Mythos World

Horror Roleplaying

Russell Brown

MYTHOS WORLD

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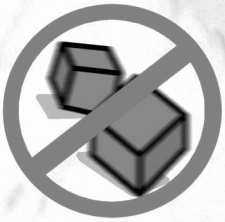

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Mythos World uses the Apocalypse World roleplaying engine developed by D. Vincent Baker. The move mechanics, as well as Gamemaster Agenda and Principles are key to a player-driven storytelling experience. This book could not exist without the inspiration of the Mythos authors, as well as Sandy Petersen and Chaosium Inc.'s original idea to bring the Mythos to roleplaying.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Horror Roleplaying.....1
Chapter 2: Players..... 9
Chapter 3: Wealth..... 16
Chapter 4: Basic Moves.....22
Chapter 5: Professions..... 34
Chapter 6: The Gamemaster..... 79
Chapter 7: GM Moves.....88
Chapter 8: Preparation..... 94
Chapter 9: Physical Threats..... 97
Chapter 10: Mental Disorders..... 105
Chapter 11: The Mythos..... 119
Chapter 12: Creatures.....136
Chapter 13: Settings.....156
Tag Reference.....163
Index.....164

CHAPTER 1
HORROR ROLEPLAYING

Mythos World is a roleplaying game that allows three to six players to recreate the supernatural horror of authors like Robert Chambers, H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and Robert E. Howard. As players in Mythos World, you take on the roles of everyday people in the United States of the1920's. You'll face unimaginable horror and incomprehensible revelations from beyond the realms of sanity. You'll discover intelligent ancient creatures that have roamed the Earth for millions of years, mindless deities that have only allowed mankind to survive as an oversight, bizarre aliens from other dimensions that see no difference between a human being and an insect, and branches of the human race that can barely be considered human. Most people are unaware of the horrors that could snuff them out at any moment. You are the enlightened. You see just a sliver of the truth, but enough to let you take action and try to resist. But even a bit of the truth is more than most people can handle, and you might just end up dead or insane.

Mythos World uses the Apocalypse World approach to player moves and draws heavy inspiration from Dungeon World and other Apocalypse World adaptations.

PLAYING THE GAME

In Mythos World, one player acts as the gamemaster (GM), who is sort of the author of the story. Each of the other players takes on the role of a character with a unique set of traits and abilities, and they decide what they do in the story. You can think of this game as a TV series, where the GM comes up with the setting and the situation, but the players are the main characters and decide what actions they will take. Each time you sit down to play, it's called a session, sort of like an episode in a TV series. The players will keep the same characters from session to ses-

sion, if they survive. The GM introduces new and deeper mysteries as the players gather clues and face the unknown.

In a typical scene during play, the GM describes the current situation for the players, and then they declare what they do in response. This back and forth continues as the players find themselves in new situations or discover new information and react. The GM decides the outcome of the players' actions based on their traits, abilities, physical and mental condition, and also based on what the GM knows about the world. The GM also decides the actions of all of the creatures in the world, as well as all of the people not controlled by the players, known as non-player characters (NPCs).

Sometimes, a player will declare an action that triggers something called a *move*. Moves provide a set of possible outcomes for the action, usually determined by rolling dice. Basic moves can be triggered by any player and are listed in Chapter 4. Players also gain access to certain moves based on the profession they choose.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Perhaps the best way to understand how Mythos World works is to see how a scene might play out. Read the following transcript, but don't worry if you don't understand everything that's going on right away. Review it again after you've read through these rules.

In this scene, the players have taken the roles of a criminal named Clara Green, a priest named Father James MacDill, and a scientist named William Lawrence. They've been following a local aristocrat they suspect is the leader of a murderous cult. After they see him leaving his mansion in a hurry, Clara picks the lock, and they all sneak inside. Clara has a sprained right wrist from a previous encounter with cult members, and Father MacDill has developed moderate pyromania after seeing the cultists burn one of their enemies alive.

GM: Carville's library has a lot of dark wooden bookshelves, a writing desk, a comfortable sofa, and a fireplace with a small fire still burning.

Father MacDill: I look around for any evidence of cult activity, or any strange books.

Clara: Umm. Father, there's a fire. (She remembers Father MacDill's pyromania.)

Father MacDill: Oh, I forgot. I guess I don't search. I stare at the fire and move closer to it.

Clara: I'll search for books and cult items. I'll start with the writing desk.

William: I still think there's nothing supernatural going on. I'm searching for scientific supplies that these weirdoes use to create their parlor tricks.

GM: Let's start with Clara. Make a Search for Something move. Roll plus INT.

Clara: (Clara rolls two dice and adds her Intelligence bonus) An 11. Nailed it.

GM: Yup. It didn't take long. Right on top of the writing desk is a piece of notepaper, half covered with writing. There's still a fountain pen sitting in an open inkwell.

Clara: Maybe something interrupted Carville in the middle of writing this. I take it and read it.

GM: Ok, you grab the piece of fresh, flammable paper.

William: Oh, God.

GM: Father MacDill, please Defy Danger with WIL. (another effect of his pyromaina)

Clara: Seriously?

Father MacDill: I roll an 8. (this is a partial success, or a success with a cost)

GM: Father, you grab the note from Clara's hand, and she winces at the pain in her wrist. You have a choice. Do you burn half of the note before you realize what you're doing and stop yourself, or do you accidentally start your own sleeve on fire before the note even begins to burn?

William: Start your sleeve on fire. We'll put you out.

Father MacDill: I burn half of the note. I want to see it burn.

Clara: Father, stop! We need that.

GM: OK, Father, you pop the paper into the embers and it blackens and burns at the edge. Then you hear Clara's protests, snap out of it, and grab what's left of the note.

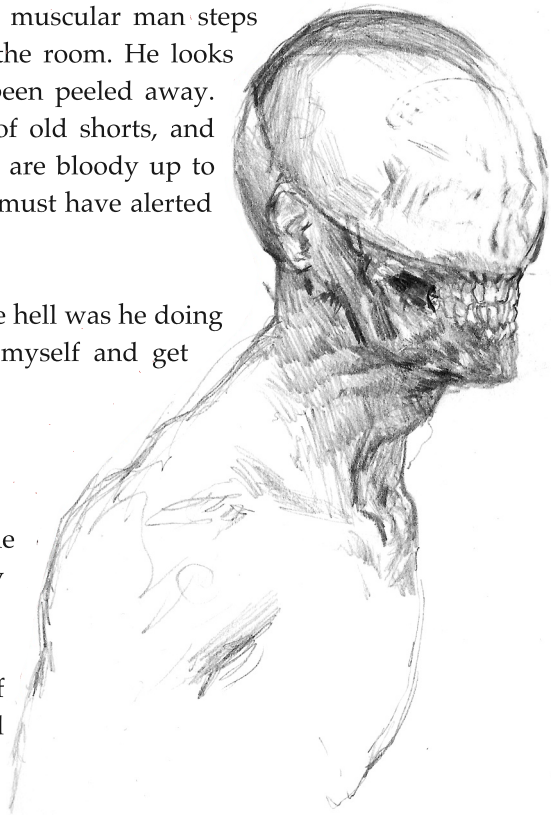
Clara: I take it back and try to read it.

William: What about me, have I found anything?

GM: You've been a little distracted by all this, but while Clara reads, you can Search for Something.

William: Crap. I rolled a 6. (6 or less is bad. It allows the GM to hurt the players or cause them trouble)

GM: You get an experience point. (rolling 6 or less is also a way to get experience points, which players can spend later to improve their abilities) You see nothing resembling scientific equipment, but while you're up on a small ladder searching the top shelves, you hear sounds behind them. One section of the shelves swings open, knocking you off of the ladder to the floor. A tall, muscular man steps through the opening into the room. He looks like most of his face has been peeled away. He's wearing only a pair of old shorts, and wielding a knife. His arms are bloody up to the elbows. All the yelling must have alerted him.



Father MacDill: A Cultist! What the hell was he doing behind that wall? I cross myself and get behind the desk.

GM: He charges at Clara.

Clara: I drop the note and draw the pearl-handled .45 from my purse.

GM: You fumble with it because of your sprained wrist and can't get it out in time.

Father MacDill: Can I shove the writing desk toward him to slow him down?

GM: Sure. I'll say you're trying to Aid or Interfere with that one. You're not really trying to hurt the cultist. How many connections do you have with Clara? (the bonus added to an Aid move is based on connections between the players, not one of their attribute bonuses)

Father MacDill: Just one connection. It says, "I must get Clara to confess that she killed Blake Marconi," but now I'm thinking he was a cultist and deserved it.

GM: We'll deal with changing that connection at the end of the session. For now, make your Aid roll at plus 1.

Father MacDill: I roll a 9.

GM: You manage to hit him with the edge of the desk as it topples over. Paper and ink fly everywhere. It's good enough to turn a 7-9 into a 10+ on Clara's next move against this guy, but you now have nothing between you and the cultist. He's a little angry and still charging both of you. He jabs at Clara with his knife.

Clara: I try to jump to the side.

GM: Roll Defy Danger with Speed.

Clara: I roll a 8, but with the good father's help, it's a 10.

GM: OK, you manage to dive to the side, and his momentum carries him past you. He turns on Father MacDill and swings at him.

William: We should just run.

Clara: No. We need that note.

GM: Which is now mixed in with more ink-stained sheets of paper on the floor.

Clara: Great.

Father MacDill: Let's get back to me. There's a knife heading for me. I try to rush past the blade and punch him. I want to distract him long enough for Clara to draw her gun.

GM: That's bold. Make an Attack up Close move and tell me where you want to punch him.

Father MacDill: In the stomach. I roll plus Might for an 8.

GM: You manage to punch him in the stomach, but you have to choose between losing resources, being injured, or increasing danger.

Father MacDill: I've caused enough trouble already. I take the injury.

GM: OK. His blade plunges into your left shoulder.

Father MacDill: Ouch!

GM: You take a moderate injury. (based on the knife's threat level) Lets call it "gash in the left shoulder." Also, we don't know where that knife has been. You're going to have to fight off an infection.

William: That's going to take a while to heal. Good thing it's not the arm you use to cross yourself. That's been so helpful.

Father MacDill: Shut up, Science Man.

Clara: Can I draw my pistol and shoot him, now?

GM: OK, he's sort of facing away from you, and only a few feet away, so you can just shoot him in the back if you want.

Clara: I don't even have to roll? Awesome. My speed is pretty good, and I might be able to trigger my Gunman move if I did an Attack at a Distance, but I'll take the free hit instead. My Colt .45 has a serious threat level.

GM: And you do serious injury, shooting him in the lung. However, the bullet goes right through. Father MacDill, Defy Danger to avoid being hit.

Father MacDill: What? How am I suddenly attracting all the knives and bullets? Can I use my intelligence to see this coming and duck in time?

GM: That still sounds like Speed, not Intelligence.

Father MacDill: Fine. I roll a 10 anyway.

William: I stand up. Not that anyone cares.

GM: Right. You stand and see the cultist drop his knife and grab at his chest. He stumbles toward the secret passage. You can see stairs descending just on the other side of the opening.

William: Perfect. That must be where they keep their science stuff. Just as he passes, before he's all the way through the opening, I slam the bookshelf closed to push him down the stairs.

GM: All right. I'm calling that Attack up Close. Roll plus Might.

William: Not my strong suit. I roll a 7.

GM: You manage to push him, but choose injury, resources or danger.

William: You pick something that makes sense.

GM: You hear him tumbling down the stairs, and then you hear loud crashing, like glass or fragile equipment breaking.

William: My new science supplies, I bet.

HUMOR AND HORROR

In this example scene, the players aren't afraid to inject humor into the horror. The terrible creatures and situations in Mythos World can create great opportunities for jokes, and any mental disorders the players acquire can put things over the top.

This is fine, if it's what the players want. If your group is more interested in a somber mood, with tension unbroken by jokes, you should all agree and try to stay serious.

Clara: I want to read this note now. I dig around on the ground and find it.

GM: You find it, and it was spared the ink splatters and the blood. It looks like it might be written in Italian, or maybe Spanish.

Father MacDill: Let me see that. For my Languages of Faith move, I chose Latin and Greek.

GM: Yes. It's Latin. It's a little different than you're used to, but you can read it. At least, what's left of it. It looks like instructions to meet at the old stones on top of Widow's Cliff, but the time of the meeting was burned away. There is also a list of names, but all that's left are the first names of three of them. Charlie, Eleanor, and one beginning with P A T R.

Clara: Could be Patrick or Patricia.

Father MacDill: Wasn't Charlie the name of the weird guy at the gas station?

William: Can I gather up the ashes of the burned part of the note? I might have something back in my laboratory that will help me recover more of the message.

GM: Sure. You find a few fragile pieces and wrap them in paper. (the GM could have called for a Search for Something move here, but William knew exactly what he was looking for and where to look, and letting him find the ashes makes for a more interesting story.)

Clara: We should wrap up Father MacDill's shoulder and get him to a doctor, and then he and I can go investigate the cliffs while you play with those ashes.

William: Fine, but first we should see what's down behind that bookshelf.

CHAPTER 2
PLAYERS

As a player, your job is to flesh out your character, set goals, and help move the story forward. You'll develop your background as you make moves and the GM asks you about your character. She may ask you how you know someone in the story, or where you learned a specific piece of information. The GM may just ask for details, like who was your mentor when you where learning your trade, or do you have any enemies? Take these questions seriously and try to give interesting answers. If you're stumped, ask the other players for suggestions.

As you learn more about your character, you'll better understand what your personal goals should be and what stakes you have in the adventure. Always try to hook your character into what's going on so you have to stay involved and go deeper. Don't always leave this up to the GM – she's got enough to worry about.

PLAYER MOVES

When you describe an action your character is taking, and the outcome is uncertain, and the action matches the "when" clause in one of your available moves, you trigger that move. Follow the instructions of the move, which usually means rolling two six-sided dice, adding one of your ability bonuses, and then checking the total against a list of possible outcomes. A result of 10 or higher is usually a complete success, while a 7 through 9 is a partial success – either you only get part of what you wanted, or you're completely successful, but at a significant cost.

If you roll a total of 6 or less on a move, something bad has happened. It is up to the GM to determine what that is, as described in Chapter 7, GM Moves. Rolling a 6 also gives you one Experience point.

Moves are triggered by specific events in the narrative, and the results produced by the move should always create changes in the narrative. For example, you might trigger the Attack at a Distance move by firing a gun at a dark figure running through the woods. The move calls for a roll, and the result is that you injure the enemy and lose a valuable resource. The GM expresses this result in the narrative by describing how the creature screams and leaves a thin trail of blood, but you are now down to your last bullet.

Most of your actions that have uncertain outcomes should trigger a move. If you do something with an uncertain outcome, and the action doesn't appear to trigger a move, the GM should just decides the result based on the narrative. If you try to sabotage a telephone so the next person who uses it gets a serious shock, it probably doesn't trigger a move. There isn't a specific move for setting traps, or even for making things. The GM will decide the outcome based on how much she thinks your character knows about doing that sort of thing, how much time you have to do it, and how observant the victim of your trap is. If you stack furniture up against a door to keep a creature from getting through, the GM might just decide what happens based on how aggressive and strong the creature is, but she might also decide that you've triggered a Defy Danger move, using Intelligence, to stop the creature. Sometimes the GM will choose a particular outcome just to reward you for a resourceful action, or to take the story in a more interesting direction.

Some moves grant you or GM one or more *hold*. Hold is currency used to take some action or cause some narrative effect at a future time. For example, hold might allow a player to avoid a dangerous future move, give a command to an animal, or call in a favor from an NPC. Hold might allow the GM to introduce future negative elements, like enemies retaliating, or bad physical or mental side effects.

CREATING A CHARACTER

To create your Mythos World character, complete the following steps. It may look like a lot of work, but the whole process, including creating your character's connections to the other players, will take less than 30 minutes. Remember, this is the character you'll be playing and developing through multiple sessions.

1) Choose one profession and claim a playbook.

Only one player should choose each profession. The rest of the steps in creating a character involve recording your character decisions on the playbook. Available professions are described briefly later in this chapter.

2) Choose a gender and name.
You can choose a name from the list provided in your playbook, or make up your own.

3) Assign your attribute bonuses.
Each character has a set of die roll bonuses associated with each of the following attributes:

- Intelligence (INT)
- Empathy (EMP)
- Willpower (WIL)
- Might (MGT)
- Speed (SPD)

You add bonuses to die rolls for specific moves in the game. For example, your Might bonus is added to rolls for the Attack up Close move. Assign the following five modifiers to the five attributes in any order you choose: -1, +0, +1, +1, +2.

4) Decide on your look.
Choose any interesting aspects of how your character looks. Choose from the lists in your playbook or make up your own.

5) Calculate your starting Wealth.
Use the simple calculation on your playbook. This will be a number somewhere between 1 and 6. If your calculated number is less than 1, raise it to 1. Use a pencil to cross off all of the numbered money boxes on your playbook with a Value up to and including your Wealth. If your wealth is calculated based on an attribute bonus, it does not change during play if that attribute changes.

6) Choose a passion.
Your playbook includes a list of passions. These describe a goal for your character, or something he or she believes in. Circle one or make up one of your own.

7) Choose a profession move.
Each playbook lists two starting moves available to all characters of that profession, plus six special profession moves. Choose one of the six profession moves to make it available to you. The other five moves may become available as the game progresses.

8) Choose your equipment
The equipment section of your playbook tells you what items you start with. In some cases, you will have to choose from a list of items. Note your choices. In addition to this equipment, assume you have a place to live that's appropriate for your Wealth. See Chapter 3.

9) Tell the other players about your character
Announce your name, your appearance, your profession, and any obvious equipment. You could even reveal your passion, if you like, and try to come up with a bit of a back-story.

10) Create three connections with other players.
Your playbook contains connection descriptions with blanks where you can fill in another player character's name. Fill in three of these blanks, or make up your own sentences to describe your connections to other players. Make sure you discuss your connections with the other players. Don't choose a connection with another player if they're not comfortable with it. As part of the process of choosing connections, you should work with the other players to figure out how you know each other and why you are all together at the start of the adventure.

PROFESSIONS

Choose one profession for your character and take the playbook for that profession. The playbook lists all of your options for character traits and profession moves. It is also where you'll keep track of your Wealth, injuries, mental disorders, and Experience points. Printable Mythos World playbooks are available at rpgnow.com or mythosworld.com.

Antiquarian

You are an expert in rare things. You're usually searching through a forgotten antique shop or browsing the back rooms of an estate sale. The past, and your bank account come alive in the objects you collect and sell. You have a particular interest in things that are strange and mysterious. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Archeologist

You dig up the past. Whether you're exploring ancient tombs beneath the sands of Egypt, uncovering lost Viking ships in the bogs of Europe, or studying strange artifacts discovered on the plateaus of Antarctica, your job is to bring the past to life. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Artist

You are a painter, a sculptor, or perhaps a political cartoonist. You reflect reality through your art, sometimes conveying depth and understanding that evades the photographer's camera or the writer's pen. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Author

You write paperback novels, or poetry, or popular books on the occult. Every new thing you encounter is potential inspiration for your next work, and every minute of leisure is a chance to create and revise. You enjoy a bit of fame in certain circles, and your way with words can come in handy in other aspects of life. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Clergy

You're a priest, or a nun, or a pastor, or a rabbi. You provide spiritual support to a congregation, or perhaps contemplate in peace at an isolated shrine or monastery. The supernatural is part of your everyday existence, and your faith gives you strength to face the challenges of the world. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Criminal

You might be a petty mobster, or the leader of a crime family, or a bootlegger, or a bank robber. You have nerve, and are probably handy with weapons. You know how to avoid the law or bribe them to leave you alone. Speed is an important attribute for you.

Detective

Whether you work for the police, the Bureau of Investigation, or as a private eye, you see clues that others miss and connect them in ways others can't. You may be assigned to find missing objects, to keep an eye on suspicious people, or to find out who committed a crime. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Doctor or Nurse

You diagnose and heal the physical ailments of your patients. You might be a general doctor, a nurse, a surgeon, or a field medic back from the Great War. You are respected in the community because of what you do. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Entertainer

You make your living making music, or singing, or dancing, or perhaps as a comedian. Income is sporadic, but the fans make it all worthwhile. Your time on stage has brought you confidence when dealing with people. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Entitled

You were born with a clear and secure path ahead of you. You had every advantage growing up, a good education, and family connections to get you a good job. You may not have any practical skills, but what does that matter when you have money? Willpower is an important attribute for you.

Farmer

You've spent most of your life working a farm, and maybe you still do. You know the seasons, how to care for animals, and the secrets of the land. You're no stranger to a hard day of work or disappointing turns of fate. Might is an important attribute for you.

Journalist

You'll do whatever it takes to get the story and get it to your editor on time. You can sense when things just aren't right, and you have a network of contacts that can help you find out what's really going on. You might work for a big city newspaper, or one of the local tabloids published in every town big enough to have any news. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Police

Your job is to protect and serve. You walk your beat every day and have come to know many of the people along it. You have the authority of the law behind you and can make arrests and call for backup. Your uniform should grant you a degree of respect in most situations. Speed is an important attribute for you.

Psychologist

You're a practitioner of the quickly developing fields of psychology and psychoanalysis, following the work of contemporaries like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. You believe there is hope for people with psychological disorders, not just a future locked up in an asylum. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Scientist

You might be a college science professor, or a researcher in a secret government laboratory. You understand many of the frontiers of modern science – marvels like electricity, radio waves, genetics, and microbiology. New scientific discoveries are being made every day, so why not by you? Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

CHAPTER 3
WEALTH AND EQUIPMENT

Your Wealth represents your economic strata. If you have Wealth 1, you're broke. If your Wealth is 5 or higher, you're doing very well. Your Wealth determines the lifestyle you can support and items you can purchase.

Wealth 1: Dirt Poor.
You have no significant assets. Perhaps disabilities or insanity make it impossible to work. Maybe you just like the freedom of being a drifter.

Wealth 2: Working Poor.
You struggle to make ends meet and probably share the cost of a small residence with others. You can purchase basic food items and supplies, but going out to eat or buying anything new is a stretch.

Wealth 3: Middle Class
You have a reliable, good job and live in a respectable apartment or small home. You can afford extravagance now and then, like a meal out, or a vacation, or a gym membership. It's a struggle to buy more expensive items like a car or a wedding ring.

Wealth 4: Comfortable
You're the envy of others in your middle-class neighborhood. You have all the modern conveniences, like a telephone and a radio. You have cash available for significant purchases, like a nice suit or a cross-country train ticket.

Wealth 5: Well-off
You don't have to worry much about money. You probably live in a nice house or downtown apartment. Buying a car or a boat is no big deal, though a nice car might set you back.

Wealth 6: Rich
Your money works for you. You don't think twice about going out to a nice restaurant or staying in a posh hotel. You have servants and other people to take care of the trivialities of life. Pretty much any personal items, including designer clothes and fine jewelry, are within your budget. Bribing is always an option to get what you want.

PURCHASES

Your playbook includes a series of numbered money boxes. You start play with the boxes equal to or below your Wealth checked. Whenever you make a purchase with the Buy Something move, you will uncheck one of these boxes. You check a money box when you sell an item or receive valuables using the Receive Money move. You check all boxes with values less than or equal to your Wealth score when you get paid at the end of a session, if enough time has gone by to warrant it.

SAVINGS

If you don't spend your money, it could build up for larger purchases. At any time, you may check off a money box by unchecking the three money boxes immediately below it in value. For example, you can check your Value 5 money box if you uncheck your boxes of Values 2, 3, and 4.

LOANS

The money boxes on your playbook represent your expendable income from week to week, but they aren't enough to make the major purchases in life, like cars and houses. You can assume that you have all the basics of your lifestyle, including food, clothing and a place to live, but if you need a specific expensive item, the GM may allow you to look for a loan. These are short-term loans that have to be repaid in under a year, sometimes less. These loans also require collateral equal to the Value of the loan, which is often the item purchased. You can take out a loan for an item up to a Value of your Wealth plus 5. When you get paid and have outstanding loans, uncheck a money box of Value 5 less than the Value of each loan, or higher . For example, if you take out a loan for a Ford Model T (Value 7), you uncheck your Value 2 money box, or a higher box if necessary, whenever you get paid.

INVESTMENTS

Investments are the opposite of loans. You make an investment by unchecking a money box of at least Value 6. When you have an investments and get paid, check off a money box of Value 5 less than the Value of each investment, or less.

CHANGES TO WEALTH

The GM can decide to increase or decrease your Wealth score. Perhaps you got a better job, or gained access to a trust fund, or maybe you spent time in prison and lost your job and your reputation. Maybe you're a storeowner and your storefront burned down, so until you get your insurance payout and reopen, you have little income.

TAGS

Tags are standard adjectives that describe a creature, item, or location in Mythos World. They generally have no specific effect on moves, but are provided as narrative prompts for the GM and the players. They may influence whether a move is triggered and what the narrative outcome is. For example, a flashlight tagged as unreliable could suddenly fail as a GM move. A weapon with a near tag limits when its wielder can make an Attack at a Distance move. The most common Mythos World tags are listed at the end of this book.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

Each item in the following list has a set of tags, and a Value used when purchasing or selling that item. Some tags have specific effects on moves and injuries, as explained below. The listed Values are for new items; used items have a Value 1 less than new items and may be unreliable.

X Uses

Some items include a tag indicating a number of uses. These are expendable items. Some may be used up by GM moves (consume food supplies, expend ammunition), and some may be used by the player to create narrative conditions for an action they otherwise couldn't take, or a move they wouldn't normally trigger. A stack of books about ancient civilizations could allow you to Consult Knowledge about the ancient Assyrians. A survival kit could contain matches, or a signal mirror, if that's what you need. If a player could reasonably make a move without an item, like an archeologist using Consult Knowledge about the ancient Assyrians, or a doctor treating a patient, the GM could allow them to expend a resource anyway and grant them some additional benefit of success. Perhaps the archeologist uses his books to get more detailed information, or the doctor's patient recovers more quickly with a dose of medication, or the gunman frightens bystanders away by expending extra ammunition.

Close, Near, Far

These tags describe the effective range of a weapon. Close weapons, such as swords and clubs, can cause injury out to four or five feet. Near weapons are thrown or short ranged weapons and must be within 40 feet to be effective. Far weapons are ranged weapons that can attack out to 200 feet or more.

Minor, Moderate, Serious, Critical

These tags give a weapon's *threat level*. They indicate the level of injury the weapon causes under normal circumstances.

Ammo, Auto, Aim, Reach, Reload

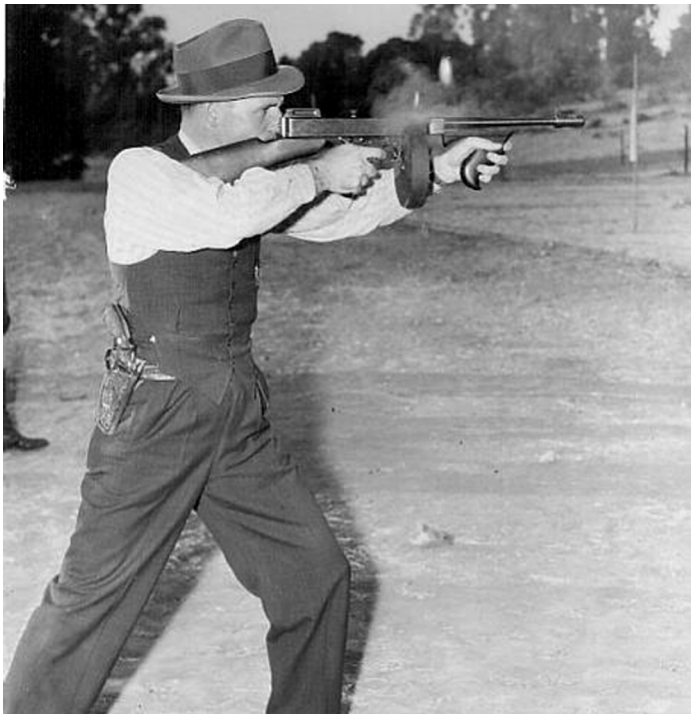
These are special tags used for weapons. Ammo means the weapon requires ammunition and could run out based on narrative situations. Firing a weapon doesn't cost ammunition unless a move says so. Auto means the weapon can fire on full automatic, spraying an entire area with bullets, which gives these weapons a higher threat level and puts other targets nearby in danger. Weapons with the aim tag require a steady stance and a moment to line up a shot. Weapons with the reach tag, like a spear, can cause injury at a greater distance than most close weapons. Weapons with the reload tag must be reloaded after every shot.

Melee Weapons

Brass Knuckles	Value 2	close, moderate, illegal
Club		close, moderate
Fist		close, minor
Knife	Value 1	close, moderate
Nightstick	Value 2	near, moderate
Spear	Value 1	close, reach, moderate
Sword	Value 3	close, serious

Ranged Weapons

.38 Revolver	Value 3	near, moderate, ammo
Bow	Value 2	near, moderate, ammo, unreliable
Colt 45 Pistol	Value 4	near, serious, ammo
Crossbow	Value 3	near, moderate, ammo, reload
Derringer Pistol	Value 3	near, moderate, ammo, reload
Hand Grenade	Value 2	near, moderate
Rifle	Value 4	far, serious, aim, ammo
Shotgun	Value 2	near, serious, ammo, reload
Tommy Gun	Value 6	near, critical, ammo, auto
Ammunition	Value 1	5 uses



Transportation

Bentley 3 Racer	Value 8	fast
Bicycle	Value 4	slow
Ford Model T	Value 7	
Interstate Train Ticket	Value 2	
Motor Boat	Value 7	fast
Motorcycle	Value 6	
Rolls Royce Phantom	Value 8	
Tank of Gas	Value 1	
Truck	Value 7	slow
Two-seater Airplane	Value 8	

Equipment and Supplies

Anti-bacterial Salts	Value 1	5 uses
Business Suit	Value 4	
Chloroform	Value 1	3 uses
Dried Food	Value 1	5 uses, cumbersome
Dynamite	Value 1	close, serious, unreliable
First Aid Kit	Value 1	3 uses
Flashlight	Value 1	
Handcuffs	Value 3	
Painkillers	Value 1	illegal, 5 uses
Portable Camera	Value 3	
Portable Telephone Pair	Value 3	cumbersome
Radio w/Antenna	Value 6	
Record Player	Value 6	
Scientific Supplies	Value 2	5 uses, cumbersome
Sedatives	Value 2	5 uses, illegal, unreliable
Small Magnifying Glass	Value 1	
Survival Kit	Value 3	3 uses
Wax Cylinder Recorder	Value 3	cumbersome

Services and Entertainment

Gallon of Moonshine	Value 2	illegal
Government Official Bribe	Value 4	illegal
Modest Restaurant Meal	Value 1	
Monthly Library Membership	Value 1	
Police Bribe	Value 3	illegal
Shave or Hairdo	Value 1	
Telephone Service/month	Value 2	

CHAPTER 4
BASIC MOVES

The following moves are available to all players, regardless of their chosen profession. Each move includes its name, a description of the narrative situation that triggers it (*in italics*), and the results of the move, which usually involve rolling two six-sided dice (2d6) and adding an attribute bonus.

Consult Knowledge

When you draw on your knowledge about something, roll+INT. •On a 10+, the GM will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject. •On a 7-9, the GM will tell you something interesting, but it may not be useful. In either case, the GM may ask, "how do you know this?"

Use this move to show how much you know about something. Trigger it when you examine a strange artifact, try to recall some facts about the ancient Babylonians, or need to know a shortcut through your hometown.

This doesn't mean that you might know everything in the world. The GM is free to decide that you have no knowledge about a topic and either deny you the move or limit the nature of the information provided to things you might know. For instance, if you don't know a languages, you can't translate an entire document, but the GM might allow you to roll for familiarity with some basic phrases. When the GM asks you "How do you know this," take the opportunity to add details to your background that could help you justify future Consult Knowledge moves.

Attack at a Distance

When you try to do harm with a ranged weapon, roll+SPD. •On a 10+, you injure your enemy. •On a 7-9, you injure your enemy and you choose one:

- Reduce the injury you cause by one level
- Lose ammunition or a valuable resource
- Take damage from the enemy or one of its allies

Use Attack at a Distance when you fire a ranged weapon or throw an object at an NPC, creature, or object you're trying to damage. The injury level you inflict is based on the threat level of the weapon you use. If the target of your attack is also armed with a ranged weapon, this move represents an exchange of shots between the two of you. As always, the GM is free to resolve the action without this move. If you're severely near-sighted and you've lost your glasses, you miss. If you're trying to hit the broad side of a barn, you succeed.

If you lose ammunition, the GM might decide that you've run out, or perhaps you have only enough left for one more shot. Lost resources could be something you dropped as you lined up your shot or dove behind cover.

Damage caused by the target could be from a ranged weapon, or from any of the creature's moves that could take effect at a distance. Or the damage could come from another enemy much closer, attacking while you're concentrating on your shot.

Attack up Close

When you try to harm someone or something by attacking them up close, roll+MGT. •On a 10+, you injure your enemy. If you choose, you may increase the injury you cause by one level and the enemy injures you. •One a 7-9, you injure the enemy and you choose one:

- Your enemy injures you
- You lose a valuable resource
- Danger increases

Use Attack up Close in melee, when you're swinging or stabbing at your enemy with a weapon or your bare hands. Each move represents an exchange of blows. As with any move, if the outcome is not in question, the GM may skip this move and just declare the results. You're not going to damage a 200-foot tall alien creature with your bare hands, and you really can't fail to do damage if you strike a helpless enemy with a heavy metal pipe.

The level of injury you cause is based on the threat level of your weapon. If the enemy injures you as a result of this move, the GM will use its threat level to determine your injuries. Instead of just injuring you, the GM could use one of your enemy's special moves. For example, a creature might have a move to "throw someone" or "crush them with tentacles." It's up to the GM to determine the exact narrative results, and whether injuring you in addition to the enemy's move is appropriate. If an enemy is unable to injure you, you may not choose that option for an a 7-9.

Defy Danger

When you try to avoid imminent danger or pass an obstacle, decide how you deal with it. If you use force, roll+MGT. If you physically avoid it, roll+SPD. If you resist mentally, roll+WIL. If you use charm or social grace, roll+EMP. If you use quick thinking, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you avoid the threat. •On a 7-9, you avoid the danger but hesitate or misstep, and the GM will offer you a choice between two of the following:

- You suffer reduced effects of the danger
- You lose a valuable resource
- Danger increases for you and your allies
- You face a horrifying situation

Use Defy Danger in situation where you might be able to avoid the bad effects of a situation or get past something barring your path. You might be dodging falling rocks, in which case you'd use your Speed. If you try to bull rush through an enemy blocking your path, use Might. You could struggle not to give in to an addiction using Willpower, or flirt your way past the security guard with Empathy. Explain to the GM how you plan to get past the danger or obstacle, and she will tell you which attribute bonus to use.

This move often occurs after the GM warns the player about an impending danger. So failure on a Defy Danger move seldom results in additional warnings or increased danger – more often it results in injury, or other significant effects. It all depends on what the threat was. See hard and soft GM moves in Chapter 7.

Receive Money

When you sell an item or receive a cash payment, check the money box on your playbook equal to the Value of the cash or item. If the box is already checked, check any lower Value box.

Use this move to recover lost money boxes, so you can make more purchases. For example, if you sell an item of Value 3, or someone gives you cash of Value 3, you check off your Value 3 money box. If that box is already checked, check off the Value 2 box or Value 1 box. If you cannot check a box, you can still sell the item or receive the money, but it has no effect on your money boxes.

Buy Something

When you try to buy an item or give away cash, uncheck the money box on your playbook equal to the Value of the item or cash. If the box is already unchecked, uncheck a higher Value checked box. If you cannot uncheck a box, you cannot buy the item or give away the cash.

Use this move when you tell the GM you'd like to buy something or give cash to someone. For example, if you purchase an item of Value 3, you must erase the check on your Value 3 money box. If that box is already unchecked, you have to uncheck a Value 4 or higher box, or else you can't make the purchase.

Convince

When you try to control the actions or opinions of an NPC that you have leverage over, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, they do what you ask if you promise to remove your leverage. •On a 7-9, they do what you ask only after you prove that you no longer have your leverage or have performed some task for them.

Convincing people to change their views or do something they don't want to do is difficult. That's why you only trigger this move if you have leverage over the NPC. Leverage could be many things. Perhaps they owe you a favor, or you know a secret about them, or you offer them a bribe, or flirt with them. If the NPC already agrees with you or is willing to take the action you want, it just happens. No move is triggered. If you have information that you believe will convince them, present it and see what happens. If they are convinced within the narrative, then no leverage is required and no move is triggered.

Overcome Fear

When you are faced with frightening creatures, or a frightening situation or revelation, roll+WIL. •On a 10+, you resist this fear and any similar fears for the rest of the session. •On a 7-9, you resist this fear for the rest of the encounter and choose one of the following:

- You acquire a mental disorder one level less than the threat level
- You suffer a moderate injury
- You increase the level of danger
- You run away mindlessly
- You lose a valuable resource

•On a 6 or less, the GM's may give you an appropriate mental disorder at the threat level of the frightening item or creature.

This move is different than Defy Danger. It is about having the willpower to control your own actions when facing frightening situations.

When you succeed with a 10+, you don't have to make Overcome Fear moves in similar situations for the rest of the session. The GM decides what circumstances qualify as similar, but they're generally the same creature or type of experience. If you see a ghoul eating someone alive and roll 10+, you won't be afraid of ghouls or someone being eaten alive for the rest of the session.

When you roll a 7-9, you choose an option from the list, but the GM determines the exact result in the narrative. And when you roll 6 or less, the GM is free to make any GM move, but is encouraged to inflict you with a mental disorder appropriate for whatever frightened you. For instance, being buried alive might cause claustrophobia, but a frightening experience in the Dreamlands could cause some sort of sleep disorder, like night terrors or sleepwalking.

Search for Something

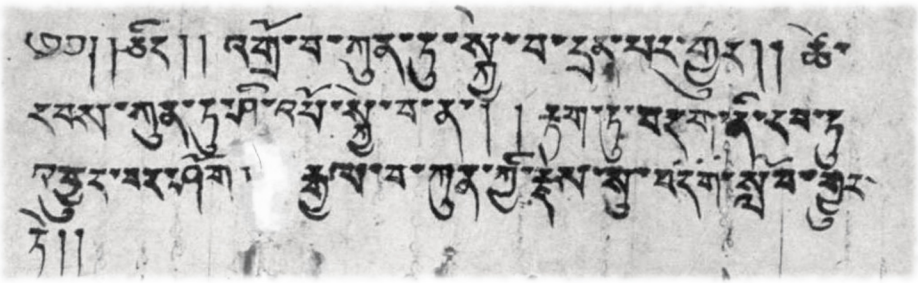
When you search an area or situation for an item or information, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you find a useful item or piece of information. •On a 7-9, you find an item or piece of information, plus choose one of the following:

- The item or information is of limited use
- You place yourself or an ally in danger
- You lose an opportunity
- You discover something frightening (moderate threat level)
- You must expend resources to find it

Use this move whenever you are searching for a specific item, or just looking for something interesting or out of the ordinary. It may take a while, and it may be obvious to other people that you're searching for something. What you find is up to the gamemaster, but you are free to make suggestions, especially if you know what you're looking for.

If you roll a 7-9 and put yourself or your friends in danger, it could be because you went too far and angered someone, or tripped an alarm, or stumbled into a physically dangerous situation. If you choose to discover something frightening, make sure it's OK with the GM, and be aware that you, and possibly any other players exposed to the situation, may have to Overcome Fear and risk mental disorders.

Sometimes it may be unclear whether a player action triggers a Search for Something move or a Consult Knowledge move. Basically, if a player is looking for something, it's Search for Something. If they're seeing what they know about something they've already found, it's Consult Knowledge. For example, if a doctor examines a dead body looking for anything out of the ordinary, he triggers Search for Something. If he finds blue stains around the mouth and under the fingernails and tells the other players what he knows about them, he triggers Consult Knowledge.



Detect Truth

When you try to determine the truth by observing others or conversing with them, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, choose two of the following questions and the GM will answer truthfully. •On a 7-9, you choose one of the following questions and the GM will answer truthfully, plus you suffer a setback or lose the trust of an NPC (GM's choice).

- Who is in control here?
- What does someone really want?
- How does someone feel about my character?
- What happened here earlier?
- What is likely to happen here next?

You use this move to read the true motivations of other people, whether you're observing them or in conversation with them. The GM is free to answer the questions with as much or as little information as she wants, but she should provide some information and it must be the truth.

When you roll a 7-9, the GM might decide on a setback. It could be that the information revealed is disappointing, or that you missed something important elsewhere while you were making this move.

Cheat Death

When you receive a critical physical injury or suffer critical symptoms of a disease or poison, but you might survive, roll+MGT. •On a 10+, you reduce the level of the injury or symptoms to serious. •On a 7-9, you reduce the level of the injury or symptoms to serious and choose one of the following.

- Your serious injury or symptoms become permanent
- Your close call leaves you with a permanent serious mental disorder
- An ally receives a serious injury or is infected with your disease

This move is your last chance to survive when you receive a critical injury or reach critical symptoms of a disease or poison. The GM may deny you this move if the injury is something like being torn in half or falling hundreds of feet into a pit. If you roll a 7-9, you may only choose to injure an ally if they were nearby and the GM agrees that there is a reasonable way they might have been injured. Perhaps some creature attacked them while they resuscitated you, or they stepped into a dangerous area to pull you out.

If you roll a 6 or less on this move, you die. Choose a new playbook and create a new character.

Aid or Interfere

When you help or hinder another player and they make a move, roll+CON. •On a 10+, the player you're aiding can turn a 6 or less result into a 7-9 or a 7-9 into a 10+, or, if you're interfering, you can turn a 7-9 result into a 6 or less, or a 10+ into a 7-9. •On a 7-9, you expose yourself to danger, and the player you're aiding can turn a 7-9 result into a 10+, or you can turn a 10+ result of the player your interfering with into a 7-9.

Use this move when you want to help or hinder a move by another player. You may trigger this move after the other player triggers theirs, but before they roll, provided you are in a position to aid or interfere with their move. It should be obvious, based on your action, whether you are attempting to help them or hinder them. Note that rolling a 6 or less on this move is treated the same as a 6 or less on any other move. The bonus on your roll (CON) is the number of connections you have with the player you're helping or hindering. These must be written on your playbook.

Rest

When you have a few days to rest, do all of the following that apply:

- If you have a few days of physical inactivity, reduce the level of one temporary physical injury.
- If you have a few days of physical inactivity, decrease the level of symptoms for any diseases that has reached their maximum.
- If you have a few days without stress, reduce the level of one temporary mental disorder.

Physical inactivity doesn't necessarily mean being bedridden. Light physical activity is fine, as long as it doesn't aggravate injuries. Generally, the more severe the injuries, the less activity should be allowed. Stress-free days generally mean days without heavy mental activity, visits from strangers, or travel. Even discussing stressful past events may interfere with recovery, unless it's under the direction of a psychologist.

End a Session

When you come to the end of a play session, do all of the following:

- Increase the level of symptoms for any disease that has not reached its maximum
- If at least a week has passed since the last time you had a payday, get paid by checking off all money boxes with Value equal to or less than your Wealth
- Earn one Experience if you let your passion drive at least one major decision or action
- Earn one Experience if you let one of your connections drive at least one major decision or action
- Change any connections if you like
- Earn one Experience if you discovering or experiencing something new to you and beyond normal human knowledge
- Earn one Experience if you gained a moderate or serious mental disorder
- Earn one Experience if you gained a moderate or serious physical injury
- Spend 10 Experience, if you have enough, to either increase one of your attribute bonuses by +1 (to a maximum of +2) or gain a new profession move from the list in your playbook

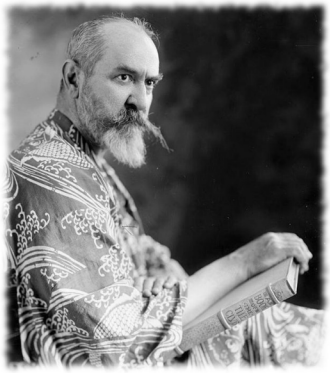
A session begins when you all sit down to play, and ends when you all decide it's time to stop. A session should be three or four hours. If your sessions are much shorter than this, consider only triggering the End of Session move every other session.

Think about changing your connections when they no longer seem valid, either because you've resolved them somehow, or they no longer seem like they fit your character. Your new connections don't have to be with the same player.

Add your earned Experience to the total on your playbook. All Experience rewards are subject to GM approval. You may only gain one Experience point per session for each bullet point above. Any extra Experience is not lost when you spend 10 to improve your character.

CHAPTER 5
PROFESSIONS

ANTIQUARIAN



You are an expert in rare things. You're never happier than when you're searching through a forgotten antique shop or browsing an estate sale. The past, and your bank account, come alive in the objects you collect and sell. You have a particular interest in things that are strange and mysterious. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Lawrence Haven, Josephine Wells, Wayland Shore, Shahir El-Afta

Look (choose one from each line)
Thick eyebrows, striking blue eyes, glass eye, monocle
Clean shaven, handlebar mustache, cheek mole
Balding on top, long shaggy hair, hair pulled back in a bun, bob cut

Wealth
2+INT=

Passion (choose one)
I am a fanatical collector of one type of antique (like watches, weapons, etc.)
Antiques should be used the way they were intended, not just sit on a shelf
I can only enjoy something if I possess it myself

Equipment
Small magnifying glass.
Reference books on antiques and history (5 uses)
Choose one antique: jewelry, comb, pocket watch (Value 5 each).
Choose one: dated business suit, ruffled Victorian dress, tweed jacket.
Choose one: fancy pipe, fashionable lady's hat, bowler, top hat, scarf

Connections
I must help _____ appreciate the past.
_____ has something I want to add to my collection.
_____ rescued me and I owe him/her.

Starting Moves

Expert on Old Things
When you Consult Knowledge about an old man-made item and roll a 7+, you may ask the GM two of the following questions in addition to the move's usual effects. You may only use this ability once for a given object.

- Where was it made?
- When was it made?
- What was it used for?
- How many are there like this?
- How much is it worth?

The Antique Trade
Once per session, when you're looking for an old man-made item, you can discover information or an NPC connection that will lead you in the right direction. Tell the GM how you came across this information or how you know the NPC.

Profession Moves

Antique Shop
You own and run a small antique shop that you purchased years ago or inherited from its previous owner. Many of the items have been on the shelves since before that time, and you occasionally discover things you didn't know you had. *Once per session, when you search through your store*, you may pull a useful item from the shelves. The GM decides what the item is, but you are free to let her know what you're looking for.

Collector Sense

When you Detect Truth in a conversation regarding old, man-made items, you may use your Intelligence instead of your empathy. When you roll a 7-9, you may ask two questions instead of one.

Dangerous Books

You are an expert on how to take care of and study old occult books. *When you study a frightening or dangerous book*, you always gain at least one piece of information, regardless of what you roll on any resulting move.

Horrors of the Past

From your studies, you are familiar with some terrible things in humanity's past. *When you acquire a mental disorder because of exposure to a terrible thing that happened in the distant past,* reduce the degree of the disorder by one. Explain why it's not as frightening for you.

Old Stories

Once per session, when you hear about an old, man-made object, the GM will tell you a story you've heard about it. Tell the GM where you heard that story.

Old Weapon

You own an old weapon with a special power. *When you acquire this move*, describe the weapon, what it does, and where you got it. Some suggested powers are as follows:

- You're always able to find it after you throw it
- It injures a type of being normally immune to weapons
- It's required for an ancient summoning ritual
- It provides an eerie blue light when rubbed with blood

ARCHEOLOGIST

You dig up the past. Whether you're exploring ancient tombs beneath the sands of Egypt, uncovering lost Viking ships in the bogs of Europe, or studying strange artifacts discovered on the plateaus of Antarctica, your job is to bring the past to life. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Name
Spade Marachic, Archer Hane, Dr. Karen Loran, Professor Shale

Look (choose one from each line)
Bulging eyes, bloodshot eyes, eye patch, thick glasses
Weathered face, hawk nose, saggy jowls, thin mustache
Wild red hair, very short dark hair, thick black curls

Wealth
1+INT=

Passion (choose one)
I need to make one memorable discovery, like King Tut's tomb
Artifacts must be carefully measured before excavation
Archeology is all about the money

Equipment
Compass
Detailed maps (5 uses)
Reference books on ancient civilizations (cumbersome, 5 uses)
Sturdy pair of hiking boots
Choose one: overalls, wool pants and suspenders, leather jacket, aviator breeches and boots
Choose one: fedora, boater hat, turban, dark sunglasses, ornate cane

Connections

_____ doesn't realize that I know his/her secret.
I want to help _____ see more of the world.
I could learn a thing or two from _____.

Starting Moves

Ancient Languages

You are fluent in two old or ancient languages of your choice. Some possible choices are Latin, Ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Mayan, Sanskrit, or Arabic.

Fascination with the Past

When you encounter a frightening situation or creature of ancient origin and you roll a 10+ on a Consult Knowledge move regarding it, you may approach the situation or creature and avoid any Overcome Fear move it might cause.

Profession Moves

Been There, Done That

When someone else Consults Knowledge about an ancient civilization or foreign land and shares their knowledge, you may interrupt them and provide an additional interesting fact about that land or civilization. The GM will provide the interesting fact, and you should tell the GM how you happen to know it.

Graduate Students

You teach a small group of graduate students at a local university. *Once per session, when you call upon your small group of students*, they show up and help with archeology-related tasks like researching, digging, or cleaning and cataloging artifacts. The GM may ask you to describe the students.

Roughing It

You have endured extreme conditions at archeological sites. *When you would normally have to resist the effects of the natural environment*, you may avoid any Defy Danger move if you explain how your past experience helps you. You may choose to make the Defy Danger move anyway, and if you roll a 10+, you come up with some device or technique that allows your allies to avoid the danger. Describe the device or technique.

Subterranean Dangers

You've spent a lot of time in dangerous dig sites and caves. *When you face underground traps or natural underground dangers*, you may avoid a Defy Danger move if you explain where you saw a similar danger in the past. You may instead choose to make the Defy Danger move, and if you roll a 10+, you come up with some device or technique that allows your allies to avoid the move. Describe the device or technique.

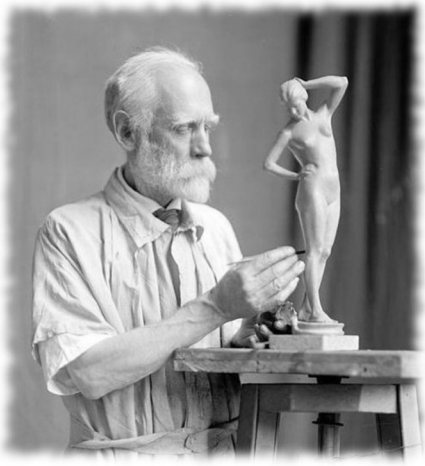
Tenure

You have a secure position at a university. *When people find your behavior strange or you come up with controversial theories*, your job and Wealth are not in jeopardy. *When you acquire this move,* Increase your Wealth by 1.

They're Digging in the Wrong Place

When you roll a 7 or higher on a Search for Something move while digging for buried items or exploring an underground site, you find one additional useful item or piece of information.

ARTIST



You are a painter, a sculptor, or perhaps a political cartoonist. You reflect reality through your art, sometimes conveying depth and understanding that evades the photographer's camera or the writer's pen. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Anatoly Krukich, Selena Shae,
Sebastian DeLune, Wilhelmina Shore

Look (choose one from each line)
Bright blue eyes, Sparkling glasses on a chain, permanent scowl
Hair in a tight bun or ponytail, long dark hair, long curly blonde hair
Goatee, high cheekbones, overbite, full beard

Wealth
1+WIL=

Passion (choose one)
The stranger the situation, the more it needs to be immortalized in art
If my art isn't making me money, I'm doing it wrong
Forgery is the sincerest form of flattery

Equipment
Messenger bag with basic art supplies (10 uses)
3 decent works of art (Value 3 each)
Choose one: opera glasses, small pen knife, portable stool
Choose one: fashionable dress and parasol, wool jacket and beret, clean white shirt with tweed pants

Connections
I'm fascinated by _____'s appearance.
I will get _____to appreciate art.
_____ saved me from myself.

Starting Moves

Art Expert

When you Consult Knowledge about a work of art and roll a 7+, you may ask the GM two of the following questions in addition to the move's usual effects. You may only use this ability once for a given object.

- Where was it made?
- When was it made?
- Who made it?
- Are there more like this?
- What materials were used to make it?
- How much is it worth?

The Devil's in the Details

You have a keen eye for details, even in the worst situations. *When you Overcome Fear and roll a 10+*, you discern one useful piece of information about the frightening creature, item or situation.

Profession Moves

Art Therapy

Your art can restore your mental health. *Once per session, when you take a few hours to create a work of art based on a frightening event that gave you a mental disorder*, you may reduce the level of that temporary disorder by one. This work or art is frightening, with a threat level one less than the event it depicts.

Forger

You are a skilled forger of art, currency, and signatures. *When you try to pass off one of your forgeries as the original*, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you succeed. •On a 7-9, experts who take a close look at the work will be able to detect that it isn't the original.

Gallery

You have a relationship with a gallery that displays and sells your work. This has two effects. *When you are interested in a particular work of art*, your gallery contacts point you in the right direction. Also, *once per session, when you have a showing of your work*, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you may check off a money box of Value 4 or less. Describe the work you sold. •On a 7-9, you may check off a money box of Value 3 or less, but your work gets panned in reviews and you can't do a showing during the next session.

Portrait Artist

You are a skilled portrait artist and you are sometimes commissioned to paint important people. *Once per session, when you are interacting with an important person*, you may declare that they know your portrait work and take 1 hold. Spend 1 hold during this session or the following session to meet with and paint a portrait of the important person, then check off a money box of Value 3 or less.

Studio

You own or rent an art studio where you can make your art in peace, study, hire models, and store all of your previous work and reference material. *When you create art in your studio*, assume you have all of the necessary supplies. *Once per session, when you spend a day creating art in your studio*, you trigger a rest move.

Well Known

You have created some fairly popular or public works of art. *When you acquire this move*, increase your Wealth by 1. *When you try to Convince someone who appreciates art*, you may use promises of private viewings, lectures, or commissioned work as leverage.

AUTHOR

You write paperback novels, or poetry, or popular books on the occult. Every new thing you encounter is potentially inspiration for your next work, and every minute of downtime is a chance to create and revise. You enjoy a bit of fame in certain circles, and your way with words can come in handy in other aspects of life. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Francis Moran, Mildred Senate, Bernard Freiberg, Loraine Einrichs, Raymond Holbrook Jr.

Look (choose one from each line)
Rheumy eyes, horn-rimmed glasses, drawn-on eyebrows
Bob cut hair, long frizzy hair, bald spot, head scarf, top hat
Bulbous nose, hollow cheeks, petite mustache, long beard

Wealth
1+INT=

Passion (choose one)
Great novels come from real suffering and real experiences
Success in writing is all about finding the right connections
I want to write the most frightening novel ever written

Equipment
Notebook and writing instruments
Typewriter
Choose one: macabre reference books (5 uses), bicycle, library membership
Choose one: unfashionable suit and tie, house dress, jacket and bowtie, small ladies hat and lacy dress

Connections

I know _____ would love reading my books.

I want to base a character in my next novel on _____.

_____ has been a good friend and a good listener.

Starting Moves

Just Like my Heroine/Hero

You are occasionally inspired to take brave or rash actions, just like the heroes in your stories. *Once per session, when one of your moves requires a MGT or SPD roll, and it will save someone else from physical harm*, you may describe the character you're emulating and substitute your EMP for the attribute. If you roll a 7-9 on a resulting move, treat it as a 10+ and take a minor injury in addition to the usual results.

Keen Observer

When you spend time observing or conversing with other people, you may ask one of the questions associated with the Detect Truth move without triggering the move. The GM must answer this question truthfully.

Profession Moves

Bestseller

You have written a bestseller. *When you acquire this move*, increase your Wealth by 1. *When you try to Convince someone who appreciates your work*, you may use promises of signed copies, public readings, or a character based on them in your next novel as leverage.

Salon

You meet regularly with a group of very smart fellow writers to critique each other's work and discuss a wide range of topics. *When you Consult Knowledge about a topic in discussion with your group*, you may add you EMP instead of your INT to your roll. On a 7+, the GM will tell you one additional useful piece of information. Describe something about the group member who gave you the information.

That was in one of my Stories

You've researched thousands of people and places for your stories. *When you hear about a location or historical person*, you can ask the GM to tell you something interesting about that place or person that you came across in your research. Tell the GM about the story you were researching.

Weird Fiction

You have contacts at a magazine that publishes weird fiction. *When you spend a few days writing a story based on an event that caused you to make an Overcome Fear move*, you create a story of Value 4. Anyone reading the story that knows it is based on true events must also Overcome Fear with a threat level one less than the events you describe.

Wild Theories

When you spend time analyzing a collection of clues and information and come up with a supernatural or unbelievable explanation, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, the GM will confirm or deny your explanation. •On a 7-9, the GM will confirm or deny one part of your explanation, or give you more information you can use to refine your theory, but your theory brings you unwanted attention.

Writer's Retreat

You have a secret location you go to for peace and quiet. *Once per session, when you spend at least a day at your writer's retreat*, you trigger a Rest move, and anyone following you loses track of you.

CLERGY

You're a priest, or a nun, or a pastor, or preacher, or a rabbi. You provide spiritual support to a congregation, or perhaps contemplate in peace at an isolated shrine or monastery. The supernatural is part of your everyday existence, and your faith gives you strength to face the challenges of the world. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Father James MacDill, Sister Mary Rose, Constance Hays, Jeremiah Winslow

Look (choose one from each line)
Nun's scarf, short hair, bald spot, tight hair bun
Bright green eyes, bushy eyebrows, sleepy eyes, thick glasses
Clean shaven, double chin, full beard, long sideburns

Wealth
1+EMP=

Passion
The church should not abandon the faithless
Life only has value if we serve others
The devil is real, and has to be stopped

Equipment
Symbol of faith
Bible or other holy book
Choose one: Small kit with religious ritual materials (10 uses), oil and matches, religious reference books (5 uses)
Choose one: ceremonial outfit, altar furnishings (Value 5), heavy cane
Choose one: dark suit and clerical collar, nun's habit, high-necked dress, monk's robe.

Connections

_____ obviously has something to confess.
I'll show _____ the value of spirituality.
_____ knows my sins.

Starting Moves

Abiding Faith

You can turn to your faith when you face a frightening situation. *When you Overcome Fear and roll a 7-9*, you may ignore the normal results and instead stand or kneel in prayer or meditation for a moment.

Clerical Privilege

Your position grants you respect, even among criminals and the non-religious. *When you try to Convince an NPC to grant you access to someplace or something*, you may use your clerical position as leverage. Explain how you do this.

Profession Moves

Confessor

People trust you with their dark side. *When you Detect Truth while in private conversation with an NPC and roll a 10+*, the NPC will confide in you and tell you one regret or something he is sorry he did, in addition to the usual results of the move.

Exhortation

Just the sound of your voice can steel the hearts of you allies in a crisis. *When you roll 10+ to Overcome Fear*, you may make an inspirational speech and choose two companions. They can then avoid making an Overcome Fear roll for the same encounter. You cannot change the fate of an ally who has already made their roll.

Language of the faith

You are fluent in two of the following languages: Arabic, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Coptic, or Sanskrit. Choose them when you acquire this move.

Latin Rites

You specialize in the Latin rituals of Exorcism and Istud Vas. You know these rituals and have the proper materials to perform them (5 uses). *When you perform these rituals*, reduce their threat level by one. This does not make you fluent in Latin.

Collection Plate

Once per session, when you explain a virtuous goal to your congregation or religions community and take up a collection, roll+EMP. •On a 10+ you collect cash of Value 4. •On a 7-9 you collect cash of Value 3 and choose one of the following:

- A member becomes suspicious of your motives
- Some money is forged or can be traced to criminal activity
- The largest donor expects something in return
- You draw the attention of your superiors

Vow of Poverty

Your Wealth can never be higher than 1, and you may never have a checked money box higher than Value 2, but your church will always provide your basic needs for food and shelter. You may never take out loans or make investments. *When you must Defy Danger to resist temptation and spend some time meditating or praying*, you may treat a roll of 7-9 as a 10+.

CRIMINAL

You might be a petty mobster, or the leader of a crime family, or a bootlegger, or a bank robber. You have nerve, and are probably handy with weapons. You know how to avoid the law or bribe them to leave you alone. Speed is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Clara Finch, Russell Shade,
Christos Abbranna, Bonnie Coalfire

Look (choose one from each line)
Beady eyes, bulging eyes, thick brow, wire-rimmed glasses, eye patch
Short bob cut, thick graying hair, bald, braids and pony tail, thick sideburns
Large tattoo, styled mustache, facial scar, harelip, gold tooth

Wealth
2+INT=

Passion (choose one)
There must be honor among thieves
People who let themselves get swindled deserve what they get
Money is all that matters

Equipment
Stash of thieving supplies (5 uses)
Choose one: .38 revolver, unreliable Ford Model T, brass knuckles
Choose one: aging suit and Panama hat, flapper dress and cloche hat,
t-shirt with overalls and heavy boots.

Connections

_____ has wronged me and I will get revenge.
I'm going to make a criminal out of _____ yet.
_____ pulled me out of a tough situation.

Starting Moves

Fence

You are able to buy and sell Illegal items and services through your criminal network. *When you buy or sell an illegal item*, you avoid getting into trouble with the police.

Petty Theft

You are skilled at basic street thievery. *When you have a reasonable opportunity to steal a small item, pick a simple lock, or pick someone's pocke*t, you can do it without making a Defy Danger move. Explain how you did it.

Profession Moves

Cheater

You are practiced at slight of hand, cheating at games, and simple deceptions. *When you participate in a contest involving manipulating small objects*, roll+SPD. •On a 10+, you smoothly tip the odds more in your favor. Explain how you did it. •On a 7-9, you tip the odds a bit in your favor, but choose one of the following:

- Someone becomes suspicious
- What you gain is less than you expected or comes with a catch
- You sacrifice resources in the process
- You succeed, but put yourself or your friends in danger

Gunman

You're handy with firearms. *When you Attack at a Distance and roll 10+*, you can declare where you hit the target, increase your threat level by one, and if you're using an automatic weapon, you can expend ammunition to force anyone in the same general direction as your target to take cover.

Illegal Stash

You have a stash of valuable stolen goods. *Once per session, when you pull an item from the stash to sell,* roll+SPD. •On a 10+, you successfully sell an item of Value 4 to one of your contacts. Describe the item, where you got it, and who you sold it to. •On a 7-9, you successfully sell an item, but choose two of the following:

- You could only sell the item at Value 2
- The police gain a clue to the location of your stash
- You end up in a dangerous situation because of the sale
- Your stash is unavailable during the next session

Informants

You hear secrets about people from your network of informants. *Once per session, when you question your informants for information about an NPC,* the GM will tell you embarrassing or incriminating information about them. Explain who told you and how they found out. If the target NPC is squeaky clean, the GM will tell you that.

Mob Support

You are part of a criminal mob or gang. *Once per session, when you get into trouble and request help from your criminal organization,* roll+INT. •On a 10+, NPCs from your organization step in and fix things for you. •On a 7-9, they fix things, but choose two:

- It's not a complete fix; you're left with some residual effect
- You can't make a Mob Support move during the next session
- Compensate them with a Value 3 payment
- Someone significant finds out you have criminal connections

Wheel Man

You drive the getaway car. *Once per session, when you are driving a car and being chased or are chasing another car,* you may either avoid one Defy Danger move or force the other driver into a dangerous situation without endangering yourself. *When you gain this move,* you acquire a Ford Model T. If you already have a car, you can trade it in for a Bentley 3 Racer or a Rolls Royce Phantom.

DETECTIVE

Whether you work for the police, the Bureau of Investigation, or as a private eye, your job is to see clues that others miss and connect them in ways others can't. You may be assigned to find missing objects, to keep an eye on suspicious people, or to find out who committed a crime. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Eliot Thorn, Lillian Lace, Raymond Cross,
Lady Phyllis Herron

Look (choose one from each line)
Baggy eyes, round sunglasses, prominent eyebrows, eyeglasses
Dark hair parted in the middle, curly red hair, bald spot
Long nose, red lipstick, cigarette holder, pipe, thick mustache

Wealth
1+INT=

Passion (choose one)
I love the challenge of a good mystery
It's about making the guilty pay for their crimes
I'm fascinated by the criminal mind

Equipment
Flashlight, magnifying glass
Multiple newspaper subscriptions (5 uses)
Choose one: .38 revolver, portable camera, unreliable Ford Model T
Choose one: jacket and tie, sweater and bowtie, women's pant suit, overcoat and deerstalker hat, sensible dress and stockings.

Connections
I think _____ is a mystery.
_____ is sloppy and could learn from my techniques.
I have to protect _____ because no one else will.

Starting Moves

Eye for Detail

You notice things others don't. *When you Search for Something and roll a 7+, even in an area that has been thoroughly searched by others*, you receive one additional piece of information that everyone else missed.

Tailing

You are very adept at following others without being noticed. *When you secretly follow someone on foot for a while*, they don't notice you and you can choose to trigger a Detect Truth move with them as your subject.

Profession Moves

Forensic Science

You have a small lab where you can compare fingerprints, examine evidence under a microscope, and do simple chemical tests on materials. *When you analyze a piece of physical evidence in your lab*, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you gain useful information. •On a 7-9, you gain useful information and choose two of the following:

- You use up a valuable resource
- You destroy the evidence in the process
- While you're concentrating, you miss something important
- Having the evidence puts you or your allies in danger

Friend of Law Enforcement

You support the police from time to time, and in exchange, they provide you with information. Describe the person who is your main contact. *When you need information that's available to the police*, you can visit or call your contact instead of making a Search for Something move. Your contact may ask for information or a favor in return.

Paid Informants

You have a network of informants that work for pay. *When you contact an informant to help you locate an item or person, and you either give the informant an item or cash worth Value 1 or higher*, the GM will give you information that gets you closer to whatever you're looking for. Tell the GM who your informant is and how you know them.

Private Investigator Office

You have a small office with a telephone. *Once per session, when you don't have a client and spend at least a day at your office*, Roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you gain an interesting client, like someone wrongly accused of a crime. You receive a Value 4 payment if you solve the case. •On a 7-9, you gain an uninteresting client, perhaps one who needs you to find a lost pet or spy on a cheating spouse. You get a Value 3 payment if you succeed. Clients also cover some expenses. *When you uncheck a money box as a direct expense of a case*, you may check your Value 1 money box.

Prominent Client

You once solved a case for an important client, like a famous person, a wealthy industrialist, or a powerful politician. *Once per session, when you call on this client for help*, you can do one of the following:

- Provide protection for an endangered client
- Use them as leverage in a Convince move to get you out of trouble
- Get introduced to another important person.

Street Smart

You know every street and back alley in your city. *Whenever you follow someone through the streets or study a crime scene in the streets*, you gain one extra piece of information.

DOCTOR

You diagnose and heal the physical ailments of your patients. You might be a general doctor, a nurse, a surgeon, or a field medic back from the Great War. You are respected in the community because of what you do. Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Adrian Pierce M.D., Dr. Martha Stiles,
Florence Miller, Jack Hart

Look (choose one from each line)
Bright green eyes, bushy eyebrows, sleepy eyes, thick glasses
Short hair, bald spot, tight hair bun, long wavy hair
Clean shaven, double chin, pug nose, full beard, long sideburns

Wealth
2+Int=

Passion
All human lives are worth saving
I need to find a cure for a loved one's strange disease
Life can be prolonged forever, and I have to find the way

Equipment
Stethoscope, medical bag (5 uses)
Choose one: medical books (5 uses), ambulance, painkillers (10 uses)
Choose one: tweed suit and tie, white lab coat and suspenders,
white dress and cap

Connections
_____ has restored my faith in humanity.
I've lost something important, and I think _____ stole it.
I think _____ needs my care or he/she won't survive.

Starting Moves

Diagnose

When you carefully examine a patient, roll+INT. •On a 10+, the GM will tell you one physical problem (injury, disease, poison) that ails the patient, and you may ask two of the questions below. •On a 7-9, the GM will not tell you what specifically ails the patient, but you may still ask one of the following questions:

- What here is the most immediate medical threat to life?
- Could this condition spread to others?
- What is the best course of treatment?
- What tests could produce more information?

Treat Injuries

When someone gets a few days of rest and you treat their injuries, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you reduce the level of one temporary injury by one. • On a 7-9, you reduce the level of one temporary injury by one, but choose two of the following:

- It costs you resources and takes longer than expected
- You cause a moderate physical injury
- The patient is immobilized for 3 days (does not trigger Rest)
- You put yourself or your friends in danger
- You lose confidence and cannot Treat Injuries this session

Profession Moves

Coroner

You know how to draw clues from dead bodies. *When you examine a dead body,* roll+INT, •On a 10+, ask three of the following questions. •On a 7-9, ask one question and either put yourself in danger or discover something disturbing.

- How did the deceased die?
- Where did the deceased die?
- When did the deceased die?
- Was there someone else with the deceased when they died?
- What will help identify the deceased?

Eye for Weakness

Your knowledge of anatomy allows you to strike in the most vulnerable places. *When you make an Attack up Close move and roll a 10+,* you can increase the injury level you inflict on the enemy without taking an injury yourself.

Pathologist

You are an expert on infection and disease. *When you spend at least a few hours taking care of a patient who has not begun to recover from the symptoms of their disease,* roll+INT. •On a 10+, reduce the maximum symptoms the patient will suffer to one level below the normal maximum. •On a 7-9, reduce the maximum symptoms as above, and choose one of the following:

- The patient is incapacitated for 3 days (doesn't trigger Rest)
- Someone else contracts the disease (GM chooses)

Specialist

You specialize in a narrow branch of medicine, like broken bones, or a specific class of disease, or head injuries. Tell the GM what your specialty is and how you developed it. *When you make a move regarding your specialty and roll a 7+,* treat the result as a 10+, and the GM may tell you one piece of additional information that a non-specialist probably wouldn't notice.

Surgeon

Some injuries require surgery to heal, but it's a risky choice. Fortunately, you're trained with a scalpel. *When you gain this move,* you receive surgeon's tools and anesthetics (5 uses). *When you operate on a patient to correct a permanent physical injury,* roll+INT or +SPD. •On a 10+, you reduce the level of the permanent injury by one. •On a 7-9, you reduce the level of the permanent injury by one, but that particular injury can no longer be treated with surgery, and choose one of the following:

- The patient is incapacitated for 3 days (does not trigger Rest)
- You inflict a permanent minor injury on yourself or the patient
- The patient gains a moderate mental disorder due to trauma

Toxicologist

You are an expert in all types of poison and their treatment. *When you treat someone suffering from poison,* roll +INT. •On a 10+, reduce the maximum symptoms the patient will suffer to one level below the normal maximum. •On a 7-9, reduce the maximum symptoms as above, and choose one of the following:

- The patient is incapacitated for 1 day
- You expend one use of a first aid kit or survival kit
- The minor symptoms of the poison will be permanent

ENTERTAINER

You earn your living making music, or singing, or dancing, or perhaps as a comedian. Income is sporadic, but the fans make it all worthwhile. Your time on stage has brought you confidence when dealing with people. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Virginia Slim, Artie Chang, Irene Dunn, Donald Kayhill

Look (choose one from each line)
Light blue eyes, large nose and cheeks, bulging eyes
Blonde curly hair, straight bangs, short dark hair, curly red hair
Thin mustache and beard, sunglasses, long earrings, cheek mole

Wealth
1+EMP=

Passion (choose one)
Performance is an art form and should be taken seriously
It's all about the fame and applause
Life is about manipulating other people

Equipment
Stage Makeup kit (10 uses)
Choose one: jewelry, Ford Model T, share in small theater (Value 7 each)
Choose one: Vaudeville dress, back tux with top hat,
plaid suit and straw hat, cowboy outfit and raccoon hat

Connections
I will get _____ to appreciate my work.
What success I have is because of _____
I detest _____ , but I am fascinated by him/her.

Starting Moves

Performance

When you give a performance to impress an audience, roll+EMP or +SPD. •On a 10+, they are impressed and you either check off a money box of Value 3 or lower, or you take 1 hold. Spend hold to ask a favor of someone in the audience at some point during the current session or the following session. •On a 7-9, you may check off a money box of Value 2 or lower and must choose one of the following:

- You cannot make Performance moves any more this session
- Your performance offended someone significant
- You are no longer welcome in that venue

The Show Must Go On

You know how to push yourself to complete a task. *Once per session, when you can't do some task because of you physical or mental condition*, say "The show must go on!" and the GM will allow you to find a way to make it happen.

Profession Moves

Acting

You are a skilled actor or actress. *When you tell a convincing lie or deceive someone through your actions*, you don't need to Defy Danger.

Celebrity

You are a well-known entertainer. *When you acquire this move,* explain your big break and increase your Wealth by 1. *When you try to Convince someone who knows and appreciates your work*, you can use your celebrity as leverage by promising them an autograph or tickets to one of your shows.

Disguise

You are skilled at changing your appearance so that you're not recognized. *When you take time to don a disguise,* you can remain in an area without being recognized by casual acquaintances. People who know you very well will see through your disguise after a few minutes.

Languages of the Arts

You are fluent in two of the following languages: French, German, or Italian.

Mimic

When you mimic the voice of anyone of your gender that speaks a language in which you are fluent, only close acquaintances have a chance to detect the deception.

Swordplay

Through your theatrical training, you have become skilled with swords. *When you make an Attack up Close move when armed with a sword, cane, or similar weapon and roll a 10+*, you may do one of the following in addition to the usual results:

- Disarm your opponent
- Force your opponent back a few steps
- Knock your opponent down
- Move to an advantageous position

ENTITLED

You were born with a clear and secure path ahead of you. You've had every advantage growing up, a good education, and family connections to get you a good job. You may not have any particular skills, but what does that matter when you have money? Willpower is an important attribute for you.

Name
Elizabeth Rothschild, Gerald Pelgrave, Josephine Carmichael, Leonard Wellington

Look (choose one from each line)
Pale skin, wild red hair, dark wavy hair, balding
Bloodshot eyes, sleepy eyes, striking blue eyes, wire-rimmed glasses
Long mustache, freckles, sideburns, upturned nose, firm chin

Wealth
3+WIL

Passion (choose one)
I have to prove myself to my father/mother
Success is all about finding the right match
I have to find my own life, away from my family

Equipment
Large family home
Choose one: Bentley 3 Racer, Rolls Royce Phantom
Choose one: gold wristwatch, silver cigarette case, pearl necklace, ruby ring (Value 6 each)
Choose one: polo shirt with white pants and shoes, tuxedo with bow tie, sack dress with wide hat and parasol, flared jacket and hobble skirt
Choose one: wide rimmed floral hat, top hat, jeweled headband, cigar, cigarette holder

Connections
My family told me to stay away from _____.
I admire _____'s carefree approach to life.
I've used _____ as an alibi with my parents.

Starting Moves

Trust Fund
Once per session, when you draw from your trust fund, you may check off your Value 4 money box or any lower box.

High Society
You're comfortable in the company of the wealthy and powerful. *When you Detect Truth among members of high society and roll a 7+*, the GM will give you one additional piece of information that might only be apparent to other members of high society.

Advanced Moves

Family Business
Your family runs a specific business, like a law firm, automobile dealership, firearms factory, or construction firm. *When you acquire this move*, describe your family business. *Once per session, when you request an item or service provided by your family business*, you get it for free if it is of Value 5 or less, or purchase it at one less than its Value.

Family Connections
Your family roots run deep among influential members of society. *When you use your family connections to make contact with a powerful, rich, or important person*, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, a family member connects you with the person and they are inclined to help you. •On a 7-9, you manage to contact the person through your family, but choose one of the following:

- The person you contact is skeptical of your motives
- You irritate a family member
- You miss an important event while making the connection
- The meeting place is inconvenient or dangerous

Financier
You have grown up around money and know how to find it when you need it. *When you take out a loan*, your lender does not require collateral.

Loyal Servant

You have a loyal family servant that has watched over you since you were young. Tell the GM your servant's name and a little bit about him or her. *When you give your servant a simple task that is not beyond his or her capabilities,* roll+WIL. •On a 10+, your servant completes the task successfully. •On a 7-9, your servant completes the task, but choose two of the following:

- Your servant misinterpreted your instructions
- The task took longer than expected
- You end up in a dangerous or compromising situation
- Your servant is unavailable for the rest of the session.

Modern Languages

You are fluent in two of the following languages: Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Japanese, or Mandarin.

Secret Society

In college, you joined a secret society, and many of your fellow members have become rich and powerful. *When you acquire this move,* describe your secret society. *When you make contact with members of your secret society to help you covertly manipulate events,* Roll+WIL. •On a 10+, someone from your secret society comes through with a very helpful act or piece of information. •On a 7-9, someone from your secret society comes through with a somewhat helpful act or piece of information, and the GM takes 1 hold. The GM can spend hold to have your society approach you for a favor, and you risk expulsion if you refuse.

FARMER

You've spent most of your life working a farm, and maybe you still do. You know the seasons, how to care for animals, and the secrets of the land. You're no stranger to a hard day of work or disappointing turns of fate, and you face danger with stoic silence. Might and Empathy are important attributes for you.

Name
Jedadiah Jones, Carmen Spring, Albert Wren, Helen Wheeler

Look (choose one from each line)
Weathered skin, braided pony tail, short curly hair, mostly bald, white hair
Narrow eyes, bloodshot eyes, eye patch
Full beard, stubble, facial scar, red cheeks, scarf, corn cob pipe

Wealth
1+WIL=

Passion (choose one)
I must do what I can to heal this twisted modern society
Technology will be humanity's downfall
I want to see the world

Equipment
Farmhouse and small farm (Value 9)
Farm implements
Choose one: 8 cows, 12 sheep
Choose one: unreliable gasoline tractor, silo full of grain (Value 5),
Choose one: overalls, blue jeans and button shirt, housedress, old suit and tie
Choose one: straw hat, scarf, cowboy hat, bandana, neck towel

Connections
_____'s priorities are messed up and need straitening.
_____ is family. And family is family.
I don't trust the way _____ smiles and jokes about things.

Starting Moves

Animal Empathy

You have a special understanding of animal behavior. *When you try to control the behavior of a single animal, or a group of animals,* Roll+EMP. •On a 10+, gain 2 hold. •On a 7-9, gain 1 hold and, after you spend your hold, the animals may put you and your friends in danger. Spend 1 hold to do one of the following:

- Calm enraged or fearful animals
- Convince the animals to move away
- Touch, examine, harness or mount one animal

Stoicism

You are used to physical difficulty. *Once per session, When you tough your way through hardship without complaining*, you may do one of the following:

- Withstand cold or hot conditions that might otherwise harm you
- Reduce the level of one physical injury by one when you receive it
- Change a 6 or less result on a MGT roll to 7 and take a minor injury
- Skip one night of sleep without negative effect

Advanced Moves

Country Charm

You are a novelty for people in the city. *When you mingle with city folk and try to distract them with your rugged charms*, roll+MGT. •ON a 10+, you draw their attention away from the activities of your allies. •ON a 7-9, you draw the attention of your audience, but choose one of the following:

- You make a fool of yourself in the process
- One or two members of the audience lose interest
- An audience member threatens violence or plots against you

Danger Sense

You read coming danger in the signs around you. *Once per session, when you think a dangerous or inconvenient event is approaching*, roll+EMP. On a 10+, the GM will tell you the nature of the approaching danger and the time of its arrival. •On a 7-9, the GM will tell you the nature of the approaching danger and the time of its arrival, but one of these two pieces of information will be wrong.

Healthy Lifestyle

Once per session, when you and any of you allies spend one day relaxing or working in the country, you may each trigger a Rest move. Each player should explain how they spent the time.

Heavy Machinery

You are familiar with repair and operation of machinery, like gears and pulleys and gasoline engines. *When you try to repair or operate heavy machinery*, Roll+INT. •On a 10+, it works just like you thought and you succeed. Take 2 hold •On a 7-9, you manage to get the machinery going or operate it for a short while and take 1 hold, but as soon as you spend the hold, you make a dangerous mistake or the machinery fails. Spend hold to make the machinery do something beyond normal expectations.

Shotgun Justice

You've come to rely on a shotgun to drive predators and unwanted visitors off of your land. *When you acquire this move*, you get a shotgun and ammunition (3 uses). *When you use a shotgun to scare off a person or creature that can experience fright*, Roll+MGT. On a 10+, you drive the target away without harming it. •On a 7-9, your display frightens away the target, but choose two of the following:

- The target returns after a few minutes
- You lose resources, possibly ammunition
- You frighten away an NPC ally
- A nearby player must Overcome Fear at a moderate level
- You accidently inflict a minor injury on a player or NPC ally

Simple Wisdom

Your simple wisdom and quaint sense of humor can lighten heavy situations. *When you make a pithy joke or observation about a frightening situation*, reduce its threat level for mental disorders by one level for you and one of your allies, but any physical danger then focuses on you.

JOURNALIST

You'll do whatever it takes to get the story and get it to your editor on time. You can sense when things just aren't right, and you have a network of contacts that can help you find out what's really going on. You might work for a big city newspaper, or one of the local tabloids published in every town big enough to have any news. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Sid "Scoop" Johnson, Hazel Harris,
Stanley Wright, Clara Green

Look (choose one from each line)
Short curly hair, straight black hair, short hair with receding hairline
black-rimmed glasses, long eyelashes, thick eyebrows, heavy mascara
Pencil behind the ear, thin mustache, thin lips, large teeth

Wealth
1+WIL=

Passion (choose one)
I must expose lies and corruption, whatever the risks
One day, I'll win a Pulitzer
My job is to tell the stories no one else will

Equipment
Typewriter
Pad and pen
Choose one: portable camera, newspaper subscriptions (10 uses), bicycle
Choose one: suit and tie, bowtie and vest, lady's jacket and pencil skirt, drop-waist dress
Choose one: pork pie hat, beret, headband with bow, elaborate hairpin

Connections

_____ has secrets, and I'm going to uncover them.
I once wrote an embarrassing article about _____.
_____ has given me important leads in the past.

Starting Moves

Just the Facts

When you encounter an interesting situation involving one or more people and take time to jot down notes, take 2 hold. Spend hold to make a Detect Truth or Search for Something move later on, as if you were still in the situation where you took the notes.

Persistence

You don't take "no" for an answer. *Once per session, when you make a move associated with a story or investigation and roll a 6 or less*, describe how you persisted and resolve the move as if you rolled a 7.

Profession Moves

Darkroom

You have access to a darkroom where you can develop your own photos quickly and in private. *When you spend a few hours developing photographs in your darkroom*, the GM will tell you an interesting detail you notice on them.

Expense Account

Your employer funds legitimate expenses for your stories. *When you complete a story for which you made at least one purchase*, check off a money box of the Value of one of the purchases, but no higher than Value 3. Legitimate expenses could include travel costs, buying dinner, or even bribes.

Inside Source

You occasionally get tips from a source inside city government, or the police department, or a local mob family. *When you acquire this move*, describe your source, how you make contact with them, and what motivates them to give you leads. *Once per session, when you make secret contact with your inside source*, roll+INT. •On a 10+, the GM will give you lead on a significant story. •On a 7-9, the GM will give you a lead on a mediocre story, and choose two of the following:

- Your source is unavailable during the next session
- You put yourself in dange
- You expend resources of Value 2 to make contact
- Making contact takes too long and you miss a deadline
- A rival reporter somehow gets the same lead

Press Pass

You can obtain a press pass that will get you access to a location others can't visit. *When you request a press pass to a private location or event that's important to a story you're writing*, you are issued a press pass good for 1 day, or the duration of the special event.

The Pen is Mightier

You can be very persuasive in your writing. *When you write a letter or publish an article to persuade a person or group to change an opinion, change behavior, or take action*, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, they see your point and take it into account in their decisions and actions. •On a 7-9, your writing only persuades some members of the group, and others are upset by it.

What They're Not Saying

You've done so many interviews that you can read a lot from a subject's body language. *When you Detect Truth and roll a 7 or higher,* the GM will tell you something your subject is hiding from you or is reluctant to reveal. This is in addition to the other information you gather from the Detect Truth move.

POLICE

Your job is to protect and serve. You walk your beat every day and know many of the people along it. You have the authority of the law behind you and can make arrests and call for backup. Your uniform should grant you a degree of respect in most situations. Speed is an important attribute for you.

Name
Andy Malone, Frank Payne, Sally Miller, Sean O'Brien

Look (choose one from each line)
Very short hair, white hair, curled brown hair, redhead
Puffy eyes, dark eyes, prominent ears
Curled mustache, double chin, boney face, dimples

Wealth
1+INT=

Passion (choose one)
No one is above the law, no matter how rich or powerful
Someday this neighborhood will be safe again
I don't get paid enough, so I must find other sources of revenue

Equipment
Badge
.38 revolver
Choose one: stolen goods (Value 4), nightstick, shotgun, handcuffs
Choose one: police uniform and hat, suit and tie with fedora

Connections
I ignored _____'s crime after I heard his/her story.
_____ has little respect for the law, so I'm watching him/her.
_____ knows a secret about me but hasn't revealed it.

Starting Moves

Arrest Authority

When you restrain and question a suspected criminal, you are within your legal rights. You can also use the threat of arrest as leverage in a Convince move.

Call for Backup

You can call for help from your fellow police. *When you contact a law enforcement agency with a request for immediate help,* they will respond as effectively as possible.

Profession Moves

Beat Cop

You have a regular area that you patrol, and you know it well. *When you Search for Something on your beat or Consult Knowledge about people or places on your beat and roll a 7+*, someone will come forward and give you information in addition to what you discover with the move. Describe the person and the GM will tell you what they know.

Nightstick Tricks

You are able to use your nightstick for remarkable feats. *When you use your nightstick in an Attack at a Distance or Attack up Close move and roll a 10+*, you may either choose the location of your opponent's injury, or choose any of the following effects instead of injuring your opponent:

- Disarm them
- Trip them
- Damage an item they're carrying

On the Take

You get regular payments from the local mob for staying out of their business. *When you acquire this move*, describe you mob contact and how you get the payment. *When you End a Session during which you caused no trouble for the local mob and accept a bribe from your contact*, roll+INT. •On a 10+, your contact gives you cash of Value 4. •On a 7-9, your contact gives you cash of Value 3, and choose one of the following.

- Business isn't so good, so you will get no bribe next session
- Your contact asks you to perform a dangerous task
- One of the Bureau's "untouchable" agents suspects you
- Instead of cash, your contact gives you illegal items of Value 3

Police Car

You have a fast police cruiser available when you need it. *When you use your police siren,* law-abiding drivers and pedestrians will clear a path for you and criminals will know you're coming.

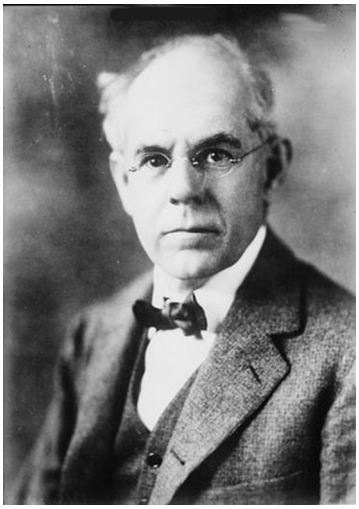
Police Records

You have access to police records of past crimes and current investigations. *When you Consult Knowledge about local events or Search for Something or someone associated with a crime and roll a 7+,* the GM will tell you about a past crime that may provide helpful insights or information.

Special Weapons

You have access to powerful weapons if you need them for your job. *Once per session, when you request heavy weapons from your agency,* you may take one of the following items. Weapons and unused explosives must be returned at the end of the day.

- Tommy Gun
- 5 sticks of Dynamite
- 2 Hand grenades



PSYCHOLOGIST

You're a practitioner of the quickly developing fields of psychology and psychoanalysis, following the work of contemporaries like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. You believe there is hope for people with psychological disorders, not just a future locked up in an asylum. Empathy is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Thomas Hook, Jean Gerst, Eugene Baasch, Marjorie South

Look (choose one from each line)
Wild hair, receding hairline, long curly blonde hair, short wavy brunette hair
Bushy eyebrows, heavy eye makeup, wide eyes, baggy eyes
Prominent cheekbones, long sideburns, facial burn marks, rosy cheeks

Wealth
2+EMP

Passion (choose one)
I will become an expert on the criminal mind
I will prove that telepathy and other mental powers really exist
Even the most mentally ill person can be rehabilitated and cured

Equipment
Notepad and pen
Anesthetic (5 uses)
Choose one: psychology journals (5 uses), straight jacket
Choose one: suit and tie, lady's jacket and skirt, sweater and bowtie, floral dress
Choose one: large glasses, monocle, pocket watch, diploma in silver frame

Connections
_____ seems unstable and may need treatment.
_____ has a relative I could treat but they won't allow it.
I know five people worth listening to, and _____ is one of them.

Starting Moves

Treat Mental Disorder

You can help patients recover from mental disorders caused by traumatic events. *When someone gets a few days of rest during which you provide counseling,* roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you reduce the level of one temporary mental disorder by one. •On a 7-9, you reduce the level of one temporary mental disorder by one, but the GM gets 2 hold. The GM can spend hold for any of the following during this session or the next:

- Make the patient Overcome Fear when reminded of their trauma
- Give you symptoms of a moderate mental disorder for a short time
- Increase the threat level by one when the patient encounters a familiar trauma

Predict Behavior

You understand what motivates people. *When you make a Detect Truth move and roll a 7+,* choose one target NPC and take 1 hold in addition to the other results of the move. Spend the hold at any time to ask the question "What are they likely to do next?"

Profession Moves

Criminal Minds

The first time you examine the scene of a crime or detailed records of a crime, you gain one additional piece of information which could help determine when and where the person who did it might commit another crime.

Electroshock Therapy

You can sometimes cure permanent mental disorders, or reduce their symptoms, through shock treatments. *When you acquire this move,* you get a shock treatment device. *When you administer daily electroshock therapy over a few days to treat a permanent mental disorder,* roll +INT. •On a 10+, you reduce the level of the permanent mental disorder by one. •On a 7-9, you reduce the level of the permanent mental disorder by one, but that particular injury can no longer be treated with shock therapy, and choose two of the following:

- The patient loses memory of an important event
- The patient is incapacitated for 3 days (does not trigger a Rest move)
- You inflict a permanent minor injury on the patient
- The patient gains a different moderate mental disorder

Hypnosis

You can use hypnosis to heighten a patient's concentration and make them open to suggestion. *When you hypnotize a willing patient*, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you may reduce the symptoms of one mental disorder (temporary or permanent) by one level for this session and the following session. Alternatively, you may implant one suggestion, changing the way the patient reacts to a person or situation for this session and the following session. •On a 7-9, you may reduce mental disorder symptoms for the current session, or implant a suggestion for the remainder of the current session, and you choose one of the following:

- You implant an additional suggestion chosen secretly by the GM
- You uncover new trauma, causing a moderate mental disorder
- You force the patient to change one of their connections
- You must Overcome Fear one level less than the threat level of the subject's worst mental disorder

Manipulation

You can read other people to discover their psychological weak points. *When you Detect Truth and roll a 10+*, choose one person you observed. The GM will tell you what you discovered that you can use as leverage in a Convince move targeting that person.

Personal Theory

You have written books and papers on your specific theory of behavior or mental disorders, which is known by your last name, followed by –ism. For example, Baaschism. *When you acquire this move*, describe you theory and check off one of your money boxes of Value 7 or less. *When you make a Detect Truth or Treat Mental Disorder move and roll 10+*, you gain further evidence of your theory and take 1 hold. Spend hold before making a Detect Truth or Treat Mental Disorder move to adjust the result as if someone made a successful Aid or Interfere move to help you.

Private Practice

You have a small office where you treat patients. *Once per session, when you spend a day at your office treating NPC patients*, you can check off a money box of Value 3 or less, or take 1 hold. You spend hold to call upon one of your patients who may be able to help you with information or a simple task. Describe the patient and their mental disorder.

SCIENTIST

You might be a college science professor, or a researcher in a secret government laboratory. You understand many of the frontiers of modern science – marvels like electricity, radio waves, genetics, and microbiology. New scientific discoveries are being made every day, so why not by you? Intelligence is an important attribute for you.

Name (choose one)
Kathleen Glover, Julio Barka, Mamie Fletcher, William Lawrence

Look (choose one from each line)
Crazy white hair, balding, pony tail, dark hair parted down the center
Wire-rimmed glasses, rheumy eyes, light blue eyes, eye patch
Full beard and mustache, prominent chin, scarf, missing teeth

Wealth
1+INT=

Passion (choose one)
Everything has a rational explanation
The frontiers of science are the path to personal power
I have to make just one great discovery

Equipment
Notebook and pencils
Scientific Supplies (5 uses)
Choose one: microscope, radio, chemistry kit, telescope, big chalkboard
Choose one: plain black dress, jacket and tie, sweater and bow tie, lab coat
Choose one: bowler, safety glasses, rubber apron, cane

Connections
_____ is one of the most rational people I know.
I'm fascinated by how _____ can accept things on faith.
_____ took me in when I had nowhere else to go.

Starting Moves

Specialty

Choose a scientific specialty, like physics, biology, or anthropology. *When you Consult Knowledge on a topic within your specialty and roll a 10+*, gain 1 hold. Spend 1 hold at any time to recall something useful within your scientific specialty.

Experimentation

You can design experiments to discover new information or confirm theories. *When you spend a day carrying out an experiment to test a creature, item or material*, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you learn two useful pieces of information. •ON a 7-9, you learn one piece of information, and choose one of the following.

- Your experiment angers the subject or damages it.
- You must expend 2 uses of scientific supplies.
- Your experiment takes much longer than expected.

Profession Moves

Advanced Mathematics

You are a mathematical genius, able to encode the behavior of multiple dimensions in mathematical symbols. *When you use mathematics to understand creatures or events that are alien or from other dimensions*, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you devise a formula to explain things and take 2 hold. •On a 7-9, you devise a basic theory and take 1 hold, but your calculations attract dangerous attention. Spend 1 hold to do one of the following:

- delay the appearance of a creature or event
- predict the next appearance of the creature or event
- Stop the creature or event with your Invention or Prototypes move
- ignore an Overcome Fear move involving the creature or event

Invention

You can cobble together an assortment of scientific parts or materials to modify their function or make them do something completely new. You couldn't modify a ray gun to help you fly, but you might be able to change its frequency to jam a radio signal. *When you cobble together scientific components to serve a new function,* roll+INT. On a 10+, the device works for 3 uses. •On a 7-9, the device works for 1 use and choose one of the following.

- It has unintended, dangerous side effects chosen by the GM
- It costs you 3 scientific supplies

Laboratory

You have a laborator where you examine specimens and perform experiments. *When you study an iten or creature for an hour in your lab,* you trigger an Experimentation move. In addition, you may forgo one discovered piece of information and instead ask one of the following questions about the item you are studying, and the GM must answer truthfully.

- Where did it come from?
- What is its weakness
- What is dangerous about it?
- What is useful about it?
- Are there more?

Prototypes

You work for a large research organization that is developing lots of interesting new devices. *Once per session, when you need help with a specific task,* you may borrow an experimental device that may help you. State the task you need help with and the GM will tell you about the device. All such devices are unreliable and must be returned by the end of the following session.

Pseudo-science

You have good instincts about advanced scientific devices. *When you try to operate an alien or supernatural device that seems to work on scientific principles,* roll+EMP. •ON a 10+, you successfully activate the device and have some idea how to control it. •On a 7-9, you activate the device, but choose one of the following:

- You can't fully control it, putting yourself of others in danger
- The device works for a short time, then stops working for good
- The device has an inconvenient side effect
- Your operation of the device attracts unwanted attention

There Must be an Explanation

You have complete faith that science can explain anything. *When you are confronted by something frightening and roll a 7-9 on an Overcome Fear move,* you may move closer to whatever frightened you instead of choosing one of the other results. When you do this, you gain one minor mental disorder and learn one interesting piece of information.

CHAPTER 6
THE GAME MASTER

As a Mythos World GM, you job is to place the players in an uncomfortable and mysterious situation. During each session, you slowly transform the discomfort into terror, and the mystery into knowledge of cosmic horrors that will put their sanity at risk. The rest of this book provides the tools you'll need to do this.

COSMIC HORROR

The cosmic horror of H.P Lovecraft, Clarke Ashton Smith, Robert W. Chambers, and Robert E. Howard, sometimes called the Cthulhu Mythos, has its roots in the gothic horror of Poe and other authors of the 19th century, but it introduces whole new sources of terror beyond human existence and experience.

Cosmic horror is ancient, godlike creatures that ruled the earth millions of years ago. It's intelligent, humanoid races living in the shadows of mankind or in the depths of the ocean. It's advanced, incomprehensible alien races that have made contact with humans across space, dimensional boundaries, and time itself. Cosmic horror is mindless deities that have only permitted humanity to survive out of neglect, and tiny, prehistoric parasites that dig under your skin. It is whole branches of humanity's family tree that are not fully human, and horrifying flying insects the size of a person that have the technology to preserve our living brains in canning jars. The Mythos encompasses the entire cosmos, and the best way to get a feel for its special brand of terror is to read the work of these authors.

THE 1920s

Mythis World is set in 1920s United States, because that's when most of the Mythos stories were written. You'll find that the 1920s is a wonderful decade for horror roleplaying, with its gothic remnants and shifting morality. It offers relative ease of travel, yet still limited communication and controlled access to information. There are still unexplored corners of the world and supernatural mysteries yet to be eradicated by science. Science itself holds the promise of miraculous, and abhorrent achievements.

The 1920s in America was a decade of drastic changes. Alcohol went from legal to illegal under prohibition, providing the opportunity for organized crime to flourish. The law enforcement capability of the federal government expanded to fight mob control in major cities and to root out the nebulous "Red Menace" threatening to establish Russian-style communism in the United States. The economic boom of the early 1920s gave way, suddenly, at the end of the decade, to the desperation of the Great Depression.

In 1920, most homes were lit by gas, or oil lamps, but by 1930, most of them had been connected to the electrical grid and had electric lighting. The telephone, also a rarity in homes at the start of the decade, made its way into about half of all homes, and most businesses, by the end. The 1920s also saw

the advent of regular radio broadcasts and the first "talkie" movies. Air travel was only for the wealthy and stout of heart in 1920, but by 1930, the first well-known airlines were running regular flights between major cities. Average workers could afford cars, especially variations of the practical Model T. By the end of the decade, the automobile and the open road had become the American obsessions they would remain for the next century. Women's fashions went through a drastic and liberating transformation, and many women began to find a place in the workforce.

AGENDA

Your goal as the GM is not to defeat the players, or even to act as a constant adversary. Your goals are collectively referred to as your agenda, which comprises the following:

- Create a frightening setting
- Fill the characters' lives with fear and horror
- Play to find out what happens

Create a frightening setting means you have to put the players in a compelling place with interesting characters, with plenty of hints that there is something dangerous or horrifying in the works. Make sure each place you mention either draws the players in or repels them. The same goes for NPCs; the players should love them or hate them, and either way, the players should have a reaction when an NPC comes to a grisly end.

Fill the character's lives with fear and horror means you should always be aware of what would be the most horrifying possible outcome of the players' current situation. You shouldn't always inflict it on them, but you could drop hints to scare them. If you know that the touch of a strange temporal creature could send a player into another dimension where parasites grow constantly beneath their skin and are ripped out and eaten by horrible floating jellyfish, first inflict that fate on an NPC and somehow present an image of it to the players. In order for players to be afraid, they must be connected to the setting in a way that creates high stakes for them. Don't give them the option to just leave when things get rough. Maybe they're staying in the old mansion they inherited because they're broke and plan to fix it up and sell it. Or maybe a player can't leave the strange seaside town until he finds an explanation for the strange changes his body is going through. Keep things mysterious, frightening, and personal.

Play to find out what happens means you don't control the story. This may be one of the most difficult aspects of Mythos World for GMs that are used to nudging their players from one planned encounter to the next. Realize, up front, that you don't know what's going to happen. If you think you know exactly where your players will be at a certain time and what dangers they'll face there, you're fighting against the game. Your players' experience will suffer. Your prep work should just consist of identifying an overall threat, perhaps a powerful mythos creature, along with its overall objective and some idea of its capabilities. You should also have an interesting setting and some compelling NPCs ready to go, but realize that this may all change during play. You'll incorporate story ideas provided by your players, switching story tracks to adapt to what they find most frightening. You'll react to their successes and failures in ways that are compelling in the moment but may put any long-term story plans at risk. Be ready to improvise.

ALWAYS SAY

Your interaction with the players is a dialog that builds a story. When they announce what they want to do, then turn to you to find out what happens next, you should always have something interesting to say. Always say …

- What the principles demand
- What the rules demand
- What your prep demands

Use the principles presented in the next section to provide the basic building blocks for an interesting and frightening story. These are guidelines you can follow to make sure your players are engaged and you're taking full advantage of their creativity.

Always use the game rules, which means you should be on the lookout for narrative that triggers player moves, and you shouldn't ignore tags and narrative facts that have already been established. If a player makes a move

and the results say they find a useful item or information, make sure you give it to them. Don't deny them what they've earned simply because it might rush or derail the story you have in mind. Mythos World is a very colaborative game, and the rules create the structure to make the players comfortable contributing to the story.

Although you'll be doing plenty of improvisation, you should use the prep work you did beforehand to stay a step or two ahead of the players. The additional elements introduced during play may mean you have to adjust your prep between sessions, but you should always know something about what's going on that your player's don't. See Chapter 8, Preparation.

PRINCIPLES

Mythos World is about collaboratively building story with your players. As the GM, you have great power to move the narrative forward or change its course. The players can create interesting, active characters, but you have to put them into a story. Use the following principles as building blocks for creating a compelling narrative with the players at the center.

- Leave room for more clues
- Address the characters, not the players
- Don't be squeamish
- Build mystery
- Make a move the follows
- Create scheming NPCs, but don't plan everything they do
- Give every creature horrifying details
- Create likeable NPCs, then hurt them in horrible ways
- Never speak the name of your move
- Ask questions and use the answers
- Be a fan of the characters
- Begin and end with the fiction

Leave room for more clues

Never have every clue and every encounter planned out ahead of time. The players will feel much more connected to the story if they are free to decide which paths to pursue. They will discover clues in places you hadn't thought to put any, and you'll have to make them up on the spot. And sometimes they'll walk right past the clues you thought were obvious.

Address the characters, not the players
Add to each player's immersion by using their character's name when talking to them. This helps players think and act in character and makes it easier for the other players to interact in character.

Don't be squeamish
Mythos World is about horror, gruesome death, and mind-crushing despair. Don't be afraid to threaten or hurt your players, and especially don't be afraid to hurt an NPC as an example of what might be in store for the players.

Build mystery
Provide compelling clues without giving away everything that's going on. This can be tricky, especially if you're making up clues on the spot. To be safe, lean toward making your clues interesting, but still very mysterious. Give clues that lead to the next clue, but not the entire answer. Players should feel like they're making progress, but they should also be unsure of what's really going on.

Make a move that follows
Your GM moves should be consistent with the fiction you and your players have already developed. It should maintain the illusion of cause and effect for the players. If the player's actions have little to do with the events around them, they'll feel like helpless spectators, not important characters in the story.

Create scheming NPCs, but don't plan everything they'll do
While there are plenty of creatures in cosmic horror tales with motivations far beyond our comprehension, there are also human NPCs that still think and act somewhat human. Understand the goals and capabilities of those opposing the players and think about them whenever you set up a scene or make a move. Don't plan out everything – your NPCs will react to players' actions, and their plans could change. These NPCs will be your players' first window into the mysteries you've established, and they'll provide examples of what happens to people who delve too deeply into the Mythos.

Give every creature horrifying details

Some descriptions of mythos creatures are provided in this book, but you should always strive to personalize your creatures and add details. A reanimated corpse should still carry scars from whatever killed it. A bat-like flying servant is more frightening if it carries around the hand of the dead mayor, still wearing his ring of office. An alien telepathic presence creates horror by using the voice of a player's dead mother. A summoned deity could immediately establish dominance by swapping the arms and legs of one of the ritual participants.

Create likeable NPCs, then hurt them in horrible ways

Your players should encounter likeable, helpful NPCs who are also just trying to survive and figure out what's going on. The players will begin to care for them, and that's your opportunity to cause horror without directly hurting the players. Inflict physical and mental harm on an NPC to give the players a hint of what might be in store for them. The horror will be even greater if a sympathetic NPC suffers as a result of the players' actions. Try to put the players in situations where they have to choose between defeating a great evil and hurting a friend.

Never speak the name of your move

Although the following section lists some of the things you might want to do when it's your chance to make a GM move, these aren't intended as mechanical choices. They exist to drive story forward, and should be smoothly presented as part of the narrative. The players may know a GM move is coming when they ask you what happens, or when they roll a 6 or less, but don't say "now I get a GM move." Just tell them when happens next. Both player and GM moves exist to support and drive the narrative, not the other way around.

Ask questions and use the answers

Whenever possible, ask the players more detailed questions about what they've added to the narrative. If a player leads the group out into the swamp looking for clues, ask them if they have any experience traveling through swamps. If they say yes, ask them for more details of how and when they got that experience. Some moves ask the players for this sort of information, but you should get into the habit of drilling deeper all the time. Write everything down and incorporate as much information as you can into the story. This is where Mythos World can get terrifying for the GM; players not only establish facts about themselves, but they often include supporting facts about the world in general. In the case above, we may have learned that there was a specific town at the edge of the swamp where the player worked, or a remote cabin where he found privacy to study ancient books. If possible, this information should work its way into the story, even if it doesn't fit with your initial plans. This can be challenging at times, but it also moves some of the creative burden from you to the players.

NARRATIVE TRUMPS RULES

If you've been the GM in other roleplaying games, but have never played Apocalypse World or any other "World" games, you might have to unlearn some things. In Mythos World, you should think about the story first and only use moves when they are triggered and the outcome is uncertain. If it's fairly clear what the result of a character action will be, based on that character's traits and what has happened so far in the story, then you don't need to ask for move rolls, and you shouldn't. Only use moves when the outcome isn't clear from the narrative, or when the move would make the narrative more interesting.

Be a fan of the characters

The players are the stars of this story. You are not, and neither are the awesome story ideas you've come up with. The best Mythos World sessions happen when the player's drive the story, flesh out their own backgrounds by answering questions, and trigger lots of moves that uncover information or get them into deeper trouble. Be happy when the players figure out your clues or defeat an enemy. Reward them for adding narrative detail to their backgrounds by incorporating those details into the story. This will keep you on your toes, constantly adjusting the story. You may even have to adjust the overall threat as you go, to fit the players' needs.

Begin and end with the fiction

Mythos World is a storytelling dialog between the GM and players, occasionally interrupted by player moves. Player moves are triggered by the narrative and shouldn't be explicitly declared. The player says "I think I remember reading about the Lighthouse Killer while I was studying law," not "I want to do a Consult Knowledge move to see if I know anything about the Lighthouse Killer." This may seem like a trivial distinction, but it focuses the players on the fiction, not the rules. The same is true for the GM. When revealing the results of a move, don't just say "You succeed. Here's what you know," take the opportunity to establish a new detail. Perhaps one of the player's fellow law student was obsessed with serial killers.

CHAPTER 7
GM MOVES

Only players trigger moves. Your NPCs never trigger moves through their actions. However, you do choose from your own set of moves under certain cicumstances. You should make a GM move when any of the following occur:

- All of the players look to you to tell them what happens next
- A player rolls a total of 6 or less during a move
- A perfect narrative opportunity for a GM move occurs

When all of the players look to you to tell them what happens next, you should choose a move from the GM move list provided later in this section. The GM moves listed are just suggestions – you're free to do anything that makes sense. However, a GM move should always advance the narrative. It should either change the status of the player characters or introduce new clues, mysteries, or threats.

When a player rolls 6 or less during a move, they always trigger a GM move. Note that some moves may have specific result listed for a 6 or less, but you are still free to make a GM move in addition to those. Your GM move does not have to be directly related to what the character was trying to do, or even affect that specific character, but that is generally the case. For example, if a player rolls a 6 when trying to cross a raging river, it might mean they woke a sleeping giant crocodile, or their guide rope broke, stranding them on the far side without the rest of their party just as enemies attack. But it could also mean that enemies show up and attack the rest of the party. Or it could advance the plans of the players' enemies behind the scenes.

When a perfect opportunity occurs, you can make a move that follows logically in the narrative. This is usually because a player does something that leads perfectly into a move associated with a GM creature or location. Yes, creatures and locations have moves too, and we'll see more about that later. For example, if you know the log spanning a ravine can't support much weight, you may have a custom move written down that looks something like "when more than one person is on the log at the same time…," or you may just have jotted down a note that "the log collapses under too much weight." Either way, the players' actions have created a perfect opportunity for you to make a move and collapse the log.

HARD AND SOFT GM MOVES

GM moves can be hard or soft. Hard moves result in changes to the state of the player. This could be lost resources (food, ammunition or light sources), physical injuries, mental disorders, or a permanent loss of social standing. Soft moves change the narrative situation and often establish a new threat that might result in a hard move in the future if the players do nothing to avoid it.

In the example above with the weak log over the river, telling the players that they hear cracking sounds while standing on the log is a soft move – they can still do something to avoid injury. When the log collapses and the player characters fall and are injured, you've made a hard move.

Generally, you only make a hard move as a result of a player rolling a 6 or less, or in the case where a player has been warned of a danger (probably by a soft GM move) and has ignored it.

SUGGESTED GM MOVES

The following list is provided as a guide when making a GM move. It is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to limit you in any way. These are tried and true ways you can keep the story moving or complicate the players' lives. After you make any of these moves, return to the narrative by asking the players "So, what do you do?" As you gain experience as a GM, many of these will become natural, but it will be helpful to review this list occassionally to broaden your repertoire.

- Put someone on the spot
- Use a creature, danger or location move
- Reveal an unwelcome truth
- Announce a physical or mental threat
- Inflict physical damage, disease, or poison
- Inflict mental disorders
- Cost them resources
- Activate negative tags
- Offer an opportunity, with our without cost
- Turn their move back on them
- Escalate the horror

Put someone on the spot

Force one of the players to make a tough choice. Do they risk themselves to save a friend? Do they risk a friend's safety to get closer to a goal? Will a player show everyone his invitation letter from cult leader, secretely accept it, or throw it into the fireplace?

Use a creature, danger or location move

Creatures in Mythos World have special moves that are available to you. Locations can also have moves, and so can the dangers you create as the driving force behind your adventure. For example, a ghoul has a move of "summon a night-gaunt." Note that these moves are not directly triggered by player action and require no die rolls. They just happen when you make a GM move.

Reveal an unwelcome truth

Let the players know the terrible truth behind something, or reveal how events have taken a turn for the worse. Perhaps the sheriff who was assisting the players disappeared, or the strange onyx egg they found has hatched, and whatever was inside is on the loose. There should always be something disturbing to reveal; the mythos is millions of years old and is full of things humans should never know.

Announce a physical or mental threat

Let the players know that they are in immediate danger, and if they don't react, something bad will happen. This could be a threat of physical injury, like an enemy pointing a gun or charging with a spear, or it could be a threat of mental trauma. It could also be a danger to a friendly NPC, or the player's wealth, or a precious possession.

Inflict physical damage, disease, or poison

Give the player a physical injury that follows from the narrative. If someone was swinging a club at their head, give them a concussion or a fractured skull. If someone shot at them, inflict an appropriate bullet wound and maybe some bleeding that may make them lose consciousness. Weapons and creatures have threat level tags that indicates the severity of injuries they typically inflict.

Inflict mental disorders

When a player faces a horrifying situation and rolls 6 or less on an Overcome Fear move, a mental disorder is an appropriate consequence. Horrifying creatures, items and situations typically include hints about what types of mental disorders they are likely to cause, as well as a threat level that suggests severity.

Cost them resources

Take important resources or items from the players if the narrative supports it. Perhaps their flashlight batteries die, or they use their last ammunition, or their car runs out of gas. Is one of the players down to his last dose of medication to control a mental disorder?

Activate negative tags

Many items and settings in Mythos World have negative tags, such as unreliable, fragile, slow or cumbersome. If the narrative suggests that invoking one of these tags could put the players in a difficult situation, then feel free to use them.

Offer an opportunity, with our without cost

Not all of your moves have to be bad or threatening. Feel free to offer the players an opportunity that moves the story along. The undertaker has some interesting information if the player can come see him. The strange radio they found starts making unrecognizable sounds. A schoolteacher offers to sell the players an artifact her students found on a field trip.

Turn their move back on them.

Think about the mirror image of a move the players just made. If they discovered the location of an important object, maybe one of their enemies did also. If they learned a vital piece of information, is it possible that they learned too much for their own good? Did the player hit the bubbling mass of tentacles so hard that it splattered him with it's caustic protoplasm? This move works well when players roll a 6 or less and you can harm the players by actually making their move *too* successful.

Escalate the horror

Horror can be created in many ways. Present an unusual phenomenon that's difficult to understand. Show the players what could happen to them by harming NPCs. Reveal horrific events from the past. Whenever possible, build mystery around otherwise ordinary sounds, smells, textures and objects. Add to the terror with darkness, disorientation, or total silence. Give glimpses and clues and let the players fill in the blanks.

CHAPTER 8

PREPARATION

Getting ready for a Mythos World game is a little different than preparing for most other roleplaying games. The dynamic story elements in Mythos World, contributed by the players or player moves, mean that any detailed characters or scenes you create might not fit. To remain flexible as a GM, what you need are a basic idea of the overall danger the players will face and a collection of available resources you can introduce on the fly.

Your danger is usually a combination of a villain of some sort, a progression of nefarious goals, and a basic understanding of the villian's capabilities. For instance, the danger might be that miners have broken special wards set millions of years ago and released a group of flying polyps into the maze of mining tunnels. These monsters will eventually find their way to the surface. Their simple goal will be to seek out humans and destroy them, then reproduce and re-conquer the world. They can use their terrifying shrieks, their invisibility, and their control of wind to do it.

Now that you know the enemy's plan, you can prepare to give your players clues for a slow reveal. Scenes of gruesome polyp-killings are an obvious lead-in, but what about local Native American artwork depicting flying polyps? Could these lead to fragments of

the Pnakotic Manuscript? What is the nature of the wards that trapped the polyps? How and why did the miners release them? Will someone finally see a flying polyp and survive? Did elder things set the wards, or was it members of the Great Race? Could clues lead the players into contact with either of these alien races and provide a way to reset the wards? Could the players find ancient weapons that can destroy the flying polyps? These are all questions you could answer during play, based on the professions of your players and the direction they take their investigation, but having some ideas ahead of time may help. Don't write out too many details – just a few notes you won't regret throwing away if the story goes in a different direction.

Having an interesting setting helps too, and gives you a set of locations and NPCs to fall back on for clues and encounters. In the example above, we have a dark, confusing mine just outside of town, and the mining office above. The town itself is small, just the essentials, and is entirely supported by the mine, so any talk of scary things down there is met with denial. The mining company owns everything, and everyone in town is in debt to the company. You know you're going to need some interesting NPCS – at least a mining company official and a couple miners. It will also help to have a few interesting townspeople ready – you'll probably work them in at some point.

So, your entire preparation for the first session of this game could be as shown on the following page. Note that we haven't locked in specific details, like how many flying polyps were trapped, or how many wards are still left intact. We know that the schoolteacher is smart, but we can wait until during play to decide which specific subjects she's interested in. We don't know why Cyril hasn't pursued his relationship with Emily, but it might become obvious as both characters develop during play.

IMPROVISATIONAL HORROR

The improvisational nature of Mythos World may seem like a poor fit for what is fundamentally a game of investigation. How can you, as a GM, anticipate all of the strange paths your players will follow and all of the interesting pieces of background they'll create for their characters? Surprisingly, it all makes your job easier if you let it. Don't figure out all of the clues ahead of time. Don't plan out those awesome encounters that you absolutely must lure the players into. You only need to decide what terrible and dangerous forces are at work and what resources and abilities those forces have available, then let the players drive the story as much as possible.

FLYING POLYPS IN THE MINES

DANGER

Iron miners near the town of Ferris, Massachusetts dig into open caverns and destroy one of a set of wards keeping a small group of flying polyps contained within. The Flying Polyps will eventually all find their way outside of the mine, and they will grow and reproduce and destroy all human life.

THE TOWN

Ferris is a small, remote mining town, run and owned by the Overland Mining Company. It has a general store, a post office, a barbershop, a school, and a couple speakeasies, but not much else.

THE PEOPLE

"Boss" Edgar Emeridge runs mining operations here and is also the mayor.

Cyril Best is the young miner who found the ward and destroyed it. He's heavily in debt to the company, and he's in love with Emily Weston but hasn't done anything about it.

John Happ is a strong German immigrant miner who speaks broken, heavily accented English and loves the mining life.

Emily Weston is the local schoolteacher and perhaps the smartest person in town.

Old Miss Kelly runs the post office and knows everyone in town

POSSIBLE CLUES

Missing miner never came back up
Someone killed by flying polyp in or near the mine
Native American artwork depicting flying polyps or wards
Someone sees a flying polyp and survives
Description of the ward from Cyril Best
Details about flying polyps in fragment of Pnakotic manuscript
Elder thing or Great Race electrical weapon in nearby oddities museum
Evidence of another mine chamber where alien "prison guards" once lived

CHAPTER 9
PHYSICAL THREATS

While delving into the mysteries of the Mythos, the players face the threat of injury, poison, disease, and madness. The game provides guidance about when to inflict these through player moves, creatures moves, and special tags.

THREAT LEVEL

Many creatures, NPCs, weapons, and items in Mythos World pose a threat to the players. The degree of that threat is called the *threat level* and is represented by one of the following tags: *minor, moderate, serious*, or *critical*. The nature of the threat may be physical injury, mental disorder, poison, or disease, or a combination of these, and is determined by the creature or item's other tags. For instance, a creature with a *close* tag can cause physical injury at close range, so that creature's threat level would be used to determine the level of injury. The threat level of a vial of poison indicates the maximum injury level of that poison.

PHYSICAL INJURY

When a move calls for a creature to physically injure a player, or when you make a GM move and just declare that a player is injured, that player receives a physical injury chosen by you and appropriate to the narrative. Physical Injuries are rated on the following scale:

Minor injuries are inconvenient, but seldom impairing.
Moderate injuries are impairing in specific situations.
Serious injuries are impairing in many common situations.
Critical injuries are impairing in most situations and are often fatal.

When players injure creatures and NPCs, the level of injury is based on the threat level of the player's weapon. The natural toughness of some creatures may increase or decrease the level of injuries they take. For example, a weapon that normally causes a moderate injury may cause serious injury to a small animal, or a minor injury to very large or very tough creatures.

Each physical injury becomes part of the narrative and should be taken into account when deciding which moves are triggered or which moves are no longer possible. If a player has broken fingers and wants to shoot at something with a gun, you may decide that he has to shoot with his off-hand and has to get closer to the target before triggering the move. If a player is suffering from a concussion, he may have to Defy Danger to stay awake and focused before making a Search for Something move.

Most injuries are temporary – they will heal, given enough time. Players can usually decrease the degree of one temporary injury when they trigger a Rest move. Healed minor injuries disappear. When a more serious injury heals one level, change its description. For instance, a *sprained ankle* might become a *tender ankle*. A *punctured lung* might become *pain when breathing heavily*.

Some injuries start as permanent, or become permanent if compounded or not cared for properly. Once an injury is permanent, it will probably never heal, even under a doctor's care. The exact nature of an injury may change once it becomes permanent. A *broken leg* may become a *lame leg*, or *constant leg pain*.

If a player already has one or more injuries and is injured again, consider increasing the level of an existing injury instead. Also consider making existing injuries permanent, especially if the player should have something lasting to remember a particular encounter. A good rule of thumb is that a player shouldn't have more than two injuries at the same level (minor, moderate, etc.) or more than five injuries overall. If they're already at that limit, the next injury should just increase the level of an existing injury or make an injury permanent.

Minor Injuries

Twisted ankle, minor concussion, bruised tailbone, small cut, nosebleed, minor burn, black eye, bad bruise, limited frostbite, sunburn

Moderate Injuries

Broken fingers, sprained ankle, sprained wrist, shoulder out of joint, extensive second degree burns, bleeding gash.

Serious Injuries

Broken leg, broken arm, fractured skull, neck wound, punctured lung, third degree burns, paralyzed limb, deafness, shot or stabbed in the leg

Critical Injuries

Amputated limb, blinded, stabbed in the eye, shot in the stomach, ingested neurotoxin, extensive third degree burns, chest crushed, skinned alive

POISON

Players may be bitten by a deadly snake, stabbed by a spear dipped in curare, or eat food tainted with arsenic. Most poisons take effect in a few minutes. They cause a minor injury that gradually increases one level every few minutes to a maximum level, unless a doctor with the Toxicology move or someone with a survival kit intervenes. The maximum injury level is the threat level of the creature or poison. After reaching the maximum level, symptoms decrease one level every few minutes unless otherwise indicated in the *lasting effects* notes.

Arsenic

Arsenic is used for pest control and is readily available at pharmacies and general stores across the United States. It can be administered in small doses over weeks, in which case the the GM should determine which is the "final dose."

Minor: You feel drowsy and have trouble doing complicated mental tasks. Treat any result of 10+ on a Search for Something or Consult Knowledge move as a 7-9.

Moderate: You suffer from convulsions and pass out.

Serious: Your vision is blurred and you are unable to stand.

Critical: You can't see and you cannot breath.

Lasting Effects: minor symptoms remain until you Rest. Discoloration of fingernails, toenails and hair lasts for weeks.

Cobra Venom

Cobra venom is a fast-acting poison that incapacitates and kills its victim within minutes. Harvested cobra venom breaks down quickly and is generally ineffective as an applied poison.

Minor: You have pain, swelling and redness at the site of the snakebite.

Moderate: You are short of breath, making physical exertion difficult.

Serious: You are nauseous, have blurred vision and can't breath well enough to stand or walk. You lose feeling in your extremities.

Critical: You can barely see at all, and you stop breathing.

Lasting Effects: moderate symptoms remain until you Rest.

Curare

Curare is a general term for a group of related plant-based poisons applied to weapons by indigenous peoples of North and South America. It is delivered into the bloodstream when the weapon breaks the skin.

Minor: You are weak and lack coordination.

Moderate: You are unable to walk or perform precise tasks with your hands.

Serious: You are completely paralyzed, but still conscious.

Critical: You are unable to breath.

Lasting Effects: Your symptoms decrease normally, but you must Defy Danger using Might or fall into a coma for the remainder of the session.

Cyanide

Hydrogen cyanide is available as a fumigation agent, and in industrial settings where it is used in many chemical processes. Small doses are lethal.

Minor: You suffer from vertigo. Treat any 10+ results on moves using Speed as a 7-9 result.

Moderate: You have terrible vertigo and can't make most Speed moves.

Serious: You have seizures.

Critical: Your heart stops beating.

Lasting Effects: You must Defy Danger using Might or fall into a coma for the rest of the session.

Ghast Saliva

The bite of a ghast can leave a person paralyzed or in a coma. Whenever a ghast causes physical injury with its bite, its poisonous saliva will get into the wound.

Minor: You begin shaking and must Defy Danger to hold onto items.

Moderate: You are very unstable. You can only crawl on all fours and you cannot perform any tasks that require dexterity or a Speed roll.

Serious: You are paralyzed, but still alive and aware of your surroundings.
Lasting Effects: You must Defy Danger using Might or fall into a coma for the rest of the session.

Mercury Bichloride

Mercury bichloride is a relatively common medical supply. It is used in small concentrations to treat sores and diseases, but is deadly in its pure form. It acts more slowy than other poisons; symptoms can take hours or days to fully develop.
Minor: You develop redness and swelling around the mouth and nose
Moderate: You are short of breath.
Serious: You develop pain in your abdomen and overall weakness.
Critical: You die of kidney failure.
Lasting Effects: You must Defy Danger using Might or acquire a permanent brain damage mental disorder.

DISEASE

Diseases kill many people in the 1920s. The influenza epidemic of 1918 killed millions. There are vaccines for some of the worst diseases, like smallpox, but immunizations for many others are decades away. Penicillin, the first truly effective antibiotic, is new and expensive, so most infections are still treated with unpleasant metalic salts.

Each Disease listed below has a group of symptoms ranging in degree from minor to serious or critical. When a player contracts a disease, they will experience the minor symptoms within a day or two. The symptoms will get worse at the end of each session until they reach their highest level. Once someone has reached the maximum symptom level, they begin to recover; their symptoms get better, one level at a time, until gone. See the End a Session and Rest basic moves to understand how this happens.

Some diseases have a critical level of symptoms, which will probably kill the victim. Some also cause lasting physical injury or mental disorders under the conditions listed. Each disease description also notes whether the disease is contagious and how it spreads. Victims are contagious until the level of their symptoms begin to decrease.

Infection

Wound infections have been a threat to life and limb throughout human history. Modern 1920s cleanliness and drugs have just begun to reduce the real danger of death from a cut or a scratch.

Minor: You have inflammation and pain at the sight of the wound

Moderate: You have numbness and swelling near the wound, and too much pain to use the infected limb. *When you take an action requiring you to make significant use of the area of the infection*, any result of 6 or less may increases the degree of symptoms.

Serious: You have a mild fever, as well as redness and green drainage spreading throughout the infected area. *When you make any physical move involving the infected area*, you must first use Willpower to Defy Danger. You are also a bit delirious and cannot make Search for Something or Detect Truth moves.

Critical: The area of the wound is swollen beyond recognition and you are delirious or unconscious. You are unable to get out of bed or take any action, and you have a high fever.

Lasting Effects: If the infection is in a limb, you may choose to lose the limb to avoid death.

Contagion: Contact with other open wounds.

Influenza

It has only been a few years since an influenza epidemic killed millions of Americans, and there is always a threat of another outbreak.

Minor: You develop a cough and sneezing

Moderate: You develop a fever and lack energy. *When you take strenuous physical action,* you must first use Might to Defy Danger.

Serious: You develop a high fever and are unconscious most of the time.

Critical: You cannot move and cannot breath.

Lasting Effects: If you fail to recover while you have critical symptoms, you may take a permanent moderate brain damage disorder instead of dying.

Contagion: Airborne. Spread by coughing, sneezing and physical contact.

Life Drain

Some supernatural creatures may afflict you with a steady drain of you life essence over time. If not stopped, it will leave you as a dead, dry husk.

Minor: Your skin feels dry and you're thirsty all the time. *When you pass a water source*, even if it's unhealthy, you must make a Defy Danger move using Willpower to avoid drinking from it.

Moderate: As minor life drain, plus you sleep a lot more, and you've lost some weight. Your Might and Speed are 1 less than their original values.

Serious: You have lost most of your energy and mobility and are nearly blind. You can barely walk. Your Might and Speed are 2 less than their original values and your skin has become flamable.

Critical: You are just dry skin over bone, as if you've aged to over a hundred years old.

Contagion: Only from the original, supernatural source

Polio

Most people survive polio infection and gain immunity without lasting effects, and sometimes without any symptoms at all, but the possibility of lifelong disabilities and it's preference for attacking children makes Polio a feared disease. Chances are good that if you are an adult living in the 1920s, you've already contracted the disease and are immune.

Minor: You have a mild fever and a stiff neck

Moderate: You have a fever, vomiting and Diarrhea. You also have pain in your limbs. *Whenever you make a move and roll Might or Speed*, a roll of 7-9 results in severe pain that incapacitates you for a few minutes, in addition to other results of the move.

Serious: You suffer from severe muscle weakness throughout you body and cannot move.

Critical: You lose consciousness and have difficulty breathing.

Lasting Effects: If you experienced serious symptoms, Defy Danger using Might to avoid gaining a permanent serious physical injury of *lame leg*.

Contagion: Contact. Anyone exposed may Defy Danger using Might to gain immunity and avoid any symptoms.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a very dangerous disease. Most people who are infected never develop symptoms, but half of those who do don't survive.

Minor: You have a cough

Moderate: You have a fever and you may cough up some blood. Your Might is 1 less than its normal value.

Serious: You can't go more than a few minutes without a coughing fit, and you have lost weight. Your Might is 2 less than its normal value.

Critical: You have trouble breathing and are too weak to get out of bed.

Lasting Effects: If you reach serious symptoms, Defy Danger using Might or gain a permanent serious physical injury of *short of breath*.

Contagion: Airborne. Spread by coughing. Anyone exposed may Defy Danger using Might to gain immunity and avoid any symptoms.

KILLING YOUR PLAYERS

Mythos World is a dangerous game, and player characters will probably die. If your party comes face to face with Nyarlathotep or a Great Old One, and none of them end up dead, horribly maimed, or permanently insane, you're not being true to the the genre. When a player takes full damage from a creature or weapon with the critical tag, that player is killed unless a Cheat Death move is appropriate. If a player already has two serious injuries and receives another, consider increasing one of them to critical or making one of them permanent. Print out extra playbooks and keep them handy so player's who die can quickly get back into the story as a new character.

KILLING NPCS AND CREATURES

If players injure NPCs or creatures, apply the same rules for level of injury. NPCs and creatures typically flee if they receive a serious injury, and a critical injury kills them unless players intervene with special moves. Timid creatures flee when they receive a moderate or worse injury. NPCs and creatures never trigger Cheat Death moves.

CHAPTER 10

MENTAL DISORDERS

Players may acquire mental disorders because of failed Overcome Fear moves or special creature moves. Mental disorders are rated on the following scale.

Minor disorders are inconvenient, but seldom impairing.
Moderate disorders are impairing in specific situations.
Serious disorders are impairing in many common situations.
Critical disorders are impairing in most situations and may require institutionalization.

The level of disorder is based on the intensity and horror of the experience that caused it, represented by the threat level of the creature or situation. For example, a frightening creature with a moderate threat level typically causes moderate mental disorders.

Mental disorders become part of the narrative, and the GM should take them into account when making GM moves and when deciding whether a player triggers a move. If a player has minor agoraphobia, he will have trouble crossing large open spaces. If he has serious agoraphobia, he may have to make an Overcome Fear move every time he leaves his bedroom. If a player has moderate amnesia, he may not remember certain common things. If a player is a sleepwalker, the GM can decide where he ends up on any given night.

Most mental disorders are temporary – players will recover given enough time. Players can usually decrease the degree of one temporary disorder by one level whenever they Rest. When a player recovers from a minor disorder, the disorder is cured. If a disorder makes no sense at its new,

lower level, like minor psychopathy, the GM can either eliminate it or substitute a different disorder at the new level. Some disorders are permanent, or become permanent if compounded or not cared for properly. Once disorders become permanent, they are nearly impossible to cure, even under a psychologist's care.

Each disorder description below includes suggested effects at each level. Feel free to interpret these effects however you like, following your basic GM principles. Generally, the effects of each level of disorder apply to all higher levels. If it serves the story, you need not immediately inform a player about a mental disorder they have acquired – let the effects play out for a while. Tell them eventually, when the time is right, so they can help you bring the disorder to life in the story.

When you want to inflict additional disorders on a player who already has one or more, consider either increasing the severity of the existing disorders, or worse yet, make them permanent. Don't be afraid to drive your players insane. That's sort of what this game is about.

Addiction

You are addicted to an activity or substance. It could be alcohol, morphine, opium, sex, gambling, driving fast, or a specific person. You and the GM decide together. Whatever your addiction is, it's very difficult for you to pass up an opportunity to satisfy it.

Moderate: When the object of your addiction is readily available, you must Defy Danger with Willpower to resist

Serious: You have trouble concentrating when you can't satisfy your addiction. *When you have an opportunity to sneak out and search for whatever you're addicted to*, you must Defy Danger with Willpower to resist.

Critical: When you can't get whatever you're addicted to, you put yourself in life-threatening danger to get it, or try to kill yourself out of despair.

Agoraphobia

Your fear of the unknown makes you deathly afraid of open spaces.

Minor: If possible, you'll stay inside. When you do go outside, you try to keep a wall to one side of you and awnings above you. You may be forced to step into random buildings just to regain your courage.

Moderate: When you find yourself in an open space or move more than a few feet across any open area, even indoors, you must Overcome Fear.

Serious: It's a minor miracle if you ever get out of bed and leave your room. Chances are you have the windows covered and get upset when people come to visit. *When you try to leave your room*, you must Overcome Fear.

Amnesia

You've lost chunks of your memory because of physical trauma, or because you are subconsciously trying to forget some horrible experience.

Minor: Most of the time you're fine, but at other times you can't remember specific events, especially those associated with whatever triggered your amnesia.

Moderate: You can't recall many of the events of your past, and have completely forgotten some close acquaintances. This may result in uncomfortable social encounters. You also lose track of important items and appointments.

Serious: Your past is a mystery. You don't even know your name. You remember life skills, like language and reading and math, and even a few things essential for your profession, but all specific memories before the event that caused the amnesia are lost.

Brain Damage

You have lost some of you brain function. It could be as mild as forgetting a group of words, or as crippling as not being aware of anything or anyone around you. This mental disorder is typically caused by physical injury, disease, or poison.

Minor: You are no longer able to perform some common function, chosen by the GM. Examples include not being able to jump, turn you head to the left, or remember any names from history.

Moderate: Your disability is more severe. Perhaps you can no longer do math, or you can only recognize people by the way they dress, not by their faces. You might have blackouts, where you can't remember anything, or you may have forgotten all words that begin with the letter M.

Serious: You can barely function in society. Whole sections of knowledge are gone, and parts of your body may be numb or useless. As play proceeds, the GM will choose three broad topics of knowledge, like history, medicine, or literature, or categories of action, like throwing, running, or writing. You no longer know anything about that topic, or you may take no actions within the chosen category. In addition, your Intelligence is 1 less than its original value.

Critical: You are no longer able to take care of yourself. It's unclear whether you are aware of the world around you.

Cannibalism

You love the taste of human flesh. Eating another person gives you power over them and makes them part of you. Some say it may even grant you immortality.

Moderate: When human flesh is available and reasonably fresh, you must Defy Danger with Willpower or else you eat it. However, you're not quite willing to kill in order to satisfy your hunger.

Serious: You can't resist eating human flesh if it's available. *When you feel you could get away with killing someone to satisfy your need*, Defy Danger with Willpower to avoid trying.

Critical: Only human flesh will satisfy your hunger. You can eat nothing else. *When you're starving and unable to find a body or kill someone*, you will begin to eat your own flesh. If you die, you might live on as a ghoul.

Catatonia

Your mind protects you by physically removing you from the world from time to time. Your body sometimes locks into position, your muscles rigid, as if moving would make you vulnerable again.

Minor: Your episodes are infrequent, but do tend to come when you're under stress. *When you roll 6 or less on a Defy Danger or Overcome Fear move*, in addition to the usual GM move, you go catatonic until the danger or source of terror has passed.

Moderate: Choose a relatively common item, place or occurrence related to the cause of your catatonia. *Whenever you encounter your item*, you must Defy Danger to avoid entering a catatonic state until it is no longer nearby. This may mean someone has to physically remove your stiff body from the situation.

Serious: Your catatonic states can come at any time, and they often last for hours or even days.

Critical: You enter a catatonic state and stay that way until cured.

Claustrophobia

You are deathly afraid of enclosed spaces and being restrained.

Minor: If possible, you'll stay away from small rooms, tight hallways, and elevators. *When given a choice of paths,* you'll take the more wide-open route.

Moderate: Make an Overcome Fear move to enter any confined space, or to take any complicated actions once inside..

Serious: When you are in an enclosed space, no matter how large, and cannot see at lease two accessible exits, you do anything, including using violence, to escape.

Delusions of Grandeur

You deal with the horror and guilt of your life by creating a new life for yourself, taking on a role you believe is more important to society. Perhaps you think you're a doctor, or the president, or a movie star. While you're having an episode, you lose access to all of your profession moves.

Minor: Your delusion isn't too far-fetched and you don't fall into it too often. If you're actually a police officer, your delusion could be that you're a Judge. If you're a priest, perhaps you think you're a bishop. *When you're having an episode and encounter people who don't know the truth of you situation*, you can use your delusion as leverage to Convince NPCs to believe that you really are what you think you are.

Moderate: Your delusional states hit you when you're feeling inadequate or threatened. *When you fail at a task, lose an argument, or are physically harmed*, Defy Danger to avoid entering a delusional state. Your delusions usually last an hour or two, or until the uncomfortable situation is gone.

Serious: You are in a delusional state most of the time, so you're no longer able to keep a steady job or manage more than a few relationships. You occasionally have to Defy Danger to avoid things like piloting an airplane (because you think you're a pilot), or removing someone's spleen (because you're the best surgeon in the world).
Critical: You're delusion is unending and gives you a sense of invulnerability. Without constant monitoring, you'll probably injure yourself or others.

Depression
You lack any passion and you don't really see the point of anything anymore. This can manifest as lack of activity, difficulty concentrating, and poor health.
Minor: You suffer occasional bouts of depression when things don't go as you expect. While you are depressed, any actions you take regarding your passion and connections do not result in Experience.
Moderate: You are depressed almost all of the time. You can have a maximum of 2 connections with other players. If you must remove a connection, explain how your depression was the cause.
Serious: You don't have the will to do much of anything, including eating and basic hygiene. You lose your passion and all but one of your connections and will have to pick all new ones if you are cured. Most people stay away from you, and it's become impossible for you to Convince anyone of anything. You must make a Defy Danger move using Willpower before doing anything physically or mentally demanding.

Kleptomania

A little harmless theft never hurt anyone, and when you give the items you've stolen to friends and family, only good can come of it.

Moderate: You feel the thrill of stealing small items, usually things that no one is going to miss. *Whenever you see a an opportunity to steal a small item without being caught, even if it's of no interest to you*, you do it.

Serious: When you know a valuable item could be stolen without too much risk and with little planning, use Willpower to make a Defy Danger move to resist the temptation.

Mania

You have episodes of manic behavior, during which you are unable to stop yourself from doing crazy, excessive, and dangerous things.

Minor: You sometimes face danger with complete indifference. *Once per session, when you Defy Danger*, the GM can deny you the move.

Moderate: You are impulsive. You can no longer make Defy Danger moves based on Willpower.

Serious: The world is a wonderful place, much less dangerous than everyone seems to think. You can no longer make Defy Danger moves of any kind. You also can't control your spending. *When you first obtain this disorder,* acquire an unneeded, unreliable item with Value up to 4 higher than your current Wealth, and then reduce your Wealth by 1.

Critical: You recognize no danger anywhere. If left unsupervised, you will quickly hurt yourself by driving off of a cliff, trying to balance on the edge of a roof, or leaving the gas on and then lighting a candle.

Manic-Depressive

You fluctuate between Depression and Mania. Your swap from one pole to the other may be triggered by specific situations, like arguments or certain smells, or it may just seem random from day to day. The GM will tell you which state you're in and when you swap.

Minor: As minor mania or depression.
Moderate: As moderate mania or depression.
Serious: As serious mania or depression.
Critical: As critical mania or suicidal.

Multiple Personality

Your mind deals with trauma by creating a completely different personality that you can switch to – someone who never experienced those terrible things. The new personality could be a different age and gender and have very different attitudes and speech patterns. It could even be a fictional creature or an animal. Choose a name for your alternate personality. When you are in your alternate personality, you do not have access to any of your Profession moves. Adjust your alternate personality's Empathy, Intelligence and Willpower stats, increasing one by one point (to a maximum of +2), and decreasing the other two by one point. You may choose one move from any other Profession playbook not currently in use by another player, and use it while in your alternate personality.

Moderate: When you are under mental stress, or when you're reminded of the traumatic event that caused this disorder, You switch to your alternate personality. Switching back may take days.
Serious: You split time almost evenly between your two personalities. While in your alternate personality, you show disdain for the people and possessions of your true self, perhaps even trying to harm them.
Critical: You have serious multiple personality disorder and serious suicidal disorder.

Mutism

You have difficulty speaking, or you are unable to speak in certain situations. You can still think clearly, but it feels like your mouth is disconnected.

Minor: When you are nervous or under stress, or in the situation that triggers your mutism, you stutter and take a while to start each sentence.
Moderate: When you're nervous or under stress, or in the situation that triggers your mutism, you must make an Overcome Fear move to speak at all.
Serious: You never speak.

Narcolepsy

You are prone to falling asleep as a reaction to stress or boredom. You can be woken normally after a few seconds of sleep.

Minor: Once per session, when you're bored, you fall asleep.

Moderate: When you're bored, nervous or under stress, the GM may require you to make a Defy Danger move using Willpower to avoid falling asleep.

Serious: When you are tired, bored, nervous or under stress, you fall asleep.

Nightmares

Your sleep is plagued by terrible nighmares that still disturb you while awake.

Minor: You sometimes have nightmares about the creature or situation that caused this disorder, and you wake up screaming.

Moderate: When you sleep, you have nightmares, wake up screaming and can't get back to sleep, so you are always tired. Reduce your Intelligence by 1 until cured.

Serious: Your nightmares seem very real. *When you wake up*, you must make an Overcome Fear move. Some nights you may find yourself in the Dreamlands, and your nightmares take form there. You are so afraid of nightmares that you can't go to sleep without sedatives. You may die or become suicidal.

Obsessive-Compulsive

You feel an overwhelming need to behave in certain ways and complete certain personal rituals. You may arrange objects in a line, touch every brick in a wall, rub the tops of your ears, or click your tongue three times before you speak. You also have difficulty being in environments that you can't control and won't conform to your rules. *When you acquire this mental disorder,* describe your compulsive behaviors.

Minor: When you enter very disorganized or dangerous environments, you must Overcome Fear.

Moderate: Your compulsive habits and rituals make it difficult to complete all but the most basic tasks. Resting takes you twice as long, and you cannot make any Defy Danger move using Speed.

Serious: It is difficult for you to complete any tasks, because you try to apply your own, very peculiar preferences. *When you are unable to complete your ritual behaviors*, treat any roll of 10+ on a move as a 7-9.

Critical: When you enter any space that is not arranged exactly the way you like it, you must Overcome Fear.

Panic Attacks

When facing uncertainty, especially when dealing with new people or pressure to succeed, you sometimes suffer incapacitating panic attacks.

Minor: Once per session, when you are about to make a move that other players are counting on, Roll+WIL. •On a 10+, make your move normally. •On a 7-9, you begin to panic. Make your move normally, but you are then incapacitated by panic for a few minutes.

Moderate: As minor panic attacks, but you might panic any time anyone is counting on you, and your attack lasts up to an hour.

Serious: As moderate panic attacks, plus you might also panic whenever you interact with people you don't know well.

Paranoia

You have imaginative and irrational suspicions that everyone is out to get you. The postman is a spy. The kid across the street is always watching you. Government agents walk right into your home and steal from the coffee can where you keep your emergency money. You don't really see things that aren't there – these aren't hallucinations – you just come to strange conclusions about the real things you do see.

Minor: The GM will choose one item, person or situation that you're paranoid about. *When the GM gives you information associated with the object of your paranoia,* she is free to mislead you into thinking you are in danger or being conspired against, even if a move says she has to tell the truth.

Moderate: The GM will choose one broad topic, like aliens, the supernatural, or the government. You believe any crazy stories or conspiracy theories you come across regarding this topic. *When the GM gives you information about the topic of your paranoia,* she may mislead you into thinking you are in danger or being conspired against, even if a move says she has to tell the truth. *When you acquire this disorder,* change one of your connections to reflect your paranoia.

Serious: The GM is free to mislead you about the world around you at any time, even if the result of a move says she must tell the truth. *When you acquire this disorder,* modify two of your connections to reflect your paranoia.

Critical: You are a danger to yourself and others. You might decide anyone you meet is out to kill you and take action to defend yourself, or you may realize that the only place safe from mind control radio towers is at the bottom of a deep well. All of your connections must be rewritten to reflect your paranoia..

Phobia

You are deathly afraid of something. It could be spiders, or heights, or water, or small children, or specific words.

Minor: If possible, you'll avoid what you're afraid of. Given the choice, you'll even avoid places and situations where you might encounter it.

Moderate: When you approach or stay close to what you fear, make an Overcome Fear move with a minor threat level .

Serious: When you go anywhere near a place or situation where the object of your fear might appear, make an Overcome Fear move with a moderate threat level .

Psychopathy

You've lost your empathy for other people and your sense of right and wrong.

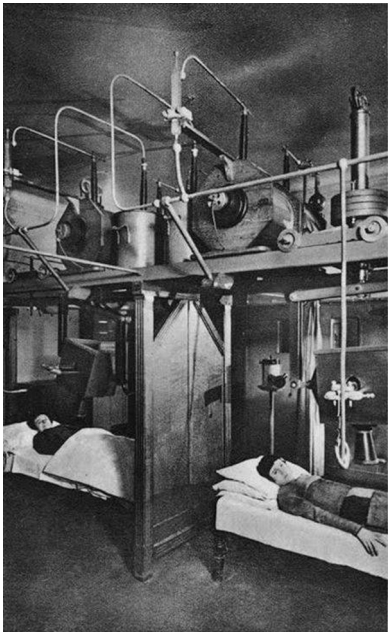
Minor: You may have only two connections. Once per session, when you roll a 7+ on a Detect Truth move, the GM may treat it as a roll of 6 or less.

Moderate: You may have only one connection. Your empathy is reduced by 1 until cured.

Serious: Your lack of a conscience makes it difficult to control you actions. Your Empathy is 2 less than normal until cured. *When you could take an action with significant advantage to you, regardless of its effect on others,* you must Defy Danger to avoid taking that action. Also, *when you roll a 10+ on an Attack up Close move,* you must choose to do additional damage and take damage yourself.

Critical: You take pleasure in the suffering of others. You may have no connections until cured. *When you have a chance to harm others without significant physical risk to yourself,* you must Defy Danger to avoid doing so.

Pyromania



Fire is power, and fire is beautiful as it spreads. You love how easy it is to just strike a match and destroy something.

Minor: You are mesmerized by fire. *When you are in the presence of a significant fire,* you are unable to make Search for Something or Detect Truth moves.

Moderate: When in the presence of any fire, even a lit cigarette, you are unable to make Search for Something or Detect Truth moves. *When you come across a significant fire,* you must Defy Danger or feed the fire with any flammable item close at hand.

Serious: You always carry matches. *When you think no one is watching and you have a chance to start or feed a fire,* you must Defy Danger to avoid it.

Critical: You will take any chance you get, even endangering yourself, to start a fire and watch it burn.

Rage

You have difficulty controlling your anger, reacting far out of proportion to situations that frustrate or confuse you.

Minor: You can usually control your anger, but sometimes all the little annoyances build up and you lash out verbally, or even physically. Your anger tends to dissipate quickly once released.

Moderate: The world is out to get you. *When you roll 7-9 on any move,* the GM may decide that your anger is rising and you take it out on those nearby, whether they're friend of foe.

Serious: Situations that make most people angry can put you over the top. *When a person or situation angers you, even a little,* make a Defy Danger move using Willpower or Empathy to avoid responding physically.

Critical: Everyone seems to be deliberately trying to piss you off. You can see it in their smug smiles and the subtle tones in their voice. Even the way they walk is an obvious parody of your own stride. Your reaction to most people's ridicule is immediate and violent. *When you interact with anyone,* make a Defy Danger move using Willpower or Empathy to avoid violence.

Schizophrenia

You see things that aren't really there and believe strange things that just aren't true. Even if you know that something is a hallucination, you can't help reacting like it's real.

Minor: You occasionally see a specific person or item out of the corner of your eye, but it disappears upon closer examination. Perhaps it's a terrifying item or scene, or a loved one who has recently died.

Moderate: When your mind is unoccupied and has time to wander, your recurring hallucination will show up to keep things interesting. *When you Search for Something,* the GM may decide that the item or clue you find is just a hallucination.

Serious: Your hallucinations occur so often that they have become part of your everyday life. *When you have a conversation with another person,* you must Defy Danger to avoid talking about your hallucinations. *When you Consult Knowledge or Detect Truth,* the GM may decide that what you discover is just a hallucination.

Critical: Your hallucinations are always there, often trying to trick you or convince you to do evil or dangerous things.

Self-mutilation

You intentionally hurt yourself, perhaps as punishment, or to get attention. The scars of your wounds may be visible to others.

Minor: You're constantly tugging on your own hair, or scratching yourself, just to feel something. *Once per session, when you have a conversation with someone,* the GM may make a move based on your odd behavior.

Moderate: You cut yourself. You're not trying to kill yourself, but sometimes it seems that way. *When you're exposed to disease or an unclean environment,* Defy Danger to avoid catching a disease or infection.

Serious: When you come across a sharp object and have not hurt yourself for a few hours, Defy Danger to avoid cutting yourself.

Critical: Treat as critical suicidal disorder.

Separation Anxiety

You cannot be apart from some other person or object chosen by the GM.

Minor: When you are in proximity to the person or object, you will not willingly separate. If your safety or the safety of an ally is at risk, you may Defy Danger to separate.

Moderate: When you are separated from the person or object and are presented with an opportunity that will bring you closer, you must Defy Danger to avoid the action.

Serious: When you are separated from the person or object and are presented with an opportunity that will bring you closer, you must take that opportunity, even if it puts you at considerable risk or costs significant resources.

Sleepwalking

You occasionally walk in your sleep, picking up small objects or going through the motions of your daytime activities.

Minor: Your episodes only last a few minutes and you don't wander far from you bed.

Moderate: You sleepwalk for hours at a time, sometimes wandering far from your home. While sleepwalking, you won't do anything obviously dangerous, like walk an a high ledge or step in front of a car, but you might go out in the cold without a coat or wander into dangerous areas.

Serious: You sleepwalk every time you sleep. While sleepwalking, you seem fully functional to others, even taking part in short, though perhaps confusing conversations. You are driven to keep moving during these episodes and tend to put yourself in dangerous situations.

Suicidal

You're life is unbearable as it is. Your solution is to kill yourself, or at least get close enough to killing yourself so other people can appreciate just how tormented you are.

Serious: You suffer from frequent bouts of depression or dissociation that make life unbearable. *Once per session, when the GM declares that you are suicidal and no one intervenes to stop you*, you take advantage of the first relatively painless means of suicide available.

Critical: Life is constant mental torture, and you long for the release of death. *When you are left alone with the means to kill yourself*, you do it.

CHAPTER 11
THE MYTHOS

Mythos stories are full of undiscovered places, powerful magic, and ancient artifacts that should never have been unearthed. Don't put too many of these in your storylines – two or three are enough to give an otherworldly feel yet maintain a sense of mystery. Again, the best advice is to read the work of Mythos authors.

MYTHOS MOVES

The main characters in cosmic horror stories sometimes start with a mysterious connection to the Mythos. You can make the following moves available to your players when they create their characters, or later on in the story, if it makes sense. Players choose one of these moves instead of one of their profession moves. Not every player should have one of these – only offer them if they fit with the danger you'd like to introduce and the tone of your story.

Dark Rituals

Someone or something in your life has exposed you to arcane rituals. *When you acquire this move*, the GM will give you one permanent minor mental disorder. Select two of the rituals listed below. You know them and may perform them. *Once per session, when you perform one of these two rituals*, you have all necessary materials, and the threat of mental disorders is reduced by one level.

Cure Injury
Mind Control
Superior Mind
Superior Physique
Telepathy
Translation
Voorish Sign

Dreamwalker

You have visited the Dreamlands (See p. 122) in your sleep for as long as you can remember. *When you attempt to enter the dreamlands without the help of rituals or drugs*, make a Visit the Dreamlands move as if you had help. *When you acquire this move*, the GM will grant you an interesting friend that follows you in the Dreamlands. *Once per session, when you successfully enter the Dreamlands*, your Dreamlands friend will give you a useful piece of information in response to your question.

Inhuman Ancestry

Somewhere back in your family tree, there are things that aren't human. They could be mysterious primates from a lost evolutionary branch, or intelligent reptiles that visited your ancestors from across time. You could be the descendant of a ghoul, or a demon, or a fish-headed humanoid from the bottom of the sea. *When you acquire this move*, choose one prominent facial feature and one unattractive body feature or posture inherited from your inhuman ancestor. Also choose one activity that you are especially proficient at because of your ancestry, like climbing, swimming, or night vision. *Whenever you roll a 10+ when you Attack up Close or use Might or Speed to Defy Danger*, you perform a feat of surprising strength or agility in addition to the normal success effects.

IMPOSSIBLE PLACES

Ancient and terrifying places are hidden all over the world: small towns inhabited by hybrid descendants of humans and monsters, advanced libraries of races that can cross through time, cities in the mountains of Antarctica constructed millions of years ago by failed alien colonists, worship sites in the swamp where cults gather to awaken heartless cosmic gods. Incorporate one or two of the following places into your adventure, or create your own.

Ancient Alien City

This subterranean complex doesn't include any of the usual shapes associated with human dwellings. Passages seem to fold back upon themselves, yet end up in a different place. There are entirely too many corners everywhere, and the narrowest of passages often open into chambers too large for any normal light source to traverse.

Explore the Ancient City

When you move deeper into the ancient city and then try to retrace your steps, roll +INT. •On a 10+, you make it back. •On a 7-9, you get lost for a while before finding your way back, and choose one of the following:

- You find disturbing evidence of the city's builders or inhabitants
- You lose valuable resources
- You are separated from your friends
- Someone suffers a moderate injury or mental disorder

Asylum

This old asylum is filled with patients who have encountered the horrifying realities of the Mythos. It is fertile ground for cults dedicated to cosmic deities and the Old Ones. The insane ramblings that echo through these filthy hallways always contain a thread of truth.

Seaside Town with Secrets

This New England town gets a trickle of tourists by day, but reveals its horrifying heritage by night. Most of the town's residents share a secret. They may all be worshippers of the sea god, Dagon, or they could all be the result of interbreeding with horrendous creatures from the depths of the ocean. Whatever their secret, they will kill to protect it. Spending the night in this town is asking for trouble.

Mansion of Misery

This lone mansion is home to a mysterious recluse and one or two misfit servants. The master of the house might be afflicted with immortality due to a scientific experiment gone wrong, or he could be an avatar of an outer god that sometimes takes complete control of his mind. Walls in the house might be portals to mazelike dimensions, or perhaps time passes more slowly within some of its rooms. The master is happy to welcome visitors because he needs fresh subjects for his experiments.

Dreamlands

Many of the lands we visit in our dreams are real. They are dimensions brought to life by millions of years of the best dreams and the worst nightmares. The dreamlands are shared between all dreamers, and not all dreamers are human. Dreamers tend to take on a new personality here, with new skills. It's as if everyone has an entirely parallel life they live at night. Dreamers who reach the Dreamlands and remember their visit usually don't know how they got there, and they can seldom repeat the experience when they want to. However, there are rituals and drugs that can make visiting this place easier.

Visit the Dreamlands

When you perform a ritual or use drugs to try to dream your way to the Dreamlands, roll+EMP. •On a 10+, you find yourself about where you wanted to be, and you may either bring along one person who is dreaming nearby, or you may have one useful item or ability you don't have while awake. •On a 7-9, you end up on the Nightmare Plains and choose two of the following:

- You are separated from companions in the Dreamlands
- You are missing an important possession that you had while awake
- You can't remember anything about your waking life
- You arrive in a dangerous situation

Miskatonic University

This small, private university in the town of Miskatonic, Massachusetts is renowned for its knowledge of the Mythos. It sponsors all sorts of bizarre research, and it regularly sends expeditions out to explore mysterious sites. Its hidden libraries contain copies of some of the most dangerous books in the world. Professors at Miskatonic University are very interested in any information about mysterious events, and they will gladly trade their ancient knowledge for new information. Only introduce Miskatonic University into your world if you want to expose the players to a broad community of Mythos investigators.

Undiscovered Outposts

These confusing and terrifying remnants of alien colonies are hidden deep inside caverns below the Australian desert, or atop the unreachable plateau of Leng in Asia. The furnishings might be millions of years old, and their function is a mystery. Each outpost could be an alien library, or a scientific research station used to experiment on local creatures. Searching an outpost could reveal very dangerous equipment and unsettling information.

Alien Landscape

The means to travel to other worlds exist within the Mythos, born of alien science or granted by powerful deities. The physical laws and creatures that rule there may be far beyond human comprehension. Visitors can survive and breath for a reasonable length of time, and might even find edible flora or fauna, but the stress on the mind and sanity usually weighs on outsiders more than strange variances in gravity or atmosphere.

Explore an Alien Landscape

When you spend an hour in an alien landscape, roll+MGT. •On a 10+, you have adapted well, or the alien landscape has adapted to you. You may visit for another day without triggering this move. •On a 7-9, you begin to feel the effects of the alien environment. The GM chooses one of the following:

- The alien atmosphere weighs on you and clouds your judgment. *When you make any move in the alien landscape*, treat any result of 10+ on an Intelligence or Willpower roll as a 7-9.
- The atmosphere grows heavy and caustic. You have trouble breathing and it feels like it's only going to get worse. *When you make a move using Speed or Might and roll 7-9*, take a moderate injury in addition to the normal results.
- You feel like you weigh noticeably more than usual as gravity seems to pull on you more and more. Treat any result of 10+ on a Might or Speed roll as a 7-9.
- Alien parasites find your warm body particularly attractive and have begun to lay eggs under your skin. If you stay in the alien environment for more than an hour, they will begin to hatch.
- You hear alien voices in your head, and they're getting louder and more persuasive. If you don't leave within an hour, you will be afflicted with moderate schizophrenia.

FORBIDDEN BOOKS

Books play a vital role in cosmic horror, whether they're old library volumes, notebooks of insane scientists, journals of lost explorers, or ancient magical tomes bound in human skin. These books expose the reader to things not known to the majority of the human race and can be dangerous to read. Reading forbidden books might be the only way to find the location of an alien outpost, or learn the ritual required to banish a servant of the outer gods. The books presented here represent only a sampling of the vast recorded history of Mythos knowledge. If a player studies one of these books and actually comprehends what he's reading, actually learns something, he triggers an Overcome Fear move.

Rare forbidden books are more widely available as poor translations or with the most significant chapters missing. The threat level of these inferior copies is one less than the original, and the information gleaned is less useful. They often just hint at disturbing revelations and motivate players to hunt down the original text.

Study a Forbidden Book

When you spend a few days studying a forbidden book written in a language in which you are fluent, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you learn something significant, perhaps a ritual, or the basics of a new language, or a clue leading to a hidden Mythos item or location, and you must Overcome Fear. •On a 7-9, you gain knowledge as above and must Overcome Fear, and you choose one of the following:

- Your knowledge is incomplete or dangerously flawed
- Gaining the knowledge has angered a person or being
- The book is lost or damaged
- You expose someone else to the frightening aspects of the book

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The Book of Dyzan ***Moderate , Frightening***

This book of ancient wisdom was protected for centuries by the Great White Brotherhood and the Ascended Masters. It found its way to Tibet in the 19th century and was discovered and exposed to the world by Madame Blavatsky, founder of the Society of Theosophy. It contains wisdom about the old gods, including clues to how they might be contacted and their servants and avatars summoned. Reading this book can cause mood and anxiety disorders like agoraphobia, obsessions, compulsions, paranoia, manic-depression, or even suicidal tendencies. The original book is coded in the cryptic Aklo cipher. The Old Tibetan and English versions are poor translations.

Cultes de Goules ***Moderate, Frightening***

This small book, written in French in the early 18th century, describes a cult of the dead that was thriving in secret at that time. It details their rituals to raise the dead and drain life from the living. The book gives a taxonomy of the undead that includes ghouls and the animated dead. Later copies were illustrated with disturbing sketches by Francisco Goya. Reading this book has been known to cause mutism, night terrors, or cannibalism.

De Vermis Mysteriis *Serious, Frightening*

A few complete copies of this Latin text still exist, detailing a variety of mystical insights of its author, Ludvig Prinn. A few partial English translations have circulated as The Book of the Worm. It is, perhaps, one of the most hunted and burned of the ancient texts in recent centuries. It contains seemingly disconnected stories of ancient inhabitants of earth, secrets of divination, and knowledge of the outer gods and their servants. This book can detach the reader from reality, causing amnesia, catatonia, psychopathy and multiple personality disorders.

The King in Yellow *Moderate, Frightening*

This book is actually a two act play, written in English and circulated in secret since the 1890s, usually as a portfolio of pages sealed with a twisted, tri-limbed symbol called the Yellow Sign. The play is set in the hidden dream city of Carcosa. Those who read the play become depressed or suicidal, sometimes resorting to extreme action to ignite their passions again. French translations of the play threatened civil order in France just after the turn of the century. Since then, the book has spread to private libraries throughout Europe and North America and is associated with the Cult of the Yellow Sign. Reading or seeing the play acted out can cause hallucinations, depression, or suicide.

Necronomicon *Serious, Frightening*

This is one of the most comprehensive books of the cosmic mythos, even though it documents only one night of dreams of the mad Arab, Abdul Al-hazred. Copies in the original Arabic still exist among ancient cults and protective societies, but there are more widely-available translations in Latin, as well as the hasty and less useful English translation of the late Dr. Dee. The Necronomicon contains basic knowledge of many mythos creatures, but is mostly valued for the rituals it contains, allowing those who care nothing for their sanity to contact deities, wake the Great Old Ones from their slumber, summon ultra-dimensional servants, animate the dead, or travel to other dimensions. It also contains the Elder Sign, a powerful ward against summonings gone bad. Reading the Necronomicon, even in English, can cause all manner of mental disorders, especially nightmares, sleepwalking, panic attacks, paranoia and strange phobias.

Pnakotic Manuscripts *Moderate, Frightening*

These chronicles of life on Earth were initiated by the Great Race of Yith millions of years ago and housed in their vast library below the Australian desert. Eons after the minds of the Great Race fled forward in time, the Elder Things discovered the library. They continued the work, as did the residents of Hyperborea long after that. The original manuscripts created by the Great Race are no longer extant, but copies of sections of the document, called the Pnakotic Fragments, are carefully circulated among a handful of scholars. There are known translations in Hyperborean (Tsath-yo), Greek, and English. Even the fragments are a panoply of Mythos history and advanced alien science, including temporal telepathy and mind control.

Book of Eibon *Serious, Frightening*

Written by the sorcerer Eibon, this book contains some of the darkest secrets and most dangerous incantations known to the ancient land of Hyperborea. It was discovered and translated by ancient western scholars who learned the language of Tsath-yo from summoned spirits and demons. It contains the formula for contacting Yog-Sothoth, and rituals involving time, like temporal divination and temporal portal. A section on alchemy, which only appears in the original language, includes the formulas for two potions that can send the imbiber forward or backward in time.

Unspeakable Cults *Moderate, Frightening*

This book contains an account of the rituals and practices of the most horrible cults in Europe during the 18th century. It gives many clues to the languages used to communicate with the servant races, as well as the rituals that summon and control them. Later chapters, often missing from modern translations, document rituals used to contact Cthulhu and other Great Old Ones, as well as practices that permit practitioners to see far off visions and contact distant minds. The original text is in German. Various English translations exist, some far superior to others. Reading Unspeakable Cults often results in schizophrenia, delusions of grandeur, and phobias.

RITUALS

The rituals of the Mythos are ancient and dangerous, and performing one should be a momentous event. These are not simple cantrips to be cast every day. Most rituals appear to be supernatural in origin, but some may just be advanced science. Some rituals were revealed to ancient inhabitants of earth, before humans evolved, and some were discovered and developed by insane human practitioners of the dark arts.

Successfully performing a ritual usually requires detailed knowledge of the process, plus specific materials or sacrifices. Some rituals must be performed at a specific place or astronomical time. You can reveal these requirements to the players when they learn the ritual, or make them discover for themselves. All rituals can be dangerous to those performing them and those witnessing them, especially when they fail. There is always danger of mental trauma and disorders, but often the physical danger of a successful ritual may be just as great.

Perform a Ritual

When you perform a ritual you've learned, in the proper setting, with the proper materials, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you invoke the effects of the ritual. •On a 7-9, you invoke the general effects of the ritual, but choose two of the following:

- The ritual has unwanted additional or extended effects
- The ritual is only partially successful
- The results of the ritual are more frightening than expected
- You or an ally also suffer some of the ritual's negative effects
- You lose valuable resources

Banish Creature ***Minor, Frightening***

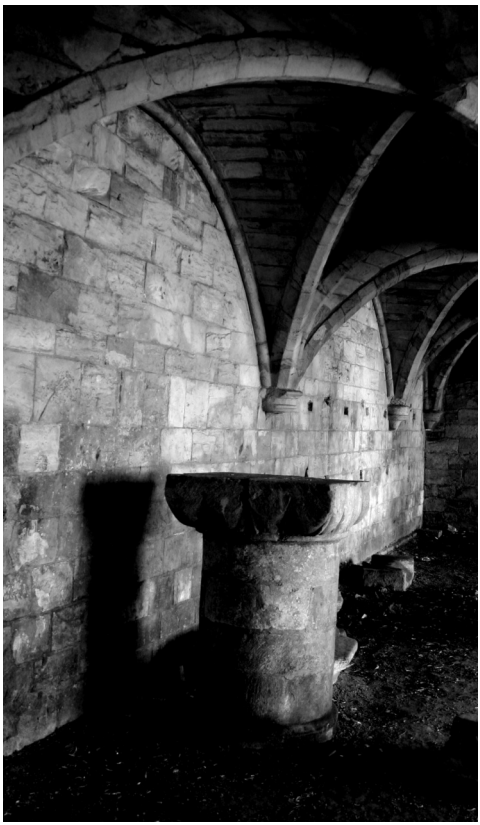
This ritual is used to banish a summoned creature back to its source, whether it was drawn from far away or across dimensions. The requirements differ by creature and must be learned separately, but the ritual is usually short, involving drawn symbols and a sensory component like incense, bright light, or clashing metal. Much of the preparation for this spell, such as drawing the symbol, can be done before the ritual begins. A successful banish generally isn't as mentally disturbing as the summoned creature itself, and banishing the creature may even relive some of the mental trauma it caused.

Contact Deity *Serious, Frightening*

This ritual varies based on the deity contacted, and each version must be learned separately. Each deity has different events that draw their attention to the material world. In general, contacting a deity is a complicated ritual that must be performed at exactly the right time and place with the support of a significant group of people. It almost always involves sacrificing people or items of great value. Once the deity appears, or contact is made through some sort of avatar, there is no guarantee that the deity will look favorably upon those involved. However, for those who worship a deity unquestioningly, contact may be the first step toward a full manifestation of the deity and fulfillment of its promises and goals.

Dimension Portal *Serious, Frightening*

This ritual allows the performer to create a gateway to another dimension. The gateway may end there, or continue through the other dimension to another place on Earth. Each particular ritual is designed to create a portal to a specific place. Modifying the ritual to move the endpoint is very risky. The portal stays open only as long as some maintenance component of the ritual continues – cultists keep chanting, blood keeps pouring, or ethereal power continues to flow to the portal device.



Cure Injury *Moderate, Frightening*

This ritual can quickly heal even the most serious wounds, but at a cost. Usually, an injury of the same level must be inflicted on another human participating in the ritual, perhaps unwillingly. Some healing rituals permit precious items to substitute for this injury in kind.

Drain Life *Serious, Frightening*

This spell drains the life force from an intelligent being. The ritual itself begins the process, which continues over the course of days. If a special vessel can be acquired or created through a separate ritual, it can be used to store the drained life force to power future rituals. The subject of this spell grows weaker by the day and finds it more and more difficult to stay interested in life. The subject's body grows thin and dry, and the shapes of bones show through the skin. This ritual can also be used to quickly drain the life from a reanimated corpse.

Gates of Sleep

This ritual can be performed while falling asleep to attempt to reach the staircase leading down to the Dreamlands. There is nothing frightening or dangerous about the ritual itself, but the creatures encountered in the dramatic terrain of the Dreamlands may be very frightening. See the Visit the Dreamlands move on p. 122.

Elder Sign *Minor, Frightening*

The Elder Sign is an ancient glyph used to ward off evil. If the short ritual used to draw this symbol is successful, the sign prevents most creatures and some deities from passing through an opening or portal. The effect persists for a few hours after the ritual chanting ceases.

Exorcism *Moderate, Frightening*

When successful, this secret Latin ritual of Exorcism can banish outside entities that have inhabited the mind. It works against Mind Control spells and banishes most invading spirits and alien minds.

Imbue Weapon *Minor, Frightening*

There are many rituals capable of imbuing a weapon with special powers, like the ability to wound or kill creatures that normally can't be harmed. This could create a special blade to wound demons, a baseball bat that shocks the life out of the undead, or pistol ammunition that can damage ethereal beings. As with most rituals of value, the cost can be very high and morally unbearable.

Istud Vas *Minor, Frightening*

This is an ancient Latin blessing of objects consecrated for a holy task. When the blessing is conferred upon an object, its user may increase or decrease the object's threat level. This benefit is lost at the end of the following session, if the item is destroyed or used up, or if the wielder loses faith by rolling a 6 or less on an Overcome Fear move.

Itinerarium

This is a class of rituals, usually memorized in Latin, which lead those who follow their step by step instructions to secret locations otherwise hidden from the world. Sometimes Itineraria start hundreds of miles from their destination, but skipping any leg of the journey results in failure. Each is named for its destination, such as Itinerarium Xanadu, and Itinerarium Atlanti.

Mind Control *Serious, Frightening*

This ritual grants the ability to influence the thoughts of another intelligent being. More powerful and dangerous versions of this ritual allow the user to dominate another mind. Combined with rituals like Telepathy and Temporal Divination, this ritual can allow someone to control minds across the universe and across time.

Mind Swap *Serious, Frightening*

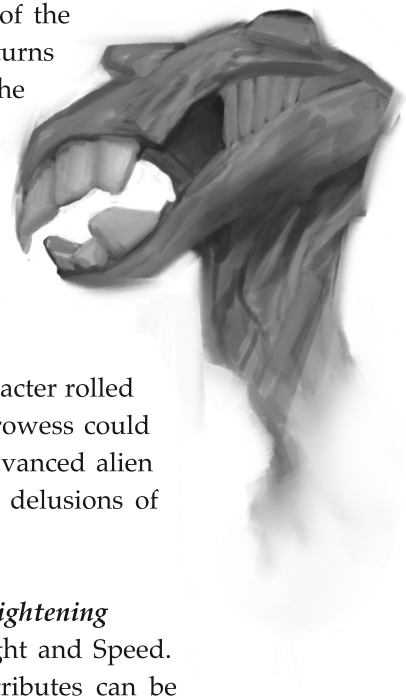
This ritual swaps the mind of one creature involved in the ritual with another creature at a completely different location, perhaps even on another planet or in another time. Inhabiting the mind of another being, especially one very different in physical structure, is a traumatic event and can cause mental disorders involving physical and mental detachment, like catatonia, multiple personality disorder, paranoia, or self-mutilation.

Reanimate *Moderate, Frightening*

The reanimate ritual imbues the remains of a dead creature with life. The fresher the corpse, the less complicated the ritual. This could be a supernatural or a scientific process. The demeanor of the reanimated creature is difficult to predict and is sometimes influenced by its state of mind as it died. A reanimated corpse is difficult to kill by conventional means, but a Drain Life ritual will quickly return it to its dead state. Seeing a reanimated corpse is a frightening experience, especially if it was someone known in life.

Summon Servant *Minor, Frightening*

This ritual summons a member of the servant races, like a byakhee, Deep One, or hunting horror. The creature will either cross over from its home dimension, or travel as fast as possible from the nearest colony on Earth. The ritual to summon each race of servant creature is unique and must be learned separately. The summoned servant obeys a single command of the summoner for up to one day, and then returns home. The danger of mental damage from the ritual is low, but the sommoner must still Overcome Fear of the summoned creature.



Superior Mind *Moderate, Frightening*

This ritual grants the subject superhuman Intelligence and Empathy for a few hours. Most moves that require rolls with these attributes can be ignored or treated as if the character rolled a 10+. The source of this newfound mental prowess could be a supernatural being, or the miracles of advanced alien science. Performing this ritual may results in delusions of grandeur, schizophrenia, or paranoia.

Superior Physique *Minor, Frightening*

This spell grants the subject superhuman Might and Speed. Most moves that require rolls with these attributes can be ignored or treated as if the character rolled a 10+. The source of this newfound physical prowess could be a supernatural being, or the miracles of advanced alien science. The power is difficult to control and can lead to reckless haste and violence.

Telepathy *Minor, Frightening*

Telepathy allows mental contact with intelligent creatures, even over distances where verbal communication isn't possible. The person performing the ritual must either see the person to be contacted or know them fairly well. Mental contact with a truly alien creature can be very frightening and disorienting.

Temporal Divination *Moderate, Frightening*
This spell allows the ritual leader to see into different times and places. It's difficult to control exactly what time and place the visions will focus on. Some visions focus far in the past, when frightening races unknown to archeologist ruled the Earth. Visions of the far future may be more disturbing, revealing a destiny without human life as we know it.

Temporal Portal *Serious, Frightening*
This rare and powerful ritual allows intelligent creatures to travel, for a few hours, to another point in time. It is very difficult to control the destination, and travelers often find themselves in dangerous situations.

Translate *Moderate, Frightening*
This ritual calls on the spirits of the ancient dead to translate text or spoken words. For languages that pre-date humans, the spirit summoned will be of some race unknown to man. The translation provided by this ritual is enough to support someone in a single task – a conversation, transcribing a short text, or studying a book. Performing this ritual may result in mutism, or periods where the afflicted only knows the translated language and not his native tongue.

Voorish Sign *Minor, Frightening*
The Voorish Sign is an elaborate hand motion that reveals visual truth. It can expose invisible or hidden things, see through hallucinations or illusions, and reveal the true nature of a disguised creature. There is little mental threat from the sign itself, but what it reveals can often be terrifying.

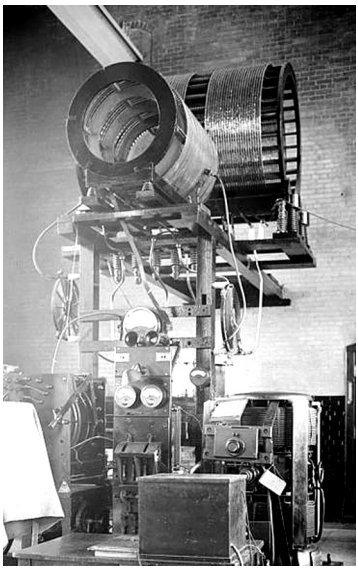
MAGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

Magical items are rare in Mythos World. The power required to create supernatural effects is difficult to contain inside an object. Nevertheless, items with magical effects do exist, as do powerful technological devices created by human and alien scientists.

Brian Remover *Moderate, Frightening*
This alien scientific device, mounted at the top of an old chair with restraints, is capable of removing the living brain from an incapacitated human and placing it in a glass jar that will keep it alive and translate its thought patterns into speech. Wherever there is a brain remover, there are probably a few brains in jars nearby.

Dimensional Paint *Minor, Frightening*

These are special artists' paints, made from materials provided by creatures summoned from other planes. When painting with these, the artist may find his skill noticeably improved, and he may also be inspired to paint scenes of the paints' origin dimensions and their inhabitants.



Dimensional Portal *Frightening, Moderate*

This is a permanent path to another location or dimension, or a weak point in the fabric of space where crossing over is easier. This is sometimes a mundane item, like a painting, or a pit, or the corner of a room. Other times the portal might be a flashy scientific device full of tubes and switches and a mysterious power source.

Dreamland Elixir *5 Uses*

Drinking this elixir induces sleep and significantly increases the chance that the sleeper will find his way to the Dreamlands and remember the visit. This is a dangerous substance, made from rare African narcotic plants and blood drawn from sleepers while they dream. If used improperly, it can cause multiple personality disorder, night terrors or sleepwalking.

Electrical Charge Weapon *Serious, Near, Slow*

Different designs of this weapon have been wielded on Earth for millions of years by the Mi-go and members of the Great Race of Yith. It produces a narrow beam, like a lightening bolt, and does serious damage. It does critical damage to flying polyps. Electrical charge weapons take about 20 seconds to recharge after each shot.

Heart Scarab *Minor, Frightening*

This small stone scarab comes to life when the inscription written on its underside, in the ancient Aklo language, is read aloud. It then flies to the nearest sentient creature, other than the reader, and burrows into their chest, settling above their heart. The scarab causes discomfort and irregular heartbeats whenever the victim acts in opposition to the desires of the one who read the inscription.

Mind Stones *Frightening, Serious*

These flat, triangular stones are the size of a human fist. When two stones are touched to the heads of two different intelligent creatures, those creatures' minds swap places. More powerful mind stones exist that can swap minds across time.

Pnakotic Chalk *5 Uses*

This looks like a piece of writing chalk, but it writes more smoothly and can write on any surface. The writing glows fluorescent blue and decreases the chance of getting symbols wrong when performing a ritual. If a player rolls 7-9 while performing a ritual and ends up in danger as a result of the ritual itself, Pnakotic chalk allows him to use Intelligence on any resulting Defy Danger move.

Powder of Ibn Gazi *3 Uses*

When blown into the air, this powder makes the invisible visible. The ritual used to create it has been lost for centuries, but quantities of the powder still exist.

Reanimation Potion *3 Uses*

When this concoction of macabre science is injected into a recently deceased corpse, the corpse returns to life. Initially, the reanimated person has complete mobility and most of its mental faculties and memories from life, but those fade fast, leaving a mindless zombie with a grudge against the living.

Silver Key

This large silver key opens a pathway to the Dreamlands. When you hold the key, you will drift off to sleep and find yourself at the top if the long stairs leading down to the Dreamlands. When you wake, you will remember your experience. Afterward, any time you fall asleep you may attempt to enter the dreamlands without ritual, drugs or special items.

CHAPTER 12
CREATURES

Creatures don't use the same system of attributes and moves as players, and they don't roll dice. Only players do that. A creature description consists of a name, a series of narrative tags, a description, an instinct, and a list of creature moves. The name represents a class of creatures, except in the case of unique gods or Old Ones. The tags affect how the creature interacts with the players. The description gives some idea about how the creature looks and behaves, and the creature's instinct is its primary motivation – what it wants, what it's trying to accomplish.

Creature moves are just short descriptions of actions the creature can take as GM moves. Creature moves don't include all of the details of player moves. Because creature moves have no trigger, they don't require a roll, and their exact effects are subject to the GM's discretion. For example, a creature move might just be "crush someone." The GM could use this as a soft move, having the creature grab a player in its tentacles and begin to crush him, or it could be a hard move, immediately dealing damage appropriate for the creature.

CREATURE TAGS

The following tags have special meaning when applied to a creature or NPC.

Amphibious	Can breath on land and underwater
Burrowing	Can travel quickly underground
Close	Can attack enemies within a few feet
Critical	Causes critical injuries or disorders by default
Far	Can attack enemies out to 200 feet or more
Fast	Faster than similar creatures
Flying	Can fly through the air
Fragile	Increase level of any injuries dealt to this creature by one
Frightening	May trigger Overcome Fear move and mental disorders
Harmless	Does not cause physical injuries
Huge	The size of an elephant, or even larger
Immobile	Does not move
Impervious	Cannot be harmed by normal physical attacks
Invisible	Cannot be seen without magical or technological aid
Large	About the size of a horse or bear
Minor	Causes minor injuries or disorders by default
Moderate	Causes moderate injuries or disorders by default
Near	Can attack enemies out to about 40 feet
Poison	Poisons enemies through its physical attack
Reach	Can make close attacks out to about 10 feet
Serious	Causes serious injuries or disorders by default
Slow	Slower than similar items or creatures
Small	About the size of a child or medium dog
Timid	Easily driven away or frightened
Tiny	About the size of a rodent or large insect
Tough	Reduce level of any injuries to this creature by one

CREATING NEW CREATURES

You can follow these steps to create a new creature. First, write a description of the creature – what it looks like, what it sounds like, and how it behaves. Any special properties should also go in the description. For instance, if the creature can only be harmed by pure iron, there is no tag for that and it's not really a move, so it should go in the description. Now answer the following questions:

- What is this creature mainly known for, or what does it want? Write this down as the creature's instinct.
- How bad are the injuries or mental disorders it causes? (choose one)
  Usually fatal or completely debilitating. Assign the *critical* tag.
  Life threatening, but survivable. Assign the *serious* tag.
  Significant, but not life threatening. Assign the *moderate* tag.
  Not significant or impairing. Assign the *minor* tag.
  No injury at all. Assign the *harmless* tag.
- Does the creature cause physical injury up close?
  Describe the attack and assign the *close* tag
- Does the creature's up close attacks have unusually long reach?
  Assign the *reach* tag
- Does the creature cause physical injury with a ranged attack?
  Describe the attack in the description or add a move for it, and choose one of the following.
  Maximum range of about 40 feet. Assign the *near* tag.
  Maximum range of about 200 feet or more. Assign the *far* tag.
- Is it terrifying just to be near this creature?
  Assign the *frightening* tag.
- How tough is it?
  It's easier to injure and kill than a person. Assign the *fragile* tag.
  It's quite a bit tougher than a person. Assign the *tough* tag.
  It's a god or demi-god or the size of a building. Assign the *impervious* tag.
- How big is it?
  It's the size of a rodent or insect. Assign the *tiny* tag.
  It's the size of a dog or a child. Assign the *small* tag.
  It's the size of a horse or grizzly bear. Assign the *large* tag.
  It's as big as an elephant. Assign the *huge* tag.
  It's the size of a battleship or bigger. Assign the *gigantic* tag.

- How does it move?
  It flies or floats in the air. Assign the *flying* tag.
  It tunnels through the ground. Assign the *burrowing* tag.
  It has special movement, like passing through dimensions. Write a move about it.
- Is it too fast to be caught?
  Assign the *fast* tag.
- Is it slow and easy to catch?
  Assign the *slow* tag.
- Can it survive on land and in water?
  Assign the *amphibious* tag.
- Is it easily driven away or frightened?
  Assign the *timid* tag.
- Does it poison its enemies?
  Assign the *poison* tag.
- Is there something special it does to its enemies?
  Write a move.
- Is there something special it does when enemies aren't nearby?
  Write a move.

COSMIC GODS AND GREAT OLD ONES

These are the gods and demi-gods of the Mythos. They represent the ultimate powers in the universe and across dimensions, and will often be the primary drivers of evil in your storylines. Understanding the powers and motives of these creatures is key to understanding and thwarting their worshippers, but directly encountering one of these gods could very well be the end of the line for the players, one way or another.

Azathoth *Critical*

Far, Impervious, Gigantic, Frightening, Slow

Azathoth is a gigantic, mindless, bubbling mass of power at the center of all dimensions. He's surrounded and protected by a void inhabited by floating squids that destroy any who approach him. He's attended by all shapes and sizes of floating creatures that produce celestial music to lull him into inaction, lest he decide to capriciously destroy a universe or two. *Instinct*: to slumber, create or destroy

Manifest in our dimension
Disintegrate someone or something
Act through Nyarlethotep
Return to slumber

Cthulhu *Critical*

Near, Impervious, Gigantic, Frightening, Flying

Great Cthulhu lies dreaming in the primordial city of R'lyeh, on the deep floor of the South Pacific. When the stars are right, R'lyeh will rise and Cthulhu will emerge to subjugate the world. Cthulhu is hundreds of feet tall, with a hulking humanoid body, batlike wings, and a wide octopoid face ending in tentacles. His leathery skin is tough and dark, with a green tint. He destroys his enemy by striking with his mighty, clawed fists, stomping his feet, or grabbing and crushing with his head tentacles. Cthulhu speaks Tsath-yo and Deep One. *Instinct*: to rise and rule in the name of Azathoth

Communicate with sleepers through dreams
Rise with R'lyeh from the depths
Inspire worshipers to kill
Grab and crush someone or something
Use tentacles to throw someone
Summon byakhee servants

Dagon *Serious*

Close, Reach, Tough, Huge, Frightening, Amphibious

Dagon looks like a very large Deep One – a basic human shape with a fish head, scaly skin, and webbed hands and feet. He is the primary deity of the Deep Ones and is protective of them. Dagon speaks Deep One. *Instinct*: to rule and protect the Deep Ones

Make direct mental contact
Make fish abundant
Drag someone underwater
Control those sleeping from miles away
Call Deep Ones

Hastur the Unspeakable *Moderate*

Close, Tough

Hastur is a mystery. In the waking world he is a king in pale yellow robes encouraging his followers to spread chaos, and he can transform into a huge mass of tentacles bent on destruction. Surprisingly, in the dreamlands he takes the form of a god of shepherds, keeping order. Perhaps he exists to bring balance to the chaos of the dream world and chaos to the order of the modern waking world. Hastur speaks all languages eloquently. *Instinct*: to balance chaos against order

Grab with a tentacle and suck blood with a razor sharp maw
Convince someone to take chaotic, destructive action
Spread chaos through art and literature
Open a pathway to the dreamlands
Take monstrous form (Serious, Reach, Large, Fast, Frightening)

Nyarlethotep *Serious*

Close, Tough, Frightening (in some forms)

Nyarlethotep, also known as the Crawling Chaos, is the avatar of Azathoth. Nyarlathotep is a manifestation summoned into being when the incomprehensible thoughts of the great outer god coalesce into meaning and motive. Nyarlethotep can appear in a thousand different forms; sometimes as a charismatic leader that causes mania just by his presence, sometimes as a three-legged creature with tentacles for a head, and sometimes as a shadowed figure dressed all in black, enticing victims to give up their souls and become suicidal. *Instinct*: to see mankind ruled by insanity and chaos

Guide the insane to power
Grant followers mental power over others
Speak any language
Plague the local population with nightmares
Summon a hunting horror

Shub-Niggurath *Serious*

Close, Reach, Impervious, Huge, Frightening, Flying

The dark and secretive god Shub-Niggurath is also known as the Dark God of the Woods with a Thousand Young. The few ancient sources in which her appearance is mentioned describe her as a huge floating mass of body parts that constantly disappear and reform. She only appears on Earth long enough to spawn smaller, walking versions of herself with two huge goat-like legs – the dark young of Shub-Niggurath. Spawning is somehow the core of her purpose, and the reason some ancient people worshipped her as a fertility god. *Instinct*: propagate life, no matter how corrupt its form

Spawn a dark young of Shub-Niggurath
Incorporate someone's body parts into her form
Scream with a hundred faces
Return to the outer dimensions

Tsathoggua *Critical*

Near, Impervious, Huge, Frightening

Tsathoggua is a powerful old one who has lived in caverns far below ground for millions of years. He looks like a squat toad with a bat-like face. Although he appears to be sleeping, he is always listening to those around him. He often acts through his body servants – amorphous transdimensional blobs capable of taking any useful shape. When he does react, possibly by opening one eye or saying a few words, the effect is momentous and terribly frightening. When Tsathoggua decides to act himself, perhaps gobbling up a sacrifice or slaying someone he finds annoying, he moves surprisingly fast. Tsathoggua speaks Tsath-yo. *Instinct*: to be worshiped while he slumbers

Wake and act decisively
Send amorphous servants to attack
Put someone to sleep
Draw worshipers toward him

Yog-Sothoth *Critical*

Far, Tough, Huge, Flying, Frightening

Of all the Outer Gods, Yog-Sothoth is the most responsive to his worshippers. Perhaps because of this, he appears in more ancient texts and is known to more civilizations, even beyond Earth. The Mi-go know him as the Beyond One, and the in the Spiral Nebula he is known only by an untraceable symbol. He exists between dimensions, but his avatar can be summoned into existence as a changing cloud of space-time bubbles. When summoned, he destroys with earthquakes and fire and wind, after which he may reward any worshippers who survive with the power of destructive elemental forces. Yog-sothoth speaks no known languages but can communicate with direct mental contact. *Instinct*: to destroy

Impregnate with spawn of Yog-Sothoth
Control the elements
Speak through a worshipper
Carry someone or something with him between dimensions
Grant destructive power of the elements to worshippers

MYTHOS MONSTERS

Mythos stories are filled with ancient and mysterious creatures from the depths of the Earth and other dimensions, but they also include some monsters that have worked their way into the common folklore of most human civilizations. For every Byakhee or Deep One the players encounter, they'll probably face a ghoul or an animated corpse. When deciding how much monster your players can handle, pay close attention to threat level; one or two monsters that inflict serious injuries or mental disorders can cause your players a lot of trouble.

Animated Corpse *Moderate*

Close, Tough, Frightening, Slow

There are many ways to bring a human corpse back to life, or at least a semblance of life. Complicated chemical processes reinvigorate and preserve the body, perhaps even restoring some of the deceased's personality and memories. Supernatural rituals can animate human remains, creating a mindless servant capable of only the simplest tasks, but much more powerful and harder to kill than the living. There are rituals that will return animated corpses back to death. Sometimes a shotgun can be just as effective. *Instinct*: to destroy what they knew in life

Remember something important from when it was alive
Take a bite out of someone
Grab someone with a vice-like grip

Attack Dog *Moderate*

Close, Small, Fast

This can be any medium to large dog trained to attack on command or protect a person or location. Once this dog attacks, it is relentless, often even ignoring further commands of its owner. Attack dogs usually come in groups of two or three. *Instinct*: attack strangers

Go for the throat
Surround an enemy
Break loose from its chain

Byakhee *Moderate*

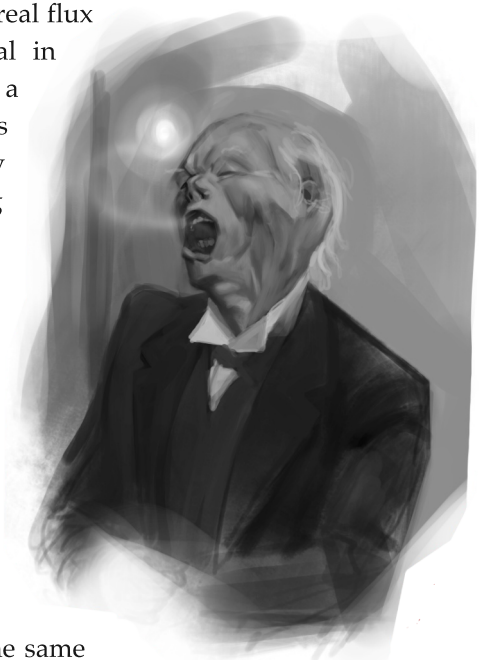
Close, Flying, Frightening

Byakee are winged black, half-bird, half-insect creatures about the size of a man, with long claws and sharp beaks. They are the star-steeds of the servants of Hastur the Unspeakable, capable of carrying someone over long distances, even through space. They can be summoned by anyone who knows the proper ritual, and can be commanded to attack. *Instinct*: to serve their summoner

Carry someone high up, or into space
Fly-by attack

Color out of Space *Harmless*

Close, Reach, Fragile, Tiny, Immobile



The color out of space appears as an ethereal flux of unnatural colors. It is extraterrestrial in origin, falling to earth in seed form as a small storm of meteorites. If a meteorite is exposed to water, it generates a rainbow of colors about ten feet across. Living things that come in contact with the colors, or with the water it contaminates, become infected with its power. They are drawn to the glow, and over the next few days the color out of space drains their life force, leaving them as a dead, dry husks. The color seed itself is tiny, and it is very difficult to identify without getting close enough to be infected. When the color gathers enough life force and the seed grows to about six inches across, it launches into space to repeat the same cycle on another planet, or another location on Earth. *Instinct*: to drain life force and reproduce

Drain the life force of those it contacts
Lure the living toward it with colors
Temporarily spread color over a wider area
Convice the infected to defend it

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath *Serious*

Close, Reach, Tough, Huge, Frightening

The dark young are the direct offspring of Shub-Niggurath. She seems to give birth to them as part of a regular cycle, regardless of what else occupies her attention. Dark young are masses of tentacles and gaping maws supported by thick, roughly-textured legs ending in hooves. At night, or from a distance, they could be mistaken for strange trees. Dark young are sometimes born for a purpose, to accept a sacrifice or carry out the wishes of a worshipper, but when the task is complete, they live on forever unless killed. Some have stood dormant for thousands of years in deep caverns and dark forests. *Instinct*: to feed and protect their territory.

Look like a tree
Grab with a tentacle and drain blood with its maws
Destroy valuable technology

Deep One *Moderate*

Close, Frightening, Timid (on land), Amphibious, Slow (on land)

Deep Ones look like scaly humans with fishlike heads, gills and bulging eyes. They live in fantastic cities on Earth's ocean floors. They are awkward on land, with large, webbed feet and hunched posture. Deep Ones worship Dagon, who sometimes calls upon them for assistance. Deep Ones mate with humans to maintain their population, and there are many small, coastal towns around the world that willingly participate in this abomination. Children of Deep Ones and humans look human and live on land until they become adults, at which point they gain their fishlike features and return to the sea. Some Deep One colonies still keep shoggoths as servants. Deep Ones speak their own language and write in hieroglyphics consisting of aquatic symbols. *Instinct*: to mate with humans and protect Deep One cities

Call to other Deep Ones
Flee into the depths
Seek a human mate
Reveal a young Deep One who still looks human

Elder Thing *Moderate*

Close, Reach, Frightening, Timid, Fast

An Elder Thing looks like a long, leathery barrel with a ring of five thin tentacles around the middle. Each of these tentacles branches into five shorter tentacles that again branch into five more. The barrel shape has a star-shaped bloom of cilia-lined petals at one end, and five sturdy leg tentacles at the other. Elder Things have five long, comb-like wings that rise from vertical ridges on their bodies, yet they seem to have lost the ability to fly. Elder Things are very intelligent and have advanced tools. If threatened, they flee, fight with blades, or call on shoggoths. The race of Elder Things crossed dimensions of space millions of years ago to arrive on Earth. They set about stripping Earth of its resources, summoning the power of the terrifying shoggoths to dig through rock and build their impressive, cyclopean cities. In time, the shoggoths turned on their masters and destroyed their settlements. Hidden cities of the Elder Things still remain to be discovered on Earth, perhaps inhabited by a few survivors or their descendents. Elder Things speak their own language and write in hieroglyphics composed of sets of up to five dots, similar to Brail. *Instinct*: to hide from shoggoths and return to their home dimension

Go invisible for a while
Call or attract Shoggoths
Hover for a short time
Attack with an electrical weapon

Flying Polyp *Serious*

Close, Reach, Tough, Huge, Frightening, Flying

Flying polyps are floating collections of bulging polyps, transient tentacles, and huge eyes. When they land, they are very heavy and stand on a single, wide foot with five circular toes. They attack other living things on sight with their tentacles. Flying polyps ruled the earth for millions of years, until driven into underground prisons by the Great Race of Yith. *Instinct*: to destroy other intelligent creatures

Sicken those nearby with its scream
Create a gust of wind
Call another flying polyp
Turn invisible for a short time
Grow a new appendage for a task

Ghast *Serious*

Close, Frightening, Fast, Poison

Ghasts are feared creatures of the Dreamlands. They look like a strange cross between a human and a four-legged animal that hops on its hind legs. A ghast's face is vaguely humanoid, but without nose or forehead. Its mouth is more of a muzzle, and its saliva is a deadly poison. Ghasts track prey with their keen sense of smell, and attack with sharp teeth and pointed hooves

Leap on top of its prey
Call another ghast for help
Stop to consume the dead or incapacitated
Bite with poisonous saliva

Ghoul *Moderate*

Close

Ghouls live in colonies in both the Dreamlands and the waking world, and they frequently cross between them. They resemble hunched humans, with cold, rubbery flesh, hairy, hoofed legs, vaguely canine facial feature, sharp claws and vicious teeth. Ghouls were once human, but something about how they lived their lives destined them to rise after death, shun the light, and live forever in tunnels below towns and graveyards. Ghouls are intelligent creatures with their own language, and they can be reasoned with once their morbid appetites have been sated. *Instinct*: to feed on human flesh

Eat the flesh of the living or recently deceased to recover strength
Call other ghouls
Summon a night-gaunt

Great Race of Yith *Moderate*

Close, Reach, Tough, Large, Frightening, Timid

In their original form, the Great Race are twice the height of a man – shiny, fleshy cones with an array of foot-thick tentacles protruding from the top. The tentacles end in an assortment of claws, a yellow sphere, and a set of horn-shaped tubes. The sphere contains three eyes and has four small tentacles used to manipulate objects. The Great Race drove back the flying polyps during Earth's Mesozoic era. They created vast underground libraries wherein they recorded history first-hand in their strange hieroglyphic language on indestructible sheets of alien plastic. They even recorded future events by swapping minds across time with members of the human race. The flying polyps escaped from their underground prisons 50 million years ago, so the Great Race fled by sending all of their minds forward in time, into a race of beetle-like aliens in the far future. *Instinct*: to preserve historical records in their great libraries

Swap minds with someone in another time or place
Mimic human speech with clicks and scrapes and horn blowing
Attack with an electrical charge weapon
Telepathically reveal disturbing past or future events

Hound of Leng *Moderate*

Close, Fast

A hound of Leng is a supernatural hunter in the form of a vicious, hulking black dog. A hound is called into existence to hunt and kill a specific person. Sometimes the target is identified by possession of a specific artifact, like a piece of jewelry. Hounds of Leng tend to track and attack their prey by night. *Instinct*: to kill its prey

Follow the scent of the target
Lunge from the shadows
Bite a limb and don't let go

Hunting Horror *Serious*

Close, Tough, Large, Frightening, Flying

A hunting horror is a creation of Nyarlethotep, tasked to kill someone or protect, retrieve, or deliver something. Hunting horrors are pure evil in the shape of black, winged creatures, or they sometimes appear as clouds of inky blackness. A hunting horror cannot survive any form of light. When exposed to light, the hunting horror dissipates. The brighter the light, the faster the hunting horror is destroyed. Hunting horrors can be summoned through rituals and are capable of simple telepathic communication with the summoner. *Instinct*: to avoid light and complete their task

Conjure terrifying images in someone's mind
Age someone who looks upon it by ten years
Change between cloud and corporeal shape

Mi-Go, the Fungi from Yoggoth *Moderate*

Close, Near, Timid, Frightening, Flying

A Mi-go looks like a pink, winged crustacean about the size of a human. It has many dangling legs ending in pincers, and a tapering, chitinous tail. It has a wide, insect-like head with bulbous eyes and short antennae that change color when it communicates in its buzzing, almost human language. When not flying, a mi-go walks upright on its heavier back legs. Mi-go originate from their home planet of Yoggoth, which is Pluto. They have visited Earth for millions of years, secretly harvesting resources, but they have a particular interest in humans and the workings of the human mind. *Instinct*: to bring living human brains back to Yoggoth

Extract a brain from a helpless human and keep it alive in a jar
Attack with an electrical charge weapon
Upset local wildlife
Take control of someone's mind

Moonbeasts *Moderate*

Close, Frightening

Moonbeasts are creatures of the Dreamlands that gather in large packs. A moonbeast is a shapechanging sack of protoplasm that naturally reverts to the form of a squat toad with no eyes and a mass of pink tentacles where its mouth should be. When a moonbeast travels to the waking world, is loses its ability to change shape and takes the form of a large, puffy sea-worm. Moonbeasts are timid when alone or in very small groups. *Instinct*: to protect the pack's territory

Change its basic shape
Call other moonbeasts
Leap to the attack when the pack is threatened

Night-gaunts *Serious*

Close, Reach, Tough, Large, Flying

Nightgaunts are faceless flying creatures of the Dreamlands, but they also congregate in the waking world's deepest caves and crypts. They have wings like bats, long, curved horns, grasping claws and spiked tails. Night-gaunts are allied with the ghouls of the Dreamlands and sometimes serve them as flying steeds. *Instinct*: to protect their territory

Carry an enemy high up and drop them
Tear off a limb
Make a fly-by attack with claw or tail

Shoggoths *Critical*

Close, Reach, Impervious, Gigantic, Frightening, Burrowing

Shoggoths are massive, amorphous wormlike creatures created by the Elder Things as servants and builders. Shoggoths can change their form to fit particular tasks, and they favor no particular shape. At any time, they may have dozens or strange limbs, hundreds of malformed eyes, and gaping maws in strange places all across their body. Most shoggoths live at the bottom of the deepest ocean trenches, but some still wander through the ancient outposts of the Elder Things or serve the Deep Ones in their aquatic cities. *Instinct*: to serve their masters

Ignore the effects of cold or heat
Suck someone's head off
Crush someone or something beneath its body
Emit a terrifying screech
Destroy something sturdy

Spawn of Yog-Sothoth *Critical*

Close, Reach, Impervious, Gigantic, Frightening (when visible), Invisible

When a human female gives birth to the offspring of Yog-Sothoth, she has twins. At first, they appear to be normal human children, but they change over time. The firstborn grows abnormally tall and develops goatlike features, and his legs transform into an array of dozens of tentacles with mouth-like suckers at the ends. The second-born grows into a huge, invisible creature with an enormous human face and an elongated gelatinous body, covered in hundreds of eyes and supported by clusters of tentacles that end in feet shaped like animal heads. It grows less intelligent and more restless as it reaches full size, often setting out across the land and leaving a wide path of destruction marked by a black tar-like substance. It seeks out a place of power where Yog-Sothoth can take control of it as a powerful avatar, capable of destroying civilizations. The more human-like firstborn spawn is responsible for protecting and feeding the monstrous spawn as it grows to fulfill its destiny, and he is capable of calming the larger spawn's rage. The tags and moves presented here are for the fully-grown monstrous spawn. Banishing a monstrous spawn destroys it, as it has no home dimension. *Instinct*: to grow and reach the spot where Yog-Sothoth can possess it

Enter a fit of rage
Crush buildings or people
Consume people or animals

Viper *Serious*

Harmless, Fragile, Small, Fast, Poison

This could be any variety of snakes that inject poison when they bite. They tend to be found around important ruins, deep in the jungle, or out in the arid desert. Some, like the rattlesnake, try to warn enemies off, but others wait silently to strike from hiding. *Instinct*: protect itself

Slither away to a new hiding place
Inject poison

Wolf *Moderate*

Close, Small, Fast

Even one wolf is dangerous, but they hunt in packs and manipulate their prey. If they have fed recently, they're fairly docile and timid, but don't get between a mother wolf and her pups. *Instinct*: hunt prey as a pack

Go for the throat
Drive the enemy into a trap
Hamstring a fleeing enemy

HUMAN THREATS

Before the players ever face the monsters of the mythos, they're bound to run into human NPCs that are nearly as dangerous. These could be the cults creating the bridge for mythos horrors to cross from other dimensions, or the mobsters who take the blame for all the macabre crime.

Cult Leader ***Moderate***

Close

Cult leaders gather followers to help them execute complicated plots. Their plots usually end in horrifying rituals meant to bring them great personal power or summon the deities that they mindlessly serve. Cult leaders often have positions of authority in their communities. They may also have magical items or know dangerous rituals like Summon Servant, Imbue Weapon, or Mind Control. *Instinct*: to gain power through plotting and magic

Call upon followers
Use local influence against those who interfere

Cultist ***Moderate***

Close

Cultists gather in hidden places to support their cult leaders in horrifying rituals, hoping to gain the favor of their deity. They believe they can bring about an apocalypse that will create a new world order with them at the top. They are often armed with hand weapons and are ready to attack anyone who discovers too much or interferes with their ceremonies. *Instinct*: to secretly change the world

Follow the curious and arrange accidents
Use a crude demonstration to frighten those who interfere

Mobster ***Moderate***

Near

Mobsters might be small-time bootleggers, or mob bosses who have city officials and the police in their pocket. They have access to money and automobiles, are armed with handguns or automatic weapons, and are willing to use violence. Many don't go to great lengths to hide their criminal activity. *Instinct*: To protect their turf and make lots of money

Intimidate NPCs
Jump into a getaway car
Bribe someone
Produce an automatic weapon or shotgun

Primitive Warrior *Moderate*

Near

Investigations into the mysteries of the Mythos often lead to remote archeological sites or involve the rituals and stories of primitive cultures. Primitive warriors have had little contact with the modern world and tend to view anyone entering their hunting grounds as a threat. They wield spears and stone hand weapons, and they paint, pierce, or tattoo their bodies to frighten their enemies. *Instinct*: to kill or drive off strangers

Continue to fight when seriously wounded
Use a poisoned weapon
Disappear into the terrain and emerge in a better position

Tainted Human *Moderate*

Close

There are horrifying humanoid creatures in the world, some hinted at in legends and some known only to isolated communities. Throughout the centuries, some of these creatures have mated with humans to create tainted bloodlines – entire human families with ancestors who were apelike, or aquatic, or from another dimension. Often these tainted humans can blend into society, claiming a rare disease, birth defect, or disfiguring accident. Their heritage gives them physical power and special resilience, but it also drives them to inhuman action. *Instinct*: to follow their non-human nature

Shrug off a minor or moderate injury
Move, attack, or act in line with non-human nature
Frighten someone by fully revealing their non-human nature

CHAPTER 13
SETTINGS

The settings presented in this chapter include a basic description of a danger, and hooks for getting the players involved based on their profession. Feel free to swap in a different danger or come up with your own hooks for your players. Note that many details and questions are left open. This is intentional. Your players will help you fill in specific details during play.

OVERTON BEACHSIDE

Overton is a small resort town on the Atlantic coast. In the summer, it's bustling with tourists, carnival signs, cotton candy vendors, and blinking lights. In the off-season, it's mostly deserted, with locals doing a little fishing or getting things ready for the next wave of visitors. Gambling, alcohol, and prostitution are illegal here, but the New Jersey mob moves in every spring and can provide any of those services to tourists.

Danger

Old Man Schroeder, who runs the curiosity shops near the beach, has discovered the location of a lost colonial settlement nearby. He is selling some of the artifacts he found there. Young Anthony Hart, who works next door at the arcade, purchased a German copy of Unspeakable Cults. He has been taking German lessons from Frau Neumann all winter in order to read it. He can now summon a byahkee and has caused a few small earthquakes in his failed attempts to contact Tsathogua. He tested his new powers by ordering a byakhee to kill the first mobsters arriving for the season. This sort of trouble will scare away the tourists and incur the wrath of the Mob.

Possible Clues

Old Man Schroeder hikes to the lost settlement and fills a backpack with relics.
Dead mobster's heart was removed.
More earthquakes shake the town.
Late night byahkee sightings
Old Man Schroeder's sales ledger shows Anthony bought the book.
There are signs that the lost settlement was destroyed by other colonists.
More mobsters are killed by byakhee.
Byakhee repeats its commands in German.
Frau Neumann mentions German lessons with Anthony.
Anthony builds an alter out of tombstones to summon Tsathoggua.

NPCs

Old Man Schroeder runs the local curio shop and sells some strange items .
Anthony Hart ran away from his home in Chicago after getting too involved with the Mob, and now he works in the arcade and delivers newspapers.
Chip Maroni is the mob lieutenant from Atlantic City responsible for the Overton Beachside operations.
Gertrude (Frau) Neumann rents boats to tourists from her seaside cabin.

Hooks

Antiquarian: You've heard rumors of interesting old items in town.
Archeologist: You have evidence of a lost colonial settlement nearby.
Artist: You've come to create art by the sea before all of the tourists arrive.
Author: You're researching seaside resorts for your latest novel.
Clergy: You run a storefront church during tourist season.
Criminal: You're part of the New Jersey mob, sent to fix the problem.
Detective: You're investigating the murders.
Doctor: You're the local doctor, and you've never seen deaths like this before.
Entertainer: One of the dead mobsters helped you find seasonal work here.
Entitled: Your family owns the arcade and one of the hotels.
Farmer: Your farm is near the site of the lost colonial settlement.
Journalist: You were sent to cover the story of mobsters being killed off.
Police: You're a member of the Overton Beachside police force.
Psychologist: Someone who saw something disturbing came to you for help.
Scientist: You've come to investigate strange seismic activity in the area.

THE ICARUS VOLATE CLUB

Some members the wealthy aristocracy of Providence belong to an exclusive social club called Icarus Volate. No one knows for sure what the requirements of membership are. Many of the wealthiest and most powerful people in the city have applied and been turned away after reporting strange interviews and tests. Yet, once in a while, a poor laborer or indigent will be invited to join and will rise to prosperity with the help of the other members.

Danger

Icarus Volate is a club for people with ancestry traceable back to an ancient race of tall, thin sorcerers of the lost land of Atlantis. They still speak the ancient Hyperborean language when in closed company, and they pass on supernatural knowledge. This secret society now believes that there is a hidden vault somewhere below Brown University, sealed for over a hundred years and containing one of the lost fragments of the Pnakotic Manuscript. The manuscript will allow them to transcend time and contact Icarus, the long-dead Atlantian sorcerer who started their order, long before interbreeding with normal humans began. They will go to any lengths and use any of their supernatural powers to obtain the manuscript and gain access to their ancient power. They have already broken into one of the buildings and killed Charles Grange, a graduate student who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

NPCs

Doris Wright is the thin, old Honored Gatekeeper for Icarus Volate. She interviews and tests potential candidates to make sure they are descendents. She also watches the door of the club during gatherings.

Eugene Hendricks III is the socially awkward roommate of Charles, the murdered graduate student. Eugene has lots of different conspiracy theories.

Sergeant Holder is the local police officer in charge of the murder investigation. He's convinced that Grange was involved with organized crime and got himself killed.

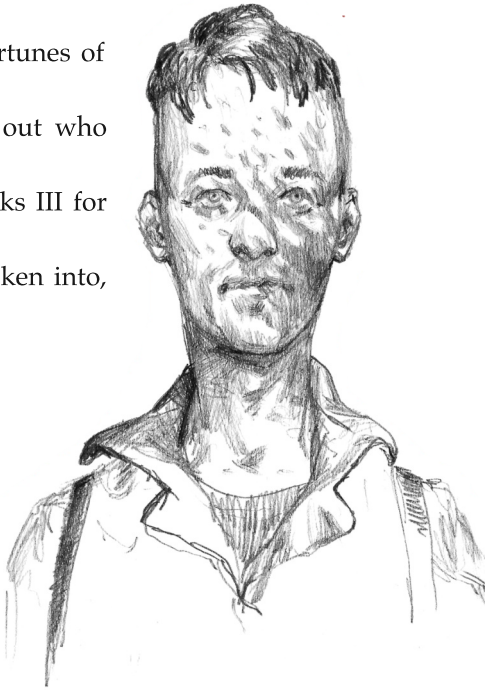
Irkos Kopitaki was a cab driver a few months ago. Now he's the newest member of Icarus Volate and owns the cab company he once worked for.

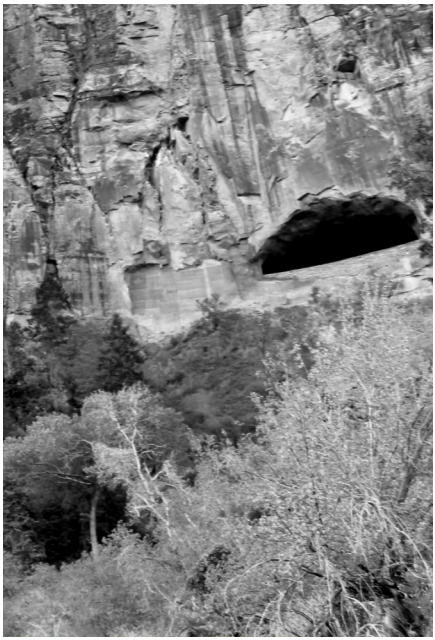
Possible Clues

Everyone in the club seems to be tall and thin, with similar facial features.
People in the club seem obsessed with ancient maps of the Mediterranean.
Some of the members are more than 100 years old.
Interviews involve a blood sample and questions about family heritage.
A local Irish woman is allowed into the club once a week to clean.
A loose floor slab in a lab at Brown University hides stairs to the secret vault.
A janitor at Brown saw two people in nice suits leaving the lab.
The lab where Charles Grange was murdered was ransacked.

Hooks

Antiquarian: Icarus Volate members have been hoarding old maps of Brown.
Archeologist: Journals from the 1806 Brown expedition to Arizona were stolen.
Artist: You have a commission to paint a portrait of the Icarus Volate leaders.
Author: Your latest novel is set at Brown, which is interesting to club members.
Clergy: Eugene Hendriks confesses he was paid to let someone into the lab.
Criminal: You've heard rumors of ancient treasures held by Icarus Volate.
Detective: You've been hired by Icarus Volate to find the underground vault.
Doctor: You were the doctor they called to treat Charles Grange, but he died.
Entertainer: You are asked to perform at a special Icarus Volate dinner.
Entitled: You have been refused Icarus Volate membership.
Farmer: Doris Wright purchased six cows, to be delivered alive to the club.
Journalist: You're reporting on the fortunes of the cab driver, Irkos Kopataki.
Police: You've been assigned to find out who broke into the lab.
Psychologist: You treat Eugene Hendriks III for his nervous condition.
Scientist: It was your lab that was broken into, and Charles was your student.





COPPERHEAD

This small mining town has long been the focus of ghost stories and strange sightings. People have disappeared from time to time, ever since the town was settled. On cold nights, people say they hear the voices of the dead coming from up on Anvil Mesa. The daring and foolhardy make the hike up there, and some never return.

Danger

A precarious trail starts just outside town and winds a thousand feet up around the back of Anvil Mesa, to a spring-fed oasis tucked between high cliffs. At the edge of the oasis is a low cave entrance, barely high enough for a man to duck through. It leads to an extensive cave system which has been a mining and experimentation site for Mi-go, the Fungi from Yoggoth, for centuries. The Mi-go are not present all the time, but tend to visit in the cooler months to explore the caves and harvest human brains. Something has changed lately, and they are more desperate to get rare metals and brains. They are creating a strange machine in the caverns that will help them summon Yog-Sothoth, who will grant them power over the elements so they can conquer a vast area of the western United States. A local boy, Willie Allen, has just been found near the base of the trial with his head smashed in.

NPCs

Roger Frost is a local trapper and hunter who has been getting copper from the Mi-go and selling it to buy rare earth ores, like pink lanthanite, to help the Mi-go build their machine.

Hank Spinner is the tough, no-nonsense foreman who runs the mining operations and suspects that Roger Frost has discovered an easier way to access the mine.

Shelly Bartlette used to run the brothel in the boom times, but now owns the Boulder, the only decent tavern in town. She's not worried about the feds.

Willie Allen is the dead young miner. He saw Roger Frost going up the trail behind the mesa and followed him.

Possible Clues

Buzzing voices up on the mesa
Strange flying things at night
Willie's brain was surgically removed.
Roger Frost meets with the Mi-go.
Another hiker disappears.
Ancient carvings of insect-like creatures
Paiute Indians call the mesa Poohenadda, which means Black Bee.
Roger frost hasn't seen the Mi-go. He has only heard their buzzing speach
Chamber in the mines with brains in jars

Hooks

Antiquarian: You've heard rumors of strange local carvings of insects.
Archeologist: Copperhead is the site of metal tools made in the Stone Age.
Artist: The beauty of Anvil Mesa has brought you here to paint and draw.
Author: You're researching ghost stories for a new book.
Clergy: You've come here to get away from scandals of your old congregation.
Criminal: You've heard rumors of metals more valuable than gold.
Detective: You've been hired to investigate Willie Allen's death.
Doctor: You're asked to examine Willie Allen's body.
Entertainer: You're scouting out locations for a new talkie western movie.
Entitled: You inherited the deed to an abandoned copper mine nearby.
Farmer: You own the ranch just below Anvil Mesa.
Journalist: You've come here to relax and get away from the city.
Police: You're the local police and have to deal with Willie's death.
Psychologist: One of your patients described strange encounters here.
Scientist: You've seen evidence of rare earth minerals in this area.

TAG REFERENCE

Aim	Requires a steady aim to be effective
Ammo	Could run out of ammunition
Amphibious	Can breath on land, and underwater
Auto	This weapon fires lots of rounds to deliver its high damage
Burrowing	Can travel quickly underground
Close	This weapon or creature can attack enemies a few feet away
Cumbersome	Impedes movement of anyone carrying or using it
Critical	Causes critical injuries or disorders
Far	Can attack enemies out to 200 feet or more
Fast	Faster than similar items or creatures
Flying	Can fly through the air
Fragile	Breaks or is injured easily
Frightening	May cause Overcome Fear move and mental disorders
Harmless	Does not cause conventional injuries
Huge	The size of an elephant, or even larger
Illegal	Illegal to trade or own without a permit or prescription
Immobile	Does not move
Impervious	Cannot be harmed by normal physical attacks
Invisible	Cannot be seen without magical or technological aid
Large	About the size of a horse or bear
Minor	Causes minor injuries or disorders
Moderate	Causes moderate injuries or disorders
Near	Can attack enemies out to about 40 feet
Poison	Poisons enemies through its physical attack
Reach	Can attack enemies out to about 10 feet
Serious	Causes serious injuries or disorders
Slow	Slower than similar items or creatures
Small	About the size of a medium dog or a child
Timid	Easily driven away or frightened
Tiny	About the size of a rodent or large insect
Tough	Reduce level of injuries to this creature by one
Unreliable	Could fail at inopportune times
X Uses	Can be used as a resource X times

INDEX

Agenda (GM)....81
Aid or Interfere....32
Aim....19
Ammo....19
Attack at a Distance....23
Attack up Close....24
Attributes....11
Auto....19
Books, forbidden....124
Buy Something....26
Cheat Death....31, 104
Connections....12, 33
Consult Knowledge....22
Convince....27
Death....31, 104
Defy Danger....25
Detect Truth....30
Disease....32, 33, 101
Dreamlands....120, 122, 130, 134, 135
Experience....33
Equipment....21
Gamemaster (GM)....1, 79
Gods....140
Great Old Ones....140
Hold....10
Human threats....154
Investments....18
Loans....18
Magical items....133
Mental disorders....28, 105
Money....12, 17, 18, 26
Monsters....145
Move....2
- Basic moves....22
- Mythos moves....119
- Player moves....9
- Profession moves....12
NPC....2, 81, 84, 85
Overcome Fear....28, 105
Passion....12, 33
Payday....33
Playbook....10, 13
Principles, GM....83
Profession....10, 34
Reach....19
Rest....32
Receive Money....26
Reload....19
Rituals....128
Savings....17
Scientific items....133
Search for Something....29
Settings....156
Study a Forbidden Book....125
Tags....18, 92, 137, 163
Threat level....19, 97, 105
Wealth....12, 16
Weapons....19, 20

DEATH AND INSANITY AWAIT

The universe is more terrifying than mankind can possibly imagine, but you've seen things, you know things, and you've begun to understand. Can you find a way to stop the evil always lurking in the shadows, waiting to enslave or destroy the human race? Can you survive with your sanity intact?

Mythos World is a roleplaying game of cosmic horror using the Apocalypse World engine. Players investigate bizarre events in a classic 1920s setting inspired by authors like H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert W. Chambers, and Robert E. Howard.