pick up a bottle of white clown base from a costume shop. You'll need it when making ghouls and other pallid beasts. Packages of camouflage make-up are available in hunting stores and army surplus shops. Buy the tubes of cream, not the hard camouflage sticks. Cream goes on and comes off much easier. Brown, black, and green are the standard colors and are perfect for almost any monster requirements.

Powders

Powders take us into more advanced make-up techniques. Commonly combined with colored base creams, powders accent special features and provide for effective blending techniques. Black, green, red, purple, and blue are all commonly used colors. The hollows of cheekbones, the shadows of the neck and throat, and the depths of the eyes are often treated

with powder. A dusting of red around the eyes of a white-skinned mutant gives him a terribly fierce appearance. The subtle application of blue, purple, and green adds a horrible cadaverous look to a corpse. The secret is not to overdo the powder. Just a hint of color is required.

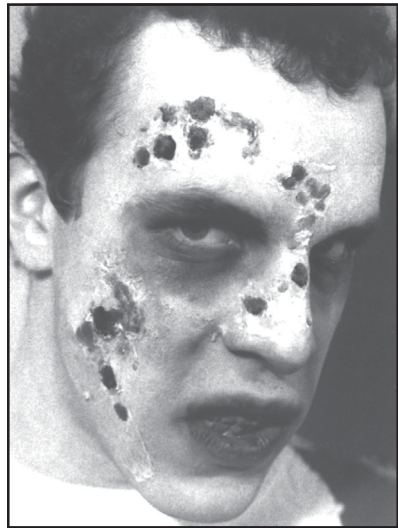
Red, blue, purple, and black powders are used to simulate bruises on actors. Dab the colors on with a small sponge wedge. Lighter hues at the edges, then let the skin grow darker at the center of the bruise.

If you're watching your budget, you should explore alternatives to the professional make-up powders. They're good, but can become rather expensive. An alternative is buying boxes of pastel chalks and charcoals from an art store. Crush them into a fine powder and you'll have a rainbow assortment of make-up. Store them in shallow jars and apply the crushed chalk with a make-up brush or sponge.

Latex

More special effects techniques, including liquid latex, will be addressed later in this book. Latex prosthetics simulate open wounds, horns, warts, and strange bone growths. Use prosthetics to change the appearance of chins, noses, and cheekbones. Take care not to tear the prosthetic when removing and these pieces may be used many times. Costume shops and online suppliers sell wonderful, ready-made prosthetics. Attach with spirit gum and blend with make-up.

Ambitious effects artists may try making their own prosthetics. One technique is to make a "mold" out of tinfoil. Shape it into a negative impression of the object you wish to produce. Coat the walls of the mold with latex and let it dry before peeling away the mold. Tissue paper soaked in latex is perfect to fashion the edges of open wounds. Shape the wet latex and paper into the desired cut, bullet hole, clawmarks, or whatever. Allow it to dry on wax paper. Attach with spirit gum and add make-up and fake blood to create grisly effects.



David Meiklejohn

Latex Masks

It's wiser and more economical to wait until the group needs a specific mask, rather than a blanket purchase of every one that looks remotely



useful. A lot of great bargains are available immediately after Halloween, but there are great online suppliers from which you can order at any time. Full head masks are best unless you combine the mask with a hood or wig. Apply black cream around the actor's eyes to minimize the contrast through the eye-sockets of the mask. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of masks floating on the market. For our purposes, we break them down into several categories.

Fish Creatures — Make-up can be used to represent the early stages of “the Innsmouth Look” but mature deep ones are tough to simulate. Fish creature masks are your best bet when creating these salt-water fiends.

Maniacs — Wide-eyed madmen and scar-faced killers, these masks are usually a poor investment. They never look as good as in the photos and a good make-up job is far superior. These are usually not worth purchasing unless you are building a body dummy and need a face for it.

Vampires — Make-up and plastic fangs are probably best for vampires in your game. However, there are a few masks available representing the Nosferatu style of vampire. These are dead white with canine faces, pointed ears, and large, protruding fangs. These masks are ideal for ghouls.

Werewolves — Makeup techniques for such creatures are too complex for most role-playing groups. Masks are best for introducing werewolves into your games. Some extremely stylized and creative werewolf masks may offer possibilities as hounds of Tindalos.

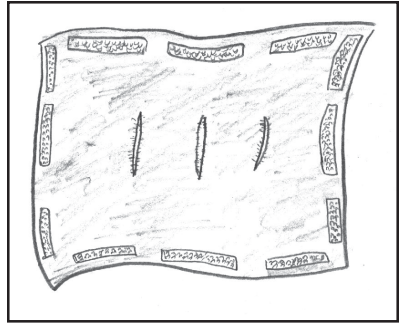
Zombies — One of the largest mask categories, these run the gamut from rotting corpses to fresh victims with ghastly head wounds. It's always good to keep a couple of these in stock. Zombie masks allow for quick costume changes, although a really good make-up job is hard to beat.

Weird Stuff — A lot of useless junk, but a lot of good stuff too. There are masks that make perfect gugs, dimensional shamblers, lab mutants, and even more bizarre things. A few anthropomorphic creatures are hard to make with simple make-up, but weird masks may fit the bill perfectly.



Bed Sheets

They are essential when creating amorphous and giant monsters. Dye the sheets a dark color (gray or brown) and try for an uneven appearance. Experiment with tie dyeing the sheets gray then making a second tie-dye pattern in brown. This creates a blotched, mottled surface. Besides tie dyeing, spray painting is another option. Paint whorls, textures, and the tracery of veins and arteries. Cut several slits in the sheet, large enough for a head or arm. Consider sewing strips of Velcro on the sheet edges so several can be easily fastened together.



Geoff Weber

Military Camouflage Nets

These nets consist of a nylon net base covered with different colors of pattern-cut fabric scraps, often rubberized to withstand inclement weather. They are often found at military surplus shops or online. While large nets are hard to come by, small nets that are 6- or 10-foot-square are usually perfect for a game group. All such nets can be used much like bed sheets, but already come with a fantastic texture. Smaller nets and “sniper” veils can be draped over the shoulders of deep ones as trailing seaweed. Larger nets are perfect for building amorphous creatures.



Robert McLaughlin

Plastic Bubble-Wrap

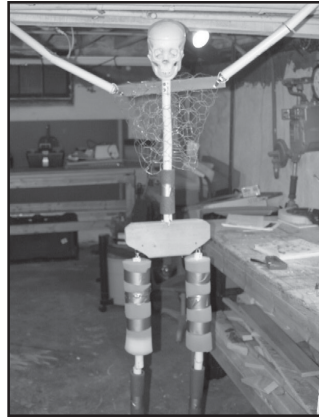
Sheets of plastic bubble-wrap can be found at office supply stores or mail centers. The large sized bubbles are the most useful for costuming needs. Roll a piece of bubble-wrap into a long, tapering tentacle to be slipped over an individual’s arm like a sleeve. Strong packing tape, used to seal the interior seam, keeps the tentacle together. Spray paint the tentacle to match the rest of your creature: mottled grays and browns, or a hideous glossy red like raw meat with veins painted in blue and purple. The texture of the bubble-wrap gives the tentacle a vile knobby, warty appearance.

Fashioning the bubble wrap into large “helmets” or complete baggy

suits produces some very interesting, low-cost costume effects. The material is inexpensive, easy to work with, and creates very unusual results when painted. The difficulty working with bubble-wrap is that many paints do not adhere well to the plastic. Flakes of paint will gradually rub-off with continued handling and use. Pieces may need to be repainted after every few games.

Foam Rubber

Some creature designs may require a lot of foam rubber, so look for a cheap supply. Fashion the stuff into eyestalks, claws, pincers, alien heads, and similar objects. Proper tools for cutting foam rubber are uncommon and expensive, so you'll probably use scissors and hobby knives. Take care not to cut yourself when shaping foam rubber with hobby knives! Don't worry about cutting perfect forms and precise edges. The playing environment and lighting effects help to obscure the creature. The finished pieces are painted to an uneven, mottled appearance.



No Good Deed Productions

Foam “Water Noodles”

These are long, brightly colored foam tubes common in toy stores during the summer months. They are used as flotation toys and safe items for exuberant children to hit each other with around the poolside. With a little trimming and painting, they are perfect for creating tentacles and similar forms with enough stiffness to support their own weight.

Cardboard

Sheets of cardboard are useful to have around. The cardboard may be fashioned into pinchers, alien heads, wings, or other constructs and painted appropriately. As always, try saving those monster pieces if you have enough storage space, since you'll frequently reuse certain pieces.

Making Wings

Several anthropomorphic races require wings. Nightgaunts, mi-go, and byakhee are several examples. You can either fashion the wings from cardboard, or create an internal skeleton from stiff wire with lightweight black cloth, nylon, or plastic stretched over the frame. If the material is too heavy, you'll bend the wire skeleton. Secure the cloth with black tape,

staples, or strategic stitching. Fashion the wings into either an open or folded position. Open wings are very impressive but can't be used indoors without breaking things. If used outside, they frequently snag on bushes and branches. Consider a half-folded position unless the encounter occurs in a large room or open clearing.

Mount the wings onto a harness to be worn by an actor. Old belts can be trimmed and riveted for this purpose. Another option is to visit an army surplus store and buy a nylon and aluminum rucksack frame. Paint the frame black and mount the wings on the aluminum frame. An advanced design would use hinged mounts for the wings with a spring linking them near the back of the actor. When the actor shrugs his shoulders, the wings flap menacingly.



Geoff Weber

Making an Amorphous Monster

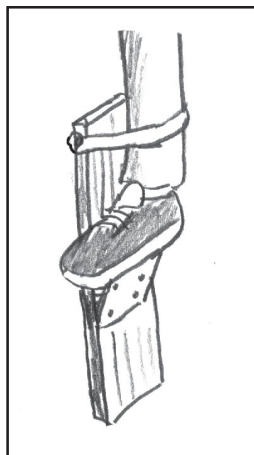
The process of making flying polyps, formless spawn, shoggoths, and similar alien beasties is virtually identical. Three to five actors are usually required, depending how large the creature should be. Drape the pattern-dyed sheets over the actors. It may be necessary to use more than one sheet, since a lot of excess material is preferred. You don't want sheets lifting up to expose the feet of actors. Velcro strips sewn on the edges of the sheets are ideal to connect multiple sheets together. Each actor has at least one bubble-wrap tentacle or foam-rubber/cardboard appendage (eye-stalks, pincers, etc.) to extend through a slit in the sheet. The exact positioning of actors beneath the sheet, and the configuration of appendages, depends on the creature in question.

Making a Giant Monster

One method is to make a set of short, strap-on stilts. Use 2x4" pine boards to construct a set of stilts raising the wearer two to three feet in height. A good technique is to rivet and tape an old pair of lace-up boots to the stilts. The actor can lace his feet into the stilts and walk about with comparative ease. Depending on the monster simulated, a few blocky foam rubber pieces can be built about the stilts into monstrous feet or hooves.

Drape one of the pattern-dyed sheets over the actor's body. It should

hang low enough to conceal the upper part of the stilts, unless you've padded the stilts and the actor's legs with cloth and foam rubber all the way up. The sheet increases the actor's body mass, especially if foam rubber pads are laced to his shoulders beneath the cloth. The actor grips wooden crutches or broomsticks, wrapped in cloth and sporting large foam rubber claws or pincers. Besides waving these around threateningly, the actor uses these limbs to help his balance and stability as he walks about on the stilts. The crowning touch, the costume piece used to cover or conceal the actor's head, depends on the creature in question. Latex masks, foam rubber, or bubble-wrap hoods, or simply masses of tentacles are all possible options.

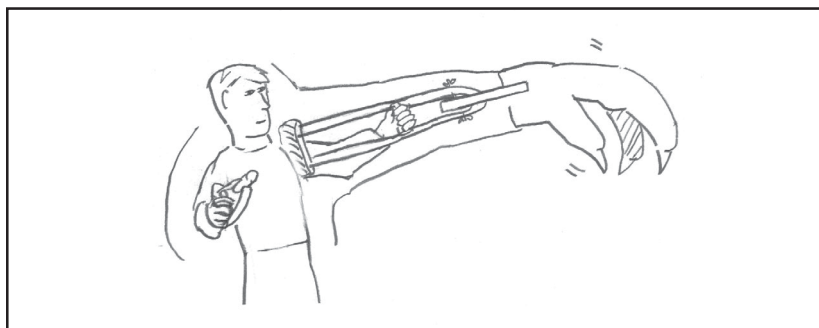


Geoff Weber

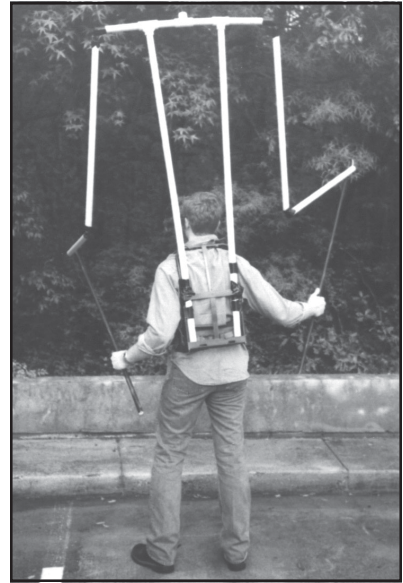
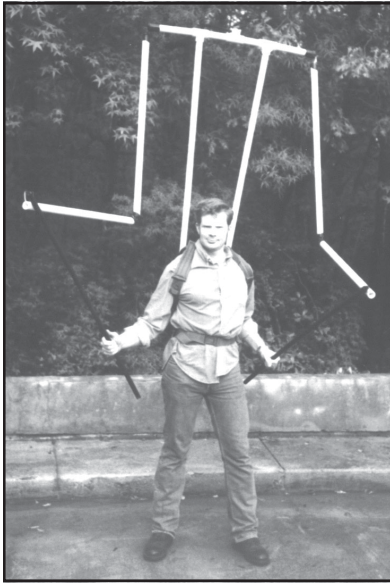
A second technique builds giant creatures by adding height above the actor rather than below him. This method allows for the creation of the tallest monsters of all. For this construction method, you start with a sturdy pack frame from a camping, sporting goods, or military surplus store. The frame should be equipped with shoulder straps, waist belt, and kidney pad for lower back support.

Build a framework for the creature's body from PVC pipe. Large hardware stores offer PVC pipe in a variety of lengths and diameters with a host of connecting angles and joints. The PVC is inexpensive, easily trimmed with a hacksaw, and can be assembled in a variety of different forms like a giant toy construction set. Create a blocked-out, upper-body form of the monster and secure this skeleton to the pack frame. Be sure it is strongly secured and let the actor walk around in the skeleton to make sure he is not unbalanced.

Drape the framework with fabric appropriate to the creature being represented. Make sure that the fabric skirt is long enough to cover the



Geoff Weber



Robert McLaughlin

actor inside. Insert a patch of some see-through material such as cheesecloth, dyed to match the rest of your fabric, so the actor can see where he's going.

If appropriate, make a head from Styrofoam, cardboard, or foam rubber to attach to the top of the framework. If you want to get really elaborate, it is possible to provide a skating helmet for the actor that connects via a free-turning vertical PVC shaft into the creature's head so it turns from side to side with the actor's head. Limbs and wings can also be attached to the framework.

You can create moving arm joints for the skeleton by threading the PVC with nylon rope. Play with the slack before securing the rope, to find the best level of interior tension for your needs. These huge arms are often capped with foam rubber or cardboard claws and pincers.

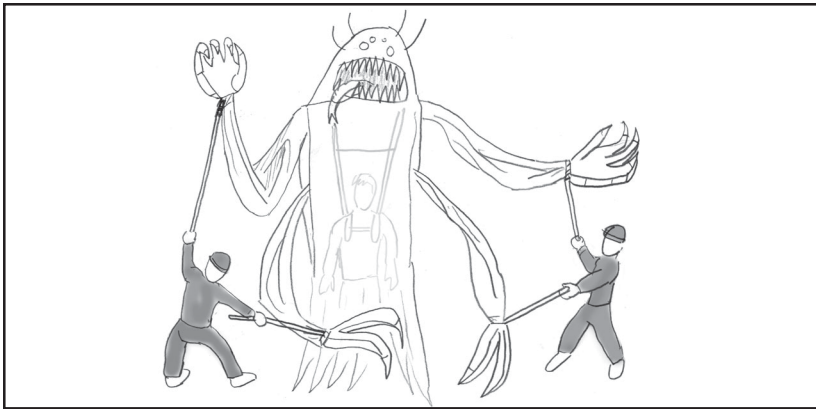
Because of the height and weight of this type of construct, and of the restricted vision, it is important that one or two "spotters" from the game staff accompany the actor to help him maneuver. These spotters can also manipulate limbs by slender poles like a giant puppet. The team should practice to ensure the safest performance. During game-play, these spotters should be dressed all in black to minimize their appearance.

Due to the top-heavy nature of this type of costume, it is necessary to put it on while seated. The pack frame rests on the seat and the rest of the costume leans against a wall. The spotters hold up the "skirt" and the actor belts on the pack frame. The spotters then help the actor stand and drape the skirt over him. Reverse the procedure to get out of the costume.

Making a Puppet Monster

Potentially the largest of all simulated monsters, puppet monsters are huge, three-dimensional puppets controlled by support staff outside the puppet rather than actors inside a costume. Chicken wire can be used to construct large, lightweight body forms for these puppets. The mesh may be cut with wire clippers, bent to shape and combined by twisting the clipped wire sections together.

Limbs may be built from chicken wire forms or PVC pipes. The chicken wire forms are covered with pattern-dyed sheets, dark colored plastic sheets, burlap or another fabric. Limbs are painted, or covered in appropriate materials. Depending on where the puppet is situated, high-test fishing line will be used to manipulate the limbs from above, or black-clad support staff will manipulate the limbs from below with slender rods.



Geoff Weber

Vault of Horrors

The following vault of horrors presents information on a small range of creatures likely to appear in a *Cthulhu Live* game. The information is by no means a complete treatment of potential stats and capabilities. Keepers usually want to personalize creatures to their own game, adjusting the danger of the monster as best suits the scenario. Keepers may easily invent new creatures, or import others from books, films, and Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game.

The Sanity Tests are mere suggestions and the Keeper may adjust tests as he sees fit. In a high-action game with repeated brushes with monsters, the Sanity Tests may become lower over time as the players become more familiar with the creatures. A dead specimen will also cause a lower Sanity Test than a live one.

Atlach-Nacha (Great Old One)

EDU: 15 **DEX:** 12 **CON:** 50 **POW:** 30

Wound Points: 50

Magic Points: 30

Sanity Test: Orange

Attack: 8 WP attack plus paralytic venom (CON 12)

Defense: 4-point armor from fur and chitin plates

Atlach-Nacha resembles a huge and hideous black spider with a strange, remotely human face, and little red eyes.



In the distant past, Atlach-Nacha lived beneath the continent of Hyperborea. Now it may dwell beneath South America. This creature dwells in a vast, underground chasm, eternally spinning a fantastic web across the abyss. Old books cite the belief that when the web is completed, the end of the world will come.

This creature is replicated through the use of a giant puppet with a large chicken-wire body frame covered in black cloth or plastic. Long legs can be made from PVC pipes and painted black. The rear legs should be built with locked and immobile joints, but the front legs are jointed and free to move under the manipulation of fishing line from above or by slender rods in the hands of black-clad game staff. A nice design job can make this huge arachnid puppet a very frightening surprise!

Byakhee (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 8-11 **DEX:** 13-15

CON: 15-20 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 15-20

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 5 WP attack

Defense: 2-point armor from chitin plates

Byakhee are a hideous race of interstellar beings often serving Hastur the Unspeakable. They may fly through the air and through the vacuum of space. Byakhee are often summoned by humans to serve as steeds, take part in occult rituals, or perform murderous deeds.



Kettle of Fish Productions

The exact appearance of the byakhee is unclear. They've been described as bearing similarities to crows, buzzards, ants, and decomposed human beings. Use some imagination when creating your byakhee. (One concept of a byakhee appears in the photo facing the first page of this chapter.)

Crawling One (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 10-15 **DEX:** 4-8 **CON:** 12-15 **POW:** 18-25

Wound Points: 12-15

Magic Points: 18-25

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: By weapon type

Defense: Physical weapons do half damage. Fire, magic, and enchanted weapons do normal damage

Crawling ones are a vile race of servitor beings that traffic with both the Great Old Ones and human wizards. Each crawling one is composed of thousands of wriggling worms and maggots that hold the general shape of a human body. Crawling ones must use weapons in combat, and they are difficult to injure with bullets or melee attacks. They are incapable of speech, but may write messages and communicate telepathically with their alien masters. All crawling ones are capable of using magic. Their sorcery is not hindered by their lack of speech.

An actor playing a crawling one should wear human clothes. Every-

thing from stained rags to a business suit may be appropriate depending on the adventure. In this way, only his head and hands need special treatment. Find a very cheap, full-head latex mask. You'll also need a pair of gloves. You can buy a couple pounds of rubber fishing worms to glue onto the mask and gloves. Another option is to make scores of worm-like strands on wax paper with a caulking gun and apply them with epoxy when dry. A little spray-painting or airbrushing of the worms will finish the costume.



Kettle of Fish Productions

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath (Greater Servitor Race)

EDU: 4-6 **DEX:** 10-12 **CON:** 25-30 **POW:** 20-25

Wound Points: 25-30

Magic Points: 20-25

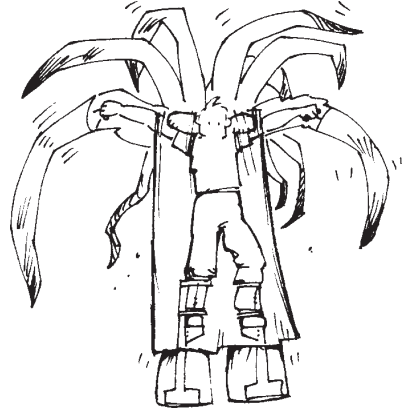
Sanity Test: Orange

Attack: 8 WP attack

Defense: Firearms do 1 WP damage. Immune to acid, electricity, and poison

These enormous black masses of ropy tentacles and puckered mouths stride around on great hooved legs. They accept sacrifices for Shub-Niggurath and participate in cultist rituals worshipping the Black Mother. They know spells related to Shub-Niggurath, the forests, and darkness. Not pleasant creatures to encounter on an evening stroll through the woods!

The basics of the costume follow the guidelines for giant creatures discussed earlier. Build up the strap-on stilts with foam rubber and cloth so that they look like a stout pair of hooved legs. The actor wears tentacles on his arms and drapes a pattern-dyed sheet over his body. An exaggerated set of shoulder-pads slip over the actor's head. These shoulder pads sprout dozens more tentacles and lengths of black rubber hose. Pull a black-cloth hood over the actor's head to hide it in the mass of tentacles. For an even larger dark young, use the pack frame skeleton construction to create a looming, squared off body shape. The skeleton is draped in a pattern-dyed sheet and topped with dozens of bubble-wrap tentacles.



Deep One (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 8-15 **DEX:** 8-12 **CON:** 13-18 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 13-18

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 5 WP attack and may use melee weapons

Special Defenses: 1-point armor from hide and scales

These vile batrachians serve Great Cthulhu, Father Dagon, and Mother Hydra. They often interact with evil humans inhabiting remote coastal villages, inbreeding with the humans to produce immortal hybrids who gradually turn into deep ones as they mature. The fish-frog faces of deep

ones are too difficult to reproduce with simple make-up. Latex fish-creature masks are the best choice if the script calls for these sea-dwellers. The actor wears a dark body suit and can drape his shoulders with shreds of “seaweed”.

Deep ones attack unarmed with their claws and with simple knives, clubs, spears or tridents. Deep one priests know spells related to Cthulhu and the sea. They often participate in rituals with human worshippers of the Great Old Ones.



Robert McLaughlin

Dimensional Shambler (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 6-9 **DEX:** 8-12 **CON:** 22-27 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 22-27

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 6 WP attack, chance of grabbing victim and disappearing

Defense: 3-point armor from thick hide

These enigmatic beings spend little time at any one planet, but endlessly wander between the planes and worlds of the universe. In combat, dimensional shamblers claw at their opponents or try to sweep them up in a bone-crushing embrace. Dimensional shamblers are large, bear-like creatures with thick, loose hide, and a terrifyingly insect-like visage.

Experiment with dark imitation fur or a baggy suit made from bubble-wrap and painted. Look through the more off-the-wall mask designs to find an appropriate head. Dimensional shamblers may leave a plane at will. They have been known to seize victims or special objects and carry them away to other dimensions, never to be seen again. The creature is vulnerable during these few seconds. The dimensional shambler begins to fade during the Declaration Phase and may not defend itself during that round. Unless killed, it will then vanish completely at the end of the Resolution Phase.



No Good Deed Productions

Father Dagon and Mother Hydra (Unique Entities)

EDU: 20 **DEX:** 13 **CON:** 40 **POW:** 30

Wound Points: 40

Magic Points: 30

Sanity Test: Yellow

Attack: 8 WP attack

Defense: 3-point armor from scales and hide

Ancient deep ones grown to an enormous size, Father Dagon and Mother Hydra roam the depths of Earth's oceans. They are the rulers of the deep ones and know all spells related to Cthulhu, the deep ones, and the summoning and binding of lesser Mythos creatures. A giant monster body design is used, with huge foam rubber claws and green cloth or pattern-dyed sheets to drape the body. A fish-creature latex mask is perhaps the easiest solution for the creature's head, although it may seem out of scale. If you're feeling particularly creative, a large fish-like mask can be made from foam rubber or cardboard.



Flying Polyp (Greater Independent Race)

EDU: 15-20 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 25-35 **POW:** 20-25

Wound Points: 25-35

Magic Points: 20-25

Sanity Test: Orange

Attacks: 8 WP Damage, Windblasts

Defense: Only takes 1 point damage from any physical attack.

This fearsome race came out of space about six hundred million years ago. They fought and were finally forced underground by the Great Race of Yith. Near the end of the Cretaceous era, they rose up from their caverns and exterminated the Great Race. Still dwelling in their deep subterranean haunts, the flying polyps seem content to remain there and devour the few beings chancing across them. These beings are only partly material. They have a monstrous plasticity and temporary lapses of visibil-



ity. They are created much like any other amorphous monster in *Cthulhu Live*, with several actors beneath pattern-dyed sheets. Tentacles, eye-stalks, and other foam rubber limbs are in order. There is no firmly established description of a flying polyp; they're just chaotic growths of malevolent, otherworldly tissue.

A flying polyp attacks with its tentacles. It also has the power of controlling incredibly powerful winds that it may use to knock over opponents, strip the flesh from their bones, or to suck them into the polyp's lair. Instead of attacking physically, a polyp may channel a gale-force wind during the Resolution Phase at all characters within a 15-yard long, 3-yard wide area. Characters within this area are immediately sucked toward the creature (into melee combat range) or are thrown violently backwards and knocked off their feet. Keepers may rule that characters immediately adjacent to solid, fixed objects grab onto the object and hold their position. In any case, characters within the area of the gale-force winds are unable to complete any ranged or melee attacks for the rest of the combat round.

Formless Spawn of Tsathogghua (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 4-6 **DEX:** 10-12 **CON:** 20-25 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 20-25

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 6 WP Damage

Defense: Immune to physical weapons; Fire, lightning, and magic inflict normal damage

These amorphous lumps of viscous black slime are closely associated with Tsathogghua and are often found in his temples and in underground caverns. They are extremely fluid beings, throwing out whip-like appendages and pseudo-pods at will. They are immune to all physical weapons and may only be injured by magic, fire, chemicals or electricity.

These creatures are replicated using the same techniques as for a flying polyp or shoggoth. Two or three actors are required. A black sheet is preferred for the formless spawn, instead of the standard pattern-dyed sheet. The actors climb under the sheet and whip tentacles about through slits in the cloth. The tentacles should be



painted black. Actors may feel free to shift and roll beneath the sheet, remaining crouched or prone, to increase the illusion of fluidity.

Ghoul (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 8-12 **DEX:** 10-15

CON: 13-18 **POW:** 12-16

Wound Points: 13-18

Magic Points: 12-16

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 5 WP attack or per weapon type

Defense: Firearms do half-damage

These pale, rubbery, loathsome humanoids dwell in tunnels beneath many of mankind's cities. Known to dig into graves and mausoleums in search of food, they'll eagerly add a bit of fresh meat to their diet when the opportunity arises. The ghouls' language consists of gibbering and meeping noises. They tend to roam in small packs. Ghouls make unarmed clawing attacks or close to bite at their opponents. They are relatively intelligent creatures, despite their animalistic appearance, and may also use simple melee weapons. Splintered bones and broken tombstones are neat ideas for a ghoul's weapons.



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The actor may be clad only in a loincloth or a few ragged pieces of clothing. Use a white base cream, or simply lots of baby-oil and talcum powder, to get that leprous skin tone. "Nosferatu" vampire masks are the best looking option, but there are alternatives. Most cheap, plastic fangs make the wearer drool a lot and cause his mouth to assume a swollen, muzzle-like shape. Comb the hair back with gel; apply powder and streaks of "dirt" and "mold" to the limbs. An appropriately stooped, loping gait and a veil of shadows are all that's needed to complete the illusion.

Gof'nn Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 6-9 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 13-18 **POW:** 12-14

Wound Points: 13-18

Magic Points: 12-14

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 5 WP attack or per weapon type

Defense: 1-point armor from fur and leathery skin

These horrific creatures were once normal men and women that were granted "favours" by Shub-Niggurath. Twisted and bestial, these creatures have forms reminiscent of satyrs with countless bestial and terrifying



mutations. Often these creatures are drawn from the ranks of the Dark Mother's worshippers, granted these gifts by the goddess for faithful service. Sometimes they are created from unwilling humans who may have stumbled across Shub-Niggurath in a darkly playful mood. Dwelling within the depths of the forest, they are certainly to be considered among the Black Goat's Thousand Young. Fragments of humanity remain which may draw the Gof'n Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath to the fringes of human society to gaze upon the lives they formerly lived.

Great Race of Yith (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 20-25 **DEX:** 8-10 **CON:** 25-30 **POW:** 15-20

Wound Points: 25-30

Magic Points: 15-20

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 4 WP attack or lightning gun for 12 WP

Defense: 2-point armor from thick hide

Members of the Great Race are a species of mental entities that fled the destruction of their own world and inhabited the bodies of a race of cone-shaped beings in Earth's distant past. Members of the Great Race are scientists and scholars devoted to the study of history—both future and past. Members of the Great Race project their consciousness through time and swap bodies with other creatures. In this way they move about and study other cultures. The displaced entity occupies the conical body of the creature and is asked to write down everything he knows about his own time. The Great Race can be fairly kind, permitting the captives to travel about and even meet other displaced victims like themselves. This period usually lasts for about five years, before the displaced entity is returned to its own body with its memory blanked to forget what occurred. This technique isn't perfect and the victim often has dreams recalling what took place while he was in the past.

In combat, the creature attacks with its two pincers. Some members of the Great Race carry a box-like lightning gun that can be fired once per combat round. A cult on present-day Earth is devoted to aiding visitors from the Great Race. In return, the visitors give them technological or magical knowledge.

Flying polyps destroyed the cone-shaped race at the end of the Cretaceous era, although the Great Race escaped their doom by projecting their

minds into insect beings of Earth's distant future. Characters are much more likely to encounter a member of the Great Race inhabiting a human body for "historic research."

In the unlikely event that investigators encounter a member of the Great Race in its cone-like body, one or two actors are required. You'll need pattern-dyed sheets, four tentacles, some nylon rope, stiff wire or PVC pipes and corner joints. The creature has four tentacled limbs. Small pincers top two of them; an eyestalk is on the third, and a small cluster of four reddish, trumpet-like appendages end the fourth limb.

Fashion the wire into a ring approximately six to eight feet in diameter. You can also use PVC pipes and corner joints to assemble a closed square about six feet to a side. This "hoop" is needed to shape the pattern-dyed sheets like an antique hooped skirt. Cut the rope and fashion straps suspending the hoop from the shoulders of the tallest actor. The hoop should float just above the floor. Fold the edges of the pattern-dyed sheets over the edge of the hoop and pin them in place with safety pins. At this stage the sheets may be gathered around the head of the actor and the sheets should be pulled down in a conical shape by the hoop.

The actor(s) playing the member of the Great Race extend the four appendages through the top of the cone formed by the sheets and wire ring. It is possible to use two actors, each controlling two appendages. This requires the second actor to walk immediately behind the first, sharing the burden of the suspended ring. Cover the heads of the actors in black masks, or wrap them in excess cloth from the dyed sheets.

A second option is with only a single actor. Make the eyestalk and trumpet appendage fairly short and mount them on the actor's shoulders. He uses his arms to control the two pincers. This option is less convincing than the first. Four independently moving appendages sprouting from the top of a fleshy cone is infinitely more disturbing than just two.



Gug (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 5-8 **DEX:** 10-13 **CON:** 25-30 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 25-30

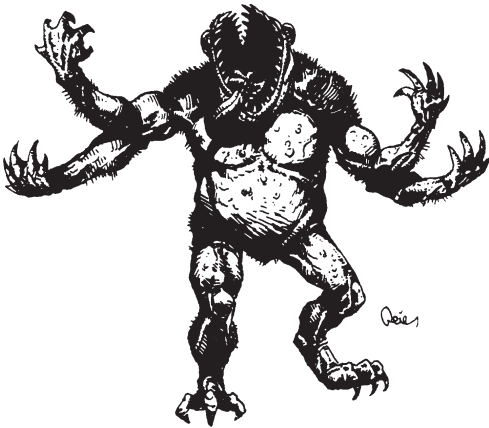
Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Yellow

Attack: 7 WP attack

Defense: 3-point armor from thick hide

These vile creatures worship the Great Old Ones with ceremonies so



abhorrent they were banished long ago, beneath the earth's surface. They aren't picky about what they eat, and almost any creature smaller than them is fair game. Gugs are rarely encountered outside of their caverns in Earth's dreamlands. There are many places in our world where the borders of dream and reality are worn perilously thin, and these terrible creatures might wander into our world in

search of prey. For some unknown reason, gugs are unnaturally terrified of ghouls and avoid these smaller creatures like the plague. Mortals venturing through gug-infested caverns would be wise to form an alliance with ghouls to accompany the party.

The most striking thing about a gug is its ghastly head with a great fanged maw that splits the skull from top to bottom and opens vertically instead of horizontally. Large staring eyes jut out on either side of the terrible mouth. Besides its strange skull, gugs have very unusual arms. Each arm forks into two forearms at the elbow, giving these creatures four large, hairy paws.

Gugs are built on the basic, giant monster body. Modifications must be made to the arms to create the bifurcate forearms. The body is draped in a pattern-dyed sheet. There is a latex mask currently on the market that is perfect for a gug.

If you prefer to build your own, the head of a gug is best made with a thin sheet of foam rubber, folded in the middle and pinned at the top and bottom to create the vertical maw. Stretch black nylon across the inside of the mouth to hide the actor's face and add some yellowed fangs. Short eyestalks with staring eyes are attached to each side of the head.

Hound of Tindalos (Greater Independent Race)

EDU: 8-11 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 20-25 **POW:** 20-25

Wound Points: 20-25

Magic Points: 20-25

Sanity Test: Yellow

Attack: 6 WP attack

Defense: Mundane weapons do no damage

These evil, hungry predators lived in Earth's distant past. They inhabit the angles of space and time, while mankind inhabits the curves. Because of their relationship with the angles of time, the hounds materialize from geometric angles such as the corner of a room. They cannot pass through smoothly flat or curved walls. Hounds of Tindalos may know several spells, usually related to contacting alien races and the Great Old Ones. Some individuals experimenting with Liao, or the Plutonium Drug, have been known to send their minds so far back in time that they attracted the notice of the hounds. It may take days or weeks for the hounds to traverse the eons in pursuit of their prey, but they are relentless, lean, and athirst.

The alien and extra-dimensional nature of the hounds renders them immune to physical weapons. Enchanted weapons and magic are required to battle the hounds. Advanced experimental weapons, perhaps particle beam weapons, may also be capable of injuring the hounds.

A hound of Tindalos is best created with a tall, slim actor in a nylon body suit. The suit can be airbrushed with the ribs, spines, and bony angles of the hound. Several "hell hound" masks on the market are perfect. Many of these are very stylized, alien canine forms. A second choice would be a white or gray werewolf mask. Use disturbing lighting effects and even smoke when the hound manifests itself. Black lights and ultra-violet make-up do wonders to enhance a hound of Tindalos. These are extremely alien and terrifying creatures.



Hunting Horror (Greater Servitor Race)

EDU: 5-9 **DEX:** 12-15

CON: 25-30 **POW:** 15-25

Wound Points: 25-30

Magic Points: 15-25

Sanity Test: Yellow

Attack: 6 WP attack

Defense: 3-point armor from hide



Resembling enormous ropy black serpents with bat-like wings, hunting horrors are swift harrier-creatures of the Outer Gods. They also may be summoned by sorcerers and sent to seek out blood and lives. These beings are dispelled by daylight. A strong enough burst of light may also drive these terrors away.

Hunting horrors are best simulated by a giant puppet construction. Chicken wire is used to fashion a head as one construction and approximately five feet of barrel-like torso as a second object. The forms are wrapped snugly in black cloth and five feet or so of black cloth forms the “neck” between the two constructs. Cardboard or chicken-wire and cloth wings may be mounted firmly to the body segment. An additional tail of black cloth, about 10 feet in length, should trail from the body. Two black-clad members of the game staff can manipulate the head and body by poles secured to the puppet. By stepping in and out, and using the rods to control the head, the puppeteers may direct the weaving, bobbing, striking actions of the hunting horror like a Chinese dragon.

Living Dead (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 2 **DEX:** 3-6 **CON:** 15-20 **POW:** 0

Wound Points: 15-20 **Magic Points:** 0

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 2 WP attack plus toxic bite

Defense: Firearms inflict 1 WP. Killed by destroying brain

The living dead are caused variously by chemical spills, strange radiation, and numerous scientific experiments gone awry. Some unholy force gives them a blasphemous mockery of life, and a rudimentary, reptile-like intelligence that drives them to consume living flesh. Their saliva contains the same toxin that gives them unlife. Any character killed by the living dead soon becomes one himself. The Keeper briefs slain characters on what

they need to know to join the ranks of the living dead. Wounded characters may be required to take Health Tests against the toxin, or simply lose WPs over time until they receive some form of antidote or die.

Living dead lose mobility and the use of their limbs when wounded by melee weapons. Firearms never inflict more than 1 point damage. If reduced to 0 WP, they



David Meiklejohn

drop in a quivering, creeping pile of dismembered parts. The only real way to kill them is to destroy their brains with a bullet or weapon strike to the head. This can be done using a trick-shot firearm specialization or using the aiming rules to shoot for 10 or more WP. Melee attacks at the head may simply be announced in combat but at least four points must be inflicted in a single strike to crush the skull and destroy the brain. The Keeper may make appropriate judgment calls based on the situation.

Simulate large groups of the dead by allowing actors several “unlives.” When the players kill them, they wait for the undead mob to pass over and then rejoin the back of the herd. They stay “dead” after two or three killing blows, or as dictated by the Keeper. Use make-up and liquid latex to obtain a suitably rotten appearance, or else pick out a few nice “zombie” masks. Dress the actors in tattered clothing and they’re ready to go. The Keeper should keep a compact case of white powder on hand to add a quick pallor to any new additions to the ranks of the living dead.

Man of Leng (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 9-12 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 10-15 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 10-15

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Green

Attack: By weapon type

Defense: None

These almost-human denizens of the legendary plateau of Leng were conquered by the Moon-Beasts long ago. The Moon-Beasts eat their plumper slaves and send the leaner men of Leng to act as their go-betweens with mankind. A few of the brighter men of Leng may know a few spells. They have no natural attacks and fight with normal melee weapons.

A man of Leng looks like a traditional satyr, with cloven hooves, goat-like legs, tiny horns, and excessively wide mouths. When dealing with humans, they conceal these deformities beneath long robes and humped turbans.

These are easy creatures to create for a game. For disguised men of Leng, all that’s needed is a turban, a robe, and maybe a little make-up to exaggerate the mouth and add a goatish cast to the features. To make an unclothed man of Leng, buy some inexpensive imitation fur available at any large cloth shop. If you can’t sew a pair of pants from scratch, just sew or even



staple strips of the fake fur to a pair of sweat-pants. Walk with the back straight, but the legs bent slightly at the knees. Use spirit gum to attach a pair of small devil's horns purchased at a costume shop or made with liquid latex and a mold.

Mi-Go (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 13-18 **DEX:** 8-10 **CON:** 13-18 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 13-18

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 4 WP attack by pincers

Defenses: Firearms and impaling weapons do half damage

These Fungi from Yuggoth are an interstellar race that descended to Earth from Yuggoth (Pluto) in the Jurassic period. They set up mining colonies in mountainous areas, where they dug for mineral ores to support their technologically advanced civilization. They speak human languages with a buzzing, droning voice and are known to use human agents to carry out specific missions.

Mi-go look rather like winged lobsters with a convoluted mass where a head should be. They are supposed to be pinkish-gray in color and fight with large pincers. Ordinary photographic emulsions can't record them, but a smart chemist could design a special film that picks them up.

Mi-go usually appear in small groups. Actors should wear long-sleeved black turtlenecks and black pants. Wrap the actor's body in a pattern dyed sheet or a tunic from painted bubble-wrap and belted at the waist. Use bubble-wrap to create a large "helmet" or hood for the actor to wear on his head. Paint the helmet to look rather like a human brain. Wings and foam rubber or cardboard pincers can be added to the actor. Extravagant groups might like to play around with two or three extra pairs of skinny arms made from rolled up cloth, tied tightly



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at intervals to simulate joints. Pin the base of these arms to the actor's side and connect them to his pincers with fishing line. When he moves the big pincers, the smaller arms move as well.

Nightgaunt (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 5-8 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 13-18 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 13-18

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 3 WP attack or may “tickle” victim (see below)

Defense: 1-point armor from hide

Nightgaunts are black, winged man-things with smooth, oily skin and featureless faces. They serve the Elder God Nodens. Nightgaunts often seize and fly away with their victims, dropping them from great heights or leaving them in horrible, remote places to die. They are stealthy and silent.

Nightgaunts may “tickle” their victims in combat, announcing their intent in the declaration phase. The creature’s DEX and the victim’s CON are compared in a resistance test. If the Nightgaunt wins, the victim falls helpless for three combat rounds.

The actor wears a close-fitting black suit. Dancer’s leotards and a tight turtleneck shirt will do nicely. Tight black gloves and dark shoes are required. Split-toed tabi boots, available at most martial-arts stores, work very well. Make a pair of wings, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Pick up a black ninja mask for the actor and pull a black, nylon stocking over his masked head. This creates a smooth, featureless face and still allows the actor to see what he’s doing. Hunt around for something to make little horns, if you’re a traditionalist.



Robert McLaughlin

Nyarlatotep (Outer God)

Human Form (Monstrous Form)

EDU: 50(50) **DEX:** 20(20) **CON:** 22(100) **POW:** 100(100)

Wound Points: 22(100)

Magic Points: 100(100)

Sanity Test: None as human, various levels for monstrous forms

Attack: per weapon type as human, 8 WP attack as monster

Defense: none as human, varies per monstrous form

The Black Man, the Crawling Chaos, the Messenger, and Soul of the Outer Gods — Nyarlatotep is one tough customer. He may appear in any one of a thousand forms. When dealing with humans, he often takes the form of a swarthy man of middle-eastern appearance. He appeared as a muscular man with jet-black skin to ancient witch-cults. His other forms are the stuff of madness.

His power is immeasurable although he is not omniscient. He knows every virtually every spell imaginable and delights in granting dangerous knowledge to civilizations not yet ready for the responsibility. He has appeared time and time again throughout the history of mankind, bringing turmoil and destruction in his wake. His human form can be slain, transforming into a hideous creature that flies off into the sky. No players can hope to best him in one of his monstrous forms.

Nyarlathotep is good for an occasional cameo appearance or to use as the dark force behind dangerous cults. Madness and insanity are more enjoyable to Nyarlathotep than mere death and destruction. He delights in bringing suffering and chaos to the world, tempting men with knowledge they haven't the wisdom to use. He's one of the most interesting creatures of the mythos, often filling a Mephistophelean role. Nyarlathotep may also appear as a cruel, relentless harbinger of the End Times.

Use free reign when designing Nyarlathotep's monstrous avatars. Several of his 1,000 forms are described in Mythos literature. You may wish to duplicate some of those shapes, using the techniques described in these rules, or you may wish to design your own form. Special attacks and defenses are always possible. Just design the nastiest creature you can imagine and you'll be doing fine.

Serpent Man (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 16-21 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 10-15 **POW:** 16-21

Wound Points: 10-15

Magic Points: 16-21

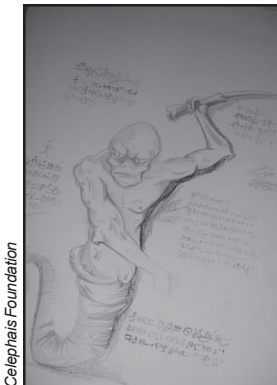
Sanity Test: Green.

Attacks: per weapon type or bite for 1 WP and poison

Defense: 1-point armor from scales

This ancient race flourished in the Permian era. They built black basalt cities and were known as fearsome sorcerers and scientists. Most of them are now long extinct, save for a few individual sorcerers or a dwarfed, degenerated species living in burrows beneath the British Isles. Serpent people may fight with any weapons available to them. They may grab opponents and bite with their venomous fangs. The victim makes a Health Test against a toxicity equal to the Serpent Man's CON. If the investigator fails, he loses an additional Wound Point every five minutes until successfully treated.

Serpent people know a wide variety of spells, including one that transforms their appearance into that of a normal human. Thus cloaked, the



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sorcerous reptile is free to mingle in human society and go about his dark business. Serpent people in their natural form are fairly easy to make. They often wear long, flowing robes. Cover the actor's hands in a green makeup cream. Let him wear a latex serpent or reptile mask to get a nice ophidian head-shape. Since Serpent people often take the guise of normal humans, a mask allows a very fast change to their true forms.

Servitor of the Outer Gods (Greater Servitor Race)

EDU: 15-20 **DEX:** 10-12

CON: 25-30 **POW:** 20-25

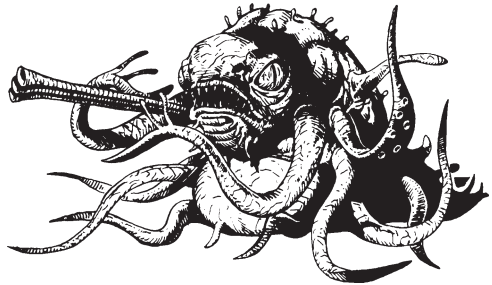
Wound Points: 25-30

Magic Points: 20-25

Sanity Test: Orange

Attack: 6 WP attack

Defense: Only injured by fire, magic, enchanted weapons, or chemicals



These amorphous beings seem to have a visual kinship with frogs or octopi, but it's hard to be certain because of their ever-shifting forms. The servitors of the Outer Gods may accompany their masters, or be summoned by human cults. They know a variety of spells and often assist human sorcerers summoning more powerful entities. The servitors play haunting pipes and flutes, and these unearthly instruments are linked to their spell-casting abilities.

A servitor is created with one or two actors. Cover them with pattern-dyed sheets and equip them with bubble-wrap tentacles, eyestalks, and other appendages. These creatures are often accompanied by an eerie piping music. A hidden tape recorder with suitably eerie tunes can be turned on when the creature makes its appearance.

Shoggoth (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 3-5 **DEX:** 5-8 **CON:** 45-50 **POW:** 10-15

Wound Points: 45-50

Magic Points: 10-15

Sanity Test: Yellow

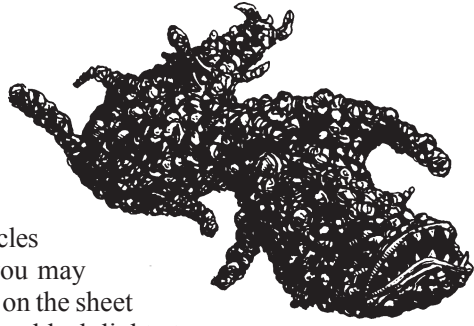
Attack: 8 WP damage

Defense: Physical attacks do 1 WP each; fire and electrical attacks do half damage. Regenerates 2 WP/round

Among the most feared creatures in the Cthulhu Mythos, shoggoths are protoplasmic servants bio-engineered by the Elder Things. They are dangerous to have around, since these surly monsters have a rudimentary intelligence and have been known to rebel against their masters. The statistics given for the shoggoth are for one of average size. They may be

much larger or smaller than this typical specimen.

Shoggoths are big and three to four actors are required. Connect several pattern-dyed sheets to produce one massive cloth. The actors fan out beneath the sheet and extend tentacles through the slits. If desired, you may paint a number of small “eyes” on the sheet in UV paint to be picked up by a black light at the encounter location. The actors under the sheet can see their way about through the unused slits. Make sure they keep the sheet taut enough that the whole assembly looks like a shifting blob, rather than four guys under a dirty bedspread. A domed chicken-wire frame beneath the cloth may help keep a better shape to the whole creature and is an easy cheat for enhancing the size of the shoggoth.



Tsathogghua (Great Old One)

EDU: 25 **DEX:** 15 **CON:** 50 **POW:** 35

Wound Points: 50

Magic Points: 35

Sanity Test: Blue

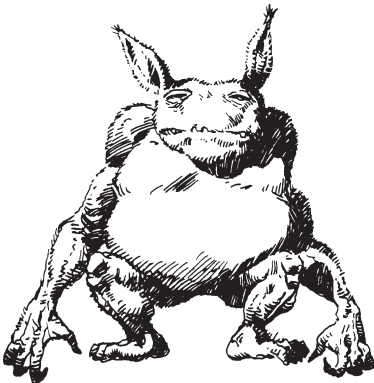
Attack: 6 WP damage

Defense: 2-point armor from fur and hide

Tsathogghua dwells in caverns far below the surface of the earth, in the black gulf of N’Kai. He has a fat, furry body and a toad-like head with large bat ears. His toothy mouth is extremely wide and his eyes are always half-closed, as if sleepy. He’s one of the less malevolent beings of the mythos, but still terrible to anyone unlucky enough to stumble on his lair. Even though he spends much of his time asleep (or pretending to be

asleep), Tsathogghua moves surprisingly fast when he wants to.

A race of black, formless beings serve Tsathogghua and are likely to be found in N’Kai or in any of Tsathogghua’s temples. Unlike most of the Great Old Ones, Tsathogghua doesn’t appear bent on world domination. He seems relatively content to doze in his cavern, snacking on the occasional sacrifice or luckless spelunker.



A single actor represents this Great Old One using the giant monster construction techniques. Tie a few pillows to the actor beneath the sheet, to give him a paunchy appearance. If your gaming group has a large patch of fake-fur lying around from previous adventures, drape it over the actor's body. A few latex masks on the market may serve for representing Tsathogghua, but it's probably better to create a large helmet/mask out of foam rubber. Add large ears, sleepy eyes, and a toothy grin.

Vampire (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 10-15 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 15-20 **POW:** 15-22

Wound Points: 15-20

Magic Points: 15-22

Sanity Test: Green

Attack: per weapon type or bite for 2 WP damage

Defense: See below; regenerates 1 WP/round

These princes of the undead may fight with weapons or seize their victims and bite at their throats. Vampires may make psychic attacks with the intent to dominate their victims. So many legends exist about the vulnerabilities of vampires that details are left up the Keeper. The efficacy of crosses, holy water, wooden stakes, and normal versus enchanted weapons may vary from one vampire to another.

Outfit your vampires as you choose. Even in this regard, ancient legends and modern films vary widely. Most vampires have fangs and pale skin. Others obtain their blood with knives and may even walk about during the day. Decide details about these monsters for yourself. If the characters are a fearless group of vampire hunters, details might even differ from one adventure to the next, just to keep them on their toes.

Werewolf (Lesser Independent Race)

EDU: 8-12 **DEX:** 10-15 **CON:** 15-20 **POW:** 10-13

Wound Points: 15-20

Magic Points: 10-13

Sanity Test: Blue.

Attack: 5 WP damage

Defenses: 1-point armor from fur; regenerates 1 WP/round. May not regenerate damage from silver weapons

These individuals bear the curse of lycanthropy and may transform into wolves or half-human monsters. A few werewolves may be unaware of their condition and only transform



when the moon is full. Some evil souls relish their powers and the taste of human flesh. They may transform to their animal states at will.

Werewolves fight unarmed with their claws or teeth. Whether or not the bite of a werewolf spreads lycanthropy is left to the individual Keeper. Dress a werewolf in ragged clothes and a frightening latex wolf-mask. For these creatures, masks are recommended since good werewolf make-up effects are labor and time intensive.

Y'Golonac (Great Old One)

EDU: 30 **DEX:** 15 **CON:** 50 **POW:** 30

Wound Points: 50

Magic Points: 30

Sanity Test: Yellow

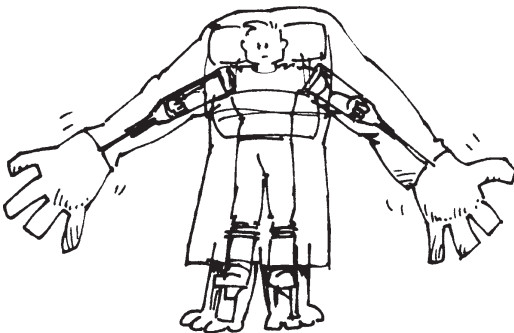
Attack: 5 WP damage

Defense: None

Y'Golonac is a headless, bloated, pale creature walled up in a lost, subterranean ruin. It is a minor god, but an extremely malignant one. Y'Golonac has been known to come when its name is read or spoken in the presence of evil. Y'Golonac has only a small cult, but actively tries to increase his following among the most evil and perverted minds of mankind. An occult text called the Revelations of Glaaki details the existence of Y'Golonac. These blasphemous pages create a bridge to the reader's mind that Y'Golonac may attempt to cross. Y'Golonac is quite clever at getting persons to read passages from that horrid book without realizing they have done so.

Y'Golonac may psychically attack anyone who has read a page or more of the Revelations of Glaaki. If successful, Y'Golonac devours the individual's soul and possesses his body. At will, Y'Golonac may mutate the body into its true form — a pale, headless, bloated corpse with wet mouths opening in the palms of its hands. Normal weapons may injure or kill this avatar of Y'Golonac and banish his spirit back to his dark lair.

Y'Golonac is created from a single actor using the giant monster construction technique with huge foam rubber claws



and a couple of pillows tied to his chest and stomach for mass. While the creature could be wrapped in pattern-dyed sheets, white sheets would be more appropriate for this white, glistening horror.

Zombies (Lesser Servitor Race)

EDU: 2 DEX: 3-6 CON: 20-24 POW: 8-12

Wound Points: 20-24

Magic Points: 8-12

Sanity Test: Blue

Attack: 2 WP attack

Defense: Firearms, unarmed attacks, and blunt weapons only inflict 1 WP. Edged weapons inflict full damage


Zombies are corpses reanimated by magic or prepared by voodoo rituals. They have no real minds of their own and are directed by the sorcerer or shaman who created them. Zombies are stopped by counter-magic, the death of the animating wizard, or hacking the zombies into little quivering bits. Only edged melee weapons have any effect. Zombies stagger and stumble under unarmed strikes, blunt weapons, and gunfire, but only complete dismemberment destroys them. Zombies never fall unconscious and merely collapse in a festering heap when reduced to 0 Wound Points.

Zombies are too slow and uncoordinated to use weapons. They are often used as servants and guards by evil sorcerers and voodoo high priests. They may be “programmed” to come alive when certain conditions are met, such as someone entering a room or taking an object from its resting place. Use make-up and liquid latex to simulate rotten, decaying flesh. A few latex zombie masks can also be used if quick and easy costume changes are required for actors. Tattered rags suit zombies fine, as few care if their zombie servants are models of haute couture.

Final Monster Notes

This has only been a sampling of creatures at the disposal of the Keeper. Chaosium’s *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game is an excellent source book on these and other nightmares from the Cthulhu Mythos. Witches, golems, demons, psycho-killers, and other horror favorites are all waiting to be designed and included in your own adventures.

As you’ve seen, many costume pieces used to build monsters can be used over and over again. After a few games, the prop-room is well stocked to mix-and-match pieces for a host of otherworldly horrors. It requires a little effort to build these creatures, but the results are quite rewarding. Lights, smoke, and other special effects are used to enhance the dramatic appearance of these creatures. Remember that these creatures are best encountered in dark, forbidding surroundings.

Give the players time to really get into their roles and they’ll actually “see” the monster before them. Capitalize on the value of surprise to blur the players’ senses. They’ll almost believe they’ve truly run into a roaring, clutching terror from beyond the stars. 



Cthulhu Live Archives

Chapter 6

Outsiders & Psychic Abilities

This chapter presents several advanced rules structures not required for basic game-play. These rules offer expanded game options that may be introduced upon the approval of the Keeper.

Outsiders are player characters set in dramatic and often villainous roles. The line is not clearly defined, but certain characters have a distinctly more sinister cast and may require special handling. In their simplest form, Outsiders are a means to reduce the number of NPC actors and allow very unusual roles to be offered to players. In other cases, entire games or campaigns can be built around groups of Outsiders. These games often cast players in the roles of cultists and servitors of the mythos engaged in secret wars and following the gradual loss of their humanity.

Psychic powers occupy only a small role in traditional Mythos tales, but are more common in contemporary horror. Keepers should be very selective in allowing characters with Psychic abilities. These abilities should be rare and introduced only if there is a solid reason for being in a game. In some cases, Psychics and paranormal powers occupy a central role in a script. In others, Psychics may merely be one of multiple sources of information and assistance that players must correctly employ during the evening.

The Outsider

As live-action role-playing evolved over the years, many gamers have demonstrated acting skills and maturity that permit the Keeper to confidently assign Outsiders to certain players. Many scripts may use no NPC actors at all, and employ players in the roles of heroes and villains alike. As stated earlier, some Keepers may chose to build games or whole campaigns around these anti-heroic character types.

Outsiders are dangerous, insane, and typically opposed to the goals of most other characters in the game. They hide their true natures behind veils of normalcy. Many stand as upright pillars of the community, while worshipping ancient gods and committing terrible acts in the dark of night.

As stated earlier, the term “Outsider” is one of convenience. The lines of character division are not firmly established. Some characters clearly qualify for the rules and considerations applied to Outsiders: a mythos cult leader, a half-human hybrid horror, an occult researcher who lost his mind and humanity when delving into the dark arts. Other characters are questionable: a sadistic prison warden, a serial killer, or a diabolical Nazi

officer. Should these be considered Outsiders or just villainous bastards? Very specific rules apply to Outsiders, particularly in regards to Sanity Tests and brushes with the supernatural. The Keeper makes the decision as to which characters these rules apply.

The challenge Outsiders present to game balance is obvious. When designing the role, you must be sure to include a number of disadvantages and weaknesses to balance out any special powers, spells, and lore the Outsiders may have at his disposal. Even after the strengths and weaknesses are combined, Outsiders are still more powerful than the “average” player. The Keeper should only assign Outsiders to gamers who have demonstrated their role-playing skills in the past and will play the role intelligently and maturely. As they are typically outnumbered, Outsiders must step carefully to avoid attracting too many suspicious eyes until their vile plans come to fruition.

Must Outsiders be evil? Not necessarily. They may well be tortured souls who hate their inner nature. It is convenient to consider Outsiders as evil and insane player characters and Façade as the dark cousin of Sanity. But not all characters may embrace this evil. This opens up the door for complicated and fascinating characters.

Outsider characters have terrible secrets and utter blackness in their souls. In their true state, when the façade of humanity is stripped away, they can be cruel, bloodthirsty, and evil monsters. Fiends that the other player characters would want to lock away in an asylum or prison, or to just put down with a bullet like a rabid beast. Certainly there may be Outsider characters that hate what they have become. They labor to maintain their façade and live as normal a life as they can. These unhappy souls wrestle continually with the darkness within, fearful of what they will do when they lose control of themselves.

Robert McLaughlin



Façade

One of the most immediate differences between “normal” characters and Outsiders is the handling of Sanity Tests. Characters who are irrevocably insane or immersed in the dark lore of the Cthulhu Mythos simply don’t think like most humans. Most Outsider characters have built up a thin veneer of sanity, a façade that hides the true darkness of their souls and allows them to pass in normal human society. Beneath this façade boils terrible violence, evil, and depravity.

When normal humans encounter horrific sights and are confronted

with awful secrets, their minds become unbalanced. Fear, uncertainty, and primordial terrors rise from the depths of their souls to overwhelm their senses and their capacity for rational thought. When Outsiders encounter these things, it merely serves to awaken dark lusts and reaffirm the evil within them as the natural order of things. Their façade begins to peel away, exposing the blackness within.



PST Productions

Façade is an alternate form of Sanity assigned to Outsider characters. It functions in many regards like traditional Sanity tests. As an Outsider character, you are assigned a Shade of Terror, just like normal characters. This Shade of Terror is determined by your POW and drawn from the chart in the Character Creation material. When encountering your shade of terror, you drop a level of Façade. You may not panic when dropping a level, but your behavior alters. The further down the Façade scale your character progresses, the harder it becomes to conceal the evil within you.

Façade Levels

Fine

Foreboding

Foul

Fiendish

Feral

Freaking Insane!

Just as the Cthulhu Mythos skill limits the maximum Sanity Level, it also limits the maximum level of Façade a character can maintain. At Level 2 and Level 4 of the Cthulhu Mythos skill, the maximum Façade for a character drops by one level.

Façade may also be restored over time, generally between game sessions, although the Keeper may rule on small boosts that psychotherapy, drugs or alcohol may give to an Outsider's façade level. The Keeper may wish to rule that every time a character dips to Freaking Insane, the maximum Façade level also drops by one point. This would function in the same manner as Sanity for normal characters and represents the eventual loss of all vestiges of humanity.

Horrors Unveiled:

The Nightmare Of Transmogrification

One of the strangest challenges some Outsiders face is the threat of transmogrification. Not all Outsider characters are susceptible to transmogrification, physical changes to their bodies as a result of the darkness within them. Characters with mythos-tainted bloodlines and those regularly using mythos magic are at greatest risk. Keepers may rule that some characters are so intrinsically evil that their physical bodies can no longer conceal the horrors within.

When Outsiders drop to the lowest level of Façade, the madness and alien logic rushing through their minds may unleash an uncontrolled rush of energy that can warp their physical form. Transmogrification may also occur from other causes. Dark patrons may grant monstrous gifts for faithful service or inflict crippling mutations as punishment for failure. Hybrid humans with alien or demonic ancestry carry a sleeping horror within their very genetic code, waiting for an unknown trigger to bring about a terrible transformation.

Transmogrification is a tool of the Keeper to uniquely punish and reward Outsider characters. In most cases, the Keeper alone will determine when it occurs and what sort of transformation takes place. It can be a slow, creeping process, or it can come very suddenly. A sequence of several such transmogrifications can yield different mutations, or they may make an earlier alteration become worse.

How terrible a deed did the Outsider perform when he dropped all of his Façade? Is there anything poetically fitting for the deed or uniquely appropriate for a cult, such as fangs and talons for a ruthless killer, extra teats dripping the Black Milk for a servant of Shub-Niggurath or a face full of wriggling tentacles for a worshipper of Cthulhu? Is the transformation a gift or punishment from the Outsider's patron deity? To what extent do they deserve to be rewarded or punished?

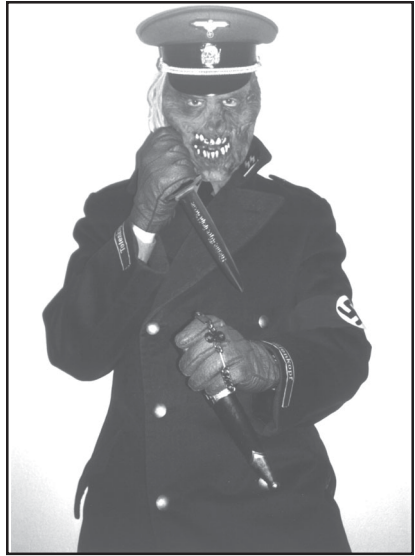
The point values listed with these examples help guide the Keeper's decision. Some elements may be put in place when the character first enters the game. The player does not select changes taking place after character creation. Instead they are chosen according to whatever dark logic or grim irony the Keeper has in mind. This includes changes brought about as rewards from supernatural patrons. Remember that what constitutes a "gift" in the mind of the patron may not be the same for which the player was hoping. That covering of fur and horny plates absorbs substantial damage in combat, but the Outsider is now unable to walk the streets unless swathed in heavy clothes and a low-brimmed hat. That's just part of doing business with the Great Old Ones.

The sample transmogrifications listed below are classified as either limitations with a negative point score, or powers with a positive point score. Unlike the advantages and disadvantages discussed in Character Creation, this point score has no direct relation to attribute, skill or experience points. It is intended to balance the powers and limitations of Outsiders that experience physiological changes. Limitations must always exceed powers gained by the character. They should be assigned in supporting combinations, when ever possible.

For example, a character that gains claws, fangs, and infrared vision may gain a total of 3 points of unnatural powers, but may be assigned 4 points of limitations from his inhuman appearance and a new killer instinct. A vampire-like character may gradually acquire eternal life, fangs, night vision, and immunity to firearms for 7 points in powers. As these powers develop, he might also suffer the penalties of dead flesh, bloodthirst, sleep of the dead, repellent to animals, and creature of the night for a Keeper-determined total of 9 points of limitations.

Outsiders with a dormant alien genetic code, such as a deep one hybrid or child of a human and the Outer Gods may have a pre-determined set of changes just waiting for the right triggers to take place. The character will gradually transform into a deep one or a hideously furred and tentacled monster. The same principle of pre-determined changes may apply for a human whose eating habits and circle of friends gradually degenerate him into a ghoul. Typically these chains of “programmed” transmogrifications cease once they have run their course. Subsequent critical losses of Façade are unlikely to trigger further changes in these inhuman or hybrid species, but will serve to further remove them from the chance of ever controlling their actions and passing amongst humans.

When creating Outsider characters who have already experienced transmogrification, such as the Goffin Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath, vampires, hybrid-beings, and others, the Keeper may permit the player a “ceiling” point score of powers they may select and either choose appropriate limitations for the player or allow the player to choose them himself. Don’t forget that the point total of limitations must exceed the point total of powers! The Keeper assigns all subsequent transmogrifications.



Robert McLaughlin

The Outsider and Others

The prospect of a few interesting powers or monstrous features may appeal to some players, but these gifts come with a heavy price. The less human an Outsider becomes, the further he must remove himself from human society. Unable to seek solace and stabilization in the routine of human existence, he is eventually forced to shun all human contact and live alone or amidst others like himself.

This makes recovery of Façade ever more difficult. It becomes harder for the Outsider to distance himself from his monstrous reality. Lower Façade means a more frequent descent to unbridled madness. The tortured soul is opened to further changes, gradually reducing the Outsider into a warped, inhuman beast of pain and madness. Few Outsiders survive to reach that stage. Most commit suicide, are lynched by terrified humans or are prudently slain by members of their own cult long before they reach that level of degeneracy.

At first glance, the introduction of transmutation seems to open the field for Outsider “power-gamers” who push their Façade to its lowest limits in the quest for new supernatural powers. Disgruntled players might complain that when Outsiders lose control they gain special abilities while all the investigators get is a drool cup and sponge bath courtesy of Arkham Sanitarium. This is not entirely the case. Many limitations are truly horrible curses to bear. Outsiders will soon find that being a monster may not be all for which they hoped. Players are expected to role-play these limitations to their fullest, otherwise the Keeper has numerous means to demonstrate just what a hard, cold world this can be to the Outsider.

The Keeper need not allow a transmutation to occur every time the Outsider slides down to uncontrolled madness. Over time, most cultists and servants of the Great Old Ones develop minor limitations such as degenerate appearance, deformed, and repellent to animals, and perhaps minor powers such as enhanced senses. For most of them, this is as far as the changes go. Not every character is genetically predisposed to transmute under the influence of eldritch power and darkest madness.

Many Outsiders may not survive long enough to experience more dramatic changes. Every time an Outsider falls to Freaking Insane on the Façade chart, he has lost all control of the madness that rages within his soul and becomes a dangerous psychopath under the control of the Keeper. The actions an Outsider performs during these periods may well get them caught, imprisoned or killed. A player who elects to “roll the dice” with an Outsider character and purposely plunge himself repeatedly into this state of madness in hopes of developing supernatural powers takes a terrible risk with his character’s life.

Although mythos cults labor to bring about the return of the Great Old

Ones, most members are still lucid enough to realize that they are outnumbered and outgunned. Secrecy is essential to survival until the Old Ones return to reward the faithful. Some cults nurture one or two members as blessed servants “touched” by their dark patrons. Constantly driving these poor souls into greater and greater deprivations, the leader may develop these beings into horrible monsters at the beck and call of the cult. Useful in their awful rites or as convenient means to dispose of pesky reporters and investigators who snoop too closely, these horrors are usually so far gone that the cult leader himself maintains only nominal control of their actions.

If rank and file members of a cult were purposefully pushing their bodies toward such terrible mutations or had inadvertently suffered the effects of transmogrification due to lost Façade, they would pose a significant risk of attracting undue attention to the cult. The leader might decide that members too far gone were significant risks and send others to capture or kill the Outsider in order to protect the cult.

This “fall from grace” within a cult might form the basis of a compelling shadow campaign, in which the players are Outsiders sent out to hunt down and destroy a horribly mutated member of their cult. Along the way they must take every opportunity to conceal the evidence of its terrible crimes and any clues leading back to the cult. Or, a few unfortunate players may seek to conceal the extent of their monstrous alterations from their brethren lest they end up shunned and hunted by human society and their former cult alike. Only a very few cults, such as the Goffin Hupadgh and the Temphill Cult, truly bask in the “blessings” of transmogrification. All understand the necessity of concealing their mutations or safely dwelling far from the eyes of man.

Players must understand the terrible price to be paid for any powers resulting from these unnatural changes. Good role-players may relish the rich opportunities of playing the pain, torment, and the hungry, bright-eyed madness that haunts the victims of transmogrification. These players can add a wonderful depth and spice to *Cthulhu Live* games and shadow campaigns. Power-gamers who neglect the limitations and constraints of role-playing such monsters may need the Keeper to organize a harsh reminder for them. Police, mythos hunters or hysteric mobs can serve to remind the Outsider just how human society reacts to something it fears or doesn’t understand.



No Good Deed Productions

Limitations

Following are some of the limitations that can be suffered by Outsiders.

Bloodthirst Cost: 1, 2, or 3

A terrible fetish and fixation on blood dominate the Outsider. His thoughts, expressions, and deeds reflect the need to physically ingest blood to survive. If the blood of any animal sates this thirst, it is a one point limitation. It is two points if the blood must be that of humans, or a three-point limitation if the thirst is exclusively for the blood of humans the Outsider finds sexually attractive. The blood normally must be fresh and sucked directly from the body of the victim. If “cold blood” from medical stores will suffice, the cost may be lowered at the discretion of the Keeper. The Outsider must consume a number of wound points of blood each day equal to half his permanent CON score. Otherwise his CON temporarily drops by one. Once the Outsider resumes feeding, CON is regained at a rate of one point per day. The accursed creature will die should its CON ever reach zero from lack of fresh blood.

Cannibalism Cost: 1, 2, or 3



No Good Deed Productions

Much like Bloodthirst, this transmutation is not only a sick fixation but also a physical need to consume human flesh. The cost of this limitation is adjusted according to how specific the victims must be and whether the meat may come from corpses, may be stored in a freezer, or must come from fresh-killed victims. The cannibal loses one point of CON per day when no meat can be found, but regains this at one point per day once his diet is resumed. Assuming the Outsider need not have freshly killed victims, a single corpse can feed most cannibals for five to seven days.

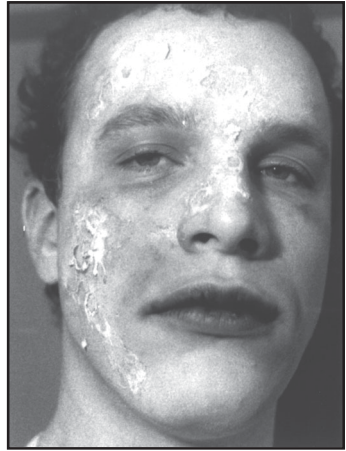
Creature of the Night Cost: 3

The Outsider's body absorbs too much energy from sunlight or is dangerously sensitive to certain wavelengths of ultraviolet light. Exposed to full daylight, the character's CON drops by one point every five seconds.

If the sky is heavily overcast, the he or she loses one point of CON per minute. If the character is brought into a dark place, all losses are regained in 12 hours. If CON reaches zero, the Outsider dies. Some Outsiders may experience damage at a slower rate than what is described, while a few may burst aflame at any exposure to direct sunlight. Adjust the limitation cost accordingly for these cases.

Dead Flesh Cost: 3 or 1

The Outsider suffers the ghastly curse of undeath. His soul and intellect are bound to a body he still controls, but is no longer alive. At the Keeper's discretion, the character may be given the benefit of an additional five to ten wound points added to his WP total. This accounts for the extra physical trauma that must be inflicted on the character's body in order to bring him down. The Outsider maintains the temperature of its surroundings, making him difficult to spot by infrared detection. The character is an immobile husk in sub-zero temperatures. The body is unable to heal itself and is in a constant state of decomposition, particularly in hot climates. The Outsider may resort to chemical preservation, refrigeration, weird science or arcane magic in order to slow their physical decomposition. Ghastly surgical techniques or magical healing must be employed to restore damage from physical attack or decomposition. If this affliction is combined with another limitation that allows the Outsider a chance to specially preserve or heal his undead body, such as Bloodthirst, Devourer of Souls or Sleep of the Dead, then Dead Flesh only warrants a reduced cost limitation of 1.



David Meiklejohn

Deformed Cost: 1

While recognizably human, the character's body is severely deformed. He may suffer unnatural bone growths beneath the skin, club-like limbs, limbs that are double-jointed or jointed in unusual locations, a hunchback, and similar deformations.

Degenerate Appearance Cost: 1

The Outsider's body betrays the signs of a degenerate, inbred or corrupted bloodline, telltale signs of the insidious influence of the Mythos. He may be uncommonly hairy with a stooping, Neanderthal-gait and a satur-

nine face, a waxy albino with rat-like features and sharp, darting eyes or perhaps display the characteristic bulging eyes, thinning hair, and sloping forehead of the “Innsmouth-look.” While not truly deformed, the Outsider’s appearance is decidedly unwholesome, even shocking, and not soon to be forgotten.

Devourer of Souls Cost: 3



Robert McLaughlin

As the bloodsucker thirsts for blood, the soul-eater hungers for souls. The character consumes the life force of humans and leaves their bodies as dead, empty shells. The release of the victim’s soul is often accomplished through intense physical sensations such as sex or extreme torture. The Outsider drains the souls from lovers or draws out the life force of howling victims through brutal and sadistic physical torment. Every week the Devourer of Souls must drain souls with a POW total equal to or greater than the Outsider’s combined POW and CON. If the soul-eater does not get the necessary sustenance, it loses five CON each

week until it reaches zero and dies. Lost points can be regained from new victims.

Frightened of Holy Symbols Cost: 2

Although there is no scientific reason, such as those penalties suffered by Outsiders with non-terrene flesh, the character’s own personal guilt, feelings of damnation and deeply ingrained superstitions from his former life make him frightened and even physically affected by the presence of holy symbols from his own culture. The character becomes dizzy and nauseated when confronted by such symbols and may flee in terror if boldly presented by individuals demonstrating strong personal faith. The Outsider cannot bring itself to enter temples and holy places and may imagine physical pain when splashed with what it perceives to be holy water. Only an Outsider that believed strongly in a conventional religion before being drawn astray by the vile revelations of the Mythos can suffer this limitation. It will not occur among Outsiders that were atheists or from different world cultures.

Influenced by the Star Cycles Cost: 1 or 2

Like the Great Old Ones themselves, the Outsider’s life is dominated by astronomical patterns. This is typically combined with other limitations and powers that define the effect of the stars on the character’s life. The

Outsider may suffer a rush of killer instincts or experience an involuntary shape-shift during certain phases of the moon, gain certain powers when specific stars are visible above the horizon or be forced into a dormant, death-like sleep during seasonal changes of the star patterns. The Keeper determines if the limitation is serious enough to warrant a one or two point disadvantage.

Inhuman Appearance Cost: 1, 2, or 3 (cumulative)

The character is a hideous aberration, a twisted and horrific monster that cannot walk the streets without extensive clothing or veils. More than mere deformations, the Outsider is twisted by distinctly inhuman features such as glowing eyes, extra limbs, tentacles sprouting from the body or face, insect-like limbs, organs pumping outside the skin, gibbering mouths on their body, or a host of other nightmarish mutations. The Keeper determines the cost of this disadvantage based on how difficult it is to conceal or how horrific it may appear to the human observer. This transmutation may occur multiple times, cumulating limitation points as the character is twisted into something closer to his dark masters. The Outsider's appearance will likely trigger Sanity or Façade tests among others.



Kettle of Fish Productions

Killer Instinct Cost: 1 or 2

Aggressive hunting instincts dominate the character, making the urge to hunt and kill an uncontrollable desire. Such an instinct is typically tied to a certain type of victim, or certain times of the day or month. The exact point penalty varies depending on how indiscriminate the instinct might be. When confronted by a suitable victim in the appropriate environment, the Outsider drops a level of Façade if fighting his instincts. If the pursuit is initiated, the character will not stop until the victim is dead or escapes the Outsider.

Non-Terrene Flesh Cost: 3

The Outsider's physical body has altered to such an extent that it shares many traits of the Great Old Ones themselves. Regardless of the character's physical appearance, be it normal or monstrous, their flesh also extends into several dimensions unseen by mortal eyes. The character is now

vulnerable to hyper-spatial manipulations created by the magical science of the Mythos. In practical terms, this means that the Outsider may be unable to penetrate portals sealed by the Elder Sign and may be imprisoned by the hyper-dimensional fields created by certain glyphs, pentacles or spells. Certain spells will force the Outsider to another's bidding or to physically drive them from the dimensions we inhabit. This limitation is often used to account for powers such as unusual resistance to injury, invulnerability or regeneration.

Repellent to Animals Cost: 1

The character radiates an aura or miasmatic stench unpleasant to humans and violently repellent to animals. Strong cologne may mask the odor to all but the most sensitive of human noses, but no amount of perfume or disinfectant can conceal the unnatural corruption of the Outsider's body and soul to animals. Most creatures bark, yowl, chirp, and madly seek to flee the character's presence. If cornered or unable to escape, the animal may violently attack the Outsider, heedless of its own safety.

Sensitive to Electricity Cost: 1, 2, or 3

The Outsider's body is especially sensitive to electricity and will become dizzy and nauseated if near electrical machines that are switched on. Even being in a room with an electric light makes the character uncomfortable. Electric current passed through the Outsider's body inflicts twice the normal damage. This limitation costs merely one point during games set in periods earlier than the 1920s, but can become a very severe limitation in the modern world. Wound points inflicted by electricity require twice the normal healing time.

Sensitive to Fire Cost: 2

The character is particularly vulnerable to fire and terrified of open flame. Fire does twice the normal damage to the Outsider, and he suffers an



automatic loss of Façade when confronted by flames. The Outsider cannot light a fire or carry a torch. He becomes physically ill and panics if in close proximity to a large fire. Wound points inflicted by fire require twice the normal healing time.

Sensitive to Metals (silver/copper/iron) Cost: 1

The Outsider experiences no ill effects from proximity to the substance, but suffers twice the normal damage from weapons made of or plated with the specific metal. The Keeper determines the metal from which the Outsider suffers this sensitivity. Wound points inflicted by these weapons require twice the normal healing time.

Shape Shifter Cost: 3

A raging beast dwells within the Outsider's heart, overtaking his psyche and twisting his very form when emotional control is lost. Whenever the character dips to Feral or below on the Façade chart, the animal within breaks through and transforms him into a bestial hybrid state. The Keeper may also decide if the change is triggered by intense emotions of ecstasy or sadness or by other influences like a star cycle. The character may come under the Keeper's influence and control when in his altered state or the player may be allowed to direct his own actions. The Outsider usually changes back only after his bestial desires are sated or sufficient time passes that his emotions are fully subdued. Players with Outsider shape shifters typically carry masks they don when the animal seizes control.



Sleep of the Dead Cost: 2

The Outsider is forced to spend at least eight hours per day lowered into the earth, preferably in his own grave, or suffer a loss of one point of CON per day. Not uncommon among characters that have died but now exist in a ghastly undead state, they must constantly return to the grave and die again. The CON loss is fully restored after a full eight hours in the earth. Some characters meet this need by sleeping in a bed of earth contained in a coffin or aboveground tomb. This limitation is common among Outsiders whose undeath allows them resistance or invulnerability to certain types of attack.

Soul Trap Cost: 2

The Outsider's very soul and life force is transferred to another object or thing such as a statue, a gemstone, a painting, a building, a standing stone, a tree or even an animal familiar. If the soul trap is damaged or destroyed, the Outsider is injured or killed. Some arcane spells may accomplish this form of soul bondage, and this limitation is often used to offset advantages such as regeneration or invulnerability to weapons

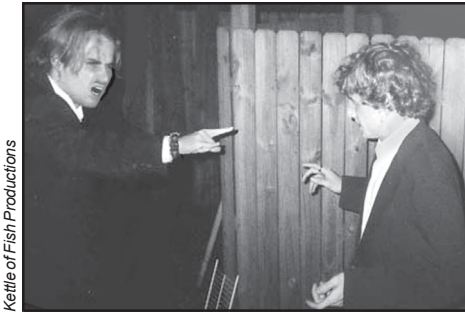
Powers

Following are some of the powers that can be enjoyed by Outsiders.

Amphibian Cost: 1

Gills grow on the Outsider's body, allowing him to live underwater indefinitely. Typically growing on the neck, special efforts such as high collars or scarves may be required to conceal this mutation. Although the Outsider can breath underwater, his body is not necessarily able to withstand the incredible pressures of the deepest seas.

Commanding Voice Cost: 3



The creature can speak with a special timbre that makes all people within earshot listen up and obey. This presupposes that they understand the language the creature is speaking. If not, they just feel that they ought to obey if they knew what to do. The victim must actually hear the words and the voice, leaving deaf characters

immune to this power. If the victim has a lower POW than the Outsider, he or she may be given simple instructions or hallucinatory visions. The victim will not perform extreme acts against their will such as suicide, killing an innocent or a loved one, unless the Outsider has a power greater than twice the victim's own. This power is obviously most effective when planting suggestions and hallucinations in the minds of victims in order to drive them mad or indirectly lead them to commit acts they would normally refuse. This is definitely a power that requires Keeper adjudication.

Drain Lifeforce Cost: 2

The Outsider is able to siphon energy from another living creature to benefit yourself. If you physically touch another player, you can drain one MP every five seconds. You are able to build up your own MP total up to three times your normal limit, and maintain this "supercharge" for up to 12 hours. The victim begins to feel tired, sick, and depressed after MPs are drained away. It is not a pleasant experience and usually this sort of life force drain takes place with the sick, dying or emotionally traumatized to hide what is happening to the victim. If multiple points are drained at once, the victim drops one Sanity or Façade Level for every three MP sucked away.

Enhanced Endurance Cost: 2

The Outsider is an inexhaustible automaton. He needs a mere two hours sleep a night and is capable of great feats of physical endurance. He may walk or run for miles and ceaselessly perform physical labor. In combat, the character has no restrictions on the number of times he can use Evades or special attack options.

Enhanced Senses Cost: 1

The Outsider has extra sharp hearing, sight, taste, and tactile sense. He can track like a bloodhound, has the eyesight of an eagle, has the sensitive touch of a blind man, and immediately recognizes anything he tastes.

Eternal Life Cost: 2

The Outsider does not age and is unaffected by all but the most virulent strains of disease.

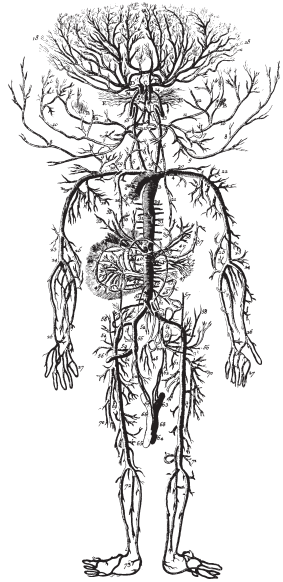
No special skills or heightened ability scores are provided by this power, only the benefit of eternal life. If the Outsider has been around for an exceptionally long time, the Keeper may grant extra skill or ability points to spend during character creation. If true eternal life is not in alignment with the Keeper's vision of the character, the Outsider may still be aging, but at such an imperceptibly slow rate that their lifespan now spans hundreds or even thousands of years.

Increased Attribute Cost: 3

One of the Outsider's attributes, EDU, CON, DEX or POW, is exceptionally developed and increased by 10 points. Recalculate secondary attributes as necessary. Such unnatural development comes with a price and the Keeper is encouraged to assign an appropriate limitation to balance this power. Perhaps the Outsider only experiences this attribute increase while shape shifting, or the character must cope with insect-like limbs or an unnaturally swollen cranium.

Infrared Vision Cost: 2

The Outsider sees heat radiation as a color. It may see in complete darkness with appropriate considerations. Extremely cold environments may hinder its ability to navigate without a heat trail to follow, and extremely hot environments may make it difficult to differentiate living creatures. Depending on the outside temperature and possibility of other confusing trails, the Outsider may be able to expertly track a living creature by its



heat signature, if it gets on the trail quickly enough. In game, the player may be handed a small flashlight to see his way around in a dimly lit room or be given guidance on heat signatures by the Keeper.

Lightning Reflexes Cost: 2

The Outsider normally acts before all others. He adds five points to his DEX score in combat to determine when he acts in the Declaration and Resolution phases. These extra DEX points are not applied during normal skill tests, but only in combat or during DEX-based Resistance Tests in which reaction speed is a factor.

Natural Weapons Cost: 1 or 2



No Good/Deed Productions

The character has claws, fangs, tentacles, tail, horns or some other kind of extremity that works as an efficient weapon. Exact damages are left for the Keeper to determine, but the Outsider typically is given an appropriate limitation such as shape-shifter or inhuman appearance to account for these physical changes.

Night Vision Cost: 1

This benefit means that the character's eyes are particularly well suited to darkness and make maximum use of

available light in the visible and ultraviolet spectrums. Some visible or ultraviolet light is required for this power to function. The character cannot see in total darkness. In game, the player may be handed a small flashlight to see his way around in a dimly lit room.

Protective Skin Cost: 1 or 2

The Outsider has a natural defense such as scales, thick skin or dense fur that defends it against physical damage. A cost of 1 allows a natural armor score of 2 points that are subtracted from all melee attacks and may be linked to the Degenerate Appearance limitation. Upgrading to a power cost of 2 allows a natural armor score of 3 points against all melee and firearm attacks, but is likely to result in the Inhuman Appearance limitation.

Psychic Powers Cost: 3

The character is granted the same powers of extra-sensory perception as someone with the Psychic advantage. The Outsider is granted 10 skill points with which he can purchase Psychic skills. Additional skills and skill levels may be purchased through experience or by skill points in initial Outsider character creation.

Regeneration Cost: 3

If the Outsider is injured, he heals unnaturally fast. He can regenerate wounds at a rate of 1WP per five minutes. Damage resulting from a source to which the character may be particularly sensitive, such as fire or silver weapons, will not regenerate and may require prolonged healing times. The character can be killed if reduce to a total of negative ten wound points, otherwise he will keep coming back, given sufficient time to regenerate.

Resistant/Invulnerable to Electricity Cost: 1 or 2

The Outsider's body is resistant to high voltage electricity and suffers one-half damage from electric shock. For a two-point cost, often paired with the limitation of Non-Terrene Flesh, the Outsider is completely immune. Millions of volts could be sent rippling through its body with no ill effects. Such characters may be capable of retaining a limited electrical charge, jolting and injuring those who touch them before the charge has time to dissipate.



PST Productions

Resistant/Invulnerable to Fire Cost: 1 or 2

Physically resistant to high temperatures and open flames, the Outsider suffers only half damage from intense heat and flames. For a two-point cost, the character is practically immune to any heat source short of a gigantic blast furnace or the heart of a star. Typically such an individual will have the limitation of Non-Terrene Flesh to account for invulnerability.

Resistant to Poison Cost: 2

The Outsider's body is capable of isolating and neutralizing any poisonous substance that enters its body and is immune to all but the most

virulent poisons and diseases. He or she may neutralize toxins and viruses, but may still be affected by secondary damage effects. The character may still experience pain or even burn damage from ingesting strong acids or suffer radiation damage after eating plutonium.

Resistant/Invulnerable to Radioactivity Cost: 1 or 2

Suffering only one-half damage, the Outsider is highly resistant to the effects of radiation. For a two-point cost and possibly the limitation of Non-Terrene Flesh, the Outsider is totally immune. He or she could live in the depths of a nuclear reactor or an atomic wasteland. After prolonged exposure, such an Outsider may radiate an unhealthy level of radiation from its own body and could be tracked by the readings of a Geiger counter.

Resistant/Invulnerable to Weapons Cost: 2, 3, or 4

The Outsider is resistant or even unaffected by most physical weapons. For a two-point cost, the character suffers half damage from a substantial

group of weapons, such as all melee weapons or all firearms. He is a physically tough creature, but still something of this world. For a three-point cost, he is immune to the effects of either melee weapons or firearms. For a cost of four points, immunity is granted to all but select weapons; such as those made from silver, iron, wood, or enchanted weapons. Higher levels of immunity are typically associated with the Non-Terrene Flesh limitation. No Outsider can be immune to all physical weapons. There is always something that can kill it.



Robert McLaughlin

Vision of the Spheres Cost: 2

The Outsider sees beyond the veil and tracks shapes, movement, and disturbances in extra-dimensional space. He may be able to see the movement and possibly even the appearance of invisible monsters or creatures lurking just outside our physical dimensions. The character can recognize magical or enchanted items, spot extra-dimensional gateways or caches hidden within the folds of space. He is able to recognize places where They broke through of old, and where They will break through again. While this power has its advantages, over the long run it may be terribly damaging to the Façade of the Outsider.

Psychic Powers

Magic changes the world around us by manipulating arcane scientific principles and hyper-dimensional space. Psychic powers are connected to this broader understanding of reality, but draw energy from another source. It is well known that most humans use only a small portion of their brains. Vast, untapped mysteries remain locked away and inaccessible to most people throughout their lives. These hidden chambers of the mind are open for a very few individuals. With concentrated practice, they can train their minds to manipulate the world around them by the force of their wills.

The Psychic Talent Advantage defines the basic potential of these powers. It may be purchased during character creation with the approval of the Keeper, or it may be written into the details of a pre-generated character. The Psychic Powers gift discussed in the Outsider rules grants this same potential. To effectively use these powers, the character must train his mind in one or more Psychic Skills.

During the game, a psychic notifies the Keeper when he wishes to use a psychic skill. The test functions much like any other skill test. The psychic describes the results he wishes to achieve. The Keeper makes a determination on how difficult the skill would be to accomplish for a “trained psychic”, although obviously this tends to be much more subjective than estimating difficulty ratings for mundane skills.

The Keeper calculates the success score of the test by multiplying the psychic’s POW by the specific psychic skill level. He applies any modifiers that seem appropriate; stressful surroundings, possession of a focusing talisman, strength of will or emotional release surrounding the object, event or item in question and other factors which might influence the test. Whether the test succeeds or fails, the psychic expends a variable number of Magic Points. This simulates the mental strain of tapping into these powers. As with magic tests, psychic who have expended all of their Magic Points may begin to use Wound Points in their place. This represents pushing the psychic’s mind and body to extreme limits and could manifest itself in such ways as bleeding from the eyes, ears, or nose.

Psychic Skills

The purchase and use of psychic skills in game terms is almost identical to normal skills. The one pre-requisite to buying any psychic skills is the Psychic Talent advantage or if the character is an Outsider with the Psychic Powers gift. Skill points are used to purchase psychic skills in character creation, just like the more mundane Combat, Academic, and Trade skills.

Psychic skills represent major disciplines of power. As the character increases skill level by training his talents, basic tests become easier and more difficult tests become possible to achieve. A player may elect to purchase skill specializations, starting at skill level three, as a cost of one skill point per specialization. If the test falls within the psychic's area of specialization, the test is made effectively at one skill level higher.

Channeling



Your talent reaches out to commune with spirits of the dead. The easiest to reach are unquiet spirits lurking near important places in their life or the location of their death. Greater effort is required to contact restful spirits, pulling them from their afterlives against their will. Even without a formal test, you are able to sense the presence of dead spirits around you. With a focused skill test you may be able to see the spirits, speak with them, or even force them into an ectoplasmic manifestation that may be seen and heard by others who do not possess your gifts. A ritual focus, a séance, helps to combine magic points of participants to perform more difficult skill tests. Since the

difficulty and cost of forcing a physical manifestation is so high, some psychics allow spirits to temporarily enter their bodies to more easily speak to others in the room. This practice can be very dangerous if the spirit turns out to be a hostile one. Channeling has a variable point cost, set by the Keeper. Suggestions are 2 MP per minute to view a spirit, 3 MP per minute to view and speak with a spirit, 5 MP per minute to force a manifestation.

Example Specialties: Calm Spirits, Reveal Secrets of the Dead, Manifest Spirit.

Cloud Mind

The Domination and Illusion skills force emotions, thoughts, and images onto another person. This skill projects an aura that dampens your presence to a degree that you are frequently overlooked. Other humans in the room simply don't notice you unless they have an equal or greater POW. Your passing will still set off security alarms and you appear on film reviewed again at a later date. Animals and non-human monsters are not deceived. Guard dogs bark wildly and strain at their leads, but you remain unseen to their masters. The aura is dispersed if you run out of magic

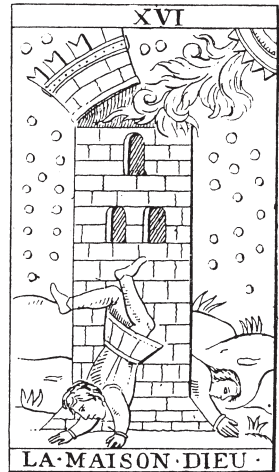
points, attack someone, or cause a loud noise that shakes the other characters out of your influence. The psychic wears a prominent white sash or scarf while projecting this cloud. The Keeper must explain the significance of the sash to other players prior to the game. Players are expected to be good sports and role-play their actions as if unaware of the psychic creeping through their midst. Magic point cost is 6 MP per minute, minus the psychic's skill level.

Example Specialties: Day, Night, Urban.

Divination

You can use your talent, usually in conjunction with a ritual and various tools of augury, to gain insight on future events. It is a challenge to deal with in game terms but not impossible. Predictions the Keeper provides you will be in line with events expected to happen as part of the script, but circumstances may occur which alter the expected outcomes. The more specific the information requested, the more difficult the Keeper will consider your test. If a difficult and specific question was asked and you are successful in your test, the Keeper will make an effort to steer events toward that outcome. Sometimes it might be better not to ask too detailed questions about the future. The Keeper may have to sacrifice the lives of other players to force an outcome divined early in the game. Such are the mysteries of the universe. Divination typically requires an expenditure of 3-5 MP depending on the specificity of the question and time to role-play the augury. High-level psychics may not need focus rituals for their divination.

Example Specialties: Tarot, Rune Stones, I Ching.



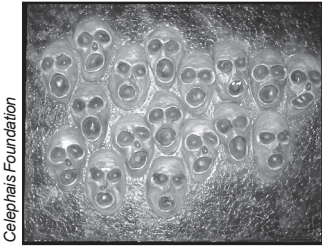
Domination

You have developed your talent in the direction of forcing your will onto another living creature and forcing it to do your bidding. At lower levels, the target must be able to hear your voice and usually be able to see your eyes in order to establish dominance. Others in the room will hear you make these suggestions although only the target is directly influenced. "I think you should give me your weapon," "We need to enter this building," "These are not the books you're looking for." Humans must be able to hear the suggestion in a language they can understand. At higher levels (4 or 5) you may be able to focus your domination through your eyes alone.

The Keeper will whisper instructions or pass notes. Animals may be dominated through your eyes alone. The more unreasonable the suggestion, the more difficult the domination effort becomes. Suggestions to kill a friend or commit suicide are extremely difficult to project, but suggestions of suspicion and mistrust are much easier to implant. Domination typically requires an expenditure of 3 MP. If the target's POW exceeds that of the psychic, one extra MP is required per point of POW difference.

Example Specialties: Animals, Plant Emotions, Multiple Targets.

Illusion



You are able to project visions from your own mind into the minds of others. The easiest illusions involve only a single sense; sight, smell, hearing, taste or touch. Multiple senses are brought into play for complicated illusions, making them more difficult to perform but more believable to the target. No evidence has been shown that a very realistic illusion of a "killing blow" actually causes injury or death

to a target. At the worst, a very realistic illusion of death may cause the target to pass out. However illusions could be used to indirectly bring about the death of another. Projecting the illusion of a solid floor over an open pit, an empty road over an oncoming truck or the image of sugar on a package of rat poison are a few examples. The Keeper sets the difficulty category based on the complexity of the illusion. Magic point cost is two points per minute for an illusion engaging a single sense. One extra point per minute is added for every other sense engaged in the illusion. The Keeper may just relate minor illusions verbally, but efforts should be made to stage complex illusions as if they are really happening. Characters with a POW equal or greater than the psychic may see through the illusion.

Example Specialties: Auditory, Visual, Multiple Targets.

Psychokinesis

This spectacular ability moves objects by force of will alone. Small effects are possible with only a little training, but much more effort and practice is required for larger items. The Keeper determines difficulty levels of the tests. A few suggestions are:

- No Sweat — Rolling a pencil across a desk
- Simple — Sliding a small object across a table
- Easy — Pushing over a vase
- Routine — Flicking a switch across the room
- Average — Causing a gun to jam

Challenging — Slamming a door

Difficult — Lifting a book or small object in the air

Extreme — Pushing or tripping someone

Superhuman — Hurling an object as a weapon

Impossible — Throwing an opponent across the room

This skill costs 2 MP for objects up to 5 pounds in weight. The weight doubles for each extra MP invested; 3 MP for 10lbs, 4 MP for 20lbs, 5 MP for 40lbs, and so on.

Example Specialties: Push, Lift, Throw.

Psychometry

You read psychic and emotional residue from locations, objects, and individuals. You sense that a specific location is “melancholy,” feels “violent,” “hostile,” “peaceful,” or other emotions left behind. You are able determine if an item is enchanted and the relative level of power. The true accuracy of the impressions may be questionable. An ancient battle or a murder that took place decades ago may leave background emotional traces that are misleading, as may a recent tragedy or any strong positive or negative emotions. The feelings can be misled or colored by the psychic’s preconceptions or own emotional state. If you believe the rusty knife to be bloodstained, then you may sense it to be a source of evil or painful emotions, when it is completely innocent. You must be able to handle the object or physically visit the location to obtain a reading. This talent may be used for impressions from an object about the current situation of the owner, as often used in missing person cases. When using the skill to read impressions from a human, you are able to gaze at the target for a few seconds until you perceive their psychic aura as a shifting, colored nimbus. The brightness of the aura provides a hint to the owner’s POW, while the color might indicate the emotional state and physical health of the subject.

Example Specialties: Current Events, Past Events, Human Aura.



Richard Alan Poppe

Pyrokinesis

You are able to focus your willpower on an object and excite the molecules into faster and faster movement. This allows you to increase the temperature of an object or even start fires. Strong judgment calls from the Keeper are required as to what this talent can do and the difficult required, but some sample guidelines are:

No Sweat — Increase temperature 10 degrees Fahrenheit
 Simple — Increase temperature 25 degrees Fahrenheit
 Easy — Increase temperature 50 degrees Fahrenheit
 Routine — Increase temperature 100 degrees Fahrenheit
 Average — Inflict painful 1st & 2nd degree burns (1-3 WP)
 Challenging — Ignite small, easily flammable objects
 Difficult — Ignite large flammable objects
 Extreme — Set fire to living creatures
 Superhuman — Melt stone and metal
 Impossible — Massive, high-temperature conflagration

A variable amount of time is required to bring the talent to full effect as the molecules are stimulated. Magic point cost for this talent is a minimum of three points, but the Keeper should increase the cost for larger and less easily combustible targets. Raising the core body temperature of a human will be at least three or four steps higher than the costs listed above due to the mass of tissue required to heat. Raising a human's core temperature 10 degrees or more will lead to unconsciousness, brain damage, and ultimately death.

Example Specialties: Heat Liquid, Heat Metal, Burn Wood.

U.S. Army



Remote Viewing

You enter a trance and perceive distant events, or connect to the mind of another and view their surroundings at that time and place. The distance separating the psychic and the target location determines the difficulty of the test. Positive modifiers include prior knowledge of the area viewed or a personal connection with the individual used for viewing. The simplest execution in game is for the Keeper to whisper details viewed to the psychic to pass on to the other characters. A nicer simulation is to outfit the psychic player with a walkie-talkie that has a plug-in earpiece. The Keeper may stand across the room or even in another room and radio the vision into the ear of the psychic, who can really play up their trance and description of what they are “seeing.” Several minutes may be required in your trance to establish a connection with the location or person to be viewed. Once the connection has been made, Magic Point cost is 2 points per minute, plus 1 for locations over 10 miles away, plus 2 for locations over 100 miles away, plus 3 for locations over 1000 miles away, and so on. The vision is often a little out of focus and additional MP may be required to read letters, symbols or make out small details.

Example Specialties: View via Animal, View via Kin, Read Text.

Telepathy

This talent allows you to read an individual's surface thoughts and emotions or to communicate with another person through thoughts alone. The higher the success score of skill level multiplied by POW, the more information may be obtained. If the target knows that someone is trying to read his thoughts and chooses to actively resist, the target's POW is subtracted from the psychic's before the calculation is made. A mind reading attempt costs 3 MP and the Keeper will relay any pertinent information. By concentrating and expending 2 MP, you may send a short message (one or two sentences) to one other individual. This may be written down on a scrap of paper and relayed to a member of the game staff, who delivers the message to the recipient. The cost to send a message is only 1 MP if the receiving person has the Telepathy skill as well.

Example Specialties: Read Memories, Read Surface Thoughts, Project Thoughts.

Cthulhu Rising:

The Mythos and the Psychic

The Call of Cthulhu opens with a description of a worldwide mania of nightmares, weird visions, insanity, and religious revivals that afflicted the world from March 23rd to April 2nd, 1925. Psychics are far too sensitive and vulnerable to effectively deal with the mind-numbing horror of a powerful, alien consciousness. This sensitivity may manifest as a drop of two to three sanity levels during the duration of any major Mythos influence unleashed in the world. This includes such events as R'yleh rising above the Pacific depths or an Outer God physically summoned to Earth.



Celephais Foundation

Psychics also suffer worse than other characters when they encounter Mythos horrors that are reservoirs of great psychic malignancy. A psychic's Sanity Test is made at one Shade of Terror stronger when encountering one of the following entities for the first time. The test is made at regular levels on any subsequent encounters with the same entity or type of creature. Entities of great psychic malignancy include all Outer Gods, all Great Old Ones, Cthonians, Star Spawn of Cthulhu, Lloigor, Flying Polyps, Hounds of Tindalos... and others as determined by the Keeper. ✧



Robert McLaughlin

Chapter 7

StageCraft

This chapter details the art of stagecraft. After the character sheets are finished and after the script is written, the event still has to be run. There are a number of tricks of the trade in this chapter to assist the Keeper and his staff with location design and decoration, special effects, make-up techniques and safety concerns. Good stagecraft is an important factor of any game. This chapter addresses just a sampling of the many elements which fall into this art form.

The Playing Area

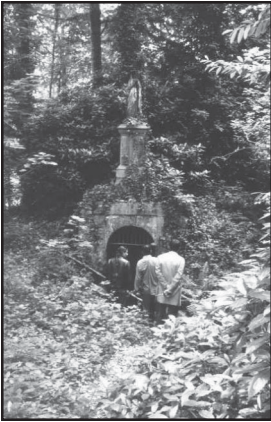
Locations available to your group have a major impact on game play. Atmosphere, accessibility, safety, legality, and a degree of isolation from the outside world are required. You can't expect to play *Cthulhu Live* wherever you choose.

Legality and safety are your most important requirements. Abandoned factories and moonlit cemeteries make terrific settings but aren't always proper locations for games. Entering old houses or abandoned buildings without the owner's consent is trespassing. Creeping through cemeteries with flashlights and fighting running battles between the graves may be great fun for the players, but it's considered illegal and in bad taste by the general public.

Contact the rightful owners of the property for permission to use it for a game. Explain what would be happening, when, and how many people would be present. Don't be surprised if your request is denied. No one wants to be the target of a lawsuit if a player is injured on the premises.

Many look at live role-playing games with some skepticism and mistrust. Murder mystery parties are more widely known and better accepted than live role-playing games. When negotiating with people who may not be familiar with LARPs, you will have much better success describing it in terms of a murder mystery type event. If you can't obtain permission to use an area, don't sneak out to play. Games are meant to be fun. Don't ask for trouble. Look for another location that is almost as good and can be enhanced with a little work.

Old houses, factories, and caves can be spectacular locations if you obtain permission to use them. They must be inspected beforehand, to make sure they're absolutely safe. Rotting floors and staircases, open pits, and the danger of weakened construction can be disastrous. Such locations are very tempting, but you must thoroughly inspect them for



hazards or look for safer places.

Only after an area is thoroughly inspected and approved should you consider it a gaming location. Prominently seal dangerous areas. Mark them as off-limits to players and support staff alike. Since the Keeper usually accompanies the investigators, he's there to pull back any players straying into danger areas.

Remarkably good adventures can be set in a single play-area. A medium to large-sized house, a large basement area, or rooms in a hotel or convention center offer great flexibility. Live role-playing requires planning and special considerations unnecessary in traditional role-play-

ing games that take place entirely within the imagination of the players. Ideally, *Cthulhu Live* adventures take place within a single evening and within only a few locations. A classical unity of time and place is most manageable. Many game sessions may be played in three to four hours.

If you use several different locations, find ones fairly close together. This facilitates moving staff and players around and prevents major time lags. An advance party of staff should arrive at the site at least fifteen minutes before the players. They'll make sure the area is clear and set up any special props or effects. After the players and Keeper depart for the next location, a small clean-up team should stay and handle any props or trash left behind. Multi-location games obviously require a larger support staff and several autos.

Decorating the Play Area

The best term to describe decoration for *Cthulhu Live* is "theatrical minimalism." Each location should have enough props and decorations to add an air of authenticity without bogging down game play or causing unnecessary headaches for the Keeper. Players love searching for clues, no matter how obscure or well hidden they may be. Any book that looks remotely suspicious, wardrobes, cabinets, and closets are all likely to be rifled by player characters. If you play in someone's apartment, move anything you don't want the players to touch into an extra room or closet. Mark "off-limits" doors with a small sign or a strip of tape. Tell players before the game to ignore the existence of these marked doors.

The best locations are furnished with only minimal decorations, to which you introduce whatever books, artwork, and game props are required. Anyone familiar with the theater understands this minimalist approach quite well. Stagehands don't have time to relocate the Smithsonian every time the lights go out.

A few chairs, a table, a bookcase, lamps, and a few pictures on the walls are great for studies and living rooms. Books on witchcraft and the occult, mysterious artwork and strange clay statues can all be tied into the adventure or merely serve as red herrings to mislead the players. Hardbound books are far more impressive than dog-eared paperbacks. Keep a look out in flea markets and used bookstores for old hardbound books. If you have the perfect prop book, but only have it in a paperback edition, consider using cardboard, paper, and leather to create a hardbound cover. Add a few detailing touches like carpets, a nice clock or a hat rack to polish the scene.

If the script calls for scene changes at a single location, think about reusing props in different ways. Dramatic changes can be accomplished with simple rearrangements and the addition of small, detailing props. A simple table in one scene becomes a desk with the addition of a pen-set and a few small photos. Cover it with a sheet and it's an operating table. Add pillows and a blanket and it's a bed. The table becomes an altar when covered in black cloth and decorated with candlesticks and a dusty, old book.

Shuffling tables and chairs and changing the detailing props turns a conference room into a dining room, a hospital ward, or a research lab. Look for old photographs, inexpensive art prints, and medical and chemical charts to dress up the walls. Diagrams from a copy of Gray's Anatomy can be incrementally increased at a copy-shop until you have a large mosaic. Arrange personal computers, television sets, printers, painted boxes, and assorted gadgets into a bank of research equipment. A computer-literate gamer can produce an interactive slideshow, Flash or HTML program that allows characters to explore databanks and personnel files. The computers can spill out reams of confusing calculations or valuable clues.

There's more to *Cthulhu Live* than just indoor adventures. While monsters are notorious for lurking in cellars, closets, and even under your bed, there's a whole wicked world out there for the players to explore.

A woodland clearing or your own back yard transforms into a cemetery with a dozen or so Styrofoam slabs



Cthulhu Live Archives

carved and painted to look like tombstones. Some creative design-work on a tool-shed turns it into a mausoleum. A large sandpit or vacant lot becomes an archeological dig when you set up a grid with wooden stakes and twine. Dig a few deeper levels here and there. Scatter broken pottery, old metal scraps, and a few interesting looking stones around the pit. Erect tents, or reasonable facsimiles, around the area of the dig.

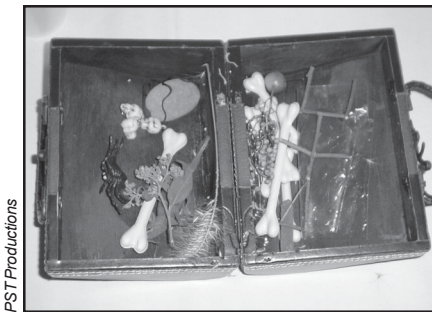
Besides thinking about what can be added, also consider what should be removed. Adventures set in the 1920s shouldn't have televisions or computers sitting around in plain view. Move or conceal them. The same goes with color photos, stereos, digital clocks, and other blatantly anachronistic decorations. The removal of out-of-place items from the game area is fully important as adding necessary props.

Props and the Fine Art of Scrounging

Getting your hands on good props for *Cthulhu Live* can be challenging. Tragically few stores carry evil alien sculptures, blasphemous tomes of forbidden lore or large electron microscopes as part of their regular inventory. Home production of props is the best means to save money and build the specific items required. The fine art of obtaining interesting items and raw materials at minimal cost is a subject near and dear to the hearts of *Cthulhu Live* gamers.

Opportunity scrounging is a continual process; it could even be said to be a state of mind. This process goes on continually. Depending on your schedule, you could make the rounds of prop sources every week, every month or even once or twice a year. These could be flea markets, yard sales, thrift stores, flea markets, junkyards or even dumpsters behind interesting businesses. Anywhere that interesting or unique items and materials could be found. Identifying good props amidst junk is simply a matter of training the eye and building up a "creative awareness."

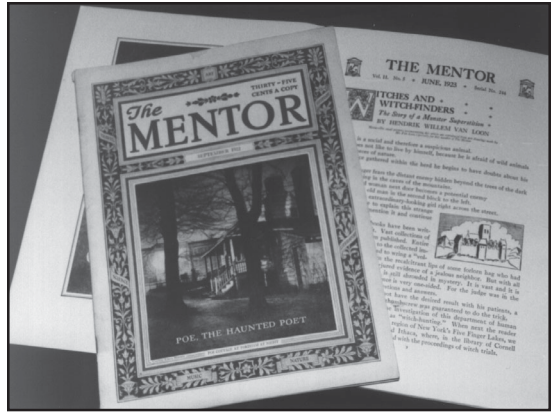
The directed scrounge is a process that takes place after completion of the script. The game staff goes through the script, identifying props that are not in current inventory. The directed scrounge is a much more intense process than the opportunity scrounge; a focused search through all the local scrounging resources for as many of these specific items as possible. It is important not to delay too long since some prop building or prop buying must wait for the scrounging results. Scrounging procrasti-



PST Productions

nation delays the game's production schedule. We all know how much Keepers love to be up late the night before game, frantically assembling props and costumes.

The first thing scroungers are hunting for is set dressing. For groups that regularly run games set in



Robert McLaughlin

specific time periods, it's worthwhile to amass items like picture frames, old photographs, vintage telephones, old glasses and decanters, books, and knickknacks to add that period touch to scenes. It's not necessary to be an absolute stickler for historic detail. Players are unlikely to know if an item was manufactured in 1941 or 2006, as long as it looks like it wouldn't be out of place in the time period of the game.

Become familiar with the look and feel of the period through old catalogs, art books, and films. Old magazines are terrific set dressing items and the paper quality used in high-end magazines of the 1920s and 30s have helped copies survive surprisingly well to the present day. Vintage set dressing is typically found in flea markets, thrift stores, and garage sales.

Keepers running modern-era games have a much easier job with set dressing but still reap the benefits of successful scrounging. If you will be building a secret lab or government facility, junked monitors and keyboards are a lot less expensive than the real thing. Nobody cares if a panicking player knocks one off a desk.

The opportunity scrounge is a good source of inspiration. Who knows what strange scenario ideas an old photograph, a small figurine, or a tattered book might provide? Many artists use "found" objects to spark the creative process, or seek ideas in seemingly random sources. In the same way, the act of opportunity scrounging itself can be a source of first-rate ideas when an amazing prop find gives birth to an entire game scenario.

Unusual forms, shapes, and raw material are another primary target of the opportunity scrounger. Blocks and sheets of foam rubber, styrofoam packing forms for shipping electronics, cardboard boxes, sheets of plastic bubble-wrap, lumber, plywood, pieces of hardware, scraps of wire and plastic tubing, PVC pipes and connectors, old tarps and scraps of

fabric, broken electronics, and circuit boards. These are the basic components and detailing features for building homemade props. Many of these items may be purchased inexpensively at large hardware and building supply stores, but you should always scrounge as many items as possible to maximize your game budget.

Don't be afraid to ask the staff of electronics and building supply stores about items they will be throwing out anyway. This is a great means to obtain Styrofoam packing forms, wire and circuit boards, and scraps of lumber and plywood. Many companies throw out fantastic items that are unused, broken or replaced with updated models rather than going to the trouble and expense of organizing sales or formal giveaways. Successful scrounging is often an example of being in the right place at the right time.

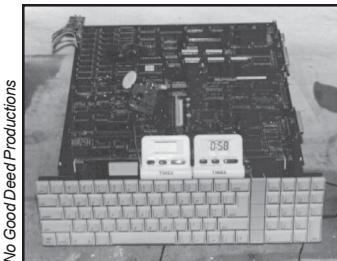
Be alert to the unusual. Alien entities won't produce technology or art that looks like ours. If the Mi-Go or deep ones designed a computer, it would look very little like a human device. Be on the lookout for objects with unusual shapes. It doesn't matter if the item is a piece of industrial garbage, a broken toy or an ugly crystal knickknack; if it's got odd, jarring angles or weirdly sinuous curves, it can be transformed into an otherworldly artifact.

Getting down and dirty is the motto of the hard-core scrounger. You would be surprised what you find just cruising around your town the night before trash collection. Televisions, stereos, and other household electronics are just the tip of the iceberg. Serviceable speakers, electronic components, motors, switches, and other parts can be pulled out of many of these.

Large, junked household appliances might be hard to take with you, but having the right tools on hand allows you to extract the powerful electric motors in washers and dryers to power various homemade props. The compressor inside a refrigerator can be used to create a cheap source of compressed air for special effects. Besides hardware, there are countless items of building supplies such as solid foam insulation, PVC pipe, copper tubing, and lumber. Look for a house undergoing remodeling. There is always great stuff lurking in the trash so don't be afraid to look. Make sure that your city or state doesn't have laws concerning curbside

scrounging. It is a good principle to ask the owner of the house for his permission to take the items you are eyeing.

Another hardcore scrounging technique is the sport of dumpster diving, ideally around industrial parks and technology companies rather than private neighborhoods. Dumpster diving in industrial parks is similar to curbside scrounging but produces



No Good Deed Productions

some amazing things that aren't usually found in your neighborhood. Most cities and states have industrial parks housing high technology and precision mechanics companies. These firms discard components that don't pass quality controls, resulting in a boon for prop designers from high tech electronics to machined mechan-



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ics. As with curbside scrounging, check your local laws to see if it is legal to go diving behind these industrial parks. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask the company about salvage. Since companies are charged according to the weight in their dumpsters, they will grant permission in most cases. Play it safe when dumpster diving; always dive with a buddy, wear durable clothes and gloves, watch out for sharp items, and wait at least an hour after eating.

Thrift stores are packed with all sorts of goodies that the avid prop and costume designer is looking for. Racks upon racks of old clothing line the walls of thrift stores and consignment shops. This clothing can be purchased very cheaply and altered to fit your needs. Everything from wedding dresses to old pinstriped suits can be found. Thrift and consignment stores near large military installations are a wonderful source of uniforms. Many thrift stores stock items like glassware and household items and many have old computers and electronics. Besides getting a great deal on these items, you are helping out charity groups in the process.

Hidden within your local newspaper is a weekly listing of flea markets and yard sales, a manifest of possible prop and raw material suppliers. A good rule at a flea market is to first hit areas where vendors have their wares on the ground or on blankets rather than tables. They are usually facing a lower overhead and price haggling tends to be easier. For recurring events like flea markets, get on good terms with particular vendors. If someone has piles of old books, laboratory hardware or used military equipment, he or she may know where to get the kind of thing you're looking for, even if it's not immediately available. Negotiating price is a little more difficult at yard sales, unless it's a moving sale and everything must go.

Each game group is going to have its own internal scrounging sources. The staff should always canvas individual players for special contributions they might have in the own garage or from their jobs in the real world. You might be surprised what sort of items your players can scrounge from their own jobs.

The Internet is final frontier of modern scroungers. If you want it, whatever it is, you can find it in cyberspace. There are many online auction houses that provide countless useful and hard-to-find items. Since you will be purchasing the items sight unseen, deal with reputable sellers with high positive feedback scores whenever possible. Several surplus companies reside in the vastness of the Internet, where one can get almost anything. Run an online search for the Defense Reutilization Management Office and visit the DRMO web-sites for a truly amazing selection of surplus military uniforms, equipment, and hardware. Surplus companies often sell in bulk, so read descriptions carefully and be sure to note the condition codes of these items. There may be federal or state surplus offices in your area that you can visit and rummage through first hand for props, so be sure to check your local phone book as well as the Internet.

Don't think that the scrounger must find everything in perfect condition or must find props that fit the bill exactly. Scrounged items are often just the raw materials for prop-builders to transform into more elaborate projects. A well-prepared scrounger will carry a mobile toolbox with different screwdrivers, pliers, wire-cutters, scissors, gloves, a pocketknife, and a small flashlight to help him in his endeavors and for extracting components from larger junked appliances.

A well-stocked toolbox is a must for any prop-builder, along with a selection of good adhesives. Super-epoxy and white glue are standards, but for sheer finger-burning insanity, a hot glue gun is a must. Liberality with hot glue is perfect sticking unlikely things together. Flat black paint is a key item, for repainting odd-colored items or for use as an undercoat for later colors. Epoxy putty is good for modeling additional details, or for filling in scrapes and gouges.

Whether it's searching around your neighborhood or surfing the net, the fine art of scrounging can help you get the raw materials to construct some great props. It doesn't have to cost a fortune to create some impressive props. The efforts of scrounging will more than pay off in the long run. As you hone your scrounging skills, the biggest challenge you will face is that pack-rat instinct so common among *Cthulhu Live* players. Don't get so carried away that you end up with closets, attics, and basements overflowing with junk that may never be used, but seemed too good a find at the time to pass up. Always keep your available storage space in mind, and put thought into what items are really worth saving if not for immediate use.

Blood and Other Kitchen Delights

Cthulhu Live games are enhanced by expendable special effects such as fake blood, slime, and ectoplasm. Most theatrical supply shops charge around 20 to 30 dollars for a pint of good stage gore. Why buy these compounds when they can be made in the greatest of all laboratories, your own kitchen?

Be very careful with fake blood when using it in a game. It can very easily stain and ruin clothing, carpets, and furniture. Always be considerate and responsible with your players and the location in which you are playing and use fake blood in controlled circumstances with adequate preparation and planning to minimize any physical or personal property damage.

Standard Stage Blood

Mix 16oz of clear corn syrup with 1oz water and 1oz red food coloring. Mix well and add a few drops of blue food coloring to darken to an acceptable hue. A good all-purpose stage blood, this recipe is also edible. It is very sticky, however, and will stain clothing and carpets.

A darker version of this recipe uses equal portions of clear corn syrup mixed with dark corn syrup, red food coloring, and just a drop of blue. If you are interested in creating the effect of dried blood, mix equal portions of your stage blood with chocolate syrup. This grabs fabric and dries well.



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Washable Stage Blood

Making blood that doesn't stain clothing and skin is a bit more work. These recipes are for external use only and not for internal consumption. Heat 16oz of water in a large pot, but do not bring it to a boil. Add two teaspoons of Arrowroot and stir until the water begins to thicken. Pour in a small amount of children's washable red paint until the desired color is reached. Add a few drops of brown washable paint to darken. Pour the mix into a glass bottle or jar for storage. If the blood thickens, you can thin it with water. This recipe washes out of most fabrics but is not edible.

Another washable recipe is to use a clear liquid detergent such as Woolite or other translucent detergents free of additional dyes. Test a small amount of this detergent on the skin to ensure there will be no allergic reaction. Thin the detergent with a small amount of water and add children's red and brown washable paint as described above. Obviously, this blood is also for external use only, but washes out of fabrics quite well.

Edible Bloods

There are dozens of alternate edible blood recipes available, commonly using corn syrup or vegetable oil as a base, with everything from food coloring to powdered fruit punch as a coloring agent. Not all of these recipes are particularly tasty and a vegetable oil base is downright nasty. But they won't harm you. If you want a nice drinkable blood, thaw one can of frozen white grape juice and slowly stir in red food coloring until the desired color is reached. Add a few drops of blue and possibly yellow food coloring for an optimum hue. The blood mix will be very thick and strong, but can be thinned with water if necessary. This mixture will stain clothing, but it's tasty and can be guzzled down during a ritual to the general disgust of all present.

Chunky Blood

If you want to make a truly vile mess, such as exploded brains or bile and pieces of lung coughed up in a gory spray, combine one of the above recipes with elements such as whole pieces and pulp of pink grapefruit, chunky peanut butter, and grape or strawberry jelly. Beloved effects of splatter-punk fans everywhere, you may frighten and gross-out many of your players. But then again, that's not always a bad thing. Be careful with fabrics, as almost every edible blood mixture will stain.

Blood Special Effects

Applying gore to NPC actors as an extension of their make-up or costume is the most obvious use for stage blood. Whether it's a butchered victim of cult atrocities or a creature slathered in blood from its last meal, stage blood is a wonderful medium and basic special effect. Many groups will want to stage even more spectacular and shocking scenes, moving us into the realm of blood packs, sponges, bottles, and syringes.

A simple blood pack can be created with a pouch made of plastic wrap or the corner of a plastic bag. Carefully fill the pack half to three-quarters full with stage blood. Fold the opening shut, lay a piece of tinfoil across it, and use an iron on low-heat to melt the plastic and fuse the bag shut. Tape the blood pack to an actor's body beneath his clothing, or sew hidden pockets inside their clothes. A sharp slap with an open hand will be enough to split open the pack and create a spreading stain of blood. Perfect for



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staging gunshot wounds on your NPC actors or for splitting open as they tussle with a Mythos horror.

Blood sponges are used in much the same manner as a blood pack. Dampen a piece of sponge and squeeze out all the excess water. Soak it in fake blood and put it in a plastic sandwich bag. These are a little safer for the actors than blood-packs, and less likely to pop open by accident. On the other hand, their strength is also their weakness, and your actor may find himself frustrated when he can't produce his blood fast enough.

Blood sprays and arterial wounds are best accomplished with a length of surgical tubing, a syringe, or a small squeeze bottle. Tape the surgical tubing along the actor's body to the point on the body where you want wound to occur and conceal it under the actor's clothes. Fill a syringe or plastic squeeze bottle with thin stage blood, and securely fasten the surgical tubing over the nozzle. When the actor is ready, a strong, sharp squeeze should send the blood jetting out in a crimson spray. Prepare several tests of this effect in advance, to be sure you have adequate force behind the blood or that the tubing isn't too long to reduce the intended effect.

Basic Slime

Your basic slime is thick, edible ooze that is perfect for multiple uses. A foul slime spilling from the mouths of zombies or Glaakeen in the advanced stages of the Green Decay, Deep One secretions left on a victim, Shoggoth tracks, and much more.

Heat one-half cup of water in a pot. Bring the water to a boil then remove it from the stove. Pour in three packages of unflavored gelatin; let it sit for about a minute, and then stir slowly with a fork. Add about a-half cup of clear corn syrup and stir well. Slowly add a little extra water and continue stirring until the mix cools to prevent the gelatin from setting. To color the mix, add food coloring before adding the corn syrup.

This slime will keep for several days if stored in a jar at room temperature. Besides smearing it on items or letting your NPC actors regurgitate and drool this nasty looking stuff, consider using the surgical tubing and squeeze bottle/syringe techniques discussed with stage blood to create gangrenous, suppurating wounds, and vile, slime-oozing orifices on your creature's bodies.

Cornstarch Slime

Cornstarch makes a classic, sticky, messy slime. It is insanely simple to make and consists of nothing more than dry cornstarch, water, and optional food coloring. Start with two parts cornstarch in a bowl. Drop in a few drops of food coloring, and slowly add one-part water. Mix with your hands to thoroughly wet the starch. Add the water slowly, constantly checking the consistency of the mix. A few drops too much and you'll suddenly go from slime to starch-water. For a slightly less sticky recipe, mix equal amounts of cornstarch and baking soda and slowly add water.

Cornstarch and Glue

For a very special effect, try mixing cornstarch with white glue. Start with cornstarch in a bowl, add white glue and stir until you have a thick slime. Using a plastic drinking straw, you can blow the starch and glue mixture into translucent bubbles that you can set carefully aside until they harden. These bubbles can make great egg-sacs for unearthly creatures.

Ectoplasm

Our final slime concoction is one of the most difficult and potentially dangerous recipes. This recipe uses Sodium Borate, commonly known as Borax, which is toxic if swallowed. Do NOT eat, drink, or otherwise ingest anything in this recipe. Pour one cup of warm, but not boiling water into a glass jar. Slowly stir in 2 teaspoons of Borax. Close the lid and shake well until the Borax is dissolved. In a separate jar or bowl, combine two parts water with two parts white glue and mix well. After the glue and water are combined, add just one part of the Borax solution. Adjust quantities used in these proportions depending on the amount of ectoplasm desired. Any leftover Borax solution may be saved for later. Keep mixing the solidifying blob for about 10 minutes. It will thicken to a putty-like consistency as time elapses, and eventually you will have to

knead it like cookie dough. If you wanted to color it, add a few drops of food coloring to the final mixing process. This goop will last a long time provided it is stored in an airtight container to prevent it from drying out.

Candy Glass

A few advanced *Cthulhu Live* groups may want to create candy glass bottles, objects or windowpanes for use in their games. Be extremely careful when making candy glass. The liquid gets *extremely* hot and will stick to your skin like napalm. Only use a large, strong copper or steel pot, rather than anything clad in aluminum. Mix 4 cups water with 2 cups white corn syrup. Bring to a boil on the stove, and stir in 2/3 teaspoon of cream of tartar and 1 cup sugar. Cover and let it boil for about 10-20 minutes. If you want colors, add some food coloring just before pouring. Mix the color into the liquid well, or it will produce uneven swirls in the glass.

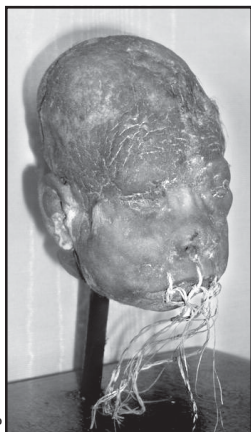
Carefully pour into your molds or onto a large clean cookie sheet for candy glass panes. Swish the hot mixture around inside your molds so that the interior is thoroughly coated, then pour any excess liquid out and allow it to cool. Candy glass is most often used to mold bottles, and bottles are hollow. You won't be doing your actor any favors by trying to break a solid chunk of crystallized sugar over his head. If pouring the candy glass onto a cookie sheet to make a glass pane, be sure not to make the pane too thick.

Look through stagecraft catalogs for candy-glass bottle molds. You can try to make your own by pressing a bottle into clay and creating two-piece bottle molds that can be fired in your oven. Spray the inside surface of the mold with a non-stick cooking spray and clamp the two pieces of the mold securely together before pouring in the hot candy glass. The longer you allow the candy glass to cool, the easier it will be to release from the mold.

Shrunken Heads

The Jivaro tribes of South America are well known for the practice of collecting and shrinking the heads of their enemies as grisly trophies. Called "tsantsa" by the Jivaro, these heads bring prestige to the warrior and trap the avenging souls of their victims. A staple of pulp horror, shrunken heads are great props for *Cthulhu Live* games and are easily incorporated into strange auctions, bizarre occult collections, or as curios sitting on the bookshelves of eccentric world-travelers. Mythos villains such as the diabolical Tcho-Tcho tribes are perfect candidates as collectors of shrunken heads, and a few grisly trophies found during the game add just the right touch to make players' skins crawl.

When real shrunken heads are prepared, a slit is made in the back of



the severed head and the skin is carefully peeled from the skull. The skin is boiled in plain water for about half an hour, reducing it to about half the original size. After drying, any remaining flesh is scraped away and the slit through which the skull was removed and the mouth are sewn shut. Several small rocks are heated in a fire and rolled around inside until cool. They are reheated and the process repeated until the skin has shrunk too much to accommodate the stones. Hot sand is used to continue the shrinking process. The skin is rubbed with charcoal dust, darkening it so that the previous owner's avenging soul will not be able to see out.

By the time the shrinking process is finished, the tsantsa is about the size of a man's fist. Three palm pins are placed through the lips and tied together, and red seeds are often placed under the eyelids. A small hole is made in the top and a string is passed through so that the tsantsa may be worn. *Cthulhu Live* players are strongly advised to explore alternate means of creating shrunken heads for your games.

There are several ways to model a shrunken head. A nice replica can be crafted from doll hair, clay or papier-mâché all available from a craft store. A better-looking and much more fun process involves carving and shrinking an apple. Find several of the largest apples you can from your local grocery. Remove most of the peel with a vegetable peeler, leaving a little peel at the top and bottom. Carve a face into the apple with a small, sharp knife. Make the nose, mouth, ears and other features oversized, since shrinkage will reduce them substantially. Try not to gouge too deeply into the apple, since deep cuts will be magnified after shrinking. Use toothpicks to carve the details then round and smooth the surface of the "head" using a rag or paper towel.

Immerse the head in a solution of 1/2 cup salt, 5 cups of water and 2-3 tablespoons of lemon juice. Let it soak for 24 hours then remove it from the solution. Straighten out a paper clip or stiff wire and form a small loop in one end. Pierce the apple from top to bottom with the wire, bend it at the bottom to support the weight of the fruit, and hang it with a string through the loop in the wire. Let it hang in a dry place for 2 to 3 weeks. If you live in a very humid environment or are in a hurry, place the head on the center rack of a warm oven (200 degrees F) until dry. Darken the head with charcoal or shoe polish and coat it with a clear matte polyurethane finish to keep moisture from damaging it. For an even more authentic appearance, sew the lips with cotton strings and paste on strands of doll hair.

Make-up Techniques

The following section presents several basic make-up techniques that will help Keepers enhance the appearance of NPC actors and players. Numerous books and online references exist, but these pages contain a solid foundation of make-up techniques for live-action gaming.

Burned Flesh

Burns are ghastly physical injuries. Whether they are from flames, road rash, chemicals or radiation; burns are painful and horrific. Burned flesh make-up techniques are important additions to the Keeper's arsenal of gore and terror.

A simple first-degree burn is very simple and takes merely seconds to apply. Red make-up or powder applied to the area with a stipple sponge will achieve a raw, blotchy appearance. Perfect for early warning signs of contamination by dangerous chemicals or radiation exposure.

For a fast and nasty looking char burn, lay on a thick smear of petroleum jelly mixed with yellow food coloring. Use a stipple sponge to apply red and black make-up or powder around the area. A small amount of water with a hint of yellow or red food coloring can be sprayed on the wound to bead on the petroleum jelly and look exceptionally vile. This technique is perfect for small burned patches or stripes, perhaps from an application of hot irons or wounds from alien tentacles dripping a caustic slime. Larger burned surfaces can be created with a smear of petroleum jelly mixed with ashes. Prepare a jar in advance so that the jelly can be quickly applied and the edges finished with make-up and a stipple sponge.

Wounds and Wound Filler

A generous application of fake blood is always a fast and easy way to simulate wounds. Some additional techniques may be employed for the more realistic and gut-wrenching simulation of traumatic physical injuries.

Gelatin is a good multi-purpose effects compound since it's cheap, readily available and easy to apply. This is not prepared like your mother's gelatin dessert. Combine three packets of unflavored gelatin to a gradually added amount of liquid until you have a thick mixture with a consistency like applesauce. Water is the most common liquid, but this can be replaced or combined in solution with drops of food coloring for translucent color or drops of liquid makeup or acrylic-latex paint for solid color. Texture can



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be added to the mix with the addition of sand or breadcrumbs. Snippets of thread or string add a veiny appearance. Heat for fifteen seconds to a minute in a microwave. The longer the time it cooks, the smoother but hotter the mixture. Work quickly to sculpt scars or the edges of a wound with the gelatin before it cools. Be sure the actor tests the temperature for comfort and safety. After it cools and solidifies, the gelatin can be further treated with makeup, liquid latex and wound filler.

Wound filler is a medium you can mix ahead of time and store for use during the game. It can be made with a thick gel or liquid such as KY Jelly, petroleum jelly, or corn syrup, blended with coloring and some sort of inexpensive thickener to add texture, cohesion and color. This thickener is a matter of personal taste, but old coffee grounds and a little flour are an easy and inexpensive option. Wound filler can be used to build up both burns and gashes, and is essentially a base medium to simulate raw and exposed tissues.

For the simplest of techniques, the wound filler compound may be used to sculpt welts or the spreading maw of an open wound. A liberal dose of fake blood helps disguise the filler and is a means of setting up a fast wound effect without adding additional and more elaborate techniques.

For more realistic looking wounds, the wound filler is used for the purpose its name suggests, a dark, unpleasant looking substance or tissue exposed by the open wound. A few short segments or splinters of plastic PVC pipe cut lengthwise can be set into the wound filler if you want exposed and shattered bone. The edges of the wound and the ragged flaps of skin must be simulated with gelatin, latex or the addition of other compounds.

Plastic wax, mortician's wax, and nose putty work best with oil based make-ups and you need some sort of "scaffolding" to help these putties adhere to the skin. Typically the skin is brushed with spirit gum and stuck with cotton that is then whisked away. The adhering wisps of cotton anchor the putty, which is sculpted to shape. This scaffolding is also useful when coated with latex. If the skin is stretched while latex is being applied, the skin wrinkles. The cotton can be left thick on the skin for bone structures and coated with liquid make-up.

Latex can be used to create cuts and lacerations, tears, and dead flesh associated with burns or open wounds. Painted on layer-by-layer, semi-wet, it can be pulled out in strings and re-attached, or textured using stippling for irregularities while drying. It can also be used with various "texturizers" such as sand to achieve irregularities on the skin.

Raspberry tea bags can be used as a special trick to make fairly realistic puncture or bullet entry wounds. Lay the damp tea bags on the skin and brush down the edges with liquid latex. The natural red and purple

pigments in the tea soak into the latex, giving you a highly realistic and nasty looking “puncture wound” that simply needs to be blended around the edges.

Zombies and the Living Dead

For the simplest make-up techniques, all you need is black and white face paint from any costume shop. Your actor needs to wash and gently dry his or her face before beginning, cleaning dirt and excessive oils from the skin. Apply a smooth base coat of white over the face, ears and neck. You will eventually want to cover any other exposed flesh, such as hands and arms, but those may be saved for last to minimize make-up smudges on clothing.

Apply black make-up around the eyes. Cover the upper eyelids and continue up into the eyebrows. Add touches of black make-up below the eyes, and in the hollows of the cheeks. Don’t apply too much black make-up; just some narrow lines and small patches will do, since we will soon blend it. Isolate any other characteristics to accentuate on the face. If your actor has large eyes, make them seem small and beady by creating deep, dark eye hollows. If he or she has a wide face, make it seem narrower by sharpening the cheekbones and the natural lines and hollows around the nose and mouth.

Blend the black make-up into the white with a small piece of sponge to create transitional areas of shadow underneath the cheekbones and in the temples. The underside of the nose, hollows of the throat and area beneath the chin should be shadowed. Cover the lips with either straight white or a mixture of black and white paint. Consider having the actor down a spoon-full of grape beverage powder to stain the tongue and mouth purple.



Christian Matzke

When applying make-up to hands or other areas of exposed flesh, be sure to apply a similar shading technique. Colored make-up powders in tones of blue or green will add to the cadaverous appearance. Veins may be traced on the face or hands with a blue make-up pencil. The use of fake rotten teeth or special effects contact lenses will enhance the effect. Avoid using bright stage blood on an “old” zombie. Experiment with different blood concoctions or darken the stage blood with chocolate syrup.

To create a more complex effect you need white, black, gray, green, brown and red make-up, black lipstick and liquid latex. After the actor has washed his or her face, cover their lips and trace the lines of their face and hollows of their eyes with the black lipstick. Wipe the make-up lightly with a cloth, removing the excess lipstick but leaving a base of black in the deepest lines of the face.

You will now use latex to create textured effects on the actor’s face. The effect should be that of dead skin beginning to rot or sag off the bones, even if no open wounds are visible. Dab a small amount of petroleum jelly onto your fingers to keep the latex from sticking to you while you apply it to your subject.

Spread liquid latex over the cheeks and forehead while holding the skin taught. Release the skin tension as the latex dries, so that it wrinkles and creates a shriveled and aged appearance. When the latex has been allowed to dry, tear small holes in it by moving your finger in a circular motion on its surface. This will create open sores and other blistering wounds.

The bottoms of the nose and earlobes allow space for rotting effects. Build up the area with latex as though the septum and lobes continued further down but were now rotting through. Try soaking shreds of tissue paper in the liquid latex, using this to build up three-dimensional effects before the latex dries. This works very well when building up a false nose that ends abruptly as if rotten off.

Rolls of latex or latex-soaked tissue can create bulging veins on one side of the face and neck to simulate a pooling of blood after death. Thin shreds of latex can be applied to the opposite side of the face with spirit gum to simulate peeling skin and weathering of the exposed side.

You may apply make-up when the latex is fully dry. Gray or pale-green are great base colors. Apply the make-up carefully with a sponge to the entire face, ears and neck. Apply darker gray and black to darken the eye sockets and hollows of the cheeks and throat. Highlights may be applied to the eyelids, cheekbones, chin, eyebrows and forehead.

Apply brown and green to the edges of edges of exposed sores, veins and other marks. A light coating of blue may also be used on the veins. Work black and dark red into the inside of exposed sores and wounds. The bottom of the nose and chin should be darkened with gray or brown. Consider matting your subject’s hair down with hair gel or with fake

blood to continue the visual impact beyond just the face.

Once the face is done, turn your attention to any other exposed flesh. On the hands, cover each knuckle with latex. When dry, rub it in a circular pattern to tear holes that will be colored with black and dark red. The natural wrinkles on the actor's skin will look like exposed muscle tissue. Highlight the edges with gray or green.

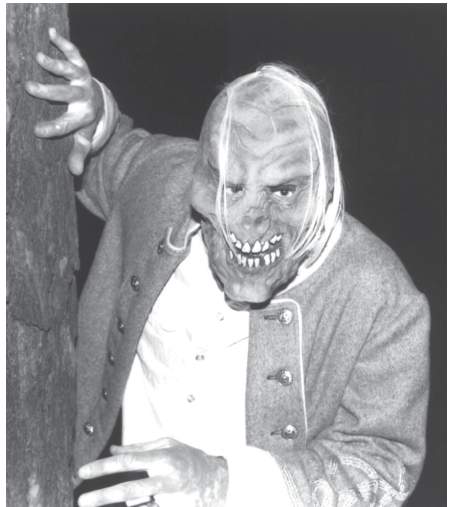
Rotting fingernails can be simulated with a thin covering of latex. For a more elaborate look, all of the subject's fingernails could be concealed in latex with fake nails attached on a few fingers, peeled back and left hanging.

The final step is costuming. Clothing that is too small for the actor will create a bloated look that is realistic for the freshly undead. Clothing that is too big for your subject gives a withered, cadaverous look that is perfect for old and shriveled zombies. Choose the look that best compliments your make-up.

Thrift stores are the best source for clothes to rip, stain and ruin for your zombies. Consider how the person died. Was it of natural causes? A nightgown or hospital smock might be appropriate. Murder? Bullet holes or a protruding knife handle in their back would be simple but effective. Were they attacked by the living dead? A bite on the arm or shoulder is easy to simulate simply with the subject's clothing, or latex effects applied to create grisly wounds.

Pre-making a number of living dead outfits increases the visual impact and turn-around time for the game staff. Mount shirts on simple body frames made from cardboard boxes and newspaper. Tear holes where you want wounds and apply fake blood or dark red paint to the fabric around the wounds. Mounting the frames upright allows realistic flow patterns to stain the cloth.

Pants and shoes can be similarly ripped and stained. It may be appropriate to stain some with "grave mold" or rub the clothes with dirt. The staff may want to create and keep several sets of zombie clothes on-hand. Even if the zombies have to be organized quickly, using simple make-up or even latex masks, the use of pre-prepared zombie clothing will add a great deal to the effect.



Robert McLaughlin

Ghouls

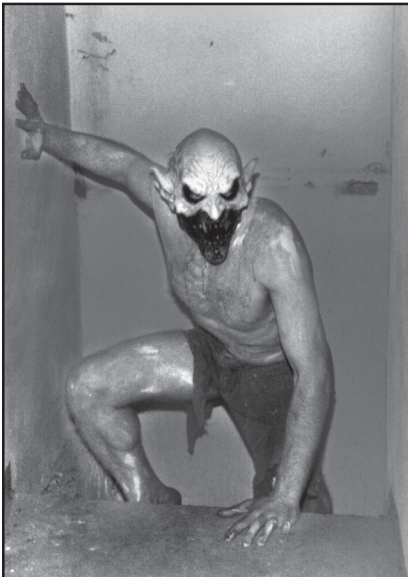
An old favorite of *Cthulhu Live* games, ghouls can be simulated through several techniques. The fastest and easiest technique is to use a Nosferatu-inspired vampire mask. These latex masks come in various styles, but typically feature pointed ears, a sharp chin, and huge teeth. Apply black cream make-up around your actor's eyes to minimize the contrast between the mask and the actor's skin. The actor should dress in whatever ragged clothes that are the costume, in order to identify what areas of the body need make-up. Starting with the neck and working down, apply white make-up to highlight the contours of the actor's body, such as collarbone, pectoral muscles, ribs, knees, and so on. Be sure the neck is adequately covered to minimize the contrast between the mask and the actor's skin.

For the next step, blend black make-up with white to create a dark gray make-up cream. Shade the recessed areas of the actor's body, between the ribs, above and below the collar cone, around the edges of the biceps, and similar areas. You can accentuate bone and muscle structure, whether the actor has a defined body or not, to give the ghoul a strong, sinewy appearance. Make the ghoul's arms and legs appear longer by exaggerating muscle length and decreasing width through careful shading. If on a budget or under time constraints, apply baby oil to your subject's body and sprinkle talcum powder or flour to achieve a pale, splotchy appearance.

Finally, apply brown make-up in splotches to the chest, arms and legs to simulate dirt and grave mold.

Fake blood gives the ghoul a nice "well fed" appearance. Immediately before the ghoul enters game-play, spraying the mouth of the mask with a mist of water adds a wet and realistic sheen.

If you want to explore other options than latex masks, you will need to drastically alter the actor's appearance through make-up. A cheap set of novelty plastic vampire teeth fills their mouth with fangs and often stretches the mouth into a contorted, muzzle-like appearance. Since you are not tied down to the black and white color scheme of the mask, you can experiment with greens and yel-



Robert McLaughlin

lows, or blues and grays. The make-up patterns described above can be used with any light/dark combination of colors. Lengthening the subject's face and jaw-line with shading and highlight their forehead, nose and chin. Use a bald skin-wig or swim cap to hide the actor's hair or slick it down with hair gel.

Costuming for ghouls is a tricky balancing act, remaining decent without making the



Chulhu Live Archives/Cuites des Goules

ghoul seem modest. If the actor and players in the game are comfortable with partial or complete nudity and you are playing in a controlled environment, then this is not a problem. Otherwise you need to focus on an unplanned, tattered appearance. Take a scrap of cloth and make a simple loincloth. Or, use an old shirt and trousers from a thrift store; cutting, ripping, staining and painting it until they are mere vestiges of their former shape and color. Fray and rip the edges to your satisfaction. Remember that ghouls are living, sentient creatures and would be much more practical about their rags than a zombie or living dead. Streaming and tattered rags would become snared in roots and masonry within the burrows. A ghoul would be more likely to tear away its shirtsleeves completely and probably rip its trousers down to mid-shin length to maximize movement but still protect its knees from cuts and scrapes.

Latex monster hands and contact lenses enhance any ghoul, but are by no means required. A useful prop would be a large beef bone from the butcher's section of a supermarket. Tell them it's for your dog! Instruct your actor to crouch low to the ground and adopt a fast, loping gait.

Building a Mythos Tome

Ancient grimoires and books of forbidden knowledge are often key script elements and important props. A well-made and realistic tome is not just good for disturbing your relatives and visiting neighbors, but a cherished game prop that can be used again and again.

Some prop builders hand-write and illustrate their tomes in hard cover, unlined artist books available from an office supply or art supply shop. The book may be "aged" prior to handwriting the text, or afterwards. The appearance of a hand-written tome is outstanding and in many ways superior, but the time and effort required is considerable. This technique is

superb for short diaries, letters and notes, but a large Mythos tome may take months of labor. Personal computers, quality laser printers, and text resources accessible on the Internet offer a much easier alternative.

The Text

The simplest solution is a simulated cipher manuscript. Random character combinations filling pages and pages of “encrypted” text. Find a strange fantasy font for your computer and transform letters to your parents or an old college thesis into an encrypted tome of evil. Since the text is meaningless and untranslatable except for “deciphered excerpts” provided to the players, it may represent anything from an enciphered grimoire to an encoded diary or alchemist’s journal.

Languages that do not employ Latin letters, such as Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian or Chinese, fall into a similar category as cipher manuscripts. Very few players are likely to read these languages, so an appropriate computer font transforms almost any text document into a Greek manuscript or Arabic tome.

Building an English language tome is easier than many people realize due to the tremendous resources available on the Internet. The text of several books claiming to be the true *Necronomicon* have been published on the Internet and are freely available for download. Other Lovecraft-related sites host ongoing projects where individuals contribute their own original texts as extracts from Mythos tomes. Other sites contain online libraries of hermetic magic and alchemy.

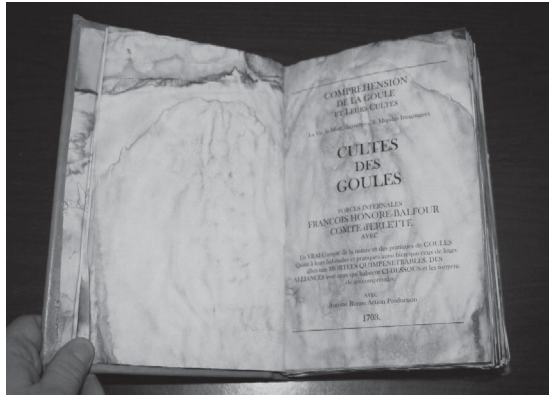
A number of complete Mythos tomes have already been assembled, these and new ones continue to be distributed between *Cthulhu Live* players. In short order, anyone can assemble literally hundreds of pages of occult and Cthulhu Mythos lore.

Building Mythos tomes in your native language requires forethought and planning. It must be rich enough for repeated use. You must do some editing and original writing to smoothly bridge the transition between the cut and pasted texts. English translations of works such as the *Necronomicon*, *Mysteries of the Worm*, *Cultes des*



Richard Alan Poppe

Goules, or *The Book of Eibon* are generally considered to be encyclopedic in scope. Depending on the binding technique employed, pages may be added, subtracted or altered between games. The planning to create tomes which players can read and use through multiple games is considerable but the final product is very rewarding and a proud possession of any game production staff.



No Good Deed Productions

Smaller, specialized books are easier to handle. *Cthulhu in the Necronomicon*, *the Sussex Manuscript*, individual volumes of the *Revelations of Glaaki* and similar tomes are loaded with detailed information and built into a very usable source for specific games or campaigns. The challenge with specialized books is maintaining the mystery for experienced players, so that when they do find volume seven of the *Revelations of Glaaki*, they don't immediately jump to the conclusion that Y'Golonac is waiting around the next bend in the plot.

A way around these issues is offering foreign language tomes that replicate original editions or earlier translations of a Mythos work. Living languages such as French, Spanish, or German are easier to build since there is so much material waiting for plunder. The likelihood of players knowing such living languages, however, increases the risk of seeing through your text as an obvious contrivance and creating unwanted comedy relief when your investigators realize the hoary old copy of *Unauspredlichen Kulten* is actually composed of German independent film reviews.

Dead and obscure languages are excellent choices. Players may recognize just enough words to know that the book isn't complete gibberish, and little enough to worry that they're missing something important. More information on adapting foreign language texts will be detailed shortly.

Finding Texts Online

Before searching for materials, there are a few important questions that should be considered. What book are you creating? Who wrote it? Is it the original, a good translation, or a corrupted and inaccurate translation? In what time period was it written? How large is the text?

Once you've determined the basics and you know what language you'll



be using for the tome, use a translation dictionary or an online translator or dictionary on the Internet to assemble keywords. Collect a list of foreign keywords related to your subject matter, as these will prove invaluable for searching the net for the appropriate texts.

The number and diversity of E-texts available online is staggering. When looking for foreign

language texts, refine your search to materials from the right time period in which your work was written, and as close to the right subject matter as you can. Mixing modern texts with medieval ones can be awkward but occasionally chilling in their own right. A player who can read a little bit of the foreign language may suddenly point out how one chapter deals with the nature of the four classical elements in respect to alchemy but the next paragraph deals with nuclear thermodynamics and the particle acceleration of materials ejected from stellar masses.

Copy online materials suitable to your needs into files for subsequent editing and layout. Save relevant graphic images for digital insertion into the text, or as references for hand-drawn copies on the printed page. Locate and search through magic and occult web-rings. Many sites on these rings maintain online libraries of choice materials that won't be found in mainstream E-text archives.

Refining the Text

By now, you've hopefully found more than enough material for your monstrous tome of forbidden lore. It's time to customize and modify your raw material. Foreign language religious texts are the easiest candidates for The Word Replacement Game. Use your word processing program to find and replace certain recurring words with the names of Mythos and occult entities and locations.

Keep your replacements consistent and logical. Replace place names with new place names, for example, and make sure that the names and places are appropriate for the content of your tome. If working on a

religious text, try to replace all references to God, Allah, Jupiter, Apollo, or whomever with the likes of Azathoth, Nyarlathotep and Yog-Sothoth. Replace angelic names with Great Old Ones and saints with suitable historical characters or monsters. Location names should be replaced with care. If the context is referring to a nearby town, Yuggoth might be a poor choice, but Irem may be ideal.

Keep conjugation in mind, but make it work to your advantage. In a Latin text, for example, Jesus Christ is a prime candidate for becoming Hastur the Unspeakable. But “Jesus Christ” will appear in a variety of forms, from Jesu Christos, to simply Christi. Work backwards by taking the longest forms of the name you can find, such as Jesu Christos, and replace that with the full blown “Hastur quo Ineffabilis”. Work your way through shorter and shorter variations on the original until you get tired of using simply “Hastur.” Don’t forget to include the occasional “Quo Requis intus Fulvus” (The King in Yellow).

Keep in mind items in the original that will now be associated with the new text concerning Hastur. Jerusalem becomes Carcosa, Nazareth becomes Aldebaran, and so on. Use your translation dictionary to replace such verbs as glorious with noxious. This can be carried to any extreme you choose. Joseph and Mary will appear in the text in relation to Hastur with reasonable frequency. Joseph may make a good Cthulhu, while Mary might be one of several names replaced with Shub-Niggurath. Where applicable, it’s a good idea to keep any gender, real or imagined, consistent with these replacements. The source material, the targeted outcome, and your own patience and creativity will largely determine the degree of neurosis you take in these sorts of replacements.

Getting It All Down on Paper

Consider the binding technique you will use prior to layout and printing, to ensure proper margins and spacing in the document. One-inch margins are fine for most binding techniques, but 1.25” to 1.5” side margins may be required for others. Layout the text into major sections with appropriate titles and paragraph breaks first, then decide what font you will use for printing. Will it be a “hand-written” tome? Then select a handwriting font in an appropriate script ranging from elegant calligraphy to a barely legible scrawl. If the book was printed, what was the time period? Find a nice gothic black letter or similar moveable-type font from years gone by.

Determine the most appropriate font size. Handwriting fonts should always be set at a larger size than moveable-type fonts. Eighteen to twenty-six point fonts are a reasonable size for most “old tomes.” Line spacing can be adjusted on most word processing programs. Try this option out when creating “hand-written” tomes, since this causes font characters to spill over one another in a cramped and authentic appearance.

Once the new font and size are selected, you'll have to go back through for final tweaks and changes. Make sure page breaks fall at logical places in the text. Adjust formatting and paragraph spacing accordingly. The title page will be the first thing your audience looks at, so it should look good and translate to your native language as accurately as you can manage. Chapter/Section Headings should make as much sense as possible and ideally pertain to the subject matter of the section.

You will probably want illustrations in your tome. Insert digital images in the text, or leave windows and blank spaces in the text during layout. After the pages are printed, strange magical characters and creepy original ink drawings can be made in these spaces. Flip through role-playing books for appropriate monster drawings, occult books for elaborate magical seals and characters, or old art books for horrific etchings and woodblock prints. These images may be photocopied, cut out, and pasted into those blocked out spaces on the page. You may then photocopy the pasted page to create a clean single sheet for your master copy.

Scan through the file at least once more before printing, looking for sections that don't fit, word replacements that were skipped or should now be reexamined, and any other items that stick out as being unsuitable for one reason or another. Proceed with confidence that your familiarity with the project will allow you to pick up and fix much more than your players will usually be able to spot.

Final details should be dealt with now. This may include replacing specific letters, such as "u" being represented by "v" in medieval Latin, and eliminating inappropriate numerals or text characters. Check the copy carefully. Some punctuation marks are not in certain fonts. When all is finished, it's time to fire up the printer and run off a master copy. Make several back-up copies of the word processing file and store them in a safe place. Always maintain both the printed and the electronic original.

Photocopy your single-sided original into a double-sided format. Visit your local copy shop or spend a little time "working late" at the office one night. You can photocopy your tome onto parchment paper, but the aging process detailed in the next section produces wonderful results with standard white paper.

The Aging Process

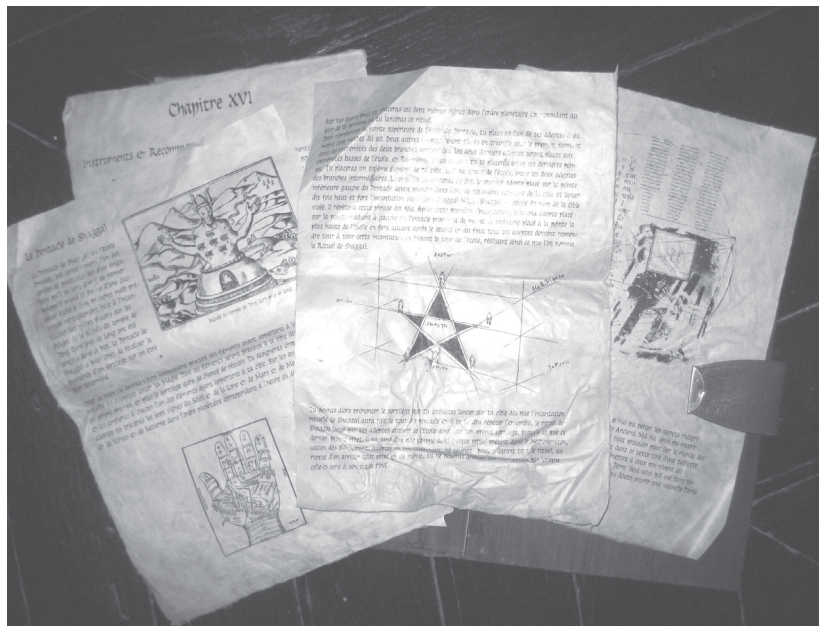
Fill a large pan or casserole dish with a strong mix of water and instant ice tea. Lay out an assembly line consisting of a stack of your photocopied pages, the tea dipping station, and a cookie sheet covered with several layers of paper towels. Immerse the pages, one by one, in the tea. Soak the pages thoroughly and hold them over the dipping station to allow excess tea to run back in the pan. Stack the wet pages on the paper towels.

When these pages are wet, they are extremely delicate. Do not attempt to separate individual pages from the wet stack or you will tear them. The preferred drying technique is simple fresh air; gradually splitting the stack into smaller bundles as the water naturally evaporates. This technique may take a week or longer for large tomes, although the process can be hastened by setting the pages on or near a low temperature heat source such as a radiator. If placing them directly on a radiator, use a low heat setting and an intermediate buffer such as several layers of fresh paper towels. Turn the drying stack of pages over every six to eight hours. The tea inside the pages will seep down with gravity, leaving your bottom pages excessively dark if you don't periodically turn the stack.

Binding the Pages

There are a number of ways to handle the binding. An authentic but labor-intensive technique involves sewing the pages together and mounting them in a hard cover binding. If you plan on using this technique, consider getting the edges of your pages punched at a copy shop for spiral binding *before* aging them. Be very careful in the aging process as this border will be very delicate when wet. After the pages are dry, use unwaxed dental floss or heavy thread to sew the pages into bundles using the pre-punched spiral binding holes. These sewn pages, or several bundles of them, will then be mounted into the cover.

An easier and very effective technique is to age the pages, dry them,



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and then assemble in a tight stack. Use two pieces of plywood and several clamps to press the pages tight together, with the inside edge or the pages slightly protruding from between the plywood. Fan the edges lightly with a thumb and use a hot glue gun to bind the inside spine of the pages.

Gut the pages out of interesting old hard cover books, or obtain new hard book covers with a gummed spine and flaps from library supply companies. The gummed flaps of these “archive” covers fold part way over the margins of the first and last pages, effectively hiding the stitching or staples. You can accomplish the same effect for tomes mounted in old book covers with hot glue or very strong craft glue.

You might want to create a binding that can be broken down at a later date to insert new pages, or to replace pages damaged during game-play. Use a paper puncher and screw-post binders to assemble the pages. Page alignment for punching holes is easier when done before the aging process. The screw-post binders can either penetrate the cover itself, creating the look of decorative rivets running along the sides of the spine, or the screw-post binders can attach the pages to the cover by means of interior flaps.

Finishing Touches

The cover can be as simple or as elaborate as you desire. Cover it in leather with metal edging and clasps from a hardware shop. Coat the cover with a modeling compound, sculpt it into terrifying relief shapes and paint it as appropriate. Use paint brushes or air brushes to finish and detail the surface.

Consider tinting some illustrations with watercolors. Keep the paint heavily diluted, so colors are subtle and washed out. You may prefer an elaborately illuminated manuscript with brighter colors and even gold-gilt paint. Rub cloth in dark green and gray paints and smudge the edges of the tome and certain pages with this “mold” and “mildew”. The same technique used with brown paint can simulate dried blood.

Treat your tome as an ongoing project. If you stumble across ominous or cryptic quotes when reading a book or watching a film, you can scrawl them in the margins of the book or leave footnotes next to certain passages and illustrations. Remember that the tome might have passed through many hands. Sorcerers and scholars may have jotted down notes and observations in the margins. Perhaps a few pages are damaged by fire or smeared with spilled wax.

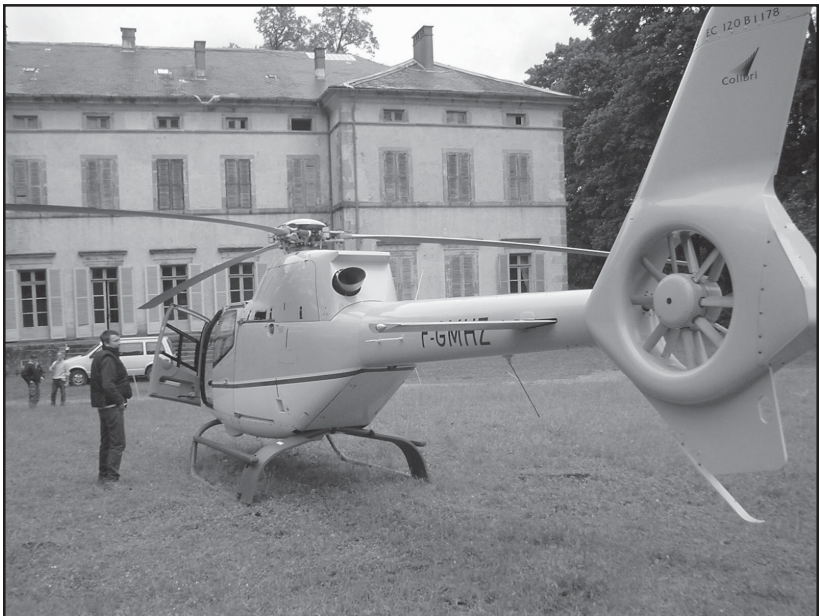
Burying your tome in the backyard for a week or two or taking unconventional liberties with a raw, bloody steak before tossing it on the grill can achieve more extreme effects. Just remember that you’re going to have the live with an overly authentic mildewed and reeking tome after the game is finished.

Maximizing Game Locations

Whether you are running one-shot games or campaigns, always consider how to get the maximum use out of each location. If transportation resources are limited, most games will be held in a single location or at several sites within walking distance. This necessitates a reasonably private venue, since everything from casual conversations to gun battles and grandiose occult rituals may be staged at that single location.

Many new possibilities are opened if transportation is not an issue and the game timeline permits players driving to multiple sites. Every pre-planned combat sequence, ritual, monster attack, or other acts of high weirdness and public disturbance should still be conducted in a private setting. Don't risk arrest, negative publicity or even physical harm to your players by foolishly planning events and actions that are inappropriate or dangerous in public. But some game scenes, particularly in a contemporary setting, are very effective when held in public locations.

Common sense, discretion and respect for other people are paramount when in public. Unlike medieval fantasy live-action games or horror games with a dark urban punk setting, players in most *Cthulhu Live* games tend to dress conservatively or even semi-formally. Suits, dresses, conservative shirts and slacks are commonly worn, although there are always exceptions. Even if 1920s or 30s vintage attire is worn, it is unlikely to draw negative attention and typically warrants nothing more than a few



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curious glances. Scenes in public are best with no more than a half-dozen players to minimize attention, so larger groups may need to split up and take care of tasks at different locations.

Discrete meetings to gain information or critical items make effective use of public areas. Send the players to the local public or university library in order to conduct research. An NPC posing as the curator of the “rare-book collection: can be waiting at the scene to meet them. If the prop book is not considered to be under tight control, file your prop on an appropriate shelf in the library and slip a few dummy cards into the catalog files so that players must look up the book’s location.

The players may need an artifact from a rare bookstore, occult or antique shop. Speak with the owner of the store in advance. Explain that you are playing an interactive game like a murder mystery and ask if he’d be willing to let the players show up for a few minutes on a certain day and time. If the owner proves cooperative and seems to enjoy the idea, arrange to have the artifact somewhere in his shop for the players to find and purchase with play money. Many small store merchants find the idea charming, but always ask permission before staging a scene in their shop.

Meetings to exchange information, artifacts, photographs or a briefcase full of play-money might take place in public parks, hotel lobbies, restaurants, bars, nightclubs and so on. Perhaps the players are told to meet an old man playing chess in the park. The players may meet a hard-boiled detective or junkie stool pigeon in the back booth of a greasy spoon diner. If staging a scene in a restaurant or bar, be courteous to other clientele and encourage your waiting actors to order something to eat or drink. Plan the scene so players are also likely to order at least a drink. Let the establishment make some money from your use of their facility.

The contact may be a well-dressed gentleman reading a copy of the *New York Times* in the lobby of the Ritz-Carlton. Perhaps the players are to go to a bank of pay phones and wait for a call to come in for further instructions. They may have previously been given a claim check and must go to recover a briefcase or a coat with something important stuffed into the pocket. If in a nice hotel, be quiet, discrete and do nothing that will upset the management or paying guests. If the game staff is staying at the hotel, during a convention game for example, consider



Robert McLaughlin

guest rooms as additional locations. Secret documents or critical artifacts can be left in a room safe or a safety deposit box at the front desk. Recovering the safety deposit box key and gaining access to that information may be an important goal.



No Good Deed Productions

Mysterious keys used to open bus station or airport lockers are easily incorporated in live-action games.

A room in a budget motel isn't that expensive to rent as one of several game locations. Perhaps the players are sent to meet a fugitive hiding in a fleabag motel, only to find him butchered in the tub with gore splashed across the bathroom walls. This could serve as the starting point of a murder investigation, with players taking photographs of the scene, collecting fibers, dusting for prints and looking for clues that take them to the next scene in the game.

If you rent a motel room for such a scene, be respectful of the property and don't do anything that will damage the room. Stain your own "blood-soaked" sheets with paint and allow them to dry completely before the game. A dramatic "wet" gore scene is best staged in a tiled bathroom, but members of the game staff must stay behind to clean up afterwards. Do not leave a staged gore scene behind for the housekeeper to find the next day! Your address and credit card information are kept on file by the management and the authorities might not be amused after being called in to a presumed murder scene. Of course it might be part of the players' job to clean up the murder and conceal evidence that it ever took place. What a perfect time to build a corpse prop, fitted with internal blood packets in the limbs, for the players to saw up and smuggle out in plastic bags!

Museums, art galleries, science and technology exhibits are fine locations. Don't forget wharf side docks near ramshackle old warehouses or back alleys in the heart of the city. The game staff is expected to use common sense when selecting locations and times of play. In other words, staging a game scene outside a downtown crack house at one o'clock in the morning is not a wise decision.

While it may sound repetitive, you cannot stress enough the impor-

tance of discretion, respect and common sense to your players and game staff whenever game scenes will be featured in public areas. Role-playing games are meant to be fun and creatively stimulating social events. Don't allow irresponsible or immature players to ruin a game and generate negative publicity for our hobby by performing any dangerous, illegal or stupid actions. Keepers have every right to throw players breaking such rules out of the game. The timely appearance of "game cops" is a less extreme but very effective measure against players pushing their limits. The Keepers and staff members keep toy police badges in their pockets, stepping into game-play to arrest, disarm or hassle players threatening to cross the line during play in a public area.

Safety and Security in *Cthulhu Live*

Keepers and game staff for *Cthulhu Live* events assume multiple roles. Besides being directors, prop-managers, and storytellers, they also take the role of safety officers. The Keeper and his staff must concern themselves with both the quality of the story, as well as the well being of the players.

Identify potential trouble spots in the story. Are there any actions or rituals in the script that may be problematic when performed? Walk through your playing areas with the script. Is there anything in the area that has the potential of accidentally harming a player or staff member: statues that can be knocked over, falling paintings, small furniture in the way, and so on? Can the setting support the total players and staff without being too small and constrictive?


Inspect the game setting one last time just before the event, especially if you're playing in someone's home. Is everything valuable and fragile put away? Put the things that could hurt someone under lock and key. Warn players about problem spots in the house; plan the game in all the safest places in your home. It is the responsibility of the host to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience. Please keep in mind that the host also has a legal obligation to see that the environment provided is safe and secure. The host, if not already the Keeper or another member of the staff, should be included in planning the event.

Props bring another question of safety. Weapons are usually the first things to come to mind. Announce before every game that non-consensual physical contact will not be tolerated. Don't be afraid to kick someone out of your game if you think they'll contribute to an unsafe environment. Show everyone what weapon props will be used. Never use real weapons as game props. Realistic looking weapon props may be alright in a tightly controlled game environment, but never allow players to brandish realistic looking weapon props in public.

Show the same concern when working with special effects and costuming. Light, music, sound effects and smoke might all be a nuisance to your neighbors. It doesn't hurt to check your municipal laws about quiet times in your town. You might want to tell your neighbors that you are having a small event at your home and they should call you directly if they have any concerns. Courtesy and sensibility are keys to having a successful game event.

If the police are called, the host and Keeper should be present to speak with them. Explain what is happening in simple terms without going into too much detail. Most police are content to just know that there is no real problem and “it’s just one of those murder-mystery parties.” If they want more detail, give it to them. If they heard there were weapons, show him your props and script. Show the means you’ve taken to ensure everyone’s safety. If the officers make any comments about excessive noise or lights, listen to their suggestions. Quiet things down if they ask. The concern of the police is that no laws are being broken and people are safe.

A couple examples include the infamous “summon cops” spell inadvertently cast by a Keeper through the ignition of a giant, flaming elder sign cut into an open field. After showing the police the careful safety precautions and advance planning that were taken and reassuring them that this was just one of those “murder mystery” games, everything was comfortably resolved. The same held true after a conversation with an officer checking up on a group of players roaming all over College Hill in Providence, Rhode Island, late one night. Once he was assured it wasn't a roving gang and the intentions were innocent — if a bit unusual — the game continued.

The Keeper and staff of a *Cthulhu Live* event should have the safety and security of the players and environment on their minds at all times. It is their job to provide a safe environment for the players, just as it is the player's obligation to be careful and responsible during play. The key is just exercising common sense. Live-action role-playing is great fun and a fantastic way to enjoy the traditions of Lovecraftian horror. It only takes a few careless incidents or negative publicity to spoil the hobby for everyone, so please be smart and safe when you play *Cthulhu Live*. 



Robert McLaughlin

Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition

Keeper Cheat Sheet

Basic Skill Resolution

Multiply Skill level by supporting stat score (EDU, DEX, CON, POW) and compare to difficulty score target determined by Keeper. Variable modifiers may be introduced at Keeper's discretion. Unskilled attempts test at half the supporting stat score. If the players score is 50 or more points less than the test success score, a critical failure may result.

Difficulty	Success Score
1 — No Sweat	5
2 — Simple	11
3 — Easy	18
4 — Routine	26
5 — Average	35
6 — Challenging	45
7 — Difficult	56
8 — Extreme	68
9 — Superhuman	81
10 — Impossible	95

Team Efforts

Player with highest skill is the team leader. He can manage up to one additional person per skill level in the team effort. Leader's skill level and supporting stat are multiplied as normal. Team members with the correct skill contribute half their supporting stat (no multipliers used) to the leader's score. Team members without the correct skill contribute only three points each to the score of the team leader.

Sanity Tests

POW	Shade of Terror	Sanity Level	Façade Level
18-20	Red	Solid	Fine
15-17	Orange	Shaken	Foreboding
12-14	Yellow	Spooked	Foul
9-11	Blue	Scared	Fiendish
1-8	Green	Screaming	Feral
0		Stark, Raving Mad!	Freaking Insane!

Combat!

Declaration Phase — Announcing intent. Counting up from lowest to highest DEX.

Resolution Phase — Completing announced actions. Counting down from highest to lowest DEX

Standard Combat Actions

Attack — Melee or ranged attack announced.

Defend — Put all efforts into deflecting damage.

Move — Move to another location.

Evade — Extra burst of speed to evade melee or flee.

Hold — Hold an attack until opportune moment later in phase.

Aiming — Careful aiming of ranged weapon to increase damage.

Perform Action — Miscellaneous actions and skill use.

Special Attacks

(Must have appropriate skill specialization!)

Disarm — Knock opponents weapon out of his hands.

Throw Weapon — Throw a weapon to cause damage.

Mighty Blow — Additional damage from powerful melee attack.

Lightning Strike — Attack faster than usual, but at reduced damage.

Improvise Weapon — Use an improvised weapon as a skilled attack.

Trip — Drop opponent to ground.

Knockout — Render opponent unconscious.

Two Weapons — Dual weapon attacks at base damage.

Marksman — Accurate aimed shots for extra damage.

Double-Tap — Double-shot with a single weapon.

Run & Gun — Move and attack at base weapon damage at the same time.

Trick Shot — Fancy shooting at special target locations.

Automatic Weapon — Skill with full-auto weapons.

Quick Draw — Draw and fire in the blink of an eye.

Armor

Armor	Defense	Notes
Leather	1	No defense against firearms
Chainmail	3	No defense against firearms
Plate Armor	4	Defense 1 against firearms
Light Ballistic	3	No defense against melee
Heavy Ballistic	4	Defense 2 against melee

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EDR		WP	
DEX		WTP	
COR		Luck	
POW			
Skills			
<h1>Cthulhu</h1> <h2>Live 3E</h2> <h3>Character Sheet</h3>			
<hr/> Name <hr/>			
<hr/> Player <hr/>			
Weapons & Spells		Shade of Terror	
Sanity or Façade Level			
Solid		Fine	
Shaken		Foreboding	
Spooked		Foul	
Scared		Fiendish	
Screaming		Feral	
Stark Raving Mad		Freaking Insane	

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