

Shark Bytes



Modern/Horror Issue

THE MODERN/HORROR ISSUE!!

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Around the World

This month, a real location with a creepy twist.

The Winchester House

by Gordon "Sitting Duck" Lawyerer

Fear Level: 5

On a mesa about halfway between Shan Fan and Gomorra, travelers passing through the Great Maze might notice a large house atop it. Should you pass by again after a few months, it would be apparent that extensive alterations had been made in the interim. If the local ghost rock miners were to be asked about it, they would mutter that the house belongs to, "that crazy Winchester woman." A couple might admit to having helped build it at some point. But always they'd leave in spite of the excellent pay because of the way her instructions changed on a daily basis. One or two might sinisterly observe that, while the sounds of constructions continue day and night, there haven't been any supplies delivered up there for close to a year.

To fully comprehend the nature of the Winchester House, one must first get acquainted with the fractured psyche of its architect. When she was married in 1862 to William Winchester (heir to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company), Sarah Pardee was to all appearances a well adjusted young woman. While she had a strong interest in spiritualism, this was hardly unusual for the time. The initial chink in her sanity came about in 1866 when her daughter Annie died a few weeks after being born, sinking her into a great depression. This intensified in 1874 when William died of tuberculosis on the anniversary of the Winchester '73 being introduced on the market. Believing her family to be cursed, Sarah consulted several mediums for advice. Finally one of them told her that the ghosts of those killed by Winchester rifles were angry and to appease them she would have to go out West and build a house for them.

Sarah did as instructed and eventually arrived in the Maze. During her trip, she conducted seances on a regular basis to determine where the House was to be built and continued to do so for instructions on how it was to be constructed. Workers were easy to come by, as many ghost rock miners frustrated over being unable to hit a big strike were lured to the promise of a steady paycheck. There was still a moderate turnover in her workforce despite the generous pay as Sarah's constantly changing orders were a source of aggravation. However, a little over a year ago the desertions stopped. The last person known to have left there was Erik Zarkov of the Collegium, whom

Sarah had commissioned to install various household devices.

As you've probably guessed, the demand for the House came not from ghosts but the Reckoners, who aren't above taking advantage of a grieving widow. The purpose of the House is to be a fear collector not too different from the city of Lost Angels. The reason for the constant alterations is to adjust it like an antenna to collect as much fear as possible. The entity Sarah believes to be her spirit guide is

in truth a manitou which monitors the surrounding Fear Levels. The workers themselves are no longer alive, merely animated husks continuing the work on the House. The House itself is slowly becoming an entity in its own right and can currently cause minor physical effects and illusions in its interior. Once the mesa becomes a Deadland, the House will be able to adjust the actual architecture by itself and will consume Sarah and the workers.

Should the posse enter the Winchester House, they'll be in for a bad time. The

interior layout is chaotic and is easy to get lost in. Unless an effort is made to map a trail, a character must make a Smarts roll at -4 every five minutes of exploration to keep from getting lost. Many of the doors and staircases lead to blank walls or drops. Sarah believes this is to confuse the ghosts so they won't get her. In actuality it's the House's way of dealing with intruders. Compounding the danger is that the House frequently creates illusions to disguise a dangerous fall waiting on the other end. To spot such illusions requires an opposed Spirit roll against the House's d12.

Sarah Winchester (WC)

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

Skills: Guts d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Hindrances: Anemic, Delusional (major, must keep up the construction), Slowpoke (mildly arthritic), Small

Edges: Closed Channeler*, Filthy Rich, Sensitive*

Pace: 5 **Parry:** 2 **Toughness:** 3 **Charisma:** 0 **Grit:** 2

Description: A petite upper class woman in her early forties.

*These edges can be found in Shark Bytes 1.1.

Workers

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Repair d6 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

Fearless

Low Light Vision

Undead

Note: There are twenty workers and one foreman. The foreman has its skills at d8 and is a Wild Card.



THE STUFF OF LEGEND

Legendary Characters to spruce up an encounter or provide the seed for a whole adventure.

PRESTER JOHN A NECROPOLIS 2350 LEGEND

by Wiggy Wade-Williams

For the last decade, Prester John's name has been spoken in awe by soldiers aided by him on the battlefield, yet despite his fame among the Sacri Ordines, Prester John's name appears in no Ordo's records, and no Lance claims to serve with him.

Virtually every story about him runs the same—a unit cut off and seemingly without hope is rescued by a lone man who appeared out of nowhere and vanished just as quickly once the action was over. The story could be believable, if it wasn't for the fact that soldiers across Salus have reported his appearance. Without an official record, the man could never secure transportation, but soldiers on every battlefield have witnessed his fury, and been healed by his expert ministrations.

To some he is a spiritual guardian, an angel sent to aid those in desperate need. Others claim the stories are pure myth, figments of imaginations stretched to breaking point by the horrors of perpetual war. Yet those who have received medical care or rallied to his orders swear holy oaths the mysterious figure was flesh and blood.

Little is known about the man behind the myth. Witnesses claim he wears the markings of an Impaler Chaplain on his battle-damaged armor and that he is blessed with miraculous powers. They also swear he wears the distinctive "Hammer of Thor" shoulder patch, the symbol of Valhalla Military Academy graduates.

Adventure Seed: The Lance is suffering heavy losses to the Rephaim, when out of the smoke walks a lone figure, a shotgun in one hand and prayer book in the other. Without pausing, the stranger takes command of the situation, barking orders and blasting any Rephaim in sight. When the battle ends, there is no sign of the mysterious Chaplain.

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

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge(Battle) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Death Wish, Loyal, Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Combat Reflexes, Command, Common Bond, Improved Dodge, Marksman, Medic, Power Points (x2), Tactician, Valhalla Graduate

Special Training: Church Knowledge, Healers

Powers: Deflection, healing (20 PP)

Gear: Light armor (+2), shotgun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1–3d6), 20 shells, dog-eared Book of Common Prayer, medikit.

Licensee Dispatch

TRIPLE ACE GAMES

It's only been 16 weeks since TAG came sprang into life, but we've managed to deliver one product a week without fail. And that trend is set to continue long into the future. As well as continuing to pump out our Daring Tales of Adventure pulp tale line, Triple Ace Games is proud to announce the release of Necropolis 2350 on 22nd October. Releases for the next few weeks include the Necropolis 2350 Player's Guide, Figure Flats, and two adventures, a Sundered Skies adventure, and more Daring Tales.

Several new adventure lines are in development, as are two new Savage settings. Early 2009 also sees the release of not one, but two Showdown settings. Keep an eye out for new products each and every week!

The Savage Worlds Explorers Society

Ever wonder how you can spread the Savage word to all those poor unlucky gamers you see at the conventions playing the same old, same old?

The best way is to jump in there and run some games yourself! The *Savage Worlds Explorers Society* is all about helping you be successful at running convention games and rewarding you for doing it!

We offer a place for GMs to share with each other, helpful aids, previews of upcoming *Savage Worlds* projects, and much more! Becoming an Explorer can also net you some cool branded items just for running games! Stickers, T-shirts (yes they are coming soon! Check the site for more details!), and some other as of yet unannounced freebies are coming for you devoted GMs!

Running a game at a con can seem intimidating, but take it from the Explorers, it's not as bad as you might think! So the next time you're going to a convention that doesn't have enough Savageness, why not bring your own!?

Visit the web page at

www.savageworldsexplorerssociety.com for more information and thank you for supporting *Savage Worlds*!

- Evil Mike and Chaos Steve



Campaign for My Real Friends

This month, from the prolific Lord Skudley we have the town of Raven's Peak and a couple of the fine establishments in the town. There are more maps than are shown here (only one floor of a given map with multiple floors is shown) but all will be available as a separate download on the Shark Bytes site.

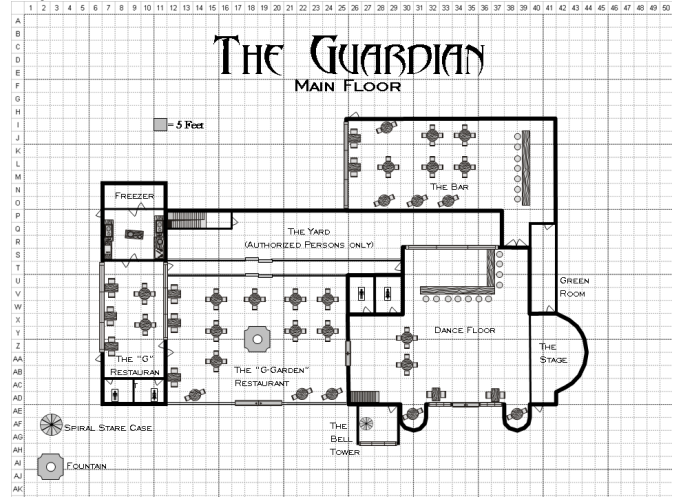
RAVEN'S PEAK

by Lord Skudley

The Guardian

Once a gothic church, The Rose of Mary Chapel, the Guardian is now a favorite hangout for the Youth of Ravens Peak (or any other town). Despite the atmosphere, the Guardian conducts an honest and very above board

business. Altercations are dealt with quickly, the offending parties are expelled and repeat offenders are banned for a period of time. The Proprietor and Bouncers' ability to spot and deal with problems is almost supernatural...



The main floor consists of:

The Dance Floor: open to anyone 16 and older. The Dance Floor also has Mezzanine available to the patrons to sit away from most of the noise. The Bouncers at the door are vigilant and mostly unflappable.

The Bar: Open to only those above 21 and who can provide verifiable ID. If the Bouncers at the Dance Floor are vigilant then the ones here are positively militant.

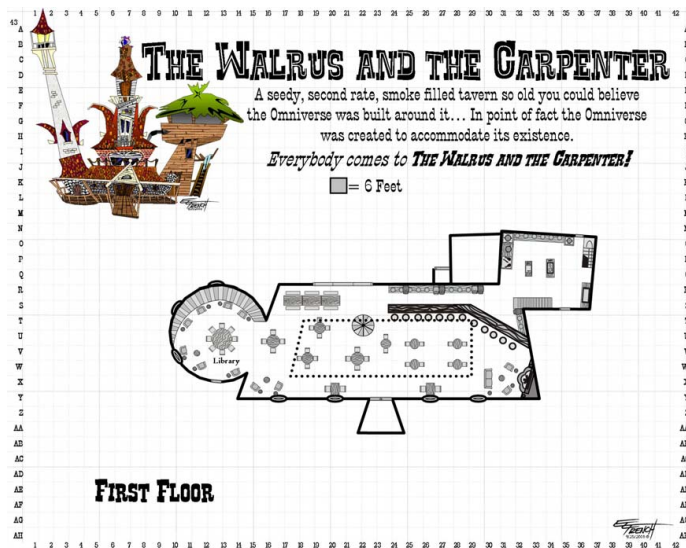
The "G-Garden" Restaurant and The "G" Restaurant. Open during the day, closing at 9:00 PM as the Dance Floor opens. It serves exquisite food, and has an elegant atmosphere.

The Yard and Bell Tower: Hmmm...

The Basement: It is an OLD church after all...

The Walrus and the Carpenter

A seedy, second rate smoke-filled tavern so old you could believe the Omniverse was built around it... In point of fact the Omniverse was created to accommodate its existence.



Andrew "Drew" Carpenter

A large Scotsman who greatly resembles a squat walrus, his bushy mustache flares and his ample belly shakes when he laughs, which is often. He is the congenial owner, operator of the infamous tavern "The Walrus and the Carpenter". Always there to serve you a drink or share information, for a price.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d6

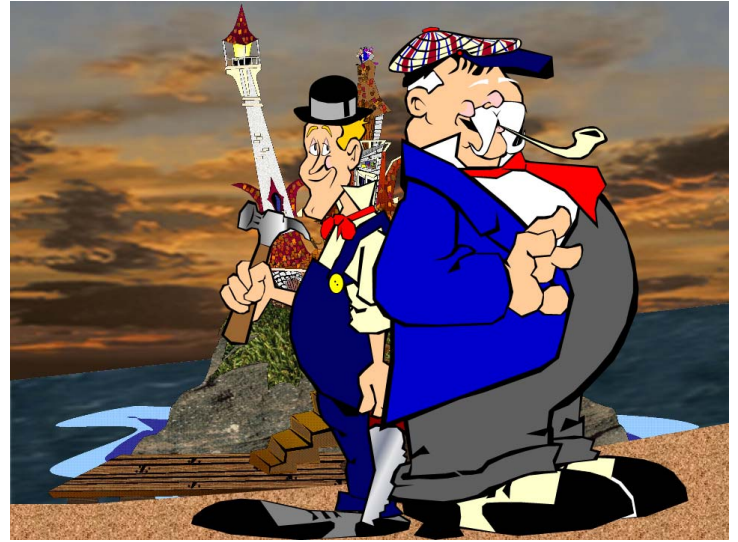
Skills: Fighting d4, Gambling d8, Intimidation d10+2, Knowledge(Business) d10, Notice d10+2, Persuasion d10+2, Shooting d4, Streetwise d12+2, Taunt d6+2

Pace: 4, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 6, **Charisma:** +2/-2

Edges: Alert, Charismatic, Rich, Snake Oil Salesman, Strong Willed

Hindrances: Cautious, Habit (Major): Smokes a pipe, Obese, Outsider: Scotsman

Gear: Bar: Owner Operator of "The Walrus and the Carpenter", Club, Sap, Shotgun: Double Barrel



Stanley "Fingers" Walrus

Drew's long time associate and Partner. Fingers is as slim as Drew is fat. With his battered derby cocked to one side and look of perpetual naïveté, he hides a cunning talent for... procurement.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6+2, Fighting d4, Knowledge(B&E) d10, Knowledge(Carpentry) d10, Lockpick d8+2, Persuasion d6, Repair d8, Stealth d10+2, Streetwise d8

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 4(+1), **Toughness:** 5, **Charisma:** +2/-2

Edges: Acrobat, Charismatic, McGyver, Thief

Hindrances: Curious, Quirk: Absent mindedness; some may say he is as Dumb as a Brick, Small, Outsider: Cockney

Gear: Hammer, Saw, Picks, Derby

The Quaint & Curious Chamber Door

A Curiosity Magic Shop

"Nevermore" Neverman

Owner operator of *The Quaint & Curious Chamber Door*. He is a tall thin man of Carrabin descent. Well educated and knowledgeable on a number of esoteric subjects. His long thin nose and dark complexion reminds people of the Raven in the gothic poem of the same name.

Attributes: Agility d6 Smarts d12 Spirit d10 Strength d6 Vigor d6

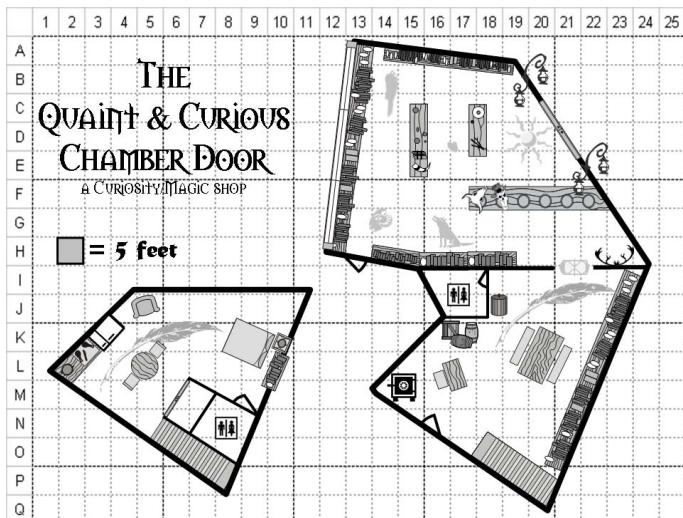
Skills: Healing d6 Investigation d12+2 Knowledge: History d12+2 Knowledge: Occult d12+2 Knowledge: Trivia d12 Notice d10 Persuasion d12 Streetwise d10+2

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 2 **Toughness:** 4 **Charisma:** 0

Edges: Beast Bond Beast Master Investigator Jack of All Trades Scholar

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (mjr) Curious Pacifist Small

Gear: The Quaint & Curious Chamber Door



NoCraven

Mr. Neverman's pet Raven. He sits on his perch on the counter and welcomes patrons to the shop with a squawk of "Come in, Welcome". His grasp of language is rudimentary but he will learn the names of regular customers and will call "Nevermore Neverman!!!" when Mr. Neverman is not in sight to help the clientel.

Attributes: Agility d12 Smarts d6(A) Spirit d4 Strength d4 Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4 Notice d10 Stealth d8 Tracking d4 Knowledge: English d4

Pace: 7 Flying (Climb rate of 2) - 4 Walking **Parry:** 4 (-2 to hit) **Toughness:** 2 **Charisma:** 0

Edges: Low Light Vision

Hindrances: Curious

Gear: Perch

The RavenSpeak

Raven's Peak's bi-weekly newspaper

Randy Carter

Owner and Editor of the RavenSpeak. If curiosity killed the cat then Mr. Carter should have died long ago. Always ready to hear a tale, spin a yarn, and stick his nose where it doesn't belong just as long as he gets the scoop!

Attributes: Agility d8 Smarts d10 Spirit d12 Strength d6 Vigor d6

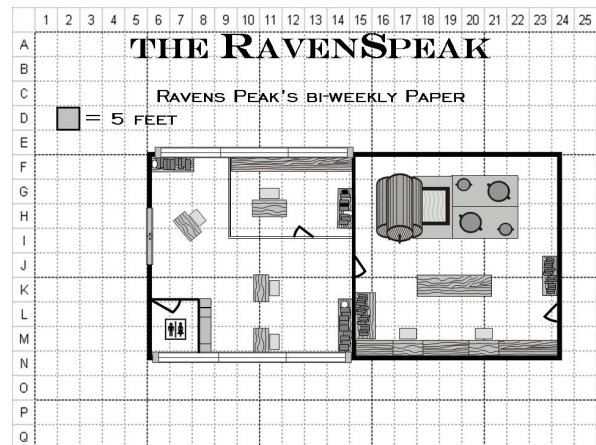
Skills: Driving d8 Fighting d6 Guts d12 Intimidation d6 Investigation d12+2 Lockpick d6 Notice d10 Persuasion d8+2 Stealth d10 Streetwise d8+4 Knowledge: Literature d10+2 Knowledge: History d12 Knowledge: Occult d10+2

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5 **Charisma:** +2

Edges: Charismatic Investigator Jack of All Trades Scholar Snake Oil Salesman

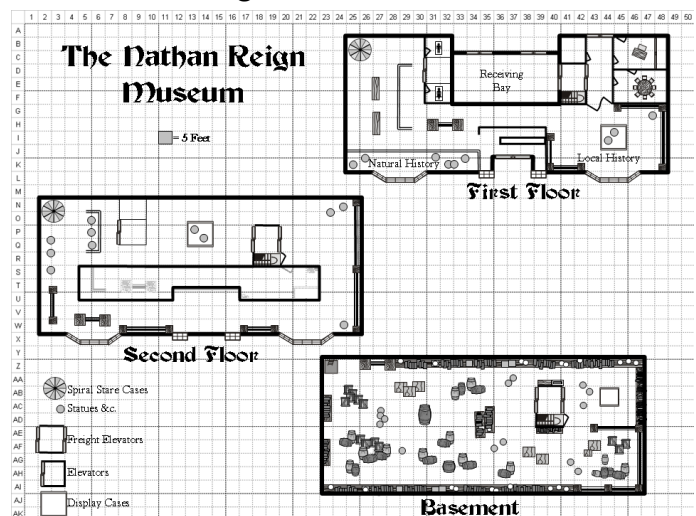
Hindrances: Curious Overconfident Stubborn

Gear: Notepad Pen Camera Laptop



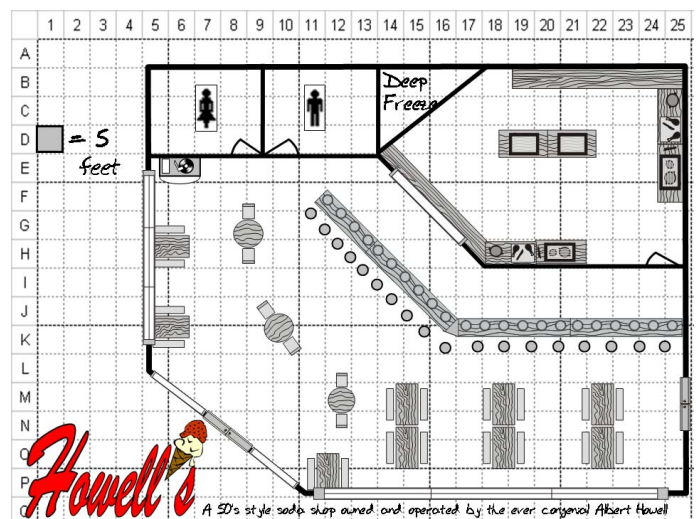
Other locations

The Nathan Reign Museum



Howell's

A 1950's style soda shop owned and operated by the ever congenial Albert Howell.



THE RULING HOUSE

The Ruling House showcases house rules or additional rules. This month, how to make your game more terrifying from the masters at 12 to Midnight.

20 Ways to Haunt Your Game

by Preston P. DuBose of 12 to Midnight

Pulling off a haunting in game takes a special kind of spookiness. Real haunted houses aren't filled with tableaux of gore and monsters, but hours of boredom broken by brief, startling phenomena. At the game table the best way to create a successfully scary haunting is by building upon several small events. When you're all out of ideas, or when you want to throw your players a curve, dust off your d20 and roll randomly on the table below--or just use the idea that sounds coolest to you.



A small object belonging to a hero disappears and is found in an unlikely place (medicine cabinet, kitchen drawer, locked safe, attic, basement, inside a toy, etc.)

1. Voices whisper a hero's name from the next room.
2. A hero feels a hand clamp down on his shoulder from behind, but nobody is there.
3. A small object flies across the room toward a hero.
4. A strong, distinct smell (burning hair, a hot cooked meal, perfume or cologne, etc) briefly washes over the heroes.
5. A hero experiences a brief drop in temperature intense enough to cause frost to form on clothing or equipment.
6. An empty room rings with the sound of children running through.
7. A hero who looks in a mirror fails to see his reflection.
8. All photos, paintings, etc. fall from the walls simultaneously.
9. Any and all radios, tvs, or sound equipment spontaneously turn on and burst into static.
10. The heroes can hear a swarm of flies or bees, seemingly inside a wall.
11. A shadow defies all light sources.
12. All doors slam shut simultaneously.
13. Blood pools up from any fabric touched by the heroes, including footsteps in carpet.
14. Lights flicker every time a particular hero speaks.
15. An unplugged telephone rings until someone answers.
16. A knocking sound comes from inside the walls.
17. As a hero enters a room, he catches sight of a stranger leaving through a different doorway.
18. Over the space of 15 minutes, dozens of birds violently kill themselves by flying into windows.
19. All liquids, even water, turn rancid.

For more ideas on what to do with a haunting, check out the Random Séance table found in [Green's Guide to Ghosts](#).



The Game's the Thing
a podcast about tabletop games

Ron & Veronica Blessing's podcast that often covers **Savage Worlds** with fantastic interviews and insight. Check it out at <http://www.thegamesthething.com>

I Love Adventure

This section normally has one or two, but this issue we have just a few more than that, with representation from Deadlands, Ravaged Erath and Pinebox Texas. Sit back, relax and enjoy these episodes in terror.

Living Death

A Deadlands: Reloaded Adventure

by M.A. Cutter

A Bad End

While moseying across the plains the posse sees a haze of smoke up ahead. Soon they discover an overturned and smoldering Conestoga wagon, a pair of bloated horses hacked nearly to pieces, and an entire family of settlers burned upon a bonfire.

Their belongings are scattered about but nothing—not even the family's keepsake box containing \$20—is missing. The smell is nearly unbearable, so cowpokes need to make Guts checks or lose their lunch.

A successful Notice check reveals that the earth and prairie grass are trampled down as if by a mob of 20 or more people. Any character scoring a raise on the Notice check discovers something even more odd—the bonfire is encircled by a ring of salt, and the mouths of the victims were stuffed full of holy wafers after they cooled. A successful Tracking or Notice roll reveals that the mob's footprints lead due south.

Old Gil

Gilman Hutchinson wasn't always lonely. Once he had a family, and was well-liked among the people of Atlanta. But that was before Gilman saw with his own eyes the evil that men do. Long before the Civil War he was a Captain in the Army, and he led a raid upon a Cherokee village that turned into a massacre. Captain Hutchinson did not join in the slaying, but he didn't raise a hand to stop it either. The dying Chief's last words to him were, "You may be killed...but you can never die."

Over time Gil's wife passed on and his children grew up. He grew old as well, and infirm, but as much as he prayed for death it never came. He lit out for the West after the Civil War, still praying that his torment would end. Out on the plains an ancient spirit heard and answered, leading Gil to the tiny, impoverished town of Sawgrass Ridge.

The people were laid low by drought and famine, and new settlers continually passed over the region for brighter prospects farther West. With the unholy aid of his spirit guide, Gil secured the same blessing he'd been given—

though some might call it a curse—for the people of Sawgrass Ridge. No matter how bad things got, the townsfolk of Sawgrass Ridge would never die. But they weren't exactly alive, either.

Old Gil is now the beloved mayor of a town that believes itself to be quite normal. In truth the townsfolk are walkin' dead, deluded by the Reckoners. Even worse, the townsfolk believe "The Living" to be irredeemably evil. It was they who slaughtered the settlers. They'll do the same to any living posse that rides into town, if they're able.

The Houlihan Farmstead

Before the posse reaches Sawgrass Ridge, they must cross the farmland of Bertram Houlihan. Bert works the fields with a rotting, sway-backed mare that pulls the plow. To him, his current state is just the way of things, while the posse—with their nauseating pink flesh and repulsive breathing—represents pure evil.

What looks like a groaning fiend is actually a farmer unaware of his own predicament. It is likely that the posse reacts with violence, but they may be taken aback when Bert shouts for help, fights intelligently, and accuses them of being "pawns of the devil." Bert's family (one per posse member) aid him if they can. Under no circumstances can Bert be convinced that he's dead. He just thinks the posse is crazy as well as evil.

Zombietown



Presumably the posse won't ride into the middle of Sawgrass Ridge (Fear Level 4), whoopin' and hollerin', but if they do they're in for a hell of a fight. The townsfolk all act with the intelligence they had in life, but use the stats for walkin' dead (with a few changes). They quickly form a mob (numbering 30), and attempt to hang, burn, and bless "The Living" with holy water. Mayor Hutchinson joins in as well, using the terrible powers given to him by his spirit guide to lay low any interlopers.

If the posse takes a more cautious route and watches the town from a distance, they see a bizarre scene. Every single person in town shuffles about, bits of flesh dropping from yellowed bones, going about their business and greeting friends as though nothing was out of the ordinary. Sawgrass Ridge has a general store, a small church, a saloon, a telegraph office, and a barber, along with several other residential buildings.

From here everything depends on what the posse does. Characters who are obviously Harrowed are welcomed as friends. If townsfolk are captured and successfully interrogated, they're not good for much more than curses and threats, along with assurances that the posse will never get away with their evil plot. All the townsfolk speak of Old Gil, their mayor, in terms of glowing admiration. They were in a bad place, they say, but when Gil came to town "everything changed." Old Gil brought everlasting happiness where there had been only misery.

Bustin' the Curse

The only way to lift the curse upon Sawgrass Ridge is to destroy Mayor Hutchinson and bless his remains. This is easier said than done. Old Gil lives in a house near the center of town, and is perhaps most deluded of any of its inhabitants. He views his spirit guide as a benevolent guardian rather than a scheming manitou. If given the chance he explains that he only wanted some respite from the loneliness of eternal life. That doesn't stop him from using his prodigious powers to try to wipe out the posse.

If Old Gil is killed and blessed, the zombie townsfolk return to normal, as though waking from a horrible nightmare. As Gil passes from this life, he seems grateful—a peaceful smile is on his lips. Any walkin' dead the posse put down stay dead once the curse is lifted.

Old Gil Hutchinson (WC)

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6

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

Hindrances: Delusional (Believes himself to be a good man).

Gear: Rotting clothes, cracked spectacles.

Special Abilities

- **Black Magic:** Old Gil has 30 Power Points and can use the following powers: *armor* (shadowy shroud), *barrier* (bloody thorns), *bolt* (black arrows), *dispel* (cleansing wind), *fear* (otherworldly scream), and *puppet* (sinister voice).
- **Death Touch:** Old Gil can drain the lives of his foes with a touch. Instead of a normal attack, Old Gil makes a touch attack (a Fighting roll at +2). Each success and raise on his Fighting roll automatically inflicts one wound to the target. Foes killed in this manner becoming willing members of Gil's flock.

- **Fear:** Old Gil has taken on a terrifying aspect that provokes a Guts check.
- **Hardy:** Additional Shaken results do not cause a wound.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.



Walkin' Dead Townsfolk (30)

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Trade) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d4

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Delusional (Believe that they are alive, and the living are evil).

Gear: (varies by individual) 2 Winchester lever-action (12/24/48; 1-3d6; RoF 1; Shots 4; +2 Shooting), 6 double barrel shotgun (12/24/48; 1-3d6; RoF 1-2; Shots 2; +2 Shooting), knives (d6+d4), clubs (d6+d6), torches, holy water.

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Undead:** +2 **Toughness:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Arrows, bullets, and other piercing attacks do half-damage.
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

Ravaged Earth

Hello one and all. As we approach Halloween, we'd like to remind one and all that there is something about the autumnal air that seems to carry with it not only the seasonal changes but ghosts of the past. It is as though Aetherium stirs up memories of another age and awakens dormant supernatural creatures, the creeps, who roam through our back alleys and dark corners waylaying unwary citizenry. Be careful. Beware.

The Creep Squad

by Sean Preston

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Ever since the War of the Worlds, the Red War, there has been a rise of supernatural phenomena across the world. In the United States, public outcry and reported weird incidents grew to such a degree that Congress proposed the Supernatural Protection Act that President Garner passed in late 1933. This act created a special division in the FBI that investigates and contains supernatural incidents in the United States. This special department is called Division X and keeps tabs on all weird sightings, unexplained phenomenon, supernatural creatures, and occult activity. Johnny Harker, a British journalist, claimed to have intercepted some of the files and refused to report on them, claiming they gave him the creeps and the less known about them the better. Currently, Mister Harker is convalescing nicely somewhere on the West Coast. Whatever the case, the files are now called the Creep Reports and the special agents of Division X are better known as the Creep Squad. Even the agents themselves glibly refer to the nightmare monsters they deal with categorically as creeps. The Creep Reports were moved after being compromised to a secure facility in the Department of Justice known as the Black Vault to which only certain members of Division X and FBI Director Hoover have unrestricted access.

Division X is headed up by Eliot Ness, a former treasury department agent who tried going after Capone in 1931 with his distinguished team called the "Untouchables."

Ness may have been given the slip by Capone's men, but he never forgot the mobster king. After Capone's trial ended and Capone went free, Ness did a lot of soul-searching. He realized the only way to get Capone was to hit the gangster hard and only one entity could do that: the FBI. Ness joined the agency and functioned as a regular agent for a few years, until Division X's creation. Hoover tapped Ness to head that division based on an experience Ness had in Capone's vault.

Eliot Ness

Ness and his G-men got a tip Capone smuggled some illegal "merchandise" in the safe vaults at the Hawthorne Hotel in Chicago in early 1933. Armed with Tommy Guns,

.38 revolvers and shotguns, Ness' G-men stormed the hotel with a warrant to search the premises.

The agents made their way to the basement vaults where the rumored contraband lay. There in the darkened gloom, the G-men came face-to-face with a hideous wraithlike apparition. The creature wielded a scimitar and wore a tattered robe completely obscuring

its head. The thing lunged at the agents, who opened fire. Two of Ness' men died in the altercation, but the creature was finally killed. Inside the vault, Ness found ancient Persian scrolls, golden statues, idols and Sumerian clay tablets. What a hood like Capone wanted with ancient artifacts puzzled Ness. He hopes the agents of Division X can solve that mystery. Ness is a good man. He's moral and clean and follows things by the book. Ever since taking over Division X, he has worked hard to lower the division's profile and few governmental agencies are aware of their existence. This is by design. Ness doesn't want to draw any attention to his agents, nor to their work. He knows how large the threats are and what's at stake and instills the importance of discretion into his operatives.



Black Badgers and Specials

The only difference between the standard FBI badge and the Division X badge is that the latter badge is gunmetal black and is commonly known as the Black Badge. Thus, Division X agents are frequently referred to among governmental and law enforcement agents with which they interact as Black Badgers. With the rampant rise of Ravaged criminals and gangster activity, support for the Creep Squad has declined as ordinary G-men are in short supply. Ness, who reports directly to Hoover, is used to working on limited resources and has made a special arrangement with Hoover that empowers his agents with field deputization powers, enabling them to recruit necessary talent outside of normal governmental channels. Deputized outsiders are known as Specials and run a broad spectrum of careers and occupations. The Specials have become invaluable in Ness' fight against the growing tides of darkness. A number of Specials regularly become full-time members of Creep Squads, either maintaining their old careers as cover identities or abandoning them altogether to become Black Badgers themselves. Specials are rarely sent on their own, usually there is at least one field agent per mission, but extenuating circumstances

sometimes arise where no regular agents are available and the Specials must act.

Power of the Badge

The Black Badge is well respected and known among criminal supernatural elements and an agent who brandishes it receives a +2 to Intimidation attempts against any who are aware of – and care about- Division X.

Becoming a Black Badger

Should a character become a Black Badger during the course of play, then they gain Connections (Law Enforcement) and Obligations (Major: Division X) and the Black Badge. Other requirements are at the GM's discretion, but should include, at a minimum actively serving on a Creep Squad as a Special for several adventures (or one long investigation).

A Typical Creep Squad

Following is a typical Creep Squad, complete with 2 Black Badgers and 4 Specials.

Special Agent Frank Cheney

Frank Cheney is a tough, no nonsense, agent who tends to be very serious and focused on his work to the exclusion of having any sort of personal life. In other words, what his boss, Ness, considers a perfect Black Badger. He stands a wiry 5'8" tall and looks a bit bookish or distracted. His black hair is in constant disarray and his general appearance is disheveled and unkempt, as though he sleeps in his clothes. He's orchestrated a number of successful operations against creeps and doesn't let his ego get in the way. He knows the dangers of what's out there and is comfortable operating in a support capacity if need be. His free time is consumed with reading books on the occult. Cheney has bent a few rules along the way and lost a few agents and Specials, but sleeps well at night knowing he's working for the greater good.

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

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 5, **Charisma:** 0, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Defining Interests: City Knowledge (Washington, D.C.), Disguise, Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult)

Languages: English

Hindrances: Obligations (Major, Division X), Obsession (Root Out Evil)

Edges: Courageous, Division X Agent, Connections (Law Enforcement), Marksman

Knack: Eagle Eye

Gear & Equipment: suit, trenchcoat, the Black badge, Colt Service pistol (.45), and two-way wrist radio

Quote: "We have no other choice, but to press on!"

Dr. Victoria Price

Victoria Price, Vicky to her close friends, is a slender blonde who dresses in pantsuits and wears simple wire-frame glasses. She is constantly playing with her gum while she tries to sort out problems. Six months ago, she became a Special and has served on Creep Squads from time to time when not trying to break the laws of physics. Her analytical mind is frequently at odds with what she sees and she's constantly trying to reconcile the underlying facts of any situation before blindly rushing into harm's way.

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

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 5, **Charisma:** -1, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Healing d8, Notice d6, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Weird Science d8

Defining Interests: Classical Literature, Metallurgy, Knowledge (Aetherium)

Languages: English, German

Hindrances: Cautious, Bad Eyes (Minor), Habit (Chewing Gum)

Edges: AB (Weird Science), New Power, Gizmo (Healing Kit: Healer)

Knack: Universal Gadget

Gear & Equipment: Face Mask with Sonic Boom, Pistol, Healing Kit

Powers: Aetherium Wave Detector (Detect/Conceal Arcana), Sonic Boom (Burst)

Power Points: 10

Clara Bow, Parapsychologist

With short bobbed hair and little make-up, there is something about Clara Bow that still makes heads turn. She did a bit of film work in her youth, but after her mother's passing, she became obsessed with the afterlife and abandoned her career. She learned savate while working on her last epic piece of cinema that was never completed, *The Revenant*.



People still regularly recognize her and Clara is considered one of the more prominent Specials. Clara is not one bit bashful about using her fame and animal magnetism when the situation warrants. Division X has promised to help her learn to control her Second Sight and, in return, she helps

open doors and illuminates the darkness as much as she is able.

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

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 6, **Charisma:** +2/+4, **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Defining Interests: Acting, The Afterlife, Psychology

Languages: English, French

Hindrances: Curious, Loyal, Pacifist (Minor),

Edges: Animal Magnetism, Cat's Pajamas, Martial Artist

Knack: Psychometry

Gear & Equipment: Simple dress, diamond ring, pill box hat, gloves, purse

Quote: "Don't you recognize me?"

Professor George Melies, Antiquarian

Of advancing years, the Professor had long been a bibliophile operating a tiny bookstore in Paris. One afternoon, an old acquaintance entered and insisted he translate a folio he had picked up while travelling the Mediterranean. Intrigued, Melies set to the task and realized he was reading an ancient book of magic. Melies also noted that the paper had a strange texture and investigation revealed that this ancient book contained trace amounts of ground Aetherium. The Professor traded the bookshop to his old friend for the book and set abroad looking for more books, concerned that they might fall into the wrong hands. Along the way, the Professor, a practical man, has taught himself some magic, though, being rational, considers it more a physical manifestation in response to a formula. He feels anyone can learn to do it, given enough time. Generally, he uses his talents with discretion. He has worked with Division X on several occasions and has continually refused their offer of making him a full agent.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Investigation d10, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Streetwise d8

Defining Interests: Ancient History, Books

Languages: English, French

Hindrances: Heroic, Poverty, Vow (Minor: Collect the World's Dangerous Books)

Edges: AB (Magic), Investigator, Linguist

Knack: Photographic Memory

Gear & Equipment: Cane, Topcoat, Bowler

Powers: Zeus' Fury (Bolt), Hecate's Wisdom (Dispel), Athena's Blessing (Speak Language)

Power Points: 10

Quote: "Magic? I don't do magic! Math with special effects, perhaps?"

Roger Miller, Drifter

An aspiring architect, Roger's world unraveled when he suffered crippling injuries during the later part of WW2.

During his convalescence, he began suffering strange visions and couldn't control them. This manifested physically as his body's energy field shifted, making his ability to work in an office impossible. With no other choice, Roger began the life of a hobo, wandering from town to town, taking whatever work he could. One day while traveling the rails one of the Circle of Wonder and Light explained to him that he had uncontrolled powers and began to teach him. He learned that they man helping him was the famous Captain Calhoun. His nightmares went away for the most part and he now helps the Creep Squad as its unnoticed eyes and ears. He blames the war for destroying his life and his greatest wish is to eliminate the Nazi threat once and for all and will happily die in pursuit of this goal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6, Psionics d10, Streetwise d8, Survival d6

Defining Interests: Architecture, Astronomy

Languages: English, German

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Death Wish, One Leg (Lame), Vow (Major: Uphold Calhoun's Creed)

Edges: AB (Psionics), Hobo, Extra Power Points

Knack: Lip Reader

Powers: Thumb Lighter Pantomime (Light), Pocket Watch Trick (Puppet), Steely Gaze (Telekinesis)

Power Points: 15

Gear & Equipment: None.

"Fighting" Father Charles Spencer

Raised in an orphanage and continually getting into trouble, one afternoon while in chapel, Charles felt the touch of the divine and decided he would join the priesthood. He still continued his fighting, but has organized it into a community boxing league for the local kids. He's viewed more or less as a street priest by the Church and is considered something as an expert on exorcisms which he's reported has been on the rise in the past fifteen years. The Church regularly loans him out to Division X and recognizes the good the father does.

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

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4

Defining Interests: City Knowledge (Boston), Knowledge (Theology), Exorcisms, Mythology

Languages: English

Hindrances: Obligations (Major: Church), Code of Honor

Edges: AB (Miracles), Bring it On!, Holy Warrior

Knack: Heroic Inspiration

Powers: Strength of Faith (Boost/Lower Trait), Healing Prayer (Healing)

Power Points: 10

Gear & Equipment: Cross, Bible, Baseball Bat

Quote: "By the grace of God!"

Fool's Errand

A Ravaged Tale from the Creep Squad Vault

by Sean Preston

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Forward

This scenario shows you another direction you can take your Ravaged Earth campaign. Rather than focus on the sunlit jungles and lost ruins, it provides a campaign with a more urban element and a noirish feel where shades of grey often mingle with crimson. Alternately, you can use such adventures as one-offs where the heroes are recruited from time to time into dealing with the creeps. These adventures can often be investigative in nature, afford ample opportunities for roleplay, but are, at the same time, punctuated by the pulp traditions of high stake action. This scenario is particularly suited to Halloween, but it is left open enough where you can place it anywhere. While our tale takes place in Boston, you can easily locate it any place and any season by modifying the names as necessary. Lastly, for convenience's sake, you'll find all stat blocks located at the end of the adventure. Enjoy!

The Location

This tale takes place in Boston, during the fall, or early winter months. There have been a lot of bad rainstorms of late and lightning creases the sky.

The Setup

Special Agent Cheney receives a call from headquarters at 9 pm about an incident at the Halloran Estate and is told to gather up a Creep Squad and investigate. Before he can protest, the dispatcher advises him to proceed quickly and with caution. Cheney has been sensing something in the air of late and gathers up a crew at McGuire's, a hang-out for the type of Ravaged talent he needs.

The Halloran Estate

Located twenty minutes outside of central Boston, the Halloran Estate is a sprawling four-story mansion. At the moment, however, the circular driveway is loaded with luxury cars and jazz can be heard playing loudly through the large front doors.

Winston, the family butler, answers the door expectantly. Behind him, it is evident that a party of some sort is in full swing. People are dancing in the ballroom to jazz records, tightly knit groups of men are discussing business and politics, and a group of women are playing bridge in the adjoining room. After requesting identification, he directs them to the study. Should the heroes wish to explore the party, how you handle that is up to them. Depending upon their attire, it's doubtful many of them will be well received and Winston will try to politely usher them back on course.

Notable party guests include the Lieutenant Governor John "Jack" Johnson, the actress Jessica Clarke, and Shorpy De Luca, a notorious gangster best known for gunrunning.

The Study

Within the study is William Dean Halloran III, a Common Knowledge roll reveals he is a local industrialist and the Halloran name dates back to colonial times. He is in his mid-fifties and is a tobacco aficionado. Presently, he paces back and forth as he smokes a brandy-smoked Cuban cigar. "You must be the folks Jack called up. Right nice of him to call you out, though I told him that it's really no big deal. Annabelle just gets upset from time to time and these things happen." He motions them over and presses a stud on the bookshelf. It slides aside to reveal a short corridor. Halloran is reluctant to discuss Annabelle's "issues" and tells them that Winston will fill them in on all the details and that he must return to the party. A successful Persuasion roll can garner general information about her troubled childhood, while a raise tells them the same information that Winston explains to them below.



The Corridor

Winston is relieved to share his information as they walk down the corridor to a staircase that descends to the kitchen and servant's quarters. "Miss Annabelle was a precocious youth. After her mother's passing, she changed. I hear it was something in the bloodlines on the mother's side, I don't mind telling you, but the girl's not natural." He leads them through the kitchen where they see an older woman scolding an attractive blonde. "Beatrice is giving it to Marta again, it seems." He comes to a door at the end of the hall with a stenciled 13 on it, pulls out a key, and hands it to them. "His name is Jeremy Winstead. He's been fresh with Miss Anabelle before. When you're done seeing what you're seeing, come get me. I'll be in the kitchen."

Room 13 and Beyond

The room is about 20x20 and is quite luxurious for a padded cell. In one corner of the room is a man in a straight-jacket who rushes towards them as they enter. He looks dirty and unshaven, but lucid. "I've calmed down now. It's okay. I won't say anything. I told Mr. Halloran. I provoked her. I didn't really believe she could, she could do it." If asked, he'll tell them the whole story about how they were drinking a bit and went out to the Cedar Grove cemetery because they'd been dating for a few months and she claimed she could talk with dead people. He dug up a body and she calmly pretended to carry on a conversation with it. He made fun of her and she whispered in his ear to "See what I see" and then he saw ghosts all around him, swarming towards him, and he must've went mad, but he's okay now.

How the heroes decide to handle the hapless young Winstead is up to them, but just when they feel they've been sent on a fool's errand, they hear scuffling in the kitchen. Rushing back down, they see Marta unconscious, Bertha missing, and Winston wrestling with a swarthy man in a tuxedo. "Don't worry about me," he'll shout at them. "Save her!"

The heroes hear people running up the staircase. As they enter the corridor, two men in suits are waiting with machine guns and open fire (use the minions, substituting pump action shotguns for Berettas). When these are dispatched, one figure is holding a knife on an unconscious Halloran and is telling the heroes to back off. If they don't, he'll knife Halloran. He is merely ensuring the rest of the Brotherhood has time to escape. However, this turns out, there is general chaos in the ballroom, guest unconscious, and bloody, and the parking lot is a disaster with many people fleeing the scene and there are several car wrecks that have already complicated things. Certainly, however, the heroes have successfully captured one or more of the Brotherhood. Each of them wears platinum cufflinks with diamond studded pentagrams. A Common Knowledge roll indicates these culprits are known members of the Brotherhood of the Pentacle. Successful interrogation reveals that the Ritual of the Reborn is to be performed at midnight at Star Harbor Cemetery. Star Harbor is a small coastal village just north of Boston. The cemetery is among the oldest in the country.

Road Travel

When the heroes hit the road, the sky opens up and the worst storm of the season begins. Should the heroes want to drive excessively fast (to get there before midnight), they will need to make a successful drive roll. Failure indicates they get a flat and lose a half hour.

Ritual of the Reborn

This Ritual takes the life of one and gives that life force to another. Beatrice, as a loyal servant of darkness, wants the power that courses through Annabelle's veins. Annabelle, however, is seriously demented from her long contact and

exposure to the spirit world, and cares nothing for Beatrice, or the Brotherhood, and seeks to destroy them all. The ritual Annabelle has promised to perform will unleash an army of the night.

Too Late

Whenever the heroes arrive, even if it's before midnight, is too late. Annabelle isn't superstitious. She might have been, if not for her dead friends. The heroes see six cars that are on fire at the edge of the cemetery. They must all make a Guts check as they see the Bloody Beast running through the graveyard and slaying fleeing men. Each man she kills rises as a "sleepyhead" and goes after the nearest hero they see. There is light and chanting emanating from the Church which is 20" away. The terrain is treated as difficult if the characters don't have a flashlight. Regardless, any character attempting to run on slippery ground must make an Agility roll or only be able to move 3" before falling prone. If any hero gets close to the Church, the Bloody Beast focuses on them exclusively.

Note: You can certainly adjust the number of sleepyheads (zombies) you have pursuing the heroes. A good rule of thumb is two per hero. Feel free to add more as needed.



The Church

When anyone nears the Church, they can hear a woman chanting through the doors. The windows are stained glass and spattered with blood. The doors are barricaded from

within. Should anyone attempt to break in, Edgar Post shoots at them (be it through the door or through the windows). Once the perimeter is breached, all the characters must make another Guts check at -2. This place is horribly befouled. Blood, intestines, and remnants of the Brotherhood members are spattered about the place, and the crazed Edgar Post is wild-eyed and filth-covered and frothing at the mouth. Annabelle drove him insane with her inner darkness. The remains of Beatrice's skin are floating in the baptismal fountain. Kneeling on a pew and praying is Annabelle Leigh without a drop of blood on her. She rises after the heroes dispatch Post and runs and hugs the nearest of the group or whomever she can assay is the group leader. She thanks them profusely for rescuing them. She is all eyes and innocence and happy to be going home. Unless the heroes physically assault her, Annabelle is sensitive and rather withdrawn. She's been through a lot and satisfied with eliminating her enemies.

The Aftermath

How the heroes want to deal with Annabelle in the future is up to them. She certainly is trending towards darkness, but how much of that was guilt, fear, and the urgings of dark, unseen powers? The Creep Squad will probably want to keep an eye on the Halloran Estate in the future and root out more information on the Brotherhood of the Pentacle, for these guys seemed more like dabblers at best. This may, indeed, have been A Fool's Errand after all.

The Villains

Annabelle Leigh Halloran (WC)

A slender girl of nineteen, Annabelle has deep red, shoulder-length hair and skin the color of alabaster. She dresses in simple black skirts, light silk shirts, and flats. Typically, she has wears little jewelry other than a pendant left by her mother that she is never without. Once a good, proper girl, she has become deranged by her constant conversations with ghosts and the dead. The police know her as the "Graveyard Girl" because of her frequent trespassing of graveyards throughout the Boston area. Her father's connection with the Lieutenant Governor ensures her record is kept clean. When she gets angry, she often loses control, and seeks vengeance upon any who cross her, for she knows that death is not the end, and the dead cannot hurt her.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d10, Spellcasting d10

Defining Interests: Cemeteries, Boston

Languages: English, French, Latin

Hindrances: Childlike (Clueless), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: AB (Magic), Courageous

Knack: Ghost Friend

Power Points: 30

Powers: "See what I see!" (fear), Reciting nursery rhyme (speak with the dead), "Get Up, Sleepyhead!" (zombie)

Gear & Equipment: purse, jacket, \$50

New Knack

Knack: *Ghost Friend:* A character with this ability can see any ghosts within Spirit inches of them and communicate with them freely. Only the character can hear the ghosts. This character receives +2 to all reaction rolls from ghosts and other sentient dead.

New Power

Speak with the Dead

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 10 minutes (1/10 minutes)

Trappings: Chanting, prayer, hand motions



This power is cast on one corpse and allows the character to speak with the corpse much as anyone else can speak with the living. The target does not animate, but rather communicates psychically. A corpse's reaction to the living begins at -2 with an additional -2 if they were killed by the person communicating with them. The corpse's reaction determines both their general truthfulness and willingness to cooperate.

Edgar Post (WC)

Once upon a time, Mister Post loved Miss Halloran, but then she learned he loved her because of her powers. She learned that he was a member in good standing with the Brotherhood and he had painstakingly sought her out after years of research into her family line. He was also of good stock and good standing in the community. He also was touched, like she was. Wasn't that enough for her? Oh well. After they broke up, he vowed to get her, no matter the consequence and make her love him. Imagine his surprise when she approached him. He saved her life and she owed him now.

Edgar is ten years Annabelle's elder and is very athletic. His family also has sensitivity to Aetherium and it typically manifests in physical attributes among himself and his

siblings. At the house, he'll seek immediate escape, leaving his associates to defend him.

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

Pace: 6", **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d4, Riding d10, Shooting d10

Defining Interests: Hunting, Riding

Languages: English, French

Hindrances: Obsession (Annabelle Lee Halloran),

Edges: Bring it On!, Martial Artist

Knack: Just a Scratch

Gear & Equipment: Pump Action Shotgun (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 2d10; RoF: 1, Shots: 2), box of 10 slugs

The Minions

Amateur Cultists

These fellows all attend university together and are in the Brotherhood for a good time. Good times, for them, include drinking, fighting, and kidnapping. As troublemaking rich kids, they have gotten in deeper than they ever imagined, driven, as they were by Edgar's charisma and enthusiasm. They are all well-connected and it is doubtful, at best, if they serve any time.



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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Shooting d8

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

Hindrances: Rich

Edges: Connections (Governor)

Gear: Berretta (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 2d6+1; RoF: 1, AP1; Shots: 7)

Monsters

Raggedy Ann (Bloody Beast)

This red-skinned, bull-horned monstrosity was once Beatrice. Annabelle carved her up and animated her to slay the rest of the cult. Rather than channeling Beatrice's life force into herself, which Annabelle thought was icky,

she redirected it into the corpse, unknowingly making Beatrice into a permanent, undead abomination.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Swim d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Rubbery hide.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Improved Sweep:** May attack all adjacent foes.
- **Fast Regeneration:** Raggedy Ann may attempt a natural healing roll every round unless her wounds were caused by fire or flame.
- **Fearless:** She is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to her head are +2 damage and do not regenerate.

The Sleepyheads

Annabelle also has summoned a number of zombies she affectionately called sleepyheads. Use the standard zombies from SWEX.

The Supporting Cast/ Other Notes

Beatrice Sharp, the cook, is a wizened old woman who watches over the lower quarters of the mansion like a hawk. She is stern, polite, and is constantly fidgeting over pots and stoves, and fussing at her assistant, Marta, a young Swedish immigrant, to work faster.

Marta Andersen is an attractive woman in her mid-thirties with straight blonde hair and deep blue eyes. She speaks English with a slight German accent she explains away by having attended the University of Hamburg where she studied Art History. Her Danish is flawless. She struck up a romance with Halloran while he was traveling abroad last summer and he brought her home with him under the auspices of expanding the kitchen staff. In reality, she is a Vril Society agent who was instructed to get close to Halloran and monitor Annabelle's behavior. Surprisingly, she has grown fond of Halloran and has a vested interest in the daughter. She is unaware of Sharp's connections to the Brotherhood.

Annabelle Leigh is a classic malcontent. Shortly after her mother passed, she manifested her powers: the ability to cause fear, the uncanny ability to speak with the dead, and the ability to see ghosts. She harbors a secret guilt that she caused her mother's death, but it was her latent abilities manifested when she reached puberty. Beatrice Sharp is a secret servant of the Brotherhood of the Pentacle and allowed them to gain entrance into the guest's quarters. Annabelle is aware of all this and has already made her own arrangements with the Brotherhood and has agreed to sacrifice Beatrice to show her loyalty.

A Bite of Midnight: Hunting for Big Foot

by Ed Wettermann and Mark Ramsey

Jimmy Jones, a local hunter living in Pinebox, claims to have shot a Big Foot in the Big Thicket and swears he has proof. However, he refuses to give his proof to the authorities claiming the government would just take it and conveniently lose it or replace it so no one will believe his story. The heroes may seek him out to investigate the story, may be hired by an interested party to find out the truth, or they may simply do so on their own. Does this East Texas hunter hold the secret to identifying the mysterious Big Foot of legends, or is it yet another hoax?

History

Jimmy Jones has been hunting the Big Thicket his whole life (52 years). He dropped out of school in 5th grade and has worked in the lumber industry, trucking, and was even an electrician for a while. However, when deer season comes, he quits whatever he is doing, and goes to live in the Thicket, hunting and loving the great outdoors. Jimmy has been in minor legal troubles, most involving drunkenness or hunting illegally. He has been married twice and divorced twice, but has five children to show for his attempts.

His oldest son, James Jones, Jr., is set to go to college and Jimmy is upset that he cannot hope to help pay for the tuition. He met with his brother, Ed, and developed a plan. They would fake a Big Foot sighting and manufacture "evidence" that they could sell on EBay or to anyone willing to pay the right price. Ed modified a hunting outfit with various animal skins and coats and made a Big Foot Suit. They studied all the Big Foot lore they could find and settled on making the newly opened Caddo Trails of the Thicket their location for the "sighting."



The Forestry Service has recently opened a series of trails through the northern part of the Big Thicket ranging from Golan County, east to Lake Toledo Bend. These hiking trails are very rugged and take hikers approximately 10

hours to accomplish, most camping somewhere along one of the numerous paths.

Jimmy and Ed picked one of the new trails leading past Black Pond, a pool of murky, flea infested water, which provided a small clearing between the pond and the tree line of approximately 40 yards.

Jimmy camped along the trail to warn Ed that hikers were coming by and Ed would don the suit and give the hikers a scare. Big Foot sightings became more prevalent over the next year, and surprisingly, many of them were not of Ed! Pinebox's mayor, John Flowers, responded by stating that Pinebox was a "Big Foot Friendly" town and even had a statue of the creature prepared to greet travelers entering Pinebox city limits along highway 96. It stands over 9 feet high, has brown fur, and a scary face with long fangs and red eyes. Humorously, several locals have taken shots at the statue and the holes are visible by any inspecting the statue. Its left hand is now missing three fingers.

Finally, Jimmy shot a small brown bear and took some of its fur and blood (which he mixed with chicken blood) as proof he had shot a Big Foot. Ed was his "witness" and the story was carried by television and newsprint across the country. Now many Big Foot Hunters have come Pinebox in search of the elusive creature, while others are in a bidding war for the "proof."

However, something else is stirring in the forest. The trails cut by the Forestry Service opened up land that had been uninhabited for centuries, and awoke a vengeful Native American Witch spirit. She has attacked a few travelers and three have been reported missing, though no trace of them has yet been found. She attacks her victims at night, all within a few hundred yards of the Black Pond.

The Real Story

The Witch's true name is Angelina, and she was a member of the Hainais Caddoan tribe of East Texas in the late 1700s. She studied the power of the Ayo (fire) on what is now Dale Island, but watched as her village was massacred by a Spanish Force led by Generalismo Lopez from the nearby fort of La Bonita.

The General was stricken by her beauty and ordered her taken to the Fort, where he decided to Christianize her and make her his Indian bride. He forced her to live among the Spanish and she learned his language and agreed to marry him, though she secretly planned her revenge on him.

Using her magic, during a harvest moon, she called upon the spirit of the wolf and the panther to exact her revenge. General Lopez asked her to lead him to the treasure of the Hainais, (rumored gold traded by the Aztecs hundreds of years earlier). She led them to the Black Pool and then set loose her spectral creatures. The General and 20 of his men fell to her bloodlust. But the evil powers she conjured trapped her as well, and now her spirit is angry and lusts for nothing but murder.

Action

Jimmy is willing to meet anyone and can usually be found at the Roadside Tavern, a local biker bar and icehouse found just north of Pinebox off 96. He is willing to show his proof, but does not agree to let it out of his sight and refuses any true scientific tests on the hair or blood samples. However, if anyone doubts his veracity, he attempts to arrange a visit to the Black Pond, to prove his case. This is the crux of the adventure and leads to all that follows.

If the heroes are willing to make the journey, he arranges to meet them around noon the next day to hike to the location. He states they should be prepared to camp overnight and that he always hears something in the night. He arranges for his brother to be "out there" to provide sounds and sightings.

The hike in is long and strenuous and the humidity in East Texas is stifling. Every hero must make a Vigor check or suffer one level of Fatigue, until he/she rests of 4 hours and is dehydrated by drinking good fluids.

Once the heroes are deep in the Thicket allow each to make a *Notice* roll. The highest hears something in the woods, just out of sight. Wood snaps and birds fly as if spooked by something. This is Ed doing his best to unsettle the heroes. Allow a second *Notice* roll to see that Jimmy also notes the sounds, but plays as if he doesn't hear them.

Once they arrive at the campsite near the Black Pond, allow them to set up the camp and mark general locations on whatever play mat is generally used. Jimmy goes on making a show of pointing out where the Big Foot was when he shot it, and describing how it ran into the Thicket on the opposite side of the pond.

If the heroes attempt to use Tracking and are successful they find several places in the brush of the Thicket that have been trampled and they also discover several empty beer cans that Ed has dropped the past few weeks.

The Witch spirit begins to slowly manifest after nightfall. She uses her minor powers to cause electrical equipment to fail, and other minor ghostly activities. Her true powers manifest around Midnight.

Ed stays away from the camp until just before Midnight. Allow heroes who are still awake to make *Notice* rolls. Success indicates they definitely hear something crunching around in the Thicket opposite the pond. From this point on in the adventure all *Notice* and *Shooting* rolls are made at -6 for Heavy cover and Dark conditions. If one of the heroes acts as a spotter using flashlights etc, the roll is modified for Dim conditions to be a -5. Anytime a hero shoots at something on the trail allow for Light cover and Dim or Dark conditions (-2 to -3 modifiers).

Once Ed begins his antics he becomes the first victim of the Witch. Her spectral panther attacks him and rips him to pieces. He screams for 2 rounds. Any hero who runs to help him must make a *Notice* roll with modifiers to find him

approximately 60 yards away from the pond in the Thicket. If found, he is dead, as he was ripped to pieces, and is missing an arm and his throat ripped out. His abdomen is also ripped open with his guts spilling out onto the ground around him. He is still wearing the remains of the Big Foot suit with the mask as well.

Jimmy, worried for his brother, calls out for Ed for 3 rounds, then attempts to charge into the woods to rescue his brother. Unless he is accompanied by the heroes, he becomes the next victim and falls to the two spectral wolves. If the heroes find him, they may take his rifle and ammo.

How the rest of the adventure plays out is up to the heroes and the GM. The Witch begins to play a cat and mouse game with them, relishing in their fear, wanting to kill them slowly. Her three spectral creatures following her commands, running through the woods, paralleling the heroes should they decide to try to escape back to civilization. In the dark, they must make Smarts checks (-2) or become lost or turned around on the many trails. The Witch is in no hurry and sends the spectral creatures at them one at a time, trying to separate the team if possible.

She occasionally manifests before them. She has long black hair, high cheek bones, and is a young shapely Native American wearing a white gown and is barefoot. She does not attack the party directly, preferring to use her spectral wolves or panther, though she does read the team's minds and uses the voices of loved ones to try to draw them into the woods.

NPCs

Angelina- Caddoan Witch Spirit

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

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Intimidation* d8, *Knowledge (Rituals)* d6, *Notice* d6, *Spellcasting* d6

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

Special Abilities:

- **Call Spectral Animals:** Once per night the witch may summon 1 spectral panther and 2 spectral wolves. These remain with her and do her bidding unless destroyed or the sun comes up (at which time they fade and disappear).
- **Channel:** Lost souls may communicate with the living whose mind is open to outside influence (such as a medium during a séance or in the dreams of others). Lost souls may use this opportunity to temporarily possess the contacted character. Each attempt is handled as an opposed Spirit roll if the character is unwilling. On a success, the lost soul controls the character (treat as the puppet power) for a number of rounds equal to its Spirit. Using this ability causes the lost soul one level of Fatigue, which can only be recovered after 8 hours.

- **Cluster Attack:** The lost soul telekinetically “throws” any objects weighing less than Spirit times 5 pounds within a Medium Burst Template. Any characters within the area take damage equal to the lost soul’s Spirit. The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the lost soul’s Spirit. Using this ability causes the lost soul one level of Fatigue, which can only be recovered after 8 hours.
- **Cold Spot:** Lost souls may reduce the temperature within a Small Burst Template by 5 degrees times their Spirit die type.
- **Electrical Drain:** The lost soul can drain the electrical capacity of a battery or batteries in a single device. It may also reduce or temporarily stop the electrical current from a single outlet or room. The Lost Soul can use this power a number of times equal to his Spirit die type.
- **Electrical Malfunction:** The lost soul can cause a single electrical device to completely malfunction. A Repair roll reverses the effect of the malfunction but the device is subject to further electrical malfunction attacks. The lost soul can use this power equal to ½ its Spirit die per day.
- **Ethereal:** (As in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook) Also, it is difficult to destroy a lost soul through simple combat; the “destroyed” soul often restores itself in 2d6 days. In addition, lost souls make natural healing rolls every six hours. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a lost soul forever is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each lost soul.
- **Fatigue:** The lost soul can cause a single person suffer a level of Fatigue (see the *Savage Worlds* rulebook). The lost soul must make a successful attack upon a targeted person and the victim gets to make a contested Spirit die roll against the attack roll. If failed, the targeted person suffers a level of Fatigue for 24 hours. Recovery from Fatigue occurs as normal. Additional Fatigue attacks have no effect unless the targeted individual is no longer Fatigued. The lost soul can use Fatigue a number of times equal to ¼ its Spirit die type per day.
- **Heat:** The lost soul can cause a single object (not a living creature) to rise in temperature by 10 degrees Fahrenheit per round up to 10 rounds, up to 100 degrees above ambient temperature. The object does not burn or ignite but is subject to changes caused by heat, such as melting or discoloration. Heroes that touch the object must make an Agility check or take one level of Fatigue due to burning. This is a minor burn and the level of Fatigue may be regained with an hours rest, proper medical care, etc. The lost soul can use his power a number of times equal to ½ its Spirit die per day.
- **Lesser Apport:** The lost soul can cause one or more objects that it was associated with in life and weighing a total of 6 ounces or less to appear where it desires. Often the apports are coins, jewelry, or other small objects that fall out of midair (causing no damage), but the objects can also quietly appear on a table or other location. When apports appear, they are near freezing and covered with a gelatinous membrane of ectoplasm that evaporates within 30 seconds. Electrical devices that appear via apport have drained batteries and may be damaged (as if exposed to an intense electromagnetic source). The lost soul can use this power a number of times equal to ¼ of its Spirit die per day.
- **Reek:** The lost soul can fill a Large Burst Template area with a single odor so powerful that heroes in the area automatically notice it. The lost soul can use Reek a number of times equal to ½ its Spirit die type per day.
- **Scent:** The lost soul can fill a 3x3 area with a single odor that was familiar to it during life. Heroes in the area notice the odor with a successful *Notice* roll. IT can use Scent a number of times equal to its Spirit die type per day.
- **Scream:** The lost soul can create a very loud sound lasting two rounds, such as a scream or the sound of a train crash. Heroes within 20” of the lost soul automatically hear the sound. Heroes within 3” of the lost soul must make a Vigor roll or be deafened for 1d4 rounds. The lost soul can use Scream a number of times equal to its ¼ its Spirit die type per day.
- **Singe:** The lost soul can cause a single object (not a living creature) to rise in temperature until it becomes takes 1d6 points of fire damage. If the object is flammable, it may catch on fire on a roll of 6 on 1d6 and may spread normally. The lost soul can use Singe a number of times equal to its 1/4 its Spirit die type per day.
- **Telekinesis:** With a successful Spirit roll, the lost soul may move an object weighing up to its Spirit die type in pounds. The object must be within 5” of the lost soul at all times. The object does not move fast enough to cause damage.
- **Scent:** The lost soul can fill a 3x3 area with a single odor that was familiar to it during life. Heroes in the area notice the odor with a successful *Notice* roll. IT can use Scent a number of times equal to its Spirit die type per day.
- **Visible Form:** The lost soul may manifest itself as a visible presence to the living. The level of detail depends on the lost soul’s Spirit. A d8 may appear as a simple ball of energy. A d10 may appear in a translucent human form similar to its original human appearance. A d12 may take a form that is indistinguishable from a living human without an opposed Notice versus Spirit roll if the character is suspicious
- **Voice:** The lost soul can create a moderately loud sound lasting for one round, such as a sentence spoken in normal conversation or a laugh. Heroes within 10” of the lost soul automatically hear the sound. The lost soul may use Voice a number of times equal to ½ its Spirit die type.
- **Whisper:** The lost soul can create a quiet, very short sound, such as a whispered word, or the soft click of a lock. Heroes within 2” hear the sound on a successful

Notice check. The lost soul can use Whisper a number of times equal to its Spirit die type per day.

Spectral Panther

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

Skills: *Climb* d6, *Fighting* d8, *Guts* d6, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6
- **Camouflage:** A panther's dark coloration makes them difficult to spot in the deep woods. Add a +2 to Stealth when hiding in thick woods.
- **Dark Vision:** Spectral panthers can see normally in Dark conditions
- **Improved Frenzy:** Panthers may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Pounce:** Panther's often hide and pounce on their prey for a quick kill. It can leap 1d6" to gain a +4 to its attack and damage. Its **Parry:** is reduced by -2 until it performs its next action.
- **Size +1:** Panthers can weigh over 300+ pounds.



The legendary black panther of East Texas is an elusive hunter that haunts the deepest recesses of the Big Thicket. Some believe these are a type of jaguar or cougar, but little evidence has ever been collected. Many tales are told of a bone-chilling scream that sounds like a woman or a small child. In reality, it is the call of this large cat.

Spectral Wolves

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Guts* d6, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d8

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

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Dark Vision:** Spectral wolves can see normally in Dark conditions.

- **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Go for the Throat:** Wolves go for opponents soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.

Though mostly extinct in East Texas, these spectral wolves come to their master's call and do her bidding.

Jimmy Jones

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

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Guts* d4, *Intimidation* d8, *Knowledge (Local Big Thicket)* d6, *Notice* d6, *Shooting* d6, *Streetwise* d6, *Taunt* d4, *Tracking* d6

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

Hindrances: Greedy (Major)

Gear: .30.30 rifle 24/48/96 RoF 1 Wt. 8 Shots 8 (2d8), Backpack with small pup tent, hunting knife, water canteen, whisky flask, flashlight, a bag of chips.

Ed Jones

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

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Guts* d4, *Intimidation* d8, *Knowledge (Local Big Thicket)* d6, *Notice* d6, *Shooting* d6, *Streetwise* d4, *Tracking* d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Brawny

Gear: Wears a modified Big Foot suit and carries a big club (Str+d4)

Complications

Jimmy allows the heroes to carry weapons, but orders them not to shoot the Big Foot unless they are threatened. He says he already has several folks threatening him with a law suit for shooting at it originally.

This adventure may be very tough without weapons, though the heroes may improvise them using metal tent stakes (Str+d4), or clubs (Str +d4).

Don't forget to have the heroes make appropriate Fear checks, especially if using our Fear Effects system.

Resolution

Once the heroes reach their car, or civilization, or when you think the adventure should end, she simply stops chasing them. Allow them one more glimpse of her as she turns and returns to the Black Pond.

Possible follow up adventures could include destroying the Witch spirit through casting of a ritual over the Black Pond, or finding the bones of the Spanish dead buried near the pond and setting them afire. The secret of this adventure is cutting the heroes off from civilization, and keeping them guessing and afraid.

Midnight Tale: Doorways

by Neal Hyde of 12 to Midnight

Background:

The books from the Ashwright collection have made their way into various hands. One group of would-be cultists should have left them alone. After obtaining a transcript from a book, the coven leader attempted a ritual far more difficult than she was ready for.

The ritual was performed at the top of the bell tower on the ETU administration building. It was intended to open a doorway to beings of wisdom and benevolence. However, because the ritual was botched, a doorway was opened to a realm of monstrous creatures, and one came through to our world. It feasted on many of the novice cultists and only a handful managed to escape.

The creature is ethereal in nature but it can effect (and kill) beings and objects from our world. It is harmed by bright lights (coming from a realm where light is unknown) and hides during daylight hours in the darkness of the bell tower's enclosed steeple. During the darkest nighttime hours, it leaves its lair and hunts, feeding on people and animals.

The creature is still tied to its home dimension and the still-open doorway. If the doorway is closed, the creature and anything else that may have passed through to our world are destroyed. The creature senses this and will attempt to stop any closing ritual.

The Investigation:

One of the heroes has a friend who lives on campus and her roommate is driving her nuts. She's suddenly terrified of the dark and has strung their room with hundreds of light bulbs. At the same time, several people claim that they've seen something big in the air at night, possibly a UFO.

When the heroes investigate the friend's roommate, they find her nearly frightened out of her mind. With a little coaxing, she tells the heroes that she was in a "stupid pretend group of witches" that tried to do a ritual but it went badly wrong. A terrible creature emerged from the drawn doorway on the floor of the bell tower and it attacked them. Several girls were killed (they simply disintegrated into dust) before they could escape. The one thing she is certain of is that the creature seemed to be frightened of the girl's candlelight. The roommate has a fragment of the photocopied ritual but refuses to do anything more to help the heroes. If pushed, she lapses into a catatonic state.

If the heroes wish to investigate the bell tower, they must first unlock the door in the main hall. Once in the tower, they find the remains of the ritual scattered about (candles, a chalk pentagram, photocopies of the ritual, and other things).

A successful Investigation roll allows the heroes to find the stub of a human finger. If the heroes investigate during the day, they may Notice a slight shimmer in the center of the pentagram (the open doorway). At night, the shimmer is much more easily seen and appears as a hole in the solid floor of the loft.

If the heroes attempt to close the gateway, they must perform another part of the ritual, which is found on the scraps of photocopied paper in the loft. Alternatively, the heroes can attempt to find the original book in the library and pull the ritual from there.

To perform the ritual that closes the gateway, the heroes must be in the bell tower at midnight, which is, of course, when the creature is free to go nuts on them. When the ritual is completed, the creature and anything else that passed through the gateway ceases to exist.

Extra-Dimensional Squid

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d8

Pace: 10 (Flying); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- **Fear -2:** The Extra-Dimensional Squid causes Guts checks at -2 when it is seen.
- **Flight:** The Extra-Dimensional Squid has a Flying Pace of 10" with a climb rate of 4". They may not "run."
- **Size +6:** The Extra-Dimensional Squid is well over 30' long and 5' in diameter.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the Extra-Dimensional Squid.
- **Weakness (Light):** The Extra-Dimensional Squid is damaged by intense light, including sunlight.
- **Disintegration:** A character grasped by the tentacles of the Extra-Dimensional Squid takes 2d6 damage each round as the creature absorbs them.

The creature is large, approximately five feet wide and some thirty feet long. It is ethereal, being visible but transparent, and it floats and maneuvers around the air as a fish does in the water. The creature resembles a cross between a hammerhead shark and a giant squid, with the hammerhead-like eye stalks appearing at the top of the creature's torso and a dozen long tentacles hanging from the bottom. Although it is ethereal, it affects creatures around it as if it were fully corporeal. The creature is harmed by bright light, and it avoids all but the dimmest of lights. Flashlights, particularly powerful halogen lights, can do considerable damage to the monster.

Sample Light Damage

Candlelight (Small Burst Template): 1d4

Average Light Bulb (Medium Burst Template): 1d8

Flashlight (Flame Template): 1d6

Handheld Spotlight (Flame Template): 1d10

Daylight: Death

Midnight Tale: ***The Devil's Throat***

by Preston P. DuBose of 12 to Midnight

Background

It has been another dry Summer in Texas. The Big Thicket is dry as tinder and grass pastures are brown and withered. Even Lake Greystone is down 16 feet from normal levels. Golan County needs water badly, and one entrepreneur thinks he has a solution. The Devil's Throat is a crystal, clear, spring-fed pit at the abandoned Wilson's Quarry, and one company plans to tap into this easily accessible source of fresh water and pipe it into Pinebox for processing. However, to get the necessary permits they have to conduct geological and wildlife studies to insure that their actions won't harm the local ecosystem.

Dr. Fred "Caveman" Boyle is a Geology professor at East Texas University and a campus favorite. His sense of humor and enthusiasm for geology makes even a normally dry subject seem fun. In the field, Dr. Boyle enjoys spending hours and days studying formations found in caves, and has even done some cave diving. He is a natural choice to explore the Devil's Throat, and he takes to the "consulting" job with enthusiasm.

Hook

The heroes may be Dr. Boyle's students at ETU, earning extra credit by helping him with equipment at the Devil's Throat. Alternately, the heroes could be hired to investigate attempts by unknown parties to sabotage the project, one of the heroes could be related to Boyle, they could be environmentalists trying to stop the project from proceeding, or one of the heroes might be a psychic who caught a precognitive flash of danger at the quarry.

Investigation

Dr. Boyle, equipped with an insulated wetsuit and SCUBA apparatus, slips into the frigid water's embrace and disappears into the blackness below. Less than five minutes later, the surface of the water briefly bubbles and roils before quickly settling down again. Characters who succeed in a Notice check briefly glimpse dark silhouettes in the water's depths. Should one or more of the heroes dive into the Devil's Throat themselves, they discover that these silhouettes are rare fresh water jellyfish, each as large as a dinner plate and with stingers trailing a yard below. Dr. Boyle inadvertently disrupted these creatures and received a painful sting even through his wetsuit. There are three such creatures, but their slow movement should make them an avoidable threat.

Dr. Boyle is nowhere to be seen, but a cloud of silt is still visible roughly 3" feet below the surface and against a cave wall. If the heroes attempt to investigate, they discover an

opening large enough for one person to pass through at a time. This narrow branch continues for a only a body length before opening into a pool in another wide cavern. Reaching this cavern does not require diving equipment; however it is a long, dangerous swim for anyone trying to do it while holding his breath. Without SCUBA gear, it requires a Swimming check at -2.

The new cavern has a pool, through which the heroes arrive, and at least 6" of dry rock in an irregular shape. The dry portion of the cave is at roughly the same level as the entrance to the Devil's Throat, which means the cavern is a pocket within the quarry wall itself. The cave has stale, but breathable, air. It is also pitch black--a darkness so deep that it seems to eat at the edges of the heroes' light source. Should the heroes not have a light source of their own and they are fortunate enough to stumble upon Dr. Boyle's SCUBA tank, which is discarded on dry rock of the cavern floor, they also find a flashlight. There is no sign of the professor himself. However, the dry portion of the cavern does contain a set of human remains. Based on the style of clothing, one might guess that the skeleton is 20 years old. One of the leg bones is broken, and a natural assumption might be that it was a swimmer who found the cave, became injured, and couldn't make the return swim.



A narrow fissure splits the back wall of the cavern, and a series of steps are chiseled into the very rock leading up the crevice. These steps lead up to yet another, significantly smaller cavern. A carefully stacked set of bricks adorn the center of the cave, but the cavern also contains a pair of corpses. One corpse is grotesquely fresh and is, in fact, the late Dr. Boyle. The other is nothing but a skeleton dressed in the ancient uniform of a Spanish Conquistador. The second corpse is a guardian revenant, cursed to guard Spanish spoils even beyond the grave.

The revenant awakens upon their entrance; however combat is not a foregone conclusion. It first issues a warning in Spanish. As long as nobody attempts to touch the grimy--but solid gold--bricks, the revenant does not

attack. The spell holding him in place compels him to prevent the gold bars from being removed, but the old soldier wants to be released from his curse. This could be accomplished through a ritual of exorcism, destroying the seal chiseled in the cave's ceiling (dangerous!), or defeating the revenant in combat.

Assuming the heroes survive the encounter, they are free to take the gold bricks. However, they are identified as antiquities and there is significant red tape in trying to sell them for profit. The gold originated from Aztec spoils melted down by the Conquistadors, who ran aground on the Texas coast in a terrible storm. Nothing else is known about these castaways other than the name of the priest who accompanied them, Roberto de la Garza y Gomez.

Guardian Revenant

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

Skills: Climb d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d4, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Swimming d4,

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7; **Charisma** 0

Edges: Dodge

Special Abilities:

- **Animate Own Body:** Revenants can animate their own bodies at will.
- **Fear:** Revenants cause Guts rolls at -2.
- **Fearless:** Revenants are immune to Fear.
- **Know Location/Object:** The revenant can identify the location and condition of any object or location that it protects. This operates like the Detect/Conceal Arcana power but only for the location or object that it protects.
- **Undead:** +2 **Toughness:**, +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.
- **Gear:** saber (str+d6)



Midnight Tale:

The Evil Eye...Doctor

by Brendan Quinn of 12 to Midnight

Overview:

Jerome Owens was an ETU senior with everything going for him. Owens was ETU's starting running back attending school with a full scholarship. Academically, he had earned a 3.82 cumulative GPA and was majoring in Civil Engineering. His future was bright and hopeful, until his body was found along the shoulder of highway 96. According to police accounts, Owens was struck by an 18-wheeler sometime between 3 and 4am earlier that morning. Owens' roommate reported that Owens had left their dorm at around 1am and hadn't returned since. Owens' death was ruled an accident as no ante-mortem signs of force were evident on the body. Toxicology reports show no presence of narcotics or alcohol in the student's system.

The truth is: Owens' death was accidental, but was caused by a side effect of the treatments he had been receiving from his new eye doctor. Dr. Thomas Safford has recently set up shop about a quarter mile away from ETU. Billing itself as "High-tech optometry, with a home-town feel," Safford's office has quickly earned itself a loyal clientele. Students have found Safford's services especially appealing as he performs all services at 50% off for students with a 3.0 GPA, and 75% off for any students with a 3.5.

Safford can afford this significant discount because his real backing is a secret private organization using his practice as a front to conduct medical experiments on unsuspecting students. The experiments are focused on chemical compound A2930-Oracle. Oracle's primary function is to enable Special Forces operatives the ability to glimpse briefly into the future and react accordingly. Safford has been able to design a version of Oracle based on his unique cerebral make-up, but is now developing a drug that can be applied to anyone without modification. So far, tests have been unsatisfactory. The majority of students tested have no change in visual ability, but rare cases of erratic behavior have been noted. In the most extreme cases—like Owens—subjects suffer from acute visual and auditory hallucinations.

For the cases that do not progress into complete hallucinations, the treatments—primarily delivered through eye drops—are addictive. After Owens' death, Safford will close his doors and those addicted to the eye drops will succumb to the withdrawal and proceed en masse to Safford's office.

Heroes are asked to uncover more information from Owens' roommate who doesn't buy the official story of the student's death.

Clues:

- If heroes search Owens' dorm, a Notice check at -2 will uncover a half-empty bottle of eye drops prescribed by Thomas Safford.
 - If eye drops are analyzed, chemical compound is unknown. A successful Knowledge (Chemistry) reveals that the eye drops don't match the typical chemical make-up of eye drops
- If asking around about Owens, a Streetwise check will introduce them to Sadie Caldwell: a study partner of Owens'. Caldwell is another patient of Dr. Safford who has been experiencing vivid nightmares that have been getting progressively worse. Caldwell has a bottle of eye drops that she will use if questioned for more than a few moments. The more characters question Sadie, the more she will use the eye drops. A Notice check at -2 will reveal that were prescribed by Dr. Safford.
 - See Knowledge (Chemistry) check above if drops are analyzed. Successful Knowledge (Chemistry) check will also confirm that eye drops match those found in Owens' room



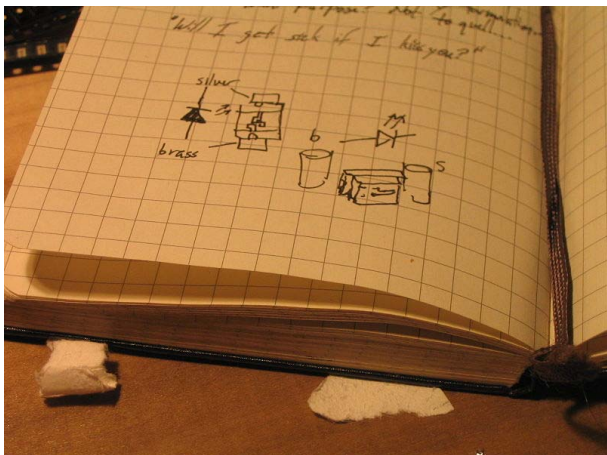
- A successful Streetwise check while researching around the student dorms (or a Notice check at +2 once the fight breaks out) will allow characters the opportunity to observe a rather heated argument occurring over a dorm room poker game. What starts out as a loud argument between two players erupts into a violent brawl. Fists are quickly replaced by nearby bludgeoning weapons (lamps, backpack with books, etc) as the students work out their hostilities. One of the students has been accused of cheating by the other.
- The other players eventually break up the melee, and if questioned afterward will reveal that neither of the students involved in the fight had had anything to drink, and that this group had played poker weekly for months and had never had the slightest argument break out. The money involved was paltry; each of the 5 players tossed in ten bucks for a seat. The "cheater" had won every hand since sitting down.
- A Notice check will show that in front of both seats that the brawling students had occupied are bottles of Dr.

Safford's eye drops. A Notice check at -2 will reveal that the two students being pulled away from each other have vibrantly blood-shot eyes.

- A successful Streetwise check will uncover that there have been a number of cases lately of students visiting the campus clinic to have severe eye irritation checked. Cases have been increasing over the past few days. If visited, three students are currently being examined, and five are in the waiting room. All students have very irritated eyes, and are constantly applying eye drops to them.
- If characters speak with the clinic's front office staff, a successful Persuasion check will get an off-hand remark warning characters to stay away from the new optometrist's shop. The office staff is frustrated with the increase in cases, so they begin at an Uncooperative level.
- Internet research (Investigate check) will reveal that before Dr. Safford set up shop in Pinebox, he had an established practice in Placentia, California. Further research (Investigate -2) will reveal that two months before opening up locally, three promising college students died mysteriously. Calling relations to the deceased students will connect them to Dr. Safford. Relations are hesitant to speak with strangers about the events though (Persuasion at -2 or they won't talk).
- Safford's office is closed for business. If characters wish to enter during the day, breaking into Safford's practice requires a Lockpicking check at -4 (very nice electronic lock) or a brick. The brick method will leave heroes with 10 minutes of search time before police arrive (though police will not be the first unexpected party on the scene). If characters attempt to enter the office under the cover of darkness, all doors will be left unlocked.
- The office holds the following:
 - Flash Drive: stuck into the USB port of Safford's computer is a flash drive containing the chemical formulas of numerous (useless) versions of Oracle. A Knowledge (Computer) check will grant access to the drive, and a Knowledge (Chemistry) will give evidence as to what the formulas might be related to. Bottles of eye drops (Notice check)
 - If later analyzed, eye drops are chemically similar to those found in Owens' room and in Caldwell's possessions.
 - Safford's journal (Lockpicking (desk drawer) and a Notice check -2 (false bottom))
- **Safford's journal**
- At first glance, the journal is a list of numeric sequences followed by gibberish
- Two successful Investigate checks will connect the numbers to patient identification tags. The tags are typed onto manila folders located throughout the front office
- Journal is encrypted Latin (Knowledge (Cryptography))

check -2 to find a cipher, Knowledge (Dead Languages) to translate)

- *Journal is a series of tests performed and their results. The largest number of tests performed were on Owens, followed by Sadie Caldwell.*



Action:

During the investigation at Safford's office, heroes will begin hearing pounding at the walls and shattering glass. All students addicted to Safford's treatments are trying to find more Oracle to satisfy their cravings. Students are unreasonable, and will tear apart anything standing between them and the narcotics. While violent and surging with adrenaline, they are still normal people and can be knocked unconscious without too much of an issue.

During the battle, characters making a Notice check at -2 will see the windows of the office being boarded up, and hear the doors being nailed shut. Within moments, a clean-up crew will set fire to the building and everyone inside.

Once the building is lit, characters can break down boarding to escape. They can carry/drag unconscious students to safety, but those still awake will continue their search for Oracle, ignoring the fire. When the heroes are outside, the clean-up crew has vanished.

Aftermath:

Heroes will be questioned by police if they are present when emergency services arrive, but the journal and any other evidence they retain will exonerate them. Safford is still at large, and is likely to open another office somewhere in the country.

Cast:

Addicted Students:

The addicted mob of students consists of two types of student: Fast and Strong. One of each type per character should provide enough of a challenge.

Fast Addict:

These are addicted students starting to develop some of what Oracle is capable of. They receive glimpses of actions before they occur and can react to them.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6

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

Edges: Quick

Strong Addict:

These are students who started physically fit, but are surging with adrenaline and frenzy from both the treatment and the onset of withdrawal.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6

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

Poker Players:



Cheater:

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6

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

Edges: Quick

Accuser:

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6

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