



SAVAGE TALES of Horror



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of Horror

Volume I

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FACE SNATCHERS

By Preston DuBose

Hundreds of years ago two witches named Mena and Vedis terrorized any who dared intrude upon their dark forest home. Many brave heroes died trying to vanquish the seemingly immortal crones, but it took a cunning villager to finally trick the witches into centuries of imprisonment.

Those centuries have come to an end. Near the hamlet of Baden-Loffenbach in the Black Forest, crops are withering, milk spoiling, children falling ill, and families in outlying areas disappearing altogether. Mena and Vedis are once again free. Having enslaved all the outlying farmers and shepherds by magically stealing their faces, the greedy crones are now prepared to punish Baden-Loffenbach itself.

The adventure begins with an investigation into accusations of witchcraft inside Baden-Loffenbach, but a frightening raid against the hamlet steals the initiative from the wanderers. The raiders' trail leads into the dark forest beyond the village, where they are attacked by the witches' terrifying faceless slaves. Only by crawling into their dark, earthen warren can the party rescue the witches' latest victims and put a stop the wicked face snatchers.

BACKGROUND

Long ago there lived two witches — sisters, in fact — who made their home deep in the untamed wilds of the great Black Forest in Europe. Although their exact ages and origin have been lost to history, we know Mena and Vedis enjoyed decades of isolation broken only by the occasional game of tormenting lost woodsmen.

Yet as time wore on, Man intruded deeper and deeper into the woods the witches claimed as their own. In turn, the sisters heaped greater and greater cruelties upon interlopers. Although tales of the wicked forest witches frightened away most people, others — those perhaps filled with more bravery or foolhardiness than most — were drawn to the forbidden woods to try their hand at ridding the world of the evil. Dashing swordsmen stormed the witches' modest stone cottage, mysterious sorceresses lashed out with arcane power, and men of faith wielded holy artifacts meant to cast out evil.

Wonder No More, Wanderers

This tale of horror is written for Wanderers following the path of Kane. Ideally, you'll want the Solomon Kane setting book as well as *Savage Worlds* for the Dramatic Task rules. For other settings, trade the Magick skill for Spellcasting and use the alternate powers *confusion* (for curse), *smite* (for viper weapon), and *light/obscure* (for light). Assign 20 Power Points to the witches and their familiars or use the No Power Points setting rule in *Savage Worlds*.

Without fail the seemingly immortal crones dispatched each new adventurer in ever more cruel and elaborate ways.

That is, until a poor young villager, lost in the forest, stumbled upon the witches' cottage while they were away harvesting ingredients for their magic. Within the sisters' home he saw sights both wondrous and terrible, from a flying broom to furniture made of human bones. "Poor" is not the same as "foolish" and the young man, Fritz, quickly realized his dangerous predicament.

When the witches returned, they found their cottage ransacked. After spending their rage upon the already disheveled house, Mena noticed footprints leading away. The sisters set out after the tracks, ready to invent all manner of new torments once they caught the fleeing intruder. To their surprise, the footprints led merely to their own nearby root cellar, from which the furious Vedis heard rustling. As soon as the witches climbed through the entrance Fritz leapt from his hiding spot, slammed the door shut, and wedged a board against the handle.

This alone would have been less than an inconvenience to the sisters, but the cunning Fritz had other surprises in store. In their anger at the ransacked home, Mena and Vedis failed to notice the items Fritz had taken. First, the rustling noise came from the witches' own flying broom he'd set free to batter about the cramped cellar. While the crones fought to subdue the quick-moving broom, the young villager hastily glued the door to its frame using a jar of charmed tree sap (the same

they had used to snare many an adventurer). Finally, Fritz produced the contents he'd found in a clay pot marked "cage root." What poured forth was no root but rather acorns fairly tingling with magic. One of these he buried in the mound of earth above the witches' heads. Within moments the seed sprouted into a strong sapling while below the surface its roots enveloped the root cellar like a prison.

It was this last item which sealed the witches' fate. The enchanted white oak proved impervious to Mena and Vedis' powers, imprisoning the witches and rendering the forest free from their wickedness.

When the poor villager returned to the tiny settlement known as Baden-Loffenbach, few would believe his tale. How could the skinny commoner they'd known their whole lives kill not one, but *two* witches when strapping, brave heroes had failed time and time again? Fritz ended the doubt and scorn by planting another magical acorn in the dirt beside his home. The naysayers fell into a hush as a dozen witnesses saw the acorn sprout into a sapling right before their eyes. Overnight, Fritz became a hero. Although the Black Forest held many other dangers, never in Fritz's lifetime was his village plagued by Mena or Vedis. Nor in his children's lifetime. Nor in their children's lifetimes.

But the generation after that...

Present Day

All living things must end. This is equally true of small things such as people and enormous things such as a magical white oak. After centuries of towering above the forest like a noble's *schloss* (castle), twig by twig, branch by branch, year by year precious life withered from the limbs of the majestic oak. Aged and weak, its slow decline came to an abrupt end under the fury of a storm. When dawn broke upon the uprooted tree, it revealed a wide hole and tunnels extending well below the tree's base. And from within emerged two filthy, gleeful crones and their demonically-animated plant familiars.

The witches had returned and they wanted revenge. Before long, Mena and Vedis ensnared their first victims and stripped them of their essence (their souls, if you will), leaving them enslaved. The witches accomplished this horrific deed by magically peeling away their victim's faces, leaving nothing but smooth, unmarred skin. Once changed, the pitiful,

JOURNEY'S END, ADVENTURE'S BEGINNING

empty husks obediently helped the crones catch even more victims in a widening swath beyond their underground home.

Within weeks, dread and panic smothered the nearby hamlet of Baden-Loffenbach. Brooding villagers traded rumors of crops inexplicably failing, milk spoiling, children falling ill, and families in outlying areas disappearing. More and more often, men in the *kneipe* (tavern) muttered about strange creatures glimpsed in the woods. Soon these stories spread beyond the Black Forest itself, to the ears of the heroes. Baden-Loffenbach needed a witch hunter.

Earlier Today

The witches are no longer satisfied with picking off isolated farmers and woodsmen. This morning while Vedis prepared more of their faceless slaves, Mena entered the village with her familiar to assess its defenses and identify the choicest victims. However, the crone underestimated how quickly fear had already spread in the hamlet. Mena was caught scratching a mark onto the mayor's door, which the paranoid villagers interpreted as a curse or other witch mark. Although she could have easily escaped capture, centuries of idle imprisonment left the witch eager to toy with her victims. Mena did not particularly fear her predicament, knowing her sister will send their faceless at night. She did not anticipate being chained to a post cut from the hamlet's "Witch's Oak" tree which toppled in the same storm as its forest twin. Even with her witchcraft negated, she still expects rescue from her tiny familiar lurking nearby, and she awaits witness to terrible vengeance when the faceless arrive.

The hamlet of Baden-Loffenbach sits nestled more than a day's travel into the Northern Black Forest. The road is little more than a rocky track which sometimes splits and other times fades from view altogether. The path winds up through various passes, down into valleys, across icy cold mountain streams, and back again. Travel is slow going in this densely forested mountain range, in no small part because the ancient forest harbors many dangers — both natural and unnatural. In addition to hazards such as rock falls and treacherous paths, the Black Forest also harbors predators ranging from hungry gray wolves to heartless cutthroats.

As the wanderers descend into the hamlet's small valley, they see an impressive stone church towering above several other buildings. Just in time too, as the mountain ridge already cradles the setting sun in a prelude to dusk. Another 15 minutes of travel brings the heroes to the hamlet's edge. Baden-Loffenbach is home to nearly two dozen families and sits along the shore where a mountain stream widens into a small lake. The valley offers pasture land for sheep and cattle while the stream provides a tiny mill and provides a source of fish. The majority of the hamlet's dwellings are sturdily built of stone and thick timber with roofs of either thatch or slate. The streets, few though they may be, are paved



in cobblestones to protect against the mud of winter thaw.

A barking hound greets the heroes' approach, but oddly no one steps into the lane or peeks from a window to check the fuss. As the wanderers reach the hamlet's first building, the sunset's deep purples and reds bleed away behind the sharp gray mountain ridge and leave the valley in darkness. Allow a Notice roll for the heroes to detect an ominous buzz coming from deeper within the hamlet. With a raise they recognize the sound of a crowd.

"BUUUUURN HER!"

Most of Baden-Loffenbach's population is squeezed into the open square before the stone church whose steeple they spied on their approach. This leaves the heroes free to explore the rest of the village without interruption, should they wish. If the wanderers instead pursue the soft orange glow and sound of the crowd, they find it a quick journey in the modest village.

In the church square, a stout man in his 50s seems to be feeding a mob's anger from his position atop a wooden crate. Although lanterns bathe the square's perimeter in warm light, the leader brandishes a flaming torch of his own to punctuate his speech. In the torch's flickering light, the man's features shift from shadow to red relief.

Beside the crate stands a pitiful-looking elderly woman, bound in heavy chains. She stands upright only by virtue of being chained against a rough timber pole partially buried in the ground at the square's edge. Two burly villagers stand guard nearby while a third, a younger man, stands defiantly between the prisoner and the crowd as if to protect her.

Allow a Notice roll to identify the third man's clothing as the simple robes of a priest. Judging by the shouts of encouragement, most of the crowd seems to favor the older man on the crate, but they seem reluctant to force their way past the young priest.

As those in the mob notice the heroes' presence, the crowd's attention ripples from the standoff to the newcomers. Although the

air still hangs heavy with tension, the crowd seems more wary than antagonistic. At the mob's sudden silence, the blustery man looks about in confusion until he spies the party. He then jumps from his platform and makes his way to the heroes, the crowd parting around his approach.

"I am Mayor Groff. I suppose you're the witch-finders? Well, you're too late. We caught her ourselves. At least you're in time to take over the trial. Maybe you can talk some sense into our young Father Burkhard and let us end this for good."

Whether or not the heroes claim to be the expected witch-finders, they can quickly learn about the woman in chains from the mayor or people standing nearby. They say she is a stranger who was caught casting a curse. In light of the local disappearances and other old signs of witchcraft, catching a crone in the act of devilry makes the case cut and dried.

With a successful Streetwise roll the party can learn more specific information. The woman was caught scribbling a symbol — presumed to be a witch mark — on the door of the Mayor's home. They also learn the town priest doesn't believe in witchcraft and refuses to let them execute the woman. With a raise on the roll, an elderly woman (Frau Schneider) interrupts the conversation.

"Of course she is a witch! Mark my words. The signs are everywhere. She rode in on the big storm a few weeks ago and toppled the Witch's Oak." The old woman points to the silhouette of an enormous tree lying on its side in the grass beyond the cobblestone square. "Everyone knows witches ride the black thunderclouds."

"A week later she cursed Herr Meyer's cattle. The milk spoils as soon as it hits the pail. Even young fools like you know witches spoil milk to starve the young and feast on their tender flesh. I knew the signs, but these young knuckleheads have no respect for their elders. Not like in my day! It wasn't until Herr Hoffman's farm was found empty and the entire family missing that some listened. More vanished,

and some more listened. Finally, little Helga came into town, barefoot and in her nightgown, telling of monsters attacking from the darkness. That's when they listened to me."

Refer to the respective sections below if the wanderers wish to learn more about the Witch Oak or talk to any of the nonplayer characters mentioned above.

TRIAL AND ERROR

Mayor Groff, who wants to execute the old woman, and Father Burkhard, who doesn't, are at an impasse. Willing or not, the villagers of Baden-Loffenbach insist on the strangers taking over and conducting a witch trial. Refer to the sections below as the heroes speak with the mayor, interrogate the prisoner, talk to the priest, or investigate clues (such as the Witch's Oak) mentioned by other villagers. However, the crowd becomes agitated and could even turn on the heroes if they sense the newcomers are stalling. They expect an answer tonight.

Witch's Oak

According to local legend, the Witch's Oak was planted by one of Baden-Loffenbach's early founders to ward off evil. However, the giant oak toppled in a terrible storm a few weeks ago and the hamlet's seniors have been predicting doom ever since.

In truth, the tree grew from the magical acorn young Fritz brought back from the witch's cottage. The true story of the forest witches has mostly faded from local memory except as a bedtime fable.

Mayor Groff's Testimony

The people of the Black Forest are tough, hardy people and Mayor Groff is no exception. As long as the heroes aren't disrespectful, the large, imposing man is eager to share what he knows:

"The trouble began several weeks ago. A family who lived in the forest a half-day's journey from here just vanished. Then a tinkerer disappeared on his way here from another town. At first we blamed cutthroats. But more and more people from beyond Baden-Loffenbach went missing, the tracks always leading back into the forest

before disappearing. More than two dozen people have disappeared and those are only the ones we know of! Then there was Gretchen. The child awoke to strangers in their farmhouse, and they live only a short walk from here. She was the only one who escaped.

"Gretchen tells of an old woman who visited the farm the day before the attack. Even if you do not believe she is a witch, surely you see this old woman is scouting her next victims and sending her agents — be they men or devils — to steal them from their beds.

"And what should I find, but this crone scratching witchcraft on my door? No doubt she was marking the mayor's house as the fiends' next stop. It's lucky I caught her when I did. I scratched out the devil's marks and captured the witch myself. Finally we can be safe in our own homes again."

Captive Testimony

The wanderers are free to examine or question Mena if they wish, although Mayor Groff warns them against listening to the witch's lies. The priest, Father Burkhard, stands nearby and listens to any exchange.

At their approach, the pitiful prisoner cries and begs for mercy, insisting she is innocent.

The closer you near the prisoner, the more pathetic she appears. The old woman's filthy clothing is a patchwork of cloth scraps sewn together into a pauper's dress. From up close, the flickering lantern light reveals trails of snot and tears cutting their way down her unwashed face. Her lips pucker inward like many toothless elders you've seen, but surely those did not have eyes blackened and bruised nearly shut like hers. The old woman slumps in defeat against the rough pole to which she is chained. The people of Baden-Loffenbach have been none too kind to their captive.

"Please, masters. I swear I am no witch! Spare an old woman's life," she sobs. "Fever took my eldest son and his family. I only wanted to beg for a morsel of food on my way east to live with another son."

Mena elaborates on the lie as needed. She claims ignorance of the curse she is accused of casting, instead insisting she was merely standing at the mayor's door waiting to ask for charity.

Father Burkhard

The well-meaning priest seems awfully young to be in charge of his own church. What would normally be a prestigious position for someone of his age might be considered more of a punishment, given the remote location. No Notice roll is required to detect Father Burkhard's agitation, given the mob he has been single-handedly facing down prior to the party's arrival. Even more so than the mayor, Father Burkhard is only too glad to make his case.

"Accusations of witchcraft have plagued the fearful and ignorant for hundreds of years. The greedy cry 'witch' to remove their rivals, the ignorant to prevent change. Officially, yes the Church recognizes witchcraft. I believe the far more pernicious evil is how the devil tricks one man to wrong another.

"You saw what the mob was about to do to that poor old woman. It is my duty to tend to the spiritual future of my flock. I don't want murder staining their souls. Maybe this old woman is telling the truth or maybe she's senile, but she does not strike me as someone who has consorted with the devil."

The priest advocates for keeping the woman in custody until someone can travel to the farm at which she claims to have lived with her eldest son's family.

Gretchen (Sole Witness)

Gretchen Schmidt is an eight year old girl and presumed orphan, the only survivor of an attack on her farm. She has been taken in by an older village couple who lost their children to fever two years prior. Gretchen has been questioned many times and is still traumatized by the attack and upheaval in her life. The young girl is not in the square with the mob. If the heroes wish to question her, word spreads among the crowd until her adopted parents retrieve the child.

"I was asleep in bed with Frida, Giselle, and Vala. I woke up because I heard Mama cry out. Men were standing over the bed. I never saw Papa. My sisters screamed and the men reached for us. Giselle shoved me out of bed and said to go. I felt someone grabbing for me but I jumped through the window and ran. After a while I hid and waited for my sisters to catch up or for Papa to call out that it was safe. No one did.

"Everyone asks what the men looked like but the house was dark. I couldn't see their faces and they never spoke. I only remember the sound of my mama and sisters screaming.

"Everyone says the old woman who visited the day before is to blame, but I only saw the men that night."

OUTCOMES

After the wanderers have been given suitable opportunity for investigation, the mayor and priest demand a decision from them. The mayor insists on burning her at the stake, whereas the priest pleads for the her to be kept alive until someone can find her former home and confirm her story. With the investigation complete, the impatient crowd now expects a verdict.

When the heroes announce their decision, the village leader who advocated for the opposite makes one last appeal to the crowd. This becomes a **Social Conflict** (see *Savage Worlds*), pitting one of the heroes against either the mayor or priest. Both the mayor and priest are Extras (no Wild Die) with a Persuasion skill of d8. The winner of this debate sways the crowd to their course of action, either executing the witch or keeping her alive but captive. Accordingly, refer to either **Death Sentence** or **Not Guilty** below.

DEATH SENTENCE

After losing the debate, Father Burkhard shakes his head in disappointment, says he wants nothing to do with this crime, and retreats back to the church. After his departure,


the mayor orders for the old woman to be burned at the stake.

As the villagers of Baden-Loffenbach heap more branches from the Witch's Oak around the doomed crone, Mena becomes genuinely frantic. She pulls at her chains and screams hysterically, feeling fear for the first time in centuries as the mayor pours lantern oil over the wood and sets it alight. She calls for Geerta, her demonic witch's familiar. (See Geerta in the **Friends and Foes** section at the end of the adventure.) A successful Notice roll reveals the silhouette of a tiny, misshapen person no taller than a cat streak from the shadows directly into the pile of firewood before becoming lost in the smoke and flames. While the smoke mercifully obscures the worst of Mena's torture, the witch's screams cause even the hardiest members of the mob to blanch. The witch cannot die as long as her familiar lives.

Obscured from view, Geerta faithfully attempts to loosen its master but eventually its body, an animated mandrake root, catches fire and the familiar is destroyed. As the heroes watch, the pyre's smoke and flames coalesce into the head and torso of a horrifying demon with enormous, bat-like wings. Free from its physical form, the Geerta's last act before returning to Hell is to burn through the post holding Mena captive.

The witch stumbles from the pyre, gravely burned but alive and free from the power-draining oak. The mob, so fearsome and full of anger at the safely chained witch, dissolves in panic and confusion at her escape. All present should make a Fear roll to overcome the horrific sight of the demon and the badly burned, enraged witch. A group roll can be made for all the Extras for a general sense of their reaction. While Mena kills anyone who gets in her way, she particularly seeks out the heroes who presided over her trial.

The church bells peel out an urgent alarm just as combat with the witch begins. While her witchcraft should not be underestimated, Mena has already suffered two wounds from the fire and has lost her familiar, making her more vulnerable than she has been in centuries. Although the circumstances of the battle are terrible, fighting and killing Mena here means facing only one witch at the adventure's end rather than both.

 **Mena:** See page 18.

While the wanderers are preoccupied with Mena, the sisters' faceless slaves descend upon the square and silently attack the villagers. Dressed as any other Black Forest local, the flickering light conceals the nature of the fights breaking out within the mob. Only their eerie silence hints at something unnatural. Although the focus should be on Mena for the time being, if the heroes take time to examine the attackers then refer to *Faceless* under **Friends and Foes** for a description. The horror of encountering a faceless attacker invokes a Fear roll.

The church bells stop their alarm just as the witch is killed. Skip to **Under Assault**.

NOT GUILTY

If instead the trial ends in favor of mercy, several brawny men lift the wooden post to which Mena is chained right out of the ground and roughly drag her back to the "jail." The mayor is furious at the turn of events and should the heroes wish to speak with him again prior to the upcoming raid he begins the scene as Uncooperative on the **Reaction Table** in *Savage Worlds*.

More Questions

If the wanderers follow Mena or wish to question her later, they learn the jail is no more than the village tavern's basement. The basement's interior door is barricaded shut, whereas an exterior door is guarded by a grim-faced giant of a man named Jaegar. Two of his brothers are among those missing, so he was among the mayor's more ardent supporters. Jaegar requires a Persuasion (-1) roll to be convinced to allow the heroes to enter. If they do so, he locks the door behind them until they are ready to leave.

The basement is unlit, no one wanting to spend a candle on the prisoner. The heroes must bring a lantern or candle to drive back the darkness, although the shadows leap and flicker from every corner like wolves nipping at their prey. Under these conditions it is easy to see why the villagers might suspect the old woman of being a witch. Mena eyes the party suspiciously when they enter, but gains some of her composure after the guard closes the door behind them.

When questioned, Mena repeats her story from earlier in the square. She maintains her



innocence throughout, although the mayor is essentially correct—she was scouting the village to plan a raid when she was caught off guard and captured. She acts pitiful but, in truth has little fear for her situation and is confident either her familiar or faceless slaves will free her soon. In this, she is correct.

Now What?

With darkness pressing all around, the heroes need a place in Baden-Loffenbach to spend the night. Although the village is too small for an inn, residents direct the party to a widow willing to rent a room. Frau Schneider is an elderly widow clearly accustomed to ruling her home with an iron fist. Although she is quick to take coin for a room, the humorless woman has no tolerance for people who make messes in her home or keep her awake past her accustomed bed time. Continue on to **Raid on Baden-Loffenbach**.

RAID ON BADEN-LOFFENBACH

If Mena's life was spared, at a suitably dramatic moment during the night the church bells abruptly begin ringing. This may be while the wanderers are questioning Mena, while they are having a few drinks in the tavern above her head, or even after they have gone to bed for the night. If the heroes are in the tavern basement at the sound of the bells, proceed to **Prison Break** below. Otherwise, skip to **Alarm**.

Prison Break

If the party is with Mena when the church bells sound, the exterior door unlocks and a pair of faceless wretches enter. Behind them, Jaeger lies unconscious outside. The rescuers immediately attack and Mena's familiar Geerta (see both *Faceless*, page 17 and *Geerta & Wibke*, page 18) emerges from hiding to free its master from the chains. The heroes' first look at a faceless wretch invokes a Fear roll to overcome the horror of such an unnatural being.

If the villains overcome the heroes in the fight that follows, Mena says:

"You acted to spare my life. I will do the same—once. The next time we meet I will add your face to my collection." With that, she retreats into the darkness.

If instead the wanderers prevent the witch's escape this night, they are to be congratulated. Now they must decide what to do with her. A captive witch is a dangerous thing. Further, her sister remains free. The remainder of the adventure continues unchanged with the exception of their only having to confront one witch at the end.

If the heroes remain at the tavern to guard Mena until the raid ends, skip to **Aftermath**. Otherwise proceed to **Under Assault**.

Alarm

Other villagers note the ringing as well, and all up and down the streets curious people exit their homes into the darkness and look toward the church in confusion. Vedis has sent every faceless slave at her disposal—nearly 40—in a raid on Baden-Loffenbach.

After half a minute, the ringing ceases as abruptly as it began. In the silence that follows, allow a Notice roll for the heroes to detect the cries of alarm rising from the same direction (apply a –2 modifier if the party is indoors). On this moonless night, the hamlet's dark streets quickly turn to chaos. Once the wanderers join the villagers in a cobblestone street, allow a Notice –2 roll to detect a faceless attacker stalking up behind an unsuspecting villager. Passing the roll is a dubious success, since seeing a faceless wretch for the first time is a nightmarish experience requiring a Fear roll. (See *faceless* under **Friends and Foes**, page 17 at the end.) Otherwise the heroes proceed, ignorant of the danger ahead.

The villagers know an alarm when they hear one and come brandishing a weapon of some sort, ranging from a sharp sword to a length of charred firewood still smoking at one end. From the shouted questions, clearly no one knows the cause of the alarm but everyone advances up the street toward the church where the cries for help and sounds of fighting become more strident.

If the heroes ignore the church bells and instead rush to Mena's prison, continue to **In Media Res** below. Otherwise, skip to **Under Assault**.

In Media Res

Upon arriving at the exterior door to the tavern's basement, the party finds Jaeger unconscious and the door open. Inside the dark cellar, a pair of faceless and Geerta work to release the witch from the chains binding her to the enchanted oak timber. The wanderers have three rounds to interrupt the creatures' work before Mena is freed and attacks the party.

The basement is quite dark, giving a -2 penalty to the heroes' attacks unless they bring a light source. If so, the light also reveals a small, brown, doll-sized creature clambering about the witch's chains. The familiar, Geerta, prefers ranged attacks using one of its powers, but if engaged in melee it uses its poison barbs to subdue its opponent.

If the heroes stay at the tavern to guard Mena until the assault ends, skip to **Aftermath**. Otherwise proceed to **Under Assault** below.

UNDER ASSAULT

Fear and chaos washes across the village courtyard beyond the church. Darkness makes it difficult to tell friend from foe, but a number of villagers are defending themselves against attackers. Unless the heroes carry a light source or Mena's pyre still burns, illumination in the courtyard is Dark, invoking a -2 penalty to attacks. While almost the entire hamlet focused on the witch trial, Vedis' faceless slaves attacked. Although more than a dozen faceless terrorize the villagers in the square, easily twice that many run amok through the rest of the village seeking new victims for the witches.

Allow a Notice roll to detect cries for help coming from the direction of the church. The building's double doors are thrown open and dim light spills out onto the cobblestone sidewalk. The heroes may skirt the fight and head straight to the church. Proceed to **Church Standoff** below.

If the wanderers fail to notice or ignore the need from within the church, then they are swept up in the battle playing out in the dark square. Many villagers are struck petrified at the faceless wretches attacking them from the darkness, leaving two raiders for each hero. Unless the party arrives at the church in four rounds, the victims inside are overcome by their assailants. Shortly thereafter, the faceless leave the church under the cover of darkness

carrying two new victims for their mistresses. Skip to **Overrun** below.

- **Faceless (2 per hero):** See page 17. See page 12.

Church Standoff

Just inside the doorway lies the body of a man on his back, his chest sliced open in a bloody, fatal wound. Yet the most terrible aspect is the victim's face, which is entirely featureless. Where the eyes, nose, and even mouth would be there is only smooth skin. It is as if they never existed.

If the heroes skirted the fight outside, they are in time to see two boys wearing the robes of church acolytes standing back to back and fending off the attacks from four attackers. The raiders, like the corpse at the church's threshold, are completely faceless. Heroes who get their first look at living faceless should make a Fear roll to avoid the shock and horror of seeing such abominations. Despite a vigorous battle taking place, the attackers are completely silent. The faceless no longer feel pain and fight until killed. They utter no words nor offer even a grunt of exertion. By contrast the two boys, armed only with heavy brass candlesticks, are clearly frightened and exhausted.

- **Faceless (4):** See page 17.
- **Acolytes (2):** Use Villager profile. Treat the candlesticks as clubs (Str+d4). See page 18.

If the acolytes survive the fight, they hastily describe the events leading up to their rescue. After leaving the witch trial, Father Burkhard sought solitude in his favorite spot atop the bell tower. It was from there he spotted the invaders, shouted a warning to the boys, and sounded the bells. At the alarm, a number of invaders rushed the church. Father Burkhard left the safety of the bell tower to defend the boys. It was he who killed the wretch in the doorway before being overwhelmed and carried away by the faceless devils.

Overrun

Fighting is not limited to the square and church. As the heroes exit the church (or finish fighting in the square), sounds of struggle

and cries for help come from all corners of Baden-Loffenbach. Roughly 100 yards away, tall flames and billowing smoke reach upward from a cottage roof toward the sky. Those not fighting faceless monsters ring the home in a desperate struggle to keep the fire from spreading to nearby buildings.

The wanderers should make a Notice roll. On a failure they cannot pinpoint the location of a specific cry for help and must decide their next course of action on their own. On a success, they hear high pitched cries for help coming from the cemetery. Two children fled and thought to hide in the darkness, but a pair of faceless followed them. The heroes have three rounds to reach the cemetery before the children are subdued. On the fourth round the faceless retreat from the village with their captives. A raise on the Notice roll reveals another faceless stalking through the darkness with a captive slung over her shoulder.

Aftermath

The entire assault on Baden-Loffenbach lasts less than thirty minutes. Should the party examine a faceless body in more detail, a successful Notice roll at +1 reveals filthy clothing as though they had crawled up from their own graves. If a villager is nearby when the examination takes place, she becomes alarmed.

"That's...that's Herr Fredrick Meyer. He lost those two fingers as a child when a mule bit them off. He and his family disappeared from their farm last week!"

This revelation results in a quick inspection of other faceless corpses and several others are identified as friends and neighbors. As word of this horror spreads, a hysterical mother stumbles from the shadows and clings to a hero desperately.

"Help me. You must help! They took my husband. They dragged him right from our home. You must bring him back!"

This plea is repeated several more times in the next few minutes from different people crying for their children, wives, and other loved ones. Although the wanderers and brave people

of Baden-Loffenbach dispatched many of the raiders, at least a dozen faceless each escaped with a kidnapped villager (including young Father Burkhard) out into the forest.

Worse yet, if Mena was not burned at the stake or stopped from escaping, the witch is discovered missing from her chains in the cellar.

HERO'S WORK

As dawn lights the sky in bloody colors, the last of the fires are extinguished and a crowd forms in the square. A number of men prepare to track the faceless fiends into the woods and either rescue their victims or avenge them. The mayor, blacked with soot and bleary-eyed, once again addresses the growing crowd.

"I want revenge as much as the rest of you, but we have been fooled once already. What if this is a trick to lure our remaining men from town on a fool's errand while those things circle back and take our remaining loved ones? Or what if the trail leads us into an ambush and we are turned into more of those faceless monsters? Who will protect our loved ones against us?"

"No. I say send the so-called witch hunters. Their decision invited the attack on Baden-Loffenbach! Yes, it's true! Those monsters clearly came at the witch's bidding. Let these people go ahead to track the fiends to wherever they hide. Once we are sure this isn't a trick, then every able-bodied man who wants revenge can have it. Mark my words."

Some grumble at the mayor's plan, but even in the heat of anger and anguish they see the sense in his words. If the party needs one or two extra able bodies to help fight or if none of the player characters have the Tracking skill, the Mayor makes an exception just for those Extras. The heroes can leave when they wish, but the townspeople urge them to make haste for the sake of those kidnapped.

Getting a Head Start

The descriptions and Tracking difficulty assumes the party leaves Baden-Loffenbach during daylight. If the heroes immediately give chase as soon as the raid is over, adjust the Tracking roll difficulties and travel speed for appropriate light conditions.

THE CHASE

The faceless made no effort to hide their tracks. A Tracking roll reveals a large group of shallow footprints approaching from the West and deep prints departing the same direction. These tracks converge on a regular dirt path leading deeper into the forest.

Even in daytime the great forest is an imposing presence. The Romans named it the Black Forest because the dense, untamed wilderness seemed dark and impenetrable. It still does. A heavy silence has fallen over the woods, as though every animal holds its breath and every tree pauses in anticipation. Even the rustling leaves and birdsong seem somehow muted.

Although the Tracking is easy at first, the path itself is not. The steep, forested, mountain path makes the journey to Baden-Loffenbach seem leisurely by comparison. Those with an average pace of 6" can only travel a mile of the steep terrain per hour (3 mph for horses), and the tracks follow the worn mountain path for five miles. Refer to **Travel** in *Savage Worlds* for characters with a pace other than the norm; the terrain is Hard.

After five miles, the raiders' tracks diverge from the dirt path. Henceforth, the underbrush is too thick to ride horses and any such animals must be led. Have the heroes make three Tracking (-1) rolls; one for every mile of trail left by the faceless. A broken branch here, a snatch of cloth on briars there assures the party they are still on the correct path. If they fail a roll, the wanderers diverge off their quarry's trail and lose an hour backtracking to find it again.

If the heroes fail twice in a row they become completely lost in the dense woods. After losing another hour meandering, they are ambushed

by a group of faceless sent by the witches to deal with the intruders in "their" forest. Assuming they survive the encounter, the party can follow the tracks of these faceless (Tracking +2) back to the witches' home. Substitute this ambush for the one that follows in the clearing, giving the heroes a Notice roll to find the tunnel openings.

- **Faceless (2 plus 1 per hero):** See page 17.

DESTINATION

Eventually the tracks lead to a rough clearing where the party finds the toppled remains of a mighty oak similar to the one in Baden-Loffenbach. The entire area is awash in vibrant green ferns, making it difficult to see tracks on the forest floor. With a successful Notice roll the heroes find a section of crushed ferns where the kidnapped victims were set down for a time. However, there are no cook fires or other signs of a camp. With a raise, they also discover part of a stone wall and fireplace from a long abandoned cottage choked among the ferns and underbrush.

Another Tracking roll (+1) confirms the tracks do not leave the clearing. Instead, they seem to meander the clearing before simply disappearing near the cottage. While the wanderers investigate, they are ambushed by the faceless, who emerge from concealed tunnels like ants.

- **Faceless (2 plus 1 per hero):** See page 17.

Heroes who fall prey to their paralyzing touch are dragged below ground back through the holes from which the attackers emerge.

If the party fights off the horrific attackers, they can examine the holes, which are only a few inches wider than a person's shoulders. These narrow openings lead to an unguarded connecting tunnel after only three feet. While examining a hole, the hero may make a Notice roll to hear a cry for help coming from within.

HOME TURF

Fortunately for the heroes, the corridor in which they find themselves is tall enough to stand upright, if barely. The dirt tunnel itself is just wide enough for a single person and not so tall that someone can stand without brushing her head against the mat of roots bracing the ceiling. Those with a fear of tight spaces must

I Say We Collapse the Tunnel

Players like creative solutions and Game Masters generally like to encourage them. That being said, the witches cannot die until their familiars have been killed. Further, they have been buried underground for centuries, so this holds no particular fear for them. Smoking them out would indeed Incapacitate the witches (and probably kill their living captives), but wouldn't affect the faceless nor the witches' familiars.

make a Fear roll to control their anxiety. Battle in the narrow corridors makes it easy to defend but difficult to swing a melee weapon (-1 Fighting rolls). Roots growing down into the tunnel ceiling glow dimly red, providing just enough illumination for Dim conditions (-1 to attack rolls unless they have another light source).

Other openings in the clearing above lead to identical tunnels. If the heroes foolishly split to explore different openings, they must find one another through the maze of dim corridors. The remainder of this description assumes the heroes all chose the same entrance.

While the heroes assemble in the tunnel entrance, a successful Notice roll allows them to detect a muted cry for help coming from somewhere ahead.

The narrow corridor continues a mere 3" (6 yards), sloping gently downward, before ending at an intersection. The branch to the left curves out of sight, whereas the branch to the right opens into a small room only 1" (2 yards) later. When the first character reaches the intersection, she hears a cry for help (no Notice roll required) coming from the branch to the right.

In this room, another four faceless stand guard over the kidnapped villagers. Some appear unconscious; others are awake but bound with cruel briar vines. A wrinkled old woman stands stooped among the victims. While she could be mistaken for Mena in the dim lighting, those who pass a Smarts roll realize she is not the witch from Baden-Loffenbach. On a raise, the hero also notices a crude, doll-like creature sitting her shoulder. If the wanderers already encountered Mena's

familiar in Baden-Loffenbach then they recognize it as then they recognize it as a duplicate.

When the first hero comes into view he witnesses the witch peeling away a villager's face as though removing a cobweb. The skin stretches before snapping away into her hand and she shoves it in a cloth sack attached to a leather belt. The horror of this act invokes a Fear roll at -2.

Unless the party made Stealth rolls, Vedis is already aware of their presence in her tunnels. At the first hero's appearance, she retreats through another passage on the opposite end of the room while the faceless attack. In truth the witch only advances just out of sight, awaiting an opportunity to enslave a hero while he is Grappled or Incapacitated by her soulless minions. Meanwhile, her familiar Wibke, lies quietly inanimate among the bound victims, likewise waiting for a moment to strike.

Unless Mena died in Baden-Loffenbach, the other witch approaches from deeper within the tunnel behind the heroes. Once the crafty witch sees them she cries out.

"Rescuers! Please help. No, no. Forget about me and help the others."

She stumbles weakly, slumps against the tunnel wall, then slowly slides down to a sitting position with her face hidden. Her ploy is to lure a hero to help her, at which point she tries to enslave him. If the wanderers see through her act and attack, she attempts to use her witchcraft to ensnare and enslave them.

The crones have fought many heroes over the years and do not take the threat seriously until a sister is slain. When this occurs the surviving sister flies into a rage. A favorite tactic is to fling magic beans, which instantly take root and grow into a binding thicket (*entangle* power). While the victim is thus bound she attempts to steal their faces. By contrast, their familiars use *burrow* in combination with an offensive power to "hit and run."

Of the dozen villagers kidnapped from Baden-Loffenbach, seven have yet to be converted by the witches. Among them is Father Burkhard.

When the final witch dies, the tunnel roots providing light immediately begin dimming and clumps of earth fall from the ceiling and walls. Only the witches' magic kept their home



from collapsing. Have the wanderers pass a Dramatic Task (Agility) to evacuate the rescued victims (or cowardly abandon them to save themselves) before the tunnels collapse.

RETURN TO BADEN-LOFFENBACH

The reception awaiting the heroes at Baden-Loffenbach depends largely on the result of the rescue attempt. If they do not return with the kidnapped villagers, the wanderers can expect a cold welcome. By contrast, if they manage to bring home the latest victims and restore additional faceless to their former selves then the villagers are profuse in their appreciation.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Faceless

The faceless are animated husks of former people whose souls have been peeled from their bodies along with their faces. These poor wretches become slaves to the witches Mena and Vedis. Absent their souls, they have no will of their own but only follow the desires of their masters. The faceless have no eyes, nose, mouth, ears, or other facial features. Smooth, unbroken skin stretches across the place where these features once were.

Although not technically undead, neither are they alive in the traditional sense. Faceless need no air to breathe, food to eat, nor water to drink. They are instead animated by the witches' own magic. This same magic allows them to sense their surroundings as though they had normal hearing and eyesight. Faceless feel no pain and thus no fear. They never tire, nor do they give up or retreat until they have completely fulfilled their master's command. Most often, this task is to bring back more victims. Faceless do not use weapons, but instead rely on grappling with victims until their paralyzing grip renders the target immobile.

These slaves were created from men and women ranging from late adolescence to the elderly. They are uniformly filthy, covered in dirt from head to toe due to spending time in the witches' underground refuge.

Face Off

If the heroes take a witch's bag of faces then they gain control over her minions. Further, the faces (and thus souls) can be restored to any living faceless wretch simply by touching the face to their head. When a faceless creature dies his face dissolves into the ether, thus all the remaining faces in the bag belong to a living (or at least animated) body.

Ideally, a local villager should help match faces to bodies because, horrifically, it is entirely possible to restore a face (and the soul with it) to the wrong body. Worse, once a face is restored to a body the heroes do not have the means of removing it again. The young can be given an elderly body, women given men's bodies, and the strong made sickly.

Although the victims are generally grateful for a second chance at life, their friends and neighbors find the unnatural change both frightful and revolting. The wrongly restored are shunned as if diseased or cursed. Unless the heroes find a cure or allow them to accompany the wanderers as camp followers, these poor wretches are forced to abandon their former home for a life of isolation deep in the forest.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Seeing this twisted monstrosity of a person for the first time invokes a Fear roll.
- **Fearless:** These soulless husks are incapable of feeling Fear or Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** The magic animating these wretches keeps them going when a living person would falter. A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Low Light Vision:** Although they do not have eyes, the fearless can "see" using magical means. Faceless ignore penalties for Dim and Dark conditions.
- **Paralyzing Touch:** The soulless minions carry a dark, unfillable void which feeds

on any living thing they touch. When the faceless makes a successful Touch Attack (+2 Fighting) against bare skin such as face or hands, the victim must win an opposed Vigor roll or be paralyzed and incapable of any action — even speech — for 2d6 rounds after the faceless breaks contact. This ability excludes faceless from the Unarmed Defender rule.

- **Stealthy:** The faceless do not breathe, giving them an advantage when it comes to remaining silent. Add +1 to Stealth rolls.

Father Burkhard

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Healing d4, Knowledge (Christian theology) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Doubting Thomas, Loyal (Hamlet), Vow (Church)

Edges: Healer, Luck

Gear: Religious vestments.



Geerta & Wibke

These witch's familiars are demons summoned by Mena and Vedis and given physical bodies crafted from mandrake root. Although small, the creatures are deadly in their own right. They are crafty, capable of casting spells, and delight in causing fear and pain in the human world.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Magick d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Infravision:** The familiars' senses aren't limited by the crude mandrake bodies and halve penalties for dark lighting against living targets.
- **Size -2:** Geerta and Wibke are walking, talking mandrake roots the size of a doll, reducing their Toughness by 2.
- **Magick:** Geerta and Wibke know *burrow*, *curse*, *elemental manipulation* (earth), and *viper weapon*.
- **Poison Barbs:** Although their bodies were originally fashioned from mandrake root, the familiar's tiny arms are now lined with a row of sharp, poisoned barbs growing directly from its body. These

natural weapons mean Geerta and Wibke are always considered armed. Attacks with these barbs do 1d4 damage, but if the attack results in a Shaken or wound the victim must make a Vigor roll or suffer 1d4 minutes of paralysis, reduced to 1d4 rounds with a success. A raise further reduces the effect to Fatigue which is recovered at the end of the scene.

- **Small:** The familiars are no taller than a doll and suprisingly nimble, making them quite difficult to hit. Humans subtract 2 from attack rolls against them.
- **Weakness (Fire):** The familiars take an additional d8 damage from fire.

Mayor Fredrick Groff

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Local) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal (to hamlet), Stubborn

Edges: Brawler, Charismatic

Gear: Ax (St+d6).

Villager

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Local) d8, Notice d6, Survival d4, Tracking d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear Any one of the following: ax (St+d6), club (Str+d4), dagger (Str+d4), short sword (Str+d6), staff (Str+d4).



Mena & Vedis

Mena and Vedis are sisters and witches who live in the Black Forest of the Holy Roman Empire (modern-day Germany). They spent decades terrorizing intruders until they were tricked into captivity with their own magic. The sisters spent the next several centuries trapped underground within the umbrella-like confines of an enchanted oak's roots. With the oak's inevitable demise, the witches are once again free and seeking vengeance on anyone nearby.

While they were remarkably able to extend their lives several centuries, it cannot be said the years have been kind to the sisters. Their skin is pale almost to the point of transparency

and deeply wrinkled. Loose skin hangs from their thin, stick-like arms while their gnarled hands speak to painful, swollen joints. Both witches are stooped from hunching under the low-ceiling tunnels and rooms they dug to expand their prison.

However, appearances are deceiving. Unnatural strength, speed, and stamina drive their small frames. Their minds are still razor sharp, as is their eyesight. Their wits are as keen as their hearing. In part, the secret to their longevity comes from their familiars Geerta and Wibke, from whom they derive an additional pool of powers. These summoned demons made a pact to serve each witch faithfully until death, after which the sisters would serve *them* in hell.

Mena and Vedis focus their powers through plant life, so all their powers have plant trappings — vines, seeds, pollen, leaves, and even a wand.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Magick d10, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Magick-imbued plants as focuses for their powers.

Special Abilities:

- **Familiar:** In addition to the other effects listed here, the witches may draw upon their familiar's known spells.
- **Immortal:** Until their respective familiar has been destroyed, Mena and Vedis can only be Incapacitated, not killed.

- **Regeneration:** As long as the witch's familiar lives, the witch may make a natural Healing roll once per day.

- **Spells:** In addition to the spells shared by their familiars, the witches know the following powers: *barrier*, *boost/lower Trait*, *entangle*, *fly*, *light*, *slumber*.

- **Soul Theft:** Mena and Vedis can extract a person's essence — their soul, if you will — by virtue of peeling away the victim's facial features. This first requires a successful Grapple, as the witch must pull at the victim's face. Mena and Vedis prefer their victims already be Incapacitated, thus they frequently begin with their *entangle* or *slumber* powers or order the faceless to employ their paralyzing touch.

After the victim has been overpowered, the crones must make a successful Magick –2 roll opposed by the victim's Spirit roll. Victims who are unconscious or asleep do not get to oppose, although the witch must still roll a success.

If the witch succeeds, she removes the victim's face. Only smooth skin remains, while the removed soul takes on the characteristics of the poor victim's face on a flap of warm, living skin. The victim's body becomes an empty husk animated by the witch's magic for as long as the face remains intact. See the faceless entry for more information.

- **Weakness (White Oak):** Mena and Vedis are especially vulnerable to the magical white oak grown from acorns they themselves enchanted.





COLD STORAGE

By Shane Lacy Hensley

The Return of Smilin' Jack

Hello, kiddies! It's been a long time since we've told a gruesome tale of ghoulish murder and mayhem together, hasn't it? Lest you think old Smilin' Jack was giving you the cold shoulder, I've returned to share a frigid and bitter story of death and immortality, ugliness and beauty, fire and ice!

The inhabitants of Whittier, Alaska, have a dark secret. They were once members of the young and famous. But time waits for no man...or woman...and eventually those devilish good looks begin to fade. But if you're rich enough and happen to know a certain mad scientist, you might just find yourself in a brand new body when the old one wears out!

But enough chitchat, chums! Let's join our party of storm-tossed pretty boys and girls as they wake up in the freezing waters off a tiny little town in Alaska. They'll uncover the mad doctor's plan soon enough, but will they escape his icy grip or wind up in...

It's 1965. The heroes are young actors and actresses looking for their big break. They attend a party in Beverly Hills where they are drugged and abducted by their host — then awake in the ruins of a wrecked ship somewhere off the coast of Alaska!

The group stumbles to shore after swimming for their lives from the freezing sea and a pack of hungry (and strangely misplaced) leopard seals. From there they stagger into the nearby town of Whittier, Alaska, to find a Christmas party going on at a former military installation called the Buckner Building.

The four-story structure is now home to a group of eccentric residents with a dark secret. One of the installation's former doctors is able to take the brains of the rich and famous and implant them into new bodies of the young and attractive! The heroes were part of the shipment of new hosts for these eccentric elites until their ship crashed in the storm — but of course they don't know that yet!

The drunken party-goers surround their new guests and begin to ask questions about the shipwreck and how many survivors are left, then they ask about the individuals' lifestyle,

drinking, general health, etc. Some even begin to inspect the guest's teeth and hairline!

Finally, one of the residents, a former actress riddled with guilt and wanting to end it all, takes the heroes aside and tells them the truth...that Dr. Louis Wertham is transplanting brains into the building's residents! He and his mercenaries left the party when they received the mayday calls from the shipwreck but will soon return. When they do, the guilty guest continues, the survivors will be subdued and become new hosts for the other resident's brains!

The heroes have three choices, the actress says: steal a car and attempt to escape through the tunnel to Anchorage, brave the wilderness to the south where a sympathetic and suspicious ranger mans the Decision Point Marine station, or steal a boat and flee by sea.

Regardless of which option they choose, all roads eventually lead back to confronting Dr. Wertham at his secret lab in the Buckner Building. Will the young actors give their greatest performance ever by ending Wertham's murderous program? Or will they end up living on...with someone else's brain inside their pretty little heads?

SETTING RULES

Use these Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds* when running *Cold Storage*:

- Blood and Guts
- Critical Failures
- Heroes Never Die*
- Joker's Wild

***But They Do Get Hurt!:** If a hero is Incapacitated by taking more than three wounds, roll on the Injury Table immediately (don't make the usual Vigor roll first). The character recovers from Incapacitation at the end of the encounter, but the Injury lasts for the duration of the adventure. Healing may be used to restore wounds but does not remove injuries gained in this way — they're there for dramatic effect till the end of the tale.

NEW SKILL

Performance (Spirit)

Given that the heroes are all actors and actresses (as are some of the residents of the

Buckner Building detailed below), characters may take a new skill called Performance, which is linked to Spirit and modified by Charisma.

Like Knowledge, Performance is a catch-all skill that requires a focus of some sort, like Performance (Stage Magic) or Performance (Trumpet). It can be taken multiple times with different focuses to represent different areas of ability. Spirit is the linked attribute by default, but use whatever is appropriate to the particular skill. Performance (Dancing) or Performance (Juggling) are linked to Agility, for example.

Most musical instruments are their own focus, such as Performance (Clarinet) or Performance (Piano), but there may be some overlap between them if they're close enough.

Performance can be used anytime the actor wants to pretend to be someone or something else, give a dramatic reading, or entertain a crowd.

CHARACTERS

The heroes are all young and beautiful actors and actresses looking for their big break. Tell the players only that it's a few days before Christmas, 1965, and that their characters are attending a party in Beverly Hills. There they will be given a chance to hobnob with directors, casting agents, movie stars, and other hopefuls.

Don't tell them their heroes will be fending for their lives in the wilderness! How they get past being so unprepared for the environment is part of the challenge of this adventure!

Otherwise, the group may make their characters however they wish with a few exceptions:

- All heroes are Novice characters.
- All characters must take the Attractive Edge. This is not a "free" Edge but must be taken normally.
- No character may have Smarts higher than d6. The really smart ones weren't invited to the party!
- The following Edges are prohibited: All Arcane Backgrounds and Edges that require them, Arcane Resistance, Adept, Champion, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Connections, Beast Master.

THE HORRIBLE HISTORY OF WHITTIER

General Simon Buckner commanded Alaska's defenses in the early stages of World War II before becoming the highest-ranking officer killed by enemy fire in the Pacific. After the war, the US worried that the Soviet Union might invade Alaska, and the "Buckner Building" was built as a bulwark against the Cold War going hot. The structure was completed in 1953 in Whittier, Alaska, and was designed to protect and hold up to a thousand soldiers and their support personnel. It came complete with apartments, stores, theatres, a hospital, and underground tunnels connecting it to the mountains and various buildings in town.

In our story, the building was also home to a team of scientists tasked with enhancing US soldiers, regenerating damaged tissue, and developing new techniques for agents, operatives, and soldiers to withstand the frigid temperatures of Alaska and the cold Russian wastes should a counterattack ever be needed.

Dr. Louis Wertham did that and more, eventually combining the fruits of these labors into a series of treatments called the "Wertham Process." He strengthened flesh, developed a process to render humans immune to all but the most dire cold, and even found a way to freeze, treat, transplant, and fuse tissue regardless of blood type!

The military found Wertham's work flawed and dangerous after test subjects showed signs of strange mental and physical deterioration. When the base closed in 1960, Wertham was let go as well.

Wertham raged but eventually settled on a plan. He called a wealthy friend and offered to make the rich and famous immortal. The two bought the Buckner Building from the government and began quietly contacting the wealthiest men and women with an offer they could not refuse — immortality! The aging elite would have to remain in the cold north to best preserve their brain matter and altered flesh, but the new bodies he could give them wouldn't feel it after being treated with the Wertham Process, and eventually, Wertham promised, he would further refine his procedures so they could return to the world — young, fit,

and ready to resume their roles as captains of industry or stars of the silver screen.

The player characters, all young, budding actors and actresses with good looks and fine forms, are the latest "body donors" for Wertham's clients. At least that was the plan. But then something went terribly wrong...

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT...

The tale begins as the heroes tumble into the freezing waters of the Passage Canal that leads to Whittier. Read or paraphrase the following to the luckless chumps:

Everything is black. You feel icy cold water.

The last thing you remember is a party in Beverly Hills at the home of the extremely successful casting agent, Antoine Fortuna. There were famous movie stars like Julie Angelina, Carlton West, and Rafaelo Dicaprio. There was loud music, amazing food, and lots and lots of strong drinks.

Now you're freezing to the bone. Something terrible is going on all around you but your vision hasn't cleared yet. You see...fire...and feel water. Water so cold it takes your breath away. You hear screams. Your eyes flutter open and you see the outline of a great ship behind you, inverted impossibly and silhouetted against the full moon. Fires rage on its decks as men and women leap to an icy doom below.

Dozens of others flail about you... paddling with failing strength or hanging onto wreckage. Ice floats in the water and a bone-chilling wind howls with thick streams of swirling snow.

You seem to be instinctively holding onto a piece of wreckage as your head clears. It's a large crate of some sort. A beautiful blonde girl struggles toward you...you remember her from the party. She reaches out her long, Hollywood toned-arm for help. You reach to aid her...CRASH!!!

Something large and furry breaches the water next to you, taking the blonde in the jaws of its long head as it

disappears beneath the choppy waves. You feel guilty as a momentary rush of hot blood warms the water around you.

Screams come from every direction... more of the horrible predators are taking the panicked swimmers down into the icy depths. You see the shore a hundred yards away. You must make it before you become another meal for whatever terrible monsters swim beneath you — or you freeze to death in the bone-chilling waters!

There are perhaps two dozen swimmers in the water and another dozen floating dead or unconscious nearby. Some of the swimmers are crew from the ship, others are fellow partygoers or even kidnappers, but all are doomed. Only the player characters, of course, make it to shore.

Beneath them swim a trio of hungry leopard seals, massive, terrifying creatures intent on gorging on as much prey as they can manage. It's unlikely young starlets of the 1960s know this, but with a Common Knowledge roll at -6 (or Knowledge (Marine Biology), should someone happen to have it), one of the group is fairly certain leopard seals *are* native to Antarctica, not Alaska. That's little consolation at the moment, however, because they're clearly here now, and they're hungry.

Don't run a standard combat here — there's little chance these young stars and starlets can defeat the sea leopards in these conditions. Instead, run this as a Dramatic Task where the survivors must reach shore.

If a character fails (normally or due to a Complication), he's not killed. Instead, he's dragged to the shore and left there by the predators. The leopard seals have plenty to feast on tonight and figure they'll come back to these later. Resolve one bite attack on the victim normally, then he's left unconscious for the others to save. He awakes at the end of the scene.

- **Leopard Seals (3):** See page 36.

A Bleak and Lonely Shore

The actors now find themselves shivering and alone on an unknown rocky shore. A blizzard swirls around them and they're chilled to the bone. They *must* find shelter quickly or they'll die. Because they are wet,

don't have proper winter clothing, and are in the middle of a snowstorm, they must make Vigor rolls immediately on beaching and every five minutes thereafter. This can lead to Incapacitation.

Fortunately, they're only a little over a mile from a large, white building with dim, twinkling lights along the top floor. The group should gather as many survivors as they can (other player characters) and run like hell before they freeze to death.

COMING IN FROM THE COLD

The Buckner Building typically has a door guard, but the doorman went to respond to the shipwreck with Dr. Wertham, leaving the double doors unwatched.

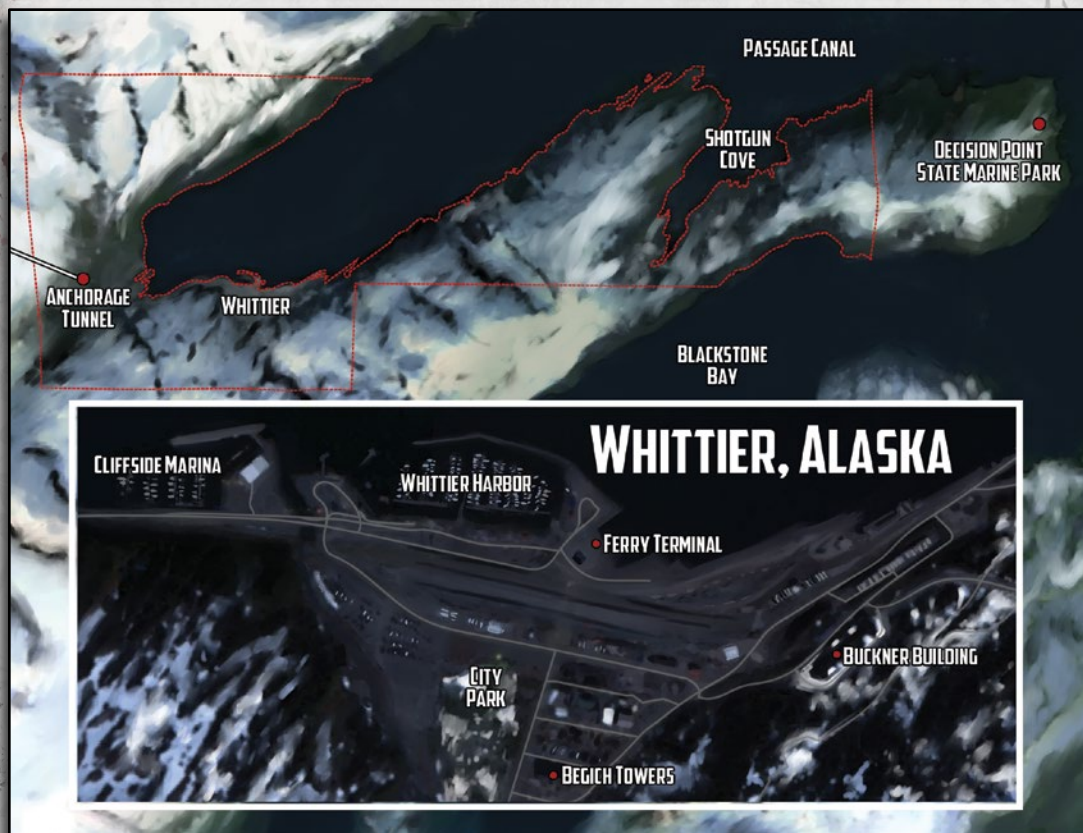
Inside is a maze of what seems to be apartments or offices, but all are closed and dark. Most are locked firm, though some offices are vacant save for desks, chairs, and empty filing cabinets. Stairs lead up to where the heroes saw the lights, and as they ascend to the sixth floor they hear what sounds like a phonograph playing Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* and a number of people (some quite talented) singing along.

Sure enough, as they crest the last flight they come to a large open cafeteria illuminated by a few lamps and blinking holiday lights. Tables hold punch bowls, snacks, and Christmas gifts. A banner across the middle of the room says MERRY CHRISTMAS in large green and red letters. Dozens of men and women in elegant but surprisingly light and casual night clothing move about the floor.

Unless the group is trying to be stealthy, a middle-aged and very lovely woman in a black gown sees them and shouts out "Oh! Look everyone, we have guests! They must be from the ship!"

The partygoers are all residents of the Buckner Building, former rich and / or famous elites who have had their brains transplanted into younger bodies. Most do so every ten years, when the host they're "wearing" wears out from the constant parties and the damage done by the Wertham Process.

The guests swarm enthusiastically over the newcomers once they notice them, offering drinks, food, and of course dry clothes — smoking jackets and robes taken



right off the residents' own backs. No one looks away if the clothing is offered and the guests must undress somewhat—the residents are very eager to see the wares they'll wear!

THE STRANGE RESIDENTS OF THE BUCKNER BUILDING

It's -8 degrees Fahrenheit outside before accounting for wind chill and the survivor's wet clothes. It's 34 degrees inside—nice and chilly for the strange residents and their slowly atrophying flesh. At first, the heroes are likely to think it's warm in here because of the contrast with the outside. After 10 to 15 minutes, however, they should definitely realize it's still *freezing* in here! Should they ask someone, the partygoers make excuses about the heat going on and off, "Geoffrey" the maintenance man must have left a window open, or with all the booze they can hardly feel it...but they'll see to it quickly that the heat is fixed (they don't, of course). The residents aren't wearing much in the way of warm clothes, but they're "used to the cold," they claim.

The truth, of course, is that part of Werthams' transplant process involves infusing the body with his human anti-freeze, so the guests are very comfortable in light clothes even in sub-zero temperatures. See **The Wertham Process**, page 27, for the ghastly specifics.

The residents are all somewhat strange and eccentric. Most of it comes naturally to the devilish divas, but some of it is enhanced by the freakish chemicals circulating through their stolen veins and the isolation of their clandestine environment. Besides their thin clothing, which varies in style and fashion from the '20s through the '50s, the partygoers also wear hats, scarves, or head coverings of some sort. Why? To hide the surgical scars of their brain transplant, of course! The residents claim it's simply part of the fun of the party—a hat-wearing Christmas party! *Would you like one?*

Of the 47 residents living in the Buckner Building, 12 are due for a "touch up" when the survivors arrive. The rest can wait a few more years, but if any of the young actors are Very Attractive, even those who aren't due yet might decide to fight for the upgrade!

All of the residents use false names. Their real names are included in parentheses. The actors

might recognize them should they somehow be revealed (Smarts roll, or Smarts -2 for elites who aren't actors). Most seem to be in their late '30s, but carefully hidden blotches, wrinkles, and liver spots should eventually be detected (all side effects of Werthams' treatments and their hard-partying lifestyle).

- **Cynthia Bonair (Cynthia Bonaparte):**

A distant relative of Napoleon himself and once heiress to a Corsican fortune. Cynthia wears a silk gown near bursting at the seams — she hasn't taken particularly good care of her body. Why bother? She'll get a new one when she needs it!

- **Sylvester Milestone (Sylvester Millstone III):**

A steel magnate, rail baron, and technology investor. Unlike most of the others, he's cold and suspicious of the newcomers. He constantly worries that his rivals will find him and use the conspiracy to blackmail his remaining family of its holdings.

- **Darla O'Bannon (Darla O'Banion):**

Darla was a mobster's wife who took a bullet in 1932 but didn't have the good sense to die right away. She made off with

her husband's stash and eventually found her way to Dr. Wertham. She's been on the lam ever since, but there's little chance she'll be found out since her body was discovered decades ago...a bullet in her gut and her head removed. Darla seems sweet and caring to the freezing survivors, but is really, really interested in a new body. Preferably one with plenty of curves in all the right places.

- **Dr. Sigmund Friedman (Sigmund Freud):**

The famous Austrian doctor succumbed to the same weakness most men and women face and decided on immortality. He still speaks with his Austrian accent despite being in the body of a young, black-haired man, and is very interested in the mental state of his companions and the new arrivals. Sigmund is not ashamed to admit he wants to be transplanted into the body of a woman this time — perhaps one that somewhat resembles his mother!

- **Wilma Gaines (Rebecca Crawford):**

Wilma is a short girl with close-cropped brown hair hidden beneath a scarlet beret, and wearing a sheer, white night gown. She seems observant and aloof, and avoids



conversation with the heroes until the **Guilty Conscience** scene below.

- **Carlos Manuel de Ortega (Carlos Manuel de Seville):** Carlos was one of the greatest Latin stars of the silent screen. His movies made him millions, and eventually allowed him to cheat Death itself when Dr. Wertham offered him a new body. Carlos is now a true charmer — kissing ladies' hands and offering them his jacket or a companion's robes as soon as they enter the room.
- **Allan Sherbert (Allan Shawshank):** Allan was once a famous Vaudeville actor known for his hammy acts. He speaks in a high elevated voice with strange intonations and accents. His new form has platinum blonde hair combed back in a pompadour, and he wears a very expensive whale-skin smoking jacket. He's a little tired of playing the clown and really wants a "manly man's" body this time around.

THE MEAT MARKET

The residents want to know all about the shipwreck and hear about the exciting escape from the leopard seals. Strangely, they don't seem to ask many questions about the kidnapping from Hollywood — unless the omission is pointed out. In that case a few use their superior Performance skills to act surprised and interested in the event. They all know the body donors are kidnapped from Hollywood, of course, but most don't want to know any more than that. "Never watch the sausage being made," Dr. Friedman is fond of saying!

As the survivors' responses begin to grow repetitive, Dr. Friedman introduces himself as a medical doctor and steps up to "examine" them. He gives each character's body a cursory look, then whips out his monocle and more closely examines their eyes, ears, teeth, and *hairline*. He seems particularly interested in females, and isn't shy about touching them (though he avoids outright fondling — that would be rude and an overt and embarrassing expression of his id!).

While Friedman pokes and prods the subjects, the other partygoers gather around and watch, wide-eyed and expectant...almost slavering at this year's models. The heroes should feel like cars at a car show by the time Friedman is done,

though the doctor is smart enough to cover any suspicions with lies or apologies.

Revelations

As the inspection winds down, the heroes are offered food and drink — especially strong alcohol. Dr. Wertham and his security team went to the shipwreck and the partygoers are stalling for time till he returns. Some of the guests continue to poke and prod the survivors as much as possible — perhaps someone even goes to the apartments and fetches more appropriate clothing — but most return to drinking, dancing, cavorting, or arguing quietly in the corners about who gets which body once Wertham returns!

The guests should take this chance to find out a little more information, either through Persuasion or general conversation. Remember the guests are quite pickled — figuratively and literally — and they're sure the survivors will be captured soon, so they might let slip more than they ought to if it doesn't cause the visitors to run away.

Here's what they have to say about the following subjects. The Game Master should, of course, tailor the delivery to the particular character being asked:

- **The Buckner Building:** It was a Cold War installation designed to hold a thousand soldiers in case of a Russian invasion. It has its own stores, movie theatres, a bowling alley, hundreds of apartments, and tunnels connecting it to the rest of the town. There's a full hospital and a large morgue down below, one of the guests should let slip.
- **Whittier:** The partygoers say the town was originally a fishing village, then later grew up around the Buckner Building and the soldiers who lived there. It closed in 1960 but a few friends of the genius Dr. Louis Wertham bought the place. The residents live here permanently (the cold helps keep their flesh fresh), but they claim they just visit for the occasional gala with their close friends (the other partiers).
- **Other Residents:** A few others live in town, of course — fishers, oil men, and the like, but the elite have very little to do with them. Whittier has no official law, but the Buckner Building Security Force keeps order over the entire town when needed. The guards are currently out responding

to the shipwreck, but should return soon, the guest says with a knowing and avaricious smile.

- **Dr. Louis Wertham:** Dr. Louis Wertham is the leader of the town (they don't say "Mayor"—the town doesn't seem to have one). He's a brilliant doctor who worked with the US Army on secret cold weather projects when it was here and decided to stay on after. The partygoers are quick to change subject if asked about the exact nature of their relationship to him. If forced, they say something about how they take care of him and he takes care of us.

Guilty Conscience

When the party has been poked and prodded and gathered all the information presented above, a quiet, demure girl who's been watching from afar the whole night approaches the male hero who appears the most capable in a fight. She puts her arms around him, looks up into his eyes with her big browns, and says "Come with me, handsome."

Wilma Gaines (Rebecca Crawford) pulls the hero back into a corner and pretends to flirt, but surprises the big lug with something else entirely.

"Keep looking in my eyes, whatever you do. And smile. Like you think I'm pretty. Like you think I'm the prettiest girl you've ever held in those big strong arms. I have to tell you something. Something you're not likely to believe. My new name is Wilma Gaines, but my old name is Rebecca Crawford, the same Rebecca Crawford who wowed them in the movies in the '40s."

Wilma waits to see if her target recognizes her work (a Smarts roll). If he does, she smiles grandly—it's nice to be remembered. If he doesn't, she sighs and continues.

"I made more war pictures than there were battles, I think. Made a ton of money, invested it in California real estate, and made even more money. But I also had a little problem with certain illegal substances and I started dying. Dr. Wertham approached me and said I could live forever—for the tidy sum of eight million dollars."

The Wertham Process

Wertham's Process actually accomplishes three things: It makes the host tougher, drastically increases his resistance to cold, and allows him to regenerate tissue!

Wertham accomplishes this by first reducing the body's temperature in cold storage, heart beating and blood pumping. Then he transfuses the patient's blood with a bizarre cocktail of polar bear and sea lion plasma, anti-freeze, and irradiated sea-water! The human body is slowly poisoned by the mixture, but the regenerative properties stave off death for about a decade.

A natural extension of the results led Wertham to realize he could perform brain transplants in bodies that had undergone the Wertham Process. To do so, he cuts an eye-shaped hole in the top of the skull of the old body and lifts out the brain. The same hole is cut into the new body, which has already undergone the treatment for several days, and a slush of frozen cocktail is poured into the cavity. The old brain is placed in the new icy serum of the host head, and within a week, has attached itself to the nervous system. Voila!

Wilma pauses.

"That's right. Forever. I jumped at the chance. A little too fast, it seems. Louis told me I'd have to go into hiding for a while as he worked things out. Decades, maybe. But it was a small price to pay for immortality. What he didn't tell me was that while my brain and thoughts and memories would live on, it wouldn't be in the same...body."

Wilma lets that sink in, then looks around to see if anyone is watching. They aren't, so she slides the beret on her head to one side, pulls her hair apart, and shows the hero the terrible, eye-shaped scar from her brain transplant.

"Keep it quiet, handsome. Yes, you and your friends were drugged, abducted, and brought here to serve

as our new body donors. Our flesh has changed with the treatments we receive to keep the brain alive and cold is a requirement. That's why we live in Alaska, and why we keep it so cold in here."

Wilma pauses again.

"Dr. Louis and his security team went to the shipwreck fifteen minutes before you got here, but they'll be back soon. They'll capture you and harvest your bodies for these vultures. If you prove too difficult to capture, they'll just kill you and wait on the next batch. You've got to slip out the back door and leave before they return!"

Once you get outside, there are three ways you can escape Whittier. Steal a car and head toward the Anchorage tunnel, steal a boat and sail to the logging camp off Poe Bay, or steal a snowmobile and try to get to the ranger station at Decision Point. I recommend the ranger station. There's a trail that heads due east through the mountains. Dangerous, but you look like a strong one, and Ranger Kinney who lives there is definitely no friend of Dr. Wertham. He's armed and he might even believe this wild tale. Don't try heading south though. There are... things...in the wilderness to keep away the curious."

The group needs to vamoose as soon as possible. You can push them along by having other guests come and get interested in the conversation with Wilma...maybe even saying something like "Now Reb—er, Wilma! Are you drunk and telling wild stories again?", then glaring at her chosen hero evilly. After that, headlights appear in the window signaling Wertham's return. The residents get really antsy when this happens and invite the survivors to sit on the couch to meet their "friend and mentor."

If the invitation is accepted, Wilma eventually screams "RUN!" to them before being savagely beaten by her companions. The partygoers then attack in force, but only to grapple—never to harm the delicate flesh they care so much about. They try to hold the

prisoners in place until Wertham and his men show up, but make sure they fail. Maybe a lit cigar and some spilled liquor start a fire and cause a distraction, or several of the residents start fighting among themselves about who gets the characters' bodies.

Hopefully, the team slips away out the back as Wilma advised, or fights their way out the front door and avoids Wertham's men on the stairs (easy to do—there are many entrances, exits, and windows throughout the building).

Finally, they are on the streets of Whittier and must decide what to do next. As they do, have them make occasional Vigor rolls against the cold, and remember they likely didn't secure snow boots, coats, gloves, or *anything* particularly useful before they fled the building. This means the rolls are likely at -4 (-2 for the blizzard and another -2 for the lack of winter clothes). Unfortunately, there are only a few small houses in town. There is a small hotel, and a few people live on their boats, but otherwise there are few places to scavenge for gear. If they *really* put some effort into it, let them, but SUV-mounted Whittier security patrols should keep them constantly on their guard (see page 36 for information on the patrols).

CAT AND MOUSE

The heroes have escaped the Buckner Building and are on the run. They are most likely to try one of Wilma's three suggestions, but if they don't, see their own plan through and let them try whatever they think is best. There shouldn't be any way to get out of town, however, and if they try to slip back into the building and kill Wertham you should make sure they are chased to some of the other locations below first—then run the big finale described in **A Tale of the Crypt**.

From this point on, the adventure is a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse and relies to some degree on the tension of the chase. To help encourage constant movement and anxiety, highlight that if the survivors don't find a solution to their problem before daybreak, the Whittier security guards will gather in force and hunt them down. There aren't that many

places to hide and tracks are easy to follow in the snow.

As Game Master, reinforce this as often as you're able—either through direct advice or through the “voice” of your Extras. Don't worry too much about actual time as long as they're constantly on the move. You can also drag the hours out as long as you need to, especially since the nights are much longer this time of year (Whittier's December daylight hours are only about five to six hours long, depending on cloud cover).

In the end, it's not really important whether its day or night—what's important is that the heroes feel constantly harassed and stay on the move. Nowhere is safe, everyone is after them, and there's seemingly no end to the Whittier Security Force.

- **Security Force (20):** See page 36.

PATHS OF PANIC

Now the party has to choose which of Gaines' suggestions they want to try: the Ranger Station, the Anchorage tunnel, or the shipyard. Each of these choices are described below.

Note that any attempt to hide or pass through the wilderness—such as heading south or delaying too long on the way to the ranger station—results in an encounter with the deadly bi-polar bears (page 34).

THE RANGER STATION

The trek to the ranger station is brutal and grueling. And that's just the mountain and the weather. Even worse is that Wertham security guards are hot on the survivor's trail the moment they start!

Let the group first decide if they want to trek to Decision Point on foot or via snowmobile. Going on foot is very dangerous given the weather and their (likely) lack of winter clothes. Snowmobiles are slightly better only because they should (theoretically) get to the station faster. The latter can be found around back of the Buckner Building. There are enough of them if the heroes double up as much as

Guns and Ammo

There are several chances to grab firearms in the town, but for the proper tone, the Game Master needs to keep the party underpowered. The guards have all the ammo they need when they're firing their weapons, but if they're taken out and scavenged they have only 2d6 rounds of submachine gun ammo, and 1d6 pistol or rifle rounds. Their bullet proof vests can be taken, as can their walkie-talkies, which should help the heroes evade and survive the night.

The grease guns work well in cold weather but are leftover from World War II and starting to show their age. Anytime the grease guns fire full-auto and two 1s are rolled, the weapon freezes up and jams hard. It's irreparable without a machine shop with oil and a blowtorch, 20 minutes of time, and a Repair roll.

It's a cruel trick of fate to keep the survivors weapon-poor, but the tone of the adventure is an homage to EC Comics, not the *Rambo* movies!

possible (so if there are five characters there are three snowmobiles, see above).

Either way, the result is a Chase through the mountains.

The blizzard reduces visibility drastically so attacks can only be made at Short Range. The security guards fire their weapons on full-auto, but mostly for effect. They suffer -2 for running or being on the snowmobiles, -2 for full-auto, and another -2 for the darkness, so they shouldn't hit anything, but should give the group a tense and harrowing ride.

Should anyone suffer a Disaster or fail a Complication, he tumbles or drives into a steep ravine for 3d6 damage! Climbing out (or in) is a Climbing roll at -2, with each failure resulting in **Bumps and Bruises** (see **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds*).

If any of the group moves on, continue the Chase normally—the fallen character shows up at the ranger station just after the events described in **Decision Point**, below. If the entire group stays with the fallen companion, the pursuers pass them by in the blizzard and lose the trail. They return when the

survivors finally get to their destination in **Decision Point**.

After the fifth round of the Chase, or after the team has recovered from disaster, they can finish their trek to the ranger station. Go to **Decision Point**.

Decision Point

Decision Point is a United States Marine Wildlife park with campsites and a few cabins, all empty this time of year. But a small Ranger station is manned by Ranger Bob Kinney, a tough survivalist who has had some suspicions about his neighbors in Whittier for some time.

When the group arrives, Ranger Kinney is skinning a deer — despite the blizzard — with a hunting rifle across his back and a pistol on his hip. This is just what they've been looking for.

Give the group a few minutes to tell him their story — if the security team was hot on their heels from the chase, they pause and regroup just out of sight when they see the tough as nails Alaskan Ranger.

The Whittier Security Force

As the heroes run around the small town trying to escape, they should constantly be on the run from Wertham's mercenaries. The Whittier Security Force is made up of about twenty men, all recipients of the Wertham Process so they're tougher than usual and have some ability to regenerate. They don't instantly heal, but if a trooper is taken out of a fight he's very likely to appear again a few scenes later unless his body is completely destroyed.

Most are stationed in groups of two to five troopers, depending on what they're protecting. Patrols consist of two on each snowmobile, or three in a Scout 80 SUV.

Scout 80 SUV

Large Vehicle: Acc/TS 20/40, Toughness 18 (6), Crew 4

Notes: Armor, Four Wheel Drive.

Snowmobile

Small Vehicle: Acc/TS 10/35, Toughness 8, Crew 2.

Notes: Works only on ice or snow

Surprisingly, Bob believes their story...or something like it. Then he says the following:

"You came to the right place. I'll handle these rent-a-cops and then I'm going after Wertham. But if something happens to me, you've got to take him out. That's the only way to call off the dogs. They'll have the tunnel to Anchorage closed, and not even an experienced local can navigate the waters in these kinds of conditions so a boat does you no good. You can't hide out in the mountains either 'cause you'll freeze, they'll track you, and the polar bears around here...well...let's just say they're weird.

And if you don't settle this tonight, they'll surely find you in the day — it's damnable easy to track in the snow."

At that, the security forces arrive. A rattle of machine gun fire rocks the night as splinters of wood and ice fly from the ranger shed. Kinney spins with his sniper rifle, grins...and is hit smack between the eyes by a bullet. Cross-eyed and deader than a doornail, he falls back into the snow drift with a WHUMPH!

The party has Ranger Kinney's rifle and pistol and three security guards to handle. The guards stay about 40 yards distant in the thick tree line, just at the edge of vision in the darkness and swirling snow. Ranged attacks for both parties are at -2 for the poor visibility. The security forces also stand behind trees or lie prone behind logs, giving them another -2 for Medium cover.

The mercenaries retreat after only one of them is wounded, dragging his body (and gear) off into the darkness and retreating. They plan on coming back with a stronger force, but the party should be long gone by then. If things go really bad, a bi-polar bear might arrive to kill a few security guards and chase them off (see page 34).

- **Security Guards (3):** See page 36. They have two snowmobiles between them.

ANCHORAGE TUNNEL

Stealing a car and attempting to drive to Anchorage sounds like an excellent plan. There are a half-dozen cars scattered about the

Buckner Building and another dozen around town, and in the 1960s hot wiring isn't too hard (a Repair roll). Let the heroes sweat it a bit as one car after another won't start due to the cold or is hopelessly stuck in a snow bank, but eventually, a pink Cadillac (maybe owned by Cynthia Bonair) starts up and rolls with some difficulty out of its spot.

The big car is heavy and holds the snowy road well. The simple highway was plowed a few hours ago by Wertham's men but already has two inches of accumulation again due to the blizzard. Have the driver make a Driving roll. Failure means he skids into a light pole, knocks it out, and sends it toppling to the ground with a shriek of metal and sparks of fire. The Caddy is structurally unharmed, but it's certainly possible the group drew some attention.

The road leads two ways, but is quickly impassable to the east (back toward the shipwreck and Decision Point). That route requires snowmobiles to go further (see **Decision Point**). The road to the west runs for about two miles, past the boat yard and a barely visible oil depot hidden among the snow and foliage to the right.

The problem, of course, is that Wertham's security force has closed the tunnel. An A-frame building marks the tunnel entrance. Across it is a barrier of snow, ice, and barbed wire. Six security guards stand watch over it, armed and looking for anyone trying to use it.

If the group tries to play it cool and bluff, the guards are already on the lookout for strangers — they know everyone else in the town. One of them starts firing as soon as the Caddy nears.

The rest of the guards then open fire, but fortunately the heavy metal vehicle protects the passengers. Don't roll damage unless they insist on staying. The guards rush forward on foot so the team should be able to turn around and make a run for it relatively easy.

A minute later, they see the headlights of a Whittier Security Force SUV heading toward them, machine guns rattling from two men standing in the rear cab.

The survivors can attempt to ram or fight off the security guards, or they can make a run for it. Either way should eventually be successful. The one thing they can't do is get through the tunnel. The ice and snow require hours of digging to pass through (Wertham wanted no visitors to the town this night). Should the party

try, they're met by wave after wave of security guards until they're eventually chased off.

Born Ready

If the group gets in real trouble, a trucker named Jack Davis wakes from the rear of his cab where he was sleeping till the tunnel opens. Jack is already fed up with the Whittier authorities and decides to help. Born ready to fight, he starts up his big rig and smashes it right into the pursuing guards' SUV just as the survivors need help the most! (Maybe even several SUVs for more pyro and dramatic effect!)

Jack looks out the window, smiles at the heroes, and says "It's all in the reflexes!" A moment later, one of the vehicles crushed beneath the rig explodes...taking the rig full of oil and good ol' Jack Davis with it!

It should be clear that the tunnel isn't an option. They'll either have to try the ranger station, the boat, or head back to the Buckner Building to take out Dr. Wertham.

THE SHIPYARD

Another possible escape is through the many boats tied up at the Whittier Shipyards. Unfortunately, the blizzard — and a likely lack of sailing skill — dooms the attempt.

Just to be cruel, the Game Master should allow the group to sneak into the yard — likely avoiding or overcoming the lone security guard on watch — and find a boat they can hotwire (Repair roll). They start it up, manage to pull out into the harbor, and are almost instantly spotted by Wertham's men. The guards start firing, raking the stolen vessel with machine-gun fire, and give chase. Give the heroes a couple of rounds to plan, but eventually they hit unseen ice in the choppy water, the hull shatters, and the boat starts going down fast.

The security team draws near, weapons drawn to capture the unfortunate and freezing heroes for their maniacal boss. But just as they pull up, a shot rings out from the darkness and hits the patrol boat. The mercenaries on board look at each other...then vanish in a massive explosion!

Just When You Thought It Was Safe

A minute after the party's ears stop ringing, a little rowboat with an outboard engine putters out of the darkness. This is Graham

Ingels, a steely-eyed old coot who has fished these waters for years. He pulls the group from the water and tells them he's no friend to the "crooked cops what work for Doc Wertham."

He then relates his tale of woe:

"That monster came here back in '53. Started testing weird formulas on the soldiers to help 'em fight. One of 'em told me he could heal from anything. He cut off a finger with my own knife and damn if the next day it wasn't back! They could handle the cold, too. They'd swim out here in the water like it was a beach in Florida!

Most of us cheered when they closed the base, but Wertham stayed and kept bringing more mercenaries and other strange types to town. Holed up in the ol' Buckner Building and told the rest of us to skedaddle — least till he needed something.

I seen what they was fixin' to do to you and I couldn't take it no more. The water's too full of ice to sail my Betty out here, but I hopped in this little skiff to help you out and I'm glad I did it! You can't get outta here on the water though. This blizzard'll wreck about anything eventually."

Graham puts in at the dock and lets the heroes get off first while he holds it steady. When the last character is out, he climbs up on the end of the dock and says: "You need to take out Wertham. That's the only way they're gonna leave you alone. I'll be happy to come along and help you o..."

Just then a massive leopard seal leaps up out of the water, catches Graham by the head, and drags him beneath the waves in a red and white froth.

There's no escaping Whittier by boat. The storm is too fierce, the water too full of ice, and the leopard seals still roam in force.

A TALE OF THE CRYPT

Eventually the survivors should realize they need to break back into the Buckner Building

Everyone Who Helps Us Dies!

The few good Samaritans living in and around Whittier, like Ranger Bob Kinney, trucker Jack Davis, or fisherman Graham Ingels, have important but short roles to play. They come to the party's aid or grant information, then die — horribly and suddenly. Their deaths are outlined where they appear, but the trope should hold true if the Game Master introduces other characters as well. The Extra delivers whatever information or aid the group needs, then meets a spectacular end. Make it fast, make it shocking, and leave the party better equipped or more knowledgeable but once again hopelessly alone.

and defeat Dr. Wertham. Maybe they can hold him captive and make him give the group a way out, or they can simply kill him if they're the vengeful type so there's no reason to need body donors anymore.

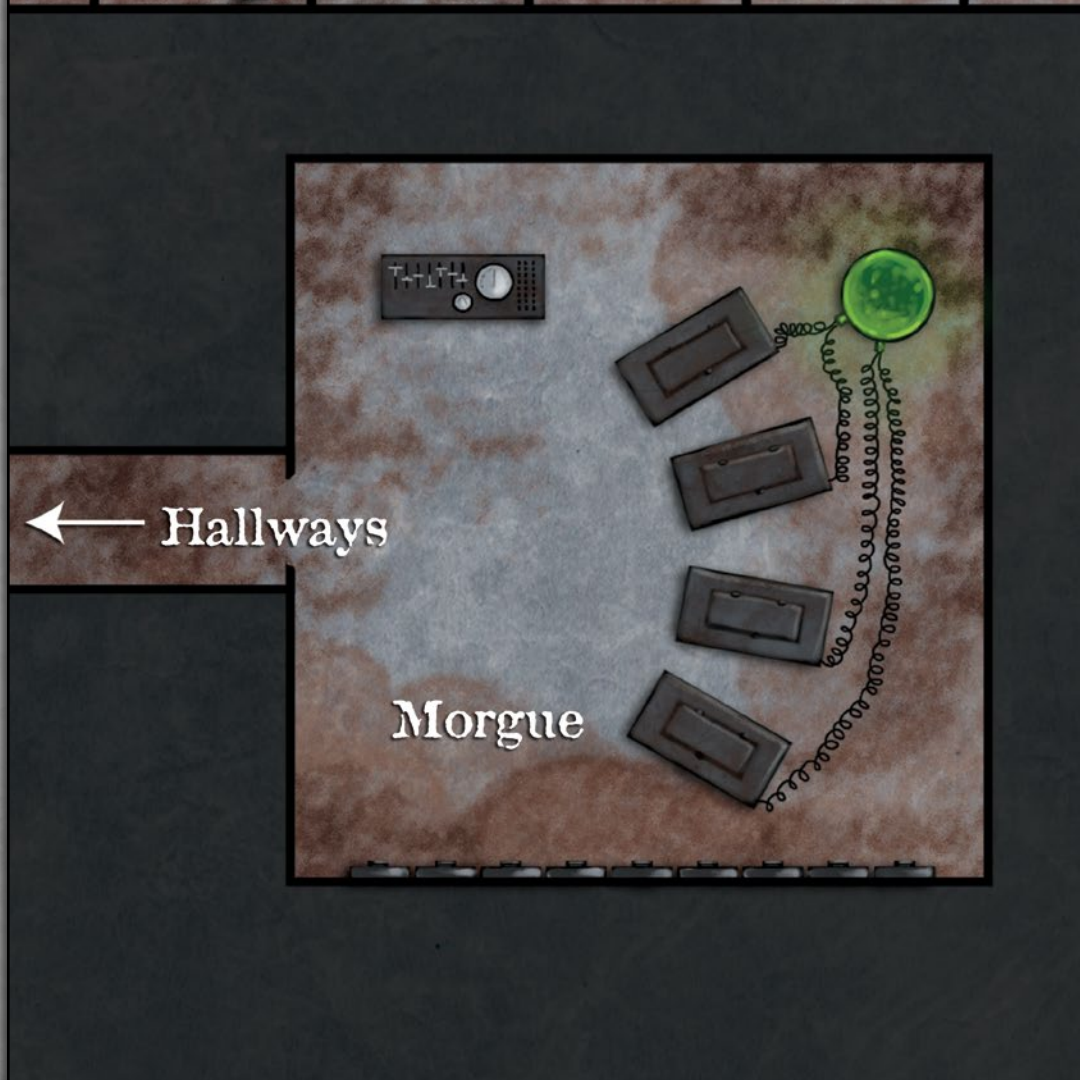
Let the group figure out how they want to break in on their own. If they've explored the town thoroughly, they might find out that the other buildings are connected to the Buckner building via tunnels. This leads them directly to Dr. Wertham's lab. Go straight to **The Haunt of Fear**.

They can also try a more conventional approach, perhaps distracting or defeating the guards and slipping in through windows or some other scheme. Once inside, they can sneak through the structure — maybe encountering a guard or resident they have to deal with — but eventually find the stairway leading to the morgue — go to the **The Haunt of Fear**.

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

The tunnels beneath the Buckner Building are long unused. Red emergency lights illuminate scores of vacant rooms. The survivors see classrooms with stacked desks and chairs, warehouses full of store rooms full of packaged foods, an empty theatre, ransacked commissary, and finally, the medical labs.

The hallways are not entirely empty, unfortunately. A pack of grey wolves prowls the halls, subsisting on rats and the occasional deer



Dr. Wertham's men feed them. But these wolves are very special. Just like the bi-polar bears that roam the surrounding hills, these wolves have been given the Wertham Process and installed with human brains! The brains are castoffs from procedures that went wrong, leaving the patient able to understand basic commands but lacking true sentience—at least most of the time. Dr. Wertham has told the wolves to kill anyone who isn't him, with him, or dressed in the Whittier Security Force uniform.

The beasts stalk the dark corners, running between holes in the wall to ambush or flank their prey from unexpected angles.

- **Gray Matter Wolves (4):** See page 36.

The Vault of Horror

Dr. Wertham and a few of his most trusted security guards have heard the commotion and wait for the heroes in the morgue. It's a square room with four vault-like metal boxes set up to accommodate the transplant patients or apply the Wertham Process. In either case, the patient is placed inside the goo-filled box and cooled to below freezing. If the brain is to be transplanted, the patient remains within for about four days to heal and graft the complex connective tissue of the nervous system.

The guards stand behind the iron boxes, weapons at the ready. Dr. Wertham stands at the back right of the room, beside one of the boxes and near an open morgue drawer. The mercenaries are ready to fight, but Dr. Wertham has a plan. Why fight the heroes or ruin such precious flesh when he can make them a deal instead? As they draw near enough to converse, Dr. Wertham gives his villainous monologue:

"Congratulations, my friends! Not only did you survive that nasty shipwreck and evade my elite security forces all night, but you've actually managed to defeat my wolves and find your way all the way to my lab! You really are amazing specimens!



But there is no need for us to fight. I have dedicated my career to saving lives. At least, the most worthy lives. And you have certainly proven yourselves worthy! So let's make a deal! Lay down your arms and join our community! I can give you immortality, beauty, and health! What do you say friends? Would you like to live FOREVER?"

If the party agrees to his seduction of the innocent, Dr. Wertham congratulates them on such a wise decision and wants to start the treatments immediately—he's all set up, after all! Of course, the moment they're his he puts them to sleep, extricates their brains, and freezes them for further study later on. The bodies become hosts for the residents upstairs—Dr. Wertham must please his paying customers!

More likely, the party refuses the offer and fights. If so, the two guards in the room give it everything they've got, and two more eventually arrive from the tunnels behind the party as

well. Wertham doesn't fight, but crawls into the morgue drawer to hide until the battle is over. Once found, he once again attempts to bribe the heroes with eternal life. Failing that, the group can decide what fate awaits the fiend...but a gruesome and poetic end is most appropriate.

☠ **Dr. Werthman:** See page 35.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Bi-polar Bears

Dr. Wertham has security forces to control the town of Whittier, but he also realized a while back that he needed guardians to patrol the wilderness around it. To this end he took some of the security guards who seemed to be reacting poorly to their treatments, cut out their brains, and installed them in polar bears! To even his surprise, a few of them took.

The guards' brains no longer function at true human capacity, but they remember they take their orders from Wertham and are fed as long as they patrol the woods and hills to the south. Three of the beasts prowl the forests in a pack. They know to chase anyone who isn't a US Forest Ranger, Dr. Wertham himself, or anyone dressed in Whittier Security Force uniforms, back into the town limits. If the prey isn't cooperative in heading back toward town, the bears are more than happy to rend them to bits.

Their purpose in the story, being particularly tough creatures in some strength, *isn't* to tear the party apart, however — entertaining as that may be for ghoulish Game Masters. Their role is to rear up and scare the fire out of the survivors for pure shock value, and create a sort

of mobile barrier around Whittier should the team stray "off the map."

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size +2:** Polar bears stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1000 pounds.



Dr. Louis Wertham

The most brilliant — and most reviled — of the Buckner Building scientists was Dr. Louis Wertham. He was tasked with making the US soldiers stationed there tougher and more resilient to the weather. Wertham's research quickly revealed more than just immunity to sub-zero temperatures, however. He learned how to regrow what was once thought to be fatally damaged tissue. He even performed a limb transplant, and eventually a heart transplant. Both of the experiments met with initial success, but the patients began to deteriorate, especially in the warmer summer months or even indoors.

When the building was closed in 1960, Wertham's contract was not renewed.

It didn't take the brilliant but twisted scientist long before he hit upon an idea to continue his research and fund it at the same time — offering eternal life to the world's elite.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12+1, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Driving d6, Healing d10, Intimidation d6, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Biology) d12, Knowledge (Chemistry) d12, Knowledge (Marine Science) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Repair d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Swimming d6



Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Curious, Overconfident, Stubborn, Vow (Discover the true secret of eternal life)

Edges: Alertness, Healer, Luck, McGyver, Mr. Fix It, Scholar (Knowledge (Biology) and Knowledge (Chemistry))

Gear: None

Gray Matter Wolves

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Swimming d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet-Footed:** The wolves have a d10 Running die.
- **Go for the Throat:** The wolves hit the target's least armored area when attacking with a raise.
- **Size:** -1: The wolves are large, but still smaller than a man.

Leopard Seals

Leopard seals are actually natives of Antarctica, but Dr. Wertham transplanted a small pack to Alaska, installed cast-off human brains in their skulls, and has so far been quite happy with their performance as coastal guard dogs. The vast majority of people in the 1960s won't know this, of course.

The animals do have scars on their heads from the brain transplant, but in the darkness of the first encounter the group shouldn't notice it (it will give away too much of what's to come if you do). Once the group knows about the Wertham Process (see page 27), and should they encounter the massive predators again, they can make a simple Notice roll to see the scars.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Swimming d10

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Blubber and muscle.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Ram:** In water, a leopard seal can charge at great speed and ram its prey to knock it off-balance or even unconscious. This is a Trick using opposed Swimming skills, but if the leopard seal wins with a raise, the victim suffers nonlethal Strength damage as well.



Jack's Closing Remarks

How did it go, **FIEND**? Did your **Gorgeous George** take Dr. Wertham up on his offer? Did your **Darling Betty** end up with a new **BRAIN** to match her snowshoes? Or did she tell the good doctor to **CHILL**? Permanently! Or maybe your survivors **BAKED ALASKA** and everything in it!

However things turned out, I hope you and your party had a **COOL** time with this **WEIRD FANTASY**. I also hope you found all the EC-ster eggs our hack author planted for you **FREAKS** to find!

Ah well, it's time ol' Smilin' Jack got put back on **ICE**, at least until the next **Two-Fisted Tale**!

Or when HELL FREEZES OVER!—Ed.

- **Size +3:** Leopard seals can grow up to 12' long and weigh over 1300 pounds!

Wertham Security

These men are former soldiers Wertham tricked into his service. They follow his orders loyally and narrowly. They *never* speak. They're clad in black pants and sweater, bullet proof vest, black ski cap, and sunglasses—even at night! If examined, they don't have the scars on their skulls the residents of the Buckner Building have, but their skin is tinged slightly green and feels cool to the touch.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: — **Gear:** M3 Grease gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3, AP 1, Auto), night stick (Str+d4, non-lethal), bullet proof vest (Armor +4 vs bullets, +2 vs melee).

Special Abilities:

- **Wertham Process:** The security guards have +1 Toughness thanks to Wertham's chemicals, and regenerate one wound every hour assuming most of the internal organs and circulatory system is intact. They add +4 to Vigor rolls made to resist cold.



It's 1982. The heroes are young college students on spring break travelling to stay with Aunt Mary at her lakeside retreat. When they arrive, however, Mary is nowhere to be seen. The heroes find entries within the pages of her diary retelling recent horrific events perpetrated by what she considered "good honest folks." The last entry speaks of an attack by some hideous flying creature on her way back from town, and how an injury from the beast is somehow changing her. The characters then hear scratching coming from the basement...

When they head into town or are chased there, the heroes find it is devoid of people. Many shops, businesses, and homes are boarded up and empty cars litter the streets. On stopping to investigate they are immediately fired on by an unseen gunman and forced to seek refuge in a nearby convenience store with a few survivors who haven't yet fallen into savagery.

They discover the town has been beset by winged creatures that come and attack at night. The day is little better — infected humans, perhaps under the sway of the creatures, prevent anyone from leaving!

The students also learn they are not the first to arrive and be trapped here, and those who have lived through the horror are forming armed groups to scavenge from other survivors. The adventure sees the heroes try to escape the town and deal with roaming motorcycle gangs, doomsday fundamentalists, and the dictatorship of those formally in positions of trust — all while eluding both the infected during the day and the winged creatures at night. If they can find those responsible for disturbing the creatures' nest they may find a way to end the night attacks, but will they survive the hostility of the other surviving townsfolk?

SETTING RULES

These optional Setting Rules from the *Savage Worlds* corebook and *Savage Worlds Horror Companion* are appropriate when running *The Retreat: Gritty Damage, Sanity Rules*.

Sanity Rules are recommended only if you are planning on expanding the adventure into a longer series or campaign. As the inhabitants of Sanctuary have been under siege by the creatures and each other for some time prior

March 3rd

Dear Diary,

I cannot begin to describe the terrible fate that has befallen our quiet little town of Sanctuary. Pastor Jacob always said we'd all be judged for our earthly sins—but what great sins has this community committed to deserve such wicked and terrible cruelty?

Last night the horrific attack upon Mairi's Bar claimed 14 people—massacred by something without remorse or mercy, and others, still, are missing with no clue to where they are. There are no traces of their passing. Their relatives are utterly distraught, as one might imagine, and demand answers from the sheriff and the mayor, but none are forthcoming.

The rest of the town is in a state of panic. Some blame the Survivalists out in the woods, others point their accusations at the bikers who roar up and down the main street at all hours; but they have never dared do anything like this before.

People are scared, really scared, and they're keeping their children indoors, their loved ones close.

And there is talk of strange lights in the sky.

to the adventure, it is worth thinking about how the situation may have affected the townsfolk's sanity, even if you decide not to use the rules.

CHARACTERS

The heroes are all young students on Spring break. One has an Aunt Mary, whether she is a blood relation or just a friend of the family. The group may create their characters however they wish with a few exceptions:

- The heroes are Novice characters.
- Each student attends the same college, so they already know one another.
- All characters must take a d6 Knowledge skill relating to their college course.
- No character may have Smarts lower than d6 unless they reached college through a sports scholarship (although nothing prohibits an intelligent sports student!).
- The following Edges are prohibited: All Arcane Backgrounds and Edges that require them, Arcane Resistance, Connections, Beast Master.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The tranquil resort town of Sanctuary is located 15 miles off the interstate and sits in an isolated location amid great swaths of forest, small lakes, and flooded cave systems. To the west, a great picturesque mountain range looms over the town, showering it in heavy snowfall during the winter months.

Sanctuary's beginnings date back to the 1700s when it was first an outpost for British exploration, then later became a trading post for trappers and hunters. By the turn of the 19th Century the town of Sanctuary was born, named by settlers retreating from a cholera outbreak back east.

During a terrible winter in the mid 1800s the town's population was cut off and decimated; few survived the bitter cold, illnesses, and scarcity of good hunting and crops. There were rumors that several people went missing during this time, simply disappearing in the dark at night, but the official position of county government pointed toward harsh conditions

of the winter and Sanctuary was not unique in this position.

The town grew steadily from the 1870s onward, relying on the traditional hunting and trapping industry but also incorporating a newly formed lumber trade helped significantly by railroad advancement in the north. Never growing outside its means, the townsfolk enjoyed simple prosperity and hard but gratifying lives until the onset of the world wars in the 20th century, when many of the town's young men, feeling the boredom of youth and eager for glory, left in search of adventure. Few returned.

With the population of Sanctuary once again greatly reduced and with no one to pass down the knowledge of their trade, the town began to recruit outside help in the 1950s. The sudden influx of outsiders caused conflict with the locals and they often clashed in the bars and taverns come sundown over both ideological and petty differences.

Major change came in the 1960s when the town council decided to look for alternate ways to reinvigorate the area and settled on tourism, citing the naturally clean air of the surroundings as giving numerous health benefits to weary city types. Logging was drastically reduced and many small guest houses were built to blend in with Sanctuary's renowned federal-style architecture. As the town grew to accommodate the influx of the tired and weary, reclaimed land from the lumber industry was turned into farmland, and the rich produce proved popular with both locals and tourists alike.

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE LAKE

The adventure begins just after one o'clock in the afternoon as the students make the final leg of their long journey to Aunt Mary's lakeside retreat in Sanctuary; expecting a warm welcome, iced tea, sandwiches, and hopefully a good rest before they do any work in fixing up the house. They haven't actually spoken to Mary in several weeks — not being able to get through on the telephone — but with the late winter weather in the area this sort of thing is not unusual.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You've come off the interstate and have been heading towards the small town of Sanctuary some 10 miles away.

March 4th

Dear Diary,

Today, the Sheriff's Department was attacked by several of our own. I don't understand what's happening out here. Everyone who was in the department is dead... ripped to shreds by people I knew, friends of mine.

People in the streets panicked, others ran home for weapons or locked their doors. I tried to hide in the church but the doors were bolted shut, so I hid in the convenience store until nightfall. All the phone lines in town were dead.

I need to contact someone, anyone that can help.

Who is going to believe me?

After a small navigational hiccup, the map takes you down a small grassy road, still covered in a thin layer of early spring frost, leading into the forest and toward Aunt Mary's house by the lake. You can't help but notice several cars, seemingly abandoned by the side of the road.

As the vegetation gets thicker you worry momentarily that perhaps you took a wrong turn, but then the trees suddenly part to reveal a clearing, the smell of fresh water, and the sounds of birds in the sky.

Aunt Mary's house stands before you, a large wooden building with a covered porch. It looks in much worse condition than you were led to believe, with windows shattered and roof tiles lying about. With ample space to park, you drive up and get out to investigate.

Upon exiting the car, the player character whose aunt resides here may want to call out for

her, or be the first to go up to the door through the porch and ring the bell. However, no one is at home. A successful Notice roll reveals the other car here to have a badly damaged roof, and a raise reveals damage to the house in several places as if something fell against it. The students see no signs of fallen trees or other big objects nearby which could have done this. The door is locked from the inside, but there is a key under the mat.

Once the heroes enter the house it all seems relatively normal. An unpleasant smell coming from the kitchen where unwashed dishes have been festering. The garbage hasn't been taken out for a while and thick clouds of flies buzz lazily about.

The students may look around the house, but there is no sign of struggle or mess save the state of the kitchen. Anyone in the living room notices a large, leather bound diary and pen along with a loaded hunting rifle, on the table. The diary belongs to Mary, and although it only has a few recent entries in it, all are alarming.

As soon as the last entry has been seen, read or paraphrase the following:

Without warning a frantic scratching and clawing emanates from the cellar door. It was locked tight, as if it had been nailed shut from the inside, but now the bolts are shaking and a gibbering sound resonates through the house. The lock suddenly snaps and a grotesque mockery of Aunt Mary comes crashing through—her hair long, dank, and black but falling out in clumps, her eyes swollen shut, and most menacing of all her mouth is split from ear to ear revealing needle-shaped teeth. She senses you and with a guttural scream charges forward...

This is definitely time for a Fear test! Mary's relative rolls at -2.

☠ **Smiler Aunt Mary:** See page 59.

The Getaway

The students won't be able to reason with Aunt Mary so must fight or flee from the house. As Aunt Mary is heavily outnumbered she should be easily defeated by even non-combatants. There will be plenty of makeshift weapons to be found in the house, not

forgetting the hunting rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2). The most probable course of action, whether they decide to kill Mary or flee, is to get back into their car and attempt to escape the town. If they decide to run without fighting she pursues them to their car and attacks.

If they decide to flee toward the interstate, go to **No Escape!**

No Escape!

The characters may think they best get out of Dodge and take the road back to the interstate. In the '80s there are no cell phones or internet to call for help! A few miles back on that road the empty cars they saw on the way in, now crawls with people. On closer inspection they see they all have the hideous smile of poor Aunt Mary.

The cars that were previously by the side of the road have been dragged into the center to prevent folks from passing. If the students stop or get out of the car they are immediately set upon by smilers (See page 58.).

The idea here is not to kill the heroes; the smilers instead try to herd them back toward town. If the characters wish to stay and fight, suicidal as it would seem, they are most likely to lose. However, upon Incapacitation they find themselves without their car, having been dragged to Central Avenue in the next scene. Use the stats for smilers on page 58, with at least four for each player character to emphasize there is no escape!

Guns, Ammo, & Supplies

There are several opportunities to get weapons and ammo as well as other supplies. However, it should be noted that as often as they pick up such weapons they are most likely to have them taken away. It should be emphasized there is little ammo for guns, and most of the player characters won't have much understanding or training in the use of firearms. Running is usually the best option! As for supplies, the convenience store and the Town Hall kitchen are good stops to refresh; otherwise looting from the dead is a grisly but acceptable option.

THE QUAIN TOWN OF SANCTUARY

Upon arriving in the town read or paraphrase the following:

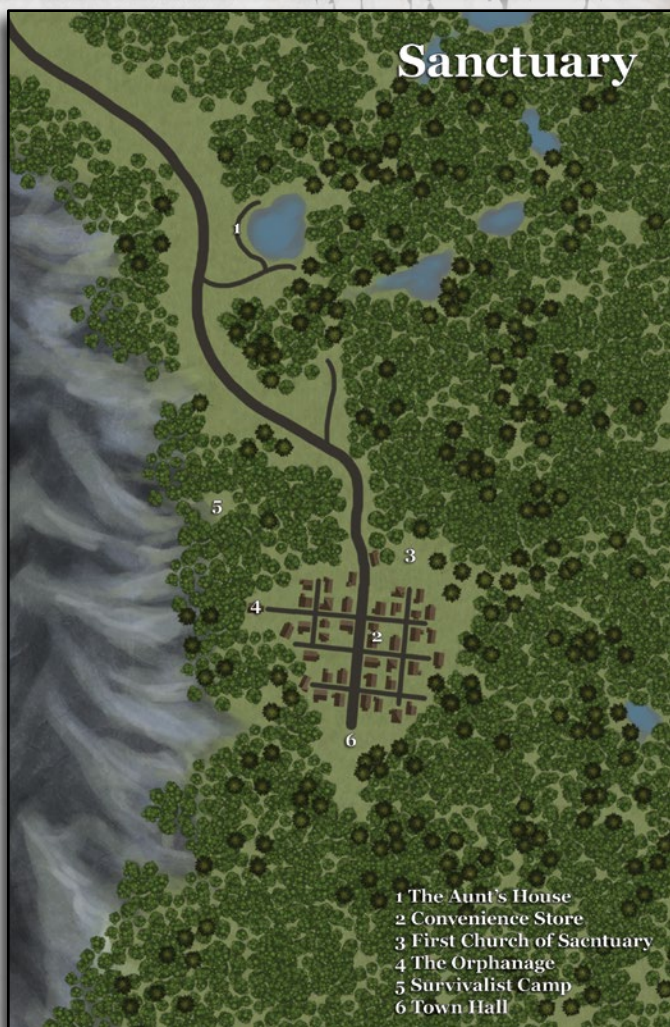
As you drive onto Central Avenue, the town of Sanctuary looks deserted. Parked cars in the street force you to slow down to a crawl. You notice some of the doors are wide open with keys still in the ignition.

Shops and businesses alike are boarded up, others have their windows smashed. They appear looted, but from glimpsing into an electrical store there's not a hint that high end valuables have been taken. You notice three cars ominously block you from further travel into the town and none of the side streets are wide enough to pass through.

If the heroes haven't already tried to leave town they might turn around and do so now, returning to the events in **No Escape!** Ultimately these events force them back to Central Avenue and they are left with no choice but to leave their vehicle and explore on foot.

The students only manage a few steps before they are fired on from a high vantage point. Allow each character to make a Notice roll to check for surprise. On a success, they get an action before the sniper zooms in on them. The characters are unlikely to have much in the way of weaponry at this point. Even if they have managed to pick up Aunt Mary's hunting rifle they are not well equipped to handle a gun battle in the street. Deal Action Cards, with anyone who spends an action actively looking for the shooter and making a Notice roll being able to point out the rough direction of the shooter to the others.

Once the shooter has been spotted, or after 1d6 rounds, a police officer emerges from a nearby convenience store and fires a couple of



- 1 The Aunt's House
- 2 Convenience Store
- 3 First Church of Sanctuary
- 4 The Orphanage
- 5 Survivalist Camp
- 6 Town Hall

rounds in the rough direction of the assailant while two other people, a man and a woman, usher the heroes inside.

- **Shooter (1):** Treat as Townsfolk. He is armed with a hunting rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP2). He prefers to take aim rather than fire wildly. See page 59.

Sanctuary within Sanctuary

Ushered with haste into the convenience store, the woman and man begin nailing the door shut. You can tell immediately they took a risk in opening the door for you, and you are not above suspicion yourselves as the police officer points a gun at all of you.

The deputy's pistol is held casually. He seems more cautious than trigger happy. He questions

the heroes as to what they are doing here, and asks if any help is coming for the town.

A successful Persuasion roll gets the deputy to put the gun away. With a raise he immediately begins to bandage any injuries the students might have sustained (Healing d6).

The other two survivors finish securing the door and introduce themselves as Clare and David Hart. The officer is Deputy John Jackson. Clare offers the heroes food and drink while they rest and ask questions about the town and its situation.

If the students read Aunt Mary's diary and share this information then Clare confirms the entries. Otherwise she sits down as if suddenly exhausted:

There have been attacks for over a week, but it feels longer. People started going crazy, attacking their neighbors in the street, in the local bar. There was a horrific attack at the Sheriff's Department, only Deputy Jackson survived...

Letting out an emphatic sigh Clare explains the town has been beset by monsters out of nightmare. The first to appear were what they have dubbed smilers, who appeared during the day roughly a week or so ago. They are ferocious

when they attack but seem more occupied with keeping the good folks of Sanctuary in the town. Clare and David agree that the monsters appear to be members of the community who have been changed somehow.

The second creatures are hideous winged beasts, only coming out at night to feed on both animals and humans. They whisk off stragglers and take them to an unknown destination, presumably to feed on later. Clare and David don't know about the infection, or that animals can also be infected and die soon after (see **Creature Origins**, page 47).

- **Deputy John Jackson:** Use the Police Patrolmen profile from the *Horror Companion*.
- **Clare and David:** Use the townsfolk profile, page 59.

Trouble Comes A-Knockin'

Deputy Jackson tells the heroes the Town Hall is where he believes most of the surviving townsfolk are held up. As the convenience store has its own generator and they have ammunition, the three of them have decided to hold up until help comes. He indicates there isn't enough food and water for the entire group and they are best served by heading to the Town Hall.



Whether the group agrees or not, a sudden commotion directs their attention to the back of the store; someone is frantically trying to break in!

Through the dirty glass of the back door is a man in his late 40s or early 50s. He is disheveled and a large head wound has matted his graying brown hair lank across his face. When he sees you he stops banging and pleads to be let in.

"You must help me!" he begs, as he grabs at the door handle and futilely shakes it. "I've been attacked and they're chasing me! You must let me in!"

If the heroes try to help, the three survivors in the store tell them it's too dangerous. As the argument escalates, however, the door suddenly swings open and the gentleman falls in...where he's instantly and violently shot by the deputy emptying his entire clip in panic! A moment later, it's clear, the man was forced through the door by what appears to be a huge mastiff with a deadly smile, and it is not alone...

- **Infected Dogs (3):** Use Dog/Wolf Profile from *Savage Worlds*. Increase Bite to Str+d8 and add the Hardy and Infected Special Abilities (page 58) .

Blocking their only escape, one of the dogs immediately attacks and kills the deputy. Clare and David flee from the creatures into the convenience store. Hopefully the students are brave enough to attempt to rescue their rescuers. Here the Game Master should encourage creative behavior—there's plenty of different household objects that can act as makeshift weapons—for example, an aerosol and a lighter would make a good flamethrower (See the **Flamethrower** rules in *Savage Worlds*, but reduce the weapon's damage to 2d6).

If they defeat the animals they are told by the couple that they have never seen dogs become smilers. The students are then instructed to take as much as they can carry and make their way to the Town Hall. Clare and David insist that they will follow shortly behind them and cannot be persuaded to leave immediately. The students may decide to wait for the couple but it should be made obvious the shop is now compromised, and if a flamethrower was used

it is possibly on fire! If Clare and David were killed by the dogs, one of them survives for long enough to tell them to head to the Town Hall.

THE TOWN HALL

After navigating back alleys the characters come back onto Central Avenue where they are presented with what is unmistakably the Town Hall.

The hall is a relatively large two story Georgian building. It has only two entrances that are not boarded up. One is a small side entrance with an iron door; the other is the main double door entrance at the front. Armed militia stand guard behind several carefully placed cars. A school bus and a fire engine have been used as makeshift barricades.

To the left of the building is the Sheriff's Department. An altogether smaller building, it appears to have been badly damaged and no attempt has been made to board up the windows or protect it from the elements. It is impossible to gain entrance without alerting the armed men. If the group is being chased then the militia fire on the dogs and herd the survivors inside.

The Mayor's Office

The heroes get a lukewarm reception from the armed guards and are escorted through the main doors to see the mayor, but not before they are stripped of any weapons and items they may have acquired. If David and Clare came with them they are whisked into a different room. There are many rooms in each direction and a large central staircase. The entire place is very busy with people fetching and carrying things, all under the watchful eye of the militia. The students are led to the main hall in the left wing of the building and here, sitting on a large chair in the staging area, is Mayor Edward Meyen, a large portly fellow with thinning hair, who looks over maps of the town on a large oak table with two other gentlemen.

As the students are marched closer the mayor dismisses his companions, and rarely looking up, enquires as to how they arrived and the state of the roads out of town. When he is satisfied they have given him all the information he requires he stands up and seems at once solemn yet friendly.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Friends, you must excuse the reception. Since the attacks began a week ago we cannot be too careful — there are not just creatures out there who wish us harm, but sadly other members of the community, some of whom were bad seeds before this terrible event befell our beautiful town. I have unfortunately had to recruit a militia to protect the others at the Town Hall, and not just from the monsters. Tell me, have you had any trouble with the creatures or others around town?"

The mayor waits for the heroes' response before continuing.

"There are small pockets of survivors holed up in their own homes with daddy's old shotgun or Timmy's little league bat, but mostly they've started to pool together for safety and security. As you may have noticed, a great number have fled to the Town Hall, and it is I, as Mayor of Sanctuary, who has to keep the town safe."

"We know a few good God-fearing folks are barricaded in the church, but there are other more dishonest types around. Survivalists, who lived in the woods and rarely troubled the town before, are now making raids during daylight hours and have no problem with indiscriminate killing to get what they want. There's also a ragtag group of bikers who ride their dirty machines up and down Central Avenue at all hours, robbing and pillaging and attracting those damn winged beasts. With these trouble makers we can't possibly lead a group out on foot, and even if we used the school bus we would have to take enough armed men with us that there wouldn't be enough left to protect the others."

If David and Clare came with them to the Town Hall or the students tell him they are on their way the mayor says he will speak with them later, or his men will keep an eye out for them. Should the characters inquire about the creatures the mayor says:

"There seem to be three main types of foul beasts that have plagued this town over the last week, but in truth we think it started earlier, when our livestock and pets starting dying, or becoming feral. If they weren't dead, mutilated in some instances, then they would become rabid — deranged even — slathering and spitting like they had rabies. A great deal more just went missing and were never found again."

"Then came the human-like monstrosities, patrolling the outskirts of the town and forest during the day, preventing anyone from escaping. They attacked the Sheriff's Department, took down phone lines and electrical wiring before heading further out. And then... well there's the night flyers, strange creatures of light and shadow that patrol the night skies, snatching and eating our own. We...have lost many to their attacks."

If the group has mentioned Aunt Mary and how she changed into one of the smilers, the mayor nods sadly and says it confirms his suspicions that the daylight creatures are in fact townsfolk and tourists who have somehow been infected. He asks the group to keep that information to themselves as there are many here who would be devastated to think something might have happened to their loved ones and may attempt to leave to "save" them.

"Anyway, you must be tired, and night is almost upon us...so we must prepare. We will ensure you are fed and rested. Tomorrow we will fill you in on work duty; everyone who stays here works, else they will be asked to leave, and I don't recommend that."

The Dorm Rooms

The mayor bids the newcomers good night and the guards escort them out of the room. A young, petite woman, Alice Marshall, introduces herself. She greets each of the students in turn and gives them a tour of the building, including a bathing area, kitchens, and finally one of the many upstairs meeting rooms that have been converted into makeshift dormitory rooms for the survivors. Emphasize that everything here is communal, and

anything picked up is immediately noticed and politely but firmly asked to be put down again.

The dormitory has little space, for the people who sleep here are in close proximity and only a makeshift blind is in place to segregate gender. The good folks of Sanctuary go in and out without paying much attention to the heroes. Alice orders a simple meal be brought to them, apologizing for such a meager offering. She implies that her husband Alistair, who is one of the mayor's personal assistants (read: militia) is out tomorrow on a raid of local houses, and is sure to bring back better supplies.

The students may wish to ask Alice some questions but she's hesitant to answer. With a success on a Persuasion roll she tells them:

- The mayor is doing what he believes is right — which is safeguarding the remaining townsfolk.
- He is listening less and less to other members of the community, instead relying on a select few of his trusted allies and his personal guard.

With a raise on a Persuasion check she whispers the following:

- The mayor is slow to react. There has already been a fatal attack on the Sheriff's Department that wiped out the law in this down — that's the opinion of at least half of the survivors under his care.
- No one voices their opinions too strongly at town meetings which have been held daily, not since the mayor started the Sanctuary Militia four days ago.
- The militia, with the exception of her beloved husband, can be bullish and obeys the mayor's every command, not least because they get extra perks not afforded to the rest of the community.

After this conversation Alice tells the heroes they should eat and then get some sleep. Night is upon them and soon the winged creatures will come and attack, snatching anyone unwise enough to be walking out at night. She assures them they are safe under her husband Alistair's watchful eye.

The heroes may wish to leave before daybreak. If they do, have them make Stealth rolls at -1 in order to not get noticed as they make their way to the back door downstairs

(the front door means instant exposure and they are marched at gunpoint back to the dorms). If they take this course of action they get no further than the Sheriff's Department before an attack by four flyers (see page 58) forces them to either retreat back to the Town Hall or run along Central Avenue under attack towards the church. If they choose the latter, proceed directly to **Church Congregation: The First Church of Sanctuary.**

Staying the night at the Town Hall brings an uncomfortable sleep as there is sporadic gunfire and screaming from outside. The characters must make a Vigor roll or else take a level of Fatigue as they struggle to get any rest. The Fatigue is recovered after four hours of restful sleep.

The Sheriff's Department

As day breaks the smell of soup wafts throughout the building and Alice returns to lead them to the main hall. Tables have been set up and there are at least 15 people already sitting and eating, with more entering every minute.

The students may wish to talk to fellow survivors. Here are some responses and information up for grabs:

- The people are scared, of the creatures, of loved ones missing, and of the other gangs, especially the bikers and Survivalists.
- There was an attack last night. Several members were slightly wounded by the night flyers before the militia put the creatures down.
- The Survivalists come from families that were in the logging business before it was all but shut down, and resent the town. Likewise, the bikers are mostly made up of sons of those who came to the town in the 1950's, as well as a few dishonest youths.
- Half of the survivors are completely behind the mayor, the other half are not openly against him in case someone is listening.
- There are rumors of survivors going missing if they don't do what the mayor says.
- The best job is in the kitchen, as it is always guarded and they at least have access to knives.
- The worst jobs involve raiding alongside the militia, as common survivors from the Town Hall aren't allowed firearms and must

make do with whatever simple tools and makeshift weapons they can gather.

- The militia does little to protect them when out on raids, often using them as human shields from snipers on the rooftops.
- There is some resentment about personal property becoming communal, although most agree that it's the only way to survive for now.
- Many of the survivors will continually ask the same question to the students: is this horror happening in the outside world? (Answer: not when they left!)
- If David and Clare survived and were to follow later, no one has heard from them.

As breakfast comes to a close Mayor Meyen enters the room and begins to read out the day's tasks, assigning people to different communal jobs, from washing bathrooms, cleaning, kitchen duty, and barricading. When he comes to the heroes read or paraphrase the following:

"We were joined last night by some fellow survivors from out-of-town; I hope you can all give them a warm welcome. Their job today is to secure the Sheriff's Department next door which I know many of you have asked for. It is a large job, in need of cleaning and barricading and there are sure to still be some things there that can benefit our community. Please show them every courtesy and help them become valued members of our little group until the phone lines are restored and help comes, which will be any day now I promise you!"

After the mayor has finished assignment duty the group are led out the back way by Alice's husband Alistair, a small man with glasses and a friendly face, and another guard. They put them with two other members (who can be Clare and David if they came with the characters but are otherwise unimportant) who carry tools and wood to the Sheriff's Department.

The building is riddled with bullet holes and smashed windows as if a battle took place here. The sheriff and all but one of his deputies were killed by the creatures. The mayor quickly acquired the firearms from the secure lock up and gave them to his trusted militia.

After an hour or so of barricading the windows the armed militia man stands guard outside and the two other members of the Town Hall begin fixing the internal doors, allowing the heroes to cleanup, have a good look around, and discuss their plans.

The characters notice the ceiling has collapsed down onto the staircase preventing access. In the secure lockup all of the guns have been taken. The heroes can pocket any other simple office items for later use if they want, but all the weapons are gone.

As they make their way into the cells, the students notice most of the grated doors are open and the far one is warped, slowly swinging back and forth from its metal hinges. Directly in front of them is a man sitting in the lone locked cell.

He looks up at them with a sad smile and says:

"Hi. I don't suppose you're here to let me out or feed me are you?"

Depending on the response, the students can find cell keys on a hook by the entrance.

He gestures slowly with open palms and continues:

"I'm not dangerous, I assure you. I was put in here yesterday after a... certain disagreement with Mayor Meyen. I was under the impression he wanted a way out of this situation and I was sadly mistaken in that belief."

The man introduces himself as Dr. Nicholas Miles, a scientist from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) who came with his more experienced team members to investigate what appeared to be a ravaging wasting disease affecting cattle in the area. They found the disease was not contagious; rather, something was infecting the cattle individually. Each animal showed injury to its spine and changes to its genetic makeup. He doesn't know how or when people of the town became infected although his team was called in three weeks ago, before any attacks on the populace began.

The animals Dr. Miles found didn't survive for more than a few hours after the infection. Prior to death the infection drives them insane and they attack anything not their own kind. He says his fellow team mates are able to explain more, but doesn't know where they

are currently. He heard they were headed to the First Church of Sanctuary to speak with members of the congregation and collect more data, but the dismissive mayor insisted they were abducted by the local biker gang.

Whether the heroes decide to open the door or not, he tells them the Sheriff's Department isn't safe, that during the night the doors have been left wide open and those imprisoned here have been under threat by the night flyers.

"Just last night they came in looking for people. There were three of them and they managed to break into the last cell and snatch one of the prisoners there, another gentleman who had disagreed with the mayor. The others must be dead. I heard screaming...and then silence."

At this point the heroes need to decide whether they are letting the good doctor out of his cell. Moments later they hear a familiar and unsettling sound... three smilers come stumbling out of the furthest jail cell and head for the characters! Dr Meyen suddenly retreats to a corner and whispers ominously "They're Heeeeere!"

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Creature Origins

It is hinted in A Brief History that the creatures have been here before, but where do they come from?

If you want to extend the adventure, possibly rooting out the creatures' nest, there is documented evidence in the town library of missing people throughout the town's history, leading the heroes to semi-flooded underground caves near one of the many lakes. Alternatively the town could have been struck by a meteor bringing the creatures to earth, or the scientists hint the creatures have always been here, hibernating over long periods of time when they can no longer sustain their numbers.

What is certain is that the creatures cannot turn lesser beasts into more of their number and use them only as a food source. Those that have been infected become feral and soon die horrifically.

Only by infecting humans in the night flyer form can they create smilers, who

eventually mutate into their flying brethren. Perhaps just one of the flyers awoke from a long slumber, and tried to mutate animals before finally finding it could use humans to create more of its kind.

The group may attempt to defend themselves against their assailants, lock themselves in the cage with Dr. Miles, or attempt to escape either by themselves or with the doctor. Either way they have a fight on their hands. If they make it to the front of the building they can call on the militia man for aid. The doctor may either stay imprisoned or not make it out of the department alive, but either way it helps to keep the tension high for his life to be ended, one way or another.

Outside, the heroes notice there are people flooding out of the Town Hall. It seems other survivors were infected recently and became smilers, infesting the sanctuary. Uninfected

militia tries to keep control, shooting into the air and at smilers who attack indiscriminately. If the students choose to help the survivors they come across several smilers themselves, three for each hero. Any hero with the Loyal or Heroic Hindrance who stays until everyone else retreats is awarded a Benny.

Alice and her husband Alistair run to the heroes and tell them they must find another place to hide; regulars at the local church, they believe Pastor Jacob can protect them. Alistair gives one of the students a handgun before a smiler jumps on the back of his neck to the screams of his wife.

The heroes may attempt to save the couple, but even if they beat back the smiler it is more horrific if Alistair succumbs to his wounds as they escape, with Alice refusing to leave his side.

The street is chaotic and the characters have no sway over the militia to try and rally them. There is no other option but to run down Central Avenue towards the towering sight of the First Church of Sanctuary at the end of the street, leaving the rest of the Town Hall to its fate. If they run toward the convenience store they notice it is no longer secure and if their rescuers didn't come with them to the Town Hall they are nowhere to be seen. Anywhere else they try to go they find that the smilers herd them toward the church.

- **Smiler (2 per hero):** See page 58. An additional 1d4 every two rounds that the heroes stay by the Town Hall.

FINDING A PLACE FOR THE LORD

In this part of the adventure, the heroes find their way to the First Church of Sanctuary and come to realize the impact of the creatures on some of the survivor's sanity.

Shortly after the attacks started, the kind and faithful pastor gathered his congregation and declared that the devil may be upon them. Many didn't believe him at first, but his flock grew steadily. It practically swelled after a massacre at Mairi's Bar and subsequent attack on the Sheriff's Department. By the time the night flyers descended on the town the church group had already barricaded themselves and

the surrounding buildings, having gathered a large reserve of non-perishable foodstuffs as well as many personal weapons.

What is unknown to the rest of the populace is that the benevolent Pastor Jacob is quite dead; in his place is one of the more prominent and fundamental members of his congregation. The sanity-challenged Christina Fairchild took control of the Church survivors and sees the creatures as demons sent by the Lord Himself to test the faithful. Those who were not swayed by her long, rambling preaching were sacrificed to the creatures in a vain attempt to appease them. Now the faithful and terrified few alike are all that remain and they are looking for stragglers. When they come across such unfortunate souls they attach them to makeshift crosses in the church grounds to feed the demons in the unfounded belief it will save their own skins.

CHURCH CONGREGATION: THE FIRST CHURCH OF SANCTUARY

Standing on top of a steep hill, up many steps, the First Church of Sanctuary is well defended from the atrocities of the town. Rough palisades are erected around its boundaries and members of the congregation with basic firearms patrol the perimeter.

The group is ordered to halt when they reach the bottom of the stairs. They are asked who they are and told only true believers can be admitted to the house of the Lord. A Persuasion roll is enough to gain them entrance as the church is on the lookout for stragglers. Upon entering the church they find 20 or more people in the midst of hymns led by a tall, thin woman with long straight hair.

The survivors are immediately stripped of any weapons but allowed to keep any meager possessions they might have picked up. If they stand at a pew and join in they get a temporary +1 to Charisma for the next scene.

As the hymns finish the woman at the front approaches and introduces herself as Pastor Christina Fairchild. She bids them welcome and inquires to their general health and wellbeing, eager to hear what happened to them since they arrived in town. She shows considerable

attention to the events that have just transpired at the Town Hall and the road out of town.

Christina offers a tour of the church, during which the students learn the congregation all sleep in the surrounding rooms. One of the larger rooms has been turned into a functioning, but basic, kitchen. In the grounds around the back of the church the heroes notice chicken wire has been curdely erected as a cage to keep out the night flyers. The congregation is already planting and using rain barrels for self-sufficiency. Just outside the wired cage several large crosses are erected before the hill drops off steeply to the other side of the building down to a small road. If anyone asks about the large crosses the reply is dismissive as if this was natural for any church in a time of crisis.

Once back into the church a small team returns late from a scouting mission. They would have returned last night but were attacked by demons. One of them shows signs of infection and Christina tells the characters those infected by the demon's "Satan Seed" become "the Walking Men" (smilers) and they kill anything and everything. She challenges the group to strike down the man with the full blessing of the church and God.

If one of the heroes accepts her task (if using the **Sanity** setting rules have the character make a Sanity roll at -2) then he is immediately in Christina's good graces and won't be locked up with the others in **Last Supper**. If they all refuse, then Christina herself takes out a knife and repeatedly stabs the poor man and orders him to be flung from the steps of the church.

The heroes now know something is terribly wrong with Christina, even if they believe the man would have come back to kill them all, and may wish to leave. They are barred from leaving the church if they take this course of action with the pastor citing it is too dangerous, that too many from the Town Hall will be out there attracting the smilers. Any student who insists is locked in a room immediately for what she considers their own protection.

Christina now leaves them in the company of Kathryn Saunders, a mild mannered woman in her late 30s, who brings them to the makeshift kitchen and serves plates of chicken and bread. A successful Persuasion roll reveals the original pastor, Jacob, was killed by a night flyer and his position soon taken by Christina. On a raise, or with a little good roleplaying, she says things are running smoothly here for now, but the

March 4th

Dear Diary,

My car was attacked on the way home last night; something landed on the roof—forced its way through.

I was cut badly on the shoulder but I couldn't get back to go to the clinic. I don't know if it left or I managed to shake it. I could barely see whatever it was. It attacked the house later in the night..but eventually seemed to give up.

I've managed to stop the bleeding but it already seems infected. I've put a bandage around it for now but I don't dare go out. I've loaded up the hunting rifle.

I've locked the doors.

My phone doesn't work...

heroes best do everything Christina says or she's afraid she cannot help them. If pressed for more information Kathryn shakes her head and says she has already said too much.

Last Supper

Throughout the day the sporadic sound of gunfire comes from outside in the direction of the Town Hall, along with the distant curdle of screams.

The congregation goes solemnly about their daily tasks under the watchful eyes of Christina. The students find themselves put to task in the caged garden where crops need planting and water collecting. The other members of the church are polite and instruct them in their duty but otherwise do their very best to ignore them.

On a successful Persuasion roll characters can find out one of the following with each person they speak to:

- There is a secret lottery tonight and everyone must take part.
- The lottery helps protect the congregation from the “demons” attacks.
- No one knows exactly what this lottery is or how it will take place.
- The scientists were turned away from the church by Pastor Christina. “They were not of God.”
- Despite the long term plan of the planting, the amount of immediate food will not feed everyone for long.
- Everyone needs to pray harder. The scout wouldn’t have been infected if the church was more pious.
- The crosses were erected only after Christina took over as pastor.

As the day draws to a close the characters find themselves brought back into the church where they clean up for the communal dinner. They are given seats at the last pew where dinner is served to everyone. When the last person sits down to eat, Christina stands before them, arms stretched out and says:

“Lord, our brother, we praise you for saving us during this Time of Judgment. Bless us in Your eternal love as we gather in your Name and await your heavenly verdict. Bless this meal that we share and let us be thankful for the sacrifices of our brothers and sisters. And protect us from the demons who would make cemeteries their cathedrals and the cities their tombs. Amen.”

As the prayer ends the congregation begins to eat. During the meal there is a sudden commotion. The students can see Kathryn, sitting a few rows ahead of them, has collapsed to the floor. Inquiring about this turn of events they are told that one plate in the supper was laced with sedative and Kathryn has lost the lottery!

Crucifixion!

To their horror, amidst the chanting of the congregation, Kathryn’s unconscious body is now picked up by two other members of the congregation and taken outside.

Christina now addresses the congregation once more:

“Today one of our own has been chosen by God to protect us from the evil that has descended upon this world. Kathryn’s sacrifice to the flying demons will protect us from further attacks and allow us to continue His great works. Please put your hands together and let us say a silent prayer for Kathryn.”

It’s now time for our heroes to act! The congregation is momentarily occupied with prayer, allowing the students to attempt a rescue and escape. Have the players make Stealth rolls at –1 as they attempt to get out through the back. If this fails then the congregation feels betrayed and five of them attack immediately, forcing the characters out of the back and down the hill. This leads to the events in **Hell’s Orphaned Angels**, unless they want to risk fighting every member of the congregation.

When the students get out of the back they see Kathryn is still unconscious and currently being tied up to one of the crosses by three members of the congregation. Let the players decide how best to approach, but remind them they won’t have long before the rest of the congregation knows they’re missing.

After four rounds the bioluminescence of the flying creatures silently pops into existence and attack. If the characters have not rescued Kathryn (who will awake with a successful Healing roll) by this time the flyers pull and snatch the poor woman until they tear her from her binds and carry her away into the night! This is time for a Fear test!

Led by Christina, four members of the congregation arrive on round 5 and screaming hellfire attack the players.

💀 **Christina:** Use the congregation profile. See page 57.

- **Congregation (8):** See page 57.
- **Night Flyers (3):** See page 58.

Ensure the players know their characters are in grave danger, and that the congregation members are generally armed. It takes any member of the congregation their first action to draw a firearm. The night flyers attack indiscriminately as soon as there is a commotion, and this could give the group the chance they need to make their escape.

The hill is very steep, but descendable on a successful Agility roll. If they fail they must

immediately make a Vigor roll at -2 as they fall and stumble down the hill, or suffer a level of Fatigue caused by **Bumps and Bruises** (see **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds*).

As they reach the bottom of the hill they are not followed by the congregation, but instead hear the roaring sound of motorbikes coming directly for them...

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

In the last part of the adventure the heroes meet two other groups in quick succession, attempt to rescue the scientists who hold possible solutions to their predicament, and possibly make their escape.

The biker group known as The Orphans is a ragtag bunch of patch-wearing thugs and hooligans—at least by the standards of the “good honest folks of Sanctuary”—who drive their noisy filth-ridden low-riders up and down Central Avenue at all hours causing havoc and mayhem with their drunken brawling and wanton vandalism.

While it is true there is a criminal element to the biker group, they are amongst the most benevolent of Sanctuary’s survivors. They have taken in many stragglers, losing more than a few of their own crew to do so.

Now they make raids into town, breaking through the boarded up shops and using their bikes to outrun, and sometimes outwit, the flyers and smilers—while saving those they can and bringing them back to the relative safety of their clubhouse.

In contrast to the Orphans, the Survivalists are everything the town thinks them to be. They live a few miles away, deep within the woods in a high fenced compound. They have been stockpiling weapons and food for years, but now come into town to raid and pillage since the attacks began, and the town is at their mercy.

5th March

Dear Diary,

I saw Evylin and Denise from my window this morning. They were just standing there, staring blankly. They were too distant to see properly but they did not look well...all disheveled and impossibly still.

I called out to them but they didn't move.

I went to open the door to go out to them, to see if they knew the latest from the town, but when I looked outside...they were gone.



The Survivalists have recently captured several scientists and taken them back to their compound. They believe they can use them to barter with, if someone like the National Guard were to show up...

HELL'S ORPHANED ANGELS

The motorcyclists ride on up to the characters. One large bearded man clad in leathers puts a hand out and shouts *"come with me if you want to live!"* before dragging the hero onto the bike. The other bikers follow his lead and in a rush of excitement drive back to their safe house with the students.

The heroes arrive at the biker's club house on the edge of town late that night. The clubhouse contains a rundown wooden bar and adjoining garage. There are an assortment of motorcycles out front, as well as a few cars and trucks in various states of working order. Live music is played impossibly loud and the constant hum of mechanical work rings out from the garage despite the hour.

The bikers set down their motorcycles and welcome the group to The Orphanage, the clubhouse of the Orphans. Although all of the bikers are carrying weapons, they are welcoming as they lead them into the bar where an assortment of people is present.

The club itself is large, with a bar running nearly one entire length of the longest side, only stopping to a door reading Orphans Only. Even at this time people enjoy the merriment of the bar, others play pool, and food is brought out to the tables. In some strange way, despite the time, biker patches, and the liquor, all is relatively normal.

The nearest Orphan offers the group a drink on the house and says the club President wants to see them in their meeting room when they have taken a breather. After the drinks are finished they are led through the doors to where two burly looking men are drinking. The smaller one of the two introduces himself as Connor McDonald, the club President, while the other, their rescuer, introduces himself as Tony Dixon.

McDonald welcomes them warmly. He says the Orphans have survived by salvaging off the dead while evading the flyers at night with the mobility of their motorcycles. They use this opportunity to pick up people who seem lost

or in need and hope to use a rider to send for help as soon as they can spare one.

If questioned about The Orphanage, he is unsure why the smilers give the place a wide berth, only that townsfolk feel safe here. He doesn't know the sheer amount of noise they make during the day adversely affects the creatures — although this won't affect what happens during **Stampede!**

Whether the heroes bring the topic up or if it is offered, they find out the Orphans know the rest of the scientists have been captured by the Survivalists and taken to their stronghold. At this point he tells them the bikers can't lend their support — they just don't know the characters well enough.

The heroes now have a day to rest and treat any wounds they have picked up and to help Kathryn shake the rest of the effect of the sedative, if she was saved.

Stampede!

Early in the afternoon there is a shout from outside, and a sound and vibration akin to the rumbling of an earthquake. Folks head toward the windows or flood outside to see what the commotion is, only to find cattle rampaging down the street toward them!

Most of the biker gang and associates flee back into the tavern. Those left outside at the forefront of the stampede are trampled, eaten, or run desperately for cover. Dixon runs out from the Orphans Only room, eyeing the characters and instructing them to follow him to the roof.

Scrambling up through a ladder the characters are presented with rifles and instructed to fire on what appear to be infected cattle. Connor turns to the characters and says with a grin, *"Orphans never say die!"*

There are four cattle for each player character and a further six the bikers deal with. The Game Master is encouraged to allow the players to take control of the bikers as extras for this scene. There are eight Townsfolk, also, on the lot under attack by the infected cattle, and saving them is the priority!

After six rounds a farmer, Clegg Evans, scrambles to the roof having found a portable hand-crank air raid siren — this scares the remaining cattle away, but each hero on the roof needs to make an immediate Vigor roll at -1 be Shaken from the noise of the siren, this cannot cause a Wound. He explains they are

his cattle, and he owns a farm near where the Survivalists are based. This appears to have been orchestrated by them as a direct attack on the Orphans.

When the battle is over, Connor and his men thank the characters for their help and can be persuaded to assist in the rescue of the scientists. With a successful Persuasion roll or with a bit of good roleplaying he agrees to provide a hunting rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+1, RoF 1, Shots 8, AP 3, Snapfire) and 16 rounds of ammo, and two bikers to go with them to the Survivalists' compound.

If the survivors escaped from the Town Hall early and never encountered the scientist at the Sheriff's Department, Clegg Evans tells the characters he dealt with scientists investigating the events that befell Sanctuary, but they are now captured by the Survivalists. In this case, Connor asks the heroes to take on the challenge of rescuing them to see if they know a way out of this predicament, and provides extra supplies for this endeavor (Game Master's discretion).

- **Infected Cattle (6 plus 4 per hero):** See page 57.
- **Bikers (2 per player):** See page 57.
- **Townfolk (8):** See page 59.

SURVIVALIST COMPOUND

Connor stays to protect the others at the Orphanage but suggests the students get to the compound at night as it is located in a thicker area of the forest and will be trickier for the flying creatures to pick off the group, as well as providing natural cover. There is an hour around dusk when there is less monster activity.

Connor and Tony can tell them the following information:

- **The Stronghold:** The Survivalists live in several houses, mainly converted from shipping containers and Winnebagos. The entire stronghold is surrounded by an electric fence patrolled by groups of Survivalists with guard dogs.
 - **The Survivalists:** The gang is a group of hardened criminals rather than a religious cult and is led by J.J. Kerbey. They like to prey off other survivors since the attacks began.
 - **The Scientists:** If the scientists are still alive then they are held either in the warehouse, or more likely in a small brick building to the north of the compound.
 - **The Alarm:** The compound is protected by an alarm and electric fence. These need to be disabled if they are to get in without being noticed.
- In addition to any Extras they already recruited, the Game Master should draw a card from the Action Deck; this is the number of new bikers who volunteer to go with them with Jacks through to Kings being 11–13 respectively. A face card denotes one of the bikers is a Wild Card.
- The heroes are driven to a quarter mile away from the compound where they need to rely on stealth and cunning to find a way in:
- **Electric Fence:** the electric fence has a fuse box near the guard tower on the western side of the compound. A Knowledge (Electronics) roll reveals this can be switched off if something non-conductive, like a thin branch, can reach through the fence. However the guard on the tower needs to be distracted but Heroes should be careful not to set off the alarm! The bikers have wire cutters to then get them through the fence.
 - **Alarm:** The alarm is located near to the fuse box, but they need to get up close to turn it off. A successful Stealth roll is enough to get to the box and flip the switch. If the alarm is triggered then combat begins with another four Survivalists arriving each round. It is a judgment call to how long the Game Master wants to punish noisy heroes. There are 21 total Survivalists in the compound, plus the leader J.J. Kerbey.
 - **Patrols:** Any survivor who dedicates some time to understanding the movement of the guards can determine the compound is patrolled by groups of four Survivalists with two non-infected guard dogs. There are roughly 5–10 minutes between each patrol passing through (Game Master discretion); use Dog/Wolf stats from *Savage Worlds* and Stealth and Notice rolls are a must.
 - **Kennels:** If the players are foolish enough to get within 4" of the Kennels their scent attracts the attention of the dogs, giving the patrols their location.

- **Survivalists:** The leader of the Survivalists, J.J. Kerbey, is located in the office near the front gate and is protected by six others. Anyone who gets close enough to this building overhear discussion on what the scientists might be worth and whether they should be used as hostages if someone like the National Guard are called in.
- **Scientists:** Led by Dr. Anne-Marie Bickle, the four scientists have been captured and held in a small building to the north of the compound; their notebooks and belongings taken to a secure building. The eggheads know many details about the creatures, their weaknesses (such as the smilers' reaction to sound) and where their nest is (if playing a longer campaign). This information is also in their notebooks. If they can leave the town they are adamant they can construct a high frequency device to wipe out the creatures. They are also interested in the fate of their colleague Dr. Nicholas Miles if the characters have met him.

- **Warehouse:** If the students manage to sneak into the guarded building they can refresh their ammo and can find six grenades and four ill-fitting Flak Jackets (+2). The Games Master is encouraged to add appropriate items or weaponry.

- **Survivalist (6):** See page 59.

THE ESCAPE

The heroes, having either rescued the scientists or at least acquired their note books, are now herded by six Survivalists toward the Town Hall! Resolve this as an Extended Chase (see *Savage Worlds*).

If the Survivalists catch up with the students the surviving members of both groups are attacked by the militia at the Townhall who believe they are once again under siege. Only after the Survivalists are defeated may the heroes make Persuasion rolls at -2 to try to talk their way to safety.



If the students managed to elude the Survivalists they may approach the militia in peace as long as no weapons are drawn. If any players helped save Townsfolk during **The Sherriff's Department** they gain a +1 on Persuasion rolls to talk their way into the building.

Once within the Town Hall the heroes see the earlier attack has severely damaged the interior and survivors move solemnly around with distrustful eyes. The militia lead them, along with any remaining bikers and scientists, to see Mayor Meyen.

Meyen demands to know what has happened since the attack by the smilers, but he is shaken and no longer carries an air of authority. He listens intently to anything the heroes say but it is obvious that he has lost a lot of people and is rather desperate to find allies.

The heroes in this scene can find out the following:

- The scientists, or their notebooks, reveal that loud noises cause the smilers agony and can incapacitate them. Strong light is anathema to the flyers. This is why they don't come out in daylight. Powerful flashlights would work, but anything stronger would be preferable.
- Over half of the Townsfolk at the Town Hall were killed by the smilers and the Town Hall wouldn't survive further incident.
- Mayor Meyen works with anyone who promises to aid the rest of his group.
- There is a working fire engine (with sirens) and a school bus outside of the Town Hall.
- With a successful Persuasion roll the Mayor agrees to arm the characters.
- The best time to go would be at first light but the people of Sanctuary are now looking to the students for guidance.
- There are 15 unarmed Townsfolk, five militia, and the mayor.

Allow the heroes to formulate a plan. Any surviving bikers insist that they leave town via the Orphanage. If the students decide to leave when it is light then smilers will be out in force. Likewise, if they decide to make a run for it when it is dark they will be preyed upon by flyers. The fire engine siren can be used to disperse smilers.

Traveling to the Orphanage should be handled as an Extended Chase (see *Savage Worlds*).

Blaze of Glory

Of course, our heroes might decide the best approach is a full-frontal assault! The Orphans, rugged and burly as they are, will advise against this course of action, but if it's what the players really want to do then it can be handled as follows:

Either have the bikers and heroes all rush through the front door, or have some of them still trying to sneak through the fence at the back to rescue the scientists (but remember the electric fence!). There are immediately four patrols (16 Survivalists with eight dogs) and four guards between the two guard towers.

Although this route could be suicidal without enough bikers on their side, the Survivalist leader J.J. Kerbey joins the battle. If he is defeated then the Survivalists scatter.

💀 **JJ. Kirby:** See page 57.

• **Survivalists (20):** See page 59.

• **Dogs (8):** Use Dog/Wolf stats from *Savage Worlds*.

• **Night Flyers (5):** Only at night. See page 58.

• **Smilers (15):** Only at day. These creatures attack in packs of five. See page 58.

Arriving at the Orphanage, Connor is eager to find out what happened at the Survivalist's camp, although he is reluctant to move from the club as it has proven to be a safe haven (with the exception of the infected cattle attack). Whether the President can be persuaded or not, within a short space of time (Game Master's discretion) the church congregation suddenly roars up to the lot. They are armed and dangerous, having arrived in three pickup trucks. Their blatant movement has brought with them a score of beasts who frantically follow them. Christina, now completely devoid of sanity, leads both the congregation and the creatures with screams of "We will tear your souls apart!"

There are 15 bikers in total, two of whom are the President and his VP, and they join the 21 survivors from the Town Hall for this battle for freedom. The beasts will attack both

Story Seeds for a Campaign

There are many opportunities to expand the play outside the scope of this adventure. It wouldn't be hard to make the town bigger than a few streets running off the main road. The setting could also be nearer to the end of winter, cut off from the outside world and allowing for the town to be under siege by the monsters for some time.

This would give the opportunity for the heroes to spend extended time at the Town Hall, going on raids, visiting the local school, health spa, or supermarket, and a chance to acquire more supplies, weaponry and perhaps even become members of the militia themselves. You can develop the First Church of Sanctuary in much the same way, with the characters employed as emissaries between the two groups.

Here are some optional adventure seeds for running *The Retreat* for several sessions.

A Chase scene occurs as night flyers pursue the bikers through the streets with the heroes on the back frantically swatting at the beasts with makeshift weapons.

The Survivalists capture the heroes, where they end up as bait, or prove their worth and prey on the town themselves.

Could the Survivalists be persuaded to let the scientists go?

The National Guard is already aware of the situation, but rather than help the town someone high up has decided it needs quarantining and shoots anyone trying to escape. This leads the characters to all sorts of new worries to deal with.

The scientists know several of the weaknesses of the creatures; they require electronic parts to make their high frequency device work. This requires going on raids into town to pick up the relevant parts as well as retrieving Dr. Nicholas Miles' notebook.

If the mayor can be persuaded to give up the fire engine, which may or may not be working, and the use of his militia, the heroes can mount an attack against the nest itself—but can they get everyone working together in time?

Someone in town is responsible for disturbing the nest. The heroes must mount an investigation to find out where these creatures are coming from!

Getting the phone lines working, or stealing a radio from the Survivalists might enable contact with the outside world—if they believe their story!

groups indiscriminately. Now is time to draw Action Cards!

- Both the fire engine siren and the air raid siren can be used to disperse any smilers in the area and allow players to get townsfolk onto the school bus.
- There is a gas pump by the garage. If this is destroyed it does 3d8 damage in a large burst template. Roll a d6, anyone caught in the radius will also catch fire on anything but a 1. The pump continues to burn for the next week unless the cutoff valve is flipped, and the fire is doused with retardant from the fire truck.
- **Congregation (12):** Christina is a Wild Card. See page 57.
- **Night Flyers (7):** Nighttime only. See page 58.
- **Smilers (20):** Daytime only. See page 58.

The monsters will continue attacking until they are all destroyed, but target straggling congregation members who scatter once Christina is defeated as easier pickings!

As the battle dies down, the heroes are free to lead the remaining survivors out of town. The adventure should end as the group pushes through the barricade of cars with sirens blazing, on the outskirts of town, and onward toward civilization to see if their story will be believed!

Read or paraphrase the following:

As the survivors flee the town of Sanctuary, smoke billows from empty buildings and distant screams are still heard over the sound of the escaping vehicles—a painful reminder that not all have escaped and stragglers remain. The exhausted heroes and the grateful townsfolk look only to the road

ahead and to the promise of safety that the now empty road affords them.

...at the back of the trailing vehicle, clutching unseen with a mouthful of menace, is a grinning fiend!

6th March

Dear Diary

I fear these are my final words...I can hardly hold the pen in my hands now and fear my time is coming to an end. I can barely see, my eyes are fusing shut and great clumps of my hair are falling out. There is pain in my guts and my body and teeth ache...

I am scared. I have no idea what has befallen me, what has happened to this town. I fear more will fall to this fate, that there's no way out, no retreat...I'm going to hide now...I can't bear the thoughts in my own mind. Yes, I'll hide, go into the cellar, lock myself in somehow. Hopefully someone will find my body, bury it properly.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Biker

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Repair d8, Shooting d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: any suitable melee weapon or firearm, improvised weapon (tire iron, chain, pool cue).

Congregation

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (chosen profession) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: any suitable melee weapon, fire axe (Str+d6), S&W (.44) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, Revolver), double-barrel shotgun (12g) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1-2).

Infected Cattle

Cattle are large creatures and usually not a threat to humans unless they are spooked. Infected cattle on the other hand, driven insane by their mutation, are always startled and have big toothy smiles!

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature up close (within 5") suffers a Fear test.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Infected:** Infected cattle add +2 to their basic Toughness, +2 when attempting to recover and don't suffer additional damage from called shots.
- **Hardy:** Infected cattle shake off simple blows and cuts and do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Stampede:** Charging cattle who move at least 6" toward their opponents add +4 to their damage total.
- **Size +2:** Cattle are large animals.



J.J. Kerbey

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Tracking d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Command, Natural Leader

Gear: Flashlight, Revolver (.44) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1), Flak Jacket (+2), AK47 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+1, RoF 3, AP 2), Survival knife (Str+d4).

Night Flyers

Flyers are bioluminescent, chthonic wyvern-like creatures, seven to nine feet in length with cavernous needle-like toothed maws that spew forth three tentacle-like appendages, and long prehensile tails ending in a paralyzing barb. They have two sets of arms, one ending in claws and a second pair to hold leathery wings that end in sharpened prongs. Under their belly is an array of tentacles which enable them to slither on the ground or grab their targets, as well as shorter back leg prongs for stabbing and stability. They favor hunting from the air, swooping down silently from the darkness to catch their prey.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Ambush:** Flyers normally glow with a bioluminescent shine when exerting themselves, but in flight they can glide in to attack which makes them almost impossible to see. For the first round of combat, the flyer makes an opposed Stealth roll versus its target's Notice. With a success it gains The Drop.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature suffers a Fear test.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d8.
- **Echo Location:** Flyers suffer no penalties for bad lighting, even in Pitch Darkness.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace 12", Climb of 1
- **Infection:** Anyone who suffers a wound result from a bite, claw, or other lacerating attack must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, he is destined to become one of the creatures. Each hour after the attack, the victim must make another Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue. When this results in Incapacitation, the victim returns as a smiler at the next dawn.
- **Quick:** Flyers are agile hunters. Discard and ignore any Action Card draw of 5 or less.
- **Minor Paralysis:** Anyone Shaken or wounded by a flyer's barbed tail must succeed on a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.
- **Size +2:** Flyers are seven to nine feet in length.
- **Tail:** Str+d6; +1 Reach.
- **Tentacles:** A night flyer may attempt to grapple an opponent each round at -2.

An entangled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape.

- **Weakness (Bright Light):** Any direct bright light, such as a strong flashlight, causes an immediate Vigor roll at -2 or is Shaken for d4 rounds.
- **Weakness (Daylight):** Daylight is anathema to flyers, causing 2d8 damage per round.

Smiler

Operating during the daytime hours, smilers are infected humans who haven't yet mutated into their flying brethren. Once their transformation begins they start to lose their hair and ears and their eyes meld shut. Their mouths begin to split from ear-to-ear revealing needle-like teeth.

While they lose all notion of their former host's sense of self, smilers gain an animal cunning and remember aspects of the town. They have no compunction against killing survivors, especially if armed, but prefer to keep them from escaping the town by herding them back to a central point so they can be hunted by their winged cousins during the night.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature up close (within 5") must make a Fear test.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Infected:** The infection offers the creatures' additional protection to best secure their chance of becoming flyers. Smilers add +2 to their basic Toughness, +2 when attempting to recover from Shaken and don't suffer additional damage from called shots. Smiler Wild Cards never suffer from Wound Modifiers.
- **Hardy:** Smilers shake off simple blows and cuts and do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Weakness (Sound):** High pitched or extremely loud noises can disorientate smilers, causing them pain and discomfort. Caught within 5" (10 yards) of a loud noise smilers must make Vigor rolls at -2, or are Shaken for d6 rounds. If the noise is continuous the smiler is Shaken for an additional round on a failed Vigor roll.



Smiler Aunt Mary

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature up close (within 5") suffers a Fear test.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d8.
- **Infected:** The infection offers Mary the same protection as other smilers (see above). This adds +2 to her Toughness, +2 when attempting to recover from Shaken, and she doesn't suffer additional damage from called shots. She also ignores wound modifiers.
- **Hardy:** Mary shakes off simple blows and cuts and does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Weakness:** High pitched or extremely loud noises disorientate Mary, causing pain and discomfort. Caught within 5" (10 yards) of a loud noise, she must make Vigor rolls at -2 or be Shaken for d6 rounds. If the noise is continuous she can still exit the area on a failed Vigor check but is Shaken for one further round.

Survivalist

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Tracking d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Flashlight, S&W Revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1), Flak Jacket (+2), AK47 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+1, RoF 3, AP 2), Survival knife (Str+d4).

Townsfolk

The average townsfolk lived simple, humble lives, going about their day-to-day business without much care or worry. Since the attacks they have begun to join up with one another for survival, with most of them joining, voluntarily or not, one of several factions. Most of them are scared and lash out at the slightest provocation, but they are still human (for now!) and can be reasoned with under less stressful circumstances.

Some townsfolk adhere to the strict regimes set out by their gang leaders. These people have forsaken the good morals they once believed in and are prepared to fight for what they or their patron believes in. They're not stupid though, and prefer to run if they don't think they have the advantage.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (chosen profession) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Makeshift weapons and tools.

THANK YOU FOR
VISITING
SANCTUARY
HOME OF A
THOUSAND SMILES

POP 1 ~~108~~ 99

ELEVATION 4,567



MANOR OF BLOOD

By Eddy Webb

England, 19—. The heroes are an organization of London-based occult detectives (“psychic detectives” in the contemporary parlance) called the Society for Psychic Truth. They use science and mystical knowledge to investigate supernatural phenomena, helping those with unusual problems to resolve them.

They are approached by Sir Isaac S. Findley, a landowner and minor nobleman. He has inherited a manor called “Langdon Hall” in Manchester some locals are claiming is haunted, and he is desperate for the Society for Psychic Truth to prove it isn’t, or if it is, to remove the taint of supernatural evil. Sir Findley’s fortunes have declined, and he wants to sell the manor so he can pay off his father’s egregious debts and restore some dignity to his family’s name.

The heroes take a train to Langdon Hall. As they use their scientific devices and supernatural skill to explore the various rooms, they learn there is indeed a psychic disturbance in Langdon Hall in the form of three ghosts. Only one of the ghosts is coherent — the housemaid, Miranda — and she claims the spirits are all household servants

who were murdered by the former master of the house when he went mad. They just want to be set free on the anniversary of the time they died, which is tomorrow evening. If the heroes bring the new owner to the house on midnight of the next night, he can ritually give them permission to leave his service, which sets them free.

The heroes bring Sir Findley to the hall at the appointed time, but when the ritual is enacted, the ghosts reveal he has been possessed by the spirit of the original owner the whole time. In reality, the ghosts are looking for bodies to possess, which they can use to kill more people and create more ghosts to live at the manor. They want to see how strong the heroes are in order to make them hosts for themselves, and then use their bodies as puppets to tell other prospective owners the house is safe so they can increase their “family” of dead spirits. Sir Findley and the ghosts will not let the heroes leave Langdon Hall alive.

Will the heroes see through the conspiracy? Can they survive with their minds intact? And will they be the same after their time in **THE MANOR OF BLOOD**?

SETTING RULES

This is an adventure designed to evoke the late Victorian or early Edwardian Gothic tradition: melodramatic by modern standards, but with moments of stark horror, a risk of insanity, and potential for heroism. To best reflect this style, use the following Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds* and *Savage Worlds Horror Companion* when running *The Manor of Blood*:

- **Backlash (*Horror Companion*):** Meddling with strange forces can take their toll on a person's sanity.
- **Chronological Phenomena:** Dates, times, and astrological occurrences carry great weight in the occultism of the period.
- **Critical Failures:** Things sometimes suddenly go bad.
- **Joker's Wild:** A single success can bolster the spirits of everyone.
- **Multiple Languages:** Many characters of the period were fluent in a number of languages.
- **Sanity:** The human mind contains as much horror as terrifying monstrosities.
- **Rituals:** Magic is only cast through elaborate, arcane rituals...
- **Wards & Binding:** ...and binding rituals are one of the most common.

Magic and Technology

The Arcane Background (Magic) and Arcane Background (Weird Science) are allowed in this setting, but magical powers may only be cast via a ritual (see **Rituals** in the *Savage Worlds Horror Companion*). However, Weird Science can be used as part of magic rituals, and vice versa. This blending of occultism and technology is very much in line with the flavor of early 20th century ghost hunters, using mysticism and electric pentacles to banish the angry spirits of the dead before everyone around them goes insane.

Sensing Ghosts

Ghosts are generally invisible, but they sometimes leave traces in the world which can be observed by keen eyes. If a hero believes there's a ghost around and is looking for it, he can make a Notice roll at -6. If successful, the hero gets a vague sense something is wrong—it could be a cold spot which moves slightly, a

glimpse of movement out of the corner of his eye, or maybe a sound he can't quite place. Characters with Arcane Background can use their Arcane Skill instead (at no penalty), under the assumption they're using a mystical ability or a scientific device to detect such traces.

No matter what the heroes use to sense a ghost, however, it can't give the hero an exact location—only that a ghost is present, and nearby.

NEW EDGE

Psychic Detective (Professional)

Requirements: Novice, AB (Magic or Weird Science), Spirit d6+, Knowledge (Occult) d6+

Psychic detectives from the Victorian and Edwardian era are not what we think of today—they aren't police consultants who use mental powers to solve crimes. Rather, they are investigators of the occult, using a blend of science and mysticism to investigate strange cases and bring them to a speedy resolution.

Psychic Detectives gain the *banish entity* power for free in addition to their normal starting powers gained from the Arcane Background. In addition, whenever knowledge of a specific ritual is needed to bind or banish a ghost or similar entity, the psychic detective can make a Knowledge (Occult) roll at -2 to immediately know it instead of doing research—either they read about it once in an obscure tome, or they can align their psychic resonance to the creature to improvise such a ritual.

CHARACTERS

The Manor of Blood starts in London, in an unspecified year during the early 1900s. The heroes are all members of the Society for Psychic Truth. The Society for Psychic Truth has the trappings of a scientific society, but is really more of an agency for occult detectives. As such, they aren't a secret organization, hiding their mystic powers from society like many other horror settings. Rather, they offer their services as gentlemen and ladies of good standing to other such individuals, investigating and putting to rest any supernatural concerns which might be brought to them.

In this setting, women are commonly accepted as detectives; both private and psychic. Female characters have equal weight

and opportunity to their male counterparts inside the realm of psychical research. Inform the players ghosts are a common thing for this group to investigate, so they should build their characters accordingly. Otherwise, players can make their characters according to the rules in *Savage Worlds* and *Horror Companion*, while keeping the following information in mind.

- All heroes are Novice characters and human.
- Characters have the potential to know multiple languages, as per the Multiple Languages setting rule. French, German, and Italian are common choices.
- At least two characters should take the Psychic Detective Professional Edge—ideally one with Magic and the other with Weird Science. More than two characters with Arcane Backgrounds are fine, but at least one is needed.
- No Weird Edges are allowed.

A VICTIM OF TRAGEDY

The heroes are sitting and chatting in the library of the Cheyne Club, an exclusive (and eccentric) club for gentlemen and ladies interested in all manners of scientific occult study, particularly spiritualism. It's a chilly autumn day, just cold enough to make sitting by a fire an attractive option. This is a good opportunity for the players to get to know their characters a little bit—a short experiment or a quick séance can spur roleplay and get everyone into the right mindset.

At an appropriate moment, the head butler of the club (a man known only as “Mr. Poole”) enters and informs the group they have a visitor. He presents them with a calling card with the name “Sir Isaac S. Findley, KCVO,” and tells them to ring when they are ready to receive him in the guest parlor.

The heroes can make a Common Knowledge roll to see if they've heard of Sir Findley, or check the club's extensive library to look up his credentials. If successful in either case, the hero learns Sir Findley is a minor knight of the realm (“KCVO” refers to “Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order,” a junior but no less prestigious order), awarded for his domestic

service in managing the logistics of shipping supplies to British soldiers during the Boer War. He is a single man of 35 years, of minor noble blood, and was worth a modest fortune of four thousand pounds a year, although this has declined.

Whenever they are ready, Mr. Poole takes them to the parlor where guests are received. Sir Findley is pacing the room nervously when the heroes enter. He is a short, gaunt man with short blond hair and blue eyes, wearing a well-mended suit which was fashionable a few years ago. His skin is pale, and his hands tremble slightly when he offers to shake or kiss the hands of the heroes. Mr. Poole leaves the parlor, and everyone sits down in comfortable chairs (there are enough for everyone) to get down to business.

“Thank you for seeing me. I understand your organization applies scientific methods to the study of spiritualism, and it is those skills I so desperately seek. I apologize if I seem eager, but I would like to get right to my problem, as it has preyed on my mind for so many nights, and I would see the end of it as soon as possible.

“Recently my father—Mr. Henry Findley—has died, and I am his only son. As such, I have inherited his entire estate, including a manor house in Manchester called Langdon Hall. The house was built by a wealthy textile owner and then sold to my father when the businessman went bankrupt and died. My father lived there for the past ten years while I made my own fortune here in London. Our relationship was...estranged, to say the least, and I had not seen him since he moved to Manchester days after my mother's funeral. Aside from his drinking, we stopped speaking to each other because of his unfortunate habit of betting on horses—shameful vices I hate to even mention aloud, if it were not for a far greater scandal.

“To be frank, my father has squandered the Findley fortune. I have inherited very little save for debt and disgrace. I have no love for this manor, and I seek to sell it to pay off my father's debts. However, no one will go near it,

The Truth Behind Sir Findley

Sir Findley is lying, at least somewhat. Most of his story is true — his father did drink and gamble away his family's fortune, and did die from brain fever — but after Sir Findley visited the manor, the story changes. At that point, he was possessed by the spirit of the original owner, Robert Baker. This is why "Sir Findley" is vague about how he knows the manor is haunted — he's trying not to give too much away, while still encouraging the detectives to take the case so they can be tested and taken as hosts for the remaining ghosts in the manor. That's also why he'll end up agreeing to whatever the heroes want as payment — he doesn't plan to pay them anyhow, so it doesn't matter what he agrees to, but he needs to make it look convincing.

If the heroes become suspicious of Sir Findley, feel free to allow a Notice roll. Baker is allowing more of Sir Findley's mind to emerge during the conversation, so he can sound as convincing as possible — in effect, Sir Findley does believe much of what he's

saying, except for the parts where Baker quietly goads him into actions. Success shows he is hiding something, but given the scandal to his family and the fact he's clearly distraught, it's perhaps not surprising. With a raise, the hero notices something is distinctly wrong with Sir Findley, but the best way to find out what it is would be to take the case and observe him more closely.

It's unlikely, but possible the heroes decide to take action and assault Sir Findley/Robert Baker, here and now. If so, use his statistics from **A Secret Pact** (see page 71). If questioned with enough success and vigor, he'll eventually reveal the plan, allowing the heroes to go to the house and deal directly with the ghosts present. It takes away from the pacing a little, and you'll have to adjust some pieces, but don't discourage the players from being clever. In the end, they'll still find each of the three ghosts and attempt to banish them — just without Robert Baker there to make things worse.

as many of the locals claim the manor is haunted. I would ask your services as gentlemen and ladies to stay the night at Langdon Hall and help me either prove the house is clean of spirits, or help send those unfortunate souls to heaven. I wish only to sell this wretched manor and be done with it."

At this point, the heroes can ask Sir Findley questions. Some potential questions are:

What do you know of the history of the house? Sir Findley knows very little. His family's original, much more modest house is here in London, where he's lived for the past ten years, but his father bought the manor after the two had argued about his gambling habit. Since the funeral, Sir Findley has only entered Langdon Hall once, to do an inventory with his lawyer, Mr. Leavenworth.

How did your father die? The doctors say Henry Findley died from brain fever, an inflammation of the brain brought about from the stress of his declining fortune. Sir Findley attended the funeral, as was proper, but he felt very little remorse or sorrow. Sir Findley did

not dispute or have reason to doubt the doctor's diagnosis.

Why is it believed to be haunted? He seems flustered by the line of questioning, but admits he's heard disturbing stories. Travelers walking or riding past the manor claim they can hear screams in the night, and the occasional guests of his father have whispered about visions of servants which float through the hallways. Sir Findley himself has seen no such apparitions.

How much are you paying us? How the heroes approach the matter of money impacts how Sir Findley responds. If they ask bluntly, Sir Findley is offended (and more than a little embarrassed, as his own fortunes have declined) — it takes a successful Persuasion roll to calm him down. Until he is calm, he refuses to pay anything, and claims they should be privileged to have someone of his standing giving them notice.

Once he is calm, or if the group approach the matter of finances more delicately, he admits he is not a wealthy man, but he would be happy to give the group a percentage of the money gained in the sale of the manor. He offers 5%, but can be convinced to go as high as 10%

("but no higher — recall I have my father's debts to pay").

If the heroes look like they're going to walk away, Sir Findley ends up offering whatever he thinks he needs to convince them to take the case.

Once the heroes agree to take Sir Findley's case, he becomes visibly relieved. A little color comes back to his face, and his hands stop trembling. He says he has a ticket for a train to Manchester which leaves in a couple of hours. He gives them directions to the manor, and says he will meet them there. He thanks everyone, and leaves the club.

RESEARCH

After Sir Findley leaves, the heroes might want to do some research on a variety of topics stemming from Sir Findley's story. Each hero can make one Investigation roll at no penalty, or a Common Knowledge roll (-2). After their research, they can take the next train to Manchester.

Langdon Hall

Success: Langdon Hall is a large house in Whalley Range, one of Manchester's first suburbs. It's a two-story Victorian building, standing on a few acres with some lovely walled gardens. At one point it was furnished in a grand style, with a fine art collection, but various pieces of the collection have shown up at auctions over the past few years.

Raise: The house went up for sale a decade ago because the master of the house, a businessman named Robert Baker, committed suicide after rumors surfaced in which he killed all of his servants and lied to the police about it. Some locals say he went insane and stabbed them all with a knife, but others claim he really killed himself once he was declared bankrupt.

Haunting

Success: Stories of Langdon Hall being haunted have circulated for years, ever since the original owner, Robert Baker, died under mysterious circumstances. When Henry Findley bought the hall, he started having a large turnover in servants — partially due to his drunkenness and inability to manage money, but partially because some of them whispered of ghosts wandering the halls.

Raise: Other servants stopped applying to work at Langdon Hall, after one chambermaid claimed she saw a "transparent man with bloody hands" walk right behind Henry Findley and disappear. Within seconds, Mr. Findley started strangling the chambermaid, telling her she had seen too much and needed to die. She managed to hit Mr. Findley over the head and escape. Mr. Findley claimed the situation never happened, and the authorities didn't pursue the case. The chambermaid was fired for slander.

THE MANOR OF BLOOD

ARRIVING AT LANGDON HALL

The train takes the heroes to Manchester, and from there they can get a carriage to Whalley Range, and another one from there to Langdon Hall — a trip which takes several hours in total. If the heroes decide to bring along any particularly bulky or unusual equipment, they might have problems with transportation. Play this up as much or as little as makes sense; it can be a chance to run a short interlude while traveling.

Langdon Hall is much as it was described to them: a modern manor which looks worn down, although it's still in good repair. The house sits between several walled gardens, all of which are turning brown in the crisp autumn evening. There's a carriage house a modest walk away from the main estate. The heroes are left at the main entrance to the east of the house, where they are met by Sir Findley and another man with gray muttonchops and a battered bowler hat. Sir Findley introduces the man as his lawyer, Mr. Giles Leavenworth, and helps the heroes with their bags. Mr. Leavenworth simply watches the heroes, not offering to help, as they make their way through the walled garden and into the house.

Once inside, you can see this was a home which used to be tasteful and cared for. The colorful wallpaper has yellowed and peels slightly, and the

expensive furniture in the parlor and dining room now looks dusty and worn. A few gas lamps flicker in the early evening gloom, and aside from your footsteps and the sounds of Sir Findley's exertions, the house is silent.

"I apologize for the lack of servants. Still, welcome to Langdon Hall."

The heroes are given a series of rooms on the first floor to use as their bedrooms and base of operations. Mr. Leavenworth continues to follow the group silently. At one point, Sir Findley says he needs to get something from the library on the ground floor, leaving Mr. Leavenworth to the heroes. Once Sir Findley is gone, the lawyer suddenly becomes animated.

Mr. Leavenworth's eyes flash with anger as he points a finger at you. "I know all about your type. You prey on the insecurities and superstition of decent men and women, twisting it to your financial gain. But I know the truth. That man, Sir Findley, has had enough tragedy in his life, and I will not allow anyone to take advantage of his good nature. When we come back tomorrow, explain to Sir Findley this so-called 'haunting' is nothing more than a charade, or so help me I will have the lot of you in court."

No matter how much the heroes try to persuade him otherwise, Mr. Leavenworth chooses to hear none of it—his mind is made up. After a few tense moments of discussion, Sir Findley returns, handing the heroes a copy of the map of the manor.

"Now that you are all settled, I think it is best if I leave you to your work. Mr. Leavenworth and I will return tomorrow morning with a carriage to get your report and take you back to the train station. I have left a cold plate of meats and cheeses and drink in the kitchen downstairs, and the gas is on for any lamps you wish to light. Unless you need anything else, I wish you the best of luck and good hunting."

Sir Findley and Mr. Leavenworth leave the heroes in the silent house, all alone.

EXPLORING THE MANOR

The heroes can explore the manor in whatever fashion they feel is appropriate.

Outside: Courtyard

The house wraps around a small courtyard, with a stone wall and an iron gate to the north. The courtyard itself only contains some grass, brown from the cold, and a handful of shrubbery around the edges. A couple of stone bowls stand by the doors leading from the house into the courtyard; at one point they may have contained plants or small trees, but now they only hold dirt and pipe leavings.

On a successful Spirit roll, the heroes notice, despite the cold of the evening, it's actually colder in the courtyard than it was outside when they first entered the house with Sir Findley and Mr. Leavenworth. The cold seems to emanate from the center of the courtyard, and cold spots are a common phenomenon when dealing with the spirits of the deceased.

If the heroes wish to brave the cold, they can use their equipment or magic to see if there are any ghosts present in the area (see Sensing Ghosts, page 61). The heroes who succeed notice the grass in the center of the courtyard slowly turns red, as if covered in blood, and there's a faint male voice simply saying "no" over and over again. Characters witnessing the event need to make a Fear check; in addition to the normal effects, those who fail lose a point of Sanity. If all the heroes fail, have all of them make a Spirit roll; the ghost appears to the hero(es) who rolls the highest.

The ghost here is Bobby, the young manservant who was murdered by Robert Baker. Once at least one of the heroes notices the manifestation, Bobby materializes. He is dressed in simple work clothes, and has a deep wound in his chest which oozes blood—characters who did not make a Fear check before now make one at -2. He acts traumatized and unable to answer questions, simply saying "no" over and over while he holds his hands up, as if trying to keep someone from

Langdon Hall



coming closer. (In reality, he is completely coherent, but the heroes may not realize that.)

If the heroes decide to banish Bobby, they find it difficult – the time isn't right, and something is keeping the ghost bound to the house. Regardless of the heroes' actions, he and the scene both dematerialize after a couple of minutes, leaving behind a clear, sticky substance which dissolves in an hour. Characters experienced with ghosts can make a Common Knowledge roll to recognize it as ectoplasm.

Once he dematerializes, Bobby follows the heroes around invisibly. He is very careful

to avoid being noticed, and pays particular attention whenever they do anything "weird" (such as use Magic or Weird Science to detect ghosts). Unless the heroes are specifically looking for him, they won't sense Bobby's presence. Even if they are looking for him, he is still at a –6 to Notice.

If Bobby is the third ghost the heroes have met, move to **Morning Comes**.

Ground Floor: Buttery Room (Library)

The buttery room is where barrels (or "butts") of alcohol were stored in medieval

times. Over the centuries the nature of the room has changed, but many older manors still have one room labeled as “buttery room” for tradition’s sake. In Langdon Hall, the buttery room was converted into a library.

The north wall is entirely covered with built-in bookshelves, and a heavy desk sits in the south. There are a couple of comfortable chairs between the shelves and the desk, presumably for comfortable reading. Most of the books appear to have been sold or destroyed, leaving behind only a smattering of old almanacs and encyclopedias. The reading chairs are covered in dust, but the desk and desk chair look clean.

There are no ghosts in the buttery room, and the desk is empty save for one locked drawer — there are no keys anywhere in the library. A successful Lockpicking roll allows the heroes to open it. Inside is a thick bundle of papers which look much older than a mere decade. A casual glance at the first page shows this paperwork belongs to the original owner, Robert Baker. Most of the paperwork is faded, worn, or has pieces missing. It requires an Investigation roll and an hour’s work to read through it all. If a hero is successful, read the following:

The paperwork is a wide variety of personal documents, ranging from personal invoices to legal documents to medical paperwork. However, after carefully and painstakingly reviewing them all, you get a picture of what happened to Robert Baker.

It seems he was a businessman, and a successful one. He was an engineer, and turned his talent to industrial applications. From there, he moved to buying and selling equipment, and used that money to invest in real estate. He bought a large plot of land outside Manchester, and had Langdon Hall built.

Soon after he moved in, he started complaining of nasty headaches. He paid for doctors to come out to the hall to visit him. The diagnosis was brain fever, likely brought on due to overwork and stress. He paid for a second doctor

to visit him, and he received the same diagnosis. At that point, Mr. Baker started acquiring a large amount of debt, as if he no longer cared about paying his creditors.

Near the bottom of the stack are a couple of letters from agencies which specialize in placing servants in households. They express regret they are unable to fill Mr. Baker’s vacancies, and hint that candidates appear to be too frightened to accept commissions.

If the players don’t make a connection between the behavior of Robert Baker and Henry Findley, give them a Smarts roll and point out the similarity on a success.

Ground Floor: Hall

The hall was probably once a grand room, well suited for an intimate ball. Warm wood paneling stretches from floor to ceiling, behind a number of marble pillars which march around the room near the walls. The floor is wood near the walls, but from the pillars outward is a huge black and white checkered marble inlay, cracked and broken due to time and neglect. Every movement and footstep is amplified as you make your way through the dusty hall.

There is nothing special about the hall, although it is large and empty enough to conduct rituals, experiments, and the like. It is the place where Miranda and her ghosts ask for the ritual to be performed tomorrow evening (see **The Night of the Ritual**, page 72).

Ground Floor: Dining Room

The dining room contains a bare table and six chairs, all carefully positioned as if ready to serve a meal. The floor is all hardwood, with a threadbare square rug underneath the dining table. In a nook in the east wall there is a large cabinet, which would normally contain a wide variety of dishes, glasses, and silverware. Instead, there are only a handful of chipped, cracked, and dented service pieces, mismatched and

covered in dust. The silverware has all been replaced with cheap tin versions, and the drawers for the tablecloths and napkins are hung open and empty.

If the heroes explore the room, give them a Notice roll. If successful, they find a discolored plank of wood under one of the corners of the rug. The plank is loose, and the heroes can carefully pull it up and out of the floor, revealing a small hiding place. In the nook is a heavy butcher's knife. It is covered in a flaky, brown substance and a number of beetle carcasses. Characters with a medical or military background might recognize the brown substance as dried blood.

This is the knife Robert Baker used to kill his servants, and it is useful during the ritual

(see **The Night of the Ritual**, page 72). Heroes which use Magic or Weird Science to sense ghostly activity find only a faint residue on the knife — not powerful enough to do anything, but enough to connect the knife to ghostly manifestations.

Ground Floor: Old Kitchen

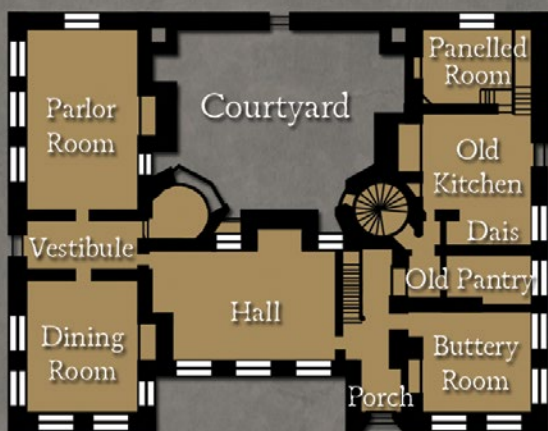
The map says this is the “old kitchen,” although you haven’t seen any other kitchen in the house. It’s a large room with a rough wooden dais sitting to one side. The dais has been dusted, and a variety of sliced cooked meats, wrapped cheese, and bread have been set in the center — likely the food Sir Findley left for you. In a nook to the west is a large cast iron stove covered in rust. All along the walls are a number of shelves, with the occasional dented brass pot and pan sitting on top. On either side of the stove is a wooden cupboard. Everything else in the kitchen is covered in dust. Outside the kitchen the door to the pantry hangs open, revealing an interior which only contains shelves and cobwebs.

The food is relatively fresh, wholesome, and untainted. Nothing unusual happens if the heroes decide to eat it.

Heroes can use their magic and equipment to see if there are any ghosts in the area (see **Sensing Ghosts**, page 61). Any heroes who succeed notice some of the rust stains on the stove turn into blood, which slowly oozes down the front and drips onto the floor. They also hear a woman's voice, crying wordlessly. Characters who witness the event need to make a Fear check, with penalties to Sanity if the check fails. If all the heroes fail, have them make a Spirit roll; the ghost appears to the hero(es) who roll the highest.

The kitchen contains the ghost of Georgina, the cook murdered by Robert Baker. As soon as at least one of the heroes notices the phantasmal

Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



scene, Georgina materializes. She wears a plain black dress with an apron tied in front of it, and her hair is tucked into a white cap. She has a hole in her chest which oozes blood, and more blood drips from the back of her head. Any characters who didn't make a Fear check before now make one at -2. She doesn't seem to notice the characters and doesn't answer questions, simply crying and kneeling on the ground, holding her hands in prayer.

Once she manifests, the remaining objects in the room (including the food) start flying toward the heroes at high speed. Make a Throwing attack (d8) against each hero — if the attack is successful, they take d6+d4 damage from an object hitting them. If the heroes decide to banish Georgina, they find it is difficult to do so — something is keeping her bound to the house.

After one round of attacks, the items flying through the air suddenly fall to the ground. Georgina and the ephemeral blood both dematerialize, leaving behind a clear, sticky substance which dissolves in an hour. Those characters who have dealt with ghosts before recognize it as ectoplasm.

If Georgina is the third ghost the heroes have met, move to **Morning Comes**.

Ground Floor: Parlor Room

The parlor room looks much like any other parlor in a well-to-do household: a few comfortable chairs scattered around the room, a small table in the center, and a pianoforte sitting in the corner. There are square spots on the wallpaper where pictures once hung, and the fireplace is cold and empty. A large rug sits under all of the furniture. Everything in the room is covered in a layer of dust, as if the room hadn't been disturbed in weeks.

As with the courtyard and the old kitchen, heroes can try to sense ghosts in the area with their Magic or Weird Science equipment (see Sensing Ghosts, page 61). Success on the roll means the hero notices one of the chairs seems to exude blood, as if it's coming out from the cushions to cover it in thick, dripping gore. They can also hear a woman's voice, saying "help us." Those characters which witness this need to make a Fear check, with the usual

penalties to Sanity for failure. If all the heroes fail, have them make a Spirit roll; the ghost appears to the hero(es) who roll the highest.

The parlor is where Miranda the housemaid died at the hands of Robert Baker. Whenever at least one hero witnesses the ghostly gore, Miranda materializes. She is a young woman, wearing a long brown dress with white cuffs, and a white apron that covers it. A white cap sits on her head. Like the other ghosts, she has a bloody hole in her chest and a jagged slash across her throat. Any characters who didn't make a Fear check before now make one at -2.

As soon as she manifests, she turns and looks at the heroes, asking them why they've come. Unlike the other two ghosts, she presents herself as lucid and aware of the real world. If asked who she is or how she died, read the following:

"I am Miranda, the housemaid to Mister Robert Baker. Or I suppose I was, now that I'm dead. We were all his servants, before he...before I..." She shakes her head, as if to clear it.

"Let me start over. Myself, Georgina, and Bobby were all hired to serve Mr. Baker. He seemed like a nice man, but he took a fancy to me. I didn't care nothing for him — he was my employer — but he decided he needed something more. One night he got drunk and approached me, here in the parlor."

As she speaks, the parlor around you slowly changes. The dust is gone from the furniture, and the room is full of light from a roaring fire. You can feel the warmth from it, and hear the wood crackle and split. A silver tray sits on the table, and another version of Miranda is cleaning up from a light meal: plates, silverware, glasses, and a large cutting knife next to a block of cheese. A middle aged man is standing near her, with his hands on her shoulders. His dark hair has a few strands of gray, and his suit looks expensive, even though it is in a style over fifty years old. The image is frozen, like a vivid color photograph.

"He asked me to marry him, you see. And I didn't want to say no, but he kept insisting, demanding answers. I tried to get past him, to run to the door, when he grabbed the knife on the tray and..."

The image suddenly and abruptly ends. The room is dark and cold, and the dust is everywhere. Miranda continues to float in front of you, the blood on her dress dripping into the floor and disappearing.

“He killed me. And then he killed everyone else who might have seen it. He buried us all in the courtyard, where no one would find us. And ever since then...”

She hides her face in her hands. But after a moment you realize she isn't crying. When she drops her hands, her face is a mask of fury. “Ever since then, I've wanted nothing more than to leave this God-forsaken place and be at peace! If the master of the house—the new master of the house—were just to let us go, call us into the hall and dismiss us from his service, the three of us could go...wherever it is we go. But it wouldn't be here.”

Questioning Miranda further doesn't reveal much more information. She was aware of the last master of the household, but she claims he never seemed to hear them. The ghosts are stronger now because tomorrow is the anniversary of the night they were all killed. If the new master summons them to the hall and terminates their services, Miranda thinks they'll be set free. She doesn't mention Baker's suicide, and claims she doesn't remember much after she was buried.

After her speech and a question or two, Miranda starts to fade, claiming she needs to preserve her strength for tomorrow. She thanks the heroes as her voice fades, leaving behind nothing but a thin, sticky layer of clear ectoplasm, which evaporates after an hour.

If Miranda is the third ghost the heroes have met, move to **Morning Comes**.

First Floor: Painted Room

The so-called “painted room,” once a ladies' salon, is now a large, empty hall. The walls, floor, and ceiling were all painted a shade of electric blue at one point, although it is all peeling and flaking now. Near the southwest corner of the room is a large pile of trash: empty picture frames, wooden

chairs with missing legs, rusty and dented kitchenware, a broken clock and other unidentifiable devices, and a wide variety of torn and dirty linen. It looks like this is where someone has been throwing the broken detritus from around the floor, in preparation of taking it down the narrow circular staircase to throw it out.

There is nothing unusual in this room, although characters might want to sift through the trash for parts of weird science inventions, or to use as part of a plan.

First Floor: Long Gallery

The long gallery originally showcased the family art collection. Windows are evenly distributed across the walls, sitting between blank squares and rectangles where paintings used to hang. Below the spots are a number of brass plates, giving the names and artists of pictures long since sold—the tombstones of a dead collection. A few comfortable chairs are scattered in the room, covered in a layer of dust. From the ceiling, the large gas chandelier hangs at a crooked angle, as if someone had yanked hard on one side.

While there is not a ghost here, there is a scene of death which has left a spiritual resonance. Characters using Magic or Weird Science can attempt to sense the scene in the same way as sensing ghosts (page 61).

If a hero succeeds, she notices the lights in the room are growing dimmer, and she hears a creaking sound coming from the chandelier. If she goes to explore it, she'll discover a man hanging from a rope noose, but it's impossible to tell who it is—the face always turns away if anyone tries to examine it, or the light casts the face in shadow. Any hero who sees this apparition must make a Fear check, with the usual penalties to Sanity if the roll fails. If all the heroes fail, have all of them make a Spirit roll; the ghost appears to the hero(es) who roll the highest.

This is the room where Robert Baker committed suicide, although he was driven to it by Miranda's first attempts to possess him. He heard her voice in his head, and became

delirious. The doctors claimed it was brain fever, but Baker became paranoid and skittish. Finally, he hung himself in his gallery to silence the voices in his head. Particularly creative or resourceful heroes might learn some pieces of this story, although none of the ghosts admit to it until the events of **A Secret Pact**.

After a minute or two, the scene fades. It does not leave ectoplasm behind — it isn't a ghost, but an illusion sent by Miranda, but the heroes may devise other theories as to why.

First Floor: Bedrooms

Each of your bedrooms is comfortable and clean. At some point someone came into the room and dusted, made the bed with fresh linens, and left a careful pile of wood for the fireplace in each room. There's a working gas lamp in each room, and a small bureau with a mirror and a basin for washing (although there is no water). Thick curtains frame the windows.

The bedrooms don't have any ghostly activity in them. They're meant as a safe place for the characters to retreat to, which they can convert into a base of operations, should they wish.

A SECRET PACT

MORNING COMES

Once the heroes have met three of the ghosts, read the following:

The third ghost dematerializes. You notice a faint light creeping across the area where you saw the last spirit: sunlight. Your exploration of the house took you all through the night, and you didn't even realize it.

In the stillness, you can hear horses' hooves and the rattle of carriage wheels over gravel. It sounds like Sir Findley and Mr. Leavenworth have come to hear what you have to say.

The heroes have two main options: tell the truth, or claim the house isn't haunted (either because it never was, or because they've removed the haunting).

TELL THE TRUTH

If the heroes tell the truth of what they've found, Mr. Leavenworth becomes enraged.

"I warned you about this," he says, spluttering in anger. "I will not allow you to take advantage of Sir Findley with your outrageous stories. I'll see you all in court for this."

Sir Findley turns and looks to his lawyer. "I happen to believe them, Leavenworth."

"But sir, surely you aren't saying..."
The owner looks coldly at the man. "Good day, Leavenworth. If you are not willing to represent my interests, then I'll find another who will."

Leavenworth looks astonished at Sir Findley for a moment, then turns and storms off, shouting at the carriage driver to take him to his office.

Once Mr. Leavenworth is gone, Sir Findley apologizes to the group for the inconvenience, and asks if there's anything he can do to help put the souls of the departed at ease. He readily agrees to help dismiss the dead staff, and suggests meeting at midnight might be best.

CLAIM THE MANOR ISN'T HAUNTED

If the heroes claim the manor isn't haunted or is no longer haunted, Mr. Leavenworth seems pleased.

"Now that this digression is over, Sir Findley, perhaps we can move on to more substantial matters?"

Sir Findley looks you over, concerned. "Are you sure? Are you positive the manor isn't haunted?"

The lawyer scoffs. "You've already had your 'detectives' over for an entire night, sir. Surely you don't believe they did anything useful?"

The owner looks coldly at the man. "Good day, Leavenworth. If you are

willing to mock my interests, I'll take my business to someone who will take them more seriously."

Leavenworth looks astonished at Sir Findley for a moment, then turns and storms off, shouting at the carriage driver to take him to his office.

After Mr. Leavenworth leaves, Sir Findley asks if the lawyer forced them to lie about the house. He says Mr. Leavenworth never really felt this was a serious concern, but Sir Findley claims to be a true believer in spiritualism and the "occult sciences." If the heroes continue to claim there is no haunting, he offers to pay them double if they would only check again — perhaps with a séance at midnight.

It's possible (although unlikely) the heroes might choose to leave, but feel free to point out leaving Sir Findley behind isn't very heroic behavior. If they suspect Sir Findley, confronting him and putting an end to the evil in the house is a valid direction (and doesn't change too much of the flow of the story), but simply leaving the manor behind is against the kind of research they've devoted themselves to.

If the heroes admit to the fact the house is still haunted, Sir Findley looks relieved rather than angry. He offers to do whatever the heroes need to help them send the souls trapped in the house on to their long-delayed eternal reward.

THE NIGHT OF THE RITUAL

The detectives and Sir Findley spend the rest of the day preparing, researching, exploring, or discussing their plans. No supernatural activity occurs while the sun is up, and the three ghosts aren't visible in their rooms even after the sun goes down (although the illusion in the long gallery appears again if the heroes explore there in the evening). Require each hero to make a Vigor roll for working so long without sleep — if the roll fails, the hero takes a level of Fatigue.

Researching the Ritual

The ritual to call the ghosts in order to send them on to their eternal reward is relatively simple: conduct a séance inside of a circle, call the spirits forth, let the owner of the house address each ghost by name, and discharge each of them individually. However, this only

works if the ghosts are *willing* — which they won't be once the time comes. If the heroes change the séance circle to an electric pentacle, however, they can trap the ghosts inside the circle, even if they aren't willing.

There's a tricky balance between letting the players spend a lot of time and resources on a ritual which won't actually work, and tipping them off too early that something else is going on.

If the characters have suspicions about the ghosts, or are simply being cautious, allow them to research the version of the ritual using the electric pentacle. A character with the Psychic Detective background can make a Knowledge (Occult) roll at -2 to learn the version with the electric pentacle. Otherwise, the characters have to make an appropriate Knowledge check (Occult, Spiritualism, or Ghosts are good fields of study to use) — a success gives them the normal ritual, while a raise reveals to them the more "secure" version with the pentacle. If no one is able to learn the ritual, a hero with the Psychic Detective Edge may spend a Benny to find out the secure version of the ritual. If all else fails, you can either tell the detective with the highest Spirit what the normal ritual is, or Sir Findley offers to try and conduct a séance (naturally, the séance has no effect).

At Midnight

The heroes spend however long they wish preparing for the ritual, with Sir Findley helping here and there. Once midnight strikes, read the following:

The doors to the hall all slam shut, along with the shutters on the windows. The gas lamps in the room flare with a blue light, and the figures materialize in the middle of the circle. You recognize them as Miranda, Georgina, and Bobby, but none of them are wearing the bloody clothes you saw them in before.

"Well done," Miranda says. Her voice is cold and hard, a marked contrast from the scared woman you spoke with last night. "You will be suitable hosts for us." She turns and looks at Sir Findley. "Subdue the strongest ones, and kill the rest."

You look over, and see Sir Findley holding a revolver at all of you. His

face is split with a wide, insane grin. "Surprise," he says, his voice suddenly hoarse. "I don't think we've been properly introduced. My name is Robert Baker."

If the heroes do not have the ritual active, or are using just a summoning ritual:

- The ghosts attack the heroes as well as Sir Findley.
- Miranda uses her *illusion* power to hide all the doors and windows in the hall, making escape impossible. She also causes the walls to run with blood, causing a Fear check for

The Electric Pentacle

The electric pentacle is much like a normal pentacle, constructed with a chalk circle and a star, with a lighted candle at each point of the star. However, an electric pentacle also has wires running along each of the chalk lines, connecting with vacuum tubes at each point, near the candles. Once the arrangement is hooked up to a battery, the tubes and the lines all glow with an eerie blue light.



any hero who hasn't already experienced a ghostly manifestation (odds are all of them are jaded, but she doesn't realize that). Then she finds whichever character is most wounded and attempts to possess them.

- Bobby remains invisible, attempting to attack from surprise (which requires him to materialize). If someone near him looks tired enough to possess (i.e., they have at least a level of Fatigue), he attempts it.
- Georgina uses her ability to throw things while remaining invisible. She'll only attempt to possess someone if the other two ghosts have managed it.
- Sir Findley/Robert Baker attempts to keep the characters from leaving the room. He has no concerns about hurting them, as pain makes it easier for the ghosts to possess them. Once all three of the ghosts have hosts, he and the others attempt to kill any remaining heroes.
- The ghosts have no powers outside the edges of the manor grounds, but Sir Findley can still act if the fight goes outside — one of the reasons why the ghosts desire hosts.

If the heroes have the ritual with the electric pentacle active:

- The ghosts are unable to use their powers, nor can they pass the circle or do anything to damage the circle until the pentacle is disturbed. Sir Findley attempts to break the circle, either by shooting at the vacuum tubes (a shot at -4, since they are so small; the tubes have a Toughness of 4), or by running up to it and damaging the wires or the tubes with a Fighting check.
- Once the pentacle is disturbed, the ghosts act as per the section above.

Defeating the Ghosts

There are a few different ways to defeat the ghosts.

Banish Entity: If a ghost is in the circle (whether by happenstance or because they were kept there due to the electric pentacle), any character can attempt to use the *banish entity* power. All the ghosts are Wild Cards, but if they use the electric pentacle ritual it only requires a number of Power Points equal to the ghost's Spirit die (d8 for Bobby, d10 for Georgina and Miranda).

Baker's Knife: Using the knife from the dining room (page 67) allows the

hero to attack each ghost as if they were corporeal, doing Str+d4 damage. If a ghost is Incapacitated, they are banished.

Dismissing the Servants: If Sir Findley is freed from the possession of Robert Baker, and if he is quickly updated as to the situation (he only has hazy memories of what happened after he was possessed), he can still ritually dismiss the ghosts, as per the original ritual. It takes one action, and he must speak one servant's name clearly and tell them to leave his house and never return. If he does this, it acts as a successful use of the *banish entity* power.

Destroy the Manor: Finally, if nothing else seems to work, the manor can be burned. If the heroes can get outside the bounds of the manor, and Incapacitate Sir Findley/Henry Baker, they can try to destroy the manor. As soon as the roof falls in, the next rays of sunlight to fall on the interior of the house destroys all the ghosts.

CONCLUSION

Once the heroes have freed Sir Findley from Robert Baker's possession, he fulfils any arrangements of payment, even if he does not remember making it — his honor as a gentleman dictates nothing less, though it lead to his further ruin. Heroes who will not accept his ruination find an ally and potential patron, after his fortune is restored.

After the investigation and defeat of the ghosts, there are some loose ends which could lead to future adventures. Has Sir Findley's influence while possessed caused other problems in high society? What were the ghosts planning to do once they possessed mortal bodies? How will the detectives explain how their client ended up in such a state? Are there other ghosts which find out about the incident at the manor and decide to proactively target the detectives?

Depending on how the adventure unfolds, the heroes could be celebrated as well-regarded psychic detectives or vilified as charlatans causing more damage than they allege to prevent. This can impact what kinds of clients the detectives receive in the future, as well as what their enemies might learn about them when they are confronted.

THE GHOSTS OF LANGDON HALL

Each of the three ghosts has slightly different statistics. They all share the following special abilities.

Ghost Abilities

- **Ethereal:** Ghosts are immaterial and can pass through physical matter. A ghost may affect the physical world using Spirit for Strength and can only be harmed by magical or Weird Science attacks.
- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Fear checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen. Characters who have seen a particular ghost are considered to be jaded to it (see *Becoming Jaded* under **Fear** in *Savage Worlds*), but subsequent ghosts still provoke a Fear check.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Materialize:** The spirit can materialize at will. It may do so in any state it had in life, but it typically chooses the moment of its death. This usually causes a Fear test.
- **Possession:** Each of the spirits can attempt to possess a mortal within line of sight. On the ghost's turn, they can attempt a possession action, making an opposed Spirit roll at -2. The penalty is reduced to -1 to renew a current possession, if the entity can "touch" the victim, or if the target is Shaken, asleep, or currently involved in a ritual in which the victim is open to supernatural energies. Failure means the spirit does not enter the victim's body and may not try again for 24 hours. Success means the ghost controls the character as the *puppet* power for its Spirit die type in minutes. With a raise, the duration increases to hours, and the spirit can access the target's memories and skills. The spirit takes its victim's physical attributes but keeps its own Spirit, Smarts, and skills. It also keeps any of its other Special Abilities the Game Master thinks make sense for the mortal form. The spirit may make another opposed roll at the duration's end to renew its control, and must do so if its host takes damage (a wound or greater). It may release

the body as a free action at any time. *Banish* entity removes the ghost from the host.



Bobby, the Manservant

Bobby was a young manservant who was murdered by Robert Baker in the courtyard. He is dressed in simple clothes from around the early Victorian era, and has a deep wound in his chest which oozes blood. He is one of the weakest ghosts, and acts as Miranda's faithful spy.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Taunt d6, Stealth d12, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Ghost:** May only be harmed by magical attacks; can pass through physical matter; affects the physical world using Spirit for Strength; causes Fear; immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Near-Omniscient:** Bobby is usually lurking about in the background, listening in on the living and learning about their plans. At the Game Master's whim, he knows most anything the heroes say or do within the manor.
- **Weakness (Baker's Knife):** The ghost is vulnerable to the knife which Baker used to kill him, which is hidden in the dining room (page 67). It counts as a magical attack, doing Str+d4 damage. Further, Bobby needs to make a Spirit roll to attack or interact with the wielder of the knife.



Georgina, the Cook

Georgina was a middle-aged cook murdered by Robert Baker in the old kitchen. She wears a plain black dress with an apron tied in front of it, and her hair is tucked into a white cap. She has a hole in her chest which oozes blood, and more blood drips from the back of her head. She doesn't agree with Miranda's plan, but she thinks she isn't strong enough to stop her. Her frustration at her own impotence manifests as telekinesis.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Taunt d10, Stealth d12, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Ghost:** May only be harmed by magical attacks; can pass through physical matter; affects the physical world using Spirit for Strength; causes Fear; immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Telekinesis:** Georgina can affect the material world — balancing chairs, hurling knives, etc., just as if she were corporeal. She typically remains invisible while doing so, however.
- **Weakness (Baker's Knife):** The ghost is vulnerable to the knife which Baker used to kill her, which is hidden in the dining room (page 67). It counts as a magical attack, doing Str+d4 damage. Further, Georgina needs to make a Spirit roll to attack or interact with the wielder of the knife.

Miranda, the Housemaid

Miranda was a young housemaid, and the target of Robert Baker's unwanted affections before she was killed. She wears a long brown dress with white cuffs, and a large white apron. A white cap sits on her head. Like the other ghosts, she has a bloody hole in her chest, and a jagged slash across her throat. She is the leader of the ghosts, and her outrage at how she was treated has made her stronger.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Taunt d10, Stealth d12, Throwing d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Ghost:** May only be harmed by magical attacks; can pass through physical matter; affects the physical world using Spirit for Strength; causes Fear; immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Illusion:** With great effort (once per scene), Miranda can entirely transform the surroundings of the manor via illusion. The walls may drip with blood, all doors and windows disappear, and everyone in the room is surrounded by the sounds of dying screams. Large knives (like the one

Baker used) may fly through the air — make an opposed Spirit roll, with the character being “attacked” taking Fatigue instead of wounds. Note: Miranda uses this ability to manipulate the heroes' emotions, but not attack, in the Old Kitchen, Courtyard, and Parlor Room.

- **Weakness (Baker's Knife):** The ghost is vulnerable to the knife which Baker used to kill her, which is hidden in the dining room (page 67). It counts as a magical attack, doing Str+d4 damage. Further, Miranda needs to make a Spirit roll to attack or interact with the wielder of the knife. However, if she makes her roll, her attacks add an additional +1d6 damage, due to her rage of being confronted with the knife again.

Robert Baker and Sir Findley

Sir Findley is possessed by the spirit of Robert Baker. If Sir Findley becomes Incapacitated or is the subject of the *banish entity* power, all of his attributes and skills become d6, his Parry and Toughness become 5, and he has no Special Abilities.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Taunt d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Gear: Revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, no reloads), knife (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Possessed:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, no additional damage from Called Shots, and immune to disease and poison. Once Sir Findley is no longer possessed, these effects end.
- **Weakness (Baker's Knife):** Baker is vulnerable to the knife he used to commit murder, which is hidden in the dining room (page 67). All damage done with the knife (Str+d4) is considered to be “ephemeral” damage, hitting only Baker and not Sir Findley. If Baker stops possessing Sir Findley, all damage done by the knife fades immediately.





MOONSHINE BLUES

By David Boop

*"Tell everybody that comes my way
I've got those moonshine blues, I say,"
—Ma Rainey "Moonshine Blues"*

The Big Easy, circa 1936. Only, this isn't the history told in schools. Back in the old west, something changed the world. California is gone, but in its place are monsters, strange machines, and magic! Welcome to New Orleans where nothing is as *easy* as it seems.

It's a sad day when a group of hard-boiled gumshoes come back from a hard case only to discover their favorite bartender, Whitey, has slung his last shot of bourbon. Something doesn't add up. The bulls of the New Orleans PD say it was an accident, that Whitey drank himself to death. Only Whitey never touched the stuff.

Something is rotten in the Big Easy and it's up to the dicks to set the score straight and get to the bottom of this tragedy before they start singing the blues themselves.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for any characters living in the late 1930s and has a film noir/pulp horror mood. The premise of the adventure is

the majority of the characters are all private dicks who work together.

Characters for this should be Seasoned Rank (20 XP) and follow the general guidelines for characters in *Deadlands Noir*. This adventure can easily be slipped into other settings without using the *Deadlands Noir* rules. Take a look at the sidebar on the following page for suggested changes.

THE END OF A LONG DAY...

This scenario is set after the end of a rewarding case. The detectives, fresh from dragging their worn carcasses back to the office, decide to celebrate. For some, this might mean restocking weapons and items. For others it means finally paying off some debts. While the gumshoes don't have to hang together all the time, a small celebration later that evening may be in order; someplace nicer than the dives, gin joints and hoot-n-hollars of the French Quarter.

Unfamiliar with Deadlands Noir?

If you aren't using the Deadlands: Noir setting, you'll need to make a few tweaks to get the full use out of this adventure:

- Ruby Ray is no longer a Voodist, instead he has the Arcane Background (Miracles) and his Voodoo skill is replaced by Faith.
- References to **Patter** or **Interrogation** use the Social Conflict Rules from *Savage Worlds*, using Intimidation or Persuasion versus Spirit, or Taunt versus Smarts.

The following Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds* should be used to capture the grim dark gritty feel of *Deadlands Noir*:

- **Blood & Guts:** Characters can spend Bennies on damage rolls.
- **Critical Failures:** Whenever a character rolls a 1 on both his Trait and Wild Die, he can't spend a Benny. He's stuck with the result!
- **Gritty Damage:** Whenever a Wild Card suffers a wound, she rolls on the **Injury Table**. Injuries sustained this way are cured when the wound is healed.

Read or paraphrase the following to your team:

Ah, the sweet smell of success! It's a long time coming. Who knew having a few extra bills in your pocket would burn so much. Time to toast your victory by heading down to your favorite (when you can afford it) lounge, La Luxure. You especially love chatting with Whitey, who seems to always have the best gossip and the deepest pours.

You can almost smell the beignets as you walk down Canal Street toward La Luxure. There are banners flying for the upcoming Bastille Day festival, the second largest event in New Orleans next to Mardi Gras. Even though it's two days away, the night is a buzz with energy. There is a lot of pressure

to make sure holiday goes off without a hitch, but you don't concern yourself with that. That's for politicians, mob bosses, and restaurant owners to worry about. You just want to have your own celebration, right here — right now!

To your surprise and horror, there's a circus of chaos surrounding the place. A crowd stands outside and squad cars from the New Orleans Police department light up the night with red and blue.

If that wasn't bad enough, you see the meat wagon from the coroner's office idling nearby. With sinking hearts, you know you're not going to get your pastries, shots of bourbon, or the company of Whitey the bartender.

LA LUXURE

Few places in the City Center are as opulent as La Luxure while still keeping their doors open to all races, creeds, or backgrounds (as long as they have money!) The main floor has an indoor patio complete with streetlamps, a bar area off to the left (once Whitey's domain), and dining room with a dozen or so tables. A winding staircase takes guests up to a second floor where there are more tables, a separate private dining area, a balcony, and a smoking room (with the best cigars in town). Giant gaslight chandeliers punctuate the fact that the owner, Ruby Ray Morales, is a man who does things his way.

A local celebrity, Ruby Ray is known far and wide for his larger-than-life personality. Ruby Ray gets his name from the countless array of ruby gems he has on his body: rings, necklaces, even jeweled glasses (though he can see just fine). He carries a walking stick with him that has a giant ruby on the end worth more than anyone can imagine. It never leaves his side.

If your shamuses decide to talk to Ruby Ray now, skip to **A Gem of a Guy** then return.

Rumors regarding Whitey's death begin to swirl, but the shamuses can filter out the facts. A success on a Streetwise roll tells them that just before La Luxure was to open, the wait staff arrived to find Whitey on the floor behind his bar, several empty bottles of gin next to him; his mouth and clothes reeking of the stuff. This would come as a shock to those

who knew Whitey well. He had a hard and fast rule about never touching the sauce. He didn't like the way it dulled his senses. Senses were everything to Whitey. He could tell what drink someone needed by the perfume on a man's collar or the gait of lady's step.

A raise reveals a cook heard Whitey fighting with someone earlier in the day; however, he's new and doesn't know who it was. If the heroes check with the police/coroner, a Streetwise check at -4 reveals that the only mark on Whitey is a bump on the back of his head from where he fell to the ground. Could someone have taken a blackjack to Whitey and set-up to look like he'd died under non-suspicious circumstances?

"Hit over the head? Why?" the informant says, "Everyone loved Whitey! No, this was an accident, an unfortunate one. Some men just can't handle the sauce."

If the characters nose around a bit more for information they find an alcohol delivery driver (a legitimate one working for the Black Hand). He gives the detectives pause when he reveals that Whitey didn't stop rum-running when Prohibition stopped up North. There are two dry states — Alabama and Mississippi, plus several dry counties throughout the South — that made being in the illegal trade a good side business. The mob doesn't want any part of it as long as Whitey uses their booze and gives them their cut. The driver suspects Whitey kept a list of contacts and manifests at his office (see **The Faux Factory** below) in the Warehouse District. With a successful Intimidation roll or Persuasion roll along with a 15 dollar bribe, he gives up the address.

The news is depressing, but not unexpected in the Big Easy. That Whitey had lived in the shadows as long as he had was a testament to the guy's skills, but his death sounds too suspicious to let go without digging a little deeper. Sure, they don't have a client, but this time it's personal!

THE FAUX FACTORY

The detectives enter the factory through an office. If the heroes search, the dicks find manifests for liquor shipments. A successful Streetwise roll at -2 recognizes the distributor,

Whitey's History

Everyone knows Whitey. When still in his mid-twenties, Whitey's hair turned platinum white, a trick of a rare gene. Now in his early fifties, no one remembers what his real name was and he ain't tellin'! He is well loved by his patrons at La Luxure (The Desire) and by members of the community at large. When the North tried to enforce Prohibition, Whitey was first on the line to run booze to the "dry" states. Working with the mob, many say it was his efforts that eventually broke the back of the Union and forced the repeal. Two states still hold on to the conservative value of abstinence, but for those areas, Whitey keeps the hooch moving north. The Mob has all but moved out of the bootlegging business, letting Whitey do as he pleases, as long as they get their cut.

What people don't know about Whitey is his level of greed. He keeps it hidden well by making sure he rewards his friends (at the cost of someone else's pocket.) He gives out free drinks, only to get a fatter tip at the end of the night. He'll buy cheap booze and transfer it to more expensive bottles, pocketing the difference in cost. This is the exact situation that gets Whitey in over his head and costs him his life.

When his boss, Ruby Ray Morales, discovers Whitey's side work, instead of being mad the restaurateur helps Whitey out by setting him up with moonshiner friends of his bodyguard, Locomotive Mike. Whitey isn't keen on the plan, not knowing these swamp people personally. He voices his concern that the quality of the hooch might be noticeable to his customers, but Ruby Ray assures him the replaced bottles aren't going to any of Whitey's contacts, but to the competing bars under the control of the Black Hand. Whitey doesn't like backstabbing the mob, and decides to investigate the faux bourbon. Unfortunately, he's discovered and killed by Locomotive Mike. Ruby Ray and Mike stage Whitey's body behind the bar he tended so lovingly.

Mama's Spaghetti Sauce, as the one the Black Hand uses to supply their gin joints, houses of ill repute, and so forth. On each manifest, one specific sauce, Bolognese, is always circled and the number of bottles tallied below. Many of these shipments are sent to the dry states. A success on Investigations or Knowledge (Accounting) roll at -2 uncovers that Whitey delivered more bottles of Bolognese sauce than he bought by a 15-25% margin depending on the location. Those with a Success on the roll locate an old newspaper article. It's the obituary section with war reports. One name is circled, Trenton Barranco, who died at home from injuries suffered during the war, leaving behind a wife and child.

Outside the office, on the factory's main floor, there are hundreds of crates. In one set there are empty bottles of high-end Kentucky bourbon along with the materials to package it for distribution. Conversely, there are several crates of clear glass bottles containing what looks and smells like fine Kentucky bourbon, but professionally made liquor never comes in clear bottles. It has to be something else. An assembly line stands between them with funnels to pour one into the other. The unlabeled booze is meant to be poured into the top shelf bottles.

Anyone who samples the sauce must make a Spirit roll at -4 or fall victim to the effects of **Black Bourbon** (see sidebar).

As the detectives investigate, a truck pulls up outside. Eyeballing from the shadows (Stealth roll), they see several thugs load the finished bottles into the truck.

If the detectives tail the truck they track the shipment to a main distributor of alcohol for the Black Hand mob, Mama's Spaghetti Sauce. All of the mob's booze goes through this center storehouse, owned by a weasel-of-a-guy known as Mama. There are lots of trucks coming and going, in preparation for Bastille Day. A Notice roll at -2 observes the henchmen dropping the crates off cautiously, as if trying not to be noticed. The cases being off loaded blend in perfectly with the currently present cases of real booze.

If the heroes are discovered or attack before the thugs leave the warehouse, the bad guys fight back but won't hesitate to cut their losses if the fight is going against them.

- **Thugs (2 per Hero):** See page 96.

Black Bourbon

This is the stuff that cost Whitey his life: Black Bourbon. Similar to Red Rum (see **Hyde** in *Deadlands: Noir*) in that it's made by mixing ghost rock with the other ingredients. What's different is the scent is refined to allow the caramel and smoked vanilla smell to cover the distinctive odor of the ghost rock used in the aging process. However, a connoisseur of bourbon might notice a difference, though most assume the smell is due to rot-gut being passed off as the good stuff. A Notice roll at -4 or Knowledge (Ghost Rock) check at -2 detects the infusion of ghost rock in it.

Also refined are Black Bourbon's effects. Whereas drinking Red Rum might induce anything from blindness to turning into a rage monster, drinking Black Bourbon produces one effect: violent madness! Anyone drinking the homebrew must make a Spirit roll at -4. Those failing become a maniac for 2d6 rounds. During this time he goes berserk (as the Edge) and launches a violent attack against the nearest character, friend or foe, continuing to rampage until the effects of the bourbon wear off.

Once it's clear what the effects of the tainted booze are, it's clear that no good can come from drinking it, unlike Red Rum, which sometimes has welcomed effects.

If a thug is taken alive, he'll reveal that the fake booze is procured from a group of swamp people out in the bayou. Additional information requires the heroes to convince him to spill the beans. For each **Interrogation** (see *Deadlands Noir*) success, they'll receive the following information:

Interrogation Results

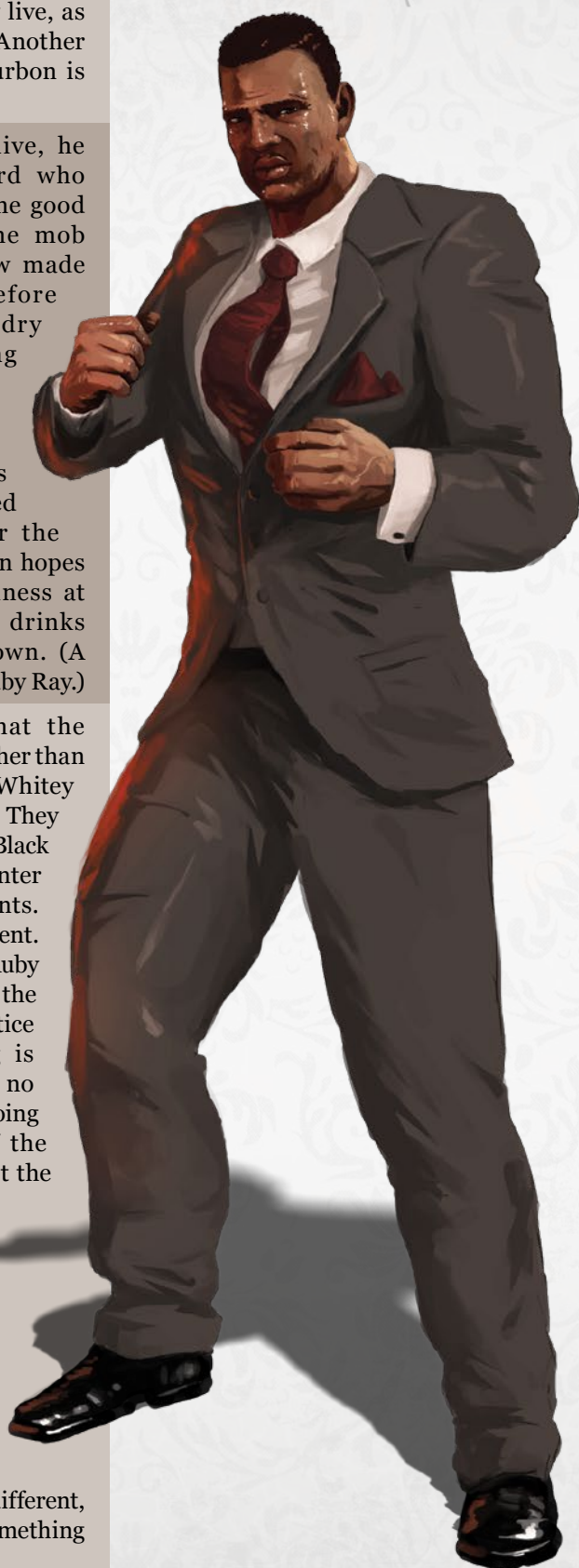
Margin of Victory Results

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | Whitey used a new moonshiner producer, a family of swamp people, for this batch of fake bourbon, one he needed an escort to meet. Ruby Ray's bodyguard |
|-----|--|

Locomotive Mike is the only one who knows where they live, as he is the go-between. Another shipment of Black Bourbon is waiting to be picked up.

3-4 When Whitey was alive, he was a greedy bastard who often watered down the good stuff provided by the mob with cheap homebrew made by rum-runners before shipping out to the dry states and pocketing the difference. Whitey planned to backstab the Black Hand next, switching out the mob's expensive liquor served at their locations for the watered-down booze, in hopes of drumming up business at La Luxure, where the drinks are never watered down. (A falsehood planted by Ruby Ray.)

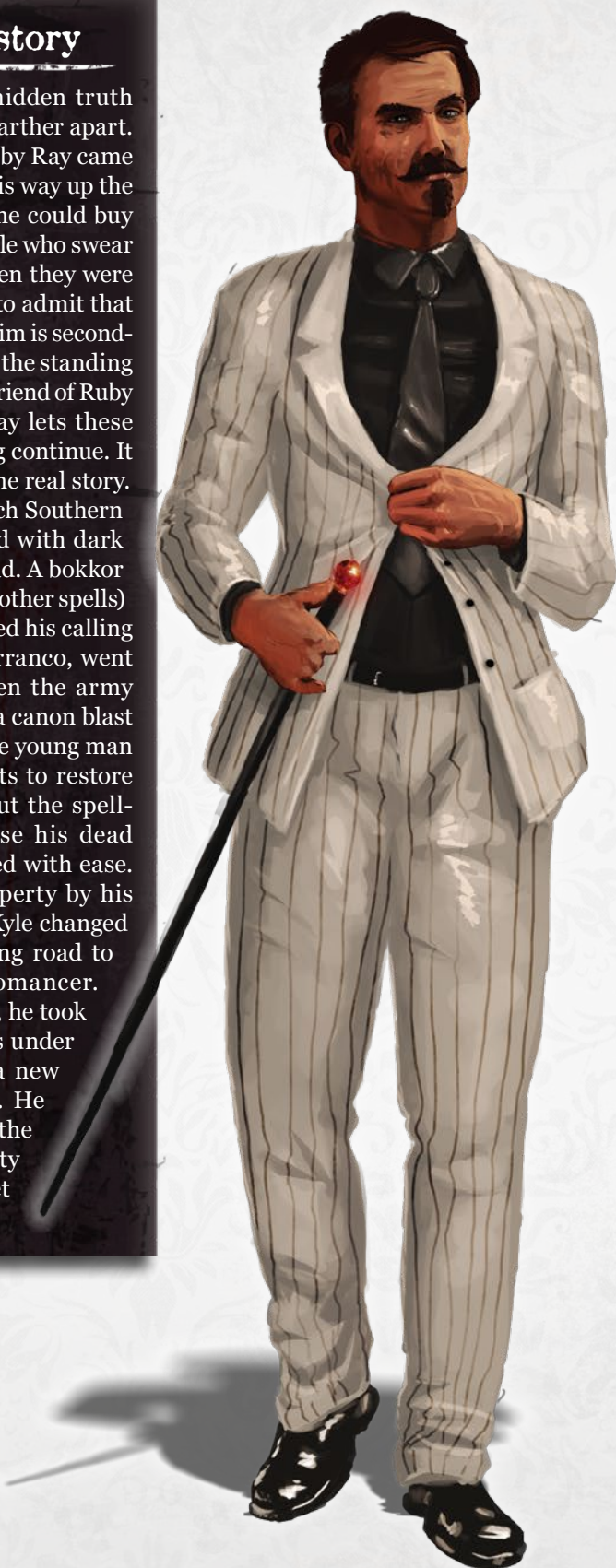
5+ He doesn't know what the homebrew is used for other than they had orders from Whitey to destroy if discovered. They were to drop it off at the Black Hand's distribution center for all their liquor joints. This was the first shipment. (Another deliberate lie. Ruby Ray is the one who gave the orders. A successful Notice roll reveals the thug is hiding something, but no amount of pressure is going to make him talk.) If the detectives decide to test the tainted bourbon, there is a chance they discover it's laced with ghost rock (see **Black Bourbon** sidebar). A successful Common Knowledge roll brings up tales of a ghost rock-spiked alcohol called Red Rum, but its effects are different, random. This drink is something new...and deadlier.



Ruby Ray's History

The public persona and hidden truth about Ruby Ray couldn't be farther apart. As far as everyone knows, Ruby Ray came from a poor family, worked his way up the restaurant food chain until he could buy his own place. There are people who swear to have worked with him when they were just busboys. Nobody wants to admit that everything they know about him is second-hand. They don't want to lose the standing of being a close and personal friend of Ruby Ray's. For his part, Ruby Ray lets these rumors and misremembering continue. It builds his legend and hides the real story.

Born Kyle Barranco to a rich Southern family, he became fascinated with dark magic as soon as he could read. A bokkor (a mage who casts curses and other spells) by his early teens, Kyle realized his calling after his father, Trenton Barranco, went off to fight in the war. When the army brought Trenton home after a canon blast left him near death's door, the young man was devastated. Kyle's efforts to restore his father's health failed, but the spell-slinger found he could raise his dead daddy's body up from the bed with ease. Driven from the family property by his mother as an abomination, Kyle changed his identity and began a long road to becoming a Master Necromancer. Once he'd accomplished that, he took up residence in New Orleans under another identity, building a new career and biding his time. He refused to even be a part of the floundering Red Sect, a society of dark mages, lest his secret be revealed.



A GEM OF A GUY

Ruby Ray, Whitey's boss, might have the inside scoop to the dead man's dealings. He is rarely found anywhere but La Luxure. He has rooms on a third floor that can only be accessed through a hidden door in the smoking room.

Ruby Ray is not an easy man to get to, but when they do he treats strangers as if they were his oldest dearest friends. His over-the-top personality is well known, as is the notion that he's connected to everyone and everything in New Orleans. Knowledge is power to Ruby Ray, and he trades rumor for rumor.

If the team arranges to meet him, they'll be approached by his bodyguard first to be cleared. Ruby Ray's long time protector is a former boxer named "Locomotive" Mike, a large black man with fists that could punch a hole through a horse.

When Ruby Ray finally agrees to a sit down, it is in the smoking room on the second floor of La Luxure. To keep the dicks on their toes, Ruby Ray lets slip some personal details he knows about them, details he gleaned from Whitey. Whitey was miserly and would do anything for an extra buck. The former bartender knew how to spot people's weaknesses, especially after a few drinks, and used that to gain information, which he passed on to Ruby Ray for handsome pay.

Ruby always knew Whitey's greed would be his downfall and doesn't think Whitey's death was a result of drinking. Feigning concern for Whitey, he offers to hire the gumshoes to find their killer. He suggests (and even pushes) Locomotive Mike onto the team for extra muscle. If this happens after the warehouse incident, the heroes already knows Locomotive Mike is the guide Whitey uses to get to the swamp people moonshiners and should accept the offer. Ruby Ray is charismatic, charming, and hard to say no to. There is, of course, a reason for that.

💀 **"Locomotive" Mike:** See page 94.

💀 **Ruby Ray Morales:** See page 95.

A HAND POINTS THE WAY

Much of the evidence points at Whitey double-crossing the Black Hand mob on the

liquor he was buying from them. Their power in New Orleans is absolute, though the detectives know there are always newcomers waiting on the side hoping for a chance to knock the big kid off the sand hill.

Nosing around in the Black Hands could cost the person to lose a nose and a hand, but the truth is somewhere in there, so start digging they must.

Finding an inside person isn't hard. Getting them to talk is. The mob is compartmentalized with one branch not knowing what the other is up to. If Whitey was discovered embezzling from the Black Hand, even on such a small operation as back-alley booze, there're only two groups who would know: the liquor group or the assassin group.

A Streetwise check at -4 obtains the name of a freelance hitman named "Jazzman" James, who does a lot of grease work for the Black Hand when he's not blowing trumpet at one of the clubs down on Bourbon Street. He might sing if the money's right, but not at the cost of losing favor with the mob. If asked he'll reveal that no hit was put out on Whitey from the Black Hand, and he'd know.

"Mama" is not so obliging. He's glad Whitey's gone, as his illegal run-running business brought unwanted attention to "legitimate" business owners as himself.

*I've got no time for your questions.
Ten-thousands mooks will be in this
city in two days, thirsty as all hell.
It's like Christmas here. All I know is,
if someone killed Whitey, it wasn't me
because I'm not so much on subtlety. I'd
made it much more...personal.*

*I'll tell you straight, Whitey made
some enemies when he chose a
different supplier for his hooch. He
started chumming up with some
inbred folks in the swamp who were
supplying him cheaply. These swamp
types ain't ones to be trusted, but
if you want to know who whacked
him then find the swampies they'll
probably know.*

If they shamuses decide to follow up, head on to **The Swamp is a Monument to Death.**

💀 **William "Jazzman" James:** See page 96.

THE SWAMP IS A MONUMENT TO DEATH

The next step for the gumshoes is to head into the swamp and see what they can learn from the swamp people and Whitey's old supplier. Finding the swamp people isn't an easy task and without a bit of help the heroes are going to have a rough time at it.

If shamuses declined Ruby Ray's offer the first time they met, he contacts the dicks to "insist" they take Locomotive Mike as a guide—he's also willing to procure required transportation. If pressed to why, he merely explains the big man grew up in the swamps and knows them better than most. The heroes would be remiss to pass on such a stalwart guide. Turning down Ray's help forces the group to find another guide and means of travel.

Once ready to go, read or paraphrase the following:

The Bayou isn't just any swamp. Within the knotted and gnarled trees that twist and writhe like haunted cobwebs lay every type of danger known to these parts: gators, snakes, diseases, and quicksand. But even they pale to the hidden predators; the type of fabled monsters that scare even the storytellers: ghosts, demons, half-men and water monsters that can swallow you whole.

If that wasn't enough, there are also the swamp people themselves, the crazies who call this hell a home. A special breed of humanity who know this area by instinct, not sight. They see you coming a mile away and suck the marrow from your bones to make hush puppies. Or so you've heard, because few people who anger the swamp people are heard from again.

The team heads out first thing in the morning. Land vehicle can only go so far, getting any deeper in the Bayou requires the use of an air boat.

Air Boat

Medium Vehicle: Acc/TS 3/16, Toughness 8 (2), Crew 1+3.

Before departing, Ruby Ray gave clear instructions to Locomotive Mike to "take care of the private dicks" and the source of the moonshine—wanting to wrap up the whole mess with Whitey once and for all. Mike's plans are to lead the heroes into a nest of ichtynite and let the fish creatures take care of things. the only problem being, he has no idea where to find their lair.

The trip takes several hours and is slow going. The mass of trees creates an ever shifting maze of water ways, which seem to even confuse Locomotive Mike. If any of the shamuses question Mike's direction sense, allow a Survival roll at -2. With a success, the hero realizes Mike is looking for something in particular. If questioned about it, the big man shrugs it off and says he thought he knew a short cut. Fearful of letting the cat out of the bag, Locomotive Mike gives up on locating the ichtynite and makes his way towards the swamp people camp. Head to **Home of the Swamp People...**

If no one questions Mike about their location, he spots what he was looking for and leads the group to an area known to be infested with ichtynite. Continue on with **Creatures from the Blue Bayou.**

CREATURES FROM THE BLUE BAYOU

Read or paraphrase the following:

As your team gets deeper into the swamp, a disturbing quiet falls over the area. All birds, bugs and noise save for the sound of your motor stops. Something thumps the bottom of your boat, but the tell-tale sign of a gator doesn't follow it. Have you run over a log? No, something is moving under the water.

What's that? A low humming, almost like a song, croons from all around you and you find yourselves being lulled by its melody. A set of silvery orbs flashes near you, and then disappears. More arrive; sometimes just off shore, more often looking up from below. You know you're no longer alone. You're being hunted. It only takes a moment, but when they finally attack, the strange fish creatures are everywhere!

Have the group check for surprise as the ichtynites launch their attack. During the first round, half the creatures use their Crooning ability to confuse the characters while the others attack. If more than half the creatures are killed, the remainder retreats, slipping back into water to escape.

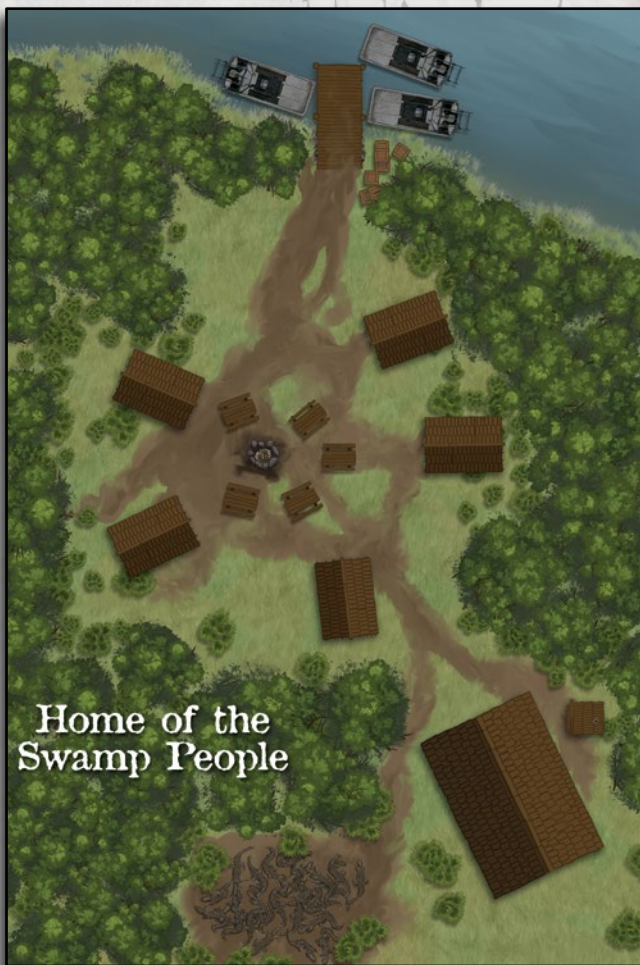
Should the heroes wish to follow to eradicate the ichtynites' lair, following the creatures requires a successful Tracking roll and a half hour of time. At the creature's lair there are 6 plus 2d6 ichtynites and 1d4 ichtynite hybrids imprisoned in cages.

- **Icthnites (4 plus 1 per hero):** See page 94.
- **Icthnite Hybrids (1d4):** See page 94.

HOME OF THE SWAMP PEOPLE

Shaken up, but still hell bent to find the illegal stills of the swamp people, the heroes finally catch a break. As they go deeper into the Bayou it feels as if nothing could, or should, live there, but before long the sound of banjos and laughter echoes off the water. They have been delivered to the swamp people's domain.

Your guide, Locomotive Mike, gestures ahead pointing at what appears your destination. In the fading light of the afternoon you spy two airboats tethered to a rickety wooden dock, where twelve cases of Black Bourbon wait for pick-up. A ramp leads up to a dry, elevated area where five shacks are built in a circular fashion around a common area. The area is filled with several wooden tables, and around each are gathered several swamp people enjoying an evening meal. A few young'uns race about chasing fire flies. Farther back you observe a barn with a gated yard, although dogs, pigs, chickens, and goats seem to roam freely about the property.



Still a fair distance out, Mike cuts the boat's engine allowing it to drift towards the shore. He casually explains that the swamp folk don't take kind to strangers showing up, so it is best for them to disembark down the bank a bit while he goes on alone. He casually explains he'll sort things out with the locals. While he does, if the shamuses head in land a bit they'll find a barn which houses the still where the moonshine is made. There they'll probably find Chalker, and if anyone knows what Whitey was up to it's him. The heroes disembark a short distance from the docks, out of direct line of sight of the shacks. In the distance, in the direction of the barn, wheezing and clanking sounds emanate from within the swamp directing the shamuses to the location of the still.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Swatting the last mosquito that decided you were a good snack, you enter a small clearing in which sits a large dilapidated barn with peeling

paint. Near the front of the barn sits a large cooper still fashioned after a contraption likely found in Dr. Frankenstein's lab. Before you can approach, a skinny man wearing waders underneath a worn lab coat emerges from the barn. As he approaches the copper monstrosity he pulls out a keyring of tools and starts to check and calibrate the various valves all the while talking to himself. Once done he checks the liquid slowly dripping out of a valve into a several green bottles and yelps excitedly. You are most certain this is the man you are looking for — Chalker.

Have the heroes make a Smarts roll. Those who succeed remember all the bottles of the Black Bourbon they have found, and those at the dock were in clear bottles, while the ones here are green. Anyone wishing to study the still may make a Common Knowledge roll (+2 for bootleggers or patent scientist) to figure out how it works. There are components for making the sour mash, distilling it, draining the runoff and then barreling up the booze. The part that really stands out though is the use of a ghost rock filtration system to age the bourbon quickly.

If the heroes approach, Chalker is momentarily startled by the newcomers but quickly regains his composure. *"Sorry, I didn't expect anyone today, but have you come to sample the new batch? I assure you it's up to Mr. Ruby's standards, just what he ordered."*

Although surprised by the intrusion, he is proud of his work and more than happy to share his achievements with anyone willing to listen. The following are suggested responses to a few of the questions the private dicks may ask:

Are you the one making the bourbon?

"Not making, creating. Oh no, you see I was hired to make a special liquor that would incite rage and unleash the primal part of man. So I did. Oh the first batch or two didn't work quite right, but now every time, a small sip and the inner beast is revealed. It's great work and I did it!"

Who hired you to make the liquor?

"Who hired me? I rarely care about the who, as long as their script is good, but I recognized this one. A large black man, a boxer I'd seen fight in the city, showed up one day with a briefcase filled with money and instructions. But I know more than they do. Oh, he was just a middle man, I swear upon my ma's possum stew, it's his boss really calling the shots."

Why do it?

"Why? 'Cause they said it couldn't be done. And there ain't nothing that Chalker can't make or do."

Why is this batch in green bottles?

"Sometimes I create other things, but this batch was specially requested. It's the exact opposite of the Black Bourbon. It doesn't make people insane. It calms them. Gives them a complete state of nirvana. Makes them susceptible to reason, even pliable to suggestion. My opus: Chalker's Green Gin!"

After he finishes speaking, Chalker looks at the private dicks with a smile. Before any more questions can be asked, the heroes find themselves surrounded by swamp people.

"But as much as I would love to stay and chat, I have other things to tend to and I see my children have come. Obviously by your stunned faces, you don't understand. I've created a new race of man; one that can not only exist in the swamp, but thrive! I've merged the best of humankind with..."

As he talks, the bodies of the swamp people change into something no longer human! An unnatural combination of human...and alligator! Heroes witnessing the transformation must make Fear checks. Unbeknownst to the heroes, Locomotive Mike spun a tale to the swamp folk indicating the shamuses were here to put Chalker on ice, following Ruby Ray's order to clean up any loose ends.

💀 **"Donnie" Chalker:** See page 93.

• **Man Gator Hybrids (6):** See page 95.

During the combat the man-gator hybrids directly attack the heroes while Chalker makes his escape. After five rounds of combat, a scream like that of a dying animal pierces the din of battle bringing, it to a stop momentarily. The fight is over unless the heroes press violence. The hybrids loop toward the main encampment. If the shamuses follow read or paraphrase the following:

Battered and bruised, you follow the gator men. You know it's not wise but any chance of getting out of here means you'll have to go this way sooner or later. You find yourself in the common area surrounded by the meager shacks. A female swamp person is kneeling near a twisted body on the ground. Approaching, you notice the lab coat, but now it's splattered with blood. On the ground lies the broken and battered body of Chalker.

One of the gator hybrids unleashes a primal growl. Between sobs, the woman says, "It was the boxer. He struck father twice, killing him."

Looking around, you notice the other swamp people looking at you with hate in their eyes. Along with the hybrid-gator men, the odds are not in your favor.

The unfortunate circumstances provide the heroes a chance to resolve the conflict without more bloodshed. The heroes need to clearly explain, and quickly, they were not part of Mike's plan to kill anyone and that they are outraged by the tragedy as well. Doing so requires a Persuasion roll at -4. Award a bonus to the Trait roll for good role-playing. Failing means the swamp people are not convinced and attack. With a success, the swamp people strongly suggest the heroes leave, allowing them to take one of the air rafts. Without a guide getting back to civilization takes a bit of time. How difficult of a trip is left to the Game Master's discretion.

- **Adult Swamp People (20)**
- **Man Gator Hybrids (6)**



**THIS PLACE
IS A RIOT!**

If it's assumed that Locomotive Mike is working under Ruby Ray's orders, why does the restaurateur want to start a war? By poisoning their bourbon stock right before a busy holiday, the Black Hand would certainly catch the flack from a riot. Is Ruby Ray in league with a person vying for power within the organization, or trying to ruin "Silver Dollar" Sam Carolla as a whole? The possibility that Ruby Ray is tied in with the Five Families from New York should also come as no surprise. Or...the Red Sect could be trying for a territory grab by weakening the Black Hand's grip. There is still too much unknown for our investigators and they need answers quick.

Once back in town, the gumshoes have the following options:

The Not-So Long Arm of the Law Go to the police with their findings.

Liquor is Quicker Find the Black Bourbon or destroy all the Black Hand's bourbon stock.

The Necromancer Sonata Confront Ruby Ray and Locomotive Mike.

THE NOT-SO LONG ARM OF THE LAW

Heading down to Lafayette Square to headquarters of the New Orleans Police Department is rarely a smart first step, but without knowing for sure where Locomotive Mike went with the Black Bourbon, the team decides to seek help. The police could put out an APB on him, if the investigators can get someone to believe them.

Only, they don't. Especially mob buster Lt. Jules Townsend, who is normally up for a fight. He hears out the detectives when they tell him there's new evidence in the Whitey murder case. They can tell he wants to believe them, but they give him nothing to go on.

"Don't get me wrong, guys, I'd love to give the Black Hand a black eye, but you can't just show up here with wild stories of poisoned booze, gator-men and a plot involving Ruby Ray Morales without some sort of evidence. The mayor loves that overdressed peacock, despite the fact I did some checking. Something about him scares the bejeesus out of hougans at the Emporium. They won't say what. I didn't even know Ruby Ray dabbled in magic.

"I'll give you this. Bring me a bottle of juke-up juice, and maybe then I'll send a warning upstairs, get some extra men on it. I'd be careful though. Making accusations like that, well, let's just say I've fished bodies out of the riverfront for less."

Ruby Ray is an outstanding citizen with no criminal record. Plus, with all the Black Hand's ties to the police department, accusing the organization of anything is fruitless. In fact, the more the team pushes, the increasingly uncomfortable the NOPD gets. A Notice check allows the gumshoes to detect others in the department taking stock of them.

Townsend won't go after Ruby Ray or Locomotive Mike, though, forcing the gumshoes to tackle that thread on their own (Skip to **The Necromancer Sonata**).

When the gumshoes leave the station, several Black Hand men are waiting outside. Mr. Ricci invites them to his offices for a chat. Having a gunfight right outside a police station is not in anyone's best interest. The gumshoes enter the black stretch cars for a ride (skip to **Black Hand Moan**).

- **Black Hand Soldiers (6):** See page 93.

LIQUOR IS QUICKER

Finding the mob's liquor distribution warehouse isn't hard (if they didn't go to it earlier during **The Faux Factory** (page 79). Having been delayed in the Bayou, Locomotive Mike has had enough time to slip the Black Bourbon into the Black Hand's supply. Without opening each bottle, it'll be nearly impossible to detect which is the poisoned stock. While on the one hand, destroying all the bourbon seems like the best way to make sure none of it reaches the public, such an open display of vandalism would produce immediate repercussions from the mob.

Whether the team starts looking first or just start busting up bourbon, they attract attention. Ultimately, the goons want the team to surrender so they can be questioned. If the heroes escape, they are tracked back to the team's office.

- **Black Hand Soldiers (4 plus 2 per hero):** See page 93.

Should the investigators take the wise route and surrender, they are blindfolded with wrists bound and are escorted to an unknown location, head on to **Black Hand Moan**.

If they manage to stay free and have an opportunity to question a Black Hand soldier, he reveals he and his men were sent by Claudio Ricci, one of the top dogs of the mob. The soldier states Mr. Ricci just wants to talk, but no one "just" talks to the second-in-command of the Black Hand. If the team decides to talk to Mr. Ricci, a successful Streetwise check at -2 reveals he works out of Tremé in one of the most heavily guarded of all Black Hand locales. It is easier to turn themselves over than try to break or fight their way in. Time to head to **Black Hand Moan**.

BLACK HAND MOAN

When the blindfolds are removed, they find themselves in a large, almost empty office. Laid out on the floor are fresh canvas sheets, the type used to absorb spills of a blood-like nature. The only other item of note is a single desk where sits a gentleman with cold, dead eyes taking the team in. He's Claudio Ricci, second only to the head Black Hand, "Silver Dollar" Carolla. He may not be the biggest guy on the payroll, but he gets the second largest check for a reason.

Read or paraphrase the following:

What do we have here? A bunch of revolutionaries, eh? Thought you were going to pull a Boston Tea Party on me, were you? What are you protesting? Liquor taxes? Protection fees? No, you all don't have the look of rebels. You look like bums for hire. So, who sent you to bust up our booze? The Five Families? They may have pinched some of our slots, but they won't distribute to our gin joints. No, not by a long shot. Choose your next words carefully, because it's hard to speak when you're gurgling blood.

 **Claudio Ricci:** See page 93.

If a member of the team chooses to engage in a **Patter** with Ricci, his Strong Willed edge gives him a +2 advantage.

Patter Results

Margin of Victory	Result
1-2	Ricci holds the investigators hostage until he can send some guys to see if any of their story checks out. This takes awhile, giving the heroes a chance to escape.
3-4	Ricci sends out for a few crates of the bourbon to test them. He'll make each of the investigators test a sample from the crates his men manage to recover (the missed crate from the The Faux Factory , page 79 should be

one of them). He makes each of the shamuses take a shot from random bottles. One should have the desired results. This convinces Ricci their story is on the up-n-up.

5+ Reveals Ricci's true feelings, that he is the only person in the Big Easy not to trust Ruby Ray. He's had the mook investigated and the man was a ghost before coming to New Orleans. Ricci doesn't like ghosts — real or imagined. He, too, owes a debt to Whitey from their rum-running days and took the bartender's death as hard as a man like him can. In honor he lets the team go.

Ricci doesn't, however, lend assistance other than to try and pull all untapped bourbon from the shelves (Kentucky Bourbon is the most popular drink in New Orleans, he says, so he doesn't know how successful he'll be.) Ricci cannot be seen moving openly against Ruby Ray, as he has ties to the Mayor and Carolla.

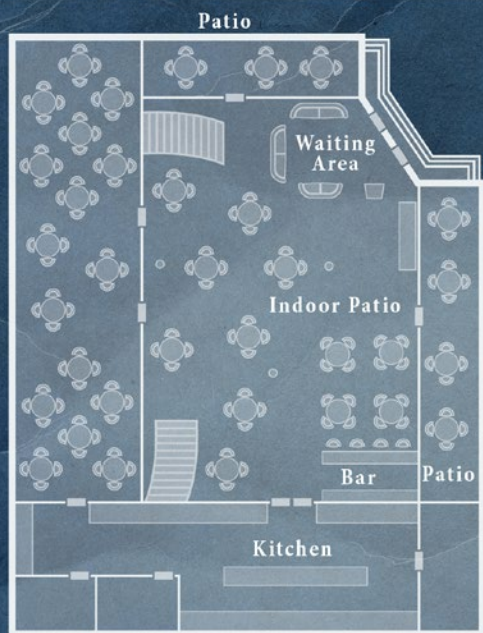
Once freed, the shamuses are left with only one other choice. Facing Ruby Ray Morales and the behemoth known as Locomotive Mike.

THE NECROMANCER SONATA

MOVEMENT ONE— ALL YOU ZOMBIES

It's dusk and La Luxure is quiet...too quiet. Read or paraphrase the following:

La Luxure is closed, like its soul just gave up the ghost. People walk by disappointed; their evening ruined. La Luxure never closes, not even on holidays. They'll have to go elsewhere, like clubs where tainted bourbon may be served to them. As couples stroll away, hand-in-hand, you cannot help but wonder if they'll be ripping each other apart before the end of the night; enemies, not lovers.



First Floor



Second Floor

La Luxure



What's Ruby Ray's endgame? Why create a riot in the streets? As you approach the doors, you see a flyer.

Private Party Tonight! Invite Only.

You don't have an invite, but if there's a party inside, you want to crash it.

The doors are locked, but the heroes have a suspicion they're expected. Use Lockpicking, or in lieu of that, break it down. Ruby Ray is waiting on the other side. The smell of death hits the team right away.

The shadows of people sitting at the indoor patio tables can be seen in the fading light of day. Some sit upright, some seem to be asleep. Soon after entering, the room falls into darkness. A switch is found and thrown, but the light doesn't bring comfort. Dead bodies are the only guests at the party. They look recently deceased. Distinctly sitting on each table is a bourbon bottle and half-filled glasses of the amber liquid. A Knowledge (Forensics, Medical, or Chemistry) success deduces they were poisoned. A raise reveals they were poisoned with cyanide.

The sound of a cane tip echoes from upstairs and Ruby Ray appears on the balcony

overlooking the patio. He doesn't smile any less than he did when you first met. In fact, he seems even more charming, if that's possible.

"Greetings, my friends. Sorry about the little goose chase into the swamps. I had to keep you busy while I finished making plans. Whitey told me how dogged y'all were in trackin' a case. I couldn't have you muckin' up the works back here. I see y'all survived Chalker's gator-men. You're every bit as tough as Whitey warned me about.

"Poor Whitey. He didn't like my plan to drive the city into a state of hysteria. Said it was bad for business. Embezzlin'? Now, that's bad for business. What I'm doing will actually start a new era for the city. One of magic and power, not money and corruption. I played that game for many years. Time for a new one.

"And before you all jump to the conclusion that I'm one of the Red Sect, heavens, no. Those drifters have no focus, no common goal. I'd never be a part of that thinly strung organization.

Lead them? Pull them together into a coherent unit? Maybe. If I let any of them live. No, I'm the future of the city. For only I have the power of life... and death!"

Ruby Ray waves his cane and the dead party guests slowly rise. Their unfocused eyes suddenly lock on to the team and, in unison, they move toward the gumshoes.

- **Zombie (4 plus 2 per hero):** See page 96.

These zombies are not hard to dispatch, and it seems Ruby Ray expected them to be easily defeated. He looks no more concerned than he did before. If any character makes a move toward the steps, though, he'll use his Cane of the Necromancer (page 95) to create fear to keep the investigator from ascending. Those reaching the top of the stairs are met by Locomotive Mike, who looks more angry and intimidating than any other previous encounter. He is no longer dressed as a simple bodyguard, but for combat. An armored overcoat and gauntlets cast him as a devil bent on the team's destruction.

- **Locomotive Mike:** See page 94. Add the following gear: Armored Coat (+4), gauntlets (Str+d4)

He's clearly not pretending to be on anyone's side but Ruby Ray's. He does whatever he can to drive any characters back down to the main floor.

MOVEMENT TWO— PUNCH AND DUTY

Locomotive Mike is as tough as the legend of John Henry. He comes at the team like a freight train. His movements are lightning fast and hard to dodge. Ruby Ray keeps talking as the team battles any remaining zombies and Locomotive Mike.

"You have no idea how many years I waited for this moment, the culmination of all my plans. After the chaos starts, there will be blame. The Black Hand will catch the brunt of it. The Mayor will want to make an example, to help the citizen rest easy. But Silver Dollar, no he won't stand for it. It'll be

a bloodbath and Carolla's position will be weakened. The Five Families will move in to start a mob war. Carolla will be fighting from every side and the bodies will be piling up. Then, when everyone's spent, I'll invite them to sit down and talk. I'll serve them Green Gin and convince them all that they should bow down before me. I won't have to lift more than a finger and New Orleans will be mine!"

When the zombie number drops to half and the heroes look to have the advantage, Ruby Ray pulls out another wild card.

"Oh, and while we're getting reacquainted with old friends, let me reintroduce another. Whitey? Come say hi!"

Like he stepped out of a nightmare, Whitey—their favorite bartender—shambles out from behind the bar. Only, he isn't the Whitey they remember. His skin is as white as his hair and runes have been drawn on his face. Instead of decaying, he has grown in bulk, muscles nearly bursting at the seams of his burial shirt. His hollow laugh, a gnarled mockery of the one they used to share together, sends chills down the hero's spines.

Despite his undead state it seems like there is sadness, maybe even reluctance beneath the glassy gray eyes of Whitey. That doesn't stop him from trying to bite the head off of anyone near him.

- **Whitey (Enhanced Zombie):** See page 96.

A successful Notice roll identifies Ruby Ray as the puppet master. Down below, Locomotive Mike does not go down easily, as was his reputation in the ring, but when he does eventually fall he does not get back up.

And while the task is brutal, the team returns Whitey to his eternal slumbers. Roll Spirit checks. Any who fail feel sick to their stomachs, suffering a level of Fatigue that dissipates after an hour. It'd been hard enough to say goodbye the first time. Putting their friend down this way is the ultimate betrayal.

When it looks like one or more of the gumshoes are going to make the top of the stairs, Ruby Ray disappears into the smoking

room. He's gone when the heroes arrive. Heroes searching the room may make a Notice roll at -2. With a success they uncover a bookcase concealing a hidden staircase. With a failed roll the heroes still uncover the hidden passage, but the time it takes to locate it allows Ray a few extra rounds to prepare for their impending arrival.

MOVEMENT THREE — I WANT MY MUM... ER I MEAN, DADDY!

Read or paraphrase the following:

Ruby Ray's office is a testament to all dark magic. Voodoo stigmata grace the walls, and the shelves and tables are lined with the vilest ingredients for spell making. Four mounted skeletons stare at you with empty eye sockets.

At the end of the room, Ruby Ray sits on an elevated throne, surrounded by coffins. On a small dais below him, one such coffin lid has been removed. The innards glow with arcane power and the room hums with dark magic coursing through it. A hand grips the edge of the coffin from inside and pulls itself up.

It's massive! Bigger than any zombie you've fought so far. Despite its state of decay, there is almost something familiar about it, like you've seen the man this creature was once before.

"Dear guests, I'd like you to meet my first success. Over the years I've enhanced and redesigned him, even going so far as to seek divine guidance from the most powerful gods. The result you see before you is a one of its kind zombie. You may call him Trenton, but I just like to call him...pappy!"

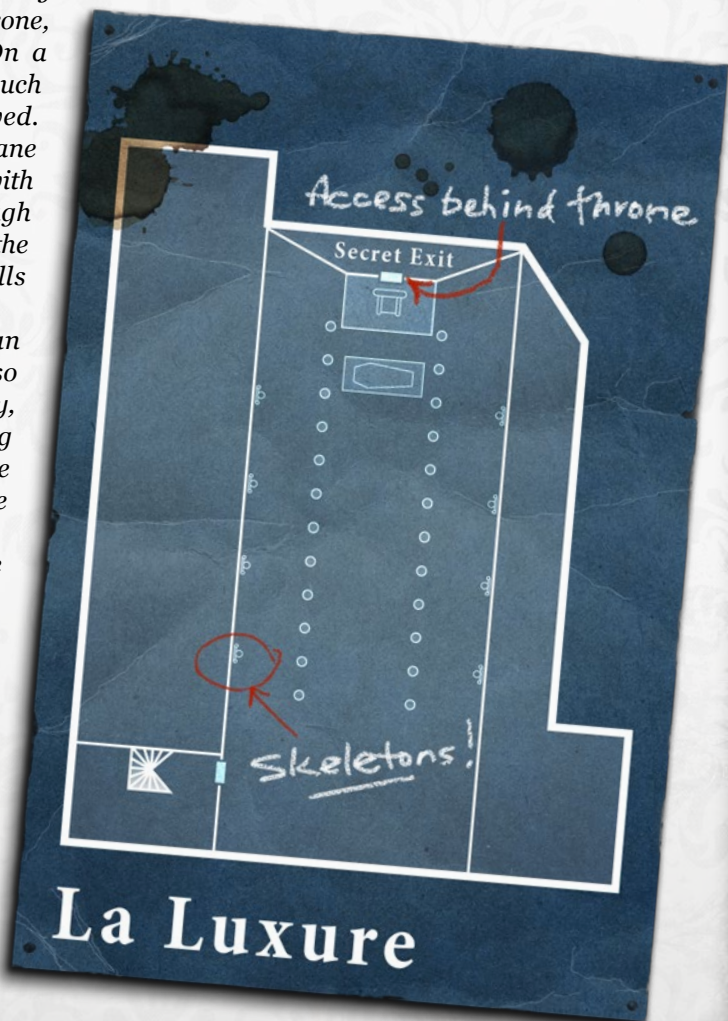
When Trenton steps free of the coffin, he holds himself like the guardian of a tomb.

Now the gumshoes can see the similarity of Ruby Ray to Trenton. Well, once they look past the grey, peeling skin and hair like hay. He is dressed in medieval Spanish warrior garb consisting of helmet, tunic, armor and leggings.

Trenton calls out in Spanish and animated skeletons burst forth from the remaining coffins, ready to attack!

During the fight Ruby Ray stays back, using his powers to bolster his creations, only joining the fray if pressed. If the fight starts going badly, he makes every effort to escape through a secret passageway behind the throne — threatening the heroes as he flees that they have not seen the last of Ruby Ray.

- **Ruby Ray:** See page 95.
- **Trenton Barranco:** See page 96.
- **Skeletons (4):** See page 95.



FINALE

After defeating Ruby's minions, the heroes can search the room. In doing so they uncover a hidden safe containing the deed to the La Luxore, a stack of cash (\$1,000), and Ray's journal that explains his plan of swapping out the Black Bourbon at the liquor stalls at the Bastille Day gathering at the city park. It is left to the Game Master to determine if the heroes' direct involvement is required in removing the faux bourbon from the park or if Ray's defeat was enough to stop his plans this time...

EPILOGUE

Read or paraphrase the following:

The clean-up takes days. Twelve dead during the riots, many more injured. Thanks to Claudio Ricci, the Black Hand stood up and took responsibility before it could be laid on them, saying that a shipment of bourbon was housed with a load of ghost rock, contaminating it. The mob compensated all the victims and "Silver Dollar" Sam Carolla himself was photographed taking a drink from the fresh supply of Kentucky hooch. The Mayor, left with no one to blame, complimented the "business organization," saying that accountability was what he built his campaign on, and it was clear others believed such as he. The status quo remains.

The swamp folk get out of the bootlegging business, choosing instead to offer guide services for those wanting to enter the Bayou unmolested. The detectives are given lifetime free air boat rides, whenever needed.

La Luxore never reopens. Haunted, they say. Every potential buyer swears they hear the clinking of liquor bottles when they enter, despite the place being vacant. The team thinks it sounds like Whitey's laugh.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Black Hand Soldiers

Soldiers are the lowest level of "made men" in the Black Hand. These guys are more than just hardcases—they're smarter than the average thug and they've got the Black Hand backing them up.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d4, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Mean, Wanted, Vow (to the Black Hand)

Edges: Comfortable, Connections (Black Hand)

Gear: .38 revolvers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1).



Claudio Ricci

Ricci is Silver Dollar Sam's left-hand man. He handles all the dirty work for the Mob boss, whether he does it himself or delegates it. He's also the guy who explains to folks "the next visit won't be as pleasant," usually just before the meat wagon and/or fire engine arrive.

He's not the biggest goon in Carolla's employ, but he's one of the meanest. The average citizen might pass the gangster on the street as long as they don't meet his eyes. His cold, dead eyes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Mean, Overconfident, Wanted
Edges: Connections (Black Hand), Hitman, Strong Willed

Gear: Luger (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1), switchblade (Str+d4), lockpicks.



Donald "Donnie" Chalker—Mad Scientist

Wiry, unstable and most definitely unhinged, Chalker puts his pursuit of "pure science" above the well-being of humans; even if he believes

he's helping them. Descended from a long line of inventors, he's a genius not to be trifled with.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Biology) d10, Knowledge (Science) d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d6, Weird Science d10

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Major — God-complex)

Edges: Arcane Background (Patent Science), New Powers ×2, Scholar

Powers: *Confusion* (whistle), *bolt* (ring), *stun* (necklace); **Power Points:** 10

Gear: Gadgets, tool kit.

Icthynites

The ichtynites are a race of fish-men who hail from a time long forgotten by humanity. From a distance they appear to be humanoid. Nearer, one can see the silver sheen of their scaled skin. The mouths of these creatures are gaping and piscine, filled with sharp, translucent teeth. Most remarkable of all are their glistening, metallic eyes which never blink. Icthynites always attempt to croon for a round prior to attacking their victims.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8
- **Armor +2:** Icthynites have tough scales.
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a wound, all ichtynites within 6" are driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes them to go Berserk (as the Edge). Icthynites cannot end their rage until the battle is over.
- **Crooning:** As an action, an ichtynite can sing an alien song which draws those with ichtynite blood inexorably to it. In other humans, it causes a mild hypnotic state in those exposed to it for more than a single round. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll upon hearing the crooning suffers a -2 to all rolls for the duration of the scene. For each additional ichtynite crooning in the chorus, apply a -1 penalty to the initial Spirit roll.

- **Low Light Vision:** Icthynites ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

Icthynite Hybrids

They have a skin with a thin covering of sickly gray scales and pointed, cartilaginous teeth. Additionally, they've developed gill-like structures on the side of their necks and webs between their toes to allow them to live in the depths with their scaled cousins.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a wound, all ichtynites and hybrids within 6" are driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes them to go Berserk (as per the Edge). Unlike their full-blooded cousins, a hybrid can attempt to end his rage by doing nothing (even moving) for a full action and making a Smarts roll (-2).
- **Crooning:** A hybrid's vocal cords aren't developed enough to initiate the ichtynites' hypnotic song. However, as an action, it can lend its voice to the chorus and counts as an additional ichtynite for purposes of penalties to the Spirit roll to resist the crooning.
- **Low Light Vision:** Icthynite hybrids ignore any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.



"Locomotive" Mike

Named for the way he punches — as hard and as fast as a steam train piston — Mike was raised in a small cabin out on the Bayou. He moved to the Big Easy to support his family. He's not smart, but he's fiercely loyal to Ruby Ray, who sponsored his first card fight. Loco Mike is as much an accessory to Ruby Ray as his handler's cane.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Ambidextrous, Brawler, Bruiser, Two-Fisted, Woodsman

Gear: S&W DA (.38) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1).

Man Gator Hybrid

The man-gator face elongates into a snout and his eyes slide to the side of the snout. A tail extends from behind and both hands and feet become clawed. His skin hardens into green-gray scales and his humped back become more prominent, making the vertebra form hard scutes. Man-gators appear to be a distant cousin to the letiche (see *Deadlands Noir*) with the ability to change back and forth at will, which neither the letiche or a were-gator can.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Fear check.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Makes two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
- **Tail Sweep:** A man-gator can strike all opponents adjacent to it in its rear facing with its powerful tail. This is a standard Fighting attack, and damage is equal to the monster's Strength -2.
- **Rollover:** If the beast hits with a raise on a bite attack, it causes an extra 2d4 damage to its prey in addition to its regular Strength damage.



Ruby Ray Morales—Master Necromancer

His Spanish ancestry helps add to the suave, debonair persona he keeps. He speaks, though, like a Southern Gentleman, never cursing or lowering his humor down into the gutters. He's thin and uses grand gestures, especially with his cane.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6, Voodoo d10

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Megalomania)

Edges: Arcane Background (Voodoo), Charismatic, Master Necromancer, New Powers x4, Power Points

Powers: *Banish, boost/lower Trait, enhance zombie, healing, slow, zombie*; **Power Points:** 20

Gear: Conjure bag, Cane of the Necromancer (treat as the Staff of the Necromancer, see *Horror Companion*).

Skeleton

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Swords (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.

Swamp People

Living off the marsh, the Swamp People make their own clothes, grow much of the own food (including livestock) and don't take kindly to strangers on their land. Cleanliness and hygiene are not as important as taking care of their own. They rarely go to town, save for when they need parts they can't make themselves. At the first sign of trouble, the women take the children and hide out in one of the cabins, protecting their young'uns fiercely. The men are scrapers, hardened by their daily life. They know how to kill with a gleam in their eyes. A Notice check at -2 detects a slight deformity to their skulls. Their foreheads round down to hard ridges over the eye sockets, giving them an almost reptilian look. Additionally, many of the man have humped backs. This could be attested to years of inbreeding.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate

Edges: Woodsman

Gear: Varied weapons, fishing knife (Str+d4).

Thugs

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: Brawny

Gear: .38 revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1), brass knuckles (Str+d4).

**Trenton Barranco**

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield, long sword (Str+d8).

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** Trenton has the Berserk Edge.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison; does not suffer wound penalties.

**William "Jazzman" James**

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Perform (Trumpet) d8, Shooting d10,

Stealth d8, Streetwise d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Grim Servant of Death, Quirk (Hums jazz tunes)

Edges: Comfortable, Connections (Black Hand), Hitman, Rock and Roll!, Talented

Gear: Tommy gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 3, AP 1), switchblade (Str+d4), sonic lockpick.

**Whitey (Enhanced Zombie)**

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite / Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **True Zombie:** This zombie cannot be wounded except by damage to the head (either accomplished by a Called Shot to the head, or an Area Effect attack). Any other sort of damage can cause nothing more than a Shaken result, though Called Shots can still amputate limbs if they are capable of dealing at least one wound to the thing.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison; does not suffer wound penalties.
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's cause +2 damage.

Zombie

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite / Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's cause +2 damage.



Dare to wander the Black Forest in search of witches foul, where you may lose your soul...to the **Face Snatchers!**

Brave the bitter northern chill, where brain freeze is the least of your worries. At least someone will keep those beautiful looks of yours in **Cold Storage!**

Relax for a lakeside Spring Break at **The Retreat** – if you can ignore the scratching at the door, and the deadly smiles of the townsfolk!

Investigate by gaslight the ghostly hauntings of the magnificent **Manor of Blood**. It's very inviting, but doesn't want you to leave!

The suspicious death of an old friend drives you to find answers somewhere in the **Moonshine Blues** of New Orleans, where mobsters and magic mingle!

Face Snatchers may be used in the Savage Worlds of Solomon Kane setting. Moonshine Blues may be used in the Deadlands Noir setting.

Savage Tales of Horror requires the Savage Worlds core rules and Savage Worlds Horror Companion.

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