



LOST CITY

BY SAMANTHA HANCOX-LI



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to Ruthanna Emrys, Anne Pillsworth, and all the others who taught me how to play in old
Howard's sandbox

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Introduction

Lost City is a story about art, and imagination, and death. It's about spending your life in other worlds, dreaming of other lives, about wanting something so badly you think you'd die for it. This is a story about a black leap of faith, and the abyss waiting for you if you fall.

The scenario is set in an alternate 1920's New York City, in a world blanketed in an eternal volcanic twilight and an America ruled by the ominous New America Party. It is a dark, fading world, in which the lights of humanity are going out one by one. To escape it, the artist Camilla Prescott performed a bit of deep magic: the Black Leap. She painted herself a new world, and leapt into it. But when she removed herself from the fabric of reality, she left a hole full of frayed ends. And now the world she left behind is unravelling. The question of the adventure is whether the investigators have the wit to figure out what the Black Leap is and the will to pay its terrible price before their world fades away entirely, and is replaced by the Lost City.

Carcosa.

The investigators are members of the New York City art scene: starry-eyed dreamers, trust-fund mediocrities, aspiring critics scraping by. And to survive their world's demise, the investigators will have to navigate that scene, a world of ambiguity and uncertainty, decadence and despair.

This scenario is designed for Keepers and players who are especially interested in roleplaying. Artists, bohemians, and New York City weirdos: these are the characters of this adventure. While the investigators face a variety of dangerous supernatural threats, including the utter destruction of their reality, they cannot punch or shoot their way out of them. Rather, whether the investigators survive the end of their world will be determined by the **players'** ability to interact with the characters in the world, acquire information, and put together the essential clues and determine the correct course of action.

Also note that while the scenario as written focuses on the fine arts scene in an alternate 1920s Manhattan, an ambitious Keeper might relocate the scenario to various other places: the West Coast film scene in the era of stagflation, the music scene of fin-de-siècle Vienna, or the literary scene of gaslight London. It all depends on the group's collective interest. Anywhere art is being made while the world falls apart will serve.

Outline for the Keeper

The adventure begins as the investigators attend a soiree at the townhouse of Mr. Blake, a noted critic who can make or break a budding artist's career. They'll have the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other and interact with a variety of other partygoers, before Mr. Blake drops by and asks them for a simple favor: look in on his friend, Ms. Prescott. He hasn't seen her in a few days, and he's worried her habitual melancholy may have come over her again.

At Ms. Prescott's cramped garret apartment they learn that her landlord has also not seen her and wants his rent. They also learn of two of her frequent associates: Mr. Wilde, an art dealer and owner of Mr. Wilde's Curiosities, and Ms. Black, the proprietor of an obscure speakeasy known as The Messenger. They also begin to notice signs that their own reality is unraveling.

Mr. Wilde and Ms. Black offer conflicting hints as to what has transpired regarding Ms. Prescott. But they both point the investigators towards Ms. Prescott's secret art studio, a loft room in the abandoned De Vinne Press Building. There, they find the remains of the great spell Ms. Prescott

worked: her corpse, with a bullet in her head and a gun in her hand, surrounded by her art, painting after painting depicting another, brighter world. And one further thing: an invitation to a gala at Frick Mansion to show Ms. Prescott's latest collection.

In the investigators' world, Frick Mansion is a dusty, abandoned wreck. But if they arrive with the invitation in hand, they'll find it transformed into the bright-lit home of Ms. Helen Clay Frick, industrialist and patron of the arts. And they'll find Ms. Prescott very much alive in this new reality, a wildly successful artist and with a millionaire girlfriend. If the investigators play their cards carefully, they'll have the chance to ask her a few questions and learn more about Carcosa and the Black Leap.

But after leaving the gala, they'll be back in their own swiftly-collapsing timeline. New York City is fading away and being replaced by Lost Carcosa. The investigators must either decipher the secret of the Black Leap, or meet their doom at the hands of the King in Yellow and his Hounds.

Setting and Character Creation

This scenario contains numerous artists and artistically-inclined NPCs. The central concern of their lives is not the Mythos nor missing persons, but Art. As such, effective roleplaying requires an understanding of the artistic set of New York City in the 1920s. This section describes some central artistic movements and controversies for the Keeper's inspiration. There is also a handout for the players describing the unique elements of this alternate 1920s.

Twilight Times

Since the eruption of **Krakatoa** in 1919, the planet has been swathed in a cloud of volcanic dust, known as **the Shroud**. The global ecosystem has been disrupted, leading to famine and civil war throughout the world. The United States remains stable, but stagnant. The economy has grown at half a percent a year for the last five years, and unemployment refuses to drop below 10%. The Shroud frequently obscures the sun, and a constant rain of ash turns all exposed surfaces dirty within days. Consequently, **dust-robos and dust-masks** are standard attire for pedestrians throughout New York.

The **New America Party** came to power in the 1920 elections, and has remained in place ever since. In addition to enforcing Prohibition, the new **Department of Morality** provides voluntary euthanasia to any citizen who requires it. **Government Lethal Chambers** are situated on street corners throughout the city, allowing unhappy citizens to acquire a quick and painless death. The Department's stated goal is to promote a general standard of morality, decency, and virtue among citizens.

People become artists for any number of reasons and have any number of thoughts about their chosen field. However, there is a pair of topics that is especially thematically relevant in this scenario: first, the tension between artistic drive and commercial success, and second, the meaning of realism. When creating NPCs, it can be helpful to use one of those topics as their central roleplaying hook. What follows is some elaboration on these ideas, but as ever, the Keeper is free to create their own take on them.

The tension between artistic drive and commercial success is a fairly straightforward problem. What is demanded by the many — or the few with money — is not the same thing as what the artist themselves desires. And yet: we all need to eat. Art that doesn't sell isn't a profession: it's just a hobby for the idle rich. More strongly, the opinions of others can act as an essential corrective on one's own thinking. Sometimes the many are right: the art you've created just isn't good, and you're too wrapped up in your own head to notice. But then again: great art is equally often unrecognized in its time — just look at Picasso. And the greatest commercial successes are often forgotten within years, remembered by history only as worthless, conventional artists. How an artist navigates these twin pitfalls can reveal much about them.

The meaning of realism is a trickier question. Art isn't the real world, but it bears some connection to it. Some things we can say are fake, are bullshit, are artificial — a portrait that removes all a rich man's warts, a novel that glosses over racism and prejudice, a dance act that apes "exotic" cultures without any understanding of them. But if these things are fake, what is real? Art itself isn't reality. Every painting changes its object in some way; every novel leaves something out; every dance is in some way a reinterpretation of its sources. What does it really mean for a piece of art to be in touch with reality? Each artist answers that themselves, and each in a different way.

Both of these issues play out in various ways in the following series of artistic movements.

In this alternate 1920s, the reigning artistic movement is [Art Nouveau](#). The world may be shrouded in darkness, but Art Nouveau harks back to a lost world, full of life, and sunlight, and beauty. Characteristic examples include the following:

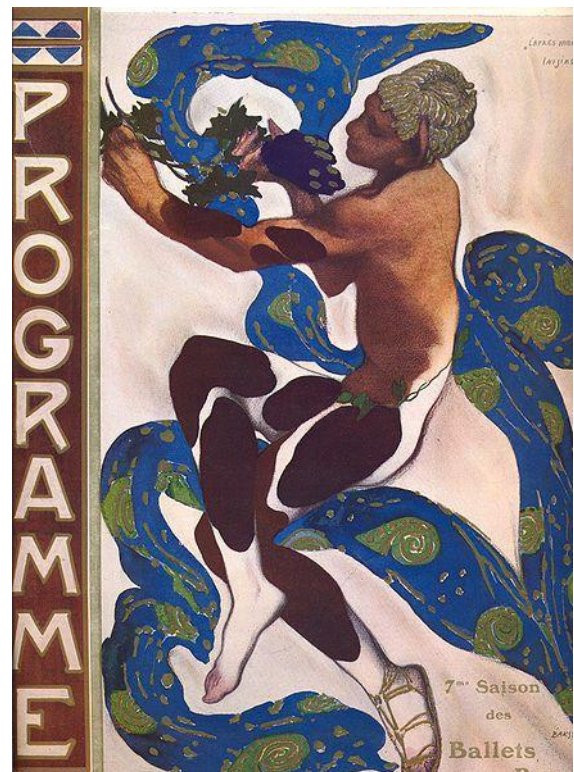
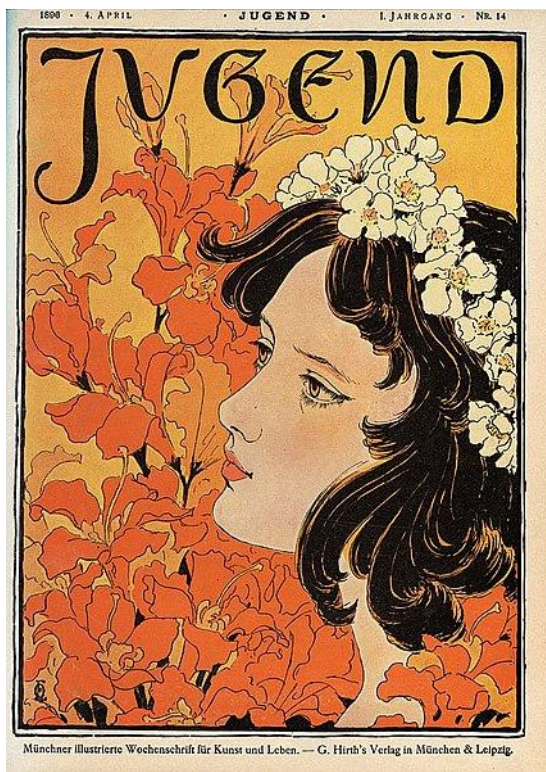


photo credits https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Otto_Eckmann_-_Jugend_Nr._14,_1896.jpg and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bakst_Nizhinsky.jpg

[American Realism](#) exists as a rebellion against the gauzy, idealistic world of Art Nouveau. The American Realists believe in depicting life as it truly is, especially in the city and especially for the working class. The school eschewed simple photorealism in favor of portraying the true essence of urban life.



photo credit

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Both_Members_of_This_Club_George_Bellows.jpeg

Alongside both Art Nouveau and American Realism, another movement is beginning to flourish: the [Harlem Renaissance](#), aka the New Negro Movement. The Great Migration of African Americans from the Jim Crow South to northern urban centers (most notably Harlem in Manhattan) led to a dramatic flourishing of Black art, music, and literature. Notable figures include the novelist Zora Neale Hurston, the poet and playwright Langston Hughes, and the musician Duke Ellington. The music of the Harlem Renaissance, especially jazz and the Harlem Stride, earned widespread popularity (and notoriety) in the United States and beyond in this time.

photo credit <https://www.loc.gov/item/gottlieb.03121>



True Magic

This scenario includes three new spells: the Black Leap, Binding, and the Yellow Sign. Understanding these spells and their effects is one of the chief necessities for the investigators. Thus the following descriptions should not be explicitly given to the players; rather, they must piece them together themselves from the clues available in the adventure.

The Black Leap. This spell enables the caster to remove themselves from one reality and travel to a new one.

- Cost: 1D10 SAN and 1D10 MP. Casting time: variable; see below.
- The caster prepares by conceiving of the reality they wish to travel to in as much detail and vividness as possible. They use their art to represent that reality as clearly as possible. Ms. Prescott, a painter, surrounded herself with paintings depicting that reality, but other casters may use any piece of art suited to their talents, including novels, movies, dance, etc. Roll **Art/Craft** to determine how effective this is.
- The caster commits suicide. Roll **POW**, with a bonus die if the **Art/Craft** roll was successful. This roll may be pushed; see *Call of Cthulhu* p.178.
- If the force of their will and the power of their art are sufficient, the caster awakens to a new life in the reality they envisioned. On a failure, they die.
- Either way, in their original timeline, they leave behind a corpse and whatever art they gathered.
- If they succeed, however, there is another unfortunate consequence. By removing themselves from reality, they leave behind a tear in the tapestry, so to speak. Reality begins unraveling and reweaving itself into a new form: the city of Lost Carcosa, ruled by the King in Yellow. Anyone left behind in this decaying timeline eventually meets their doom at the hands of the King and his Hounds.

Binding. The King and his Hounds can be bound into works of art. Their amorphous and contradictory forms are forced into a specific structure and trapped in the artwork. In detail:

- Cost: 1D8 SAN, 1D8 MP. Casting time: variable; see below.
- The caster attempts to create an appropriate work of art; this may be a sketch of a Hound in a cage, a tune composed to send them away, or even a simple photograph. It is up to the investigator to determine the precise nature of the binding and express that via art. Roll **Art/Craft** as appropriate; on a failure, the spell fails. On a success, proceed to the next step.
- The caster rolls **POW** to determine how effective the binding is. On a failure, the bound creature will break free within minutes. On a success, it will take considerably longer, hours or days.

The Yellow Sign. While Mr. Wilde will pass the Sign off as a sign of protection (i.e. an Elder Sign), it is in fact the opposite. Instead of keeping Mythos entities from passing a threshold, it invites danger in.

- Cost: 10 POW, 1D6 MP. Casting time: variable; see below.

- To cast the spell, the investigator first attempts to inscribe or portray it in some artistic medium. This can include drawing it on a piece of paper, or dancing out the pattern, or even singing it as a melody: the Sign is not tied to any particular medium. The Sign may be carried on a piece of paper, inscribed on a doorway or dwelling, or used in some other method. Roll **Art/Craft** as appropriate; on a failure, the spell fizzles.
- On completion of the Sign, roll **POW**. On a success, the Yellow Sign is imbued with power. On a failure, the art is just art: just a scribble, just a dance, just a melody, and no more.
- Once imbued with power, the Sign acts as a sort of magnet of doom, pulling the King and his Hounds towards the bearer and local reality towards Lost Carcosa. The Keeper should focus any encounters with Carcosa (p. 6) on the bearer of the Yellow Sign.

Encounters with Carcosa

The following events represent the investigators' reality slowly merging with Lost Carcosa. The Keeper is free to deploy these encounters as necessary throughout the adventure, and to create new ones, as well. Some good moments are indicated in the text, but on the whole, it is left to the Keeper's intuition to decide when to drop one of these encounters on the investigators. However, these are hardly the only way to portray a decaying reality. The Keeper is encouraged to use their imagination to respond creatively to the investigators' choices and create a unique, memorable adventure.

Note also that if investigators return to a location they have previously visited, the Keeper should make their second visit distressingly different from the first: Carcosa has encroached. Some suggestions on how to do this are attached to each location. In each case, bear in mind that the agents of Carcosa move in manifestations of urban decay: homeless men, stray dogs, graffiti, rot and ruin.

A look at the stats for the Hounds (p. 41) or the King (p. 41) will show that these are quite tough enemies; it is unlikely that the investigators will defeat them in a stand-up fight, and indeed such an encounter could easily end in a total party kill (or total party insanity). However, prior to the final collapse of the investigators' timeline, the King and his Hounds cannot manifest in the investigators' reality for long. So, for example, in the midst of wrestling with a Hound, an investigator may discover that they have simply been wrestling with a pile of rags; the Hound itself reduced to graffiti of a leering canine on a nearby wall.

The encounters are arranged into three tiers of escalating danger and madness. Tier 1 encounters should be used from the beginning of the scenario. Tier 2 encounters can be used after the investigators have met either Mr. Wilde or Ms. Black. Tier 3 encounters should be used after the gala at Frick Mansion.

Tier One. Foreboding encounters, but no real danger. Can be dispelled with **Reality** checks.

- **Street Art.** Graffiti and street art include strange figures at the edge of the artwork, a crowned figure, a pack of hungry canines.
- **Insistent Bum.** The King in Yellow appears in his guise as a silent street beggar. He insistently rattles his cup at the investigators, no matter how much money they drop in.
- **Fighting Dogs.** The investigators witness a Hound killing a stray dog.

- Rotten food. Food or drink the investigators are in the process of consuming spoils between one moment and the next.
- Worn Clothing. The investigator's clothing unexpectedly wears out: buttons pop off, seams burst, fabric wears through. Can be applied to shoes, dust robes, etc.
- Wrong Reflection. The investigators catch a brief reflection, in the windows of a passing car or subway train. But what is reflected back at them is a different world, where all the streets are empty and the city is deserted.
- Blank Newspaper. The investigator buys a newspaper, but every page after the first is blank. Alternatively, every page of a book is blank, every station on the radio is static, etc.

Tier Two. Unnerving and dangerous encounters, though whether they are supernatural is ambiguous. Can be dispelled with **Reality** checks.

- Wild Dogs. The investigators encounter a pack of stray dogs: the Hounds of the King (see p. 41). Warn them of the dogs with **Spot Hidden** or **Listen**, then start a chase; the Keeper is advised to adapt the details of the chase to the investigators' particular location.
- Wrong Turn. The investigators take a wrong turn while on the street and find themselves in a narrow alley they do not recognize (this encounter can also be adapted to a subway station or other locations). Going back the way they came is strange, since they just find more twisting alleys and dead ends. The Keeper is free to make up the environment here, but is also advised to keep track of the twists and turns in case a subsequent chase (see below). The investigators can escape the maze with **Navigate** to find their way out, or escape through one of locked doors that open onto the alley using **Locksmith** or **Strength**, or by some other means they come up with. Reality promptly returns; they are back on a familiar street (or in some irate Italian woman's kitchen). If they do not escape quickly, they find that they are not alone: a pack of stray dogs is in the labyrinth with them, leading to a chase, as in Wild Dogs.
- The Bum. The King in Yellow appears again in his guise as a dust-robed beggar. This time he is not begging on the street, but present in some unexpected location, e.g. a crowded party, a fancy soiree. Nobody but the investigators can see him. He prowls around the room, inspecting each occupant, before approaching the investigators. If they cannot evade them, they are burned by his touch (see p. 41) before he disappears.
- Fog. A very heavy smog descends on the street. The investigators wander, but cannot seem to escape it. They can see other robed people passing through the fog, but they do not respond to calls for directions and merely hurry on their way. The investigators can escape the fog by catching a person and asking for directions: the fog dissipates, reality returns, and the irate New Yorker tells them to keep their hands to themselves. If they do not, they wander for hours, or so it feels, before the fog clears and they find themselves all the way up in Harlem Heights.

Tier Three. Serious encounters in which the supernatural is undeniable. Cannot be dispelled with **Reality** checks.

- Vanishing crowds. A crowded location suddenly becomes empty between one moment and the next. There is nobody on the streets. And then there is one: the King. He pursues the investigators, sometimes walking, sometimes flying, tatters of his robes radiating like a halo. Every building he passes crumbles into dust and fog.

- Escher staircase. Architecture stops making any pretense at Euclidean geometry. And then the investigators are being chased by the Hounds, in their true appearance.
- The Court of the King. A crowd of people kneel in neat rows in the street, as if in church. At the head stands the priest — the King. Get close enough and he can be heard preaching; the language is half-intelligible, as if it was a tongue you had spoken in your childhood and since forgotten. After some minutes, it will be time for communion. One by one, he will receive it — and devour those who commune with them. In their final moments their faces are overcome with ecstasy, as if they had in that moment witnessed the supreme note of art. Investigators who witness this lose 1D3/1D10 SAN.

First Session: Leslie Blake's Townhouse

Basics. The investigators attend a cocktail party. They have a chance to introduce themselves to each other, and are asked by Mr. Leslie Blake to investigate the disappearance of Ms. Camilla Prescott.

Plot. The investigators are given the address of Ms. Prescott's garret.

Lore. Ms. Prescott has long suffered from bouts of melancholy (depression), and Mr. Blake is worried that she may have done something "drastic" this time.

Getting to Know Each Other

The scenario opens with the investigators attending a party at the Greenwich Village townhouse of noted critic Mr. Leslie Blake. The first floor of the house is currently devoted to music, dancing, and hors d'oeuvres, a crowded and but subdued affair. The lights are low, and the blues comes crackling over the radio. The second floor is quieter, with a sitting room full of curious pieces of art. The third floor is dark, and strange sounds drift down from it, like the wailing of flutes on a stellar wind.

At present, the investigators have escaped from the crowds downstairs into that quieter upstairs sitting room. They have a chance to introduce themselves to each other, using the objects in the room as conversation pieces if they like, and drink some punch or wine. Suggested objects include the following, but the Keeper is also free to add some of their own:

- There is a small wet bar set up in a corner, with a punch bowl and a bottle of wine. The only hard liquor is whiskey, and it does not appear to be the good stuff (which is hidden in a compartment in the bar's base).
- The sitting room is decorated with very fine, rich furniture; a low light comes from various ornate Tiffany lamps.
- The walls are hung with a series of Art Nouveau advertising posters: the complete set of the Bureau of Morality's *Purity and Corruption* series. The series depicts the benefits of living a pure life and contrasts them with the sickness and corruption that follow debauchery and disordered living.
- A portrait of Mr. Blake himself, caught in an odd moment. He is at a party surrounded by guests, but all their faces are blank. He himself appears to have just noticed something over the viewer's shoulder, and is turning in surprise. The artist is Ms. Prescott; the style is a sort of American Realism.

At the Keeper's discretion, Mr. Thomas Winthrop will drop by. Mr. Winthrop produces flattering portraits of the rich and famous in a derivative Art Nouveau style. The Whitney Studio Club is just starting an exhibition of his paintings, and he is flush with success; his primary purpose in conversation is to lord this over the investigators and their relative lack of success. As such, he'll ask about what they have coming up, what they are working on, etc., primarily with an eye to segueing into his own much more impressive accomplishments.

When appropriate, three flappers will descend from the upper story, laughing and giggling. They will quickly latch on to Mr. Winthrop and take him downstairs to do more dancing.

The Critic

At this point, Mr. Blake (p. 35) will enter the sitting room. Blake is a critic, bohemian, and aesthete. He knows everybody who is anybody, from the lowest street artist to the wealthiest patrons. He has impeccable taste and is known for being ahead of the wave — a "tip of the hat" from him can make an artist's career. The Keeper should play him as a bit bored and above it all, and also very gay — a queen, to be precise.

He'll enquire after the investigators' artistic endeavors, before getting to the real reason he's come by: he hasn't seen Ms. Camilla Prescott in at least a week, and he'd like the investigators to drop by her apartment and look in on her (he'll provide the address). If they'd do this for him he'd count it as a personal favor. Conversation with Blake can reveal the following information:

- "It is my firm belief that female artists can reach and even exceed any height attained by their male peers, if they are but given the chance."
- When he last saw her, he detected a trace of her habitual melancholy, and he is worried that she may need a friend to help her out of her "funk."

The Rest of the Party

At this point, the investigators are free to continue at the party, and may pursue conversation with any of the aforementioned guests. Information they may glean about Ms. Prescott includes:

- Vague hints that she was a bit queer. Some old-timey euphemisms for this include "shadow actress," that she was involved in "sewing circles," and of course "queer."
- She was interviewed by the Department of Morality recently, though they seem to have let her go — "a case of mistaken identity, she claimed."
- Her personality is a bit wild and intense, though she also has the habit of disappearing for days or weeks at a time. "When she is up she is far up, and when she is down she is very far down."
- Suggestions that she frequented a club far up in Harlem, ran with a "bad crowd" there.
- Everyone acknowledges, even Mr. Thomas, that her artwork is stunning, though he'll immediately add that it is unsaleable and she has no head for business.

They may also visit Mr. Termen upstairs. He is a scientific spiritualist: one who believes that the best scientific explanation of various phenomena is the existence of a spiritual world. In particular, he believes in a plurality of worlds, all almost touching each other, and communing via subtle vibrational and electrical signals, such as can be detected with his device (again, just a theremin). He'll invite the investigators to try their hand at playing the device, claiming that the nature of the music produced will provide a window into their other selves in other worlds.

This provides no plot-critical information, but exists to add atmosphere to the scenario, and also to suggest to the players the possibility of other worlds.

Second Visit

If the investigators return to Mr. Blake's townhouse later, they will find a disturbing scene: Mr. Blake is in bed, apparently deeply ill. He is attended by a strange, cowled figure, who whispers to the delirious Blake. **Listen** roles will reveal the topic of their conversation: the offering, the sacrifice, the bargain. The figure is, of course, the King.

Ms. Prescott's Garret

Basics. The investigators search Ms. Prescott's garret. Her room is in disarray, and her landlady has not seen her for days.

Plot. The investigators get leads towards Ms. Black's Cafe and Mr. Wilde's Curiosities. They learn that Ms. Prescott kept a secret studio, but do not learn where it is.

Lore. Ms. Prescott was deeply depressed, overwhelmed with the conviction that *the world is broken*.

The Garret

Ms. Prescott lives in an apartment in Greenwich Village, on the top floor of a narrow brownstone. The street itself is narrow and cobbled, lined by dead, ash-covered trees. As the investigators arrive, **Spot Hidden** will reveal that someone is watching them from the front window of the garden apartment (this is the Marquise of Orbium; see below).

The main door of the building is unlocked, and so the investigators can simply walk up to her apartment. The door is ajar when they arrive, and nobody is home. Inside is a cramped, battered garret. It is very hot and close inside; the walls slope inwards and the windows are coated in volcanic ash. The apartment has three rooms: a bedroom, a tiny washroom, and a sitting area with a tiny kitchenette.

The bedroom has a narrow bed with worn-down sheets, unmade. Ms. Prescott's clothes and personal effects appear to be in place (she has not packed), though her dustcloak, mask, and shoes are absent. There is little else; she was practically living out of a suitcase.

The washroom is tiny, with the toilet preventing the door from opening fully. There are toiletries near the sink, but nothing else of interest.

The sitting room contains most of the important items. Sitting by the entry door is a set of paintings wrapped in brown paper, with an invoice for a Mr. Wilde of Mr. Wilde's Curiosities. If the investigators unwrap the paintings, they will discover several landscapes. **Art/Craft (Fine Art)** or **Appraise** will reveal that these are reproductions of notable landscapes and wilderness paintings from the Hudson River School. The invoice reveals that she expects to be paid \$40 for each of the four pieces.

There are several pages torn out of a sketchbook scattered on the floor of the apartment. Two of them are pencil sketches of New York streets, drowning in the Shroud. Careful inspection will reveal a drama hidden in the sketches: a woman hurries through the crowds, pursued by half-hidden dogs. These are the Hounds of the King, imprisoned in art (see p. 4, "Binding"). The third torn page contains the uncertain beginnings of a sketch — a portrait, perhaps, but the features cannot be distinguished. Written beneath it is the phrase "the world is broken."

At the other end of the room, there is a ratty armchair set by the apartment's single street-facing window. A set of books is neatly arranged on a shelf next to it:

- *Phaedo*, by Plato circa 400 BCE, translated into English by G.M.A. Grube and John Cooper 2002 (though obviously this must be a mistake!). The front page is signed "To my colleague Ms. Prescott / yours in hope, Emmeline Black." The book itself recounts the death of Socrates by suicide, and argues for the immortality of the soul based on its

capacity to perceive the eternal Forms, such as Beauty. One page is bookmarked by a book of matches from The Messenger, a lounge in Harlem (the address is on the matchbook). On that page one passage is underlined repeatedly: "Every pleasure or pain provides, as it were, another nail to rivet the soul to the body and to weld them together. It makes the soul corporeal, so that it believes truth is what the body says it is." And Ms. Prescott has added a bit of marginalia: "The body believes this world is all there is."

- *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde 1890. This novel follows the descent into hedonism and debauchery of beautiful Dorian Gray, after he is convinced that beauty is the only thing that matters in life by the mysterious Lord Henry Wotton. Gray remains eternally young and beautiful, while his portrait accumulates all the evidence of his sins; finally, no longer able to bear the sight of it, he stabs the portrait and kills himself. The book's strong homosexual subtext is extremely scandalous.
- *The Yellow Wallpaper*, by Charlotte Perkins Stetson 1892. This tale of madness and horror follows a woman diagnosed with hysteria, Jane, taking a "rest cure" in a room covered by a sickly yellow wallpaper. Jane grows convinced that there is a figure lurking behind its hideous patterns. In the end she is driven mad, exclaiming to her horrified husband "I've got out at last... in spite of you and Jane."

What is particularly notable is what is not present: there are no art supplies of any kind here, not even a sketchbook, nor is there are obvious place they have been removed from. Wherever Ms. Prescott does her painting, it is not here.

The Landlord

There are two other units in Ms. Prescott's building. The 2nd floor apartment is occupied by the landlord, Mr. Steven Frake. If the investigators do not seek him out, he will accost them as they attempt to leave. Mr. Frake is a dangerous-looking man: he is tall, lean, with face like a hawk and a predatory look in his eyes.

The Keeper should play him as hostile and suspicious. He has a deep antipathy towards Ms. Prescott, and will claim that he ought to turn her over to his friends in the Bureau of Morality — "they would be *very interested* to see the sorts of perversions she gets up to!" — but he doesn't, because he needs the rent. Indeed, he will claim that Ms. Prescott is a month behind, and imply that as her friends the investigators now owe that debt to him — unless they want him to mention their names to his friends in the Bureau.

He is also a paper tiger. He is lying about his connections with the Bureau, and if he receives any degree of pushback from the investigators, he will fold instantly, switching over to a self-pitying, apologetic tone. He can then tell the investigators the following information about Ms. Prescott:

- She has not been home for five days.
- She doesn't have any friends, "at least none that she dares to bring home." He does know of two acquaintances:
- She paid her bills by selling art to Mr. Wilde's Curiosities, "a weird little place down off Houston."

- She was very happy, the last time he saw her. She had just come back from "that darkie bar," and she was practically vibrating with manic excitement. He does not, however, know the name or location of the bar in question.
- He doesn't know where her studio is.
- She was assuredly a "perverted degenerate"; he even saw her wearing men's clothes. Maybe her madness finally drove her to visit the Christopher Street Lethal Chamber?

The Marquise of Orbium

The last occupant of the townhouse lives in the garden apartment under the stoop. She is a middle-aged woman in fine but worn clothing, with sharp eyes and a mobile, expressive mouth. At the first opportunity, she will inform the investigators that she is the deposed Marquise of Orbium, fled to New York from her homeland. This is in fact a lie; the Marquise is a fabulist whose main activity is getting people to believe implausible stories about her life and adventures (which generally conclude with asking for a loan, which she will repay once she has reclaimed her lands). This is a chance for a creative Keeper to really have some fun making up stories.

Getting accurate information out of the Marquise will require the investigators to clearly press her for details about Ms. Prescott, and to keep her on track and prevent her from launching into another story about how she once had tea with the Queen of England's illegitimate son. She knows the following two important pieces of information:

- Some time ago, she had a conversation with Ms. Prescott when she was in one of her melancholy moods. Ms. Prescott was wary about sharing any details of her troubles, except in a rather abstract fashion: "She said she felt like the shadow of the woman she ought to be. Like this world wasn't quite real, just a dark imitation of reality. Like she couldn't tell if the world was broken, or just her."
- Ms. Prescott had lately been spending her nights at the Messenger, a club in Harlem. It was the only thing that seemed to revive her spirits. The Marquise can provide the address, with an additional cryptic instruction: "There's no sign; just look for the angel."

Second Visit

If the investigators return to Ms. Prescott's apartment, Carcosa will have encroached on it significantly. The building appears abandoned from the outside. The landlord's apartment is clearly deserted and has not been occupied for years. If the investigators enter the Marquise's apartment, they will find her bloated corpse being gnawed on by a stray dog (a Hound, in fact — see p. 41). Ms. Prescott's apartment remains in the best condition, and still includes the critical clues of the invoice for Mr. Wilde and the copy of *Phaedo* signed by Ms. Black. But almost everything else has simply vanished; the apartment is almost bare. And the walls are covered in endless graffiti: hound after hound, swirling together, fangs curved and cruel — with the suggestion of some other figure hidden behind them.

Christopher Street Lethal Chamber

Basics. The investigators visit a Government Lethal Chamber and discover that Ms. Prescott has not euthanized herself.

Plot. No leads.

Lore. The investigators learn that the Bureau of Morality may be in the process of liquidating dissidents and "degenerates."

The Bureau of Morality operates Government Lethal Chambers throughout the United States. These chambers offer American citizens the opportunity to commit suicide in a painless and sanitary way, and see regular use. The one closest to Ms. Prescott's apartment is at Christopher Street and 7th Avenue. A stairwell leads down from street level to the subterranean chamber, marked by the seal of the Bureau of Morality, a bald eagle clutching a fasces and an American flag.

Below street level, there is a small lobby area, with some chairs to sit on and desk staffed by two armed officers of the Bureau. The whole area is decorated in a neoclassical style, with Romanesque pillars and American flags hanging between them. At the end of the room is the Lethal Chamber itself: a glass-walled chamber with a glass door. The floor inside is bare and unadorned.

When the investigators arrive, the area is deserted, only the two Bureau officers present (see p. 36). These are Mr. Smith and Mr. Crooks. The Keeper should portray these men as if they were particularly unpleasant police officers. Nominally, Government Lethal Chambers are purely voluntary. But the Keeper should give the impression that these agents might forcibly escort the investigators into the chamber, then simply record their deaths as voluntary.

Talking with the officers can reveal the following information:

- Mr. Smith and Mr. Crooks assert with utmost confidence that people only ever step into the chamber voluntarily.
- "It's very simple. People whose crimes and perversions weigh on their consciences invariably break under the strain. And we are here to help them find release from that strain."
- "Degenerates and other unproductive members of society always know that they are a burden on the social body. And when they can no longer ignore the pricking of their conscience, we are here to help them end their parasitic existence."
- The Chamber operates by "atom rays, which provide a painless death and instantly sterilizes the body of any contaminants or disease. It is the most modern and humane form of euthanasia possible."

The Bureau also keeps a ledger of everyone who commits suicide in this chamber (see table below). The Bureau will let the investigators examine the ledger; it is a public record and, as the New America Party teaches, citizens have a right to see their government running efficiently. The Bureau can also communicate with other Lethal Chambers via pneumatic tube. If the

investigators wait (this takes some time — night falls), they receive a response: nobody answering to Ms. Prescott's name or description has euthanized herself in the last week.

NAME	DATE	PERSONAL EFFECTS	MORAL DESCRIPTION
unknown	April 25	black jacket, worn; black pants, worn; no shoes	vagrancy
Nicola Sacco	May 1	none	counter-American sentiments
unknown	May 1	dust robes	vagrancy
Gladys Bentley	May 4	gentlemen's clothing, including 1 silk top hat	incomplete sexual development
Jane Shanks	May 9	dust robes	excessive melancholy
Michael McDermid	May 10	overalls and shirt	vagrancy
unknown	May 10	none	painter of obscene artworks

Since the Lethal Chamber is effectively a dead end from a plot perspective, the Keeper may want to juice up the investigators' trip there with a Tier 1 or Tier 2 encounter after they leave (see p. 6).

Second Visit

If the investigators return to the Chamber after their first visit, the Bureau of Morality officers are nowhere to be seen. Trash gathers in the corners, the atom-ray machine is broken. A bum is curled up along a dim wall, sleeping. This is the King, who will let the investigators search around for a bit, before attacking them. Proceed with the "Escher Staircase" encounter (p. 6).

Mr. Wilde's Curiosities

Basics. The investigators explore Mr. Wilde's Curiosities, which sells rare books, antiques, and specialized art supplies; Ms. Prescott was one of Mr. Wilde's frequent suppliers.

Plot. The investigators receive leads towards The Messenger and/or Ms. Prescott's Studio.

Lore. Mr. Wilde provides the investigators with dangerously misleading information, suggesting that Ms. Prescott bargained with the mad poets of Carcosa in exchange for a new life.

Prior Investigation

Mr. Wilde is a known player in New York's bohemian scene; the following information can be gleaned from gossip, rumor, and discussion with NPCs prior to visiting his shop:

- If you need a quick buck and can swallow your pride, Mr. Wilde has work. He buys reproductions and derivative works from local artists, then sells them to middle-class Americans looking for a glimmer of beauty in these twilight times.
- Mr. Wilde's shop can be a cool place to hang out and look for inspiration. He sells an extraordinary array of books, curios, and obscure knickknacks.
- Don't let his appearance put you off; he's actually quite friendly and helpful. He was injured in the war and has terrible scars.
- His personal history is a big secret — nobody can quite figure out where he's from.
- In addition to the curios and books, Mr. Wilde sells high-end imported liquor, including champagne, scotch, and absinthe.
- "Make sure to pet the cat." Nobody will explain what this means; it's treated as an in-joke.

The truth about Mr. Wilde fundamentally does not matter to the scenario, and the Keeper shouldn't waste time trying to game out an elaborate backstory. The blank spaces and unanswered questions about his existence are there to confound the players, not satisfy their curiosity.

The Curiosity Shop

Mr. Wilde's Curiosities is a modest storefront just off Houston Street, where the bohemian district of Greenwich Village transforms into the dirty, industrial district of Lower Manhattan. Curios, used furniture, and commercial art are displayed in the shop's windows. Inside, the store occupies much more space than the small storefront suggests, and its shadowed aisles are filled with an extensive collection of items. If the investigators are inclined to search the place, here are some objects they may find; the Keeper is free to invent others as they see fit.

- A reproduction of Frederic Edwin Church's *Niagara*, a landscape in the Hudson River School. **Art/Craft (Fine Arts)** or **Appraise** rolls will reveal clear signs it was painted by Ms. Prescott.



photo credit <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.166436.html>

- A suit of medieval arms and armor, including mail hauberk, breastplate, and a halberd. **History** or **Appraise** rolls will reveal that this is a genuine piece, of the late medieval era. The halberd in particular is sharp and entirely lethal. (On the off chance the investigators try to use it as a weapon, use the skill **Fighting (Halberd)**, base 10%, damage 1D8+2+DB).
- A series of atmospheric, expressionist paintings of a crumbling city shrouded in dust. **Spot Hidden** or **Art/Craft (Fine Art)** will reveal a shrouded figure walking in the shadows; **History** or **Appraise** will reveal that the city is Baghdad in a sandstorm and that the paintings are at least fifty years old.
- A wide array of dust-robos and dust-masks. Some of these are of exquisite make, including a white satin mask embroidered with a fanciful design.
- A series of prints depicting a group almost-human figures. The series appears to depict the death and rebirth of a strange, regal figure.

There is also a shelf of rare and occult books: Haly Abenragel's *Complete Book on the Judgment of the Stars*, Aleister Crowley's *Liber Trigrammaton*, and Sir James Frazier's *The Golden Bough*. If the investigators look at these books, one of them will fall to the floor as something brushes the shelf from behind (the cat, perhaps):

- *The Imperial Dynasty of America*, by Constance Hawberk 1895. This novel documents the saga of Louis Castaigne, the last scion of a lost kingdom founded among the stars of the Hyades. Poor and penniless in New York, Louis dreams of the mad poets of Carcosa, who grant power in exchange for beauty. Louis journeys to the lost city of Carcosa, bearing a trunk full of masterworks stolen from the Public Museum. On the shores of Lake Hali, he delivers the art to the King of the Poets. The King accepts his offering, and reveals the true reason that he requires great art. Louis is horrified by this unspeakable secret, and flees from Carcosa. On his return to New York, he is greeted as Emperor

Louis I. He establishes a new dynasty that spans the hemisphere, but all his success tastes of ash, and he can no longer appreciate beauty in any form.

Mr. Wilde

Mr. Wilde can be found towards the back of his shop, waiting behind a narrow counter. Mr. Wilde is unusually short, under five feet tall. Despite this he is clearly an adult man, strong, muscular, and entirely bald — which reveals that his skull is quite misshapen. His ears and all the fingers on his left hand are missing. He wears a pair of wax false ears affixed to his glasses to hide the former (which can be detected with **Spot Hidden**); the latter does not appear to bother him.

The Keeper should play Mr. Wilde as a friendly, helpful character. He is businessman, not an artist. He is solicitous of the investigators, and will go out of his way to be helpful. But his true goal is to trick them and lead them to their doom. He is a servant of Carcosa. That said, Mr. Wilde can provide the investigators with a wide variety of information:

- Ms. Prescott has worked with Mr. Wilde in the past, painting reproductions of other artists' paintings. She disclosed this fact to no one, being quite ashamed of it, but Mr. Wilde has no qualms about revealing it. He is quite aware that she was ashamed of her association with him, and he'll suggest that her lack of critical success was beginning to drive her quite mad. She bought liquor from him, and in recent months her intake seems to have markedly increased.
- In this conversation, Mr. Wilde will emphasize the need for artists to have patrons. An artist alone, he claims, is nothing. "Every artist needs a patron. I was hers, but it seems I couldn't offer her what she truly craved." He'll refer to the artist's bargain: the artist gives their patron art, and in return receive money, or status, or acclaim. Perhaps Ms. Prescott went looking for a new patron, one who could offer her greater things?
- This next part is a lie. Mr. Wilde will also suggest that her schizophrenic hysteria may have returned. She'd recently bought a certain book from him, and became deeply obsessed by it. That book is *The Imperial Dynasty of America* (see above). He happens to have several more copies — he was able to pick up a case of remaindered books on the cheap after the publisher went bankrupt, you see. He'll gladly sell one to the investigators for the low price of \$2.50.
- Mr. Wilde will express regret that she refused to purchase a second thing from him: an old rune, passed down through his family from the Old World, and used to ward off madness and bad spirits. But he's happy to sell it to the investigators, and instruct them on its use — for a mere \$20, a trivial price for something so valuable. If the investigators agree, he will give them a piece of paper inscribed with the Yellow Sign, and instruct them on its use — though obviously he will not refer to it as the Yellow Sign. See p. 4 for details on the Yellow Sign.
- Most importantly, Mr. Wilde can provide investigators with the address of Ms. Prescott's studio (p. 28). Indeed, he will gladly volunteer the information: he's worried about her, after all, and if the investigators are looking for her they should certainly check there.

If asked about Ms. Black, Mr. Wilde will express extreme loathing. He calls her an evil siren who lures artists into poverty and despair. All her talk of beauty for beauty's sake is just a trap for the idealistic. She is a dark star, and all who are drawn into her orbit are eventually destroyed

— he has seen this happen several times; he will mention Ms. Georgia O'Keefe. If the investigators pass **EDU** rolls, they do vaguely recall Ms. O'Keefe as being an up-and-coming artist a few years back, though they're not sure what happened to her. If the investigators should follow up with other NPCs about Ms. O'Keefe, nobody else seems to know more. Nobody knows what happened to her. The point of this is to poison the well, in the players' minds, against Ms. Black. As with everything Mr. Wilde says, it is designed to mislead and destroy the investigators. He does, however, know that she owns a bar up in Harlem called The Messenger, and can provide the address to the investigators.

At some point during their conversation with Mr. Wilde, and with little warning, Mr. Wilde will be brutally attacked by his cat. Hissing and screaming, the cat will jump on Mr. Wilde and claw deep cuts into his flesh. Eventually, he will throw the cat off (or the investigators will), and it will flee into the darkness of his shop, growling. Mr. Wilde will be quite disheveled; his false ears are askew, his shirt ripped, and the deep cuts on his face and head will bleed profusely. Nevertheless he will act as if this is a minor inconvenience and entirely normal, as if his cat had merely lightly scratched his hand, and refuse all help from the investigators. He'll seek to continue their conversation in the same friendly vein as before.

The purpose of this encounter is to unnerve and confuse the investigators; its deeper significance is never explained.

Second Visit

If the investigators return to Mr. Wilde's Curiosities, it is significantly changed. The interior lights have largely gone out and the gloom is much increased. Indeed the interior seems larger than before, with a labyrinth of tightly-packed shelves between the door and the counter. If they investigators make their way to the back of the shop, they will find that Mr. Wilde is dead, his throat torn out — apparently by his cat. The cat can be heard moving in the dimness of the shop; it sounds much larger now. It is, in fact, a Hound, and will pursue the investigators.

The Messenger

Basics: The investigators mingle with the artists at Ms. Black's lounge, The Messenger, where Ms. Prescott was known to hang out.

Plot: The investigators gain leads to Ms. Prescott's Studio or Mr. Wilde's Curiosities.

Lore: Ms. Black knows full well that Ms. Prescott has used the Black Leap to escape this reality, and will hint as much.

Prior Investigation

The investigators can learn a variety of information about The Messenger prior to arriving there. Ms. Black, The Messenger's proprietor, is a known figure in the art world, and the investigators can learn the following about her and her lounge from rumor, gossip, and conversation with NPCs.

- The Messenger is regarded as the best place to meet interesting people from all walks of life. Ms. Black's circle of friends in particular is regarded as exclusive and stimulating: she has a particular eye for brilliance.
- Her lounge sells extraordinary cocktails; she seems to operate without any fear of the Bureau of Morality or the New York Mob. She stocks a long list of spirits no longer in production: French brandy, absinthe, fine scotch.
- Ms. Black is rumored to have launched the careers of various notables, such as Camille Claudel and Edward Hopper. Their art was displayed in her lounge, where they acquired their first wealthy patrons.
- Ms. Black herself is a bit of an unusual woman; "words can't quite capture it." If pressed, NPCs may hint that she's a bit "that way," maybe more than a bit (which is to say, a lesbian).
- The Messenger is at 142nd Street and Lennox. You can take the 3rd Avenue Elevated Line to the 143rd Street Station and walk from there. The Messenger has no sign: "look for the angel," the investigators are told.

The Messenger

The Messenger is a bar, lounge, and art gallery in the far north of Manhattan, in Harlem at 142nd Street and Lennox Avenue. Unlike the segregated Cotton Club, with its White patrons watching Black performers, the Messenger welcomes all equally: men and women, American and Chinese, gay and straight, etc. Its entrance sits off a narrow alley, and has no sign. The door is marked only by a black angel, with black wings, hand held out invitingly. Opening the knob, it's as if you take the Angel's hand.

A narrow set of stairs take the investigators up to the Messenger's dining room. The main room features a dining area and a stage on which Ethel Waters is singing the blues. The lights are low and the atmosphere is subdued, relaxed. A variety of interesting personages can be found here, any of whom the investigators may prevail on for information about Ms. Prescott or Ms. Black. Whatever truths, rumors, or falsehoods they provide is up to the Keeper's discretion. But all of

them can confirm that Ms. Prescott was very close with Ms. Black, and they could often be found in the back rooms (see below), conversing about Art.

- Harry Houdini. Master escape artist, professional skeptic. His life's obsession has to debunk false mystics, but in truth this is only because he craves to find true magic in the world. Still chasing that transcendental thread.
- A young Robert Moses. Powerful aide to governor Al Smith, dreams of coming to rule New York by ruling its physical architecture. Arrogant, full of grandiose dreams and plans.
- Anna Adolph. Author of utopian science fiction, obsessed how things might have gone had Krakatoa not erupted. Strange and manic.
- Elizabeth Watkins, the bartender. Won't serve the investigators what they ask for, but what they need. Her bespoke cocktails are strange and generally perfect, unknown colors glimmering in their depths and garnished by unknown fruits.
- Any of the pregen characters not in use (see p. 43).

One wall of The Messenger's main room is completely covered by a striking mural. It depicts a strange city: a bustling alien metropolis, in which creatures of every form and description haggle, converse, love, hate, and ignore one another. The image is so detailed that you almost imagine it is not a painting but a window to a place you've never been. Indeed, in a way it is. **Art/Craft (Fine Arts)** or a **Hard Spot Hidden** will reveal that what appears to be an open doorway in the painting is in fact an actual open doorway leading deeper into The Messenger.

The back rooms of The Messenger are a series of cozy, semi-private nooks connected by branching hallways. The walls are hung with an eclectic series of paintings lit by discrete spot lights, including the following three:



This is Séraphine de Senlis' *Les Grandes Marguerites* (*The Large Daisies*). A housecleaner by day, she taught herself to paint by candlelight. Her paintings treated mundane subjects as if they were ecstatic visions delivered by a deity.

photo credit

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S%C3%A9raphine_de_Senlis_au_Mus%C3%A9e_Mai_lol_\(2954855043\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S%C3%A9raphine_de_Senlis_au_Mus%C3%A9e_Mai_lol_(2954855043).jpg)



This is Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)* (*The Maidens of Avignon*). In it, he abandoned any pretence at "realism" or perspective, instead depicting his subjects in a single flat plane. Yet all the same, the distinct feeling and character of each figure comes through terribly strongly: as if photorealism was never the point.

photo credit [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Les_Femmes_d'Alger_\(O.J._Version_O\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Les_Femmes_d'Alger_(O.J._Version_O).jpg)



This is Otto Dix's *An die Schönheit (To Beauty)*. An artist in Weimar Germany, Dix's painting captures the excess and ambivalence of the strange, doomed times he lived in. The painting is called *To Beauty*: is it beautiful?

photo credit <https://www.wikiart.org/en/otto-dix/to-beauty>

In addition to the art, The Messenger's back rooms contain numerous even-less-licit indulgences, including an opium den behind a curtain, a strange traveler serving "caapi drink," which the stranger claims will give visions and clear out evil influences (it will; the drink is ayahuasca), and a small orgy.

Most importantly from a plot perspective, Ms. Emmeline Black can be found in these back rooms, wandering around and discussing art with her guests.

Ms. Black

Ms. Emmeline Black is a worlds-traveling sorcerer, currently in the investigators' timeline to enjoy its decadent excesses before it disintegrates and is subsumed by Lost Carcosa. She is also the one who taught the Black Leap to Ms. Prescott. She is six and a half feet tall and powerfully built, with jet-black hair spilling over her shoulders. In a tailored three-piece suit and cravat, she is a shockingly beautiful and tremendously imposing presence. She is lesbian and not trying to hide it; she will shamelessly flirt with any female investigator that catches her eye.

Ms. Black's fundamental belief is in the transcendental power of art. Art transcends this grubby material world; it turns ashes and dust into something immortal. True beauty can transform how we see the world and thereby change the world itself. She thus disdains crass or commercial reasons for pursuing art: art for art's sake is all that matters in the world. But she is very ecumenical about what counts as art: painting is art, music is art, dancing is art. Even mathematics or science can be art, if done in the right spirit.

Unlike Mr. Wilde, Ms. Black is not an inherently helpful figure. She won't offer information for nothing, and she will try to direct the conversation towards her preferred topic: art. She'll push the investigators to reveal what drives them to art — what loves, what needs, what desires. This is a chance for the players to have some fun expressing their own characters and backstories. But Ms. Black will also play devil's advocate in response. She'll push back on their ideas, challenge their stories. The key to gaining Ms. Black's favor is **not** to agree with her in a simpering or sycophantic fashion, but to disagree with her in an intelligent and spirited way. If she believes that an investigator has genuine and thoughtful ideas about art, she will gladly speak with them about more important matters, such as the fate of Ms. Prescott.

Ms. Black's favor can also be gained by simply having significant artistic talent. If the investigators can display something of true beauty (a Hard success on some sort of artistic skill), she will also grant them some time and attention.

In any event, Ms. Black can convey the following information to the investigators. While she does in fact know the answers to more or less any question they might have, she is not interested in just telling people the answers. She wants the investigators to figure things out on their own. So most of this information is more suggestive than direct.

- Great art can change how you perceive the world, can show you truth more clearly than any mundane senses. Ms. Black will gesture to Seraphine Louis' painting of daisies (see above), arguing that the painting has captured the truth about daisies far better than any passing glance. (A Keeper familiar with the nature of human visual processing can have some fun here, discussing how our apparently seamless view of the world is constructed

by the brain from numerous tiny blurry snapshots.) The Keeper is of course free to use some other artwork or prop to make this point.

- Great art requires sacrifice. It is a calling, it demands, and if you truly understand art you understand that it demands everything. It demands your entire life.
- But woe also to those left behind. Ms. Black will tell the story of Paul Gauguin, who abandoned his wife and children to pursue his art in Tahiti. Art is selfish like that: it elevates the artist, but it can all too easily destroy those around him.
- If the investigators missed it at Ms. Prescott's apartment, Ms. Black will offer the investigators a copy of Plato's Phaedo (see p. 12).
- Ms. Black knows the address of Ms. Prescott's studio (see p. 28), and will offer it if the investigators ask.

Note that if the investigators bear the Yellow Sign, Ms. Black will be repulsed. She will tell the investigators that it is a foul thing, the absolute negation of what she believes in, and will order them to destroy it immediately. If they do not, she will have them rapidly removed from her presence, by either the club's bouncers (use the stats on p. 36) or herself.

Second Visit

If the investigators return to The Messenger, they will find it much changed. Nobody is present at the coat check, and in the main room a great feast has been laid out. The table is decked with the finest foods and libations, the guests are all dressed to the nines. And everyone is dead, including Ms. Black at the head of the table. They have performed the Black Leap and escaped this dying timeline. **Medicine** or similar rolls will reveal that they have all died of cyanide poisoning. And there is one further essential clue: each guest is holding or seated next to a piece of art that is particularly important to them: a painting, a photograph, a musical instrument, a manuscript.

If the Keeper thinks it appropriate, after some investigation, one of the guests may sit up and reveal themselves to be the King and either attack or taunt the investigators.

Ms. Prescott's Studio

Basics. The investigators search Ms. Prescott's hidden studio, discovering her dead body and the remains of the Black Leap.

Plot. The investigators gain invitations to the gala at Frick Mansion (p. 30). If they missed them before, they gain leads towards The Messenger and Mr. Wilde's Curiosities.

Lore. The investigators discover that Ms. Prescott committed suicide as a part of some obscure ritual (see p. 4).

Ms. Prescott's studio is in an abandoned printer's factory east of Greenwich Village, the De Vinne Press Building. The building is quite large, seven stories tall and dominating its block. The brick façade is covered in soot, and while the front doors are closed and locked, the door in the rear alley is unlocked. Inside are the dusty remains of a once-flourishing print operation. Tracks in the dust lead through the first-floor offices to a still-functioning freight elevator. The top level is lit by very large skylights and windows, and largely still full of printing machines, half-completed orders, barrels of ink and reams of paper.

Ms. Prescott has set up her studio in a particularly well-lit corner of the space. The tools of working artist are scattered across several tables and benches, including various paints, thinners, cleaners, brushes, etc. But what draws the eye is a spiral of canvases, all displayed on easels, all facing inwards. From the outside it is impossible to see what is at the center. But there is a rotting odor in the air. If the investigators follow the spiral inwards, they see the following scenes depicted:

- A bar scene. A rowdy, vivacious crowd clusters round a striking foreground: a woman stands over a laid-out opponent, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.
- A ship at sea. At the helm is a woman in a sealskin coat, navigating the ship through an ice-filled sea.
- A scientific laboratory. A strange brilliance shines from a scientific apparatus, a wiry scientist gazing at it through dark goggles.
- A lecture hall. An elderly professor lectures to a rapt audience.
- A woman in overalls, a hundred stories up on a skyscraper under construction. She leans back against a bare I-beam, her rivet gun next to her.

Each canvas is done in an American Realist style (and **Appraise** rolls will reveal an exceptionally talented artist, with a unique voice and innovative techniques), but as you progress a few odd notes begin to jump out at you.

These are clearly not paintings of any real scene, because *there are too many women*. The central figure of each painting is a woman, as are perhaps two-thirds of the others. When men are present, they are in the background, blurred. In other words, Ms. Prescott is using the tools of realism to depict an entirely unrealistic world: a world in which women simply are artists, and workers, and soldiers, and capitalists.

At the center of the spiral is a red velvet armchair; in the armchair is Ms. Prescott's corpse; **Medicine** rolls will reveal that she has been dead for several days (though she is still recognizable, and not yet much rotted). On the floor next to her is a tumbler and an open bottle of scotch. In her right hand is the pistol she used to kill herself; her brains are spattered across

the canvas behind her. Call for **SAN** rolls, 0/1D3. In her left hand is the following handwritten invitation. The invitation is an important item; without it in their possession, the investigators will not be able to gain access to the gala at Frick Mansion.

**You are Invited to a
GALA
at the house of MS. HELEN CLAY FRICK, 70th Street and 5th Avenue, to
celebrate the ART of
MS. CAMILLA PRESCOTT
ATTEND!, or regret your absence for an ETERNITY**

The final canvas is centered in front of the armchair; it would have been the last thing that Ms. Prescott saw before her death. Unfinished, it is already a work of extraordinary art. In it, a woman in a sharply-cut three-piece suit sits on a chaise lounge, languidly smoking a cigarette. Her collar is undone, her jacket casually tossed on the lounge beside her. At her feet kneels a woman in a formal dress, gazing up at her adoringly. It is a shockingly erotic image, despite the lack of nudity, the sort of thing that would invite an immediate visit from the Bureau of Morality. No roll is required to reveal that this is a self-portrait: Ms. Prescott is the woman in the suit. The woman at her feet is unknown (though it will later transpire that this is Ms. Frick).

Second Visit

If the investigators return to the studio after the gala at Frick Mansion, it should be a markedly dangerous event. It is left to the Keeper's discretion how this danger should manifest; here are two suggestions:

- The King is present in his guise as a hobo, destroying the canvases one by one with his loathsome, entropic touch.
- The studio is full of Bureau of Morality officers, who will attack the investigators on sight.

The Gala at Frick Mansion

Basics. The investigators attend a soiree at Frick Mansion, where Ms. Prescott is showing her art with the support of her girlfriend, Ms. Helen Frick.

Plot. The investigators receive definite confirmation that Ms. Prescott performed some sort of reality-warping spell.

Lore. Ms. Prescott confirms that it is possible to escape one's reality using two essential components: great art and personal sacrifice.

Frick Mansion

Frick Mansion is a vast mansion constructed by the robber baron Henry Clay Frick, on Central park at 70th Street and 5th Avenue. In the investigators' reality, it is abandoned and falling apart; Frick died without any heirs. However, if they look through the windows, a different scene presents itself: a sparkling gala straight out of our Roaring Twenties, with men and women in fancy dress and champagne in abundance. And if they enter while bearing the invitation found at Ms. Prescott's studio, they will find themselves in a new reality: the one that Ms. Prescott escaped to using the Black Leap.

Note that the investigators cannot stay: as soon as they either leave the mansion or fall asleep, they find themselves back in their own crumbling timeline, outside (or in) the dilapidated version of Frick Mansion.

The Gala

In the new reality, the inside of Frick Mansion is an overwhelming statement of wealth and power. Electric light glitters from crystal chandeliers, the rooms are decked in opulent, gilded molding, and the walls are hung with art of extraordinary quality, from Renaissance classics to Dutch Old Masters. But pride of place is given to a series of vast canvases of a more modern vintage: what **Art/Craft (Fine Arts)** will reveal are Ms. Prescott's work: fantastic scenes, alien landscapes, a new mythology for a new world.

Unlike the subdued, enervated gatherings of their own timeline, the gala at Frick Mansion is positively roaring. The guests are dressed to the nines, fine suits or flapper dresses as it suits them, jewelry sparkling on their wrists. And they all appear to be having the time of their lives. A big brass band is playing swing tunes in the ballroom and the guests are going at it like they won't stop till the roof comes down.

As the investigators explore the mansion, they'll notice that some people stand out from the crowd: they create their own gravity, and the social world bends around them. Here are some such luminaries; the Keeper is free to create more at their pleasure. (If the players realize that each of these women was, in fact, depicted on the canvases at Ms. Prescott's studio, call for 0/1 **SAN** rolls.)

- Captain Annecatha Karetak, famous explorer. She is lounging in a sitting room, telling tales to a rapt audience; she is a broad, muscular woman with an easy smile and an open

manner. She is currently organizing an expedition to Antarctica, chasing rumors of a lost civilization in the frozen mountains.

- Dr. Susan Barleywine, scientist and engineer. She is in the garden, pacing and smoking and holding forth about politics. Dr. Barleywine is a tall, narrow woman, almost a scarecrow. She is constantly smoking and constantly moving, possessed on a singular intensity and passion. At present she is attempting to develop a new, unheard-of source of energy, generated by "the reaction of vacuum energy."
- Professor Henrietta Armitage, archaeologist and scholar. She is out on the dance floor, cutting up a storm. She is a kindly old grandmother in appearance, with white hair and a wrinkled-apple face, but her eyes sparkle with wit and joy. Despite her age she could dance anyone at the party onto the floor. She is currently at work poring over the artifacts retrieved by her most recent excavation in the Vermont hills, which suggests (dramatic eyebrow waggle) the possibility of alien life.
- Ms. Helen Clay Frick. She is standing in front of a vast canvas of a ship on a stormy sea, concluding a business deal with an aspiring engineer. Ms. Frick is a high femme lesbian in a cocktail dress, with long unbound hair and bold makeup. Like her father Henry Clay Frick, she is a ruthless captain of industry and a patron of the arts and sciences. While her overt manner is friendly and relaxed, happy even, her spine is hammered steel and she's a killer at heart. She's in love with Ms. Prescott and not trying to hide it.

The key feature of all four is that they see possibilities in the world — risks to dare, dares to win — not failure or fear. As such they are all glad to meet the investigators and free to propose new ventures. Depending on the particular investigator and their interests, Captain Karetak will ask them to join her expedition, Dr. Barleywine to consult on her project, Professor Armitage to collaborate in her researches, Ms. Frick display some art in her public gallery. The point here is to entice the investigators; to make them heady with the possibility that their life might turn around (and then to snatch that hope away after they leave Frick Mansion and return to their own reality, of course).

That said, each of these people can provide information about Ms. Prescott:

- Ms. Prescott is at the gala, likely up in the second-floor library. Ms. Frick in particular will offer to escort the investigators up to her (mostly as an excuse to see Ms. Prescott).
- Ms. Prescott's been a sensation in the New York art scene since her first exhibition seven years ago, when she was only nineteen.
- Anyone other than Ms. Frick will confide that it's only a matter of time before Ms. Prescott proposes to Ms. Frick: "she really should get on with it!"
- They can also indirectly confirm that there is no Shroud, no Bureau of Morality, no New America Party. This world is not afflicted with the catastrophes that beset the investigators' own.

Ms. Prescott

Ms. Prescott is in the library at Frick Mansion, an upper-floor room with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and a perfect view of Central Park. She is young woman in a fine black suit and a skinny black necktie. Her hair is pomaded and combed across in a rakish style. At present, she's discussing Charlotte Perkins Gilman's latest novel with a pair of young women.

The Keeper should play Ms. Prescott as confident and carefree and a bit of a top. She broke the laws of reality and got away with it and she knows it. Her personal drives should be pretty obvious at this point.

Ms. Prescott knows more or less all the answers the investigators are looking for. This is not the point to thwart the investigators or hold back; once they've introduced themselves and not pissed her off too badly, she can answer all their questions. The following are the three pieces of information it is critical the investigators receive:

- Their timeline is disintegrating. "When I left, I created a sort of loose thread in the fabric of your reality. And it seems that loose thread is unraveling the whole world. What's left won't be a reality, it will be Carcosa, and Carcosa isn't a place, exactly; Carcosa is what remains when everything that makes a place itself is peeled away. It is ruin, it is emptiness, it is madness. Terribly sorry that you find yourselves on your way there."
- They can escape with the Black Leap (p. 4). "It is the greatest, most glorious secret in the world. That every thinking, feeling person has the absolute right of veto over their world. That she can dream herself into a new one, if she's the will for it."
- They can temporarily imprison the King or his Hounds using a spell called Binding (p. 4). "They do not have any true, determinate form. This means that you may force them into a specific form, if you've the talent for it. Paint them into a prison. It's how I evaded them."

The Yellow Sign

On the off chance that the investigators are bearing the Yellow Sign when they attend the gala, the Keeper should stage it as if it were the Masque of the Red Death. A doom comes upon these people that their wealth and finery cannot protect them from: the King and his Hounds. He stalks the party incognito, hidden beneath a pallid mask, spreading sickness and death as he goes. And then he unveils himself in his proper glory at an appropriate moment.

At this point, Ms. Prescott will recognize what is happening, and either attempt to bind the King and the Hounds into a new artwork, or attempt to flee to yet another reality, by performing the Black Leap with Ms. Frick in front of one of the artworks on display. What the investigators do is, of course, up to them.

Second Visit

If the investigators return to Frick Mansion, they will find it utterly ruined— as if it were a thousand years gone, not ten, barely more than pillars and rubble remaining. If they enter the ruins, they will have entered Carcosa, and be unable to return to New York after that.

Lost Carcosa

Basics. After leaving the gala, the investigators return to their own timeline, which is rapidly crumbling into Lost Carcosa. They either escape via the Black Leap, or meet their doom in the court of the King.

Plot. At this point, the investigators should have acquired all the essential clues. However, they may want to revisit one or two locations; this depends on their choices.

Lore. The investigators' timeline is rapidly decaying and if they do not escape they are doomed.

Lost City

No matter how the gala ends, once the investigators either leave Frick Mansion or lose consciousness, they return to their own dim and crumbling timeline. The end of the adventure is rapidly approaching, and soon New York City will be entirely gone, replaced by the lost city of Carcosa. The only way to escape this doom is to perform the Black Leap. At this point, the investigators should have acquired all the necessary clues to understand and perform the Black Leap. How they try to do so is entirely up to them; the Keeper should be flexible and work with whatever attempts they make. But whatever they do, Carcosa approaches rapidly. Tier 3 encounters with Carcosa begin to occur (p. 6), and before long the investigators will find themselves trapped in dim Carcosa.

Carcosa appears as a city of dry and dusty streets, broad stone boulevards lined with deserted stone houses. The architecture is ancient, suggestive of a forgotten era of human history. It was a bustling city, once, a human city: but some terrible doom has come upon it. There is no sun in the sky, only black stars overhead, and a sort of perpetual dusk on the streets, the light forever fading but never reaching full dark. The city lacks any determinate form. Its streets are impossible to map; one's steps are impossible to retrace; there is no getting one's bearings.

Carcosa is a city of entropy and decay. While investigators are in Carcosa, their possessions, including clothes and weapons, weather and decay at an unnatural rate. Guns rust, clothes go threadbare, seams blow out, paper crumbles to dust. Spend more than an hour there, and a few items become nonfunctional; more than a day, and most possessions will be unusable. After a few days in Carcosa, the investigators will be wearing nothing but rags.

The streets of Carcosa are inhabited only by the King, his Hounds, and the occasional lost soul. If the investigators need a hint, one of these lost souls might be a good person to give it—before the Hounds arrive, of course, and begin harrying them towards the shores of Lake Hali.

Lost Carcosa has only a single immutable landmark: Lake Hali. Its blue waters are occasionally visible down long boulevards and in the gaps between buildings. If the investigators make their way there, a sort of mirage can be seen across Lake Hali: New York City, shining in the dim, present yet utterly out of reach. Zeppelins dock at skyscrapers shining in the dawn — and then the light changes, and the mirage disappears, and there is only Carcosa.

The King is waiting in the water, regal and terrible, arms open in welcome. A terrible mass of Hounds emerges from the angles of Carcosa, and drive the investigators into his arms. He submerges them in the waters of Hali, a baptism of sorts, but they do not reemerge.

Endings and Rewards

The scenario may end in a few different ways. Obviously, if the investigators die in Lost Carcosa, it simply ends. On the other hand, they may escape. If they do, it's relatively easy to transition into almost any adventure, since the Black Leap can take you literally anywhere. In addition to arriving in the circumstances of their choosing, the investigators also receive the following rewards:

- All the investigators make the Black Leap, free and clear. Gain 2D8 SAN and 2D8 POW.
- Some of the investigators make the Leap, but some don't make it. Gain 1D8 SAN and 1D8 POW.

Non-Player Characters

Mr. Leslie Blake, critic and bohemian

Appearance: very finely dressed but sickly, thinning hair combed over. A dandy.

Roleplaying: a bit above it all. Interested in art, disdainful of philistines. Sick with pneumonia ("consumption"), has difficulty breathing and walking. Occasionally must pause and cough blood into an embroidered handkerchief.

Role: to start the investigators on their adventure. To provide plot prompts if they get stuck.

STR 30

CON 10

SIZ 60

DEX 60

INT 70

APP 65

POW 65

EDU 80

SAN 65

HP: 7

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 7

MP: 13

Fighting (Sword Cane) 50% (25/10), Damage 1D6

Skills: Appraise 80, Persuade 50, Charm 50, Psychology 50

Socialites and Artists, various

Over the course of their investigation, the investigators may encounter numerous different socialites and artists. While they all use the same stats, the Keeper is encouraged to personalize them in other ways; one quick way of doing this is to pick a drive, a dichotomy, and a school from the list on p. 2; they either endorse or oppose each of the items with extreme passion.

Appearance: various.

Roleplaying: various.

Role: to create an atmosphere of decadence and despair. To provide useful information.

STR 40

CON 55

SIZ 50

DEX 45

INT 65

APP 75

POW 45

EDU 70

SAN 45

HP: 10

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 7

MP: 9

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), Damage 1D3

Firearms (Colt Vest Pocket .25 ACP), Damage 1D6. Optional, but pocket pistols are a common enough accessory in the 1920s.

Skills: Art/Craft (various) 40%, Appraise 40%, Charm 40%

Officer of the Bureau of Morality, secret policeman

Appearance: mushy. Overweight and stupid and with bad hygiene.

Roleplaying: a cruel and stupid bully.

Role: to terrify the investigators. To indicate that their world is not right.

STR 50

CON 40

SIZ 60

DEX 30

INT 20

APP 55

POW 20

EDU 60

SAN 20

HP: 10

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 7

MP: 4

Fighting (Nightstick) 50% (25/10), Damage 1D6

Firearms (Colt Government .45 ACP) 50% (25/10), Damage 1D10+2.

Skills: none

Mr. Wilde, shop owner and servant of the King

Appearance: extremely short, but muscular. Scarred and disfigured.

Roleplaying: friendly, respectable, solicitous. Very "helpful."

Role: to provide the investigators with false leads that lead them into danger. To frighten and unnerve the investigators.

STR 80

CON 60

SIZ 20

DEX 45

INT 70

APP 15

POW 65

EDU 70

SAN 0

HP: 8

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 9

MP: 13

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), Damage 1D3

Spells: the Yellow Sign (p. 4)

Skills: Appraise 75%, Psychology 50%

Mr. Wilde's Cat, foul-tempered feline

Appearance: a muscular tabby cat, with a surly look in her luminous green eyes. Her notched ears and scarred nose are signs of a long life of vicious fighting. Unusually large for a housecat.

Roleplaying: a surly, vicious beast. She may occasionally enjoy affection, purring and prancing, until — for little apparent reason — she attacks Mr. Wilde (or an investigator), clawing at his face until he bleeds, then disappearing into the shadows of his storeroom.

Role: to disrupt and unnerve the investigators.

STR 30

CON 50

SIZ 15

DEX 95

POW 70

HP 6

DB: -2

Build: -2

Move: 12

MP: 14

Fighting (Teeth and Claws) 65% (32/13), Damage 1D4

Dodge 80% (40/16)

Skills: Stealth 80%

Ms. Emmeline Black, planeswalking aesthete

Appearance: six and a half feet tall, powerfully built; her jet-black hair spills over her shoulders. In a tailored three-piece suit and cravat, she is a shockingly beautiful and tremendously imposing presence.

Roleplaying: lesbian as fuck. Flirting is a form of currency. Can help the investigators, if she thinks they're interesting — like Dorian Grey, her only interest is aesthetic appreciation; morality has no sway over her. Will not tell the investigators the complete truth under any circumstances.

Role: to provide important clues to the investigators.

STR 85

CON 85

SIZ 100

DEX 80

INT 99

APP 90

POW 120

EDU 90

SAN 0

HP 18, plus 10 points of Flesh Ward

DB: 1D6

Build: 2

Move: 7

MP: 24

Fighting (Savate) 90% (45/18), Damage 1D3+1D6. Savate is a striking art focused primarily on punches and kicks.

Fighting (Enchanted Longsword) 90% (45/18), Damage 1D8+1D6+1. Ignores armor and deals normal damage to Mythos monsters. Ms. Black always keeps her longsword close to hand, if not on her person.

Dodge 60% (45/18)

Spells: The Black Leap (see p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), Binding (see p. 4), Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Flesh Ward, Red Sign of Shudde M'ell, Voorish Sign

Skills: Appraise 90, Art History 90, Art/Craft (Fine Arts) 90, Occult 90, Mythos 50; others as the Keeper sees fit.

Ms. Helen Clay Frick, patron of the arts

Appearance: a high femme lesbian in a cocktail dress. Long unbound hair, luscious makeup.

Roleplaying: friendly and relaxed, happy. She won't show the steel in her spine unless it's necessary. In love with Ms. Prescott and not trying to hide it.

Role: to provide information about Ms. Prescott. To demonstrate the benefits of escaping into a new reality.

STR 55

CON 70

SIZ 50

DEX 45

INT 80

APP 65

POW 70

EDU 75

SAN 70

HP12

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 8

MP: 14

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), Damage 1D3

Firearms (.30-06 Bolt Action) 65% (32/13), Damage 2D6+4. Helen does not carry firearms on her person, but her mansion does have a gun room, and like many aristocrats, she has practice hunting.

Skills: Credit Rating 99, Appraise 70, Charm 70, Art History 50, Psychology 50

Ms. Camilla Prescott, artist and planeswalker

Appearance: a young woman in a fine black suit and a skinny black necktie. Her hair is pomaded and combed across in a rakish style.

Roleplaying: Confident and carefree and a bit of a top. She broke the laws of reality and got away with it and she knows it.

Role: to tell the investigators about the Black Leap and Binding (p. 4).

STR 45

CON 55

SIZ 50

DEX 55

INT 80

APP 85

POW 90

EDU 80

SAN 80

HP 10

DB: 0

Build: 0

Move: 8

MP: 18

Fighting (Switchblade) 25% (12/5), Damage 1D4

Firearms (Colt Pocket Hammerless .380 ACP) 50% (25/10), Damage 1D8+1

Spells: The Black Leap (see p. 4), Binding (see p. 4)

Skills: Art/Craft (Fine Arts) 90, Appraise 80, Art History 70, Psychology 50, Occult 50, Mythos 10

The Hounds of the King, lean and athirst

Appearance: initially, the Hounds appear as starving stray dogs, lean and hungry. However, as the adventure progresses, they drift closer to their true appearance, with impossibly lean, withered bodies, lantern-green eyes, and vast jaws full of fangs, more akin to hungry smoke than a dog.

Roleplaying: the Keeper should always be ready to inject some trace of the Hounds into otherwise ordinary and unrelated scenes. Their presence may manifest as a pack of stray dogs at the far end of an alley, the graffiti'd image of a hound on a brick wall, or a half-glimpsed reflection in a shop or subway window. Alternatively, their presence can be suggested via claw marks on a door, pawprints in ash, or noise in another room.

Role: to stalk and terrify the investigators. If the Hounds have attacked the investigators and a total party wipeout seems imminent, they are suddenly called off, as if by a dog whistle, or their master's voice, and they leave the way they came. **Spot Hidden** reveals a distant figure in a dust robe welcoming them.

Note that **Reality** checks (see CoC p. 162) may be used to dispel the appearance of the Hounds, at least as long as the investigators are not fully in Lost Carcosa.

STR 80

CON 150

SIZ 85

DEX 50

POW 120

HP: 23

DB: 1D6

Build: 2

Move: 6

MP: 24

Fighting (Teeth and Claws) 90% (45/18), damage special. The Hounds will attack the investigators as if they were rabid dogs. This causes excruciating pain, but leaves no physical damage. Instead, investigators lose 1D6 POW per successful attack.

Dodge 26% (13/5)

Armor: None.

SAN Loss: None, in their mundane appearance. 1D3/1D10 in their monstrous form.

The King in Yellow, Lord of Lost Carcosa

Appearance: a ragged, homeless man, clad in a tattered dust robe and mask. Close inspection reveals that the mask is inscribed with the Yellow Sign (p. 4). As the adventure continues and

New York drifts closer to Carcosa, the Keeper may wish to make the King's appearance increasingly inhuman and regal.

Roleplaying: the King initially presents as a homeless man, sighted here and there by the investigators. He should arouse suspicion, but avoid open conflict. The King can speak, but rarely does. Only towards the end of the adventure should the King become an active antagonist.

Role: to stalk and terrify the investigators. To end the adventure, if they are trapped in Carcosa.

Note that **Reality** checks (see CoC p. 162) may be used to dispel the appearance of the King, at least as long as the investigators are not fully in Lost Carcosa.

STR 125

CON 530

SIZ 70

DEX 135

INT 250

POW 175

HP: 60

DB: 1D6

Build: 2

Move: 15 or can appear/disappear at will

MP: 35

Attacks per round: 6 Tattered Robes and/or 1 Gaze of the Yellow King.

Fighting (Tattered Robes) 100% (50/20), Damage 2D6 plus 1D6 POW. The King's tattered garments stretch and warp in impossible ways, and any flesh they touch withers instantly.

The Gaze of the Yellow King. The King locks eyes with a single investigator; that investigator's consciousness is filled with horrific visions of their own body's withering and decay. They lose 1D6 SAN, and may take no other actions. The investigator may break or avoid eye contact with an Extreme POW roll. The King expends 3 MP per round of gaze attack.

Spells: All Call and Contact spells, plus others as the Keeper sees fit.

Armor: none.

SAN Loss: In his guise as a homeless man, none. If King reveals his nightmarish nature, 1D3/1D20.

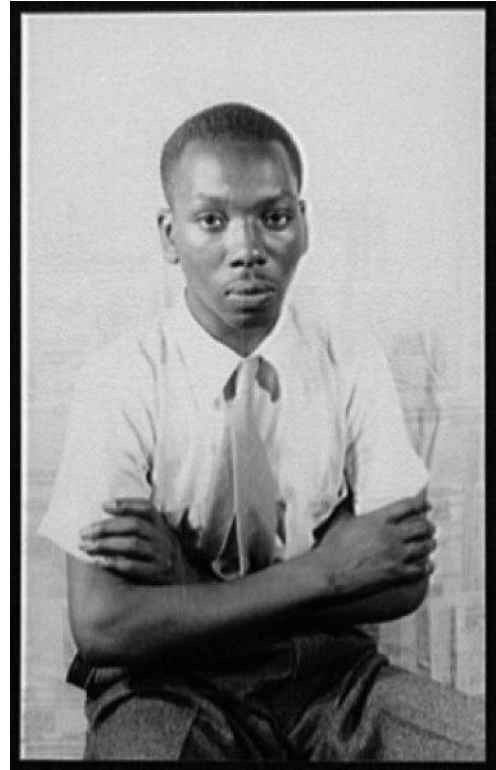
Pregenerated Player Characters

Jacob Lawrence is a brilliant artist and painter, a man of genius and intensity, committed to depicting Negro life and experience in his distinctive way, a way which rejects both the idealism of Art Nouveau and the lingering realism of American Realism. Unfortunately, he has been utterly unable to sell his artworks, and is now almost completely broke, often forced to choose between buying paint and buying bread. He is secretly in despair, afraid he may soon be forced to abandon art and join his brother's auto-repair business.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Lawrence

photo credit

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004663191>



Clara Reisenberg was born in Vilnius in the Russian Empire; her family immigrated to America when she was nine. She is a violin prodigy, with a terrible secret: she is developing tendonitis, which is causing her increasing pain whenever she plays violin, and will soon prevent her from playing entirely. She is desperate to escape what she sees as this doom coming at her.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_Rockmore

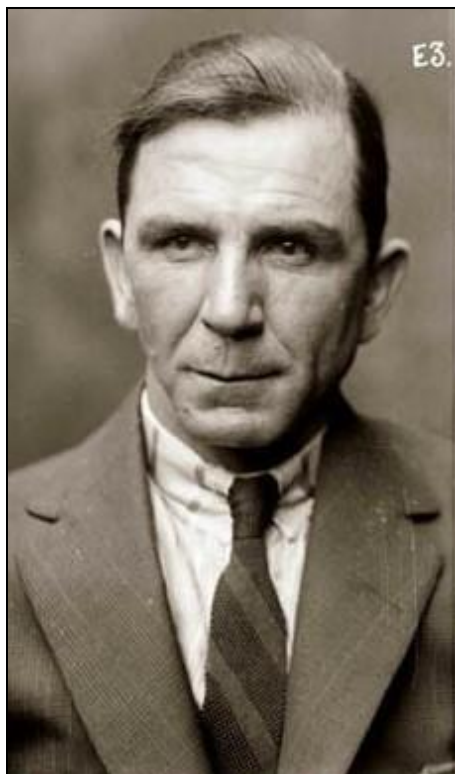
photo credit <https://www.insomniac.com/magazine/clara-rockmore-theremin-witch>

Ruth Denis is a dancer, obsessed with the near east and mystical traditions. She has spent her career chasing the feeling that outruns language, trying to find a mystical truth she can't explain. But she was recently betrayed by her long-time collaborator, who showed himself to be a charlatan and predator. Her career has imploded, but she's more afraid that she's spent her life chasing a mirage, that she herself was never anything but a fake.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_St._Denis

photo credit

<http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ggbain.05890>



As a young man **Robert Michaels** had to choose between poetry and business. And he chose the safe, respectable route: he became a successful salesman for his father's textile firm, though he's always kept in touch with his old bohemian friends. But now he's staring at his fiftieth birthday coming at him and he can't help but wonder whether he's wasted his life selling cheap clothing in dingy warehouses.

photo credit <https://twistedsifter.com/2011/05/vintage-mugshots-from-1920s-black-white>

1920s Name Jacob Lawrence
 Player _____
 Occupation Painter
 Age 22 Sex Male
 Residence Harlem
 Birthplace Atlantic City



CHARACTERISTICS

STR **40** ²⁰/₈ DEX **55** ²⁷/₁₁ INT **75** ³⁷/₁₅
 CON **40** ²⁰/₈ APP **60** ³⁰/₁₂ POW **65** ³²/₁₃
 SIZ **70** ³⁵/₁₄ EDU **70** ³⁵/₁₄ Move Rate **7**

HIT POINTS **Current HP** **11**

Major Wound Temp. Insanc. Indef. Insanc. **65** **99**

Current Sanity **65** **99**
 SANITY

CALL of CTHULHU

Horror Roleplaying in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft

LUCK **Luck Total**

Current MP
 MAGIC POINTS

13

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%) 60 ³⁰ / ₁₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%) 50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%) Fine Art 75 ³⁷ / ₁₅	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Handgun) (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%) 60 ³⁰ / ₁₂
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%) 70 ³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%) 65 ³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Rating (00%) 10 ⁵ / ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Mythos (00%) 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%) 70 ³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX) 27 ¹³ / ₅	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology (10%) 70 ³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Auto (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elec Repair (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (EDU) 70 ³⁵ / ₁₄ English	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed	60	30	12	1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

COMBAT

Damage Bonus **none**
 Build **0**
 Dodge **27** ¹³/₅

1920s Name Clara Reisenberg
 Player _____
 Occupation Violinist
 Age 19 Sex Female
 Residence Lower East Side
 Birthplace Vilnius, Russian Empire



CHARACTERISTICS

STR **65** ³²/₁₃ DEX **65** ³²/₁₃ INT **45** ²²/₉
 CON **55** ²⁷/₁₁ APP **80** ⁴⁰/₁₆ POW **80** ⁴⁰/₁₆
 SIZ **55** ²⁷/₁₁ EDU **65** ³²/₁₃ Move Rate **9**

HIT POINTS
Current HP **11**

Major Wound Temp. Insanc Indef. Insanc **80** **99**

Current Sanity **80**
 SANITY

CALL of CTHULHU

*Horror Roleplaying in the Worlds
 of H.P. Lovecraft*

LUCK
Luck Total

16

Current MP **16**
 MAGIC POINTS

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> fast Talk (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> fighting (Brawl) (25%) 25 ¹² / ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%) 75 ³⁷ / ₁₅	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%) Violin 75 ³⁷ / ₁₅	<input type="checkbox"/> firearms (Handgun) (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%) 35 ¹⁷ / ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%) 50 ²⁵ / ₁₀
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%) 75 ³⁷ / ₁₅	<input type="checkbox"/> first Aid (30%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Rating (00%) 30 ¹⁵ / ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Myths (00%) 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (01%) English 61 ³⁰ / ₁₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX) 32 ¹⁶ / ₆	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Auto (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elec Repair (10%) 50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (EDU) Yiddish 65 ³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed	25	12	5	1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

COMBAT

Damage Bonus **none**
 Build **0**
 Dodge **32** ¹⁶/₆

1920s Name Ruth Denis
 Player _____
 Occupation Dancer
 Age 32 Sex Female
 Residence Upper East Side
 Birthplace New Jersey



CHARACTERISTICS

STR **60** ³⁰/₁₂ DEX **80** ⁴⁰/₁₆ INT **55** ²⁷/₁₁
 CON **50** ²⁵/₁₀ APP **60** ³⁰/₁₂ POW **90** ⁴⁵/₁₈
 SIZ **45** ²²/₉ EDU **65** ³²/₁₃ Move Rate **9**

HIT POINTS **Current HP**
 9 Major Wound Temp. Insanc Indef. Insanc **90** **99**

Current Sanity SANITY

CALL of CTHULHU

Horror Roleplaying in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft

LUCK **Luck Total**

Current MP MAGIC POINTS

18

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)	65 ³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	25 ¹² / ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (01%)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%)	75 ³⁷ / ₁₅	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Handgun) (20%)	65 ³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance		<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acting	50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%)		<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)	70 ³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)	
Credit Rating (00%)	20 ¹⁰ / ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)	55 ²⁷ / ₁₁	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Psychology (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX)	40 ²⁰ / ₈	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Auto (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Elec Repair (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (EDU)	65 ³² / ₁₃				
		English					

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed	25	12	5	1d3 + db	-	1	-	-
.32 Automatic	65	32	13	1d8	15	1(3)	8	99

COMBAT

Damage Bonus **none**
 Build **0**
 Dodge **40** ²⁰/₈

1920s



Name: Robert Michaels
 Player: _____
 Occupation: Salesman
 Age: 38 Sex: Male
 Residence: Upper East Side
 Birthplace: New York City

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	40	²⁰ / ₈	DEX	45	²² / ₉	INT	55	²⁷ / ₁₁
CON	40	²⁰ / ₈	APP	40	²⁰ / ₈	POW	35	¹⁷ / ₇
SIZ	60	³⁰ / ₁₂	EDU	75	³⁷ / ₁₅	Move Rate	7	

HIT POINTS

Current HP

10

Major Wound Temp. Insane Indef. Insane

35 99

Current Sanity

SANITY

CALL of CTHULHU

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LUCK

Luck Total

Current MP

MAGIC POINTS

7

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)	45	²² / ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (01%)			<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	65	³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)	65	³² / ₁₃	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (01%)			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%) Poetry	15	⁷ / ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Handgun) (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%)			<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)	60	³⁰ / ₁₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)			<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)	
Credit Rating (00%)	40	²⁰ / ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)	
Cthulhu Myths (00%)	0		<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%)	70	³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)			<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX)	22	¹¹ / ₄	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology (10%)	50	²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Auto (20%)			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Elec Repair (10%)			<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (EDU) English	75	³⁷ / ₁₅	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed	65	32	13	1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

COMBAT

Damage Bonus **none**
 Build **0**
 Dodge **22** ¹¹/₄

About the Author

Samantha Hancox-Li is a failed academic, a bad writer, and a good cook. Follow her on Twitter as [@perdricof](https://twitter.com/perdricof), or check out her blog at sjshancoxli.com/blog. If you liked this adventure and want to support her as she creates more, contribute to her patreon at patreon.com/sjshancoxli.

