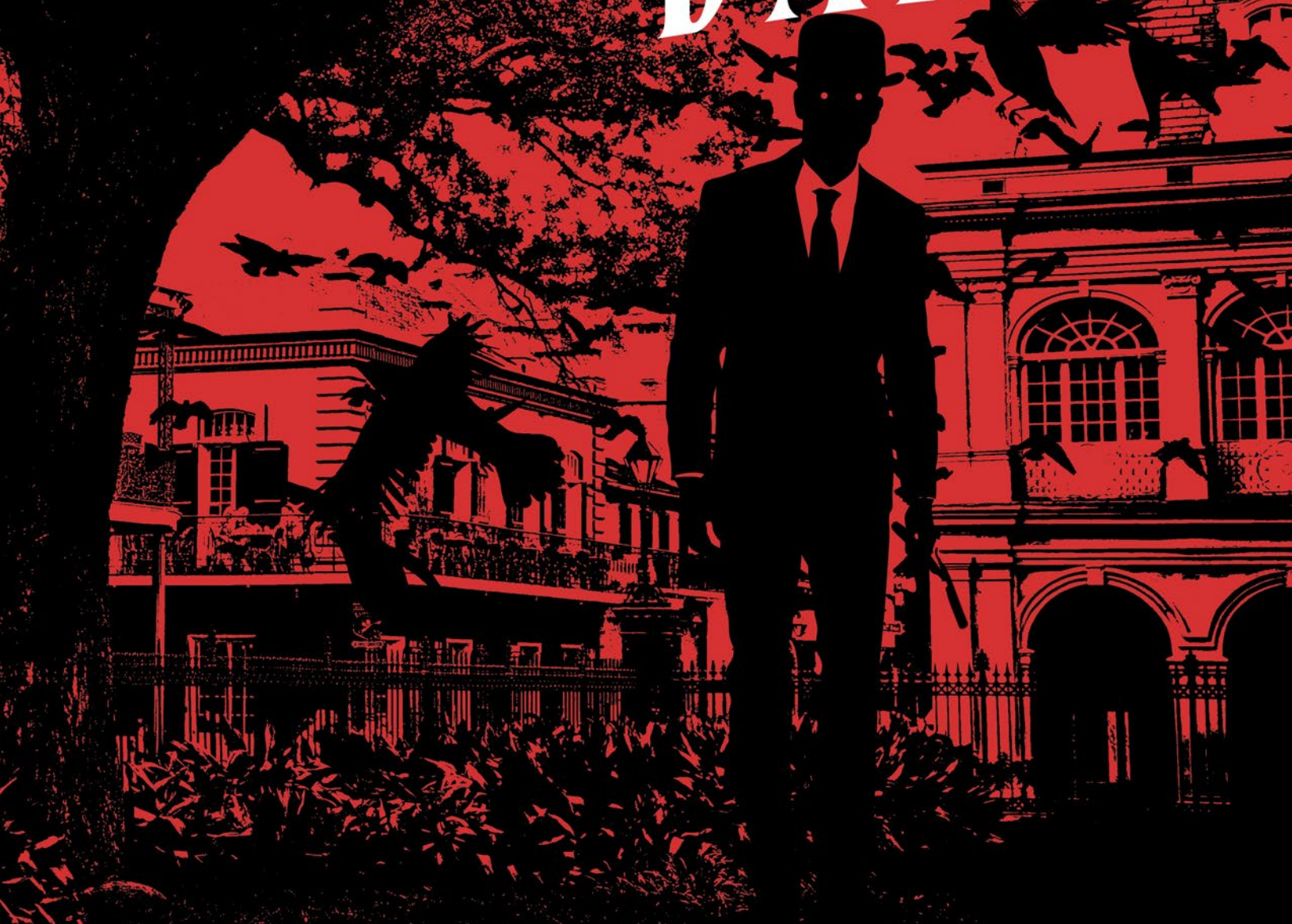




WHISPERS IN THE DARK



Matt Corley & M.T. Black
Saturday Morning Scenarios

WELCOME TO WHISPERS IN THE DARK,



TABLETOP ROLEPLAYING OF INVESTIGATIVE HORROR LEVERAGING THE 5TH edition rules of the world's most popular roleplaying game. In *Whispers* you'll explore a world of hidden horrors, tragic circumstances, and cruel fate. This book contains everything need to play including complete rules, pre-generated characters, and a scenario:



THE CROW MAN

The Crow Man begins with a gruesome murder in the wee hours of October 12th, 1875 only a few blocks from the famed French Quarter in New Orleans. The investigators find themselves drawn into the machinations of a shadow society intent on calling forth a power of ineffable evil.

WHISPERS IN THE DARK:

Quickstart Rules

Saturday Morning Scenarios



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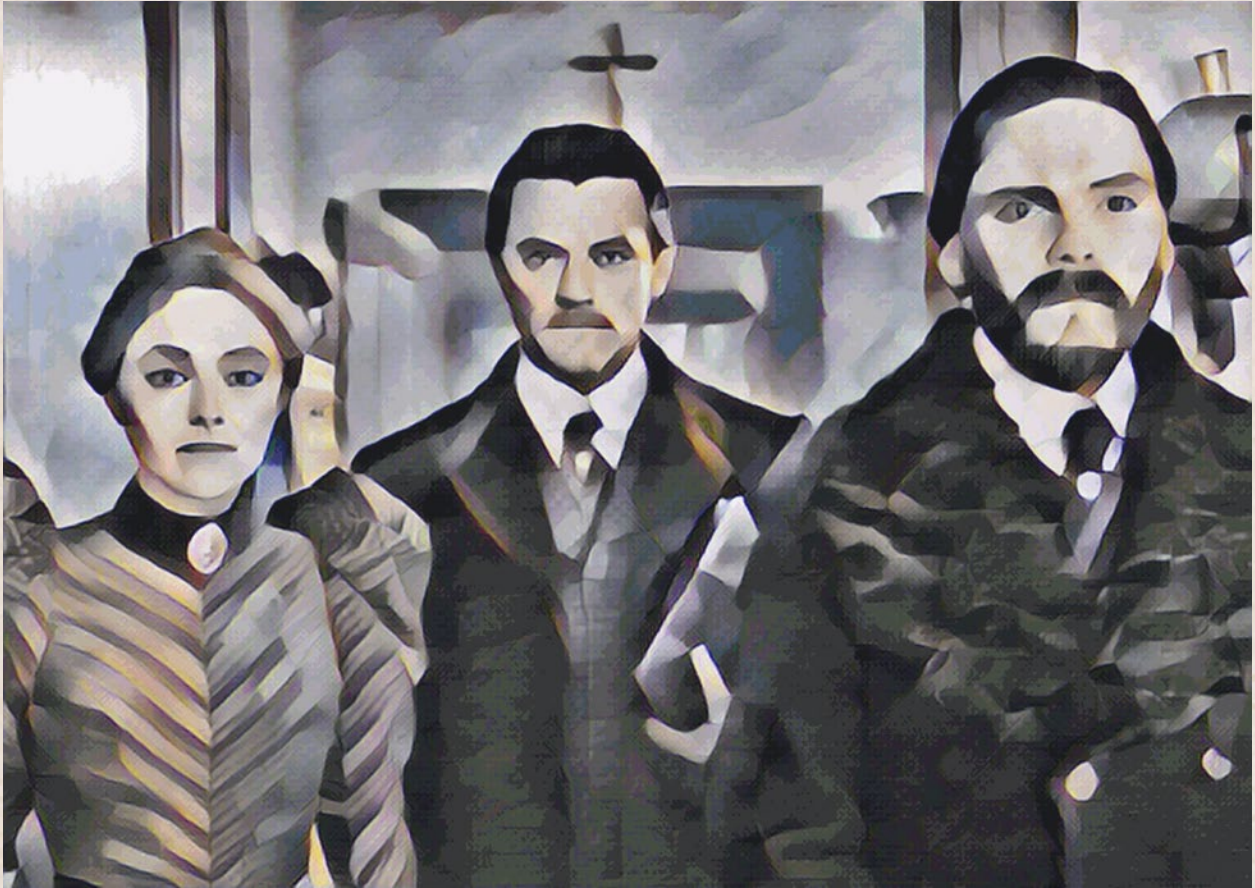
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



WHISPERS IN THE DARK IS A ROLEPLAYING game of investigative horror. The initial foray into this world is set in New Orleans during the Reconstruction Era. Readers are warned that the content includes graphic descriptions of violence and depictions of mental illness.

As a game of investigative horror, *Whispers* is different from many other 5e games, which are placed in the heroic fantasy genre. Such games often focus on combat and the characters' ever-growing personal power. In *Whispers*, your character's ability to find clues in an old library or effectively examine a crime scene is more likely to lead to success than your ability to

fire a gun, because your foes are frequently too powerful to fight directly or protected by their place in society.

The mechanics of the game are heavily based on the 5th edition of the world's oldest and most famous roleplaying game — you know the one. GMs and players of 5e should be able to jump in headfirst, but for those less familiar there are countless streaming games, videos, tutorials, and the like.

When *Whispers* differs from the 5e basic rules ([which can be downloaded here](#)), those variations are included for your use. *Whispers* does not use a class system, and one of the main ways you customize your character is through



the selection of feats. The character creation process is detailed in subsequent chapters, and pre-gens have been included too. One last comment on the rules of 5e: this is a very different game in terms of tone, atmosphere, strategy, gameplay, lethality, and subject matter.

This book comes with a scenario called “The Crow Man” which includes six pre-generated characters. If you are an experienced 5e player and wish to get started quickly, you probably only need to read Chapters 8 (*page 23*) and 10 (*page 27*) before playing the scenario.

CHAPTER 2: MYTHOS (AKA YOG-SOTHOTHERY)



THE LESS KNOWN OF THE WORLD AND underpinnings of reality the safer you are. We wear our ignorance like an armor, protecting us from horrors we cannot, and will not, fathom. It is a survival mechanism. A vestigial trait ensuring propagation of humanity. An attribute the learned, the mad, and exceptional eschew. You are among those lucky — some would say cursed — few that have seen through the miasma of mundanity due to study, an errant gene, or an unfortunate encounter with the beyond.

The Problem with HPL

Please allow us a brief sidebar on H. P. Lovecraft. Chances are good that if you're reading this you are aware of HPL's beliefs as they relate to race, religion, and gender. We do not in any way, shape, or form condone those views. They are despicable. To think that Yog-Sothothery is limited to his writings is to do a tremendous disservice to the folks of all beliefs, backgrounds, and genders that have since shaped the genre into what it is today. This is not the mythos as it was written a century ago. It is the mythos as it is today, a voice for anyone and everyone.

The hidden horrors of Elder Things, Great Old Ones, and Outer Gods are the powers behind reality. Their minions — creatures of antediluvian ancestry and power beyond the kin of humanity — hide in shadows, beneath the waves, and adjacent to angles beyond perception. Other agents are less fantastic, but no less appalling. Cults to these beings dabble with mind-shattering forces of unfathomable motivations. Their veneration of the idiot god Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, Yog-Sothoth, and Great Cthulhu more often than not end in their own destruction, but those who would see our world remain safe must maintain vigilance.

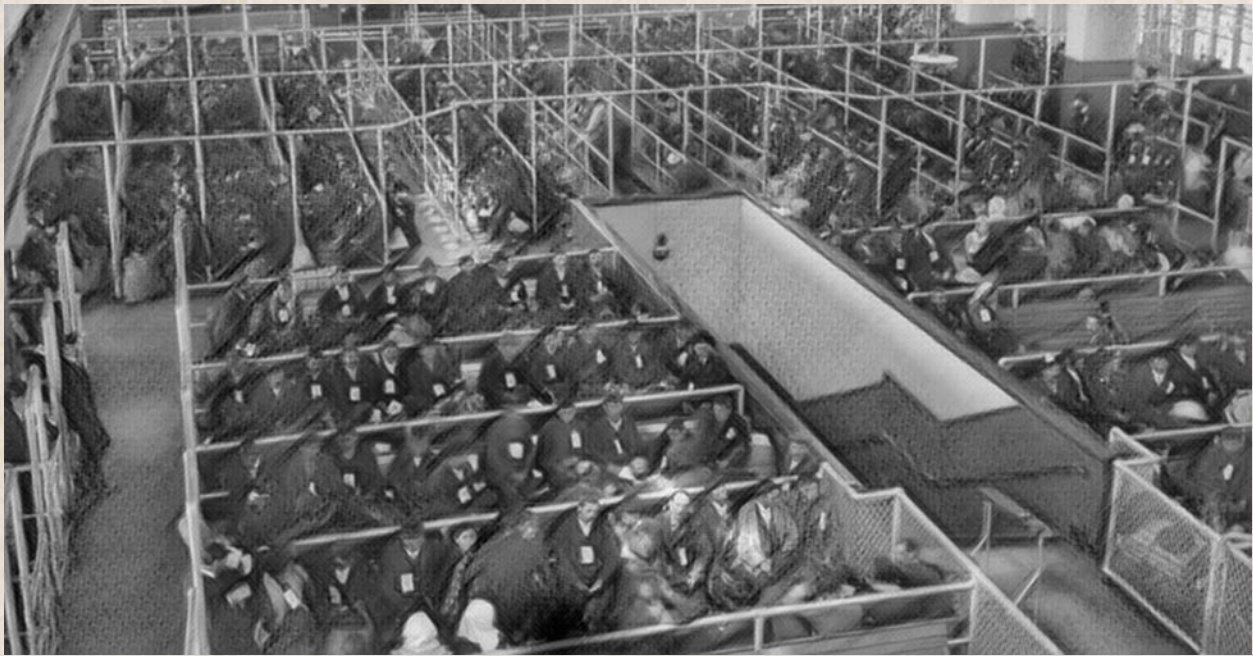
More insidious and persistent than the cults of the Outer Ones are the tomes, grimoires, and texts recording their secrets. These books describe a vast and appalling universe which lies deeper than matter, time, and space, and whose existence most only suspect. Equal parts esoteric theology and eldritch science, they appear where they will do the most harm and have the most effect.

This is the world of Yog-Sothothery, the origins of the whispers in the darkness, and the realm in which your characters live.





CHAPTER 3: CHARACTER CREATION



PLAYERS MUST HAVE A CHARACTER TO explore the world and unveil its awful truths. These characters are sometimes called investigators or adventurers. You can roll up a character from scratch or use one of the pre-generated characters included with this book. A pre-generated character is the quickest and easiest way to get started. Regardless of the method chosen, you start by recording your character's name on your sheet.

If you choose to roll up your character, take the blank character sheet that came with this book and follow these steps in order. At each stage, record your choices on the character sheet.

1. *Choose an Ancestry*

All characters appear human but some hide a secret ancestry. You may be descended from the mysterious inhabitants of Leng, or have the blood of the deep ones in your veins.

Your choice of ancestry gives you access to certain proficiencies and may grant you special abilities. Make a note of these on your character sheet. Chapter 4 (*page 11*) provides more information about ancestry.

2. *Choose a Background*

Your character's background reveals what you have been doing prior to the start of your adventures. It very often corresponds to an occupation (such as soldier or journalist), but sometimes it refers to a way of life. It may be your former occupation, or you may still be employed.

Backgrounds determine the skills, equipment, savings, and income you start with. This may be the most important choice you make when creating your character — after all, a soldier learns a very different set of skills to a journalist. It's a good idea to talk to the other



players so that your group covers a wide range of skills.

This is a good time to flesh out your personality a little more. Are you arrogant or humble? Are you motivated by greed or philanthropy? Note one or two characteristics.

3. Determine Ability Scores

Six abilities provide a quick description of every creature's physical and mental characteristics:

- **Strength:** physical power
- **Dexterity:** agility
- **Constitution:** endurance
- **Intelligence:** reasoning and memory
- **Wisdom:** perception and insight
- **Charisma:** force of personality

You can generate your ability scores several different ways, but the recommended method is to assign the following numbers to abilities as you wish: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8. After that, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2 points and another ability by 1 point. You then determine your ability modifiers using the following table:

Ability Modifiers

SCORE	MODIFIER
2–3	-4
4–5	-3
6–7	-2
8–9	-1
10–11	+0
12–13	+1
14–15	+2
16–17	+3
18–19	+4

This is also a good time to decide on your character's appearance. Are you short or tall? Thickset or thin? What color are your eyes and hair? Do you have any distinguishing features, like a scar?

There are several other important numbers you should record at this time. Your starting level is 1 and your proficiency bonus is 2. Your Hit Dice is 1, and your hit points equal 6 plus your Constitution modifier.

4. Choose Equipment

Your background gives you a small amount of starting equipment as well as your savings. You can use your savings to purchase additional equipment from the lists in Chapter 7 (page 20).

5. Define Relationships

In most cases you will be playing with other player and non-player characters. As a group, define your relationships with each other before the game starts. They could be family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, members of a social club, or anything else you can think of. There should be enough social glue to hold the party together.

6. Beyond First Level

As your character goes on adventures and overcomes challenges, you hone existing skills and acquire new ones. You also become more durable as you learn how to deal with danger. This advancement is represented by gaining a level. The game master will tell you when you have gained a level, but it usually happens at the end of an adventure or when you have achieved a significant milestone. Characters get an additional feature when gaining a level, as detailed in the advancement table below.



You gain 1 Hit Die, which is a d6 for all characters. Roll a d6, add your Constitution modifier to the roll, and add the total (minimum of 1) to your hit point maximum. Alternatively, you simply add 4 plus your Constitution modifier to your hit point maximum.

Table 1. Proficiency Bonus & Features

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURE
1	+2	<i>New Skill, Languages</i>
2	+2	<i>Ability Score Improvement</i>
3	+2	<i>Expertise</i>
4	+2	<i>Feat</i>
5	+3	<i>New Tool or Weapon</i>
6	+3	<i>New Skill</i>
7	+3	<i>Ability Score Improvement</i>
8	+3	<i>Expertise</i>
9	+4	<i>Feat</i>
10	+4	<i>New Tool or Weapon</i>

FEATURES

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT. You can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. You can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

EXPERTISE. Choose one of your skill or tool proficiencies. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the chosen proficiency.

LANGUAGES. At first level you know your native language and an additional number equal to your Intelligence modifier. If your Intelligence modifier changes the number of languages you know changes accordingly.

NEW FEAT. Choose a new feat from those listed in Chapter 6 (*page 16*).

NEW SKILL. You gain proficiency in a new skill.

NEW TOOL OR WEAPON. You gain proficiency in a new tool or weapon listed in Chapter 7 (*page 20*).

CHAPTER 4: ANCESTRIES



EVERY CHARACTER IN *WHISPERS* IS A human being, but some have ancestries that grant unusual abilities. Subsequent products will explore these and other ancestries in more depth, including history, demographics, and their place in the world of *Whispers*.

Human (common)

The vast majority of people in the world are common humans, with no special ancestry. But this is no deprecation. They remarkably versatile, ambitious, and resilient. Their dominance of the world is no accident.

- **Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Experienced.** You gain two skill proficiencies of your choice and one tool proficiency of your choice.
- **Prodigious Talent.** Choose one feat.

- **Languages.** You can speak, read, and write your native language and two other languages of your choice.
- **Saving Throw Proficiency.** Choose any one ability score.

Human (Lengian)

Legend tells of an ancient plateau named Leng — of ancient lands, inhospitable mountains, and temples of horror older than any civilization extant in our modern world. Yet some humans have traces of Lengian ancestry. Physically indistinguishable from common humans, they have certain special attributes, notably resistance to the influence of eldritch powers.

- **Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision.** Your Lengian blood gives you superior vision in dark and dim conditions.

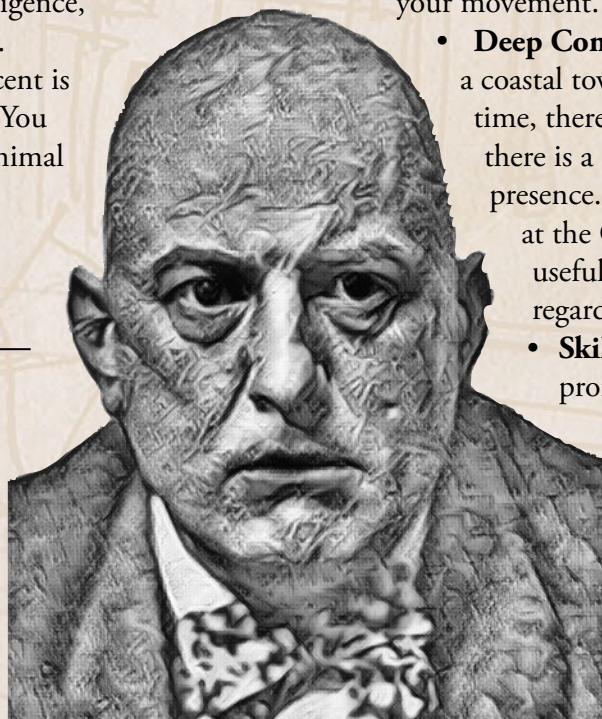


You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

- **Otherworldly.** You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- **Skill Versatility.** You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.
- **Languages.** You can speak, read, and write your native language, Leng, and one extra language of your choice.
- **Saving Throw Proficiency.** Choose one of the following: Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma.
- **Foul Blooded.** Your scent is repugnant to animals. You have a -2 penalty to Animal Handling checks.

Human (Deep Blooded)

Deep Ones are ocean-dwelling amphibians — humanoids with fish-like features such as gills, scales and fins — whose fecundity drives them to mate with humans, producing hybrids. Folk with Deep One ancestry are more common than you'd suspect, especially amongst coastal dwellers. They look human, for a time, but tend towards bulging eyes, narrow heads, and ichthyotic skin that becomes increasingly squamous as they age.



- **Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision.** Your Deep One blood gives you superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Deep Ancestry.** You can hold your breath for an extended period time. You may hold your breath for a number of hours equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1). Additionally, you have a swim speed equal to your movement.
- **Deep Connections.** When entering a coastal town or city for the first time, there is a 25% chance that there is a nearby Deep One presence. If contacted, they may — at the GM's discretion — have useful esoteric information regarding their home.
- **Skill Versatility.** You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.
 - **Languages.** You can speak, read, and write your native language, Aklo, and one extra language of your choice.
 - **Saving Throw Proficiency.** Choose one of the following: Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.
- **Monstrous.** Your appearance is off-putting and causes social distress to others. You have a -2 penalty to Persuasion checks.



CHAPTER 5: BACKGROUNDS



OUR CHARACTER'S background reveals what you have been doing prior to the start of your adventures. It very often corresponds to an occupation, but sometimes it refers to a way of life.

In some cases, you have chosen to leave this occupation behind in order to investigate strange mysteries. In other cases, you are still actively employed and need to fit your adventuring around your job. Additional backgrounds will be explored in subsequent books.

Choosing a background provides you with story cues about your character's identity. Backgrounds also determine your starting proficiencies, equipment, savings, and income.

PROFICIENCIES. Each background gives your character proficiency in a mix of skills, weapons, and (sometimes) tools (see Chapter 7, *page 20*). Your background also gives you proficiency in a saving throw.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES. Backgrounds may include additional languages beyond your native tongue(s).

EQUIPMENT & MONEY. Backgrounds provide a package of starting equipment, as well as savings and monthly income, which

is determined monthly via roll. Income is only applicable if you are still working in your chosen field (this can typically be accomplished between investigations). If you quit your job, you need to find another means to earn money.

Antiquarian

You have devoted yourself to the study of ancient objects and learning. You have a particular interest in artifacts, historical sites, and old manuscripts.

You have a large collection of notable items at home, collected over many years and possibly housed in a "cabinet of curiosities." You also have an extensive library. Since this

occupation typically does not pay, you are more than likely to be self-funded, possibly through an inheritance.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Arcana, History, and another one of your choice
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Intelligence
- **Additional Languages:** Latin, Greek, and two other languages of your choice
- **Equipment:** A set of fine clothes, a notebook, several pencils, and collection of curiosities
- **Money:** You have savings of 1d12 x \$100. Your monthly income is 1d6 x \$100.





Artisan

You are a skilled craft worker who creates and repairs objects by hand. You learned your skills through apprenticeship to a master artisan, though you are now a master in your own right. You might have your own business, or you might work for another artisan, or for a company.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Insight, Sleight of Hand
- **Tool Proficiencies:** One type of artisan's tools
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Dexterity
- **Equipment:** A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a set of ordinary clothes
- **Money:** You have savings of $1d4 \times \$50$. Your monthly income is $1d4+2 \times \$10$.

Detective

You are a professional investigator. If you work for the police you investigate crime, collecting evidence, locating criminals, and helping to prosecute them. If you are a private detective, your job is more varied but very often involves locating missing persons or property.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Insight, Investigation
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple, revolver
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Strength
- **Equipment:** A police revolver, a set of ordinary clothes, a pair of handcuffs
- **Money:** You have savings of $1d8 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d4+5 \times \$10$.

Dilettante

Inherited wealth or some other windfall enables you to pursue your private interests without the need to make a living. Your knowledge tends to be broad rather than deep, but occasionally something takes your attention and compels you to examine it more thoroughly.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Persuasion and one other of your choice
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple and one other of your choice
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Charisma
- **Additional Languages:** One of your choice
- **Equipment:** A fine set of clothes, a notebook, a pencil
- **Money:** You have savings of $3d6 \times \$500$. Your monthly income is $1d6 \times \$100$.

Doctor of Medicine

You are a physician, most likely a general practitioner, but you might also be a specialist attached to a hospital or university.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Medicine, Nature
- **Tool Proficiencies:** First aid kit
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Intelligence
- **Additional Languages:** Latin, and one other of your choice
- **Equipment:** A first aid kit, a set of fine clothes
- **Money:** You have savings of $1d12 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d4 \times \$100$.





Hobo

You are unfettered by the trappings of a home or base of operations. Wandering the country, you find work where you can, sleep where you may, and live as you see fit. Generally viewed as a nuisance by so-called polite society and authority figures, you'd prefer little more than just being left alone.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Survival, Insight
- **Tool Proficiencies:** First aid kit, thieves' tools
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Constitution
- **Additional Languages:** Any two of your choice
- **Equipment:** A bed roll, mess kit, boot knife, and the ragged clothes on your back
- **Money:** You have savings of $1d4 \times \$5$. Your monthly income is $3d4 \times \$1$.

Journalist

You are a professional writer, investigating and writing stories for a newspaper, periodical, or journal.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Investigation, Perception
- **Tool Proficiencies:** Photographic kit
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Wisdom
- **Equipment:** A photographic kit, a set of ordinary clothes
- **Money:** You have savings of $2d4 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d6+2 \times \$10$.

Soldier

You are a professional combatant, either retired or currently on leave from the service. You could well be a combat veteran, possibly having served in either the American Civil War or the American Indian Wars. If retired, you may be supplementing your military pension with other work.

- **Skill Proficiencies:** Athletics, Intimidation
- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Simple, Martial
- **Saving Throw Proficiencies:** Constitution
- **Equipment:** A set of ordinary clothes, three weapons of your choice, box of 100 bullets
- **Money:** You have savings of $1d12 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $3d4 \times \$10$.

CHAPTER 6: FEATS



FEAT IS A TALENT OR AN AREA OF expertise giving you special capabilities. It embodies training, experience, and abilities beyond what regular skills provide. Attaining a feat represents a major accomplishment and is an important part of your identity. You must meet any prerequisite specified in a feat to take it. If you lose a feat's prerequisite, you can't use that feat until you regain the prerequisite.

Ardent Scholar

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13 or higher

You are a peerless researcher and intellectual. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks made to find information in newspapers, journals, or books.
- You can accurately recall anything you have read in the last 3 months.

Audacious Charmer

Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher

You have the power to attract and delight people. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in Charisma saving throws.
- You add your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1) to any Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make.

Catch Wrestler

You are superb at catching and pinning opponents to the ground. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You may use Dexterity (Acrobatics) instead of Strength (Athletics) to make a grapple check or a shove check.
- While you are grappling a creature, you can use a bonus action to shove that creature.



Gifted Healer

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Medicine

You are skilled at administering first aid to the injured. You may expend 1 use of a first aid kit and 10 minutes to tend the wounds of a creature and restore 1d4 + proficiency bonus hit points to it. Additionally, you have advantage on Medicine checks to stabilize a creature. Once a creature has benefited from this feat, it can't do so again until completing a short rest.





Hardy Soul

Through natural disposition or special training, you have acquired a very robust physique. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in Constitution saving throws.
- You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.

Lurking Lackey

You instinctively blend into the background, only coming forward at the behest of another. As a result, others often forget you are present, allowing you a measure of safety and anonymity. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You may use your bonus action to take the Hide action.

Persuasive Zealot

Your compelling persona and enthusiastic vigor influence the actions of the weak-willed. You can spend 10 minutes in thoughtful conversation with a friendly target, at the end of which you suggest a simple task. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw (DC = 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Charisma modifier) or be compelled to spend the next 5 minutes completing the task. The task cannot cause the target to harm itself, harm an ally, or knowingly place itself in harm's way. A creature cannot be targeted by the effect again for one week. Once used successfully you cannot use this feat again until you complete a long rest.

Sharp Shooter

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher

You are highly skilled at shooting a firearm. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Attacking at long range with a firearm doesn't impose disadvantage on your attack rolls.
- Your firearm attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

Sneaky Skulker

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher

You are very good at keeping out of sight, especially in dim conditions. You have advantage on Stealth checks when you are lightly obscured, or when you are in dim lighting.

Star Athlete

Prerequisite: Strength 13 or higher

Extensive physical training has turned you into a superb athlete. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your speed increases by 10 feet.
- You have a limited well of stamina that you can draw on to protect yourself from harm. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + your level. Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until completing a short rest.



True Believer

You are a firm believer in some higher power, and this gives you internal strength. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in Wisdom saving throws.
- You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

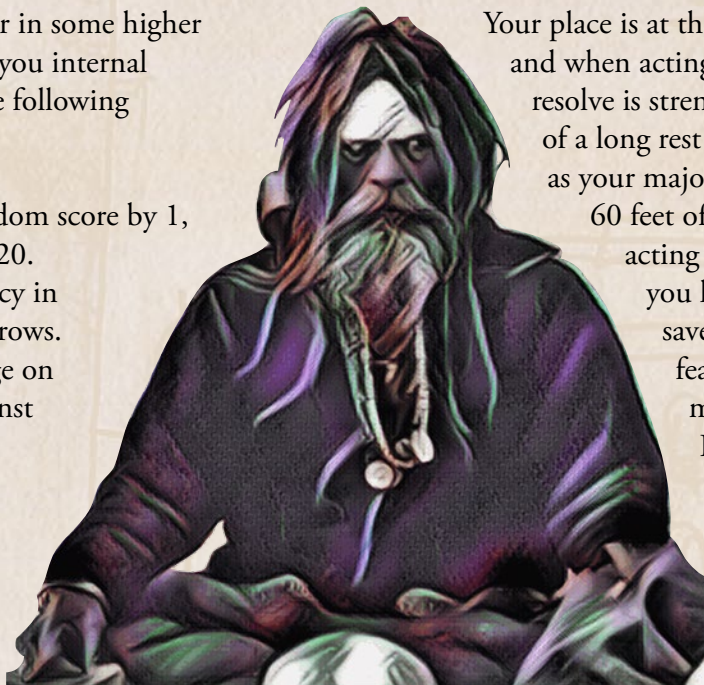
Wary Hunter

You assess every nook, cranny, shadow, and movement for threats and prey. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Initiative checks.
- Increase either your Wisdom OR Dexterity (player's choice) by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When surprised you may use your reaction or a bonus action.

Whimpering Minion

Your place is at the side of your leader, and when acting on their behalf your resolve is strengthened. At the end of a long rest you choose a creature as your major-domo. While within 60 feet of that creature, or acting on its direct orders, you have advantage on saves against charms, fear effects, and other mind-affecting effects. If the object of your adoration is killed or incapacitated you must succeed on a DC 12 Sanity check or gain a transient insanity.



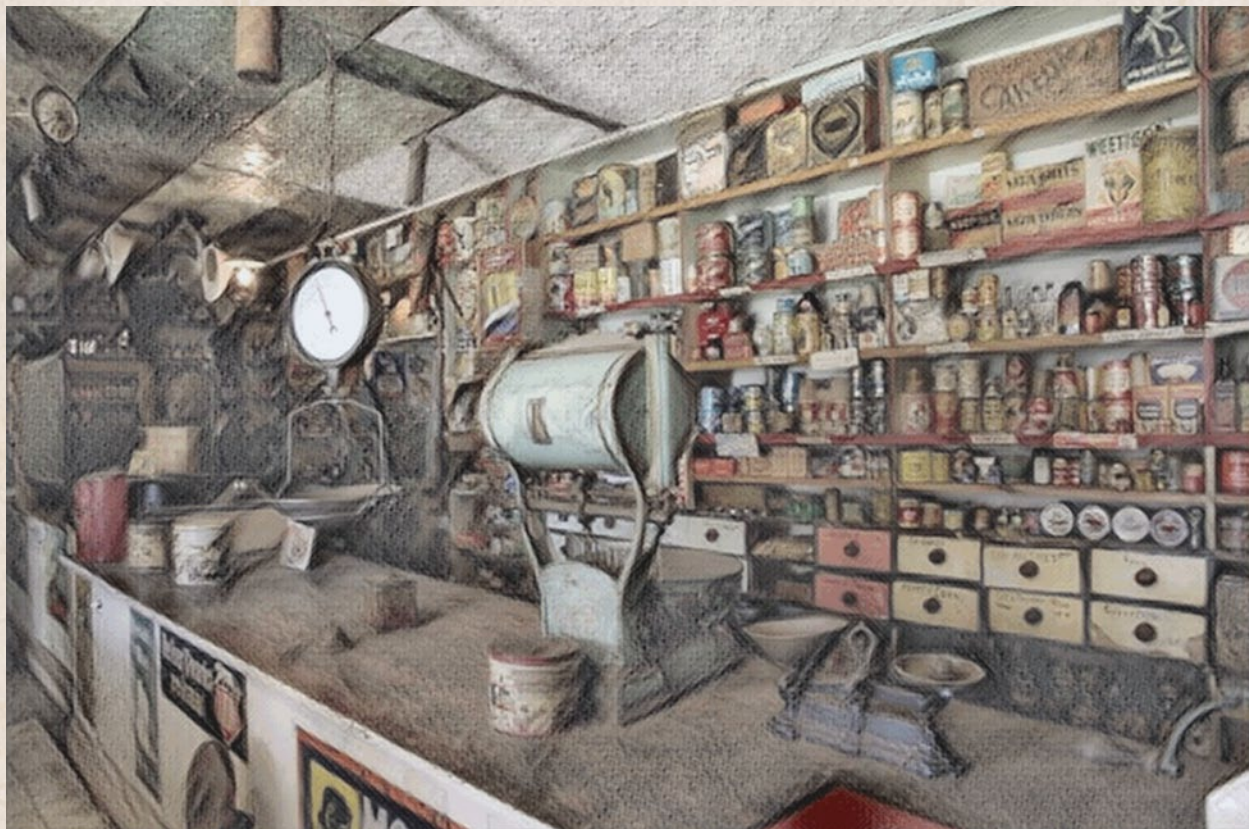


Ability Checks Associated with Skills

Whispers in the Dark offers the following optional rules regarding ability checks for GMs wishing to add difficulty and a sense of veracity to their players' actions. These optional rules are intended for use when the PC can add their proficiency modifier to an ability check because they are trained in a specific skill. Unless otherwise noted in the adventure these optional rules were used in designing encounters.

- Intelligence-based ability checks that include the use of skill proficiency require a high level of expertise, knowledge, and acumen. PCs not trained in a listed Intelligence-based skill make any ability checks with disadvantage.
- Those proficient in a skill do not benefit from the assistance of the untrained for skills involving non-physical ability score checks. For a PC to use the Help action in an ability check the PC must be proficient in that skill.
- Unless new information is available or the circumstances regarding the ability check have noticeably changed (per the GM's discretion), ability checks may not be repeated more often than once every short rest.
- Incompetence and bad luck can ruin your day. *Whispers* uses the concept of fumbled ability checks. A roll of 1 on a twenty-sided die always fails, regardless of the modifiers that the PC may have. Additionally, at the discretion of the GM, an unexpected and unfortunate side effect may occur such as destroying a clue or offending an NPC to the point of open hostility.

CHAPTER 7: EQUIPMENT



INVESTIGATORS WOULD NOT LIKELY LAST long against the horrors of the Mythos without their equipment. This chapter includes weapons, tools, and other investigative equipment found in the *Whispers* universe. Additional details will be provided in future supplements, but the tables below should serve you well in beginning your campaign.

Weapon Properties

Many weapons have special properties related to their use, as shown in the Weapons table.

AMMUNITION. You can use a weapon that has the ammunition property to make a ranged attack only if you have ammunition for it. Each

attack with the weapon expends one piece of ammunition.

FINESSE. When making an attack with a finesse weapon, you use your choice of your Strength or Dexterity modifier for the attack and damage rolls. You must use the same modifier for both rolls.

LOADING. Loading weapons takes time; because of this, you can fire only one piece of ammunition when you use an action, bonus action, or reaction to fire it, regardless of the number of attacks you can normally make.

RANGE. A weapon that can be used to make a ranged attack has a range in parentheses after the ammunition or thrown property. The range lists two numbers. The first is the weapon's



Table 2. Weapons

SIMPLE WEAPONS	COST	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	PROPERTIES
<i>Baton</i>	\$1	1d4 bludgeoning	2 lb.	—
<i>Brass Knuckles</i>	\$1	1d2 bludgeoning	¼ lb.	—
<i>Derringer</i>	\$4	1d6 piercing	½ lb.	Ammunition (range 10/30), loading
<i>Hatchet</i>	\$2	1d6 slashing	2 lb.	Thrown (range 20/60)
<i>Knife</i>	\$2	1d4 slashing	1 lb.	Finesse, thrown (range 20/60)
<i>Scalpel</i>	\$4	1d3 slashing	¼ lbs.	Finesse
MARTIAL WEAPONS	COST	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	PROPERTIES
<i>Machete</i>	\$3	1d6 slashing	2 lb.	Finesse
<i>Rapier</i>	\$6	1d8 piercing	2 lb.	Finesse
<i>Saber</i>	\$15	1d6 slashing	2 lb.	Finesse
<i>Sword Cane</i>	\$10	1d6 piercing	2 lb.	Finesse
<i>Revolver (.38)</i>	\$8	2d4 piercing	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/120), reload (6 shots)
<i>Revolver (.45)</i>	\$10	2d6 piercing	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/120), reload (6 shots)
<i>Rifle</i>	\$15	2d8 piercing	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/240), reload (9 shots), two-handed
<i>Shotgun</i>	\$15	2d8 piercing	8 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/90), reload (2 shots), two-handed
<i>Carbine</i>	\$12	2d6 piercing	7 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/240), reload (12 shots), two-handed
AMMUNITION	COST	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	PROPERTIES
<i>Bullets (100)</i>	\$1	—	3 lb.	—

normal range in feet, and the second indicates the weapon's long range. When attacking a target beyond normal range, you have disadvantage on the attack roll. You can't attack a target beyond the weapon's long range.

RELOAD. A weapon with the reload property can be fired a limited number of times. You must then use an action to reload it.

THROWN. If a weapon has the thrown property, you can throw the weapon to make a

ranged attack. If the weapon is a melee weapon, you use the same ability modifier for that attack roll and damage roll that you would use for a melee attack with the weapon. For example, if you throw a handaxe you use your Strength, but if you throw a hunting knife you can use either your Strength or your Dexterity, since the hunting knife has the finesse property.

TWO-HANDED. This weapon requires two hands when you attack with it.



Table 3. Investigative Gear

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT
<i>Acid</i>	\$10	—
<i>Backpack</i>	\$2	2 lb.
<i>Binoculars</i>	\$10	2 lb.
<i>Climber's kit</i>	\$25	12 lb.
<i>Clothes, ordinary</i>	\$3	3 lb.
<i>Clothes, fine</i>	\$10	4 lb.
<i>Compass</i>	\$1	—
<i>Crowbar</i>	\$2	5 lb.
<i>Handcuffs</i>	\$4	½ lb.
<i>Ink (2-ounce bottle)</i>	\$1	—
<i>Lantern</i>	\$2	2 lb.
<i>Magnifying glass</i>	\$2	¼ lb.
<i>Matches (box of 500)</i>	\$1	1 lb.
<i>Measuring tape (20 feet)</i>	\$1	—
<i>Notebook (pack of 10)</i>	\$1	1 lb.
<i>Pen</i>	\$1	—
<i>Pencil (100)</i>	\$1	1½ lb.
<i>Poison</i>	\$10	—
<i>Rope (50 feet)</i>	\$2	10 lb.
<i>Saw</i>	\$1	2 lb.
<i>Shovel</i>	\$2	5 lb.
<i>Suitcase</i>	\$2	1 lb.
<i>Thieves' tools</i>	\$25	1 lb.
<i>Trunk</i>	\$3	5 lb.
<i>Typewriter</i>	\$25	10 lb.
<i>Watch</i>	\$3	—
<i>Whistle</i>	\$1	—

Table 4. Tools and Instruments

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT
ARTISAN'S TOOLS		
<i>Carpenter's tools</i>	\$15	6 lb.
<i>Jeweler's tools</i>	\$30	2 lb.
<i>Leatherworker's tools</i>	\$10	5 lb.
<i>Mason's tools</i>	\$15	8 lb.
<i>Mechanic's tools</i>	\$15	15 lb.
<i>Painter's kit</i>	\$15	10 lb.
<i>Photographic kit</i>	\$30	15 lb.
<i>Potter's tools</i>	\$5	3 lb.
<i>Smith's tools</i>	\$15	8 lb.
<i>Chemistry set</i>	\$60	25 lb.
<i>Disguise kit</i>	\$10	5 lb.
<i>First Aid kit (10 uses)</i>	\$15	5 lb.
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS		
<i>Banjo</i>	\$4	5 lb.
<i>Drum</i>	\$1	3 lb.
<i>Flute</i>	\$4	1 lb.
<i>Harmonica</i>	\$0.50	—
<i>Piano</i>	\$190	300 lb.
<i>Trumpet</i>	\$8	6 lb.
<i>Violin</i>	\$6	1 lb.



CHAPTER 8: DAMAGE, HEALING & REST



THE LIFE OF AN INVESTIGATOR IS A dangerous one, with death a real and ever-present possibility. Your hit points represent a combination of physical and mental durability, the will to live, and luck.

Dropping to 0 Hit Points

When you drop to 0 hit points, you either die outright or fall unconscious, as explained in the following sections.

INSTANT DEATH. When damage reduces you to 0 hit points and there is damage remaining, you die instantly if the remaining damage equals or exceeds your hit point maximum.

FALLING UNCONSCIOUS. If damage reduces you to 0 hit points and fails to kill you, you fall unconscious. This unconsciousness ends if you regain any hit points.

DEATH SAVING THROWS. Whenever you start your turn with 0 hit points, you must make a special saving throw, called a death saving



throw, to determine whether you creep closer to death or hang on to life. Unlike other saving throws, this one isn't tied to any ability score. You are in the hands of fate now, aided only by spells and features that improve your chances of succeeding on a saving throw.

Roll a d20. If the roll is 12 or higher, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail. A success or failure has no effect by itself. On your third success, you become stable (see below). On your third failure, you die. Keep track of both until you collect three of a kind.

- Rolling a 1 when making a death saving throw counts as two failures.
- Rolling a 20 when making a death saving throw stabilizes you at 1 hit point.
- **DAMAGE AT 0 HIT POINTS.** Taking any damage while at 0 hit points causes you to fail a death saving throw. If the damage is from a critical hit, you suffer two failures instead.

Stabilizing a Creature

You can use your action to administer first aid to an unconscious creature on 0 hit points and attempt to stabilize it. **This requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check.**

A stable creature doesn't make death saving throws even though it has 0 hit points, but it does remain unconscious. The creature stops being stable, and must start making death saving throws again, if it takes any damage. A stable creature regains 1 hit point after 1d4 hours.

Resting

The main way you recover from damage is to rest. There are two types of resting, short or long.

***Short Rest.* A short rest is a period of extended downtime, at least 8 hours long, during which a character sleeps for at least 6 hours and performs no more than 2 hours of light activity, such as reading, talking, eating, or standing watch.**

You can spend one or more Hit Dice at the end of a short rest, up to your maximum number of Hit Dice, which is equal to your level. For each Hit Die spent in this way, you roll a d6 and add your Constitution modifier to it. You regain hit points equal to the total (minimum of 0).

***Long Rest.* A long rest is a period of 7 consecutive days where you sleep for at least 6 hours a day and spend the rest of the time in light activity, such as reading, talking, walking, or eating. If the rest is interrupted by more than 1 hour of strenuous activity, you must begin the rest again. At the end of a long rest, you regain all lost hit points and all Hit Dice.**

Lingering Injuries

Sometimes the effects of catastrophic injuries persist — taking an extended period to heal, or having lingering, permanent effects. Whenever you become stable after dropping to 0 hit points, you must roll on the Lingering Injuries table.



Lingering Injuries Table

D20	INJURY	HEALING TIME
1–7	<i>No injury.</i>	—
8–12	<i>Small scar. You are left with a small scar but suffer no other ill effects.</i>	—
13	<i>Disfiguring scar. You are left with a disfiguring scar. You have permanent disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks.</i>	—
14	<i>Sprained ankle. Your speed is reduced by half while the ankle remains sprained.</i>	1d4 short rests
15	<i>Concussion. You have disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability rolls, and saving throws until you have recovered.</i>	1d4 short rests
16	<i>Broken or disabled hand or arm. You cannot use any object with that hand while it remains injured.</i>	1d4 long rests
17	<i>Broken or disabled foot or leg. Your speed is reduced by half while the foot remains injured.</i>	1d4+2 long rests
18	<i>Broken ribs. You have disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability rolls, and saving throws until they have healed.</i>	1d4+2 long rests
19	<i>Lost eye. You have permanent disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and you have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks.</i>	—
20	<i>Comatose. You are stable but cannot regain any hit points and remain unconscious. If you take any damage you immediately die. After every 7 days of being tended by someone with the Medicine skill, roll a d20. On a roll of 5 or less you die. On a roll of 15 or more you wake up on 1 hit point, and can then recover normally.</i>	Special

CHAPTER 9: MAGIC



IN THE UNIVERSE DESCRIBED BY THE Mythos, magic is real, powerful, and sinister. Skilled adepts, known variously as wizards, sorcerers, magicians, and other titles, can manipulate these forces to affect the world.

Magic is very difficult to perform, requiring years of study in order to precisely master the various rituals. There are no magical schools and not even an authoritative textbook. Practitioners painstakingly assemble scraps of knowledge and rituals from a variety of grimoires, such as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Secreta Alberti*,

the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, and the infamous *Necronomicon*.

Some learn magic on their own, spending innumerable hours studying ancient manuscripts, while others have a master to guide them on their occult journey. Whether done alone or with others, magic is always very dangerous, threatening the very sanity of those who practice it.

Exploring the role of magic in the world of *Whispers in the Dark* is beyond the scope of this product, and will be included in detail in the upcoming corebook.

CHAPTER 10: MADNESS & SANITY

“If you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”

—Nietzsche



THE SANITY AND MADNESS RULES presented here are meant to enhance role-playing, create challenges for the players, and bring more color to the characters. Adjust as needed to accommodate your players, your campaign, and your style of running the game.

Characters may begin their careers with certain quirks, eccentricities, or foibles, but none can be said to be insane. That comes later. Encounters with horrors — physical, spiritual, and emotional — leave an indelible mark. Taken singly their stalwart nature allows them to continue to live a life of adventure, fight the good fight, and maintain a semblance of normalcy. The mark on their psyche, however, can never be fully removed.

SANITY

Sanity Score

Your character's Sanity score is equal to her Charisma score plus her Wisdom modifier. The maximum Sanity score a character can achieve is 25. The character's maximum Sanity and her current Sanity should be recorded separately. The character's Sanity can change based on Sanity checks. In most cases, the character can recover lost Sanity through either magic or the expenditure of downtime days. The character's Sanity score cannot exceed her maximum as determined by her Charisma and Wisdom scores.

- Sanity Score = Charisma score plus Wisdom modifier (Max = 25)
- Your max Sanity score changes as your ability scores change
- The character should record their current Sanity and max Sanity
- Your Sanity score uses the same modifier scale as all other ability scores.

Ability Modifiers

ABILITY SCORE	MODIFIER
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	+0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20-21	+5
22-23	+6
24-25	+7

Sanity Checks

To make a Sanity check roll a d20 and apply your **current** (not maximum) Sanity score modifier. If the roll is equal to or higher than the DC, the character succeeds the check and



is able to maintain her mental coherence. If the roll is less than the DC she fails the check. With a failed check she loses a portion of her Sanity and rolls on the madness table. Any madness that a character develops is transient unless otherwise noted. A roll of a natural 1 is a fumble and always fails. A specific encounter or named NPC/creature can only incite a single Sanity check. Additional checks in a single encounter could be from psychic attacks or damage, character death, struggles for dominance, or exposure to forbidden knowledge.

Failed Sanity Checks

A failed Sanity check has two results. The first is that the character's grasp on reality begins to slip and she loses a portion of her Sanity. Consequently, the character suffers a (usually) transient form of insanity as her mind struggles to process the situation. If a character must make more than one Sanity check, each check is handled independently and the effects are additive. If the character fumbles her Sanity check roll, i.e. rolls a natural 1, she automatically fails the check and the amount of Sanity lost is doubled.

Losing Sanity

After failing a Sanity check the player must roll 1d4. The result of that roll is the amount of Sanity that the character loses. The player should compare the character's current Sanity to their maximum Sanity. If the Sanity loss brings the character to $\frac{1}{2}$ of her max Sanity her madness will be long-term. If the Sanity loss brings the character to $\frac{1}{4}$ of her max Sanity her madness will be indefinite. A character whose Sanity reaches zero is irrevocably insane and becomes an NPC.

FOR EXAMPLE, *Wilberth has a Charisma of 16 and a Wisdom of 8. His Sanity score is 15 (Charisma score plus his Wisdom modifier of -1) and his modifier is +2. He has to make a Sanity check upon facing an unspeakable horror. The DC for the check is 18. Wilberth rolls a 12, adds his modifier of +2, and has a final result of 14. He fails the check. Wilberth rolls a d4 and loses 2 points of Sanity.*

Madness

Unless otherwise noted, any madness developed by a character is transient. If a character fails a Sanity check while afflicted with a transient madness the subsequent insanity will be short-term. If a character is suffering from a short-term insanity and fails a Sanity check the newly-developed psychosis is long-term.

A madness will continue to afflict a character until she has had the opportunity to calm herself, steel her nerves, garner the support of her compatriots, or in extreme cases seek treatment. The greater the damage to her psyche the more time and effort needed to suppress the manifestation of her failed Sanity check.

Transient insanity will continue to affect the character until she has completed the encounter that caused the Sanity check. To quell a transient insanity the character need only find a quiet place and spend a few minutes reassuring herself.

Short-term insanity afflicts the character until she has spent a short rest garnering the support of her friends, regaining her nerve, and rebuilding her mental defenses.

Long-term insanity persists until the character is able to spend downtime to address the condition. If you are not using downtime in your campaign, it is after she has finished the adventure or quest she's on. She will need weeks of rest and support to quell the madness that has her in its grasp. After that time has elapsed the long-term insanity is resolved.

Indefinite insanity is permanent unless cured.



GOING INSANE

“All it takes is ONE BAD DAY to reduce the sanest man alive to lunacy... Just one bad day.”
—Joker

The acute manifestation of the lunacy exhibited by the character should be thematically congruous with the situation that caused the initial Sanity check. That said, the link between the symptoms and the situation causing the behavior may not be immediately obvious. This is an opportunity for the player and the GM to be creative and develop the character's idiosyncrasies.

The tables provide a plethora of options for the GM and player to explore for characters that

are experiencing transient, short-term, long-term, and/or indefinite insanity. When relevant the GM should roll or choose an entry from the appropriate table below.

Short-term/Transient Madness

The acute nature of these manifestations means the character can quickly shake them off. In the case of transient madness, a few moments out of combat is all that's needed, and for short-term insanity the character can resolve the condition with a short rest. See *Table 5. Transient and Short-Term Psychoses* for examples and durations of the acute effects. Note that even if the acute effect wears off, the lingering effects make the character susceptible to a more severe bout of madness until the episode is fully resolved.

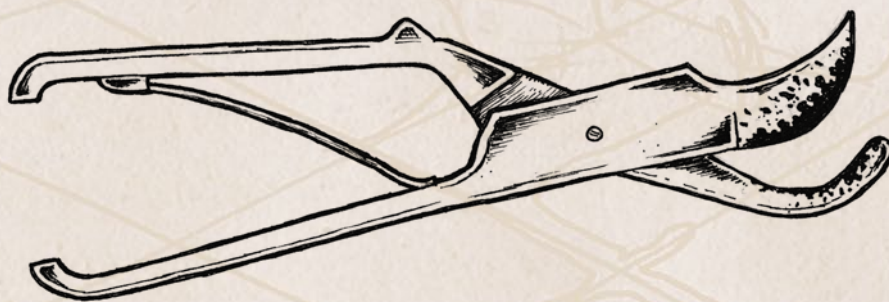
Table 5. Transient and Short-Term Psychoses

DI2	DISORDER	ACUTE EFFECTS
1	<i>The character fixates on a mundane object within the room and begins to count all instances of it. She cannot do anything until finished counting the objects.</i>	<i>The GM chooses a type of object in the room and the character must use her action to count the objects. The character can only take reactions while counting. Counting takes 1d4 rounds.</i>
2	<i>The character babbles unintelligibly. Vocalizations are in her native language and can be heard by any nearby creatures.</i>	<i>The character cannot communicate or cast any spells with vocal components for 1d4 rounds. Perception checks against the character have a +2 modifier.</i>
3	<i>The hairs on the character's arms prick, her heart races, and she breaks out into a sweat as a feeling of dread suffuses her.</i>	<i>The character has a +2 bonus on initiative.</i>
4	<i>The character is terrified of the object of her Sanity check.</i>	<i>The character must use her full movement to retreat from the object of her terror. She can still take actions after her movement. The effect lasts one round.</i>
5	<i>The character's mind redirects the terror of the situation to a random object in the area.</i>	<i>The character will not willingly interact with the target object for 1d4 rounds or until that object attacks her.</i>



Table 5. Transient and Short-Term Psychoses

DI2	DISORDER	ACUTE EFFECTS
6	<i>The character loses sight while her mind processes the weirdness before her.</i>	<i>The character is blinded until the beginning of her next turn.</i>
7	<i>The character falls prone and curls inward upon herself. She makes herself as small as possible, rocking gently with her eyes closed.</i>	<i>The character is prone and incapacitated until the beginning of her next turn.</i>
8	<i>A peal of crazed laughter escapes the character's lips before she regains composure.</i>	<i>Perception checks against the character have a +2 modifier. Persuasion checks by the character have a -2 penalty. The effect ends after one round.</i>
9	<i>Something inside the character breaks and her vision turns red with rage.</i>	<i>The character makes a melee attack against the nearest creature that is not an ally. If a creature is not within melee range, the character uses her full movement to get closer to her target and makes a ranged attack.</i>
10	<i>Anything is better than what is before you. Hallucinations assail the character and she cannot tell reality from fantasy.</i>	<i>The character cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is not real until the beginning of her next turn. While hallucinating the character has disadvantage on all actions.</i>
11	<i>The character's stomach churns and rumbles as her body reacts to the unnatural scene before her.</i>	<i>The character suffers the poisoned condition for the next 1d4 rounds.</i>
12	<i>The character retreats into her mind waiting for someone to give her direction.</i>	<i>The character will not act without outside direction for the next 1d4 rounds. The character makes all saves vs charm effects and Charisma-based skills at disadvantage. Allies can use their reaction to give basic directions to the character while she is affected.</i>





Long-term/Indefinite Madness

The effects of long-term madness persist until a character is able to completely recover both mentally and physically from adventuring. A long-term condition ends after the character has had at least a few weeks' break from the stresses of adventuring.

The effects of indefinite madness are pervasive and cannot be cured except through exceptional intervention such as a *wish* spell or divine intervention. A character with a long-term or indefinite madness should still be playable and can offer a great opportunity for role-playing.

After each short rest the character must make a Sanity check to see if she is able to temporarily suppress the effects of her condition until her next short rest. If the check fails, the character suffers the effects of her psychoses until her next short rest, when she is able to repeat her Sanity

check. If the check is successful, the psychosis is held at bay until the next short rest.

The initial DC for suppressing a long-term or indefinite madness is 10*. With each successful Sanity check it becomes harder to suppress her madness and the DC increases by 1 over the previous check, until the character's condition manifests and the process starts over.

If a character is suffering from multiple forms of madness each instance is handled independently.

FOR EXAMPLE, *Mal's experiences in the warrens haunt her daily, or more precisely nightly. Her particular form of indefinite madness manifests as night terrors. This morning she sets out for her next adventure and checks to see if night terrors will affect her. She rolls a 7 and adds her Sanity modifier of +4 for a total of 11. The check is successful and she suppresses the terrors. The next morning the DC is*

Table 6. Long-term and Indefinite Psychoses

DI2	DISORDER	EFFECTS
1	<i>The character fixates on a mundane object and must count all instances of that object when encountered. She cannot do anything until finished counting the objects.</i>	Persistent effect: If the object of the character's compulsion is present the player has disadvantage on Perception, Investigation, and Insight checks until the object has been counted. Acute effect: The character must use her action to count the objects. The character can only make reactions while counting. Counting takes 1d4 rounds.
2	<i>The character has panic attacks as she is overwhelmed with feelings of helplessness and loses all hope.</i>	Persistent effect: The character has a -2 penalty on initiative and on saves vs any fear effect.
3	<i>The character is terrified of a creature.</i>	Acute effect: The character must use her full movement to retreat from the object of her terror. She can still take actions after her movement. This effect lasts 1 round.
4	<i>The character is terrified of a mundane object in the area.</i>	Acute effect: The character must use her full movement to retreat from the object of her terror. She can still take actions after her movement. This effect lasts 1 round.



Table 6. Long-term and Indefinite Psychoses

DI2	DISORDER	EFFECTS
5	<i>The character loses sight intermittently.</i>	Acute effect: <i>The character is blinded until the beginning of her next turn.</i>
6	<i>The character falls prone and curls inward upon herself. She makes herself as small as possible, rocking gently with her eyes closed.</i>	Acute effect: <i>The character is prone and has the incapacitated condition until the beginning of her next turn.</i>
7	<i>A peal of crazed laughter escapes the character's lips when confronted with a stressful situation.</i>	Acute effect: <i>Perception checks against the character have a +2 modifier. Persuasion checks by the character have a -2 penalty.</i>
8	<i>The character's instinctual response to any problem is violence.</i>	Persistent effect: <i>The character has a -2 penalty on Persuasion/Deception checks and a +2 bonus on Intimidation checks.</i> Acute effect: <i>The character makes a melee attack against the nearest creature that is not an ally. If a creature is not within melee range, the character uses her full movement to get closer to her target and then makes a ranged attack.</i>
9	<i>Hallucinations assail the character and she cannot easily tell reality from fantasy.</i>	Persistent effect: <i>The character has a -2 penalty on Perception and Insight checks.</i> Acute effect: <i>The character cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is not real until the beginning of her next turn. While hallucinating the character has disadvantage on all actions.</i>
10	<i>The character's stomach churns and rumbles as her body reacts to the memories that shattered her mind.</i>	Acute effect: <i>The character suffers the poisoned condition for the next 1d4 rounds.</i>
11	<i>The character retreats into her mind, waiting for someone to give her direction.</i>	Persistent effect: <i>The character has a -2 penalty to Insight checks and to Initiative.</i> Acute effect: <i>The character will not act without outside direction for the next 1d4 rounds. The character makes all saves vs charm effects and/or Charisma-based skills at disadvantage. Allies can use their reaction to give basic directions to the character while she is affected.</i>
12	<i>A pervasive sense of fear penetrates the character's psyche.</i>	Acute effect: <i>The character is frightened until the beginning of her next turn.</i>





11 and again she makes the check. By the third day the stress of the expedition is beginning to wear her down. The DC is now 12. She rolls a 6, adds his modifier and fails the check. During tonight's long rest she suffers from night terrors.

If a character is unable to suppress their madness after a short rest, it will manifest as a persistent effect and/or as an acute effect in times of stress. In those situations, the character may experience an acute attack of lunacy. Stressful encounters include combat situations and may include non-combat encounters such as negotiations or interrogations with NPCs at the GM's discretion.

During a high-stress situation, the PC may attempt to control themselves for the duration of that encounter. This requires a DC 12 Charisma save, and the character should apply her Wisdom modifier to the check. If the character fails her check she suffers the Acute effect associated with her madness.



WHAT INCITES A SANITY CHECK?

"I knew who I was this morning, but I've changed a few times since then."

—Alice

Exposure to magic, esoteric knowledge, or aberrant creatures may force the character to question her understanding of the world and can fray her mind. Additionally, situations of extreme terror, confrontation with one's own mortality, and outside attempts to control your mind, leave marks that may never heal.

Forbidden Knowledge

Tomes and codices of unspeakable evil or unknowable truths have driven many sages to lunacy. The histories, spells, and rituals contained within such eldritch books as the *Necronomicon* and *Nameless Cults* attack the reader's mind with each page read and truth learned.

DC = 8 + the level of the highest spell in the tome*

**If the tome does not contain spells the DC is 12 for a rare item, 14 for very rare, 16 for legendary, and 18 for an artifact*

Unspeakable Horrors

Aberrations, fiends, monstrosities, and the undead are able to crack the protective walls around a character's mind due to their unnaturalness. The sight of a creature whose CR exceeds the character's level by 3 or more provokes a Sanity check.

DC = 8 + [creature CR - the character's level]



FOR EXAMPLE, *Kairon* (5th level) comes face to face to with her first vampire (CR₁₃). Immediately upon spying the undead she must make a Sanity check. The DC for the check is 16 [8 + (vampire's CR of 13 - *Kairon*'s level of 5)]. *Kairon*'s current Sanity score is 14. She rolls a 14 and adds her Sanity score modifier for a final roll of 16; she succeeds at her Sanity check.

Mind-Numbing Terror

The activation of the hindbrain due to extreme terror often causes an immediate effect on a character's psyche. Few things incite that terror more than the sight of legions of undead razing everything in their path. An encounter in which the characters are outnumbered by at least 5 to 1 induces a Sanity check.

$$\text{DC} = 8 + [\text{Encounter CR}^* - \text{the character's level}]$$

**For a horde of creatures use this table to determine the CR of the encounter*

Creatures in the Horde

NUMBER OF CREATURES	MULTIPLIER
1	x1
2	x1.5
3-6	x2
7-10	x2.5
11-14	x3
15+	x4

FOR EXAMPLE, *Griswald* (Antiquarian, 2nd level) encounters a roving pack of 10 ghouls (CR₂). The effective CR of the encounter is 5 (CR_x 2.5) and the DC of the Sanity check is 11. *Griswald* must make a Sanity check. He rolls a 4, applies his modifier of +3, and fails the check. The sight of the ghouls unhinges his mind. He loses sanity and must roll on the transient madness table.

Primal Fear

Stark terror may affect the stability of the character's mind if they fumble (roll a natural 1) on a check against a fear effect. If the character's level is equal to or greater than the creature that generated the fear effect the DC is 8.

$$\text{DC} = 8 + [\text{creature CR} - \text{the character's level}]$$

Struggle for Dominance

The struggle for dominance between an otherworldly intelligence and an investigator may damage the investigator's mind. Further details will be explained in subsequent products.

Brushes With Death

Any character that is reduced to zero hit points loses 1 Sanity point. Additionally, if a PC witnesses a close ally (as determined by the GM) be reduced to zero hit points they must succeed on a Sanity check or lose 1 Sanity point (DC = their current Sanity). If this change causes the character's Sanity to be ½ or ¼ of her max Sanity she rolls on the Long-term or Indefinite madness table respectively.





GETTING BETTER

“She was always trying to hide, the beautiful chaos in her mind.”

— Joker

Recovering Sanity does not cure any madness that was developed due to Sanity loss. The underlying conditions resolve automatically after the character has taken the necessary time to come to terms with her experiences or, in the case of indefinite madness, a timely lobotomy.

Recovering Between Adventures

The character may attempt to recover her newly-lost Sanity between sessions. This treatment may only be attempted once, at the end of the adventure in which the character incurred the Sanity loss. The character should apply her current Sanity score modifier to this roll. Regardless of

the roll, the character may not increase her Sanity beyond her maximum Sanity score.

DC = 8 + the total Sanity lost in the previous session

- **Natural 20:** always a success and regains 2d4 Sanity
- **Success:** regains 1d4 Sanity
- **Failure:** no change in Sanity
- **Natural 1:** loses 1d2 Sanity

FOR EXAMPLE, *Griswald's encounter with ghosts caused him to lose 3 Sanity points. Now that he has survived that harrowing experience and it is behind him, he is able to spend the next month fishing and relaxing to recover from the ordeal. After the month Griswald makes a Sanity check. The DC is 11. He rolls an 11 and adds his Sanity score modifier of +2 for a 13. He succeeds. He rolls a d4 and recovers 2 Sanity points, bringing his current Sanity up to 16.*





GM'S SHEET: SANITY CHECKS

Roll a d20, apply Sanity modifiers, and compare to the DC of the check. A natural 1 always fails. Each encounter/creature can only incite a single Sanity check. Additional checks in a single encounter could be from psychic attacks/damage, character death, struggle for dominance, and/or exposure to forbidden knowledge.

Failed Sanity Check

The character suffers a (usually) *transient* form of insanity and loses 1d4 Sanity. If the player rolled a natural 1 on the check, the Sanity loss is doubled. When your character's Sanity is at ½ of her maximum the madness is *long-term*; when it is ¼ of its maximum the madness is *indefinite*.

Duration of Madness

Transient is until the end of the encounter, **short-term** until the end of a short rest, **long-term** until the character takes a break from adventuring, and **indefinite** is until cured.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS: If a character fails a Sanity check while afflicted with a transient madness the subsequent madness will be short-term.

LONG-TERM/INDEFINITE MADNESS: If a character is suffering from a short-term madness and fails a Sanity check the newly developed madness is long-term. Long-term and indefinite madness may also be a result of decreases in the character's Sanity score.

SUPPRESSING LONG-TERM/INDEFINITE MADNESS: After each short rest the character may attempt to suppress the madness (DC = 10 + days since previous bout) until her next short rest.

Causes of Sanity Checks

- **FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE:**
DC = 8 + level of highest spell in the tome
- **UNSPEAKABLE HORRORS:**
DC = 8 + (Creature CR – PC's level)
- **MIND-NUMBING TERROR:**
DC = 8 + (Encounter CR – PC's level)
- **STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE:**
DC = 12 + entity's Charisma modifier
- **BRUSHES WITH DEATH:** loss of 1 Sanity point or straight Sanity check if an ally

Getting Better

- **BETWEEN SESSIONS:** DC = 8 + the total Sanity lost (note the character should use her current Sanity modifier).
 - **NATURAL 20:** always succeeds (regardless of DC) and regains 2d4 Sanity
 - **SUCCESS:** regains 1d4 Sanity
 - **FAILURE:** no change in Sanity
 - **NATURAL 1:** loses 1d2 Sanity

CHAPTER II: THE CROW MAN

By Matt Corley and M.T. Black

A Whispers in the Dark Adventure for a 1st-2nd Level Party of Three to Five Investigators.

Running Time: 2 sessions



BACKGROUND

The streets of the Crescent City are never quiet. Day or night, dawn or dusk, the city bustles with activity. In stark contrast to New Orleans' reputation as a port of gaiety, frivolity, and celebration, a pall has overtaken the locals, dampening their ebullience.

On Thursday Oct 8th, the body of a young woman, Mazie Miley, was found brutally slain at the corner of North Robertson and St. Louis Streets. While grisly (her intestines had been cut from her body) the folk attributed the slaying to a random act of violence. That was, until a second victim was found two days later — a local man, Basil Thompson, was found



murdered in a similar fashion, his stomach missing this time, in an alley on Treme St. near Iberville St.

Local law enforcement has prioritized solving the murders, the more vigilant eldritch societies have taken an interest in the killer's modus operandi, and a few locals have begun to consider taking matters into their own hands to prevent further horrors. A third murder, Pierce Tummond, serves as the impetus for the characters to begin their investigations. The scenario begins with the discovery of Mr. Tummond's body.

Adventure Hooks

THE COBALT CLUB. The investigators are neophytes in the Cobalt Club, a progressive and exclusive club in New Orleans that dabbles in the arcane, esoteric, and preternatural. They have met for drinks and conversation, and growing bored of the stuffy atmosphere in the club decide to walk to the nearby French Quarter for a little late-night excitement. The Cobalt Club will be explored in greater detail in subsequent supplements.

EXPERTS OF THE UNREAL. A series of murders have the citizens of the French Quarter and nearby wards terrified for their lives. Inspector Avril Benoit has enlisted the investigators in the hopes that their unconventional methods and expertise in the paranormal will provide them with insights the police are likely to miss. Inspector Benoit has requested that the investigators patrol the streets of the area to catch the killer.

STUMBLING HOME. New Orleans is a city that never sleeps, and the revelry never slows. There are rumors of murders and foul ritual, but there always are, and you've chosen to enjoy the night to its fullest rather than worry about things

outside of your control. At the tail end of an evening of festivities the characters decide to take a short-cut past St. Louis Cemetery #1, and in doing so they stumble — literally — over a horrific crime scene.

IT'S PERSONAL. One or more of the investigators are personally involved with a recent victim, or the next victim, Tracy Sommer. Basil Thompson has friends and lovers throughout the Crescent City. Mazie Miley's kin from Texas came into town for an overdue visit, only to find her recently murdered. Ms. Sommer has a cousin who left a few weeks after her, intent on helping. Can they find her before the Crow Man does?

Running the Adventure

ORGANIZATION. When running *The Crow Man* there are two main sections you will be using: Sequence of Events, and Locales. On each day there is one "event" for the GM to insert as pacing and the actions of the PCs allows. The rest of the in-game day is spent gathering information at the locations listed.

FRUSTRATION. This scenario is not a typical 5e adventure. There are no dungeons or fantastical creatures, and violence will land you in jail. Players should understand that this scenario will emphasize problem solving,

Alternative Theories

The players may find, or fabricate, relationships between the victims, the ritual, and the Onyx Confederacy that are not covered in the text. Additionally, they may explore unexpected avenues of research. In those instances, the GM is encouraged to assess the players' rationale and adjust as necessary to maintain enjoyment and pacing. If it makes sense, roll with it.



investigation, and atmosphere. There is some combat, but it's generally avoidable, and shouldn't be considered necessary to achieve their goals.

FAILURE. Part and parcel to the above statement is the chance that the investigators may not stop the Crow Man, or at the very least there may be additional lives lost. This in no ways means they've failed, in game or out. There are countless stories in which the protagonists are beaten down, only to rise up to seize ultimate victory. The Crow Man can easily be such a story. Will the investigators wait idly by now that they know nefarious forces are at work? Or will they redouble their efforts, learn from their errors, and thwart the mysterious organization behind the murders?

AD HOC SANITY CHECKS. The GM is encouraged to add Sanity checks as needed to maintain tension and pacing. In a one-shot game the checks can be more frequent and/or have a higher DC as the characters will not be used again. In a campaign, take into account that Sanity may never recover, and that its slow gradual loss is a horror unto itself.

Ties That Bind

MAZIE MILEY (FEMALE, INTESTINES). Ms. Miley hails from Laredo, Texas, coming to New Orleans three years ago in search of an escape from the tedium and expectations associated with young Texan women. She was recruited by the Onyx Confederacy, and through her natural inquisitiveness, guile, and ambition, rose within their ranks. With her

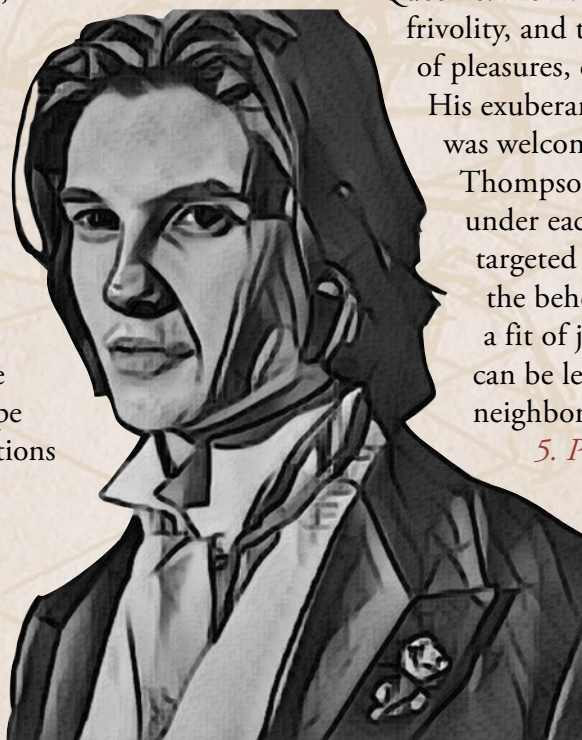
rapid rise in the organization came enemies, one of which has directed the Crow Man to remove Ms. Miley's intestines as a test to determine the extent of control the Onyx Confederacy has over the creature. Mazie had a tattoo on her left inner wrist, was a peer of Tanith (see *Day 4. Dangerous Questions on page 46*), and her body has been cremated leaving only the coroner's notes.

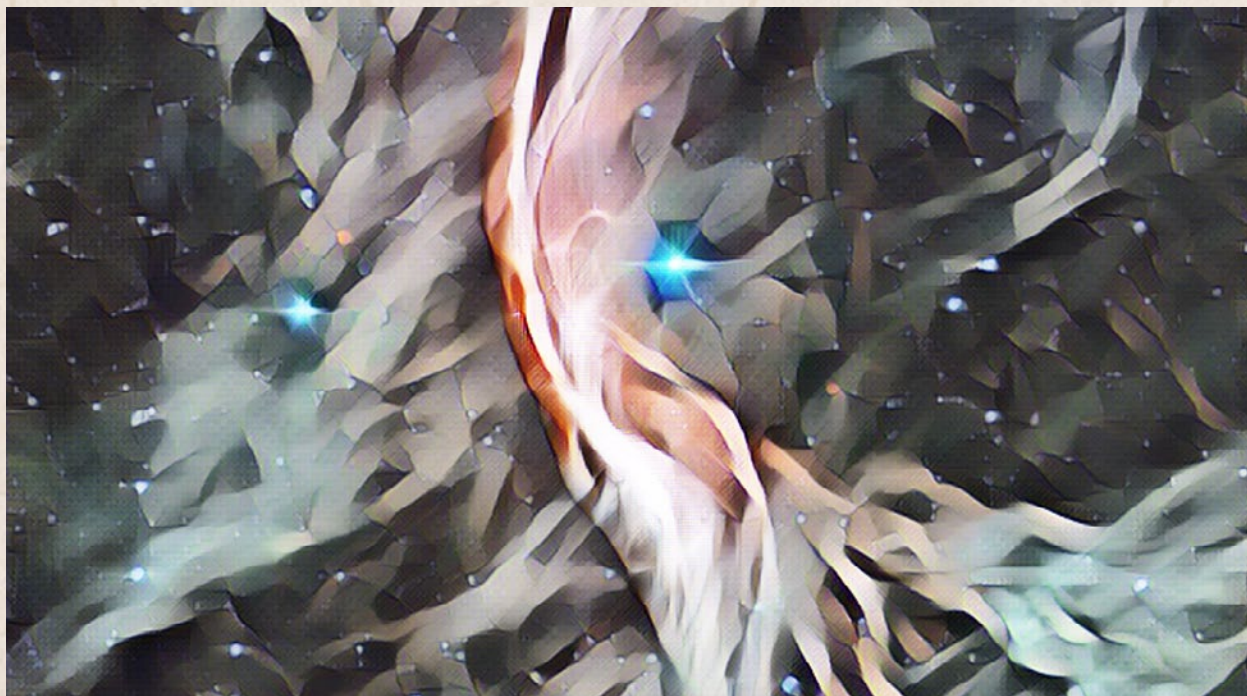
CORONER'S NOTES.

- "Female, good health, cause of death exsanguination from lateral wound to inner thigh."
- "Subject's intestines were removed perimortem."
- "The subject had markings on the inside of her left wrist. Details are difficult due to premortem injury marring it."

BASIL THOMPSON (MALE, STOMACH).

Thompson, a drag queen of note in select circles, was known alternatively as Basil and Queenie. He lived a life of excess, frivolity, and the undying pursuit of pleasures, carnal and otherwise. His exuberant fecundity insured he was welcome at countless events. Thompson had countless lovers under each persona, and was targeted by the Crow Man at the behest of one of them in a fit of jealousy. These details can be learned by canvassing the neighborhoods (see *Location 5. Pounding the Pavement on page 52*). Basil has been cremated leaving only the coroner's notes.





CORONER'S NOTES.

- “Male, signs of alcoholic disease of the liver. Cause of death exsanguination.”
- “Subject’s stomach has been removed.”

PIERCE TUMMOND. A former member of the Onyx Confederacy, and friend of Thomas ‘Teeters’ Watts. Upon learning that Watts was in danger, he journeyed to New Orleans to warn him. The Onyx Confederacy discovered Tummond’s return and marked him as a target of the Crow Man. Pierce had the protective tattoo removed with his estrangement from the society.

A Timely Ritual

The Crow Man has been summoned as part of an eldritch ritual associated with preparing the way for the return of the Onyx Pharaoh, a ruler of antediluvian Egypt sometimes referred to as Dark Khufu and known for imparting the gift of esoteric, arcane technology upon his followers. The Crow Man has limited time to

reap the requisite organs — intestines, liver, lungs, stomach, and heart — and complete the ritual before the stars are no longer aligned and the ritual cannot be completed.

The ritual was attempted 15 years ago, failing due to the escape of final victim, Teeters Watts. The Onyx Confederacy have not forgotten that failure and now direct the Crow Man’s murderous harvests to not only repay Teeters for escaping so long ago, but also to tie up other loose ends, personal vendettas, and overly curious investigators. Their interference in the Crow’s Man selection of victims offers the PCs a sliver of hope. Preventing the death of a single victim will keep the ritual from being completed in a timely manner, and ensure its failure.

The Onyx Confederacy

The enigmatic group responsible for the Crow Man’s manifestation is beyond the scope of this adventure, and will be explored in subsequent scenarios. Quite possibly in an upcoming crowdfunding campaign.



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Day 1. *Discovery of Pierce Tummond*

The first scene of *The Crow Man* occurs Tuesday, October 12th, 1874, in the early hours of the morning. The investigators are walking through the French Quarter when they arrive upon the site of a heinous crime.

The ruin of a body, a man of modest means by his attire, lies face down on the cobblestones at the northern corner of Basin Street and Bienville Street.

He is face down in a slowly growing pool of blood, rain water, and street run-off. The pants cuff of his left leg is darkened and glistens wetly in the moonlight.

With the realization of what lies on the street, the sounds of the Quarter, just two blocks south, fade to nothing and the cool night air draws all remnants of frivolity from you.

Were it not for his vitae flowing into the street and the awkward manner in which he lies on both the curb and street, he could be mistaken for a reveler at the tail end of a bender.

The Law

Whispers occurs in a world much like our own, albeit one where the forces of cosmic horror and monstrous evil are more than abstractions. The GM and players should consider the legal ramifications of the characters' actions. Jail time is a possibility, especially if the PCs use firearms, and delays can have catastrophic repercussions. A good rule of thumb is that guns are bad, bodies are worse, and beatings between folks are broken up but have few consequences.

The man lying face down in the street is the third victim of the Crow Man. The PCs have as much time as they like to examine the body; it is near the Witching Hour after all, and all sane folk are safe behind their doors.

When the PCs are close enough to examine the body, read or paraphrase the following:

The commingled stench of the victim's loosed bowels, coppery blood, and a pervasive urine smell from the Quarter is nigh overwhelming. A stain — thicker and darker than water — at the body's left leg offers clues that a malevolent force has been at work.

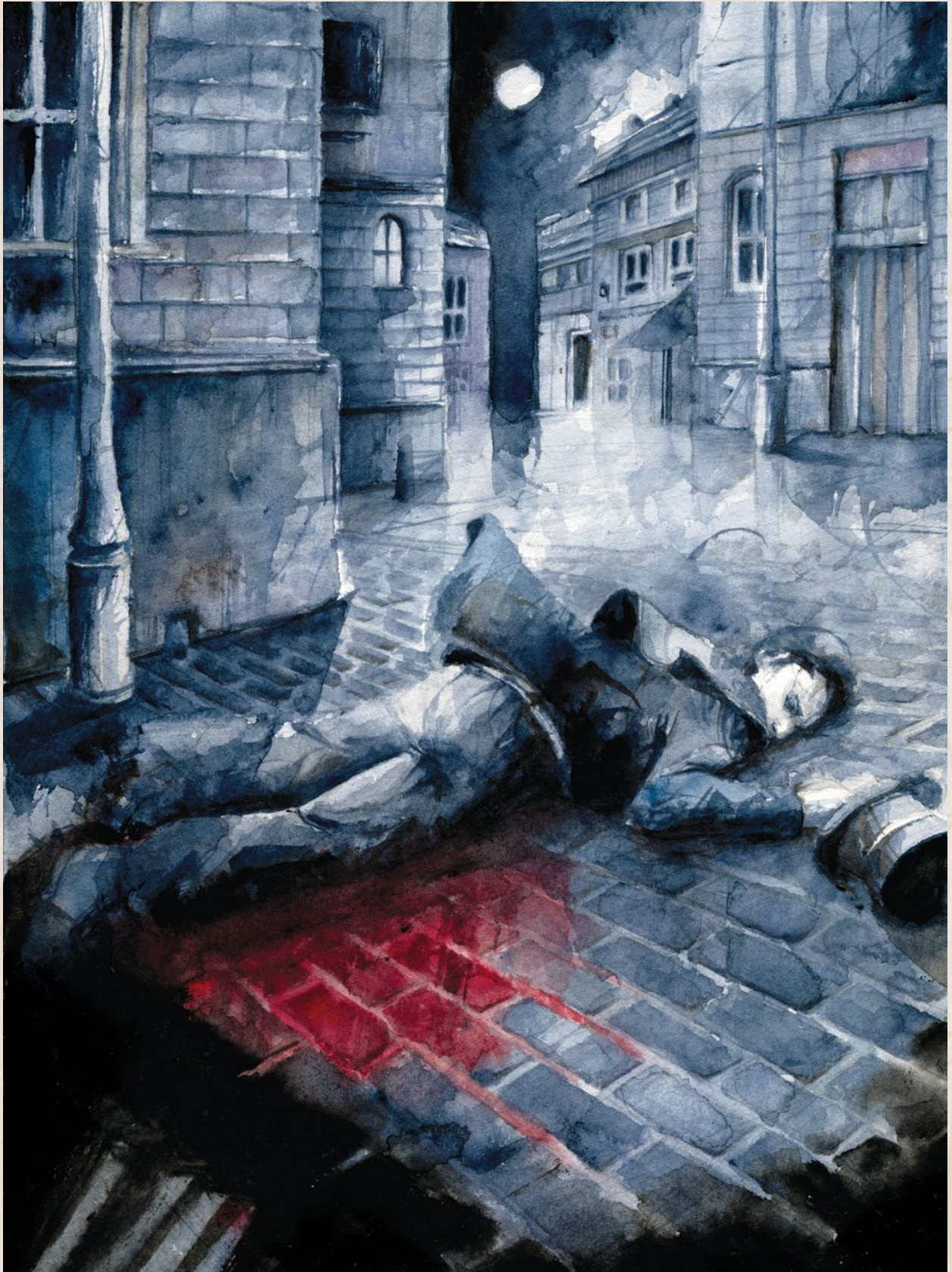
PCs with passive Perception 14 detect the faint smell of cherry tobacco. The PCs have found the body of a victim of foul play, and have numerous options at their disposal on how best to proceed — examining the body, leaving the scene to alert the authorities, or some less noble action.

INSPECTIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

CRIME SCENE. An examination of the crime scene reveals the following. If the players state that they are searching for a specific item the GM is encouraged to allow that PC to roll with advantage.

- **Black Feathers.** Any PC with passive Perception 12 or higher finds loose black feathers on the ground. There are enough for each character to have one feather. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that they are from a crow.
- **Local Lore.** All characters should make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. On a success, the crime scene calls to mind a famous series of murders that happened in this area back in the 1850s. Any character that grew up in New Orleans or is a member of local law enforcement has advantage on the roll.
- **Pool of Blood.** The pool of blood has clearly been diluted by the street run-off, an odorous mixture of rainwater and raw sewage.







THE BODY. An examination of the body begins with it in the position it is found in, face down, and progresses to a more thorough exam after turning it over.

- **Body (Face Down).** The victim is dressed as a male, in a suit. His left trouser leg is torn and blood-stained near the ankle. His jacket cannot be removed without moving the body, and neither can his pants be searched. The rear pockets are empty.

- **Left Foot.** The victim's left Achilles tendon has been cut. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine/Investigation) check reveals that whatever made the cut was sharp enough to cut the skin and fibrous tendon with no indication of tearing.

- **Body (Face Up).** Characters turning the body over are able to continue their study of the corpse and learn more about the events that led to this unfortunate victim's demise. There are wounds on the torso and leg.

- **Arms/Wrists.** The left arm is marred by a fresh scar, likely from a burn, on the inside of the wrist.

- **Torso.** The abdomen has been carved open and something has clearly been removed, as his viscera have been pulled aside and there is a void in his lower torso. An investigator examining the wound learns the following with an Intelligence (Medicine) check.

- **DC 11:** The victim's liver is missing. The instrument used to open the torso and excise the organ has the same characteristics as the weapon used to inflict the other wounds on the body. Physician PCs know this regardless of their ability check.
- **DC 14:** The dissection was made after the victim bled out.

- **Leg.** PCs stating they're examining the lower body, or those with passive Perception 12, find a six-inch-long cut on the interior of the left trouser at knee height. The cut is deep and obviously the source of the majority of the blood at the scene of the crime. An investigator examining the wound learns the following with an Intelligence (Medicine) check.

- **DC 11:** The victim bled out from this wound. Physician PCs know this regardless of their ability check.

- **DC 14:** The popliteal artery and the surrounding tendons, ligaments, and connective tissues were cut cleanly, leading to further hobbling of the quarry and rapid exsanguination.

- **Pockets.** Rifling through the victim's pockets yields the following:

- A partially filled tobacco pouch.

- Coins and notes totaling \$5.

- A hotel receipt (see handout 1 *Appendix D, page 71*).

- A train ticket (see handout 2 *Appendix D, page 71*).

- A scrap of paper with a strange sign (see handout 3 *Appendix D, page 71*). A character examining the sign learns the following with an Intelligence (Arcana) check.

- **DC 10:** It is an occult symbol.

- **DC 12:** It is an elder sign, an ancient symbol of protection.

- **Weapon.** A character examining the wounds and succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence check surmises that the weapon may have been a paring knife, small slicing dagger, or scalpel.





Elder Sign

Wondrous item, rare

The elder sign is an antediluvian symbol of protection from otherworldly entities. Its potency is tied to the concomitant ritual used when it is inscribed, the permanence of those inscriptions, and the personal power of the ritualist. That said, even a hastily drawn temporary elder sign offers the following benefits:

- *Attacks by aberrations against the object of inscription are made with a -2 penalty.*



GM's NOTE. *The PCs do not have the time (nor the resources) to create a more powerful symbol if they are to stop the Crow Man before he completes his harvest.*

Day 2. Murder in the Air

Early in the investigation the PCs have not yet come to the attention of the group behind the Crow Man's summoning. Their travels are unimpeded and unobserved, and they may travel the city as they see fit. The time required to fully explore each location is included under the specific entries. When the day's exploration has been completed the GM should insert the following encounter. This encounter can be moved to subsequent days as pacing dictates.

DEVELOPMENT. The PC with the highest passive Perception notices a murder of crows perching on a nearby building. Their beady avian stares are unwavering, suggesting a disconcerting intelligence.

When other members of the group have been informed of the watchful corvid observers, the murder grows in size until nary a perch is left unoccupied. An eerie hush falls on the street, and the sense of anticipation is palpable.

The crows are a secondary manifestation of the ritual, serving primarily as the remote eyes of the Crow Man. They are unsettling in the extreme, and remain in place until the PCs leave the area.

COMPLICATIONS. The presence of the murder of crows (see *Appendix B, page 63*) incites a DC 10 Sanity check for all investigators within 60 feet. If the crows are the target of violence, they attack the PCs for 1 round before dispersing.

Day 3. Butchery on Bienville

Late evening on the third day, the Crow Man claims his fourth victim, Tracy Sommer, in the darkened intersection of Franklin and Bienville. The body is discovered by a patrolling police constable. The characters most likely learn of this event through a newspaper headline the following day, which merely says that a young



woman was murdered and her body mutilated the previous evening.

If the characters are on good terms with the police, they might discover the following additional information. The circumstances of the murder are identical to those described in *Day 1. Discovery of Pierce Tummond on page 42*, with these exceptions:

- The victim is a woman in her early twenties. Her clothes bear the telltale signs of heavy wear, with patches and repaired seams. She is not dressed for a night of debauchery.
- Her lungs have been removed.
- Her pocket contains a single piece of paper with the following carefully scrawled on it in block letters, “Teeters, Bayou Road”.
- She has coins totaling 83 cents on her person.

The victim’s name (which the police can’t determine) is Tracy Sommer, and she came to the Crescent City last week in search of her sister, Camille, who recently went missing. Tracy’s clumsy investigation, coupled with her lack of local ties, made her a target for the Crow Man’s harvest.

Day 4. *Dangerous Questions*

A cabal in the shadows is now aware of the PCs’ investigation and have sent a representative to discuss the matter. This encounter can be moved to Day 3 if needed to maintain pacing.

A striking woman greets you with a tight smile, flanked by a trio of stern fellows who exude an aura of barely-contained menace.

“Greetings gentlefolk. I trust you’ve been enjoying your day, and your trips to [insert locations the PCs have visited] were fruitful?”

Before allowing any response, her face darkens — any trace of smile disappearing — and adds grimly, “You’ve the look of considerate folk... smart folk... ones with a healthy love of life and the mysteries of this delightful world. It’d be a shame if in exploring those wonders you cut your days short.”





Tanith and three hooligans have been sent to warn the party away from their investigations. They are *hostile*, though they do not immediately initiate violence when approaching the characters. Her message is simple and her threat clear — some questions should not be asked, and smart folks know when to mind their own business.

DEVELOPMENT. Tanith's umber skin, inky black hair, and faintly accented English allow investigators succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check to identify her as a native Egyptian. Tanith offers little to the PCs in terms of information; she only knows that the PCs are sticking their noses in where they are not welcome and will disclose no details of the Crow Man or ritual under any circumstance.

PCs succeeding on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a symbol on the inside of her left wrist. If violence erupts any PC with a passive Perception 14 makes note of the symbol too. The symbol may be recognized as an elder sign, a protective glyph of Egyptian origin, with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The toughs do not have the symbol.

The symbol is the same as the one on the wrist of the Crow Man's first victim, Mazie Miley. If the PCs mention any of the victims to Tanith, her face darkens and she immediately commands the toughs to attack: "Teach them the value of silence."

COMPLICATIONS. Attempts to intimidate Tanith or her allies are immediately met with violence. Tanith (neophyte, see *Appendix B, page 63*) will not join the fray unless attacked directly, instead choosing to watch. The toughs (see *Appendix B, page 64*) choose separate targets and attack when directed to by Tanith.

The fray ends when either a PC or NPC is reduced to zero hit points, or at the end of the second round, whichever comes first, when a patrolling member of the New Orleans police department breaks it up, shooting Tanith and her allies along.

Day 5. Crow Man Arrives

At 11pm of the fourth day after the murder of Pierce Tummond, the Crow Man comes for Teeters, finding him wherever he happens to be. If the PCs are with Teeters read or paraphrase the following:

The loud cry of crows begins in the distance, echoes making it impossible to pinpoint their direction with any confidence.

Moments pass, the caws growing to a cacophony of such strength that doors and windows rattle, and an involuntary chill runs down your spine when they abruptly go silent.

The shadows of the flock coagulate into the form of a man — gangly, eyes of glowing red, with a small blade in his right hand — gliding towards Teeters.

The Crow Man has come to claim his final victim, complete the ritual, and free himself from the Onyx Confederacy's control.

DEVELOPMENT. The Crow Man (see *Appendix B, page 61*) has Teeters, and unless stopped he will murder the broken man, harvest his heart, and disappear. Prior to rolling initiative the PCs must make a DC 12 Sanity check for coming face to face with the Crow Man. The battle with the Crow Man continues until he succeeds in killing Teeters, is destroyed, or gives up after 5 rounds.



LOCALES



Location 1. *Planters' Hotel*

The four-story edifice of Planters' Hotel occupies a busy corner of Canal Street. The ubiquitous second-story balcony holds a handful of guests observing the street below, and guests enter and leave the hotel with regularity.

Upon their arrival guests are cordially greeted by a dapper gentleman in dark woolen pants, cleanly pressed spotlessly white shirt, satin vest, and black tie. Taking in the crew with an appraising gaze his smile falters, ever so briefly, before he regains his composure. "You've no bags that I can see. What can I do for you?"

With either the presentation of the receipt or appropriate credentials, the manager, Mr. Marcus Murray, confirms that Mr. Pierce Tummond was staying at the hotel in room 15. If they lack either of those items, a bribe of \$2 or a successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion/Deception) check achieves the same result. Murray knows nothing of Tummond's business in New Orleans, and can be further persuaded to allow the investigators access to room 15.

Room 15

Gaining access to the room requires a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check; investigators able to supply proof they are employed by local law enforcement have advantage. Gaining access through subterfuge and stealth requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, or the door can be broken (DC 13 Strength check).

The room is small, cramped, and filled with the pleasant lingering smell of cherry tobacco. A steamer trunk lies at the foot of a bed with rumpled sheets and skewed pillow. A sitting table has been squeezed into the corner.

The steamer is not locked and "P. Tummond" is engraved on the nameplate above the lock. The trunk contains:

- Two sets of plain clothes.
- A wallet with \$10 and a scrap of paper that says, "Teeters Watts – 113."
- A textbook, "Egypt's Place in Universal History"
 - PCs examining the book and succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check note that page 25 is dog-eared. Characters stating that they're looking for marked passages have advantage on the check. The page describes "The Book of the Dead," a tome of rituals pertaining to





the passage of the deceased to the afterlife. An underlined paragraph describes a ceremony that can only be performed every fifteen years “when the stars are right.”

- A stamp on the book reads, “Property of University of Louisiana.”

Location 2. City Library

Characters succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recall that the City Library (within City Hall) has a comprehensive collection of newspapers — ideal for investigators searching for accounts of murders that resemble what happened to Tummond — and a city directory of residents. Admission is free.

City Hall lies at the intersection of Charles and Lafayette Streets. It is constructed of white marble and resembles an ancient Greek temple. At the entrance, a wide flight of granite stairs leads up to an elegant portico supported by eight fluted columns.

DEVELOPMENT. The investigators are free to use the City Library as they see fit between Monday and Friday from 8am to 4pm. Investigators requesting aid from George Foyer, the librarian (see *Appendix B, page 62*), must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check to enlist his assistance.

Each investigator or group of investigators may research the shelves, archives, and stacks for specific information. After each four-hour block of time the characters make an Intelligence (Investigation) check as outlined below.

CITY DIRECTORY

Investigators searching for Thomas Watts find his address to be 113 Bayou Road. Similarly, searching for Marie Laveau reveals her address to be 152 Rue St. Ann Street.

Investigations

GRAFT. *PCs presenting bribes may earn advantage on their checks, or even an automatic success if the graft is sufficient. The appropriateness of the bribe, and its impact, are at the GM’s discretion.*

MONEY. *Having money and spending it on useful things are not the same. The availability of items is at the discretion of the GM, and the characters may expend up to 4 hours of their day (or longer) tracking the items down, agreeing on a price, and purchasing them.*

TIME KEEPING. *Traveling, researching, and investigating in this era required significant reserves of time, patience, and dedication. Unless otherwise noted a good rule of thumb is that the PCs can explore two locales per game day.*

CROWS

- **DC 10:** A stray zoology text states that crows are smart, recognize different faces, and can be trained like dogs (PCs may recall this with a Wisdom (Nature) check of the same DC).
- **DC 12:** A thesis on birds in religions describes crows as many things: a messenger of the dead, omens of evil, and bearers of knowledge and wisdom. Native American religions saw the crow as a sage, trickster, and even creator of the world (PCs may recall this with an Intelligence (Religion) check of the same DC).
- **DC 14:** A book — bound in cracked leather, filled with entries hand-written in Latin — describes crows as emissaries and allies of “dark Khufu,” an Egyptian king from before the flood of Noah. PCs that do not read Latin cannot translate it, though they recognize the language on a successful DC 12 Intelligence check.



ELDER SIGN/SYMBOL

- **DC 12:** The symbol is an elder sign, an ancient symbol of protection, used in many ancient cultures to ward off the otherworldly.
- **DC 14:** Inscribing the symbol on an object (or person) instills a limited form of protection.
- **DC 18:** The protection from the symbol can be bolstered if it is both permanent and the proper rituals are performed during the ceremony.

EGYPT

- **DC 12:** The intestines, liver, lungs, and stomach of the dead were removed and placed in canopic jars as part of the Egyptian's mummification process. The heart was not removed, as it housed the soul.
- **DC 14:** A sect of antediluvian Egyptian priests performed similar sacrifices, although they removed the heart as well for their unnamed god.

Note that PCs investigating "Religions" or similar but less specific topics may learn the clues above. To reflect their circumspect approach the GM is encouraged to apply a -2 penalty to their Investigation checks.

MURDERS

- **DC 7:** There were two murders in recent days that were similar to the murder of Pierce Tummond. A 29-year-old named Mazie Miley had her intestines removed, while 42-year-old Basil Thompson had his stomach cut out.
- **DC 9:** A string of similar murders in quick succession occurred in the late '50s.
- **DC 11:** There were four victims — murdered, hobbled, and with vital organs removed — in 1859. The murderer was dubbed "The Crow Man" due to crow feathers found at the scene.

- **DC 13:** Thomas Watts, known locally as "Teeters," claimed to have escaped the Crow Man with the aid of a voodoo charm.

Voodoo

- **DC 9:** Numerous newspaper articles state that New Orleans is a hotbed for voodoo priests (Houngans) and priestesses (Mambos). They can be found almost everywhere; the most famous of them is Madame Marie Laveau.
- **DC 12:** An academic treatise from 1861 decries voodoo as little more than superstitions, fake protective trinkets, and mumbo jumbo to trick the gullible. "At best it's a sham, at worst a willful belief in the Dark Arts".
- **DC 17:** You've found enough to strongly suggest that voodoo is real, and a powerful force within the city. It can be used for good or evil, protection or pain, and healing or harm.

Location 3. Police Station

The local station of the New Orleans Police is on Canal Street and Rampart Street.

A man with tired eyes, bulldog features, and a rumpled, sweat-stained uniform looks up with weary resignation at the sound of the opening door.

Wiry, flaming whiskers contort almost comically with his greeting; "Your business?"

WORKING FOR INSPECTOR BENOIT

If the characters are working for Inspector Avril Benoit (see *Adventure Hooks on page 39*), the Inspector dutifully takes their statement — only interrupting briefly once the location



is known, to send a police officer to secure the scene.

Benoit, a lifelong resident with a healthy respect for local superstitions, does not immediately discount suggestions that there are supernatural forces at play. The inspector asks the PCs about their course of action and, if they need guidance, suggests the City Library and/or Planters' Hotel.

If the PCs ask to look at the police files, Benoit is reluctant, but will agree to give a single person access on a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Law enforcement officers have advantage on the check.

No TIES TO THE POLICE

Investigators that are not working for Benoit are met by Corporal Richard Kerwin, an honest though unimaginative detective with bristling red whiskers. Kerwin takes down the characters' statements about the discovery of Pierce Tummond's body. He pauses at any of the more gruesome details, but allows them to complete their statement without interruption. When the statement is complete, he dispatches someone to secure the scene.

Corporal Kerwin is stony-faced when asked about any police investigation. Speculation regarding the murder, or attempts to link it to past murders, are met with "Too soon t' say," and admonitions to leave police work to the professionals. Suggestions of the supernatural elicit a raised eyebrow and twitch of his mustache; if pressed he suggests that the party leave the police station, and that "We'll be in touch should we need you."

If the PCs ask to look at the police files, Kerwin says that would be highly inappropriate. He agrees to give a single person access on a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Law enforcement officers have advantage on the check.

POLICE FILES

Investigators searching the police files and making a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover the following:

- Four people were murdered in 1859. Their corpses were mutilated. Specifically, vital organs were removed, and Achilles tendons cut.
- The murderer was dubbed "The Crow Man" due to black crow feathers found at the scene.
- A man, Thomas Watts of Bayou Road, claimed to have escaped the Crow Man with the aid of a voodoo charm.
- PCs looking for information on the current batch of murders find the coroner's notes for the first two victims (see *Background on page 38*).

Location 4. University of Louisiana

The University of Louisiana is on Common Street — occupying nearly an entire block — and consists of two departments: Medicine and Law. Their library, however, contains a broad range of subjects, on par with the City Library (Location 2). The university buildings are architecturally similar — French colonial structures with columns, stairways, and sprawling façades.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The library is open only to students, faculty, and those with academic credentials. Otherwise, a character must make a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to gain admittance.

DEVELOPMENT. The library at the university is essentially identical to the City Library, except it has no City Directory. Investigators choose a subject to research for the next 4 hours, and at the end of the time make an Intelligence



(Investigation) check. For the findings see *Location 2. City Library on page 49.*

The librarian, Henri Stockwell, is available for assistance (as outlined in the City Library). Regardless of that interaction, if the subject is broached he mentions that Professor Richard Gibbons in the Medical College studied anthropology and may be able to assist their enquiries.

MEDICAL COLLEGE

Inside the college are numerous offices, halls, and a small but well-appointed anatomical museum. There is no security, and any passing student is happy to point the way to Professor Gibbons' office on the second floor.

DEVELOPMENT. Gibbons is in his late thirties, has curly brown hair, the slight bulge of a sedentary man, and sallow, pock-marked skin. He's especially susceptible to flattery, and readily shares the following:

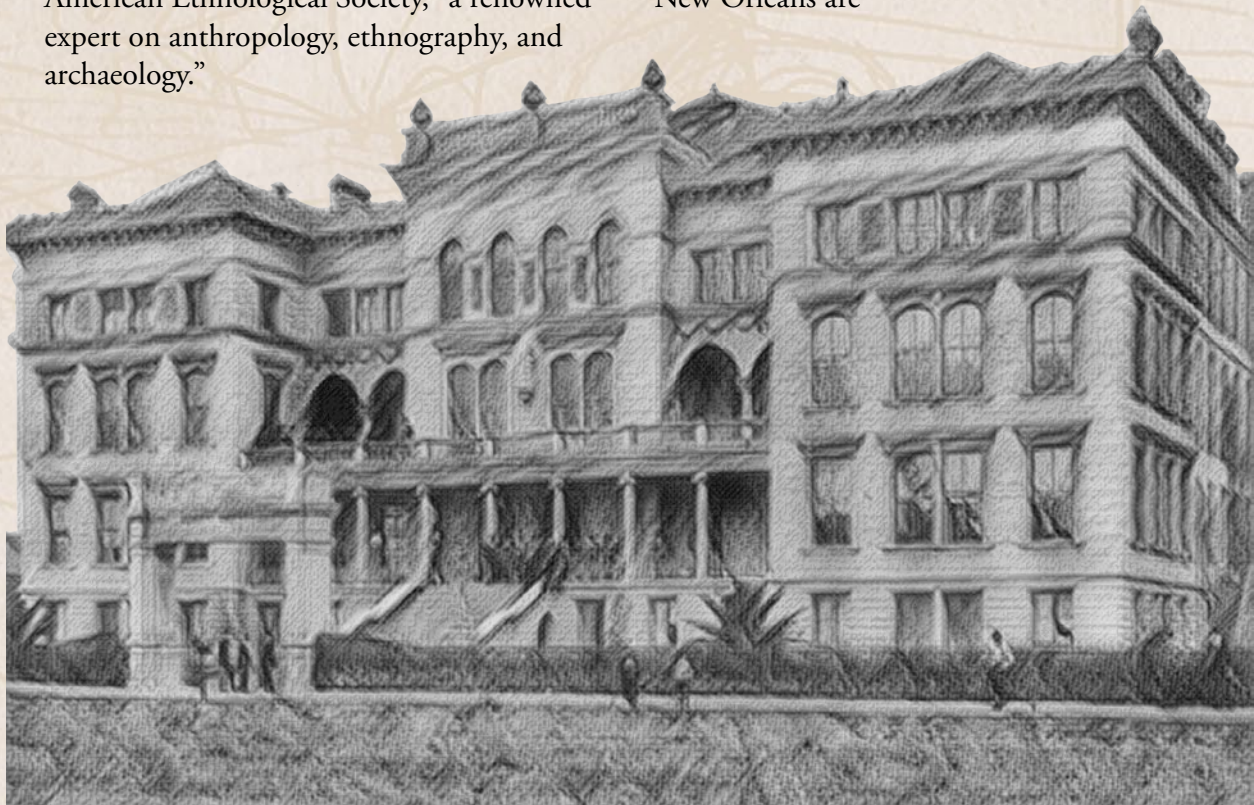
- He is proud of his membership in the American Ethnological Society, "a renowned expert on anthropology, ethnography, and archaeology."

- "The Crow Man murders? Fifteen years ago, just before the War. Ritualistic, I thought at the time."
- He knows nothing else about the case but offers to do some research and suggests the PCs check back with him in a day or two.

GM's NOTE. Professor Gibbons represents a safety valve for you and your players — one we suggest you use infrequently to maintain the agency of the investigators. If the PCs have exhausted their options or are at an impasse, a visit to Gibbons can get them back on track after a suitable delay in time, generally a half day.

Location 5. *Pounding the Pavement*

Sometimes the best way to gather information is to wear out some shoe leather and canvas the neighborhood. The streets of New Orleans are





broad, pungent, and nearly always occupied by folks going about their business. They are friendly, amenable to graft of drink or coin, and well versed in the darker side of the Crescent City. GMs are encouraged to mix and match information as needed between locations to fit the PCs' actions.

FRENCH QUARTER

All manner of folk, commerce, and entertainment are found in the Quarter. Few places are more suited to gathering rumors, innuendo, and getting the pulse of the people than those teeming streets filled with inebriated folks, the predators making their living off them, and the observers in the shadows.

The children, homeless, and doxies of New Orleans are considered nothing more than scenery, when they're thought of at all. They go about their business with their eyes and ears open, and their mouths shut. If properly motivated, their safety assured, and a rapport created, they can be a fount of insight.

DEVELOPMENT. PCs succeeding on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check may learn one of the following from the folks in the Quarter:

- **BASIL/QUEENIE.** As detailed under *French Market and Shops* (see below), though instead of excited gossip the news is fearful and dread-inducing.
- **NOSY STRANGERS.** "A poor lady was asking 'bout her missing sister. She had candy corn, you got any?" They know her name is Tracy, and can provide a good enough description to confirm that she is the woman described in *Day 3. Butchery on Bienville on page 45*.
- **RHYME OF THE CROW MAN.** Everyone on the streets knows the Crow Man rhyme (see sidebar) that the children sing to scare each other. Alternatively, characters who grew up in New Orleans and make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check know the rhyme and that it's about Thomas "Teeters" Watts.

Rhyme of the Crow Man

*Teeters totters, Crow Man fodder,
But got away from the fray
He broke his head an' went to bed –
Stayin' there night 'n day.*

*On tithe of five, the stars arrive,
Crow Man comes, will Totts succumb?
Teeters totter, poor old rotter,
Ambler, babbler, ain't none dafter.*

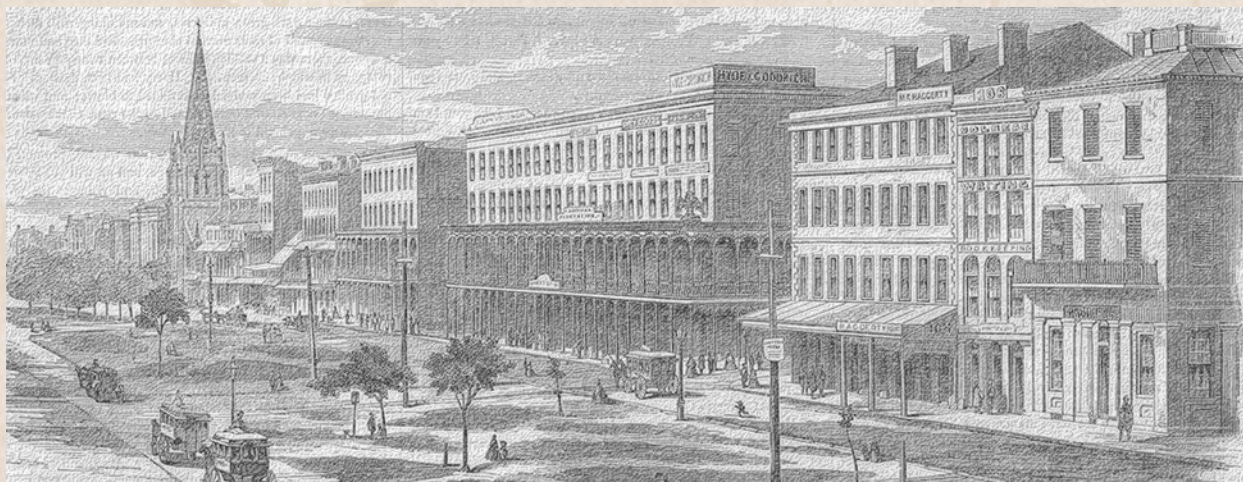
- **UNUSUAL THINGS.** "Look 'round, it's all unusual." If pressed they admit that there have been fewer rats lately. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check reminds a PC that crows often eat small mammals.

FRENCH MARKET AND SHOPS

The French Market is one of the best places to pick up gossip, as anyone who's been in the city for more than a few months knows. It consists of several buildings on the Levee near Jackson Square. Representatives from every nation and social class are present in the motley crowd shopping there.

DEVELOPMENT. PCs succeeding on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check may learn one of the following:

- **THE CROW MAN.** "Ain't no man at all. Malice given form by hoodoo." The speaker makes it clear they've said all they will on the subject.
- **SECRET SOCIETIES.** "If they's one thing we got it's clubs and secrets!" If the PC exceeded their check by at least 2, they add, "Some of folks just having fun, but others..." an involuntary shudder passes through them before continuing, "let's just say it's best to mind your manners. Never know who's watching, listening, or remembering. Their reach is long, maybe beyond the grave."



- **BASIL/QUEENIE.** “Monsieur Basil. A lovely person. I’ve not seen them for days.” If asked about Queenie, or the PC exceeds their check by 2, they add the following, “What a delicious scandal. Can you imagine!” the speaker exclaims with breathless excitement. “You didn’t hear it from me, but Queenie always did attract the jealous types.”
- **MAZIE.** “Ms. Miley? Not a woman to be trifled with. She’d sell out her momma to get what she wants. I expect that’ll catch up with her at some point. It always does.” PCs who exceeded their check by at least 2 also learn, “I hear she’s mixed up with dangerous folk.”

The children of New Orleans spend much of their time roaming, playing, and — for some — living on its cobbled streets. Their laughter, games, and shenanigans cannot be missed. In light of recent events the Crow Man rhyme (see sidebar), something they’ve likely heard countless times before, takes on new meaning.

Location 6. *Teeters Watts’ House*

Thomas “Teeters” Watts lives at 113 Bayou Road. Characters can learn this information from the city directory in *Location 2. City Library* on page 49.

Boarded up windows, badly overgrown garden, peeling paint, and an air of disrepair indicate either vacancy or a tenant with other concerns on their mind.

Watts inherited his childhood home from his parents upon their death. He became a recluse — after the attack 15 years ago — living off his meager savings coupled with help from local charities. He won’t answer the door under any circumstances, though a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) checks confirms someone is home.

DEVELOPMENT. The door can be unlocked with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools, or forced open (DC 12 Strength check). The home is full of putrescent trash, rotting furniture, and walls spotted with black mold. A trail through the refuse leads to Watts’ room where he’s found cowering beneath the covers of an old iron-framed bed in the back room.

The years since his attack have not been kind to poor Teeters Watts (see *Appendix B, page 64*, as professor with Sanity 8). Wisps of dank, stringy hair frame his gaunt face, causing him to look much older than his 45 years. When found, he whimpers, “Tithe of five! Tithe of five!” over and over again.





Finding Teeters Early

For groups finding Teeters early in the adventure the GM has the option of having the Crow Man visit them that evening. If driven off, the Crow Man may still claim Tracy Sommers (if he hasn't already).

Teeters is irrevocably insane from his ordeals and subsequent self-imposed exile. PCs from an appropriate background may attempt a DC 14 Intelligence (Medicine) check or a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm him into coherence. On a success Teeters answers questions truthfully; on a failure they are unable to reach his cracked mind. An insane Teeters will answer questions posed to him, however prior to answering each question Teeters must succeed on a DC 10 Sanity check or his response is unintelligible.



- **CROW MAN.** "He's no man. Malice given form. A harbinger." Watts' knowledge of the Crow Man is limited to his interactions with the aberration, and the belief that the Onyx Confederacy controls it.
- **GRIS-GRIS.** "Stolen! Them bastards at the Onyx Confederacy took it!" Teeters has no evidence to support his theory, however he is convinced the Crow Man is linked to the Onyx Confederacy, and was sent after him for leaving their society. "That's why I stay here. Hiding like a hare in its den."
- **LEAVING.** Watts will not leave his home for anyone or anything. Forcing him from his room renders him inert and catatonic, muttering, "Tithe of five" in a hoarse whisper.

- **MURDERS OF '59.** "That's when I left the Onyx Confederacy, after the fourth. They's gearing up for something and I wanted no part of it."
- **MURDERS NOW.** "Back to finish what 'e started. Mark my words. Waiting for me all this time, an' now he's after me."
- **SECRET SOCIETIES.** "Was a member; well kind of, all in good fun. Odd chaps, not my lot." If asked exactly what led to his departure he shudders visibly at the thought, going even paler. "Just say they found a new use for all the tramps." His fractured mind has expunged the name of the society from his memory. "I should know! But it won't come."

• **TATTOO.** "Those are for the faithful, not the likes of me." Teeters did not earn a tattoo or learn more than rumors about them. He thinks it's for protection. If an elder sign is described to Teeters he can confirm it's the same symbol.

- **TITHE OF FIVE.** "Heard it once. Chilled me to the bone. Never forget it." He goes on to repeat the couplet which he believes predicts the Crow Man's gathering of five gifts for an unknowable purpose.

Crow man rives, a tithe of five The stars arrive, with dark revive

- **VOODOO/PROTECTION.** He clutches at his chest, making himself even smaller than before. "Powerful workings from Madame Marie. She saved my life." In a vomitous burst of frantic words Teeters tells how the Crow Man attacked him, and had him dead to rights until it saw the gris-gris. "Next thing I know I hears hundreds of wings flapping, birds screeching, and he's gone."



Location 7. Marie Laveau's House

Marie Laveau's house is 152 Rue St. Ann, at the corner of Bourbon Street in the French Quarter.

Five shuttered doors — the leftmost and rightmost paired with a narrow set of stairs — fill the front of the elegant home, easily the most beautiful in the Quarter. The shutters on the far right are open to reveal a door.

Madame Laveau's home is well maintained, in perfect repair, and painted the steely grey of rain-laden clouds trimmed in white. Each "door" is framed in identical trim and lavish crown moulding around closed shutters of darker grey. The bookend shutters hide doors, and the other three windows. Only one set of shutters is open.

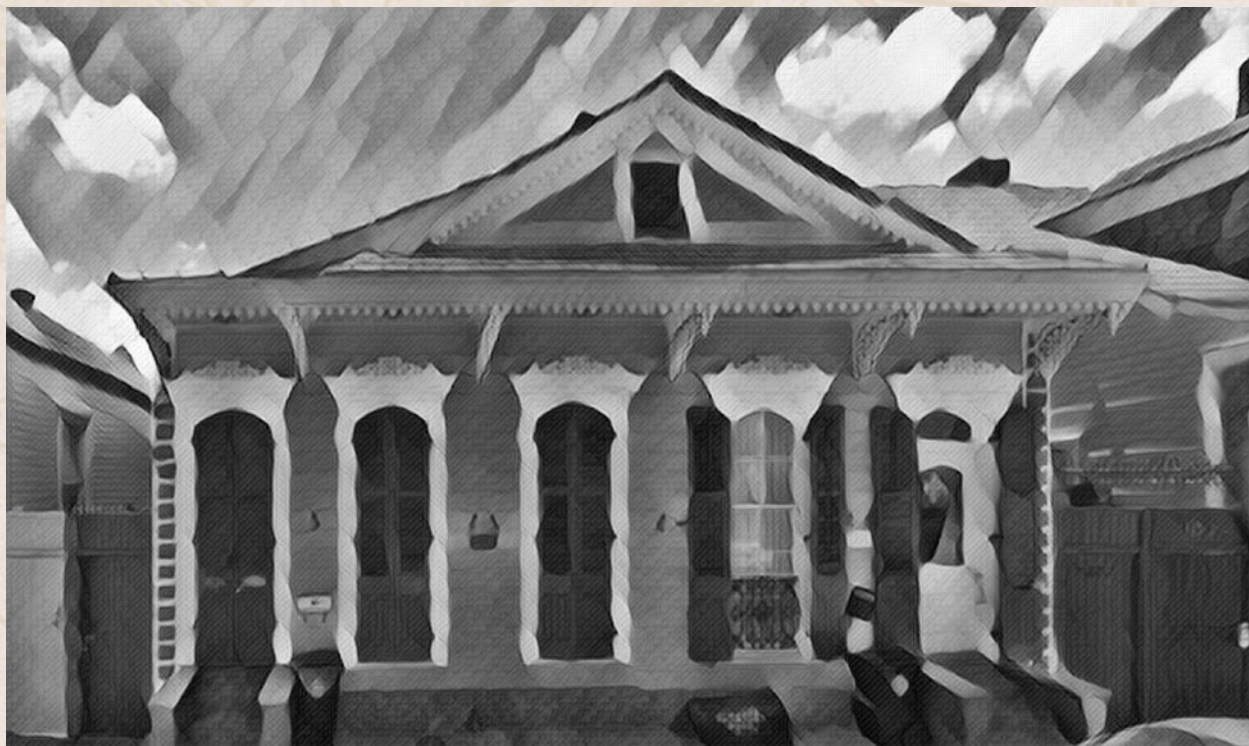
PCs knocking on the door are greeted by a woman with wary eyes, guarded countenance, and a polite, "May I help you?"

Madame Laveau

Madame Marie Laveau's life and legacy will be the subject of upcoming sourcebooks and adventures. In the context of this scenario she should be portrayed as a mysterious, powerful woman whose subtle influence exceeds that of almost anyone else in the Crescent City. She is universally respected and feared by allies and enemies alike.

DEVELOPMENT. The woman insists the home belongs to "Widow Paris." Investigators mentioning Laveau or that they would like to consult with her are asked, "And who would be calling for the Priestess?" and after a short pause, "Were she available."

PCs revealing their names to the woman, who introduces herself as Philomene, are allowed into the small foyer, asked to wait a moment, and she quickly returns with a small bag for each investigator. "Mama left these





for you. Have you anything from the creature you wish to be protected from?" If the PCs have crow feathers, she places them into the bags before sealing and handing them to the investigators. PCs looking into the bag see clippings of hair that look exactly like their own.

If the PCs lie about their identities, have them make a DC 14 Charisma (Deception) group check. On a success, they are told, "Never heard of you," before the door is shut in their faces. On a failure, Philomene chuckles and says, "You sure 'bout that? Seem a little

confused. Care to try again?" the last sentence containing no trace of humor.

The charms are a gift to be accepted or refused as they see fit. If accepted the PCs are told, "When you're called, you'd best answer." Philomene excuses herself, and will not answer any other questions under any circumstances.

COMPLICATIONS. If required, the above interactions can be repeated on the following day. Attempts by the PCs to forcibly enter the home are interrupted immediately by a passing pair of patrolling constables (as Toughs, see *Appendix B, page 64*).

Gris-Gris

Wondrous item, rare

Gris-gris are personal protective charms of limited and specific power. A piece of skin, fingernails, hair, or the like is placed into a pouch with other esoteric ingredients and a ritual is enacted. They are only effective for whomever the components were taken from. Gris-gris come in countless shapes, sizes, and potencies.

The gris-gris given to the PCs have the following properties:

- *Attacks by aberrations against the bearer of the gris-gris are made with a -2 penalty.*
- *If a crow feather is added to the gris-gris, they gain the following properties:*
 - *All attacks made by the Crow Man when it is within 5 feet of the gris-gris are made with a -2 penalty. If two or more gris-gris are within range of the Crow Man his attacks are at disadvantage.*
 - *The Crow Man cannot attack the wearer of the gris-gris without first succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw.*
 - *The gris-gris lose their potency after one week.*

CONCLUSION

CROW MAN THWARTED. Characters that thwart the Crow Man gain 1 level of experience, and the ire of the cult responsible for his emergence. They may also have gained an ally in Marie Laveau.

CROW MAN SUCCEEDS. Investigators unable to stop the Crow Man learn through the contacts they've made that the attacks ceased with the death of Teeters Watts. PCs that learned of the Crow Man's connection to the Onyx Brotherhood's ritual must succeed a DC 12 Sanity saving throw to avoid loss of Sanity due to the realization that they have failed and cleared the path for some greater, though unknown, evil.

APPENDIX A: NEW ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS — THE CHIEF CITY OF Louisiana, the sixteenth oldest city in the United States, and the largest to the south of St. Louis — is situated on the Mississippi, 106 miles above its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. The great bulk of the city lies on the left bank of the river, which at this point is a quarter to a half mile wide and makes the bend from which New Orleans derives its appellation of “Crescent City”.

Brief History

The site of New Orleans was surveyed in 1717 by De la Tour; it was settled in 1718, but abandoned in consequence of overflows, storms, and sickness; was resettled in 1723, held by the French till 1763, then by the Spanish till 1800, and by the French again till 1803, when it was sold to the United States as part of the “Louisiana Purchase.” It was incorporated as a city in 1804, and in 1864 was made the capital of the state.

Municipal Limits

A great part of the city is below the level of the river at high water and is protected by a levee or embankment, 15 ft. wide and 14 ft. high. The municipal limits, which extend on the north to Lake Pontchartrain, enclose an area of 350 square miles, but about three-fourths of this is uninhabitable swamp. The city is laid out with considerable regularity, and many of the chief streets are wide and shaded with trees.

A City of Villas and Cottages

New Orleans is in many ways one of the most picturesque and interesting cities in America, owing to the survival of the buildings, manners, and customs of its original French and Spanish

inhabitants. It has been described as “a city of villas and cottages, of umbrageous gardens, intersected by unpaved streets, shaded by forest trees, haunted by song-birds, fragrant with a wealth of flowers that never fails a day in the year, and abundant, in season, with fruit — the fig, the plum, the pomegranate, the orange.”

The French Quarter

Among the foreign-looking features of the French Quarter are the walls of adobe, the lime-washed stucco façades, the jalousies, the gratings, the small-paned windows, the portes-cochères, the arcades and balconies, the tiled roofs, and the inner courts — the whole embosomed in bright-flowering semi-tropical plants. Most of the streets bear French or Spanish names; and indeed, the whole street nomenclature of New Orleans is picturesque.

Important Thoroughfares

The most important business-thoroughfare is Canal Street, which runs at right angles to the river and divides the French Quarter, or “Vieux Carre”, on the north-east, from the New City, or American Quarter, on the south-west. The finest residences are on St. Charles Avenue. The estimated population in 1870 was about 190,000.

Accommodation

Good hotels charge \$4–\$5 per night and include the St. Charles Hotel, the St. James, and The City Hotel. Average hotels charge \$1–\$2 per night, and include Hotel Grunewald and the Cosmopolitan Hotel. Boarding houses abound throughout New Orleans, with rates from \$5 a



week. During the Carnival a special bureau is established to give information about lodgings.

Restaurants

Most of the hotels mentioned above include restaurants which serve dinner and wine for about \$1.50 per person. Other options include Moreau's, Victor's, John's, and Antoine's. Cafés abound in the French Quarter. The markets of New Orleans are singularly well stocked with game, fish, fruit, and vegetables, and its restaurants have a good reputation.

Transport

Railways connect New Orleans to other major cities, while steamers ply the Mississippi to all points, as well as New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Havana (fare \$40–\$60). Omnibuses attend the arrival of trains and steamers and convey passengers to hotels (fare 50¢). Omnibuses also meet the principal trains (fare 25¢). Horse-cars afford easy access to all parts of the city (fare 5–7¢), while carriages charge about \$2 per hour.

Amusements

Popular places of amusement include the French Opera House, Academy of Music, St. Charles Theatre, the Grand Opera House, and the Varieties Theatre.

Commerce and Industry

New Orleans, as the outlet of the greatest agricultural valley in the world, is essentially a commercial city, and its foreign export trade is very important. It is one of the largest cotton-markets in the world and also exports large quantities of sugar, molasses, rice, pork, corn, wool, timber, hides, and tobacco.

Points of Interest

The following points are of interest to the tourist.

- The famous **CELEBRATION OF MARDI GRAS** (Fat Tuesday), observed here with great splendor, is, perhaps, the most picturesque festival in America. The city is taken formal possession of by Rex, the King of the Carnival; and the revels of his retinue, the Knights of Momus, the Mystic Crew of Comus, and other societies are of the liveliest description. The processions are very elaborate. Those who mean to visit New Orleans at this season should secure rooms in advance.
- The **CUSTOM HOUSE** is an enormous granite building in Canal Street, near the river, containing the Post Office (on the ground floor).
- The **CATHEDRAL OF ST. LOUIS** is a good specimen of the Spanish-Creole style, built in 1792–94 on the site of the first church in Louisiana. It contains paintings, archives, and interesting tombs.
- In **LAFAYETTE SQUARE** we find the City Hall (including the State and City Libraries), the Academy of Music, the First Presbyterian Church, and the Odd Fellows Hall.
- The **UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA** is in Common St., near Baronne. It occupies the entire front of the block, and possesses a good library. Only two departments, law and medicine, have been organized, but these are of a very high order, and are largely attended.
- The **CEMETERIES OF NEW ORLEANS** are among its recognized sights, owing to the fact that the swampy nature of the soil prevents the digging of graves and requires the bodies to be interred in mounds above ground. Their magnolias and oaks are also picturesque. They include Cypress Grove Cemetery, the Metairie Cemetery, Greenwood, and the old French graveyards.



Names and Occupations

Following are some common names and occupations found in New Orleans during this era.

OCCUPATIONS. baker, barber, bartender, blacksmith, bookkeeper, bricklayer, broker, builder, butcher, cabinetmaker, carpenter, cigarmaker, cisternmaker, clerk, collector, collier, confectioner, constable, cook, cooper, coppersmith, dressmaker, driver, druggist, engineer, gardener, gasfitter, grocer, hostler, laborer, lamplighter, lawyer, machinist, molder, oyster farmer, painter, peddler, physician, piano tuner, pilot, plasterer, porter, printer, sailor, shoemaker, steward, tailor, teacher, tinsmith, waiter.

FIRST NAMES. Alfred, Amelia, Ann, Arthur, Augusta, Barbara, Bernard, Bridget, Caroline, Catherine, Cecelia, Charles, David, Edward, Elizabeth, Ellen, Emily, Eugene, Eugenia, Frank, Frederick, George, Hannah, Henry, Ida, James, Jane, John, Joseph, Josephine, Lavinia, Louis, Margaret, Maria, Mary, Matilda, Matthew, Michael, Patrick, Paul, Peter, Philip, Richard, Robert, Sarah, Sophia, Theresa, Thomas, Wilhelmina, William.

SURNAMES. Aaron, Abadie, Apffel, Arbo, Armand, Baptiste, Baquie, Barbarin, Barbe, Bares, Barker, Barlow, Barnes, Barnett, Beaulieu, Bernard, Brownlee, Constant, Conway, Cook, Cooper, Cullen, Culligan, Cummings, Cunningham, Fitzpatrick, Fitzsimmons, Flynn, Gauthreaux, Gautier, Gavin, Gibbons, Jackson, Jacob, Jacobs, Jacques, Jacquet, Kesler, Lyons, Manson, Noel, Nolan, Nolting, Noonan, Planchard, Quirk, Seiler, Tierney, Ulmer, Whitney.

(Source: Baedeker's *United States and Appleton's Handbook of American Cities*)

APPENDIX B: CREATURES & NPCs

Crow Man

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

“Beware the crows. They ‘member your face, hold grudges tighter than any hangman’s knot, and to trespass against one is to anger ‘em all.”

Tall, gaunt, and always bathed in the shadows, descriptions of the Crow Man rarely include specific details.

What is “known” is that he is male, clad in a suit of plain, rough, black fabric — popular opinion is that it was sewn from the stolen shrouds of the dead. He carries a small blade — a straight razor or physician’s scalpel — that he uses to maim, torture, and mutilate his victims. His most distinguishing feature is the bowler hat that inexplicably conceals his face in a web of inky shadows.

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +5, Stealth +8, Survival +3

Damage Resistances psychic, piercing damage from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Creole French, English, French

Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)



Fade. As an action the Crow Man can fade into an available shadow, becoming incorporeal. Additionally, he is invisible as long as he remains within darkness or shadows. While faded he can move and perceive his surroundings as normal, though he cannot interact with solid objects until using a bonus action to end the effect.

Perpetual. The Crow Man cannot be permanently destroyed while the ritual is active. He reforms the following evening at dusk even if the PCs somehow manage to defeat him.

Actions

Multiattack. The Crow Man makes two scalpel attacks.

Scalpel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d3 + 4) slashing damage. If the attack exceeds the target’s AC by 5 or more the target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or have their Achilles tendon partially severed, reducing their speed by half until it is healed with 3d4 days of rest.



Detective

Medium human, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 8 (2d6 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Investigation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Any one language (usually English)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Revolver (.38). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Librarian

Medium human, any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Any two of the following: History,

Investigation, Nature, Religion, or Medicine

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages (usually including English)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Assist. Whenever the librarian makes an ability check that allows them to add their proficiency bonus while they are within a library (or similar), they can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.



Murder of Crows

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 24 (7d8 - 7)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny crow. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Beaks. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 3 piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Neophyte

Medium human, any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Arcana +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually English)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Zealous. The neophyte has advantage on saving throws against being frightened while on cult business.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.





Professor

Medium human, any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Any three of the following: History, Investigation, Nature, Religion, or Medicine
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any two languages (usually including English)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Expert. A professor applies double their proficiency bonus to any two skills they possess.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Tough

Medium human, any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Any one language (usually English)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX C: PRE-GENERATED PCs

Borden, Eustacia

2ND LEVEL ANTIQUARIAN

Medium humanoid (Lengian)

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Sanity 19 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +2, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +2, History +2, Insight +4,
Perception +4, Persuasion +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft.

Languages English, French, Greek, Latin,
Lengian, Spanish

Savings \$1,100

Income \$300/month

Equipment Fine clothes, watch, derringer

Otherworldly. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Darkvision. Your Lengian blood gives you superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Weapons

Derringer. +4 to hit, 1d6+2 piercing (range 10/30)



BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY

Your parents are affluent. Your father accrued modest wealth in New Orleans after the War Between the States, and subsequently added to it the sizable dowry from your mother's family, who have been members of New Orleans society for generations. Your mother's gifts extended beyond the material to include preternatural night vision and knowledge of the eldritch, the latter of which was passed on to you as stories about the magically monstrous Plains of Leng.

Since hearing of this other world, you have spent countless hours learning all you can about it. You now know that great evil is threatening to break in upon us all, and that knowledge is the best weapon we have — alongside your trusty derringer, of course.

**Crane, Russ**

2ND LEVEL SOLDIER

*Medium humanoid (human)***Armor Class** 12**Hit Points** 14**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Sanity 11 (+0)**Saving Throws** Str +6, Con +4**Skills** Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Proficiencies Mason's tools

Languages English, Hindi, Punjabi**Savings** \$700**Income** \$100/month**Equipment** Ordinary clothes, revolver (.45) with ammunition, brass knuckles, hunting knife

Star Athlete. You have a limited well of stamina you can draw on to protect yourself. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to $1d10 + 2$. Once used this feature can't be used again until completing a short rest.

Weapons

Revolver (.45). +4 to hit, $2d6 + 2$ piercing (range 40/120)

Brass Knuckles. +6 to hit, $1d2 + 4$ bludgeoning

Hunting Knife. +6 to hit, $1d4 + 4$ slashing

**BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY**

You are a Civil War veteran — infantry, 31st Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers — and a member of the force that occupied New Orleans in the War. When fighting stopped, you chose to stay, having fallen in love with a local. These days you work as a bricklayer, but with a taste for the finer things in life and, coupled with a flexible morality that values the end result, more than the means to attain it.

During the war, you saw strange things in the swamps, things that cannot be easily explained, that ignited a fascination with the occult.



François, Edward

2ND LEVEL DILETTANTE

Medium humanoid (human)

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Sanity 19 (+4)

Saving Throws Cha +5, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +5, Insight +4,
Persuasion +7

Proficiencies Forgery Kit

Languages English, French, Italian

Savings \$5,000

Income \$500/month

Equipment Fine clothes, notebook, pencil,
sword cane

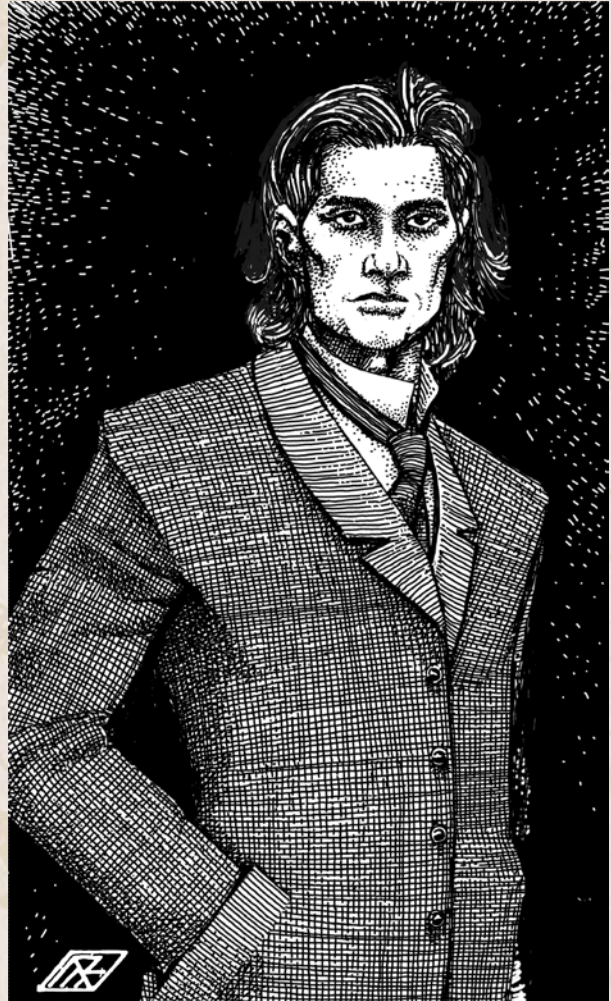
Audacious Charmer. You add your Wisdom modifier to any Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make (this adjustment is included in the above skill bonuses).

Weapons

Sword Cane. +2 to-hit, 1d6 piercing damage

BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY

Your family has been in New Orleans for generations and have always been supremely wealthy. You inherited a sizable fortune from your grandfather, and now you live in an attractive mansion in the French Quarter. You



want for nothing, you never have, and see no reason for that to change.

While studying your family history, you discovered hints of outlandish phenomena and claims: an estranged great aunt with the so-called power to read minds, a distant cousin whose eyes pierced the night as easily as during high noon, and a disconcerting number of children lost to the nearby swamps. You are fascinated by such esoterica and familial mysteries, and are obsessed with learning more.

**Minnie**

2ND LEVEL ARTISAN

*Medium humanoid (human)***Armor Class** 12**Hit Points** 12**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Sanity 8 (-1)**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Wis +2**Skills** Nature +5, Insight +2, Religion +5,
Sleight of Hand +4**Proficiencies** Artisan's Tool (Paints), Disguise Kit**Languages** Aklo, English, French, Spanish**Savings** \$100**Income** \$30/month**Equipment** Ordinary clothes, paint set, hunting knife

Whimpering Minion. Your place is at the side of your leader, and when acting on their behalf your resolved is strengthened. At the end of a long rest you choose a creature as your major-domo. While within 60 feet of that creature or acting on its direct orders, you have advantage on saves against charms, fear effects, and other mind-affecting effects. If the object of your adoration is killed or incapacitated you must succeed on a DC 12 Sanity check or gain a transient insanity.

Weapons

Hunting Knife. +3 to hit, 1d4 + 1 slashing**BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY**

You grew up in poverty on the southern outskirts of New Orleans as the child of a French mother and an American father. You love to paint, ever since you were little girl, especially nature scenes. Urged equally by hunger and mischief your nimble fingers discovered a talent for theft, much to the ire of your devout Catholic mother.

As a teenager, you and your brother ransacked an abandoned villa when a tentacled monstrosity emerged from the shadows and took him. Your babbling, fantastical story led to a stint in the local Insane Asylum, and a meek demeanor that persists despite the years since your treatments.

These days, you maintain a modest living as a painter and model, but you've never forgotten your brother, or the terror that took him. Your free time is spent looking for answers, and always with a knife nearby.



Weiss, Mabel

2ND LEVEL DOCTOR

Medium humanoid (human)

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 10

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Sanity 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +5, Con +2

Skills Investigation +5, Medicine +5, Nature +5, Perception +3

Proficiencies First Aid Kit, Chemistry Set

Languages English, German, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish

Savings \$700

Income \$300/month

Equipment Fine clothes, first aid kit, scalpel

Gifted Healer. You are skilled at administering first aid to the injured. You may expend 1 use of a first aid kit and 10 minutes to tend the wounds of a creature and restore 1d4 + 2 hit points to it. Once a creature has benefited from this feat, it can't do so again until completing a short rest.

Weapons

Scalpel. +3 to hit, 1d3 + 1 slashing

BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY

You came to New Orleans from Germany as a young girl living in an affluent neighborhood. From a young age you were recognized as extremely bright, a trait enhanced by the excellent schools you attended. Your science (especially chemistry) and a natural compassion for those in distress led you to train as a doctor



at the Medical College in the University of New Orleans.

You've always been observant, and have noticed strange happenings around the city lately, events that appear inexplicable. An influx of patients coming to you with stories of ghosts and monsters have heightened your fears and concerns of the unknown. As a person of science, you're not sure what to believe; your patients certainly believe they are telling the truth, but you are determined to get to the bottom of it and help them.

**Wells, Walter**

2ND LEVEL DETECTIVE

*Medium humanoid (human)***Armor Class** 11**Hit Points** 12**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Sanity 12 (+1)**Saving Throws** Str +1, Int +5**Skills** Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +3**Proficiencies** Thieves' Tools**Languages** Creole, English, French, German, Spanish**Savings** \$400**Income** \$70/month**Equipment** Ordinary clothes, revolver (.38) with ammunition, handcuffs

Ardent Scholar. You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks made to find information in newspapers, journals, or books. You can accurately recall anything you've read in the last 3 months.

Weapons

Revolver (.38). +3 to hit, 2d4 + 1 piercing (range 40/120)

**BACKGROUND/PERSONALITY**

You are a former farmer and Civil War veteran who joined the Shreveport police department after demobilization. One evening while on patrol, you found yourself tangling with an indescribable horror. The fight cost you an eye and left you with a permanent limp. With your body no longer able to walk the beat, you focused on your mind, and soon earned your detective's badge. You searched surreptitiously for years, but it was clear that the entity had moved on — signs point to New Orleans. You've surrendered your badge and given in to your desire to find, capture, and bring to justice the nameless creature you encountered years ago.

APPENDIX D: HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Hotel Receipt



Handout 2: Train Ticket



Handout 3: Elder Sign



WHISPERS IN THE DARK

NAME	LEVEL	BACKGROUND	ANCESTRY	ALIGNMENT	EXPERIENCE
STRENGTH _____ ()		<i>Proficiency Bonus</i> <i>Inspiration</i> ☐ <i>Saving Throws</i> <i>AC</i> <i>Initiative</i> ☐ <i>Athletics</i> <i>Speed</i> <i>Passive Perception</i>		<i>Personality Traits</i>	
DEXTERITY _____ ()		<i>Total HP</i> <i>Current HP</i> <i>Hit Dice</i> <i>Total</i> <i>Used</i>		<i>Ideals</i>	
CONSTITUTION _____ ()		<i>Death Saves</i> <i>Successes</i> ☐ ☐ ☐ <i>Failures</i> ☐ ☐ ☐		<i>Bonds</i>	
INTELLIGENCE _____ ()		ATTACKS		<i>Flaws</i>	
☐ <i>Saving Throws</i> ☐ <i>Arcana</i> ☐ <i>History</i> ☐ <i>Investigation</i> ☐ <i>Nature</i> ☐ <i>Religion</i>		<i>Name</i> <i>Attack Bonus</i> <i>Damage Type</i>			
WISDOM _____ ()				<i>Features and Traits</i>	
☐ <i>Saving Throws</i> ☐ <i>Animal Handling</i> ☐ <i>Insight</i> ☐ <i>Medicine</i> ☐ <i>Perception</i> ☐ <i>Survival</i>					
CHARISMA _____ ()					
☐ <i>Saving Throws</i> ☐ <i>Deception</i> ☐ <i>Intimidation</i> ☐ <i>Performance</i> ☐ <i>Persuasion</i>					
SANITY _____ ()		EQUIPMENT			
☐ <i>Saving Throws</i>					
LANGUAGES					

WHISPERS IN THE DARK

AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	EYES	SKIN	HAIR

Emergency Contact

Do Not Resuscitate ☐

Organ Donor ☐

HISTORY:-

PERSONAL PROPERTY:-

APPEARANCE:-

ADDITIONAL FEATURES and TRAITS:-



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