

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

# OUT OF SPACE

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Pelgrane Press

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# THE REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS

Publisher - Simon Rogers

A Scenario by Robin D. Laws

based on a story by Robert W. Chambers

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Trail of Cthulhu was written by Kenneth Hite,  
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## Behind the Pallid Meme

An Introduction by Robin D Laws

Writers who let themselves worry about the reach of their influence after they die can find a reassuring parable in the case of Robert W. Chambers. This Brooklyn-born author (1865-1933) was the Norah Roberts of his day, penning top-selling novels of love among the beautiful and moneyed. Like writers of commercial fiction before and after him, his grip on the popular tastes of his time consigned the bulk of his work to oblivion when that time passed. Yet it is a slim number of short stories—four weird tales in a collection only partly devoted to the horror genre—that keep his name and memory alive in the hearts of genre fans.

He owes this enduring place to H. P. Lovecraft, a writer who himself needed championing by others to rescue his work from obscurity. Lovecraft, who was five when *The King in Yellow* was published and outlived Chambers by only four years, singled him out for reserved praise in his critical manifesto of the weird, “Supernatural Horror in Literature:”

*Very genuine, though not without the typical mannered extravagance of the eighteen-nineties, is the strain of horror in the early work of Robert W. Chambers, since renowned for products of a very different quality. The King in Yellow, a series of vaguely connected short stories having as a background a monstrous and suppressed book whose perusal brings fright, madness, and spectral tragedy, really achieves notable heights of cosmic fear in spite of uneven interest and a somewhat trivial and affected cultivation of the Gallic studio atmosphere made popular by Du Maurier's Trilby.*

Some might say that Lovecraft calling another writer out for mannered

extravagance is like an octopus telling you that you eat too much shellfish. I say, in these two cases, bring on the mannered extravagance, pots and kettles be damned.

Lovecraft concludes his two-paragraph assessment of Chambers with another lamenting slap at his status as a boiler of literary pots: “One cannot help regretting that he did not further develop a vein in which he could so easily have become a recognised master.”

Fortunately for Chambers’ spot in the weird canon, Lovecraft also paid homage to him in his own work, by transforming the unifying element between the four stories, the book that leads to madness and the threat of apocalyptic social corrosion, into his own imaginary volume, *The Necronomicon*. Not to mention *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* and the rest, as added by Lovecraft, his circles, and his later followers.

Lovecraft follows Chambers’ cue by never making the *Necronomicon* the full focus of a story. Instead it’s a background element, a touchstone of terror identifying the action foreground as taking place in his singular, bleakly fantastic world.

Chambers’ evil book is not a tome of dangerous summoning spells and existentially maddening cosmic truths. It’s a play, a work of closet drama in verse, written more for the reading eye than for the stage. *The King in Yellow* depicts the doom of an otherworldly court of royal decadents alongside the Lake of Hali on the twin-sunned world of Carcosa.

(In another example of influence spreading like a contagion from one writer to another, these terms are borrowed from another forebear of the weird, Ambrose Bierce.)

As the narrator of “Repairer of Reputations” describes the history of the book that unhinges him, putting the entire account of his actions and perceptions in the story in doubt:

*When the French Government seized the translated copies which had just arrived in Paris, London, of course, became eager to read it. It is well known how the book spread like infectious disease, from city to city, from continent to continent, barred here, confiscated there, denounced by press and pulpit, censured even by the most advanced of literary anarchists. No definite principles had been violated in those wicked pages, no doctrine promulgated, no convictions outraged. It could not be judged by any known standard, yet, although it was acknowledged that the supreme note of art had been struck in “The King in Yellow,” all felt that human nature could not bear the strain, nor thrive on words in which the essence of purest poison lurked. The very banality and innocence of the first act only allowed the blow to fall afterward with more awful effect.*

The masterstroke of horror here lies in the elusiveness of the madness-generating effect. It is also a testament, in a twisted version of writerly hopefulness, to the power of the written word, to subtext over text. I certainly don’t want to drive you crazy when I write a work of horror for you, either in fiction or scenario form. But I sure want to mess you up. The unknown author of the *King in Yellow*, perhaps suicided, perhaps a fugitive,



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warps people's minds and in so doing changes the world.

I'd argue that here lies the distinguishing element of weird fiction—it is rooted in the fear of madness. It is the most cerebral flavor of horror, which at least in part explains its appeal to the geek tribe. A hundred years before we spoke of ideas going viral on the Internet, Robert Chambers was exploring the thought that an aesthetic expression, an idea, could filter through society like a disease and undo our minds from the inside out. It is a terror of thought, aesthetics and imagination all gone awry. And if you live in your head, as most of us of the geek persuasion do, there is no greater threat.

It is not the socio-sexual horror of *Dracula*, in which one fears the seduction of one's virtuous womenfolk by an irresistible, evil foreigner.

It is not the physical horror of the slasher film, in which one fears the destruction of the body by an unstoppable murderer (while perhaps secretly reveling in the destruction of one's not-so-virtuous womenfolk.)

It does connect, at least glancingly, to the transformational horror of werewolf mythology, in which one fears the monster within. But here the alteration is not merely one of the psyche but the intellect itself—the part of selfhood the sorts of people who play roleplaying games value above all.

In Lovecraft, the madness takes on a philosophical color not found in the more disruptively elusive and therefore more deeply irrational King in Yellow mythology. In the work of both writers, the obsessively curious man leads himself to his doom, as Victor von Frankenstein did before them. Lovecraft's heroes are destroyed when their early 20<sup>th</sup> century certitudes confront them with the essential indifference of the greater universe.

Events in his stories, or in fact the texts of books like the *Necronomicon*, shift them from a humanocentric view of the universe to one in which our hopes, dreams and impulses are revealed as utterly meaningless. Sometimes they, like the werewolf, discover that they're not human underneath their skins, reverting to ape-men or deep ones as they achieve their weird anagnorisis.

A Chambersian universe, on the other hand, doesn't even offer the solace of proto-existentialism. Men destroy themselves through the casual act of flipping open and reading a book. There is classic hubris in that choice, the assumption that the reader's mind will withstand whatever he finds there.

But we understand nothing of the playwright's motives, or the precise effect by which his verse drama unravels the intellect. It merely does, in the process opening up a world of supernatural possibility. The Yellow Sign motif in Chambers is not declarative, but suggestive, a conceit rather than an extrapolated assumption. This openness of meaning makes mythos a broad source of inspiration for other writers of the weird.

I certainly found myself hooked on the idea after completing the *Trail of Cthulhu* adaptation of "Repairer of Reputations" that appears here. As you'll see, the scenario literalizes the unreliable narrator's description of events, trapping a group of characters in a strange once-future, now-past alternate reality. If anything, the story has acquired additional power since the passing of its 1920 near-future date. Now we can read the disparities between the world envisioned by Chambers and perhaps completely imagined by its delusional viewpoint character as signs of a reality gone awry—no doubt due to the play's corrupting influence. Coincidentally, it's this idea that gives it a frisson of extra unease when rendered as a game

scenario. To triumph, the strapping, well-bred young PCs must turn back the Yellow Sign's assault on history. If they fail, perhaps you can return to the subjectivity of the original, by revealing that everything they seemingly went through existed only as a delusion in one of their clouded minds. (Try this only with a group you're confident won't storm the table and rain a furious fusillade of d6s at your head.)

Since there are four stories in Chambers' Yellow Sign cycle proper, it might seem natural to turn each of them into a corresponding quartet of Trail scenarios. Unfortunately, only "Repairer" yields itself to direct adaptation.

"In the Court of the Dragon" confronts us with a mad anti-epiphany, in which the protagonist visits the Church of St. Barnabé and experiences a vision of Carcosa. Though compelling as a vignette it doesn't offer much for a gang of GUMSHOE investigators to uncover.

"The Yellow Sign" features an encounter with a strange watchman, the twist being that, though still walking around, he's actually a rotting corpse. This shocking conclusion seems pretty basic for today's horror fan, for whom a zombie is only a starting assumption. You could certainly use that scene as a opening mystery, and have the investigators find the broader conspiracy responsible for the watchman's continuing animation. But that would take us a long way from the original.

"The Mask" presents a tale of suspended animation and revivification inspired by the then-recent discovery of liquid nitrogen. The scientific hubris that drives the jealous narrator to an act of misguided desperation is explained in part by the madness he acquires after reading the Yellow Sign. But this is a grace note in a story that doesn't present an investigative or adventurous

## The Repairer of Reputations

hook for adaptation. It even gives us a happy ending. Or, given that the narrator has read the dreaded book... *does it?*

With no direct adaptations in the offing, I had to pursue my case of Yellow Signitis through fiction. The result is *New Tales of the Yellow Sign*, a short story anthology available in ebook form from the Pelgrane Store (among many other ebook purveyors) and in print from Atomic Overmind.

Several of the stories springboard from the premise of the “Repairer of Reputations” scenario—that the book has not only destabilized minds, but has attacked history itself, leaving in its wake several timelines that should not be. “The Blood on the Wall in the Fortress” locates a meditation on the horrors of war in a history that never was, where Alsatian forces and Loyalists bombard one another across the ruined banks of the Rhine in 1947. “A Boat Full of Popes” jumps to the future of the Repairer timeline, to present a two-fisted investigative hero who led a resistance cell during the revolution of the Castaigne regime, and has now returned to his day job as a repairer of suicide machines. (Hint: they’re

not as antiseptic as they seem from the outside.) Up north in Canada, the struggle against a local despot turns the story of a boy and his dog into something less than heartwarming.

Other stories, set in our reality, take advantage of the central modernity of the King in Yellow as sanity-devouring meme. They feature literally killer apps, life during weird-time, and gaps in memory and motivation that drive a wedge of unreliability into its protagonist’s motivations.

Certainly the ideas explored in these stories could be cycled into a broader campaign inspired by the Yellow King mythology. These might take you to the banks of the Hali for a confrontation with a terrifying being whose mask-like face turns out to be flesh. Or they could pick up Chambers’ cue and use this only as a distant thought-motif, a symbol of madness and uncertain reality. As the PCs fight against a world warped by its existence, the play remains a background element, explaining all manner of supernatural weirdness. Such a cycle might take place in the quaint “my dear chap” milieu of the 1895-flavored 1920 seen in “Repairer.” Or, as in “Boat Full of Popes” you might

set it in the same timeline, but in 2012. The Castaigne dynasty has fallen and people of stout heart and good will battle to flush out traces of monstrosity left in the corners of the world.

Either version of this campaign frame—*Trail of Hastur*, if you want to call it that—would provide a newly disorienting context for weird horror in an investigative mold. The players sort of know the rules of the world, but then again don’t. You can mix your 19<sup>th</sup> century gaslight-era style tropes with those of the present day to keep them wondering exactly where they are. Maybe the mission would be to crack through the false reality—a subjective delusion made concrete—back into our timeline, the one that was meant to be. It wouldn’t be Chambers, but it would read from his playbook. Nostalgic but trippy, absinthe meets iPhones, mythos but not Lovecraft...

If you want Pelgrane to ask me to write this, you know who to lobby.

But in the meantime, you have a date with a weird 1920. Stay clear of those suicide chambers.

— Robin D. Laws, October 2012





## The Repairer of Reputations

### THE STORY

Robert W. Chambers, 1895



*“Ne raillons pas les fous; leur folie dure plus longtemps que la nôtre....  
Voilà toute la différence.”*

Toward the end of the year 1920 the Government of the United States had practically completed the programme, adopted during the last months of President Winthrop's administration. The country was apparently tranquil. Everybody knows how the Tariff and Labour questions were settled. The war with Germany, incident on that country's seizure of the Samoan Islands,

had left no visible scars upon the republic, and the temporary occupation of Norfolk by the invading army had been forgotten in the joy over repeated naval victories, and the subsequent ridiculous plight of General Von Gartenlaube's forces in the State of New Jersey. The Cuban and Hawaiian investments had paid one hundred per cent and the territory of Samoa was well worth its cost as a coaling station. The country was in a superb state of defence. Every coast city had been well supplied with land fortifications; the army under the parental eye of the General Staff, organized according to the Prussian system, had been increased to 300,000 men, with a territorial reserve of a million; and six magnificent squadrons of cruisers and battle-ships patrolled the six stations of the navigable seas, leaving a steam reserve amply fitted to control home waters. The gentlemen from the West had

at last been constrained to acknowledge that a college for the training of diplomats was as necessary as law schools are for the training of barristers; consequently we were no longer represented abroad by incompetent patriots. The nation was prosperous; Chicago, for a moment paralyzed after a second great fire, had risen from its ruins, white and imperial, and more beautiful than the white city which had been built for its plaything in 1893. Everywhere good architecture was replacing bad, and even in New York, a sudden craving for decency had swept away a great portion of the existing horrors. Streets had been widened, properly paved and lighted, trees had been planted, squares laid out, elevated structures demolished and underground roads built to replace them. The new government buildings and barracks were fine bits of architecture, and the long

*The Repairer of Reputations* is a *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario based on the story of the same name by Robert W. Chambers. It is one of four short horror stories incorporating Chambers' mythology of *The King In Yellow*, a decadent play whose publication brings madness and supernatural presences into the world. His mythology was later subsumed into the Cthulhu canon when H. P. Lovecraft, and his circle and later followers, made reference to it in their tales of the mythos.

This scenario allows the players to recreate an alternate version of the story, in which their characters, who do not appear in the original, confront the nation-shaking conspiracy of its central villains. They either destroy it, or are destroyed themselves.

“The Repairer of Reputations” is a work of speculative fiction, published in 1895 but set twenty-five years later, in 1920. Today, close to a century after that date, it reads as an alternate history. Viewed through modern eyes, its seemingly utopian future takes on a distinctly nightmarish quality. The scenario plays with this by suggesting that the publication of *The King in Yellow* has warped history in a disturbing direction. The alien beings described in the play are as real as the antagonists believe them to be. They want their literal heir of Hastur, Hildred Castaigne, to ascend to the Imperial throne of their America—Hastur's America.

We'll return to the scenario in a moment. For ease of reference, we first present the original story (which is now in the public domain), in lightly annotated form.

## The Repairer of Reputations

system of stone quays which completely surrounded the island had been turned into parks which proved a god-send to the population. The subsidizing of the state theatre and state opera brought its own reward. The United States National Academy of Design was much like European institutions of the same kind. Nobody envied the Secretary of Fine Arts, either his cabinet position or his portfolio. The Secretary of Forestry and Game Preservation had a much easier time, thanks to the new system of National Mounted Police. We had profited well by the latest treaties with France and England; the exclusion of foreign-born Jews as a measure of self-preservation, the settlement of the new independent negro state of Suanee, the checking of immigration, the new laws concerning naturalization, and the gradual centralization of power in the executive all contributed to national calm and prosperity. When the Government solved the Indian problem and squadrons of Indian cavalry scouts in native costume were substituted for the pitiable organizations tacked on to the tail of skeletonized regiments by a former Secretary of War, the nation drew a long sigh of relief. When, after the colossal Congress of Religions, bigotry and intolerance were laid in their graves and kindness and charity began to draw warring sects together, many thought the millennium had arrived, at least in the new world which after all is a world by itself.

But self-preservation is the first law, and the United States had to look on in helpless sorrow as Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium writhed in the throes of Anarchy, while Russia, watching from the Caucasus, stooped and bound them one by one.

In the city of New York the summer of 1899 was signalized by the dismantling of the Elevated Railroads. The summer of 1900 will live in the memories of New York people for many a cycle; the Dodge Statue<sup>1</sup> was removed in that year. In the following winter began that agitation for the repeal of the laws prohibiting suicide which bore its final fruit in the month of April, 1920, when the first Government Lethal Chamber was opened on Washington Square.

I had walked down that day from Dr. Archer's house on Madison Avenue, where I had been as a mere formality. Ever since that fall from my horse, four years before, I had been troubled at times with pains in the back of my head and neck, but now for months they had been absent, and the doctor sent me away that day saying there was nothing more to be cured in me. It was hardly worth his fee to be told that; I knew it myself. Still I did not grudge him the money. What I minded was the mistake which he made at first. When they picked me up from the pavement where I lay unconscious, and somebody had mercifully sent a bullet through my horse's head, I was carried to Dr. Archer, and he, pronouncing my brain affected, placed me in his private asylum where I was obliged to endure treatment for insanity. At last he decided that I was well, and I, knowing that my mind had always been as sound as his, if not sounder, "paid my tuition" as he jokingly called it, and left. I told him, smiling, that I would get even with him for his mistake, and he laughed heartily, and asked me to call once in a while. I did so, hoping for a chance to even up accounts, but he gave me none, and I told him I would wait.

The fall from my horse had fortunately left no evil results; on the contrary it

had changed my whole character for the better. From a lazy young man about town, I had become active, energetic, temperate, and above all—oh, above all else—ambitious. There was only one thing which troubled me, I laughed at my own uneasiness, and yet it troubled me.

During my convalescence I had bought and read for the first time, *The King in Yellow*. I remember after finishing the first act that it occurred to me that I had better stop. I started up and flung the book into the fireplace; the volume struck the barred grate and fell open on the hearth in the firelight. If I had not caught a glimpse of the opening words in the second act I should never have finished it, but as I stooped to pick it up, my eyes became riveted to the open page, and with a cry of terror, or perhaps it was of joy so poignant that I suffered in every nerve, I snatched the thing out of the coals and crept shaking to my bedroom, where I read it and reread it, and wept and laughed and trembled with a horror which at times assails me yet. This is the thing that troubles me, for I cannot forget Carcosa where black stars hang in the heavens; where the shadows of men's thoughts lengthen in the afternoon, when the twin suns sink into the lake of Hali; and my mind will bear for ever the memory of the Pallid Mask. I pray God will curse the writer, as the writer has cursed the world with this beautiful, stupendous creation, terrible in its simplicity, irresistible in its truth—a world which now trembles before the King in Yellow. When the French Government seized the translated copies which had just arrived in Paris, London, of course, became eager to read it. It is well known how the book spread like an infectious disease,

<sup>1</sup> The memory of abolitionist and Native American rights activist William Earle Dodge (1805-1883) is clearly anathema to the placid oppression of Hastur's America. Although Prohibition is in force in this version of 1920s America, just as it was in our timeline, Dodge's role as a temperance campaigner wasn't enough to save his statue from demolition.



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from city to city, from continent to continent, barred out here, confiscated there, denounced by Press and pulpit, censured even by the most advanced of literary anarchists. No definite principles had been violated in those wicked pages, no doctrine promulgated, no convictions outraged. It could not be judged by any known standard, yet, although it was acknowledged that the supreme note of art had been struck in *The King in Yellow*, all felt that human nature could not bear the strain, nor thrive on words in which the essence of purest poison lurked. The very banality and innocence of the first act only allowed the blow to fall afterward with more awful effect.

It was, I remember, the 13th day of April, 1920, that the first Government Lethal Chamber was established on the south side of Washington Square, between Wooster Street and South Fifth Avenue. The block which had formerly consisted of a lot of shabby old buildings, used as cafés and restaurants for foreigners, had been acquired by the Government in the winter of 1898. The French and Italian cafés and restaurants were torn down; the whole block was enclosed by a gilded iron railing, and converted into a lovely garden with lawns, flowers and fountains. In the centre of the garden stood a small, white building, severely classical in architecture, and surrounded by thickets of flowers. Six Ionic columns supported the roof, and the single door was of bronze. A splendid marble group of the "Fates" stood before the door, the work of a young American sculptor, Boris Yvain, who had died in Paris when only twenty-three years old<sup>2</sup>.

The inauguration ceremonies were in progress as I crossed University Place and entered the square. I threaded my way through the silent throng of

spectators, but was stopped at Fourth Street by a cordon of police. A regiment of United States lancers were drawn up in a hollow square round the Lethal Chamber. On a raised tribune facing Washington Park stood the Governor of New York, and behind him were grouped the Mayor of New York and Brooklyn, the Inspector-General of Police, the Commandant of the state troops, Colonel Livingston, military aid to the President of the United States, General Blount, commanding at Governor's Island, Major-General Hamilton, commanding the garrison of New York and Brooklyn, Admiral Buffby of the fleet in the North River, Surgeon-General Lanceford, the staff of the National Free Hospital, Senators Wyse and Franklin of New York, and the Commissioner of Public Works. The tribune was surrounded by a squadron of hussars of the National Guard.

The Governor was finishing his reply to the short speech of the Surgeon-General. I heard him say: "The laws prohibiting suicide and providing punishment for any attempt at self-destruction have been repealed. The Government has seen fit to acknowledge the right of man to end an existence which may have become intolerable to him, through physical suffering or mental despair. It is believed that the community will be benefited by the removal of such people from their midst. Since the passage of this law, the number of suicides in the United States has not increased. Now the Government has determined to establish a Lethal Chamber in every city, town and village in the country, it remains to be seen whether or not that class of human creatures from whose desponding ranks new victims of self-destruction fall daily will accept the relief thus provided." He paused, and turned to the white Lethal Chamber. The

silence in the street was absolute. "There a painless death awaits him who can no longer bear the sorrows of this life. If death is welcome let him seek it there." Then quickly turning to the military aid of the President's household, he said, "I declare the Lethal Chamber open," and again facing the vast crowd he cried in a clear voice: "Citizens of New York and of the United States of America, through me the Government declares the Lethal Chamber to be open."

The solemn hush was broken by a sharp cry of command, the squadron of hussars filed after the Governor's carriage, the lancers wheeled and formed along Fifth Avenue to wait for the commandant of the garrison, and the mounted police followed them. I left the crowd to gape and stare at the white marble Death Chamber, and, crossing South Fifth Avenue, walked along the western side of that thoroughfare to Bleecker Street. Then I turned to the right and stopped before a dingy shop which bore the sign:

HAWBERK, ARMOURER.

I glanced in at the doorway and saw Hawberk busy in his little shop at the end of the hall. He looked up, and catching sight of me cried in his deep, hearty voice, "Come in, Mr. Castaigne!" Constance, his daughter, rose to meet me as I crossed the threshold, and held out her pretty hand, but I saw the blush of disappointment on her cheeks, and knew that it was another Castaigne she had expected, my cousin Louis. I smiled at her confusion and complimented her on the banner she was embroidering from a coloured plate. Old Hawberk sat riveting the worn greaves of some ancient suit of armour, and the ting! Ting! Ting! Of his little hammer sounded pleasantly in the quaint shop. Presently he dropped his hammer, and fussed about for a moment with a tiny wrench.

<sup>2</sup>Yvain appears in another of Chamber's *Yellow Sign* stories, "The Mask."

## The Repairer of Reputations

The soft clash of the mail sent a thrill of pleasure through me. I loved to hear the music of steel brushing against steel, the mellow shock of the mallet on thigh pieces, and the jingle of chain armour. That was the only reason I went to see Hawberk. He had never interested me personally, nor did Constance, except for the fact of her being in love with Louis. This did occupy my attention, and sometimes even kept me awake at night. But I knew in my heart that all would come right, and that I should arrange their future as I expected to arrange that of my kind doctor, John Archer. However, I should never have troubled myself about visiting them just then, had it not been, as I say, that the music of the tinkling hammer had for me this strong fascination. I would sit for hours, listening and listening, and when a stray sunbeam struck the inlaid steel, the sensation it gave me was almost too keen to endure. My eyes would become fixed, dilating with a pleasure that stretched every nerve almost to breaking, until some movement of the old armourer cut off the ray of sunlight, then, still thrilling secretly, I leaned back and listened again to the sound of the polishing rag, swish! Swish! Rubbing rust from the rivets.

Constance worked with the embroidery over her knees, now and then pausing to examine more closely the pattern in the coloured plate from the Metropolitan Museum.

"Who is this for?" I asked.

Hawberk explained, that in addition to the treasures of armour in the Metropolitan Museum of which he had been appointed armourer, he also had charge of several collections belonging to rich amateurs. This was the missing greave of a famous suit which a client of his had traced to a little shop in Paris on the Quai d'Orsay. He, Hawberk, had negotiated for and secured the greave, and now the suit was complete.

He laid down his hammer and read me the history of the suit, traced since 1450 from owner to owner until it was acquired by Thomas Stainbridge. When his superb collection was sold, this client of Hawberk's bought the suit, and since then the search for the missing greave had been pushed until it was, almost by accident, located in Paris.

"Did you continue the search so persistently without any certainty of the greave being still in existence?" I demanded.

"Of course," he replied coolly.

Then for the first time I took a personal interest in Hawberk.

"It was worth something to you," I ventured.

"No," he replied, laughing, "my pleasure in finding it was my reward."

"Have you no ambition to be rich?" I asked, smiling.

"My one ambition is to be the best armourer in the world," he answered gravely.

Constance asked me if I had seen the ceremonies at the Lethal Chamber. She herself had noticed cavalry passing up Broadway that morning, and had wished to see the inauguration, but her father wanted the banner finished, and she had stayed at his request.

"Did you see your cousin, Mr. Castaigne, there?" she asked, with the slightest tremor of her soft eyelashes.

"No," I replied carelessly. "Louis' regiment is manoeuvring out in Westchester County." I rose and picked up my hat and cane.

"Are you going upstairs to see the lunatic again?" laughed old Hawberk. If Hawberk knew how I loathe that word "lunatic," he would never use it in my presence.

It rouses certain feelings within me which I do not care to explain. However, I answered him quietly: "I think I shall drop in and see Mr. Wilde for a moment or two."

"Poor fellow," said Constance, with a shake of the head, "it must be hard to live alone year after year poor, crippled and almost demented. It is very good of you, Mr. Castaigne, to visit him as often as you do."

"I think he is vicious," observed Hawberk, beginning again with his hammer. I listened to the golden tinkle on the greave plates; when he had finished I replied:

"No, he is not vicious, nor is he in the least demented. His mind is a wonder chamber, from which he can extract treasures that you and I would give years of our life to acquire."

Hawberk laughed.

I continued a little impatiently: "He knows history as no one else could know it. Nothing, however trivial, escapes his search, and his memory is so absolute, so precise in details, that were it known in New York that such a man existed, the people could not honour him enough."

"Nonsense," muttered Hawberk, searching on the floor for a fallen rivet.

"Is it nonsense," I asked, managing to suppress what I felt, "is it nonsense when he says that the tassets and cuissards of the enamelled suit of armour commonly known as the 'Prince's Emblazoned' can be found among a mass of rusty theatrical properties, broken stoves and ragpicker's refuse in a garret in Pell Street?"

Hawberk's hammer fell to the ground, but he picked it up and asked, with a great deal of calm, how I knew that the tassets and left cuissard were missing from the "Prince's Emblazoned."



## Out of Space

"I did not know until Mr. Wilde mentioned it to me the other day. He said they were in the garret of 998 Pell Street."

"Nonsense," he cried, but I noticed his hand trembling under his leathern apron.

"Is this nonsense too?" I asked pleasantly, "is it nonsense when Mr. Wilde continually speaks of you as the Marquis of Avonshire and of Miss Constance—"

I did not finish, for Constance had started to her feet with terror written on every feature. Hawberk looked at me and slowly smoothed his leathern apron.

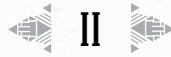
"That is impossible," he observed, "Mr. Wilde may know a great many things—"

"About armour, for instance, and the 'Prince's Emblazoned,'" I interposed, smiling.

"Yes," he continued, slowly, "about armour also—may be—but he is wrong in regard to the Marquis of Avonshire, who, as you know, killed his wife's traducer years ago, and went to Australia where he did not long survive his wife."

"Mr. Wilde is wrong," murmured Constance. Her lips were blanched, but her voice was sweet and calm.

"Let us agree, if you please, that in this one circumstance Mr. Wilde is wrong," I said.



I climbed the three dilapidated flights of stairs, which I had so often climbed before, and knocked at a small door at the end of the corridor. Mr. Wilde opened the door and I walked in.

When he had double-locked the door and pushed a heavy chest against it, he came and sat down beside me, peering up into my face with his little light-coloured eyes. Half a dozen new scratches covered his nose and cheeks, and the silver wires which supported his artificial ears had become displaced. I thought I had never seen him so hideously fascinating. He had no ears. The artificial ones, which now stood out at an angle from the fine wire, were his one weakness. They were made of wax and painted a shell pink, but the rest of his face was yellow. He might better have revelled in the luxury of some artificial fingers for his left hand, which was absolutely fingerless, but it seemed to cause him no inconvenience, and he was satisfied with his wax ears. He was very small, scarcely higher than a child of ten, but his arms were magnificently developed, and his thighs as thick as any athlete's. Still, the most remarkable thing about Mr. Wilde was that a man of his marvellous intelligence and knowledge should have such a head. It was flat and pointed, like the heads of many of those unfortunates whom people imprison in asylums for the weak-minded. Many called him insane, but I knew him to be as sane as I was.

I do not deny that he was eccentric; the mania he had for keeping that cat and teasing her until she flew at his face like a demon, was certainly eccentric. I never could understand why he kept the creature, nor what pleasure he found in shutting himself up in his room with

this surly, vicious beast. I remember once, glancing up from the manuscript I was studying by the light of some tallow dips, and seeing Mr. Wilde squatting motionless on his high chair, his eyes fairly blazing with excitement, while the cat, which had risen from her place before the stove, came creeping across the floor right at him. Before I could move she flattened her belly to the ground, crouched, trembled, and sprang into his face. Howling and foaming they rolled over and over on the floor, scratching and clawing, until the cat screamed and fled under the cabinet, and Mr. Wilde turned over on his back, his limbs contracting and curling up like the legs of a dying spider. He was eccentric.

Mr. Wilde had climbed into his high chair, and, after studying my face, picked up a dog's-eared ledger and opened it.

"Henry B. Matthews," he read, "book-keeper with Whysot Whysot and Company, dealers in church ornaments. Called April 3rd. Reputation damaged on the race-track. Known as a welcher. Reputation to be repaired by August 1st. Retainer Five Dollars." He turned the page and ran his fingerless knuckles down the closely-written columns.

"P. Greene Dusenberry, Minister of the Gospel, Fairbeach, New Jersey. Reputation damaged in the Bowery. To be repaired as soon as possible. Retainer \$100."

He coughed and added, "Called, April 6th."

"Then you are not in need of money, Mr. Wilde," I inquired.

"Listen," he coughed again.

"Mrs. C. Hamilton Chester, of Chester Park, New York City. Called April 7th. Reputation damaged at Dieppe, France. To be repaired by October 1st Retainer \$500."

## The Repairer of Reputations

"Note.—C. Hamilton Chester, Captain U.S.S. 'Avalanche', ordered home from South Sea Squadron October 1st."

"Well," I said, "the profession of a Repairer of Reputations is lucrative."

His colourless eyes sought mine, "I only wanted to demonstrate that I was correct. You said it was impossible to succeed as a Repairer of Reputations; that even if I did succeed in certain cases it would cost me more than I would gain by it. To-day I have five hundred men in my employ, who are poorly paid, but who pursue the work with an enthusiasm which possibly may be born of fear. These men enter every shade and grade of society; some even are pillars of the most exclusive social temples; others are the prop and pride of the financial world; still others, hold undisputed sway among the 'Fancy and the Talent.' I choose them at my leisure from those who reply to my advertisements. It is easy enough, they are all cowards. I could treble the number in twenty days if I wished. So you see, those who have in their keeping the reputations of their fellow-citizens, I have in my pay."

"They may turn on you," I suggested.

He rubbed his thumb over his cropped ears, and adjusted the wax substitutes. "I think not," he murmured thoughtfully, "I seldom have to apply the whip, and then only once. Besides they like their wages."

"How do you apply the whip?" I demanded.

His face for a moment was awful to look upon. His eyes dwindled to a pair of green sparks.

"I invite them to come and have a little chat with me," he said in a soft voice.

A knock at the door interrupted him, and his face resumed its amiable expression.

"Who is it?" he inquired.

"Mr. Steylette," was the answer.

"Come to-morrow," replied Mr. Wilde.

"Impossible," began the other, but was silenced by a sort of bark from Mr. Wilde.

"Come to-morrow," he repeated.

We heard somebody move away from the door and turn the corner by the stairway.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"Arnold Steylette, Owner and Editor in Chief of the great New York daily."

He drummed on the ledger with his fingerless hand adding: "I pay him very badly, but he thinks it a good bargain."

"Arnold Steylette!" I repeated amazed.

"Yes," said Mr. Wilde, with a self-satisfied cough.

The cat, which had entered the room as he spoke, hesitated, looked up at him and snarled. He climbed down from the chair and squatting on the floor, took the creature into his arms and caressed her. The cat ceased snarling and presently began a loud purring which seemed to increase in timbre as he stroked her. "Where are the notes?" I asked. He pointed to the table, and for the hundredth time I picked up the bundle of manuscript entitled—

"THE IMPERIAL DYNASTY OF AMERICA."

One by one I studied the well-worn pages, worn only by my own handling, and although I knew all by heart, from the beginning, "When from Carcosa, the Hyades, Hastur, and Aldebaran," to "Castaigne, Louis de Calvados, born December 19th, 1877," I read it with an eager, rapt attention, pausing to repeat parts of it aloud, and dwelling especially

on "Hildred de Calvados, only son of Hildred Castaigne and Edythe Landes Castaigne, first in succession," etc., etc.

When I finished, Mr. Wilde nodded and coughed.

"Speaking of your legitimate ambition," he said, "how do Constance and Louis get along?"

"She loves him," I replied simply.

The cat on his knee suddenly turned and struck at his eyes, and he flung her off and climbed on to the chair opposite me.

"And Dr. Archer! But that's a matter you can settle any time you wish," he added.

"Yes," I replied, "Dr. Archer can wait, but it is time I saw my cousin Louis."

"It is time," he repeated. Then he took another ledger from the table and ran over the leaves rapidly. "We are now in communication with ten thousand men," he muttered. "We can count on one hundred thousand within the first twenty-eight hours, and in forty-eight hours the state will rise en masse. The country follows the state, and the portion that will not, I mean California and the Northwest, might better never have been inhabited. I shall not send them the Yellow Sign."

The blood rushed to my head, but I only answered, "A new broom sweeps clean."

"The ambition of Caesar and of Napoleon pales before that which could not rest until it had seized the minds of men and controlled even their unborn thoughts," said Mr. Wilde.

"You are speaking of the King in Yellow," I groaned, with a shudder.

"He is a king whom emperors have served."

"I am content to serve him," I replied.

## Out of Space

Mr. Wilde sat rubbing his ears with his crippled hand. "Perhaps Constance does not love him," he suggested.

I started to reply, but a sudden burst of military music from the street below drowned my voice. The twentieth dragoon regiment, formerly in garrison at Mount St. Vincent, was returning from the manoeuvres in Westchester County, to its new barracks on East Washington Square. It was my cousin's regiment. They were a fine lot of fellows, in their pale blue, tight-fitting jackets, jaunty busbys and white riding breeches with the double yellow stripe, into which their limbs seemed moulded. Every other squadron was armed with lances, from the metal points of which fluttered yellow and white pennons. The band passed, playing the regimental march, then came the colonel and staff, the horses crowding and trampling, while their heads bobbed in unison, and the pennons fluttered from their lance points. The troopers, who rode with the beautiful English seat, looked brown as berries from their bloodless campaign among the farms of Westchester, and the music of their sabres against the stirrups, and the jingle of spurs and carbines was delightful to me. I saw Louis riding with his squadron. He was as handsome an officer as I have ever seen. Mr. Wilde, who had mounted a chair by the window, saw him too, but said nothing. Louis turned and looked straight at Hawberk's shop as he passed, and I could see the flush on his brown cheeks. I think Constance must have been at the window. When the last troopers had clattered by, and the last pennons vanished into South Fifth Avenue, Mr. Wilde clambered out of his chair and dragged the chest away from the door.

"Yes," he said, "it is time that you saw your cousin Louis."

He unlocked the door and I picked up my hat and stick and stepped into the corridor. The stairs were dark. Groping about, I set my foot on something soft, which snarled and spit, and I aimed a murderous blow at the cat, but my cane shivered to splinters against the balustrade, and the beast scurried back into Mr. Wilde's room.

Passing Hawberk's door again I saw him still at work on the armour, but I did not stop, and stepping out into Bleeker Street, I followed it to Wooster, skirted the grounds of the Lethal Chamber, and crossing Washington Park went straight to my rooms in the Benedick. Here I lunched comfortably, read the Herald and the Meteor, and finally went to the steel safe in my bedroom and set the time combination. The three and three-quarter minutes which it is necessary to wait, while the time lock is opening, are to me golden moments. From the instant I set the combination to the moment when I grasp the knobs and swing back the solid steel doors, I live in an ecstasy of expectation. Those moments must be like moments passed in Paradise. I know what I am to find at the end of the time limit. I know what the massive safe holds secure for me, for me alone, and the exquisite pleasure of waiting is hardly enhanced when the safe opens and I lift, from its velvet crown, a diadem of purest gold, blazing with diamonds. I do this every day, and yet the joy of waiting and at last touching again the diadem, only seems to increase as the days pass. It is a diadem fit for a King among kings, an Emperor among emperors. The King in Yellow might scorn it, but it shall be worn by his royal servant.

I held it in my arms until the alarm in the safe rang harshly, and then tenderly, proudly, I replaced it and shut the steel doors. I walked slowly back into my study, which faces Washington

Square, and leaned on the window sill. The afternoon sun poured into my windows, and a gentle breeze stirred the branches of the elms and maples in the park, now covered with buds and tender foliage. A flock of pigeons circled about the tower of the Memorial Church; sometimes alighting on the purple tiled roof, sometimes wheeling downward to the lotos fountain in front of the marble arch. The gardeners were busy with the flower beds around the fountain, and the freshly turned earth smelled sweet and spicy. A lawn mower, drawn by a fat white horse, clinked across the green sward, and watering-carts poured showers of spray over the asphalt drives. Around the statue of Peter Stuyvesant, which in 1897 had replaced the monstrosity supposed to represent Garibaldi<sup>3</sup>, children played in the spring sunshine, and nurse girls wheeled elaborate baby carriages with a reckless disregard for the pasty-faced occupants, which could probably be explained by the presence of half a dozen trim dragoon troopers languidly lolling on the benches. Through the trees, the Washington Memorial Arch glistened like silver in the sunshine, and beyond, on the eastern extremity of the square the gray stone barracks of the dragoons, and the white granite artillery stables were alive with colour and motion.

I looked at the Lethal Chamber on the corner of the square opposite. A few curious people still lingered about the gilded iron railing, but inside the grounds the paths were deserted. I watched the fountains ripple and sparkle; the sparrows had already found this new bathing nook, and the basins were covered with the dusty-feathered little things. Two or three white peacocks picked their way across the lawns, and a drab coloured pigeon sat so motionless on the arm of one of the "Fates," that it seemed to be a part of the sculptured stone.



## The Repairer of Reputations

As I was turning carelessly away, a slight commotion in the group of curious loiterers around the gates attracted my attention. A young man had entered, and was advancing with nervous strides along the gravel path which leads to the bronze doors of the Lethal Chamber. He paused a moment before the "Fates," and as he raised his head to those three mysterious faces, the pigeon rose from its sculptured perch, circled about for a moment and wheeled to the east. The young man pressed his hand to his face, and then with an undefinable gesture sprang up the marble steps, the bronze doors closed behind him, and half an hour later the loiterers slouched away, and the frightened pigeon returned to its perch in the arms of Fate.

I put on my hat and went out into the park for a little walk before dinner. As I crossed the central driveway a group of officers passed, and one of them called out, "Hello, Hildred," and came back to shake hands with me. It was my cousin Louis, who stood smiling and tapping his spurred heels with his riding-whip.

"Just back from Westchester," he said; "been doing the bucolic; milk and curds, you know, dairy-maids in sunbonnets, who say 'haeow' and 'I don't think' when you tell them they are pretty. I'm nearly dead for a square meal at Delmonico's. What's the news?"

"There is none," I replied pleasantly. "I saw your regiment coming in this morning."

"Did you? I didn't see you. Where were you?"

"In Mr. Wilde's window."

"Oh, hell!" he began impatiently, "that man is stark mad! I don't understand why you—"

He saw how annoyed I felt by this outburst, and begged my pardon.

"Really, old chap," he said, "I don't mean to run down a man you like, but for the life of me I can't see what the deuce you find in common with Mr. Wilde. He's not well bred, to put it generously; he is hideously deformed; his head is the head of a criminally insane person. You know yourself he's been in an asylum—"

"So have I," I interrupted calmly.

Louis looked startled and confused for a moment, but recovered and slapped me heartily on the shoulder. "You were completely cured," he began; but I stopped him again.

"I suppose you mean that I was simply acknowledged never to have been insane."

"Of course that—that's what I meant," he laughed.

I disliked his laugh because I knew it was forced, but I nodded gaily and asked him where he was going. Louis looked after his brother officers who had now almost reached Broadway.

"We had intended to sample a Brunswick cocktail, but to tell you the truth I was anxious for an excuse to go and see Hawberk instead. Come along, I'll make you my excuse."

We found old Hawberk, neatly attired in a fresh spring suit, standing at the door of his shop and sniffing the air.

"I had just decided to take Constance for a little stroll before dinner," he replied to the impetuous volley of questions from Louis. "We thought of walking on the park terrace along the North River."

At that moment Constance appeared and grew pale and rosy by turns as Louis

bent over her small gloved fingers. I tried to excuse myself, alleging an engagement uptown, but Louis and Constance would not listen, and I saw I was expected to remain and engage old Hawberk's attention. After all it would be just as well if I kept my eye on Louis, I thought, and when they hailed a Spring Street horse-car, I got in after them and took my seat beside the armourer.

The beautiful line of parks and granite terraces overlooking the wharves along the North River, which were built in 1910 and finished in the autumn of 1917, had become one of the most popular promenades in the metropolis. They extended from the battery to 190th Street, overlooking the noble river and affording a fine view of the Jersey shore and the Highlands opposite. Cafés and restaurants were scattered here and there among the trees, and twice a week military bands from the garrison played in the kiosques on the parapets.

We sat down in the sunshine on the bench at the foot of the equestrian statue of General Sheridan. Constance tipped her sunshade to shield her eyes, and she and Louis began a murmuring conversation which was impossible to catch. Old Hawberk, leaning on his ivory headed cane, lighted an excellent cigar, the mate to which I politely refused, and smiled at vacancy. The sun hung low above the Staten Island woods, and the bay was dyed with golden hues reflected from the sun-warmed sails of the shipping in the harbour.

Brigs, schooners, yachts, clumsy ferry-boats, their decks swarming with people, railroad transports carrying lines of brown, blue and white freight cars, stately sound steamers, déclassé tramp steamers, coasters, dredgers, scows, and everywhere pervading the

3 Italian national hero and revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) is disdained in Hastur's America, both as a revolutionary and as a symbol of Italian-American pride.

## Out of Space

entire bay impudent little tugs puffing and whistling officiously;—these were the craft which churned the sunlight waters as far as the eye could reach. In calm contrast to the hurry of sailing vessel and steamer a silent fleet of white warships lay motionless in midstream.

Constance's merry laugh aroused me from my reverie.

"What are you staring at?" she inquired.

"Nothing—the fleet," I smiled.

Then Louis told us what the vessels were, pointing out each by its relative position to the old Red Fort on Governor's Island.

"That little cigar shaped thing is a torpedo boat," he explained; "there are four more lying close together. They are the Tarpon, the Falcon, the Sea Fox, and the Octopus. The gunboats just above are the Princeton, the Champlain, the Still Water and the Erie. Next to them lie the cruisers Faragut and Los Angeles, and above them the battle ships California, and Dakota, and the Washington which is the flag ship. Those two squatty looking chunks of metal which are anchored there off Castle William are the double turreted monitors Terrible and Magnificent; behind them lies the ram, Osceola."

Constance looked at him with deep approval in her beautiful eyes. "What loads of things you know for a soldier," she said, and we all joined in the laugh which followed.

Presently Louis rose with a nod to us and offered his arm to Constance, and they strolled away along the river wall. Hawberk watched them for a moment and then turned to me.

"Mr. Wilde was right," he said. "I have found the missing tassets and left

cuissard of the 'Prince's Emblazoned,' in a vile old junk garret in Pell Street."

"998?" I inquired, with a smile.

"Yes."

"Mr. Wilde is a very intelligent man," I observed.

"I want to give him the credit of this most important discovery," continued Hawberk. "And I intend it shall be known that he is entitled to the fame of it."

"He won't thank you for that," I answered sharply; "please say nothing about it."

"Do you know what it is worth?" said Hawberk.

"No, fifty dollars, perhaps."

"It is valued at five hundred, but the owner of the 'Prince's Emblazoned' will give two thousand dollars to the person who completes his suit; that reward also belongs to Mr. Wilde."

"He doesn't want it! He refuses it!" I answered angrily. "What do you know about Mr. Wilde? He doesn't need the money. He is rich—or will be—richer than any living man except myself. What will we care for money then—what will we care, he and I, when—when—"

"When what?" demanded Hawberk, astonished.

"You will see," I replied, on my guard again.

He looked at me narrowly, much as Doctor Archer used to, and I knew he thought I was mentally unsound. Perhaps it was fortunate for him that he did not use the word lunatic just then.

"No," I replied to his unspoken thought,

"I am not mentally weak; my mind is as healthy as Mr. Wilde's. I do not care to explain just yet what I have on hand, but it is an investment which will pay more than mere gold, silver and precious stones. It will secure the happiness and prosperity of a continent—yes, a hemisphere!"

"Oh," said Hawberk.

"And eventually," I continued more quietly, "it will secure the happiness of the whole world."

"And incidentally your own happiness and prosperity as well as Mr. Wilde's?"

"Exactly," I smiled. But I could have throttled him for taking that tone.

He looked at me in silence for a while and then said very gently, "Why don't you give up your books and studies, Mr. Castaigne, and take a tramp among the mountains somewhere or other? You used to be fond of fishing. Take a cast or two at the trout in the Rangelys."

"I don't care for fishing any more," I answered, without a shade of annoyance in my voice.

"You used to be fond of everything," he continued; "athletics, yachting, shooting, riding—"

"I have never cared to ride since my fall," I said quietly.

"Ah, yes, your fall," he repeated, looking away from me.

I thought this nonsense had gone far enough, so I brought the conversation back to Mr. Wilde; but he was scanning my face again in a manner highly offensive to me.

"Mr. Wilde," he repeated, "do you know what he did this afternoon? He came downstairs and nailed a sign over the hall door next to mine; it read:

## The Repairer of Reputations

"MR. WILDE, REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS. Third Bell."

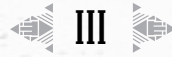
"Do you know what a Repairer of Reputations can be?"

"I do," I replied, suppressing the rage within.

"Oh," he said again.

Louis and Constance came strolling by and stopped to ask if we would join them. Hawberk looked at his watch. At the same moment a puff of smoke shot from the casemates of Castle William, and the boom of the sunset gun rolled across the water and was re-echoed from the Highlands opposite. The flag came running down from the flag-pole, the bugles sounded on the white decks of the warships, and the first electric light sparkled out from the Jersey shore.

As I turned into the city with Hawberk I heard Constance murmur something to Louis which I did not understand; but Louis whispered "My darling," in reply; and again, walking ahead with Hawberk through the square I heard a murmur of "sweetheart," and "my own Constance," and I knew the time had nearly arrived when I should speak of important matters with my cousin Louis.



One morning early in May I stood before the steel safe in my bedroom, trying on the golden jewelled crown. The diamonds flashed fire as I turned to the mirror, and the heavy beaten gold burned like a halo about my head. I remembered Camilla's agonized scream and the awful words echoing through the dim streets of Carcosa. They were the last lines in the first act, and I dared not think of what followed—dared not, even in the spring sunshine, there in my own room, surrounded with familiar objects, reassured by the bustle from the street and the voices of the servants in the hallway outside. For those poisoned words had dropped slowly into my heart, as death-sweat drops upon a bed-sheet and is absorbed. Trembling, I put the diadem from my head and wiped my forehead, but I thought of Hastur and of my own rightful ambition, and I remembered Mr. Wilde as I had last left him, his face all torn and bloody from the claws of that devil's creature, and what he said—ah, what he said. The alarm bell in the safe began to whirr harshly, and I knew my time was up; but I would not heed it, and replacing the flashing circlet upon my head I turned defiantly to the mirror. I stood for a long time absorbed in the changing expression of my own eyes. The mirror reflected a face which was like my own, but whiter, and so thin that I hardly recognized it. And all the time I kept repeating between my clenched teeth, "The day has come! The day has come!" while the alarm in the safe whirled and clamoured, and the diamonds sparkled and flamed above my brow. I heard a door open but did not heed it. It was only when I saw two faces in the mirror:—it was only when another face rose over my shoulder, and

two other eyes met mine. I wheeled like a flash and seized a long knife from my dressing-table, and my cousin sprang back very pale, crying: "Hildred! For God's sake!" then as my hand fell, he said: "It is I, Louis, don't you know me?" I stood silent. I could not have spoken for my life. He walked up to me and took the knife from my hand.

"What is all this?" he inquired, in a gentle voice. "Are you ill?"

"No," I replied. But I doubt if he heard me.

"Come, come, old fellow," he cried, "take off that brass crown and toddle into the study. Are you going to a masquerade? What's all this theatrical tinsel anyway?"

I was glad he thought the crown was made of brass and paste, yet I didn't like him any the better for thinking so. I let him take it from my hand, knowing it was best to humour him. He tossed the splendid diadem in the air, and catching it, turned to me smiling.

"It's dear at fifty cents," he said. "What's it for?"

I did not answer, but took the circlet from his hands, and placing it in the safe shut the massive steel door. The alarm ceased its infernal din at once. He watched me curiously, but did not seem to notice the sudden ceasing of the alarm. He did, however, speak of the safe as a biscuit box. Fearing lest he might examine the combination I led the way into my study. Louis threw himself on the sofa and flicked at flies with his eternal riding-whip. He wore his fatigue uniform with the braided jacket and jaunty cap, and I noticed that his riding-boots were all splashed with red mud.

"Where have you been?" I inquired.

"Jumping mud creeks in Jersey," he said. "I haven't had time to change yet; I was rather in a hurry to see you. Haven't you



## Out of Space

got a glass of something? I'm dead tired; been in the saddle twenty-four hours."

I gave him some brandy from my medicinal store, which he drank with a grimace.

"Damned bad stuff," he observed. "I'll give you an address where they sell brandy that is brandy."

"It's good enough for my needs," I said indifferently. "I use it to rub my chest with." He stared and flicked at another fly.

"See here, old fellow," he began, "I've got something to suggest to you. It's four years now that you've shut yourself up here like an owl, never going anywhere, never taking any healthy exercise, never doing a damn thing but poring over those books up there on the mantelpiece."

He glanced along the row of shelves. "Napoleon, Napoleon, Napoleon!" he read. "For heaven's sake, have you nothing but Napoleons there?"

"I wish they were bound in gold," I said. "But wait, yes, there is another book, *The King in Yellow*." I looked him steadily in the eye.

"Have you never read it?" I asked.

"I? No, thank God! I don't want to be driven crazy."

I saw he regretted his speech as soon as he had uttered it. There is only one word which I loathe more than I do lunatic and that word is crazy. But I controlled myself and asked him why he thought *The King in Yellow* dangerous.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, hastily. "I only remember the excitement it created and the denunciations from pulpit and Press. I believe the author shot himself after bringing forth this monstrosity, didn't he?"

"I understand he is still alive," I answered.

"That's probably true," he muttered; "bullets couldn't kill a fiend like that."

"It is a book of great truths," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "of 'truths' which send men frantic and blast their lives. I don't care if the thing is, as they say, the very supreme essence of art. It's a crime to have written it, and I for one shall never open its pages."

"Is that what you have come to tell me?" I asked.

"No," he said, "I came to tell you that I am going to be married."

I believe for a moment my heart ceased to beat, but I kept my eyes on his face.

"Yes," he continued, smiling happily, "married to the sweetest girl on earth."

"Constance Hawberk," I said mechanically.

"How did you know?" he cried, astonished. "I didn't know it myself until that evening last April, when we strolled down to the embankment before dinner."

"When is it to be?" I asked.

"It was to have been next September, but an hour ago a despatch came ordering our regiment to the Presidio, San Francisco. We leave at noon to-morrow. To-morrow," he repeated. "Just think, Hildred, to-morrow I shall be the happiest fellow that ever drew breath in this jolly world, for Constance will go with me."

I offered him my hand in congratulation, and he seized and shook it like the good-natured fool he was—or pretended to be.

"I am going to get my squadron as a wedding present," he rattled on. "Captain and Mrs. Louis Castaigne, eh, Hildred?"

Then he told me where it was to be and who were to be there, and made me promise to come and be best man. I set my teeth and listened to his boyish chatter without showing what I felt, but—

I was getting to the limit of my endurance, and when he jumped up, and, switching his spurs till they jingled, said he must go, I did not detain him.

"There's one thing I want to ask of you," I said quietly.

"Out with it, it's promised," he laughed.

"I want you to meet me for a quarter of an hour's talk to-night."

"Of course, if you wish," he said, somewhat puzzled. "Where?"

"Anywhere, in the park there."

"What time, Hildred?"

"Midnight."

"What in the name of—" he began, but checked himself and laughingly assented. I watched him go down the stairs and hurry away, his sabre banging at every stride. He turned into Bleeker Street, and I knew he was going to see Constance. I gave him ten minutes to disappear and then followed in his footsteps, taking with me the jewelled crown and the silken robe embroidered with the Yellow Sign. When I turned into Bleeker Street, and entered the doorway which bore the sign—

MR. WILDE, REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS. Third Bell.

I saw old Hawberk moving about in his shop, and imagined I heard Constance's voice in the parlour; but I avoided them both and hurried up the trembling stairways to Mr. Wilde's apartment. I knocked and entered without ceremony. Mr. Wilde lay groaning on the floor, his face covered with blood, his clothes

## The Repairer of Reputations

torn to shreds. Drops of blood were scattered about over the carpet, which had also been ripped and frayed in the evidently recent struggle.

"It's that cursed cat," he said, ceasing his groans, and turning his colourless eyes to me; "she attacked me while I was asleep. I believe she will kill me yet."

This was too much, so I went into the kitchen, and, seizing a hatchet from the pantry, started to find the infernal beast and settle her then and there. My search was fruitless, and after a while I gave it up and came back to find Mr. Wilde squatting on his high chair by the table. He had washed his face and changed his clothes. The great furrows which the cat's claws had ploughed up in his face he had filled with collodion, and a rag hid the wound in his throat. I told him I should kill the cat when I came across her, but he only shook his head and turned to the open ledger before him. He read name after name of the people who had come to him in regard to their reputation, and the sums he had amassed were startling.

"I put on the screws now and then," he explained.

"One day or other some of these people will assassinate you," I insisted.

"Do you think so?" he said, rubbing his mutilated ears.

It was useless to argue with him, so I took down the manuscript entitled Imperial Dynasty of America, for the last time I should ever take it down in Mr. Wilde's study. I read it through, thrilling and trembling with pleasure. When I had finished Mr. Wilde took the manuscript and, turning to the dark passage which leads from his study to his bed-chamber, called out in a loud voice, "Vance." Then for the first time, I noticed a man crouching there in the shadow. How I had overlooked him

during my search for the cat, I cannot imagine.

"Vance, come in," cried Mr. Wilde.

The figure rose and crept towards us, and I shall never forget the face that he raised to mine, as the light from the window illuminated it.

"Vance, this is Mr. Castaigne," said Mr. Wilde. Before he had finished speaking, the man threw himself on the ground before the table, crying and grasping, "Oh, God! Oh, my God! Help me! Forgive me! Oh, Mr. Castaigne, keep that man away. You cannot, you cannot mean it! You are different—save me! I am broken down—I was in a madhouse and now—when all was coming right—when I had forgotten the King—the King in Yellow and—but I shall go mad again—I shall go mad—"

His voice died into a choking rattle, for Mr. Wilde had leapt on him and his right hand encircled the man's throat. When Vance fell in a heap on the floor, Mr. Wilde clambered nimbly into his chair again, and rubbing his mangled ears with the stump of his hand, turned to me and asked me for the ledger. I reached it down from the shelf and he opened it. After a moment's searching among the beautifully written pages, he coughed complacently, and pointed to the name Vance.

"Vance," he read aloud, "Osgood Oswald Vance." At the sound of his name, the man on the floor raised his head and turned a convulsed face to Mr. Wilde. His eyes were injected with blood, his lips tumefied. "Called April 28th," continued Mr. Wilde. "Occupation, cashier in the Seaforth National Bank; has served a term of forgery at Sing Sing, from whence he was transferred to the Asylum for the Criminal Insane. Pardoned by the Governor of New York, and discharged from the Asylum,

January 19, 1918. Reputation damaged at Sheepshead Bay. Rumours that he lives beyond his income. Reputation to be repaired at once. Retainer \$1,500.

"Note.—Has embezzled sums amounting to \$30,000 since March 20, 1919, excellent family, and secured present position through uncle's influence. Father, President of Seaforth Bank."

I looked at the man on the floor.

"Get up, Vance," said Mr. Wilde in a gentle voice. Vance rose as if hypnotized. "He will do as we suggest now," observed Mr. Wilde, and opening the manuscript, he read the entire history of the Imperial Dynasty of America. Then in a kind and soothing murmur he ran over the important points with Vance, who stood like one stunned. His eyes were so blank and vacant that I imagined he had become half-witted, and remarked it to Mr. Wilde who replied that it was of no consequence anyway. Very patiently we pointed out to Vance what his share in the affair would be, and he seemed to understand after a while. Mr. Wilde explained the manuscript, using several volumes on Heraldry, to substantiate the result of his researches. He mentioned the establishment of the Dynasty in Carcosa, the lakes which connected Hastur, Aldebaran and the mystery of the Hyades. He spoke of Cassilda and Camilla, and sounded the cloudy depths of Demhe, and the Lake of Hali. "The scolloped tatters of the King in Yellow must hide Yhtill forever," he muttered, but I do not believe Vance heard him. Then by degrees he led Vance along the ramifications of the Imperial family, to Uoht and Thale, from Naotalba and Phantom of Truth, to Aldones, and then tossing aside his manuscript and notes, he began the wonderful story of the Last King. Fascinated and thrilled I watched him. He threw up his head, his long arms were stretched out in a magnificent

## Out of Space

gesture of pride and power, and his eyes blazed deep in their sockets like two emeralds. Vance listened stupefied. As for me, when at last Mr. Wilde had finished, and pointing to me, cried, "The cousin of the King!" my head swam with excitement.

Controlling myself with a superhuman effort, I explained to Vance why I alone was worthy of the crown and why my cousin must be exiled or die. I made him understand that my cousin must never marry, even after renouncing all his claims, and how that least of all he should marry the daughter of the Marquis of Avonshire and bring England into the question. I showed him a list of thousands of names which Mr. Wilde had drawn up; every man whose name was there had received the Yellow Sign which no living human being dared disregard. The city, the state, the whole land, were ready to rise and tremble before the Pallid Mask.

The time had come, the people should know the son of Hastur, and the whole world bow to the black stars which hang in the sky over Carcosa.

Vance leaned on the table, his head buried in his hands. Mr. Wilde drew a rough sketch on the margin of yesterday's Herald with a bit of lead pencil. It was a plan of Hawberk's rooms. Then he wrote out the order and affixed the seal, and shaking like a palsied man I signed my first writ of execution with my name Hildred-Rex.

Mr. Wilde clambered to the floor and unlocking the cabinet, took a long square box from the first shelf. This he brought to the table and opened. A new knife lay in the tissue paper inside and I picked it up and handed it to Vance, along with the order and the plan of Hawberk's apartment. Then Mr. Wilde told Vance he could go; and he went, shambling like an outcast of the slums.

I sat for a while watching the daylight fade behind the square tower of the Judson Memorial Church, and finally, gathering up the manuscript and notes, took my hat and started for the door.

Mr. Wilde watched me in silence. When I had stepped into the hall I looked back. Mr. Wilde's small eyes were still fixed on me. Behind him, the shadows gathered in the fading light. Then I closed the door behind me and went out into the darkening streets.

I had eaten nothing since breakfast, but I was not hungry. A wretched, half-starved creature, who stood looking across the street at the Lethal Chamber, noticed me and came up to tell me a tale of misery. I gave him money, I don't know why, and he went away without thanking me. An hour later another outcast approached and whined his story. I had a blank bit of paper in my pocket, on which was traced the Yellow Sign, and I handed it to him. He looked at it stupidly for a moment, and then with an uncertain glance at me, folded it with what seemed to me exaggerated care and placed it in his bosom.

The electric lights were sparkling among the trees, and the new moon shone in the sky above the Lethal Chamber. It was tiresome waiting in the square; I wandered from the Marble Arch to the artillery stables and back again to the lotos fountain. The flowers and grass exhaled a fragrance which troubled me. The jet of the fountain played in the moonlight, and the musical splash of falling drops reminded me of the tinkle of chained mail in Hawberk's shop. But it was not so fascinating, and the dull sparkle of the moonlight on the water brought no such sensations of exquisite pleasure, as when the sunshine played over the polished steel of a corselet on Hawberk's knee. I watched the bats darting and turning above the water plants in the fountain basin, but their

rapid, jerky flight set my nerves on edge, and I went away again to walk aimlessly to and fro among the trees.

The artillery stables were dark, but in the cavalry barracks the officers' windows were brilliantly lighted, and the sallyport was constantly filled with troopers in fatigue, carrying straw and harness and baskets filled with tin dishes.

Twice the mounted sentry at the gates was changed while I wandered up and down the asphalt walk. I looked at my watch. It was nearly time. The lights in the barracks went out one by one, the barred gate was closed, and every minute or two an officer passed in through the side wicket, leaving a rattle of accoutrements and a jingle of spurs on the night air. The square had become very silent. The last homeless loiterer had been driven away by the gray-coated park policeman, the car tracks along Wooster Street were deserted, and the only sound which broke the stillness was the stamping of the sentry's horse and the ring of his sabre against the saddle pommel. In the barracks, the officers' quarters were still lighted, and military servants passed and repassed before the bay windows. Twelve o'clock sounded from the new spire of St. Francis Xavier, and at the last stroke of the sad-toned bell a figure passed through the wicket beside the portcullis, returned the salute of the sentry, and crossing the street entered the square and advanced toward the Benedick apartment house.

"Louis," I called.

The man pivoted on his spurred heels and came straight toward me.

"Is that you, Hildred?"

"Yes, you are on time."

I took his offered hand, and we strolled toward the Lethal Chamber.



## The Repairer of Reputations

He rattled on about his wedding and the graces of Constance, and their future prospects, calling my attention to his captain's shoulder-straps, and the triple gold arabesque on his sleeve and fatigue cap. I believe I listened as much to the music of his spurs and sabre as I did to his boyish babble, and at last we stood under the elms on the Fourth Street corner of the square opposite the Lethal Chamber. Then he laughed and asked me what I wanted with him. I motioned him to a seat on a bench under the electric light, and sat down beside him. He looked at me curiously, with that same searching glance which I hate and fear so in doctors. I felt the insult of his look, but he did not know it, and I carefully concealed my feelings.

"Well, old chap," he inquired, "what can I do for you?"

I drew from my pocket the manuscript and notes of the Imperial Dynasty of America, and looking him in the eye said:

"I will tell you. On your word as a soldier, promise me to read this manuscript from beginning to end, without asking me a question. Promise me to read these notes in the same way, and promise me to listen to what I have to tell later."

"I promise, if you wish it," he said pleasantly. "Give me the paper, Hildred."

He began to read, raising his eyebrows with a puzzled, whimsical air, which made me tremble with suppressed anger. As he advanced his, eyebrows contracted, and his lips seemed to form the word "rubbish."

Then he looked slightly bored, but apparently for my sake read, with an attempt at interest, which presently ceased to be an effort. He started when in the closely written pages he came to

his own name, and when he came to mine he lowered the paper, and looked sharply at me for a moment. But he kept his word, and resumed his reading, and I let the half-formed question die on his lips unanswered. When he came to the end and read the signature of Mr. Wilde, he folded the paper carefully and returned it to me. I handed him the notes, and he settled back, pushing his fatigue cap up to his forehead, with a boyish gesture, which I remembered so well in school. I watched his face as he read, and when he finished I took the notes with the manuscript, and placed them in my pocket. Then I unfolded a scroll marked with the Yellow Sign. He saw the sign, but he did not seem to recognize it, and I called his attention to it somewhat sharply.

"Well," he said, "I see it. What is it?"

"It is the Yellow Sign," I said angrily.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Louis, in that flattering voice, which Doctor Archer used to employ with me, and would probably have employed again, had I not settled his affair for him.

I kept my rage down and answered as steadily as possible, "Listen, you have engaged your word?"

"I am listening, old chap," he replied soothingly.

I began to speak very calmly.

"Dr. Archer, having by some means become possessed of the secret of the Imperial Succession, attempted to deprive me of my right, alleging that because of a fall from my horse four years ago, I had become mentally deficient. He presumed to place me under restraint in his own house in hopes of either driving me insane or poisoning me. I have not forgotten it. I visited him last night and the interview was final."

Louis turned quite pale, but did not

move. I resumed triumphantly, "There are yet three people to be interviewed in the interests of Mr. Wilde and myself. They are my cousin Louis, Mr. Hawberk, and his daughter Constance."

Louis sprang to his feet and I arose also, and flung the paper marked with the Yellow Sign to the ground.

"Oh, I don't need that to tell you what I have to say," I cried, with a laugh of triumph. "You must renounce the crown to me, do you hear, to me."

Louis looked at me with a startled air, but recovering himself said kindly, "Of course I renounce the—what is it I must renounce?"

"The crown," I said angrily.

"Of course," he answered, "I renounce it. Come, old chap, I'll walk back to your rooms with you."

"Don't try any of your doctor's tricks on me," I cried, trembling with fury. "Don't act as if you think I am insane."

"What nonsense," he replied. "Come, it's getting late, Hildred."

"No," I shouted, "you must listen. You cannot marry, I forbid it. Do you hear? I forbid it. You shall renounce the crown, and in reward I grant you exile, but if you refuse you shall die."

He tried to calm me, but I was roused at last, and drawing my long knife barred his way.

Then I told him how they would find Dr. Archer in the cellar with his throat open, and I laughed in his face when I thought of Vance and his knife, and the order signed by me.

"Ah, you are the King," I cried, "but I shall be King. Who are you to keep me from Empire over all the habitable earth! I was born the cousin of a king, but I shall be King!"

## Out of Space

Louis stood white and rigid before me. Suddenly a man came running up Fourth Street, entered the gate of the Lethal Temple, traversed the path to the bronze doors at full speed, and plunged into the death chamber with the cry of one demented, and I laughed until I wept tears, for I had recognized Vance, and knew that Hawberk and his daughter were no longer in my way.

“Go,” I cried to Louis, “you have ceased to be a menace. You will never marry Constance now, and if you marry any one else in your exile, I will visit you as I did my doctor last night. Mr. Wilde takes charge of you to-morrow.” Then I turned and darted into South Fifth Avenue, and with a cry of terror Louis dropped his belt and sabre and followed me like the wind. I heard him close behind me at the corner of Bleecker Street, and I dashed into the doorway under Hawberk’s sign. He cried, “Halt, or I fire!” but when he saw that I flew up the stairs leaving Hawberk’s shop below, he left me, and I heard him hammering and shouting at their door as though it were possible to arouse the dead.

Mr. Wilde’s door was open, and I entered crying, “It is done, it is done!”

Let the nations rise and look upon their King!” but I could not find Mr. Wilde, so I went to the cabinet and took the splendid diadem from its case. Then I drew on the white silk robe, embroidered with the Yellow Sign, and placed the crown upon my head. At last I was King, King by my right in Hastur, King because I knew the mystery of the Hyades, and my mind had sounded the depths of the Lake of Hali. I was King! The first gray pencillings of dawn would raise a tempest which would shake two hemispheres. Then as I stood, my every nerve pitched to the highest tension, faint with the joy and splendour of my thought, without, in the dark passage, a man groaned.

I seized the tallow dip and sprang to the door. The cat passed me like a demon, and the tallow dip went out, but my long knife flew swifter than she, and I heard her screech, and I knew that my knife had found her. For a moment I listened to her tumbling and thumping about in the darkness, and then when her frenzy ceased, I lighted a lamp and raised it over my head. Mr. Wilde lay on the floor with his throat torn open. At first I thought he was dead, but as I looked,

a green sparkle came into his sunken eyes, his mutilated hand trembled, and then a spasm stretched his mouth from ear to ear. For a moment my terror and despair gave place to hope, but as I bent over him his eyeballs rolled clean around in his head, and he died. Then while I stood, transfixed with rage and despair, seeing my crown, my empire, every hope and every ambition, my very life, lying prostrate there with the dead master, they came, seized me from behind, and bound me until my veins stood out like cords, and my voice failed with the paroxysms of my frenzied screams. But I still raged, bleeding and infuriated among them, and more than one policeman felt my sharp teeth. Then when I could no longer move they came nearer; I saw old Hawberk, and behind him my cousin Louis’ ghastly face, and farther away, in the corner, a woman, Constance, weeping softly.

“Ah! I see it now!” I shrieked. “You have seized the throne and the empire. Woe! Woe to you who are crowned with the crown of the King in Yellow!”

[**EDITOR’S NOTE.**—Mr. Castaigne died yesterday in the Asylum for Criminal Insane.]



## The Repairer of Reputations

### THE SCENARIO

The story “*The Repairer of Reputations*” is told from the point of view of an unreliable narrator. The uncertainty of how much of the conspiracy is real and how much is delusion contributes to our sense of unease as we read it. In the scenario, however, the scheme of Hildred Castaigne and the bizarre Mr. Wilde is portrayed as a genuine threat.

In the story, bank cashier Osgood Oswald Vance quashes the conspiracy in the cradle by mortally wounding Wilde, instead of murdering Louis Castaigne, as he has been ordered to do, and then hurling himself into a Government Lethal Chamber.

In the scenario, Vance skips the first step, heading straight to the Chamber without facing Wilde. This sets back the conspiracy but does not put a stop to it. That becomes the PCs’ responsibility.

### The Spine

The players meet their characters, and the strange world of the Hasturized 1920s, in a prologue sequence entitled *The Inauguration of the Government Lethal Chamber*.

The mystery launches in earnest when one of the PCs, an employee of the Seaforth National Bank, is asked by its President to perform a discreet inquiry into *The Suicide of O. O. Vance*. This brief scene leads them to Vance’s Lodgings, which in turn may lead them to *The Yellow Sign*, an inquiry into the decadent drama that changed the world, or *The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment*, in

which they reunite with old comrades, most notably Louis Castaigne. Depending on which clues they decide to follow up, they may discover Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat, interact with Hawberk and Constance, or brace Hildred. At some point, they may face *The Chamber In Action*. Alternate avenues of investigation may take them to Mrs. Starkfield, an employee at the bank who directed Vance to Wilde, or to nose into his gambling activities at Sheepshead Bay, leading them to a criminal named Diamond Dan. Following Hildred’s deepest animus leads them to discover the murdered corpse of Dr. Archer.

### The Horrible Truth

As in the story, Hildred Castaigne and Mr. Wilde conspire to bring about Hastur’s final plan for America: the former’s ascension to an imperial throne. They’ll use Wilde’s vast network of blackmailers, blackmail victims, and maddened victims of the Pallid Mask to stage the necessary coup.

### A Subtly Awful World

During the early sequences, introduce the Hasturized alternate timeline as a series of facts the characters not only take for granted, but regard as right and proper. Details of the timeline appear opposite. In the prologue sequence (“*The Inauguration of the Government Lethal Chamber*”), you’ll supply a number of these facts. Others you’ll work in as you go along. They are presented in point form, with check boxes, so you can track what you’ve revealed so far. Don’t worry about including all or even most

of these points. Drop them in as asides during scene transitions. No single detail matters as much as conveying the overall impression of an oppressive order lurking beneath a facade of order and beauty.

These details are drawn from the story, with a few extrapolations to cover likely player questioning. You may have to make further extrapolations of your own.

- Outgoing President Winthrop leaves office having achieved a new era of tranquility.
- Political power has been centralized to the executive branch, curtailing Congress and the judiciary.
- Protective Tariffs ensure American prosperity.
- Agitators of the Labor movement have been neutered.
- America has just won a war with Germany.
- It began with Germany’s seizure of the Samoan Islands.
- It ended in the wake of a disastrous German amphibious invasion of New Jersey.
- Coastal cities are now heavily fortified.
- America boasts a standing army of 300,00 organized under the Prussian system, with a million reserve troops.
- Many ships of its magnificent navy can now be seen anchored in the New York harbor.
- Treaties with England and France assure its security on the world stage.
- Chicago suffered a second great fire,



## Out of Space

wiping out the horrible skyscrapers erected in the wake of the first.

- These have been replaced by grand structures in the white, imperial neoclassical style that also dominates a revitalized New York Chicago.
- People view this shift in style as part of a return to moral decency.
- Generous subsidies assure the production of art that soothes, comforts and quiets America's once-boisterous spirit.
- National Mounted Police ensure order beyond urban enclaves.
- Restrictive immigration laws have been enacted.
- They in particular exclude foreign-born Jews.
- Negroes have been resettled to the independent Negro state of Suanee, located where parts of Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi used to be.
- White residents of those areas have been in turn resettled to Tennessee, the Carolinas, and Oklahoma.
- An accord has been reached with the Indians.
- As part of the arrangement, they comprise elite cavalry units in the army.
- Mainline Christian denominations, including Catholics, have been subsumed into one ecumenical faith after a landmark Congress Of Religions. A popular slogan, which most people take at face value, claims that this development put an end to bigotry.
- Though still a part of the union, California remains a bastion of resistance against the new tranquility - Jews, ethnics, intellectuals and other outcasts have fled there to escape the tide of cultural conformity.
- Epitomizing the growth of enlightened social values has been rising demand not only for a repeal of anti-suicide laws, but for a

government infrastructure to aid those who wish to end their lives.

- When the laws were repealed, only a small number of people took advantage of them.
- The absence of these malcontents from the public sphere is widely thought a pivotal factor in the new tranquility.

### New York, 1920

Through extensive urban renewal, New York has transformed to a clean, beautiful and ostentatiously orderly city. Regrettable signs of foreign culture have been systematically scrubbed away.

- Trees line New York's widened boulevards.
- Streets are wider, well paved and lighted.
- Public squares appear throughout the city with enlightened regularity.
- Elevated train lines have been demolished, replaced with underground roads.
- Signs of government authority are omnipresent in the city's new geography, in the form of neoclassical buildings and sturdy military barracks.
- The stone quays that formerly surrounded Manhattan are now parks.
- As part of the great beautification, shabby establishments favored by foreigners, like French or Italian cafes and restaurants, were torn down.
- As in our 1920, temperance laws have gone into effect.
- But gentlemen of good background can naturally secure quality brandy, if they do so discreetly.

### Quick Character Creation

This one-off scenario allows the players to create and detail their characters on the fly, giving them more personalization than a standard set of pregens.

Pass out character sheets and use the names provided in the Character Tracker table on p. 24.

Tell the players that they can assign up to 65 points to their general abilities. They do not spend these yet. Instead, they decide how many points to invest in a given rating when they first want to call on it during play. Once they assign a rating to an ability, it remains fixed; they can't add more points to it later.

*Trail* regulars will note that a truncated investigative ability list appears on the character sheets.

The number of points players assign to their investigative abilities vary, as follows:

# of players	Investigative Build Points
2	21
3	18
4	15
5-6	12

The scenario calls on only a subset of the abilities listed on the sheet, but others might come into play if players, as is their wont, take unexpected action.

As with general abilities, players spend their build points during play, buying ratings on a one-time basis, until they run out of points.

When a scene provides information via an investigative ability no one yet has, nudge things along by asking who

## The Repairer of Reputations

among the group has that ability. (If some characters remain un-introduced, one of them might have the ability, ushering him into the narrative; see below.)

If this is your group's first exposure to *Trail of Cthulhu*, warn them that this is a stripped-down rules variant tuned for a special setting. Give them a sense of the different typical ranges for investigative and general abilities.

Cut out the six Drives cards and lay them face up on the gaming table.

The characters appear in the prologue. During that introductory sequence, we learn little about them, aside from their names, and the fact that they are friends and contemporaries. They are further introduced during play, as they would be in a story.

### Assembling the Group

The group appears together in the prologue scene. They then go their separate ways, only to gradually reassemble during the early stages of the case proper.

Then one player becomes the focus of the true introduction to the case, "The Suicide of O. O. Vance." Identify the player who will next have a birthday. That player chooses one of the six Drive cards. It defines the character's motivation and attitudes. At this time, inform the player that he served, perhaps with some or all of the other PCs, in the Twentieth Dragoon Regiment during the recent war against Germany. He was discharged with distinction during the demobilization and is now a member of the army reserves.

After the interview with Wilson Osgood Vance concludes, the next situation requiring the use of an ability brings in the next character. The first player, knowing that the task suits the

talents of one of his friends, calls on him and brings him into the case. In doing so, the first player fundamentally defines the second's character. For example:

*"It would be deucedly convenient to get into Vance's rooms. I know; in our college days, Fallowby was quite the prankster, and would often break into our rooms to lay the groundwork for practical jokes. I'll drop him a note and get him over here."*

*"Braith is always hanging about the natural history museum. He'll know what kind of beast made this devilishly strange scratch wound."*

*"We need someone intimidating to convince this fellow. Let's bring in Rowden. He's six foot six and built like the Supreme Court building."*

These introductions must be in keeping with two facts: the characters are all in their early twenties, and hail from the same elevated social circle. Introducing

players are free to specify that the characters they're bringing in also served in the 20th Dragoon.

The introduced player must spend at least 4 points on the specified ability if it is general, or 2 points if it is investigative. The player now chooses the character's Drive.

The next time another ability is called for, the second player defines and brings in the third player's character. The third player introduces the fourth PC, and so on, until the entire group is on the case.

Use the character tracker, below, for quick reference during play. The group tie tells you what binds him to the others—schooling, military service, social acquaintance, familial relationship, and so on. Ask the introducing player to specify where this is not implicit from the starting definition.

### Lingo

The characters of Hasturized New York talk more like it's the 1890s, when the story was written, than the 1920s, when it is set. The upper-class east coast Americans who populate the story affect an Anglicized mode of speech. Authority figures, villains, and women talk in a formal, elevated style. Young gentlemen like Louis Castaigne speak in a jaunty, high-toned slang. The PCs do, too, if the players are up to it.

Here are some (spoiler-trimmed) lines of dialogue from the story to give them the drift:

"Really, old chap, I don't mean to run down a man you like, but for the life of me I can't see what the deuce you find in common with him."

"Come, come, old fellow, take that off and toddle into the study."

"Just think, to-morrow I shall be the happiest fellow that ever drew breath in this jolly world."

## Out of Space

### Sanity and the Yellow Sign

Aside from its references to *The King in Yellow*, the scenario makes no direct mention of the Cthulhu Mythos. (If you were to use it as a springboard for an alternate-1920s campaign set in Hastur's America, you might later decide whether to incorporate some straight-up Lovecraft material, or leave it strictly in Chambers territory.)

Accordingly, the Sanity stat works differently here than in a standard Trail game.

Sanity remains undefined for all players until *The King in Yellow* is first mentioned. Ask the players if their characters have read this dread book.

If so, they have Sanity ratings of 1.

If not, their Sanity ratings depend on their Drives:

Drive	Sanity
Aesthete	4
Adventure	5
Curiosity	6
Good Breeding	7
Fellowship	8
Champion of Order	10

In this scenario, Sanity is treated as a general ability, albeit one the players don't have to pay build points for. It allows them to resist the impulse to perform crazy acts under the influence of the Yellow Sign.

A character who acquires a copy of *The King In Yellow* and reads it during play loses all but 1 rating point of Sanity.

If at any time a player mentions a familiarity with the original "Repairer of Reputations" story or the King in Yellow mythology, even when speaking out of character, his PC's Sanity drops by half, or to 0, whichever is worse.

The character experiences this as an eerie feeling, as if someone has walked over their grave. If it occurs during the last hour or so of the session, the character undergoes a dread epiphany:

History was not meant to go this way. All of America—no, make that the world—has been warped by the Yellow Sign.

Sanity does not refresh during the short span of this standalone adventure.

### Character Tracker

Character	Player	Group Tie	Drive
Henley Braith			
Jack Elliot			
Sim Fallowby			
Clifford Rowden			
Richard Selby			
Stanley Trent			





# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## The Repairer of Reputations

### Supporting Character Tracker

As you improvise the scenario you will likely find yourself inventing additional supporting characters who will help or obstruct the PCs. Use the following note sheet to track their roles in the story, in case the players want to interact with them more than once. These names are taken from other works by Robert W. Chambers, with first and last names rearranged.

<b>Men</b>	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Distinguishing Feature</i>
Lawrence van der Luyden	
Percy Beaufort	
Hubert Jackson	
Paul Lefferts	
Helmsley Mingott	
Guy Dorset	
Hector Rosedale	
Newland Stepney	
Sillerton Selden	
Ted van Osburgh	
Samuel Haffen	
Rutherford Bry	
Charlie Hatch	
Ralph Haines	
Elmer Hale	
Raymond Howe	
Abner Gow	
Freddy Conroy	
Gabriel Malins	
Dan Ivors	
Don Higgins	
Frank O'Callaghan	
Shawn Kerrigan	
Brendan Duffy	
Redmond McCann	
Tony Donnelly	

<b>Women</b>	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Distinguishing Feature</i>
Jackie Saxton	
Julia Brympton	
Lily Blinder	
Bertha Ranford	
Gwen Wace	
Lucy Wellan	
Mattie Roberts	
Rose Schuyler	





## The Repairer of Reputations

### SCENES

#### The Inauguration of the Government Lethal Chamber

Scene Type: Prologue / Alternate

Lead-Out: The Suicide of O. O. Vance

As good chums who often attend events together, the PCs show up en masse for the grand public event that is the inauguration of the Government Lethal Chamber.

This is where you lay out the basics of Chambers' superseded future, as point-formed on p. 21.

Describe the pomp and ceremony of the occasion, and its cheery, celebratory atmosphere. Paraphrase, if desired, Chamber's equivalent passage, on p. 6.

The first player's character spots his co-worker, Osgood Oswald Vance, on the edges of the crowd. He seems nervous and uneasy, but then Vance, an older fellow who wears on his features the ravages of a difficult life, has always been of an anxious disposition.

As this scene establishes that the first player's character works in a bank, give the character 1 free point of **Accounting**. If the player wants to invest additional points in the ability, he should do so now.

If the player chooses this moment to invest in the **Assess Honesty** ability, and goes to talk to Vance, he intuits that Vance is more than usually tense today. If asked why, Vance claims to be upset by the spectacle: "A terrible thing, a machine like that. I know they're popular, but I simply cannot credit that. And brass bands and lofty speeches? It doesn't seem right!"

At that, Vance begs off further contact and disappears into the crowd.

Answer any further questions the players have about the setting, then cut to the next scene.

#### The Suicide of O. O. Vance

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-In: The Inauguration of the Government Lethal Chamber

Lead-Outs: Vance's Lodgings, Mrs. Starkfield

Several days later, the first player's character, a junior manager of the Seaforth National Bank, stands in the luxurious austerity of its president's office. The president, Wilson Osgood Vance, is an archetypal Eastern banker, all stiff collars and pinstripes. In his mid-sixties, he speaks with a weary but formal authority.

*"I have a task of great importance for a man who is canny, resourceful, and, above all, discreet. Reports of your progress here at the bank, and your army record before that, attest to the former qualities. Your good family name tells me I needn't worry about the latter."*

Vance reports that an employee of the bank, who should be known to him, has been among the first New Yorkers to make use of the Government Lethal Chamber. Although the right to suicide has been ceded after much popular outcry, it is nonetheless unseemly for a bank to have its people publicly disposing of themselves in this manner. Moreover, the action came as a complete surprise to Vance. He wishes to understand what prompted this decision, and to see any potential scandal arising from the employee's demise allayed.

Numbed by grief, he must be prompted for the victim's name: it is Osgood Oswald Vance, a cashier. The character knows that Osgood was Wilson's nephew.

**Assess Honesty:** Vance's shock at his nephew's use of the chamber is genuine. He also seems to be withholding something he knows about Osgood.

**Reassurance:** Vance admits that Osgood harbored a secret. "I wish to know how hard it is for you to find it out," he says. "This will tell me whether others are likely to nose it out, as well."

Vance lacks a key to his nephew's apartment, but can supply the address.

This ought to prompt the player to spontaneously bring in the second player, specifying that the character is a dab hand with a lock pick.

The character himself recalls Osgood as a nervous chap who kept his colleagues at a remove. If he seemed on friendly terms with anyone, it was Hazel Starkfield, a matronly stenographer.

A visit to the stenography pool reveals that Hazel is not at work today. She has called in sick. Her supervisor, Mrs. Tilden, took the call. Mrs. Tilden is reluctant to speak out of turn. **Bureaucracy** reminds her of her responsibility to the character, as a representative of the bank. If so prompted, she ventures to say that Mrs. Starkfield seemed not so much ill as emotionally overcome.



## Out of Space

### Vance's Lodgings

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** The Suicide of O. O. Vance

**Lead-Outs:** The Yellow Sign; The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment

The younger Mr. Vance lives in a brownstone manor in the Bronx. Manhattan has been thoroughly made over, but improvements to the outer boroughs are still in progress. Vance's home is among the improved properties.

Arriving in the neighborhood, the characters note that neighborhood residents have been busily effacing signs of their Jewish heritage. Hebrew letters have vanished from storefront signage. Butcher shops no longer advertise their wares as kosher.

**Accounting:** A refurbished brownstone of this size, in this location, should have been beyond Vance's means, based on his cashier's salary.

**Locksmith grants access to the house.**

If you want to induce a note of suspense in the early going, require the characters to pair the **Locksmith** use with a Difficulty 4 **Stealth** test, to avoid detection by vigilant neighbors. On a failed test, their search of the property is interrupted by police, who must be mollified or bought off with a 2-point spend of **Bargain, Bureaucracy, or Reassurance**.

Vance's sitting room is well-appointed for the entertainment of guests.

**Accounting:** The furnishings are real.

**Art History:** The sculptures and paintings are valuable.

**Chemistry:** The spirits stocked in his bar are quality merchandise, and therefore extravagantly expensive.

**Law:** Like many fast-living men, Vance chose to flout Prohibition statutes.

Any part of the lodgings which would not be seen by visiting guests are, by contrast, shabbily decorated and furnished.

The nightstand in his bedroom is strewn with heavily annotated racing forms. The races he highlights are primarily run at the Sheephead Bay track.

**Gentlemanly Pursuits** shows that Vance is not only an obsessive bettor on the ponies, but a blasted fool as well. None of these wagers would have paid off, had he lived to make them.

Vance has taped a sheet of paper to the side of his nightstand. In pencil he has created a homemade calendar, on which he seems to have habitually tallied his days. **Anthropology** suggests that this is an obsessive habit acquired during confinement, either in prison or a mental hospital.

Under a loose floorboard beneath the bed, the gentleman investigators find a locked metal box. **Locksmith** opens it. It contains an old, dog-eared photograph and two pieces of paper.

The photograph shows a younger, disheveled-looking Vance in an institutional uniform of a patient or prisoner, unhappily posed against a brick wall.

**(core clue)** The first piece of paper is a crudely drawn mystical sign. **Art**

**History** reveals this to be the Yellow Sign, an occult symbol associated with the notorious banned text called *The King In Yellow*.

**(core clue)** The second piece of paper contains a hand-drawn map of a barracks building. And not just any barracks—it's the home of the Twentieth Dragoon Regiment. At least one of the characters served in this regiment during the war. Any player may at any time specify that his character was with the Twentieth Dragoon.

### Mrs. Starkfield

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** The Suicide of O. O. Vance

**Lead-Outs:** Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat

Mrs. Starkfield lives in a modest single-family dwelling in Queens. If the investigators attempt to reach her by phone, they are answered by a brusque male voice. It belongs to the widow Starkfield's disreputable nephew Harry. Fearing that she knows too much, Hazel has asked him to stay with her and deflect any inquiries concerning Osgood Vance.

If the PCs call on Mrs. Starkfield, Harry comes to the door. He tells the

### Gentlemanly Pursuits

This ability represents the characters' comfort in, and knowledge of, their social world. As an interpersonal ability, it permits a character to bond with peers and assert dominance over social inferiors.

It also conveys knowledge of the affairs and customs of male upper-crusters, both in their official capacity and in their secret world of illicit pleasures.

It fulfills many of the same functions as the standard Credit Rating ability, without the fine-tuning needed for a game in which group members may hail from a broad spectrum of class and wealth backgrounds.

While all characters are from the same social strata, only those who choose to purchase the ability can use it to gain information or solve problems through spends.

## The Repairer of Reputations

investigators that his aunt is ill and unable to receive visitors—even a representative of her employer.

Harry is tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular. From his demeanor, **Gentlemanly Pursuits** identifies him immediately as a man of dubious character. A 1-point **Anthropology** spend shows that behind his streetwise body language lurks a hint of low-grade military authority: he holds himself as a sergeant would.

Though a nasty sort, Harry is genuinely concerned for his aunt and serving in an unusual white knight capacity in the present situation. **Assess Honesty** suggests that his intentions toward his aunt are truly protective.

A further 1-point spend indicates that he's not worried about the investigators intentionally bringing harm to his aunt, but over the unwelcome attention their inquiries might bring her way. A 2-point spend suggests that he's also frightened for himself.

**Intimidation**, or a 2-point **Gentlemanly Pursuits** plus a threat to bring important connections to bear, gets the group past this gatekeeper.

In an alternately frightened and weepy voice, Mrs. Starkfield, when prompted by relevant questioning, unburdens herself of the following:

- Mr. Vance (by which she means Osgood) was a misunderstood soul, brought low by failings he had not the will to conquer.
- He was afraid that he had disgraced himself for a second time.
- His first disgrace occurred when he served a term for forgery.
- He received his second chance in the form of a pardon from the governor of New York.
- But he got into some other trouble, and worried about getting caught.

- Mrs. Starkfield then introduced him to Harry, who thought he might be able to help.
- Harry did help, but perhaps the help was not so helpful.

Mrs. Starkfield will not elaborate beyond this point.

Harry will then, out of his aunt's presence, reveal a little more:

- He met with Vance, who revealed that he'd been living beyond his means, trying to impress various sharpers and gamblers. Vance hoped they'd set him up with one of their shady money-making deals, so he could escape the humiliating grind of lowly bank work.
- Instead, of impressing them, he wound up in debt to them, thanks to his weakness for racetrack betting.
- Harry might have told him about someone who might have been able to help. And the less said about that, the better.

Harry must be further pressed, with a 1-point **Intimidation**, **Law** or **Reassurance** spend, to reveal anything more. His fear for his own safety now becomes evident via simple **Assess Honesty** use.

- There's talk, in certain quarters, of a man called the Repairer of Reputations. He's a sort of reverse blackmailer who, for a fee, covers up your mistakes for you.
- When he told Vance about this man, Harry didn't realize how long his reach was.
- The Repairer has a legion of followers at his beck and call.
- Harry doesn't want to be mixed up with this in any way. And he certainly doesn't want his aunt involved.
- With great reluctance, if further pressed, Harry supplies Wilde's address, above a dingy armorer's shop on Bleeker Street.

## Sheepshead Bay

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Vance's Lodgings

Lead-Out: Diamond Dan

A trip to the Sheepshead Bay racetrack fills in a few details of Vance's activities mostly available elsewhere. Assign a name and personality to the witness, depending on what sort of person they seek out there. A louche or shady sort responds to Bargain (bribery); a raffish upper-cruster spills the facts if prompted by the reflexive class camaraderie of **Gentlemanly Pursuits**.

- Though he was supposed to be some kind of banker or something, Vance ran with a fast crowd.
- He spent like mad trying to impress them.
- Instead, he wound up over his head in gambling debt.
- Word was, he did some time in Sing Sing for forgery, and some more time after that in a nut house.
- They threatened, or so the scuttlebutt goes, to publicize his past, so his rich uncle would have to fire him from his job as a banker.
- Then one day all was fine again between Osgood and his creditors.
- Shortly after that he stopped coming to the track.
- (2-point Bargain or Intimidation) One of Vance's main creditors was a dangerous customer called "Diamond Dan" Bartlett.

Alternately, a player can introduce a new PC by stipulating that he's a regular at Sheepshead Bay, at which point the new character gets 2 free points of **Gentlemanly Pursuits** and can himself supply the above information.

## Out of Space

### Diamond Dan

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Sheepshead Bay

Lead-Out: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat

**Gentlemanly Pursuits** shows that Diamond Dan is no gentleman, and not to be crossed lightly. A 1-point spend arranges, through intermediaries, for a meeting in Bartlett's boxing gym. Dan is an extravagantly tailored man who affects the tall hat and mutton chops of an earlier era of criminality. He's a gruff fellow who does his best to talk all charming like.

A 2-point Bargain (offer of bribe or future favors) gets him to reveal the following, all of which is either available without spends by other means, or is tangential to the plot:

- [Anything the investigators failed to get from their Sheepshead Bay witness.]
- Osgood fixed things by going to a guy named Mr. Wilde.
- Wilde can be found above a dingy armorer's shop on Bleeker Street. But don't let the lowly circumstances fool you.
- Wilde's no ordinary criminal. His reach goes deeper than that.
- Things have grown tough for men like Diamond Dan, what with the new tranquility and all. But he's a survivor. And one thing his survivor's instincts tell him is: don't get in the way of a guy like Mr. Wilde.

### Diamond Dan's Boys

**General Abilities:** Athletics 6, Driving 6, Firearms 8, Health 8, Scuffling 8, Weapons 8

### The Yellow Sign

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Vance's Lodgings

Lead-Out: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat

When the characters find the Yellow Sign in Vance's lockbox, ask (if you haven't already) which of them has read *The King in Yellow*.

Although you shouldn't suggest this, it may occur to a player to introduce a new character by specifying that this person has read the book. This is permissible—and sneaky.

Anyone who has read the play, or simply uses the Law ability, knows that it is considered a threat to public order. It may not be imported or published in America, and certainly not staged!





## The Repairer of Reputations

**Bureaucracy:** The New York official responsible for hunting down and destroying copies of this forbidden text is the Superintendent of Public Morals, Augustus Foxhall.

They may seek appointment with him at his office, located a palatial government structure near the harbor.

Foxhall is a weary, sober-minded man. He despises *The King in Yellow* and all it represents. The realization that he will never entirely succeed in suppressing the book eats away at his soul.

He reveals the following:

- Even as the city grows ever safer and more beautiful, copies of this accursed tome proliferate.
- Many young gentlemen of good families—"much like yourselves"—fall prey to its wiles, succumbing to unhygienic habits and general moral decline. They wind up in asylums, or die from yphilis or opiate consumption.
- In the past months, persons arrested for various crimes have been found carrying pieces of paper inscribed with the Yellow Sign. Foxhall has never been able to prove it—or in fact get even the simplest of charges to stick against them—but is sure a vast conspiracy is afoot.
- **(core)** One of these suspects turned informant, implicating a Mr. Wilde of Bleeker Street as their superior.
- Before Foxhall could stage a raid on Wilde's apartment, the commissioner of police intervened, demanding that he surrender all of his files and allow another agency to investigate. Since then nothing has happened.

If anyone hints that they possess a copy of the book, Foxhall bristles. He demands that they surrender it immediately or face criminal charges.

They can mollify him with a 2-point **Law, Bureaucracy, Reassurance** or **Gentlemanly Pursuits** spend. Otherwise, he complicates their investigation by sending police officers to shadow them.

Whether they're unwillingly dogged by him or request his assistance, Foxhall, after this scene, acts as nothing but a hindrance to them. Agents of Mr. Wilde have penetrated his organization from top to bottom. They effectively sabotage any attempt on the part of Foxhall's office to stop him. If they know about the PCs, they instead use his officers to hamper their efforts.

Foxhall or some of his men might wind up horribly dead at the hands of Wilde's operatives, if:

- You need an additional complication or mystery.
- A note of overt horror seems called for.
- You need to show the players that their characters are the protagonists, and have to rely on their own efforts to end the conspiracy.

Attempts to follow up with the police commissioner are categorically rebuffed. Persistent investigators are threatened with prosecution if they don't back off. **Law** reveals no valid grounds for prosecution, but recognizes the commissioner's near-unlimited power to harass and slander them.

Foxhall might flip from hindrance to help at the very conclusion of the scenario. At this point, if the PCs give him the evidence he needs to launch a real prosecution, he might roll up the remnants of Wilde's conspiracy.

## The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment

Scene Type: Core

**Lead-In: Vance's Lodgings**

**Lead-Outs: Hildred, Dr. Archer**

As previously mentioned, some or all of the PCs know the barracks of the 20th well, having been quartered there during the war.

If they arrive during the day (likely if they head here after searching Vance's lodgings) they find their former comrades drilling on the parade grounds. Magnificent on horseback, the hussar's wheel, and the lancers lunge.

If they arrive during the night (for example, if they spend their time talking to the Starkfields or Foxhall before finally making their way to the barracks), they find the men in jolly repose inside the barracks. Cards, brandy, and cigars provide a foreground for hearty laughter. Veterans of the regiment know everyone here but are closest to its lieutenant, Louis Castaigne. He welcomes them with firm shoulder-claps. With chipper cluelessness he happily reveals what little he knows:

- He has never met or so much as heard of Osgood Vance.
- He has no idea why he would possess a map of the barracks and grounds.
- There is no conceivable reason why anyone would wish to harm him.
- **(core)** If asked about The Yellow Sign, he pronounces the whole business a great load of rot. "You might ask poor Hildred about that. The wretched fellow foolishly read that nonsense after his spill, and has never been quite the same since."

## Out of Space

He opines further on the subject of Hildred only if prompted. He curtly answers in response to specific questioning.

**Assess Honesty** suggests that his disinterest in dwelling on the poor fellow derives from a combination of pity and weariness with his depressive personality.

- Hildred is his cousin.
- And his only living relative, now that you mention it.
- He was as hale and sunny a fellow as you could possibly ask for, until that dreadful fall from his horse four years ago.
- The injury was more than physical; he spent some time in an asylum, under the care of a Dr. Archer.
- But don't mention that if you speak to him; he's fretfully touchy when reminded of it.
- In fact, it might be better not to get him all riled about *The King In Yellow*. He becomes visibly unhinged whenever he speaks of it.

Although other former comrades are pleased to chat, they have little more to offer, aside from the following:

- One cavalryman, Lance Corporal Claud Burling, saw a figure lurking outside the barracks the night before last. His body language seemed suspicious. Burling challenged the man, who departed quickly, without giving an account of himself.
- If shown the photograph of Osgood Vance found in his lodgings, Burling says that it could have been him—although older. However, he got only a fleeting glimpse of the man, in bad lighting, so he can't say for sure.

Ultimately Louis is more interested in an announcement of his own:

- He is due to be married to his longtime sweetheart, Constance Hawberk.

- As a sort of early wedding gift, the brass has chosen to promote him to colonel, and commander of the regiment. Louis demands that they share a celebratory drink with them.

- (**Gentlemanly Pursuits:** It of course is only right and proper that heroic officers of the German war enjoy full access to quality brandy. No authority would dare question this.)

### Mr. Wilde and his Fantastical Cat

Scene Type: Core

**Lead-Ins:** *The Yellow Sign*, *Mrs. Starkfield*, *Diamond Dan*

**Lead-Outs:** *Hawberk and Constance*, *Arnold Steylette*, *Revisiting Wilde*

As the investigators head to Wilde's, describe the shop below his apartment: Hawberk's Armorers.

If the scene "The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment" has yet to occur, tell players who have specified that they were in the regiment that the name rings a bell. (On a 1-point **Gentlemanly Pursuits** spend, they recall that their friend and former superior officer, Lt. Louis Castaigne has for a long time been courting a Constance Hawberk.)

If the scene has occurred, the name should ring a bell without prompting.

The PCs could conceivably delay their confrontation with Wilde to pay their respects to Constance, in which case that scene nests within this one.

When they reach the creaky second-floor landing that leads to Wilde's door, they see a moderately well-dressed man knocking on it, to no avail. He pays them no mind as he shouts through the door:

*"I am Arnold Steylette, owner and editor-in-chief of The Great New York. I would like to interview you, Mr. Wilde, for my newspaper."*

In response, the PCs hear only muffled refusals.

Steylette has evidently been banging on the door for a while. He shrugs and heads down the stairs, brushing past the PCs.

If they decide to brace him before going on to talk with Wilde, the scene "Arnold Steylette" nests within this one.

As they should deduce from seeing the overtly information-seeking Steylette turned away, Wilde refuses to see them if they announce that they've come to ask him questions.

He will invite them in if they seem to be potential clients, which they might achieve, depending on the precise tactic they adopt, via **Bargain**, **Gentlemanly Pursuits**, or **Reassurance**.

As you'll recall from the story, Wilde is a bizarre-looking man of distinctly menacing demeanor. A pair of spectacles fix obviously prosthetic wax ears to his bald head. All of the fingers of his left hand are missing. Deep scratches, some fresh, some old and scarred, rake every area of exposed flesh, his face most especially.

The mere sight of him occasions a Difficulty 4 **Stability** test.

Gloom suffuses his ill-lit office. A monstrous cat hunches in a corner, back arched, fangs bared, hissing furiously at him. At some point, it interrupts the discussion to launch itself at Wilde, viciously clawing him, partially dislodging Wilde's artificial ears.

Wilde can influence the minds of people who have read *The King In Yellow*. He can immediately tell when he meets someone who has done so.

## The Repairer of Reputations

A copy of the book sits in solitary prominence on a small display shelf. Wilde draws no attention to it. He happily lends it if asked, knowing he will achieve dominance over its readers.

If a reader of the book is present, Wilde continues the discussion even when it becomes apparent that the investigators are pumping him for information. If not, he brings the meeting to a curt conclusion as soon as he comes to suspect this. Gauge this by the quality of the players' performance. The fiendishly clever Wilde quickly sees through any hint of deception.

The best way to forestall this realization is to let him take the lead, asking questions of them. They'll have to weave a convincing cover story about a reputation they want repaired. The fewer PCs are taking part in the talk,

the easier this will be. His questions convey the outlines of his activities.

- Yes, he does act as a Repairer of Reputations. Naturally the service only works so long as its beneficiaries remain discreet.
- He will need to know the nature of the indiscretion in order to determine the best means of repairing it.
- To this end, he will dispatch his discreet agents to research the situation. This initial phase of the service will be billed on an hourly basis.
- This will be surprisingly inexpensive. Wilde has trained his employees to work with both industry and parsimony.
- Should Wilde determine that he is able to help, he will then quote a flat fee for the reputation repair.
- Naturally anything compromising

Wilde discovers in the course of the repair will be kept strictly secret. To do anything else would be to obviate the entire project!

- (core) **Assess Honesty**: Wilde is lying when he makes this assurance.
- *The King in Yellow* is a sublime and misunderstood piece of literature.
- Its banning is regrettable; it's supposed effect on malleable minds, entirely apocryphal.
- (**Assess Honesty**) Wilde is lying.
- His interest in this book arises from his leisurely contemplation of arts and letters, and in no way relates to his vocation as a Repairer of Reputations.
- (**Assess Honesty**) Liar, liar, pants on fire.

The following questions alert him to the PCs' true intent. He will answer one of them and end the meeting. All of his answers read as deceptive against **Assess Honesty**.





## Out of Space

- He never met Osgood Vance.
- He does not know Hildred Castaigne.
- Although he has been briefly introduced to Louis Castaigne, who is courting the daughter of the armorer downstairs, he takes no particular interest in him.

Characters familiar with *The King In Yellow* see a large, technically advanced safe standing against the wall behind Wilde.

Those who have not perceive only a biscuit box on a worm-eaten side table.

If asked about the safe, Wilde appears baffled: *"It is only a biscuit box."*

When the characters realize that some of them are seeing one thing and others another, call for Difficulty 4 **Stability** rolls (+2 Difficulty for King in Yellow readers.) Failed results cause characters to become nauseous and visibly distraught, and to feel compelled to leave Wilde's presence immediately. Another PC can calm one character affected in this way, allowing him to remain in the room, with a 2-point **Reassurance** spend.

A gentleman testing Wilde's reaction with **Assess Honesty** concludes that it is disingenuous.

Wilde will show them what's in the biscuit box if asked: it's a brass crown one might find in a costume shop.

King in Yellow readers instead see a fabulous jeweled diadem. If this happens after they have already freaked out and been calmed down by the biscuit box/safe dichotomy, another round of **Stability** tests occurs, but at Difficulty 6 for non-readers and Difficulty 8 for readers.

### Revisiting Wilde

#### Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

##### Lead-In: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat

Though player initiative ought to trump best-laid plans, the most effective story pacing will see the characters meet Wilde once, conclude that he's highly suspicious, and then come back later to escalate matters.

Or Wilde might appear somewhere else, to bring the escalation to them.

Transforming Wilde into a suitable antagonist for a group of PCs requires that he prove himself more effective than he does in the story.

Wilde can use his power over King In Yellow readers to force them to harm themselves, or to attack their saner comrades. He can do this from afar. A Difficulty 4 **Sanity** success allows characters to resist this force. If he is present, the Difficulty increases to 8.

He might, for example, impel one character to shoot at another. Wilde's actions allow you to assign ratings to a PCs' unassigned general abilities. You might decide that the influenced character has 10 points of **Firearms**, for example.

Wilde automatically achieves control over NPCs who have read the book. He induces them to attack the PCs or NPCs whose lives they value, like Louis or Constance.

Simply by flashing a hand-drawn Yellow Sign, Wilde can cause people to lose consciousness. To resist this effect requires a Difficulty 4 **Sanity** test—8 for readers.

Should you need to cast subtlety aside, either Wilde or his cat might turn out be physical threats, fueled by the power of Hastur.

### Monstrous Mr. Wilde

**Abilities:** Athletics 9, Firearms 13, Health 11, Scuffling 13

Hit Threshold: 6 (to readers of *The King In Yellow*); 4 (to non-readers)

Alertness Modifier: +1

Armor: Scuffling does half damage

### Monstrous Cat

**Abilities:** Athletics 9, Firearms 26, Health 11

Hit Threshold: 5 (small and fast)

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (claws)

### Wilde's Network

#### Scene Type: Alternate/ Antagonist Reaction

If Wilde suspects that the PCs are onto him, he assigns members of his network and other blackmail victims to impede them. They're told to wait and attempt to secretly pick them off when alone and vulnerable. But minions, being minions, might take rash action allowing for an exciting fight or chase sequence when needed.

**General Abilities:** Athletics 4, Driving 4, Firearms 4, Health 4, Scuffling 6, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +2

Captured minions or blackmail victims prove equally close-mouthed.

Minions being minions, willing members of his network are easily broken by **Interrogation**. Half-crazed declarations follow:

*"The world has been changing, invisibly, for generations, ever since the printing of the Yellow Book!"*

*"Hastur's handiwork is all about us!"*

## The Repairer of Reputations

*"The Emperor shall soon take his throne!"*

*"You may have stopped me, fools, but you are doomed! Doomed!"*

Wilde then senses that they're spilling the beans and overwhelms them with remote psychic influence. Where circumstances allow it, they go into a frenzy and commit suicide, perhaps by recklessly attacking the PCs, soldiers, or policemen. If constrained, they die babbling, their lives snuffed out by spontaneous cerebral hemorrhages.

Blackmail victims acting unwillingly for fear of exposure respond to 3-point **Reassurance** spends, and promises that their secrets will be kept. They confess that Wilde put them up to it. They will tell of their own indiscretions. Mere pawns all, they know nothing of the Yellow Sign or Wilde's broader scheme. They make it clear that they'll suffer imprisonment before testifying in court. Foxhall, hemmed in by Wilde's high-placed allies, can't use mere off-the-record comments to launch a raid against him.

### Hawberk and Constance

Scene Type: Alternate

**Lead-In: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat, The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment**

In his tiny shop, Mr. Hawberk repairs antique armor and weapons, often in the company of his pretty daughter, Constance. He works both as chief armorer for the Metropolitan Museum, and as consultant to wealthy collectors. Hawberk regards this as a solemn vocation.

**Art History** notes a curious coincidence: his name suits his profession, as a hauberk is the term for a chainmail tunic.

**History** spots a tiny detail in the crest-like design on Hawberk's sign. It is a reversal of the crest of the English Marquisate of Avonshire.

If asked about this, Hawberk visibly dissembles, none-too-smoothly changing the subject.

A 2-point **History** spend, or later free use of the ability in a library, reveals that the Marquisate stands without an heir. The previous Marquis killed a man who slandered his wife. She took to her bed and succumbed to a preexisting illness. He fled to Australia, where he

supposedly died. However, an image of the Marquis looks oddly like Old Hawberk.

Wilde knows that Hawberk is the Marquis. He fears that their aristocratic connections, if revealed, might cause England to involve itself in the imperial accession. Its diplomatic interference might induce Louis to withdraw his concession of imperial rights to Hildred, leaving the throne of Hastur in dispute. This is why Wilde wants Louis and perhaps Constance dead. (Hildred also wants him dead due to his unrequited desire for Constance.)



## Out of Space

Hawberk knows that Wilde is onto him but neither he nor Constance have any inkling of the rest. Hawberk is anxious to keep his true identity secret, most especially from his daughter.

He can attest that Wilde is a strange bird, who knows more than he should about many things. For example, he recently discovered a piece of antique armor thought lost to history, and revealed its location to Hawberk. The old man suspects that Wilde did so merely to show him up in his area of expertise.

Constance requires **Reassurance** before speaking of private matters to relative strangers, even if they are Louis' friends.

- She has noted Hildred's unbecoming glances at her, but is too demure to make an issue of them.
- Wilde is a strange and sinister man, with people coming and going from his offices at all hours. Of his true activities, she claims no specific knowledge.

### Arnold Steylette

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat

PCs can speak to the editor of The Great New York at its offices, or when they first meet him, in the corridor outside Wilde's apartment.

Steylette will discuss his interest in Wilde if the PCs agree to share information (**Bargain**) or wildly praise his obscure broadsheet (**Flattery**).

- He has heard from several sources (who spoke to him under conditions of strict confidentiality) that Wilde acts as a "Repairer of Reputations."
- Men in trouble allegedly go to him, and he somehow arranges for their scandals to be forgotten.
- To this aim, he supposedly employs a

legion of anonymous operatives.

- Steylette wishes to know more of this enterprise—precisely how it is managed, and at what cost to its customers.
- **Assess Honesty** shows that this statement gilds the truth. Like any newspaperman, Steylette thrives on scandal. The PC guesses that he probably wants to uncover the indiscretions Wilde has apparently swept under the carpeting.
- Steylette has heard of the Yellow Sign but not in connection with this case. If the PCs suggest to him that Wilde somehow ties into *The King in Yellow*, he visibly blanches.
- Although he doesn't say so, **Assess Honesty** allows a character to accurately guess that Steylette will back off the story if it has a Yellow Sign aspect to it. Scandal is one thing. The depths of inexplicable madness are quite another. A 1-point spend prompts him to admit this.

Steylette can be induced to do legwork for the PCs, if it seems like it will lead to a high-profile story for his newspaper (requires 1-point **Bargain** spend.) If this happens, they later discover his mangled corpse—he's been brutally murdered by Hildred Castaigne, or by a member of Wilde's blackmail network.

### Hildred

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment

Lead-Outs: Mr. Wilde and His Fantastical Cat, Dr. Archer

Hildred Castaigne is arrogant, spiteful, defensive, and completely mad. Before a fall from his horse four years ago, he was a slightly sulky but otherwise normal young man of society. While convalescing, he defied doctor's orders and read a secretly procured copy of *The King In Yellow*. Thereafter, falling in with Wilde—who spotted the telltale symptoms of Hastur influence on him when he called on Constance at her father's shop—he accepts that he is of Hastur's bloodline, and the rightful Emperor of America.

Wilde's network will execute the coup needed to place him on the throne. It will all happen within days. Meanwhile, Hildred has settled a score, murdering his alienist, Dr. Archer, who had the temerity to question his sanity.

He expected the coup to occur last night, with the assassination of his cousin, Louis. When the PCs find

### The Renunciation

As pacing needs dictate, Louis might approach the group in the late going to regale them with a most curious anecdote:

Hildred just came to him and demanded that he renounce all claims to the imperial throne of America!

He claimed they were both descended from some chap named Hastur, who is portrayed in that damnable play.

In fact, Louis is supposedly Hastur's closest heir, with Hildred second in the lineage.

He even had a family tree to show him.

Somehow this absurd connection confers some sort of regal title.

What poppycock! The poor blighter's gone completely off his bean—again.

This happens only after the PCs have spoken to both Castaignes.



## The Repairer of Reputations

him, either at his home or club, they find him in an agitated state he is at pains to conceal. (Play him so that this comes across to the players, signaling it to a player with **Assess Honesty** if the point doesn't seem to be getting through.) It now seems that he killed Dr. Archer prematurely, and might be laid low by this mistake before he can seize the crown. He didn't tell Wilde that he was going to do this, and so is reluctant to go to him for help.

(Although Wilde will make him Emperor, he still finds the man alarming and repulsive. Once his Imperial position is secure, he'll find a way to dispose of him, mind-bending powers and all.)

Under questioning by the players, he makes the following assertions:

- He is indeed a frequent visitor to the amusingly eccentric Mr. Wilde, whose bizarre assertions provide hours of diversion.
- It is impossible to believe that anyone would want to harm good old, charming, empty-headed Louis.
- He is fond of Constance and happy that she will be happy with Louis.
- He did indeed read *The King In Yellow*. Its first act plods a bit, but the rest may be held as a sublime example of literature's decadent school, surpassing even Rimbaud and Huysmans.
- The idea that the play unhinges the mind is puerile idiocy. The crystalline certitude of Hildred's faculties is proof of that!

**Assess Honesty** shows that he's hiding something huge, and that his answers were riddled with falsehoods. It does not allow the players to more reliably separate fact from fabrication.

(*core*) His agitation breaks through to the surface if he is asked about his stay in a mental hospital. He claims never to have been insane. Then he turns white

and asks them if they've been to see Dr. Archer. If they say no, he relaxes again.

If they accuse him of killing Archer, he attempts to flee. Should they obstruct him, he pulls a pistol on them.

**General Abilities:** Athletics 12, Driving 4, Firearms 12, Health 12, Scuffling 12, Weapons 12  
Alertness Modifier: +2  
Stealth Modifier: +2

### Dr. Archer

#### Scene Type: Alternate

#### Lead-Ins: The Twentieth Dragoon Regiment, Hildred

A trip to John Archer's Madison Avenue home finds no one present to answer the doorbell.

**Locksmith** shows that the front door was recently jimmied open. It also allows the PCs to enter.

From the kitchen, they find the cellar door ajar. At the bottom of its wooden steps lies Dr. Archer. His throat has been slashed open.

**Medicine** reveals that:

He was likely killed with a straight razor.

He has been dead since about the time of Vance's suicide. (Don't make this correlation outright. Instead, give an estimated time of death that squares with the timeline.)

Having made this discovery, the PCs might then conduct an illicit search of Hildred's home. You may want to make this a suspense sequence, in which they evade the attention of Hildred or Wilde's minions.

They then discover a bloodied shirt and straight razor stuffed in a bathroom cupboard. **Medicine**, with laboratory access, shows that the blood matches Archer's type.

### The Chamber in Action

#### Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Having made so much hay of the Government Lethal Chamber, it would be a shame to withhold from the players the chance to interact with it.

As you construct antagonist reactions to keep the horror and suspense going, look for a way to stage a chase, action or escape scene in the new subterranean levels beneath New York.

They might pursue a minion, or Hildred, into the underground roadways that replaced the elevated trains, or, better yet, the trackless support tunnels used in their construction.

One or more of them might wake up in a basement after being knocked out by Wilde's psychic influence.

The capper to this sequence occurs when a PC escapes upwards through a hatch, only to find himself in the Lethal Chamber. Although the players have probably been expecting a sterile booth that kills with gas or electricity, they learn—as they are sliced to paste—that it works by an efficient arrangement of high-velocity blades.

If this occurs too early in the session, you'll want to allow **Athletics** tests to avoid hideous death. The later it occurs, the more equanimity the players will feel as their one-off characters meet a gruesome, but well laid, fate.

## Out of Space

### Endings

#### Scene Type: Conclusion

The breadth of possible player actions and antagonist reactions allows for any number of satisfying endings: some triumphant, others horrific.

**Maximum Horror:** Almost everyone dies as the coup finally proceeds to its conclusion, and a new American era begins. In their last moments, readers of *The King In Yellow* see a vision of its key image, the Pallid Mask, superimposed over the warships in New York Harbor.

**Descent Into Madness:** Influenced from afar by Wilde, the crazy half of the party wipes out the sane half, as the delayed coup finally occurs.

**Sanity Prevails:** The PCs gather enough evidence against Wilde and Hildred to inspire Foxhall to action. He has them assist in neutralizing the highest-placed members of the conspiracy while a handpicked cadre of loyal men sweeps up the conspiracy.

**Constance Held Hostage:** A panicked and resentful Hildred seizes Constance. He demands the characters' compliance with a razor held to her porcelain throat. (Wilde might do this instead, if Hildred has already been neutralized.)

**The Veil-Out:** Chambers' story ends with a terse note informing us that narrator Hildred Castaigne died soon after in an asylum. Maybe its narrator is even more unreliable than we think. What if the story is a cover-up of actual events, written by someone else, in Hildred's voice?

The account leads the reader to dismiss the Wilde-Castaigne conspiracy as mere insanity. After they foil the scheme, the scenario might conclude with the Esoterrorists-style realization that the truth must be hidden from history. Which PC of our well-bred, heroic gentlemen steps forward to author the misleading tale? And which of them is willing to complete the cover-up, by killing Hildred in cold blood?

### Not Scary Enough For You?

The weirdness of this scenario derives from its sense of a placid, creeping tyranny in a world that should not be, and from the evocative strangeness of its primary villain, Mr. Wilde.

If the action becomes too prosaic, look for ways to insert horror into the proceedings by triggering the incipient madness of characters exposed to the book. Call for Sanity rolls early and often.

Bring in Wilde's minions to threaten them physically.

Confront them with GMCs whose minds have been shattered by *The King In Yellow*, and are further along the path of madness than they are.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## The Repairer of Reputations

### DRIVE CARDS

#### Good Breeding

You are not one to seek out danger. However, as an able-bodied fellow of unimpeachable family connections, you understand that it is your duty to protect society, including your social inferiors, when it is threatened. To shirk this would cast a shadow on the family name. There is no worse failure than that.

#### Fellowship

As you learned while fighting in the recent war, there is no greater virtue than comradeship. If your friends are in danger, you must follow them, boldly and heartily.

#### Adventure

Although it is good that the war has ended, the cessation of hostilities has left you feeling vaguely dispirited. At no time did you ever feel more completely alive than when you were under fire. The sunny days of safety you once yearned for now seem dull and hollow. If there is a new fight to be fought, you'll be first into the breach.

#### Curiosity

When something strange is afoot, you can't help poking your nose in it. Several times that has nearly resulted in your losing that nose.  
(Come to mention it, you can't help but feel that something very curious has happened, and that all of your ordinary existence is the greatest mystery of all.)

#### Aesthete

Although the current fashion, in this age of new tranquility, is for art that soothes and quiets the soul, you discreetly maintain an interest in the decadent works of the prior generation. You remember when poetry plumbed the depths of the human soul, when paintings depicted the weird as well as the beautiful. One day you will show the world your own verse, and once again crack open the doors of perception. But first you must write some verse, yes? And to do that, you must look into shadowed corners, where others dare not glimpse.

#### Champion of Order

History comprises an eternal struggle between chaos and order. As anarchy embroils Europe, you remain vigilant to its symptoms here, in the United States. The blood you and others shed in the recent war must not have been shed in vain. Wherever disorder looms, you will be there to tamp it down.





# FLYING COFFINS

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## The Jolly Old RFC

### An Introduction by Adam Gauntlett

There is one moment in RFC history that sums up the service in a nutshell.

In 1914, as the British made their way across the Channel to the battleground, a mad scramble for transport had left the fledgling air service grabbing at anything with wheels it could get its mitts on. As is traditional in the British Military, not much had been done to organize transport for the RFC; as a new, and therefore despised, Service, it had to make do and mend with whatever it could get. The result was that it relied on gifts and loans to get the job done, and the cavalcade of vehicles that trooped across the water to act as transport for men and material included everything from touring cars to removals vans.

The most colourful exhibit in the carnival was No. 5 Squadron's ammunition and bomb lorry: a HP (Houses of Parliament) Sauce deliveries van, painted in the company's scarlet colours. At the time, nobody considered the unpleasant possibilities of a bright red bomb cart; aerial bombardment had yet to really be invented, and the idea that the HP Sauce van might stand out against a green-brown background hadn't crossed anyone's minds.

Then came the Battle of Mons, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1914. The advancing British army met the enemy just as the Germans were about to complete the outflanking dictated by the Schlieffen Plan, as a crucial part of a quick victory against the French. Initial fighting was ferocious, and the British soon found that they could not hold their exposed position against repeated German attacks. Thus began what later was

known as the Great Retreat, which eventually ended at the Marne.

Much of the retreat took place in great chaos, with soldiers joining terrified civilians in a mass exodus. The RFC pilots did what they could, providing both reconnaissance and impromptu attack sorties, armed with grenades and petrol bombs. Yet they too had to retreat and, in filthy conditions, at night and in the rain, the only thing they had to navigate by was occasional glimpses of a bright red HP Sauce van a few hundred feet below, its driver as eager to get out of harm's way as the pilots were.

New technology, its potential ignored by High Command, having to bodge and make do; yet somehow managing to turn what could have been a colossal disaster into a kind of success. That, in a nutshell, is the RFC.

### The Trail of Cthulhu Air War

To a degree, how a Keeper approaches a War story will depend on whether the campaign is Pulp or Purist.

Pulp games welcome the guns blazing approach; a kind of Technicolor fantasy with explosions, brave air aces, and daring Fairbanks-style exploits. Campaigns of this sort will probably be concentrating on the sudden leap in technology, allowing protagonists to finally bring some firepower to the fight. It's one thing for a Byakhee to menace an investigator on the ground; something else again when the investigator is in the air, and has two – or more – fire-spitting machine guns at his disposal.

Yet there's a lot to be said for the Purist War. In a Purist setting, the search for the truth dooms the seeker after knowledge, and anyone else who happens to be standing nearby. In an Air War game, doom and destruction is omnipresent; the technology is unreliable, the enemy could be anywhere, and the protagonist is flying in what amounts to a giant gas tank covered in wood and alcohol-soaked canvas. No wonder the pilots' nerves were on edge. Even Biggles, W.E. Johns' fictional pilot hero, was downing bottles of booze at a sitting towards the end of the War, convinced that death was near.

Whether Pulp or Purist, there are elements of the air war that Keepers ought to bear in mind:

- **Nobody Knows What's Going On.** British pilots famously didn't wear parachutes, and neither did the Germans until near the end of the War. This wasn't for lack of demand; many pilots saw the benefit in having something that could get them out alive when their crate was on fire. Nor was there a significant technological issue, and the problems that did exist were rapidly being solved by inventors on both sides. Yet the RFC authorities were red-hot against the very idea of parachutes, fulminating that they "impaired the fighting spirit of pilots and cause them to abandon machines which might otherwise be capable of returning to base for repair," according to one RFC directive. It took repeated

## Out of Space

practical demonstrations by Major Orde Lees – jumping from Tower Bridge, among other exploits – as well as several high-profile instances of German pilots using parachutes, before the powers that were finally caved in. Yet the peculiar thing about the anti-parachute policy is not that it existed, but that nobody really knows why it did. There aren't many instances in which the policy was ever put on the record, nor are there very many statements from RFC top brass on the matter. The man at the very top, RFC Commander Hugh 'Boom' Trenchard, even supported some of the early parachute trials. The implication seems to be that nobody really knew what was going on and nor did anyone care to know, an attitude that could sum up much of the RFCs tactical decisions.

- **You Work It Out On Your Own.** The British tactic for beating the enemy was blissfully simple: put as many planes in the air as possible, as often as possible, as far over the enemy lines as possible. It didn't matter that the Germans had better aircraft, or better pilots. It didn't matter that training was nonexistent; the 1914 generation had taught itself to fly, through private instruction, a luxury that nobody else in the air war had. Everyone who came in afterward got perhaps a few dozen hours in the air, "instructed" by a shell-shocked veteran, with no syllabus or standardized grading system. It didn't matter that the new crates put out by the hundreds on Government contracts weren't up to stunting or perhaps had structural issues. None of it mattered because the point was not to outclass,

but to outlast the enemy; losing pilots and machines was just the price of doing business. Survival was a matter of luck, but once a pilot did survive, he began to work things out on his own. The inventive ones began putting together their own kit, taking great pains to get their kites just right, loading their own weapons. They knew their lives depended on it, and the ones who didn't do that were the ones who, more often than not, didn't survive.

- **You Have Time On Your Hands.** Unlike almost any other Service, the RFC had time on its hands, and freedom to use it. An infantryman couldn't get leave to wander off to the bright lights of the city whenever he felt like it, but an RFC officer could. Moreover the plane grants freedom of movement; even London is within a day's flight. There are many odd missions a pilot could get involved in, from bombing to reconnaissance to transporting spies, any of which could throw up unique Cthulhuoid opportunities. From a Keeper's perspective this allows significant plot freedom, in that it provides a chance for investigation on the ground as well as in the air. Few other War stories could have the protagonist flying over a target one minute, taking photographs, and in the next scene have the players comparing those photographs to an illustration they happened to find in an old grimoire they hunted up when last in Paris.

### Scenario Seed: The Fledgling

The new boy in the flight has all the makings of a natural pilot. He's an absolute genius in the air, but a perfect swine on the ground. The Squadron Leader is prepared to forgive him much, so long as he keeps shooting down the enemy. But why is it that so many people close to him – wingmen, bunkmates, his mechanics – tend to die? Is it just bad luck, or is there something more sinister at work?

#### *Possibilities:*

- **In the Blood.** His family bloodline is tainted, and he has been marked for death by a supernatural opponent that has pursued his family for many years. Except there is a problem; for maximum benefit, he has to be sacrificed in a certain way, at a certain time. For that to work given the unusual circumstances, the family curse is turning out to be an unexpected blessing; the entity that demands his death is forced to keep him alive, for now at least. In order to achieve that, it drains life from others and uses this stolen essence to keep him alive. He's actually not that good a pilot, but thanks to his helper he's built up quite a reputation. Dealing with him may mean getting him killed, to end the threat; but his guardian angel will do everything it can to prevent that.
- **Revenge.** The pilot is an amateur sorcerer, and each of the people who have died so far either wronged him in some way, or found out about his murderous secret. He's been using magic to kill them, and by so doing he's been able to bind their spirits into his plane's machine guns. That's why he's been such a capable



## Flying Coffins

killer; the ghosts of the people he killed are forced into helping him shoot down the enemy. To properly deal with the threat, the spirits bound into this weapon must somehow be appeased.

- **Arrogance.** The pilot really is that good. The reason people have been dying so often is because they've been trying to emulate him, and they can't. However so many deaths in such a short time has attracted the attention of several followers of Mordiggan,

the Charnel God. They see great potential in someone as keen to succeed as he seems to be; he doesn't mind whether he kills the enemy or his own, and that's the sort of thing the Mordiggan cultists appreciate. They're grooming him as a kind of modern Horseman of the Apocalypse, the intent being to make him a better killer than any other ace; but each kill will be for the glory of the Charnel God, and the ace's reputation – bolstered by books

and mementoes – will serve to glorify Death. Anyone who gets in their way will find out just how dangerous these cultists can be. A variation on this theme would have the Mordiggan cultists either suborn, or recruit, the Squadron Leader and possibly others in high command. Regular ceremonies help boost the pilot's abilities, but in his pride he thinks he doesn't really need all that nonsense; and pride could easily be his downfall.



## Flying Coffins

### Hook

It is early winter, 1918. The protagonists are RFC pilots stationed near the Front, and rumour has it the next big push is about to begin. The squadron's being worked to death, and its champion ace is on the verge of cracking up. Meanwhile the new Hun Circus is racking up kill after kill – but is it the enemy or something else that's to blame?

### AWFUL TRUTH

The protagonists have unknowingly strayed into a different kind of air war. Man has only just learned to make flying machines, and the War is man's first large-scale incursion of the planet's air space. There they found the forces of the Mythos, which were long used to treating the skies as their domain. In particular Byakhee, beloved of Hastur, are fond of travelling from the stratosphere to the troposphere, possibly in search of bacterial food. Though Byakhee have no Earthly habitation there is a long history of them being summoned to Earth by sorcerers, and once they arrive they often find reasons to stay long after their initial summons is concluded. Small colonies of them migrate between the Earth's upper atmosphere and the Moon on missions of their own, and until now they have been accustomed to treating the troposphere as their personal domain. Man's new warbirds can climb as high as 20,000 feet, directly challenging the Byakhee. They resent this mortal interference in their activities, and attack both sides equally.

This problem is exacerbated by the new squadron, Jasta 32, recently relocated to the protagonists' sector. Their leader,

Ernst Becker, is the favourite nephew of Eva Agathe von Plon, a society occultist of some small notoriety who, in a rare case of accidental wisdom, advised her nephew to put a 'good luck charm' on his personal aircraft. This symbol, the Yellow Sign, is of particular interest to the Byakhee, and they assume that Becker is therefore associated with Hastur. His enemies are their enemies. Becker, at the start of the scenario, refuses to accept the evidence his eyes are giving him; towards the end, he may have no choice.

### SPINE

A sortie into Hunland to tackle an observation balloon ends in a fierce scrap with Jasta 32. Byakhee are glimpsed flying in and out of the clouds. On the ground again, ace MacMurdo can shed some light, but he's on the edge of cracking up himself. Reporting it to Command won't do any good, but talking to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, military journalist, might. Combat takes its toll, and the date of the Push draws near. Military gossip is rife, but the Intelligence Officer has some solid gen for the protagonists. Duelling Becker may be the only way to put the Byakhee menace down for good, for it's the Yellow Sign that's the real problem. On the day of the Push it's sortie after sortie; Becker makes his final appearance, if he hasn't already been dealt with, and the protagonists will have to fight hard or go down in flames.

### SAGITTARIUS RISING

This section discusses the mechanics of air combat.

RFC veteran Major L.W.B Rees, VC, described aerial engagement in four succinct principles:

- Open fire before the enemy.
- Open fire at the shortest possible range.
- Open fire under the most favourable conditions.
- Try to disable the enemy at once.

It was combat by ambush; the pilot who could shoot his target without the target firing back was most likely to win the fight. **Piloting** is going to be of primary importance, and **Stealth**, **Sense Trouble** are also useful abilities. **Military Talk**, an investigative ability, may also be useful. The **Firearms** ability is used to operate the forward-mounted machine gun. All of these abilities are doing double duty; that is, they are used in air combat, and also as normal abilities when the pilot is not in air combat.

All air combat follows this pattern:

- The initial set up (who is the aggressor, who the defender) is decided.
- The aggressor may attempt to surprise the defender. Mechanically this is resolved by the player making either a **Stealth** or **Sense Trouble** check; see *Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk*, opposite.
- If the aggressor successfully surprised the defender – hereafter described as keeping the **Stealth** advantage – then the aggressor gets a free shot before the dogfight begins, and the defender can neither stunt nor shoot back. See *Dogfight*.

## Flying Coffins

- Once the **Stealth** advantage has been dealt with and the free shot (if any) resolved, the dogfight begins. It concludes when one side successfully **Flees**, or is victorious.
- The dogfight is a bid contest, **Piloting** versus **Piloting**. The one who wins gets to shoot (**Firearms**) at the one who loses. See *Dogfight*, for further information. *Exception*: a plane with a rear-mounted observer operated machine gun can always shoot at an aggressor, even if the pilot loses the bid contest.
- All damage is assessed against the crate's **Structure** rating. When a plane loses all its **Structure** it can no longer fly. A PC has the option of crash landing, but an NPC bursts into flames, explodes, or otherwise suffers a picturesque death.

Given that **Piloting** will be used quite often during a dogfight, the protagonists may be tempted to blow their pools quickly to guarantee a result. This tactic is perilous! If the protagonist gets into more than one dogfight in a scene, they could easily run out of **Piloting** before the scene ends.

### Piloting and Stunting

Much may depend on whether the PCs are aggressors or defenders. In some scenes this is deliberately mentioned in the text, but in others this is up to chance. Compare the Flight Leader's **Piloting** to the NPC Flight Leader's **Piloting**. Whichever flight's Leader has the highest pool is the aggressor. In the opening scene, MacMurdo is the protagonists' Flight Leader, but afterwards a PC should be given that position.

**Piloting** in the Great War determines the Hit Threshold. Those with **Piloting** of 8 or more have a Hit Threshold of 4; those with less than 8 have Hit Threshold 3. Hit Threshold can also be modified by aircraft type, see further *Crates*.

**Piloting** permits **Stunting**, a new speciality. In combat, the player may wish either to reduce his target's Hit Threshold or increase his own. He does this by **Stunting** (jink, barrel roll, loop, Immelman Turn are examples), which is a simple **Piloting** test at **Difficulty 4**. This can be done after the dogfight bid contest has completed, but must be done before **Firearms** rolls. Both aggressor and defender usually have the option to **Stunt** before shooting. This means a defender who lost the bid contest can still try to keep from getting shot, and an attacker who won the contest can try to further increase his chance of hitting the target.

A **Stunt** can be attempted once per bid contest. Once the bid contest is resolved and the **Firearms** test made, the **Stunt** bonus (if any) expires; **Stunt** bonuses are not cumulative.

The combat may involve multiple bid contests, with new **Stunts** for each contest. Each new **Stunt** is a separate roll.

A successful **Stunt** allows the pilot either to increase his own Hit Threshold by 1 (making him more difficult to shoot) or decrease his opponent's by 1. Some aircraft cannot **Stunt**, while others give bonuses or penalties to **Stunting**.

The only time the defender can't **Stunt** is when he was unaware of the impending attack: the aggressor kept the **Stealth** advantage (see *Dogfight*).

### Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk

In each instance, the player is the active party, and is making a **simple Difficulty 4 test** to determine either if he successfully sneaked up on an opponent or if the opponent sneaked up on him. This can only happen before the dogfight begins; once combat is joined the situation is resolved as described in *Dogfight*.

The Difficulty of the test may be modified by NPC bonuses.

The pilot who has the **Stealth** advantage gets a free shot. If the **Stealth** advantage is lost, then there is no free shot and combat starts immediately. See also *Dogfight*.

**Stealth** is used when the PC is the aggressor. Success means that the PC sneaked up behind the NPC and therefore has the **Stealth** advantage. When a PC attacks an NPC, the NPC has an **Alertness** modifier that increases the difficulty of the protagonist's **Stealth** check.

**Sense Trouble** is used when the PC is the defender, and an NPC is sneaking towards his tail. Success means that the PC spotted the NPC before combat began. Otherwise the NPC has the **Stealth** advantage. NPCs have a **Stealth** modifier that increases the difficulty of the PC's **Sense Trouble** check.

**Military Talk** can be used during the combat. Each aircraft had its quirks; some manoeuvred differently at different altitudes, some were better at turning to the left than the right, some had different blind spots, and so on. **Military Talk** represents the protagonist's knowledge of enemy aircraft types. Dramatically, perhaps the PC remembers a useful bit of advice given while swapping war stories at the bar, something his instructor back in Flying School told him, or a special briefing he attended. A spend of **1 point Military Talk** grants either **1 temporary Piloting pool** for use in bid contests only, or **+1** to all **Firearms** damage, player's choice. The **Piloting pool** or the **Firearms** bonus lasts only as long as the scene does. This **Military Talk** spend can only be made once per scene, unlike **Stunting** which can be used once per dogfight bid contest. In a scene where more than one kinds of target are available then the PC must specify which particular target type he



gets the bonus against. So if there's a Roland, two Fokker DR.1 and a Pfaltz in the scene, the player must specify whether the bonus is against the Roland, the Fokkers or the Pfaltz.

NPC pilots do not use **Military Talk**.

**Military Talk** does not normally work against Byakhee. However the Keeper may rule that if a protagonist has diligently gathered information about the Byakhee, has met them at least once in combat and survived the experience, then the protagonist is entitled to a **Military Talk** spend against Byakhee. A PC with **Cthulhu Mythos** can spend a point to gain the same benefit as a **Military Talk** spend, without needing to make a test. In the narrative, the only source of **Cthulhu Mythos** is the book *Dictionnaire Infernal* found in the scene *Local Flavour*.

### NPC Pilots

NPC pilots and observers are ranked as **novice**, **experienced** or **ace**. Novices are at -1 to all rolls in combat, including **Piloting**, and novice observers are at -1 to all **Firearms** rolls. Experienced pilots fly and shoot at no penalty. Aces are at +1 to all rolls in combat. The only exception to this is the bid contest (*Dogfight*); novice or ace bonuses and penalties are not added to the bid contest die roll. This ranking system does not apply to PCs, who are assumed to fly and shoot at no penalty. PCs who want to call themselves aces need to shoot down at least five NPC aircraft first. For a PC, the ace ranking is an honorific, and confers no bonus.

This ranking is in addition to other modifiers. If an NPC would normally have a +1 **Stunting** modifier thanks to his crate (eg. is flying an Albatross), but is a novice, then the +1 and -1 cancel each other out, and the effective modifier is +0. An ace, on the other hand, would have a **total +2 Stunting** modifier, including his ace bonus.

### The Flying Coffin: Damage and Structure

Most aircraft are armed with machine guns, which do +2 **damage**. This may increase to +3 damage with a **Military Talk** spend, see also *Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk*.

The pilot may choose to load incendiary ammunition (the British called it Buckingham) for increased damage. This requires a **Mechanical Repair** test **Difficulty 4**, with failure meaning the gun hopelessly jams the first time it is used and will not be repairable mid-flight. Incendiary ammunition does +4 **damage** (potentially +5 with the **Military Talk** bonus), and is the only kind of ammunition that can damage spotter balloons. While not outlawed, many Great War aviators refused to use incendiary, because they didn't like burning their enemies to death. It was too forceful a reminder that they might burn themselves, one day. Keepers may want to impose **Stability 3 tests** the first time they see a pilot go down in a burning wreck, and possibly a further **Stability 1 test** every subsequent time they see it happen.

The Keeper may also choose to impose a social stigma on PCs who use incendiary. Their mess mates won't speak to them, and enemy pilots may go out of their way to attack them.

An aircraft's health is expressed in its **Structure** rating. This represents its ability to stay in the air despite damage; lose enough **Structure**, and the plane can no longer fly.

NPC aircraft crash and burn when they reach **0 Structure**. This usually means the death of the pilot and any observers who were aboard, unless there are good story reasons for the Keeper to rule otherwise.

A PCs' aircraft can drop below **0 Structure**. At 0 to -5, the crate is damaged and the **Difficulty** for all tests, including **Hit Thresholds**, is at -1. At -6 to -11, the crate is badly damaged (possibly on fire or about to catch light), can no longer **Stunt** or engage in combat, and all **Piloting** rolls are at -2 penalty. At -11 or greater, the aircraft has been shot down, and **Piloting** is at -3 (crash landings only).

PCs have the option of taking damage directly, rather than letting the plane suffer. The player can let one or more points of damage accrue to the character, not the plane. This decision must be made at the time the damage is suffered, and the player is under no obligation to take the damage; the player may prefer to let the plane suffer the **Structure** loss. The benefit is the plane doesn't lose as much **Structure**, which could help it stay in the air longer. *Example:* a Spad takes **8 points** from the enemy's attack, and the PC pilot knows the crate only had **4 Structure** left. Rather than go into negatives, the player decides to let **5 points** from this attack damage the character instead. This injures the pilot, but leaves the crate with **1 Structure**; he'd better hope things improve in future rounds.

A PC has the option of crash landing. Whether on his home aerodrome or in No-Man's Land, the PC can attempt a simple **Piloting** test **Difficulty 4**. Success means the PC managed to get his aircraft down without further injuring himself. Failure means the PC still crash lands, but takes +1 **damage**. For dramatic purposes the Keeper should assume that a PC can find his way back to his aerodrome the same day as the crash, though if desired there could be a brief scene in which the protagonist has to navigate No-Man's-Land or similar first. See also the optional scene, *Curses! Foiled Again!*

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Flying Coffins

### Dogfight

The aggressor has attacked the defender. The first issue to resolve is the **Stealth** advantage.

If the aggressor kept the **Stealth** advantage, then dramatically speaking he has worked his way into a kill position without the other pilot knowing, and gets one free shot. The aggressor can use **Stunts** or **Military Talk** to improve his chances of success. The defender cannot **Stunt** or shoot back, even if the defender has a rear-firing observer operated gun. This is the only exception to the rear-firing gun rule; in all other circumstances a rear-firing gun can shoot back even if the bid contest is lost.

Resolve the **Firearms** test as per usual. Assuming the defender survives the initial attack, the dogfight begins.

Now it's a duel to the death, with both aircraft twisting all over the sky trying to get a kill shot. This desperate jockeying for advantage is the dogfight bid contest.

All parties involved in the dogfight bid **Piloting**. No contestant can bid more than their remaining **Piloting** pool. The bidding is blind, and the reveal is simultaneous. One playtest group found that using playing cards simplified the bid process; if playing cards are not available, write the bids on pieces of paper.

Each contestant then rolls a d6. Any contestant who rolls an odd number (1, 3, 5) adds that, as a bonus, to their bid. Even numbers don't count and are not added. Remember, this is the only combat roll where novice or ace bonuses or penalties are not added.

Highest bid, including any bonus, wins that contest. The winner then gets to shoot at the loser. In the event of a tie, each gets a shot, simultaneously. Perhaps in the whirlwind of combat the

fighters were face-to-face for a brief moment, and blazed away, or there may be other story solutions that make more sense. It's up to the Keeper to decide, bearing in mind the situation and the demands of the scene.

As a general rule, if a PC and an allied NPC are both potential targets, the allied NPC ought to be shot at first unless there is a compelling story reason not to do so.

Each party involved in the contest can **Stunt** if they wish. They do not have

to **Stunt**, nor are they obligated to spend **Piloting** pool points in order to **Stunt**. Some crates are nimble and get **Stunt** bonuses while others get penalties, and some crates can't **Stunt** at all. Each combatant involved in the bid contest can only **Stunt** once per bid contest, but once the contest is resolved they can **Stunt** again in future contests.

Combatants may wish to **Flee** rather than fight. In a dogfight, **Piloting** replaces **Fleeing** as the operative pool, and if the attempt is resisted then it is



## Out of Space

resolved by bid contest. If the **Fleeing** combatant wins the bid contest then the attempt is successful, and the retreating pilot escapes the combat. It has to be a clear-cut win; a tie won't do. Dramatically, perhaps the **Fleeing** pilot dived into a cloud, or faked a crash so the attacker would think he'd been shot down. The **Fleeing** pilot only needs one bid contest win to succeed.

*Example of a bid contest:* Algy and Ginger, both in Camels, are fighting von Stalhein in his Albatross. Algy is low on Piloting but Ginger still has a 5 point pool; they don't know how much von Stalhein has to spend. Algy bids 0 and Ginger 3, while von Stalhein bids 4. Now each roll, and Algy gets 5, Ginger 2, and von Stalhein 1. Ginger's 2 is discounted, but Algy's 5 against von Stalhein's 5 means they both get to shoot simultaneously. As von Stalhein is an NPC and there are two possible targets for him to shoot at, the Keeper can decide whether the Albatross has a pop at Algy or Ginger's crate. If Ginger is an NPC the Keeper ought to make Ginger von Stalhein's target. Meanwhile Algy blazes away at von Stalhein. If nobody has **Stunted** yet in this bid contest, now's the time to do so. Otherwise the next roll is a **Firearms** test. Note that as this is a simultaneous shoot, von Stalhein might be shot down and yet still kill his target, all in the same bid contest. Assuming all parties survive, a second bid contest begins immediately. Perhaps von Stalhein would rather **Flee** now – it is two-on-one, after all, and his crate is damaged – but he'll have to win this bid contest in order to do so.

## CRATES

This contains statistics for all the aircraft used during the scenario. This is not an exhaustive list of Great War fighters. All planes have a forward-firing machine gun and may have rear-mounted weapons depending on type. This does mean that some aircraft may be able to shoot at two targets at once.

This does not mean they can shoot at the same target twice.

Top speed (in mph) is given for each aircraft; cruising speeds are normally half to two-thirds as fast. In dogfights, if the plane's top speed is lower than its competitors by 10 mph or more, the pilot of the crate with the lower speed has +1 to all Difficulty Numbers in the contest. If it's lower by 30 mph or more, the add is +2. The Keeper may rule that local conditions – an involved multi-combatant dogfight with planes twisting all over the sky, heavy cloud cover ideal for concealment – negate this advantage.

## Germans

### Fokker DR.I:

Single engine triplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 190 mph. *Structure:* 7. *Bonuses:* +2 Stealth, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Though popularly associated with the Red Baron, he more often flew the Albatross D.III. Werner Voss, considered to be the only pilot to rival von Richthofen, fought his last battle in the DR.I.

### Albatross D.III:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 180 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* +2 Stealth, +1 Stunting.

### Pfalz D.III:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* None. *Notes:* Steady, reliable and common; most pilots preferred the Albatross.

### Halberstadt:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* -1 Stunting. *Notes:* Sluggish and unresponsive.

### Fokker D.VII:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 220 mph. *Structure:* 9. *Bonuses:* +1 Stealth, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Widely considered to be the best German fighter. The Armistice specifically mentioned the D.VII, demanding that all surviving Fokkers be handed over. Several nations used them militarily post-war, during the 1920s.

### Fokker D.VIII:

Single seater monoplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 210 mph. *Structure:* 9. *Bonuses:* +1 Stealth, +3 Stunting. *Notes:* Very nimble, scored the last kill of the war. Early versions were prone to wing failure. Also known as the Flying Razor.

### Roland CII:

Two seater biplane observer, swivel mounted machine gun at rear. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* -2 Stealth, -2 Stunting, +1 observer Firearms rolls. *Notes:* Sluggish and unresponsive, but a steady gun platform.

### Gotha:

Dual engine bomber biplane with two observers and a pilot. *Top Speed:* 150 mph. *Structure:* 14. *Bonuses:* +1 observer Firearms rolls, cannot Stunt, -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* though these were more often used to bomb London, the chance to have a crack at one may be too much for the PCs to pass up. Sluggish and unresponsive, relies on observer mounted machine guns fore and aft for protection.

### Balloon:

Hydrogen-filled gasbag with observers in basket underneath. *Structure:* 5. *Bonuses:* -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Unarmed and cannot manoeuvre or **Stunt**. Can only be damaged with incendiary.



## Flying Coffins

### Archie:

Anti-aircraft fire, named Archie by the British after a popular music-hall song with the refrain, 'Archibald, certainly *not!*' (as spoken by a girl to her would-be lover). It wouldn't be the Western Front without Archie, but Keepers are advised to use it as background colour rather than an actual weapon. Archie was notoriously inaccurate, but when it hit it was almost inevitably lethal. If the Keeper chooses to exercise the Archie option, treat hits as per **mortar shell** (main rules p. 67), assume all gunners have **0 pool**, and allow all Archie attacks to be contested rolls vs. **Piloting**.

### Ground Fire:

Sometimes the protagonists will fly so close to the ground they risk being shot either by rifle fire or machine guns. Assume all gunners have **0 pool**, and allow all attacks to be contested rolls vs. **Piloting**. Damage is +1.

### Ground Target:

The protagonists may decide to strafe other targets on the ground, including trucks, trains, ammo dumps, buildings and so on. The Keeper should assume that some targets (eg ammo dumps, buildings) are protected by *Ground Fire*, while others (eg trucks, trains) are not. Ground Targets have no other defences, and their Structure rating can range from 4 (motorcycle, horses), 7 (trucks), 10 (ammo dump, trains) to 15 (buildings). Ground targets, with the exception of ammo dumps, are not particularly vulnerable to incendiary, and Buckingham does not get its usual +4. Instead all shots at ground targets are considered to be ordinary machine gun fire.

### Allies

#### S.E. 5a:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 220 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* Refreshes 1 Piloting pool point per scene, +1 Stunting. *Notes:* Responsive and capable workhorse, not as popular as the Camel.

#### Sopwith Camel:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 210 mph. *Structure:* 7. *Bonuses:* Refreshes 2 Piloting pool points per scene, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Nimble, almost too much so; when introduced pilots believed it was prone to crashing, but learned better.

#### Sopwith Snipe:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 220 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* +1 Stealth, +3 Stunting. *Notes:* Intended as a replacement for the Camel, flown by the Australians and Canadians as well as the British. Canadian Major Barker fought his famous battle against fifteen enemy aircraft in the Snipe.

#### Nieuport 28:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 7. *Bonuses:* +3 Stunting; Keeper has the option, on a natural 1 Stunt roll, to inflict -1 damage to the plane. *Notes:* Responsive and a joy to stunt, occasionally prone to structural failure.

#### Hanriot HD.1:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 7. *Bonuses:* +2 Stunting. *Notes:* Responsive and reliable. The French developed it but did not use it, instead giving it to the Belgians, Americans and Italians. Willy Coppens, the Belgian ace, flew a Hanriot.

### Spad S.XIII:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 230 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* None. *Notes:* Steady and reliable, the standby for French and American squadrons.

### de Havilland:

Two seater observation aircraft, with forward and rear facing machine guns. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 10. *Bonuses:* -4 Stunting, -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Sluggish and difficult to handle.

## COMBAT EXAMPLES

*Algy's Camel is stooging over the Front, looking for business. He spots a lone Roland flying below him, buzzing over the lines. Algy looks for other aircraft, but doesn't spot any.*

*He knows the Roland is slow and sluggish, with a rear gun. He is 10 mph faster than the Roland, which will give a modifier to his opponent's Difficulty Numbers. He doesn't know anything about the pilot or the observer. They could be experts or rank novices. Still, he has the advantage and he doesn't think it's a trap, so down he goes!*

*He spends 4 Stealth, (out of a starting pool 8), hoping to gain the advantage. He knows the base difficulty is 4, but of course the pilot could be an ace, or have other bonuses he doesn't know about. He wants to kill this Roland with the first shot, and that means he needs the Stealth advantage. Spending 4 pool ought to guarantee that.*

*His luck's in, and the Stealth succeeds! He'll get the first shot without having to make a bid contest, and the Roland won't be able to shoot back. Now to pour on the advantages to guarantee a hit; the more bonuses he can add, the better off he'll be.*

*He can use Military Talk and Stunting. The Stunt test is a simple Difficulty 4, and his Camel's natural nimbleness means he's going to get +2 Stunting even without spending pool points. He spends Military Talk but no Piloting (save that for later, he thinks),*

## Out of Space

and makes the Difficulty test. He uses the Military Talk for a +1 Firearms damage bonus, and Stunting to reduce the Roland's Hit Threshold. He power dives upon his prey.

The Roland doesn't know what's about to hit it, and can't Stunt or do anything else to save itself. The Hit Threshold would normally be 3; now it's 2, and Algy's going to get an extra +1 damage if he hits. Algy spends 1 Firearms pool to make absolutely sure of his target. As luck would have it, he rolls a 6; the Roland is well and truly peppered. The damage roll is the final nail in the coffin: a 5, +3 (including Military Talk) for a total of 8. Exit one Roland, blazing like a bonfire. The enemy never got a shot off, and Algy didn't spend too many pool points. Time Algy went to look for other customers.

Unfortunately for Algy his next opponent isn't such a pushover. This Fokker triplane is out for blood, and is the aggressor. Algy makes his Sense Trouble test, so the enemy doesn't get to Stealth him the way he did the Roland. Now it's a dogfight, winner takes all.

Algy's thankful it's a Tripehound, which has a top speed of 190 to his 210 mph. At least the enemy's Difficulty Numbers will be higher.

Algy elects to Stunt, without spending pool points. That saves his Piloting for the dogfight bid contest, but of course his Camel's natural +2 bonus doesn't guarantee success. On the other hand, the enemy crate also has a Stunting bonus, and the pilot may have additional bonuses Algy doesn't know about.

Algy also decides to spend Military Talk out of a rapidly dwindling pool, deciding to add a temporary Piloting pool point against the DR. 1. That might make all the difference.

Unfortunately for Algy, he fails the Stunt test. The enemy successfully Stunts but does not use Military Talk (as an NPC, he cannot), and the Keeper decides to decrease Algy's Hit Threshold by 1.

After a nail-biting bid contest which sees Algy's Piloting pool go down by 4 points, Algy's luck finally runs out. The enemy wins

the bid contest. That means the Fokker gets a shot off. Normally Algy's Hit Threshold would be 4 (thanks to his high Piloting), modified by his Camel to 5, and further increased to 6 by Algy's speed advantage. If the Stunt had worked it would have been 7, but it didn't. The enemy's successful Stunt reduces Algy's Hit Threshold back down to 5, and of course he may have other bonuses Algy doesn't know about. Is he an ace?

Well, on a Firearms roll of 5, he doesn't have to be. Algy's crate shudders under the impact, and suffers 4 Structure damage. It only had 7 to begin with; Algy's in a bad way. He has the option of spending Health to avoid some of that Structure damage, but decides to save that option for future rounds.

Still, he's not dead yet, and with a new bid contest comes another chance to Stunt, though he can't use Military Talk again so if he's already spent that temporary point he has no further Military Talk bonus coming to him. Time to pull out all the stops . . .



## Scenes

### BALLOON BUSTING

The scenario opens with the protagonists in the air over the Western Front, on a mission to burst an enemy observation balloon. The intent of this scene is to provide a short introductory combat as well as introduce the main story problem, and in theory the protagonists should be victorious without losses. The Keeper may want to have some NPC pilots accompany the protagonists.

See *The Jolly Old Squadron* for important information about the flight.

MacMurdo is Flight Leader. Before the flight he would have discussed tactics with the protagonists; flashback this if necessary. The weather is fine, with some cloud cover, and the protagonists won't spot any enemy aircraft before they get to the balloon.

The gasbag hangs just behind the Front, and is protected by *Archie*. Three enemy *Pfalz* (speed 200, structure 8) are stooging around nearby keeping a watch over the balloon. If they aren't drawn away, then they'll attack anyone coming near it. The most sensible approach would be for some of the flight to watch out for ambush while the rest engage the *Pfalz*, allowing one to slip past and attack the balloon. However it's up to the protagonists as to how they tackle the problem.

**Pfalz:**

**Novice** (Alertness +1, Stealth +2, Stunting -2, Piloting 4, Firearms 4), **Experienced** (Piloting Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +0, Piloting 6, Firearms 6), **Experienced** (Alertness

+2, Stealth +2, Stunting +2, Piloting 7, Firearms 7). Protagonists are the aggressors in this scene. NPC stats include aircraft bonus, if any.

Mid-way through the fight, an aircraft tumbles past the protagonists; whether this is Allied or German is up to the Keeper. The protagonists get one startled look at what seems to be a flying creature, as it hauls the pilot out of the destroyed aircraft and flies upwards with its prize. It casually tears the pilot's head off as it leaves, with a small spatter of arterial spray, which the thing seems to swallow as it flies.

**Stability 4**, and the event happens so quickly that there's no time to react. The Keeper may choose to rule that this ends the combat, as the *Pfalz* will have seen the creature too and want nothing further to do with it, choosing instead to flee the scene if the protagonists let them.

Let the protagonists deal with the balloon and then fly home.

On their way back, just before they get to the trenches, they run into Jasta 32.

The initial encounter is with a lone *Roland* (speed 200, Structure 8) apparently on a reconnaissance mission. In fact the *Roland* is bait; the Jasta aircraft are hiding above, waiting for someone to pounce on the *Roland*. See *Die Beleuchtung Husaren* for Jasta details, and assume that there are at least as many Huns as there are allied aircraft, not including Becker and his wingmen. So a group of four PCs encounter four enemy pilots, plus Becker and his wingmen, for a total of six aircraft. Becker is in command, and will stay above the fray with two wingmen, keeping watch for other

attackers. This is a training mission for his Jasta; Becker wants to see his pilots earn their spurs.

If the protagonists leap on the *Roland* without hesitation, Becker's Jasta will immediately attempt to gain the **Stealth** advantage. On the other hand, if the protagonists state that before they jump the *Roland*, they look to see if there are other attackers, Becker's Jasta automatically loses the Stealth advantage. The *Roland* will only be interested in **Fleeing**, and is quite aware of its role in this ambush.

**Roland:**

Pilot **ace** (Alertness +3, Stealth +0, Stunting +0, Piloting 9, Firearms 4), Observer **experienced** (Firearms 10). Protagonists are the aggressors. NPC stats include aircraft bonus, if any.

At one point during the combat, the protagonists will glimpse the Yellow Sign on Becker's tailplane. It seems almost to writhe like a snake, and hurts their eyes. Anyone who sees this symbol and later sees the Byakhee move through the air senses a connection between the two, as if one might be an extension of the other. **Stability 2** for seeing the Yellow Sign on Becker's kiste.





## Out of Space

### Die Beleuchtung Husaren

Becker's Jasta, nicknamed the Lightning Hussars after Becker's old regiment, are a new flight of German aircraft; top of the range *Fokker D.VIII* (speed 210, Structure 9) with well trained pilots. They have been moved to this part of the Front because the Germans want to seize control of the air in this sector, and are hoping that Becker's new Jasta will tip the balance in their favour.

While they are absolutely loyal to Becker, they don't understand what's going on and are terrified of the Byakhee. Any Byakhee sighting mid-combat is likely to have them Fleeing, as they know full well the Byakhee can't be trusted, even if Becker thinks they're on his side.

Each pilot should be assumed to have Alertness +3, Stealth +4, Stunting +5, Piloting 10, Firearms 10, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. They are eager to rack up kills, and all of them rank as **aces**. Hit Threshold starts at 4, not including other bonuses.

The Jasta have engine cowlings and prop noses of bright green, (the regimental colour of Becker's old unit) but otherwise their markings are very individual. They tend towards multicoloured camouflage patterns, but some have skull and crossbones insignia, others crossed swords or lightning bolts, and so on. The only mark common to all of them is the green engine cowling. The Keeper may wish to design a few of them, perhaps to act as personal nemesis for particular protagonists.

Becker favours a *Fokker D.VII* (speed 220, Structure 9). He has a green cowling too, with a checkerboard pattern of brown and red along the body of his aircraft. The Yellow Sign is painted on his tail. Becker has 16 confirmed kills to his credit, and is an up-and-coming ace, nicknamed The Eagle of Lens, after the section of the Front where he earned his spurs.

Becker is not a very superstitious man, and only agreed to the Yellow Sign to please his aunt. However his encounters with Byakhee are draining his Sanity, and he is beginning to accept the wider truth of the Mythos. He pictures the Byakhee as Valkyrie, come to help him slay the foe.

The Keeper should use Becker's Hussars as floating antagonists in various *Dawn Patrol* scenes. Let their green cowlings be spotted several times, either as combatants or as far-away aircraft. Avoid letting Becker come into direct conflict with them until towards the end of the scenario, as premature deaths on either side could spoil the climax. However just because Becker isn't directly involved doesn't mean the other Hussars can't get into the fight; the Keeper should encourage this.

#### **Ernst Becker** The Eagle of Lens

Cthulhu Mythos 1, Drive 10, Firearms 14, Occult 1, Piloting 15

Alertness +4, Stealth +5, Stunting +5 (includes aircraft bonus)

Hit Threshold: 5, not including Stunting bonus.

*Special:* Becker is a gifted pilot. Where other antagonist aces get a +1 bonus, Becker gets +2.

Physically Becker is a slight but muscular young man, with sandy blonde hair and an infectious grin.



## The Jolly Old Squadron

The nationality of the protagonists' squadron is deliberately left ambiguous. The Keeper should feel free to use whichever best suits, whether French, British, or American. Some names may have to be changed, but that's all.

However the nationality of the group will make a difference to the kind of aircraft used. The French flew *Nieuports* and *Spads*, as did the Americans. The British flew *Camels* and *SE5a*, among others. Therefore the Keeper should make the decision beforehand, so as to match nationality with aircraft.

In playtest, the possibility of playing as the Germans was discussed. Should you prefer, there's nothing stopping the protagonists being German and the antagonists Allies. It would mean changing some names and the Keeper would need to switch out aircraft types; the Fokker D.VIII is a bit too good an aircraft to allow the protagonists to use. If they had a squadron's worth of those, knocking down Allied airmen and Byakhee left and right could be far too easy. Recommended substitutes are the Pfaltz, Albatross or Halberstadt. However switching sides wouldn't make any difference to the Hook or the Spine, with the exception of the scene A Formal Occasion. Naturally Conan Doyle wouldn't be visiting a German aerodrome. A substitute will be needed, possibly someone like Ernst Barlach, Richard Delmel or Walter Flex, although care must be taken to avoid time conflicts (Flex died in October 1917, so the scenario would need to take place before then). The only other significant conflict is the copy of the *Wipers Times* (*One Over the Eight*), and that could be dropped altogether.

- NPC pilots will be attached to the squadron. The Keeper should feel free to design NPCs as needed, bearing in mind the following suggestions:
- No friendly NPC should have an ace ranking other than MacMurdo. In theory Pyke is also an ace, but he no longer flies.
- MacMurdo's combat stats are **Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 12, Firearms 8, Hit Threshold 6**, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. MacMurdo flies a Sopwith Camel, speed 210 Structure 7.
- NPCs should not be given Flight Leader status, apart from MacMurdo, and then only in the initial scene.
- Suggested novice: **Alertness +0, Stealth +1, Stunting +1, Piloting 4, Firearms 4**
- Suggested experienced: **Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 6, Firearms 6**
- NPC stats are not inclusive of aircraft bonus.

The squadron's exact description is left deliberately vague. This is to allow Keeper and players to play as they wish without being tied down too much by the setting. Given the types of aircraft used (the Fokker D.VIII didn't see service until late in the war, only a few months before the Armistice) the time is assumed to be early winter 1918, but should the Keeper prefer an earlier date then the only change needed would be to drop the Fokker and replace it with another model; the Albatross, perhaps. The following characteristics can be assumed:

- The aerodrome is a stretch of grass, rolled flat as possible. Accident, bombings and crashes mean that it's often pitted with holes and dangerous to use. That doesn't stop pilots trying. Before the war it was probably a farmer's field; orchards and stands of trees may line the edges of the aerodrome.
- Enlisted men have the worst accommodation, but in a squadron even the worst billets are pretty cushy compared to the kind of life they'd have on the Front. Ordinary soldiers and mechanics live in tents, or at best wooden huts. If there is any better housing available – a commandeered cottage, for example – then the officers will have bagged that for themselves.
- The Squadron Leader's Office, Doc Hollis' Office and the Intelligence Officer's Office are all in the same building, which is stone built, and probably was at least a wealthy farmer's cottage before the war. It may have been as grand as a small country manor. If it's big enough, the Mess Bar may be there as well, but this needs to be accounted for in the room's description (see *One Over the Eight*).
- Food, drink and amenities are the best that can be had, which often isn't saying much but is a good deal better than anything the Front can provide. The pilots get hot meals, coffee, and beds to sleep in; beer and music in the evening, either from a phonograph or a battered piano. They're expected to pay for the liquor they drink, but most run a tab on the assumption that they'll never live long enough to pay it.
- The aircraft are kept in hangars or under camouflage as much as possible when not in the air. Ammunition and fuel dumps are kept well away from the planes, and are also camouflaged.
- There are slit trenches and machine guns set up in case of enemy attack. Should enemy aircraft bombard the squadron, protagonists have the option of running for the slit trenches to hide, or trying to get their crates aloft to fight back. Taking off is extremely hazardous, and protagonists who attempt it should endure at least two free attacks before they get a chance to shoot back.
- NPCs are generally assumed to do their work without needing a point spend, so (for example) mechanics repair damaged aircraft in-between scenes without needing to spend from a pool. This may not suit all games; some playtesters preferred the tension of not knowing how many Structure points would be repaired by the next mission. It also doesn't solve questions such as how much **Health** pool Doc Hollis can restore with **First Aid**. For Keepers who need pool points for NPCs, assume that the total **Mechanical Repair** pool available after each combat mission is 6+1d6, and divide that amongst the damaged aircraft. This pool refreshes after each combat mission. Doc Hollis has 8 **First Aid** pool points, but no **Psychoanalysis**, and his **First Aid** pool will not refresh.

### THE COMBAT REPORT

The protagonists return to their airfield, where they are debriefed by Curtis, the Intelligence Officer.

MacMurdo does not mention the creature at all, though it's unlikely he missed seeing it. He's clearly strung out; his face is pale and his hands tremble. **Assess Honesty** or similar shows that he's at the end of his tether and lying about not seeing it. See further [Flamer](#).

Curtis is quiet and interrogative; he's an exacting man who likes to get every detail straight. He'll Interrogate the protagonists closely about their patrol. Any mention of flying monsters will get his attention; he'll recommend the storyteller 'go see the doc for one of his pep tonics; you're clearly a bit under the weather.' However (**Core**) Curtis is rattled by the protagonist's account, almost as though he's heard something similar before. See further [Military Intelligence](#).

They have the rest of the afternoon to themselves. The bar is open, as always, (see [One Over the Eight](#)) or they could make sure their aircraft are repaired for next morning's flight (see [Other Ranks](#)).

### FLAMER

This scene discusses MacMurdo.

MacMurdo is the squadron ace, with 12 kills to his credit. He's also one of its oldest hands, having been flying with the squadron for 14 months. He's a Flight Leader and until recently was in line for promotion to Squadron Leader with his own Flight, but Curtis, the Doc and Squadron Leader Pyke ([Military Intelligence](#)) have all noticed the strain MacMurdo's been under. Ideally they'd post him home, but things are so busy right now they need every pilot they can get.



MacMurdo has seen the Byakhee several times, and they are the cause of his failure of nerve. He's convinced they've come to steal his soul, for committing the sin of murder. He's sent so many others down in flames he's developed a horror of burning alive, and dreams about it nightly.

The protagonists can get clues from MacMurdo in the following ways:

- **Core:** (discussion/interrogation) MacMurdo is at the end of his rope. He'll try to keep his mouth shut, but getting him drunk or talking to him after a nightmare will find he can't stop talking. MacMurdo has seen 'the devils' several times. *"They've come for me, you know. They're going to get me one day!"* He knows they've links with the new German Circus. *"I've seen them flapping about with the cursed things, as though they were in league with Satan!"*



## Flying Coffins

- **Core:** (searching personal possessions or similar) MacMurdo has a stack of letters he's written to Algy Cooper, a fellow pilot who died two months ago. He keeps writing to Algy as though he was alive, and in those letters MacMurdo goes into greater detail. *"I saw Them again, you know, just like before. Remember when we first sighted one, that time in the spring? We thought we'd hallucinated, lack of oxygen or something. Well, I've seen the vultures closer up now, Algy, close enough to smell their reek and even to hear them piping to themselves in the clouds. The Huns sometimes fly with them, Algy, for sport..."*
- **Military Talk, Reassurance:** MacMurdo claims to have seen the flying devils five times. The last two times he's seen them apparently cooperating with the Huns (Becker's Jasta), and has observed that the creatures travel in packs of at least four. They work cooperatively to bring down their prey; he's seen them tackle a de Havilland, and win. However he's also seen them attacking Hun aircraft, and doesn't know what to make of this change in allegiance.
- **Medicine, Pharmacy:** (talking to MacMurdo or searching his quarters) The Doc has him doped with some kind of pep tonic. Difficult to tell what it is, but the smell's pretty potent; juniper or suchlike. It's probably not doing his nerves any good, but it's clearly a powerful stimulant. However checking with the Doc (**Military Intelligence**) reveals that he's prescribed no such tonic. In fact, MacMurdo got it from a local herbalist. The substance is hallucinogenic, and stimulates anxiety and heart rate as well as inhibiting appetite and causing sleeplessness.
- **Occult, History, Anthropology:** The description MacMurdo gives, coupled with the protagonists' own observations, is suggestive. They've seen similar depictions before, as gothic Gargoyles on churches or something out of Bosch. However the

protagonists are convinced they've seen something of the same type very recently, and nearby – perhaps in the local village? The IO might know more; he's a brainy chap.

### MacMurdo:

Ace. Health 9, Scuffling 8, Sanity 4, Stability 3, Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 12, Firearms 8, Hit Threshold 5, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. MacMurdo flies a Sopwith Camel, speed 210 Structure 7.

## MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

This section discusses the Doc, Squadron Leader Pyke and IO Curtis.

Doc Hollis is a cheerful, rotund man who'd much rather be fly-fishing, and spends his spare hours making new lures. Major Pyke is spare and tall, rather resembles an undertaker, and is under constant strain. Captain Curtis is a blocky, calm man who looks as though he'd be at home on a rugby field, but professes to despise all sport and is an avid detective novel reader.

The protagonists may talk to any of these to gain clues. Some are general, known to all three, while others are specific to an individual. All three are aware that something strange is going on, but don't understand it, and are anxious to keep a lid on the story for fear of causing what they call 'blue funk' – a general loss of morale. **Military Talk** works best on the Squadron Leader, while **Reassurance** or medical jargon works on the Doc. Curtis is only susceptible to **Flattery**; he likes to think of himself as an unemotional, logical Holmes-type.

### General:

- **Core:** The Huns have got some new trick up their sleeve. Some sightings have been reported of odd flying things, but clearly that's just propaganda. The reports are coming in from more than one squadron, so there's something behind it.

- **Core:** Becker's Jasta, the Lightning Hussars, have been posted to their sector. The Hussars are red-hot pilots and an absolute menace. They shouldn't be tackled carelessly, but they have to be beaten back; it wouldn't do for the Huns to get air supremacy in this sector.

### Specific:

- **Military Talk (Pyke):** Three missing aircraft have been attributed to this new weapon, including a de Havilland spotter plane. When sighted, the things have usually attacked in groups of four or more. Command has kept it hush-hush, but apparently one of them was brought down by ack-ack a few weeks ago. *'Nothing left of it but a bit of what looked like leather and tendons, like some huge bat. Probably part of its wing structure.'*
- **Reassurance (Hollis):** Hollis is very worried about MacMurdo, and has said more than once that he ought to be posted home for a rest. A few weeks ago Hollis, along with some of the other medicos, was called in to an autopsy on an observer who'd been killed by one of the things. *"He was cut apart, as though he'd been swiped with a fistful of razors, but there was very little blood. Surprising, given the quantity that must have been spilt."* If asked about MacMurdo's tonic, Hollis identifies it as *"pure witchcraft, old boy. Probably brewed by some quack in the village."* Producing this is enough to get MacMurdo sent home; exhaustion is one thing, drug abuse quite another. That may save MacMurdo's life, if not his reputation.
- **Flattery (Curtis):** Curtis blames local rumours for the scare. He quotes Holmes: *"This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."* (*The Sussex Vampire*. The writer acknowledges that this quote is out of time, in that although the story is set in 1896 it was published in 1924. If this fact is liable to be caught by the players, or

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causes the Keeper concern, the quote could easily be dropped). He knows that some of the locals 'are practically pagan; look at the estaminet, for one. In fact, I wouldn't be at all surprised if mine saturnine host isn't the source of these rumours.' However he does know, from conversations with other IOs in other squadrons, that the sightings have been reported by several different pilots and have increased in the last ten months. [Keeper's note: as more pilots survived Byakhee encounters, the number of reports increased.] Curtis thinks the enemy may have a new war weapon; at any rate, he's under orders to forward all reports, including physical evidence if any, to HQ. [Keeper's note: where it will vanish courtesy of the Defence of the Realm Act, and never be seen again.]

### ONE OVER THE EIGHT

The protagonists may choose to spend some time in the Squadron bar.

This is a one-room converted barn, with a high ceiling that makes the place seem like a cavern. There are bits of enemy aircraft — propellers, tail sections, scraps of fabric, machine guns — hung from the walls as trophies. The place is heated by a wood-burning stove, which makes one corner of the room warm while the rest remains chilly. One whole wall is dominated by a plank laid over several beer kegs, acting as the bar. Liquor on offer includes local wines, bottled beer, a small selection of spirits and (if anyone's feeling daring) the Squadron Leader's personal bottle of Highland whiskey, kept by the barman under lock and key. Hanging from the wall are the Squadron's mugs, each engraved with the owner's name. Dead pilot's beer mugs are retired; it's bad form to drink from a dead man's glass. This is also where the Squadron's Victrola and collection of records — cakewalk and classical — are kept.

Skills of use here are **Military Talk, Credit Rating, Flattery, Oral History, Reassurance, Evidence Collection, Library Use.**

- **Military Talk:** Becker's new squadron was recently posted to this sector, and are to be feared. Each pilot is an experienced man, often with one or more kills to his credit. Becker's reputation as a killer is well founded; he's known to have shot down over a dozen, and rumour has it he's been sent specially to collect his Blue Max, a medal which wants sixteen confirmed victories to win.
- **Flattery/Credit Rating:** Pilots wanting 'a little pick-me-up' or interested in knowing more about flying devils are directed to Hector, who runs the estaminet in the village. *'I won't say he's on the side of the angels, but he knows, and that's the important thing.' The informant tells the protagonist to say to Henri, 'de Plancy sent me', which will get the protagonist access to his 'special stuff'.*
- **Oral History/Reassurance:** Several of the pilots claim to have had encounters with the flying devils. *'I saw three of them tackle a Roland. Just like vultures on prey, they were, cleverly keeping clear of the rear gunner while two of them chivvied the pilot into a kill position. Then one of them ripped the tail section off, which finished the job, but not before they grabbed hold of the observer, poor sod. Drank him down like a bottle of brown ale, they did.'*
- **Evidence Collection:** The barman keeps a jam jar filled with a cloudy liquid behind the bar. He doesn't know what's in it; one of the pilots, now dead, gave it to him for safe keeping, and he's forgotten about it. There is a label on the jar that reads (in French) *'spécimen recherché le seizième Juin'* (specimen retrieved sixteenth June). If opened, the jar contains a small fragment of claw and foot, pickled in alcohol. Even now, the thing stinks like an open drain, and though the claw superficially resembles that of

a natural creature, its size and shape belie that impression. **Stability 1.**

- **Library Use:** The bar keeps a collection of the Wipers Times, a satirical periodical published by the Sherwood Foresters. Most of it is fairly strong gallows humour, (eg. weather report: 5 to 1 Mist, 11 to 2 East Wind or Frost, 8 to 1 Chlorine) but one of the serials features the recurring character, Herlock Shomes, currently embroiled in an investigation about stolen rum. At one point the famous detective states *'Even our friends in the air are not immune, for lack of the essential vitae has sent them all doolally. Why, so parched are they that they've begun seeing flying pigs! Truly an unfortunate state of affairs.'* The piece has an illustration of a German triplane, including the Yellow Sign insignia, flying in company with two winged pigs.

### OTHER RANKS

The protagonists may choose to talk with the NCOs and ground staff.

In addition to the mechanics and orderlies, each pilot has a batman who cleans his clothes and generally makes sure the officer's basic needs are met. Some are more reliable than others, and a batman who knows how to iron a shirt without burning a hole in it is something to be prized. More to be prized is one who knows where to get good cigars and liquor.

**Military Talk, Oral History, Reassurance** or **Bueaurocracy** will be helpful.

- **Military Talk:** Gossip is frowned on by the Squadron Leader, but everyone knows there's something odd going on. Few people know exactly what, and rumour is rife. However no one doubts that the Eagle of Lens is behind it all. *'We won't know a moment's peace until he's been put away.'* MacMurdo's fitters say they've been ordered to

## Flying Coffins

dip his Buckingham in holy water; a request they've not tried to carry out. *'Wouldn't do the ammo much good, now would it sir?'*

- **Oral History/Reassurance:**

According to the batman gossip line, the first pilot to see the flying devils was MacMurdo's old mucker, Algy Cooper. He claimed to have shot at one and hit it, and thought he'd brought it down. Shortly before Cooper was killed, he said he'd found 'a Froggie medico' who'd recovered a portion of the creature, and Algy was going to buy it from him.

- **Bureaucracy:** Curtis keeps all the After Action reports, and won't let anyone else see them. However his clerk can be fozzled with Bureaucracy, or possibly bribed, to show the protagonists the reports for the last six months. Flying devils are mentioned five times in all, twice by Cooper, once by MacMurdo, and twice by other (dead) pilots. One report dated 16<sup>th</sup> June reads: *'saw Unknown take on E.A. [enemy aircraft] but when 2/Lt Cooper engaged, Unknown went for 2/Lt Cooper instead. 2/Lt Cooper put a burst of 30 Buckingham into it, at which point it fell out of the sky. I lost sight of it, being engaged by an E.A., and did not see it crash.'*

## A FORMAL OCCASION

This scene is to be played at a point of the Keeper's choosing, preferably at a stage when the protagonists are running out of other leads.

The protagonists will be warned that there will be a special guest in the Mess that evening. The guest is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, novelist and (for the duration) military correspondent, who is a friend of Curtis' family and was invited by Curtis to attend.

Sir Arthur is an incisive, intelligent man who is undergoing a great deal of psychological strain. His wife died

shortly before the war, his son Kingsley is serving (and will die in October 1918), and he is about to lose several more family and friends. Though he has been interested in the occult for some time, (a member of the Ghost Club since the 1880s), these deaths really spark off his interest in spiritualism.

Before the War Sir Arthur attended the Prince Henry Tour, an automobile competition between England and Germany, and what he saw then convinced him that war was inevitable. Since then Sir Arthur has made a study of German newspapers and political literature, and has become convinced that the air war and submarines will win this conflict. Currently he is a military correspondent with a roving commission, and is collecting information for his soon-to-be-published history of the Great War.

Naturally as such a special guest is in attendance the cook does his best, and rustles up some *foi gras*, roast goose with trimmings, and plenty of wine and cheese to follow. Sir Arthur does his best to be entertaining, (it's not the first time he's been the centre of attention) and will happily talk to the protagonists.

**Assess Honesty** shows that Sir Arthur is convinced that what he says is true, and he has some interesting things to say.

- **Core:** He knows Becker from the Prince Henry Tour, when the pilot was a racing driver. *'Excellent nerve and a gifted driver, I thought at the time, and not a hostile fanatic as so many of them were. He likes to win, but he's a sportsman, on the whole. Not like some others of his family, I can tell you!'*
- **Oral History, Reassurance:** *'Becker's aunt, now, Agathe — we used to call her Toad von Plon, you know — she's a different kettle of fish. Worships the Kaiser, thinks the sun rose and set on Bismark, and has an unshakable faith in Germany's destiny.'*

*Also a ghost hunter and medium, if you like, and supposedly an intimate of Alastair Crowley, among others. A thoroughly unlikeable woman, but not without a kind of magnetism. She really believes, you see; the kind of faith that moves mountains, or so they say.'*

- **Occult (Yellow Sign):** *'Yes, I've seen that before. Toad von Plon used to say it represented Thor. The old pagan thought almost anything was connected with Thor and the Vanir, used to claim they'd discovered America, and the Americans were destined to join Germany in a kind of Brotherhood of Conquerors thanks to this Vanir link. She said it brought her luck. If Becker's using that as his personal device, no doubt she persuaded him to it.'*
- If shown the jar from *One Over the Eight*: Sir Arthur goes quiet, and his face drains of blood. *'I've seen something like it once before. Toad von Plon claimed she had a familiar spirit. I never saw the thing, but there was one near miss, when I thought I glimpsed. . . It had these terrible, clutching hands, with fingers very like that . . .'*

## LOCAL FLAVOUR

The protagonists may choose to investigate the nearby village.

They will need permission to leave the base, which can be granted by the Squadron Leader. He's reluctant, but can be persuaded either by Curtis or Doc Hollis, and they can be persuaded by **Reassurance, Military Talk** or similar. Once the protagonists have their permit, they can go to the village, Haumont-près-Samogneux.

**[Keeper's note:** this is the name of an existing village in the Zone Rouge, but its characteristics are invented for this scenario.]

The village struggles to exist, despite the destruction of half its buildings, and not all of the inhabitants have fled. Some stay because they cannot leave; the elderly, or those who refuse to abandon



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

their homes. Some stay because there is money to be made, and the proprietor of the estaminet, Hector Delmas, is one. His restaurant, which lost most of its windows in a bombing raid and now has boards over the gaps, serves jugged hare, cured ham, potatoes and such vegetables and fruits as he can scrounge, as well as some reasonable champagne. Hector is a beefy man with luxuriant moustaches. He has a volatile and morose temper.

**Languages** may help here, as Hector will be friendly to French speakers, and this will cost **0 points**. Alternatively **Oral History**, **Flattery**, **Credit Rating** or **Occult** may be useful, but will cost at least **1 point**.

If asked about the flying devils, Hector says, 'But of course! I myself have never seen them, but it is well known that they cavort above us. In my grandfather's time there were two men who swore that they

saw them tumbling and piping in the clouds. It is thought that they first came here many centuries ago, summoned by witches, but that they found the area so attractive that they stayed. At least, so the stories say, and stories have a strength all their own, for look! Above you!'

The ceiling of the estaminet is painted with a huge, colourful mural, in a primitive imitation of Bosch. Terrible demons of all types drag their screaming victims to the centre of the mural, where a gigantic Hellmouth waits to devour them. Several of the demons look exactly like the Byakhee the protagonists saw, and the Yellow Sign is depicted near the Hellmouth. As the windows are blocked, the only light is by candle, casting odd shadows and making the figures seem somehow lifelike. **Stability 2**.

'That too is from my grandfather's time. In fact, he painted it.'

Hector is also the source of MacMurdo's tonic, which he gets from a 'friend of a friend.' Actually he makes it himself from a family recipe, but isn't about to admit it. He may get more, if properly approached. It does no good, and may induce hallucinations; it's pretty strong stuff. **Pharmacy** can tell it's not safe to drink. It induces exceptionally vivid dreams, anxiety attacks, palpitations and can cause heart failure in extreme cases. Anyone who drinks more than three bottles of the tonic in the course of this adventure takes **-2 Damage**. The Keeper may also choose to rule that the imbiber is more prone to **Stability** loss, and therefore tests are made at **+1 Difficulty**.

Extra point spends, or the phrase 'de Plancy sent me,' gets Hector to show the protagonist his prize: a battered, leather-bound 1826 copy of Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*. This is a catalogue of the legions of Hell, as written by a confirmed skeptic. However it does contain information about Byakhee and the Yellow Sign, 'which according to



## Flying Coffins

the researches of von Junzt these devil's horsemen obey without question, though woe unto him who uses it without understanding. Woe also unto the land whereto they are summoned, for often it happens that they stay beyond their time, for reasons known only to them.' **Languages** will be needed to read the book, and it confers **1 dedicated pool point Occult** and **1 Cthulhu Mythos**, no spells. De Plancy had no real understanding of the Mythos but he does quote von Junzt extensively, hence the **Mythos** point.

Hector's interest in witchcraft (and library) is the remnant of an old family tradition. If NPCs had Drives, his would be In The Blood. His Abilities include **Athletics 5, Cthulhu Mythos 2, Health 7, Occult 3, Pharmacy 2, Sanity 5, Stability 8, Scuffling 8, Weapons 8; Damage -1 (Knife).**

### DAWN PATROL

This section deals with the day to day missions of the squadron. It is a recurring scene, which may be active at various points during the scenario.

The intent is to intersperse on-the-ground investigation with air combat. So, for example, *One Over the Eight* could be followed by a *Dawn Patrol*, then *Local Flavour*, then another *Dawn Patrol*, and so on. The exact dispersal of the *Dawn Patrol* scenes is up to the Keeper. A *Dawn Patrol* may lead directly to *Curses! Foiled Again!*

The protagonists would be expected to fly at least one, and probably more than one, combat mission a day. Some examples are given here; the Keeper is encouraged to invent more.

All NPC stats include aircraft bonus (if any).

- **Deep Offensive Patrol:** The protagonists fly behind enemy lines looking for trouble. They have the opportunity to ambush four *Albatross* (speed 180, Structure 8). Protagonists are aggressors.

- **Experienced Flight Leader** (Alertness +3, Stealth +4, Stunting +3, Piloting 8, Firearms 8), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +4, Stunting +3, Piloting 8, Firearms 6), **Novice** (Alertness +1, Stealth +3, Stunting +1, Piloting 4, Firearms 4), **Novice** (Alertness +0, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 5, Firearms 5)
- **Trench Strafing:** Flying at low level, the protagonists have to machine gun troops in a trench. **Piloting difficulty 4**, and will be shot at by **ground fire** (see *Crates*). The protagonists need to do at least **10 Damage** for a successful mission.

- **Escort Mission:** Flying escort for a *de Havilland* (speed 200, Structure 9). May be engaged by a formation of four *Pfalz* (speed 200, Structure 8).
  - **Pfalz: Experienced Flight Leader** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +2, Piloting 9, Firearms 8), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +2, Piloting 6, Firearms 8), **Ace** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +2, Piloting 10, Firearms 8), **Novice** (Alertness +1, Stealth +1, Stunting +0, Piloting 5, Firearms 5)
  - **De Havilland: Experienced pilot** (Alertness +2, Stealth +0, Stunting -2, Piloting 7, Firearms 6), **Novice forward observer** (Firearms 4), **Experienced rear observer** (Firearms 8)

### Tell Me, Have You Seen the Yellow Sign?

Once the protagonists work out the connection between the Yellow Sign on Becker's kiste and the unusual reaction of the Byakhee, they may attempt to inoculate themselves against Byakhee attack by painting Yellow Signs on their own crates. This is particularly likely once they've read de Plancy, or seen Hector's ceiling, when they'll get a much better idea of what a Yellow Sign looks like.

They are mistaken.

The Yellow Sign is what drew the Byakhee to Becker, but it allows him no control over them. They only stick around because they're puzzled; they expected him to demonstrate some arcane knowledge, and he hasn't. They are not his allies. They're like sharks, following a chum line. So long as there's blood and guts in the water they're willing to play along, but there's no guaranteeing what they'll do. They might even attack Becker given sufficient provocation, or boredom.

So if a protagonist sets out to do the same thing, and paints a Sign on his tail, the Keeper has a few options, but the point to take away is this: it will never work the way the protagonists would like it to, because the Sign on its own isn't enough.

Potential consequences include:

*Byakhee circle the protagonists' aircraft, causing Stability losses, and then fly away.*

*Byakhee circle the protagonists' aircraft, causing Stability losses, make a gesture of displeasure (vomiting on the Yellow Sign aircraft, for instance) that causes more Stability losses, and then fly away.*

*Byakhee attack anyone not using a Yellow Sign, including allied aircraft.*

*Byakhee attack anyone using a Yellow Sign, disregarding other potential targets.*

*Byakhee completely ignore the Yellow Sign aircraft, but then seek out the pilot later on after dark, when he's on the ground and vulnerable.*

*Byakhee attack all present, indiscriminately.*

The last option could provide a dramatic climax to the scenario, if it happens during a scene with Becker.

- **Spotting:** One of the protagonists' aircraft is fitted with a camera, and the flight is ordered to fly to a particular map coordinate and take aerial photographs. **Piloting difficulty 4** to find the spot, and either **Photography** or **Piloting difficulty 6** to take the shot. May be engaged by four *Halberstadt* (speed 200, Structure 8)

– **Ace Flight Leader** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 10, Firearms 9), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +0, Piloting 8, Firearms 5), **Experienced** (Alertness +1, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 6, Firearms 6), **Experienced** (Alertness +3, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 9, Firearms 6)

- **Bombing Run:** The protagonists are given one hand-held bomb each and told to destroy a munitions dump. **Piloting difficulty 4** to find the spot, and **Piloting or Athletics difficulty 6** to hit the target. Each bomb should be treated as **Bundle of Dynamite** (main rulebook p67) for damage purposes. This will be a low-level flying mission, and the protagonists may be engaged by **ground fire** (see *Crates*).
- **Train Busting:** The protagonists, on a deep offensive patrol, find an enemy train depot with an engine just about to come into the station. **Firearms difficulty 5** to hit the target, **10 Structure**. This will be a low-level flying mission, and the protagonists may be engaged by **ground fire** (see *Crates*).

At any point either Jasta 32 (*Die Beleuchtung Husaren*) or the Byakhee (*The Devil's Horsemen*) may become involved.

## CURSES! FOILED AGAIN!

The protagonists may be shot down. This scene describes what happens next.

The Keeper should determine whether the action takes place over No-Man's-Land, behind enemy lines, or behind friendly lines. This is a matter of Keeper preference, although it is possible that the nature of the previous scene will make one result more likely than the others. The main thing to bear in mind is that the further away the downed protagonist is from their aerodrome, the longer it will take them to get back to the main story, if indeed they make it back at all. That could complicate the plot, so if the Keeper would rather avoid complications, then it's better to have the protagonist land closer rather than further from their aerodrome.

Wherever they end up, first they have to crash. It's a **Piloting** test, Difficulty 4, and there may be modifiers depending on the condition of the aircraft and the pilot. Success means they get down without injury, though the plane is wrecked. Failure means the character suffers **+1 Damage** in the crash.

What happens next depends on where they crashed.

### Behind Friendly Lines:

The plane comes down near a platoon of allied soldiers. These soldiers are not necessarily the same nationality or speak the same language as the pilot, but they do their best to make sure the pilot is returned safe and sound to his unit. Their Medic has **3 First Aid pool points** to spend on the character, if need be. The pilot is returned to his squadron the day he crashes. Potential soldier types include French West African Tirailleurs Senegalais, Australians, Canadians, Sikhs, South Africans. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2).

*In No-Man's-Land.* The plane smashes down in the mud and muck between the battle lines. In addition to getting out alive, the protagonist needs to deal with his downed warbird. It has vital equipment (eg the compass, maps) on board, which needs to be retrieved. Once that's done, the protagonist needs to **Stealth** back to friendly territory, which is easier said than done. During the day, **Stealth** rolls increases to Difficulty 7, and failure means that the protagonist is shot at: **Firearms 4, Damage +1**. At night, **Stealth** is Difficulty 4, but failure means that the protagonist gets lost and goes towards enemy lines by accident; see further *Behind Enemy Lines*. If **Stealth** is successful, then the protagonist is *Behind Friendly Lines*. The pilot will either be returned to his squadron the day he crashes, or the day immediately following. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2), hiding in No-Man's-Land for a day (4), shot at (3).

### Behind Enemy Lines:

The protagonist is lost behind enemy lines. In addition to getting out alive, the protagonist needs to deal with his downed warbird. It has vital equipment (eg the compass, maps) on board, and even the wreck could be a Military Intelligence bonanza. The plane must be burnt if at all possible, and doing so results in a Confidence Stability refresh. Once that's dealt with, the protagonist needs somehow to get back to friendly territory. This will probably involve **Stealth** or **Fleeing**, possibly also **Disguise** and **Languages**. An encounter with enemy soldiers (**Athletics 5, Health 8, Firearms 4, Scuffling 6, Weapons 4; Alertness +0; Stealth +0; Damage -2 fist/kick, +0 rifle-mounted bayonet, +1 rifle**) is likely, and they may even encounter an enemy officer (**Athletics 5, Health 8, Interrogation 2, Languages 1, Military Talk 2, Firearms 6, Scuffling 4, Weapons 6; Alertness +1; Stealth +0; Damage**



## Flying Coffins

-2 fist/kick, +0 pistol). Should they successfully negotiate enemy lines, they then have to get across No-Man's-Land before getting back to friendly territory. The pilot probably will not get back to his squadron for two or more days, if ever. If caught in **Disguise** the pilot risks being shot without trial, as a spy. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2), risking being shot as a spy (1), shot at (3).

In addition to the above, the following **non-core clues** can be discovered:

- **Military Talk (anywhere).** The soldiers you encountered claim to have seen flying devils in the night, that sometimes drain the blood of the living. Their officers deny all knowledge, but the enlisted men are willing to talk, and they have noticed that the devils have some habits, particularly in their flying patterns, which could be exploited by those wanting to fight them. **2 point dedicated Piloting** or **Firearms** pool, to be used only in combats with Byakhee.
- **Occult, Biology (No-Man's-Land).** While making your way back to your squadron, you find a small scrap of burnt flesh that you think may have come from a downed flying devil. Searching nearby, you discover more remains, and scraps of human flesh. This must be a midden of theirs, a place where they dump waste and scraps, probably dropping them from a great height. Potential **Stability Loss 1**, but it does mean that if the protagonist wants to track down a Byakhee in future scenes, he knows where to go to find them.
- **Languages (Behind Enemy Lines).** You overhear some of the enemy talking about the new enemy air weapon that they've seen. They're terrified of it, and some of them claim that these unnatural creatures have been drinking human blood like vampires. According to them, the creatures make a kind of

high-pitched whistling noise, right before it attacks, a sound so loud it can even be made out over artillery bombardment. This lowers **Sense Trouble** by -1 **Difficulty**, for one Byakhee antagonist reaction scene only.

## THE DEVIL'S HORSEMEN

This scene discusses the Byakhee and their function in the plot.

These creatures view the sky as their territory, and are angry at man's incursion. Their early attacks against aircraft were always successful, which encouraged them, and as they always won there were no witnesses and therefore no reports. The invention of a reliable front-mounted machine gun gave the fighters real teeth. For the first time they began suffering losses, and the survivors of these combats began reporting what they saw. By 1917 the Byakhee were losing about one combat in four, which gave them something to think about. The brass hats on both sides think the enemy has invented some new war weapon, or dismiss the whole story as a fabrication, but some of the pilots are taking it seriously, and fighting back. Before the War is over the Byakhee retreat to the stratosphere, where they exist undisturbed for a while longer.

Becker's insignia complicates things for them. They know they have not been summoned, but the Sign indicates someone of power who has pledged allegiance to Hastur, and that's not something they can ignore. For that reason they look out for Becker, protecting him against attack and attacking his enemies, but his lack of sorcerous understanding puzzles them. He's not trying to issue instructions nor has he used, say, the Vach-Viraj Incantation, the Dread Name of Azathoth or any of several other means of identifying himself as a man of power. In time they will give up on

Becker, but for the moment they are his not-so-loyal allies. They have no great love for his Hussars, but they recognize that Becker doesn't want him to attack them. Other German aircraft are fair game.

The Keeper should use Byakhee incidents to spur the players on. The Byakhee don't just turn up when Becker is around. They're hunting everyone, indiscriminately, because they're extremely angry that man has tried to challenge them in the air. Should the players get complacent then the Keeper should fling Byakhee at them until they learn better or someone dies. The protagonists should constantly be under threat of Byakhee attack, every second of every mission. That threat can be a sighting at a distance, probably draining **Stability** each time, or it can be full-on attack. Every time the players start to think 'we don't need to worry about this Byakhee thing,' that ought to be a cue to throw in more Byakhee.

## Byakhee

Winged necrotic horrors from the stars.

**Abilities:** Athletics 5 (ground) 20 (air), Health 8, Scuffling 6 (ground) 8 (air), Stealth 6, Shadowing 8, Sense Trouble 7

**Stealth Modifier:** +2 (air)

**Alertness Modifier:** +2 (air)

**Weapon:** +1 (claw), +0 (bite); following a successful bite, the Byakhee will drain 2 Health/round from the victim until killed or driven off.

**Armour:** +2 vs Any (fur, hide and an absence of vitals)

**Stability Loss:** +1

For purposes of dogfighting bid contests, treat the Athletics score as the equivalent of Piloting. All Hit Thresholds are at +1, due to its acrobatic agility. All Byakhee should be rated as **aces** but naturally have no **Firearms** pool.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

Tactically they attack in packs of at least four, baiting their target with one Byakhee while sneaking up with the other three. Combat aboard an aircraft (eg. if the pilot has a pistol and is trying to shoot a Byakhee that has latched onto his tail and is climbing towards the cockpit) should be treated as normal combat at an increased difficulty. The Keeper may also require **Piloting** rolls

if the pilot is so distracted, with failure resulting in **+0 damage** to the plane.

There is an optional clue to be had in any Byakhee scene: **Photography**. A picture will be dismissed by the brass as a smudge on the lens, or stylistic trickery. Captain Curtis may confiscate it, if he sees it, and send it back to HQ. However analysing the Byakhee's

tactics and flight formation by using photographic evidence can give the user a dedicated **Piloting** or **Firearms** pool, on a 1-for-1 conversion rate (**Photography** to **Piloting** or **Firearms**). This pool is only to be used when combating Byakhee.

Potential Byakhee scenes include:

- Byakhee spotted at a distance, flying through the clouds. **Stability** check only.
- Byakhee seen attacking another aircraft; the protagonists have the option to intervene, but do not have to. **Stability** at **+1 Difficulty**, if they don't interfere.
- Byakhee ambush protagonists.
- Byakhee seen at a distance flying in company with Becker's kiste.
- MacMurdo's last fight: Byakhee seen engaging MacMurdo's crate, and will kill MacMurdo unless the protagonists intervene. **Stability** at **+2 Difficulty** if the protagonists choose not to get involved.



## Flying Coffins

### HELL'S ANGELS

#### Endgame.

By this point the protagonists should have a rough idea of what the Byakhee are, and why they are here. They may have encountered them in combat. Their best bet for getting rid of them isn't shooting down Byakhee, but killing Becker, or at least destroying his Yellow Sign triplane.

Some playtesters found that shooting down Becker was easy, provided that several of them attacked him at once. The solution here is to make sure that Becker is never encountered alone; he should have a number of allies, either Byakhee or squadron mates, roughly equal to the number of attackers.

The protagonists may come up with ideas for shooting Becker down. Challenging Becker to a duel is one, as is dive-bombing his aerodrome. If they come up with ideas of this sort, feel free to let them play out.

However if they don't, then a potential endgame could play out like this:

On the day of the Big Push, the air is alive with aircraft of all kinds, enemy and friend, each side either trying to stem the tide or carry on the assault. The protagonists will be involved in sortie after sortie, spending scant minutes on the ground before taking off again, refuelled, rearmed and repaired. Let them fight through several combat

missions before finally encountering Becker and his Jasta in a huge dogfight. Several other squadrons are involved, and over thirty crates are fighting maniacally, or just trying to survive.

At one point a protagonist (or several of them) fly out of a cloud to see Becker and two Byakhee directly beneath them. Becker's triplane has taken damage (**Structure 6**) and the Byakhee have been peppered as well (**Health 7, 6**). Becker hasn't spotted the protagonists; he's too busy lining up his next kill, a badly damaged *Nieuport* (Alertness +2, Stealth +1, Stunting +3, Piloting 6, Firearms 3, Structure 3). This is the best chance the protagonists will have to get Becker; it's now or never.

Should Becker be shot down, the Byakhee with him will turn and flee, and that will be the last time the protagonists (or anyone else) sees them over the Western Front. However while Becker is still in the air they will defend him, though not to the extent of sacrificing their lives. If reduced to **3 Health** or lower, they will flee the fight.

The protagonists may choose to seek the Byakhee out and destroy them instead. This is a risky proposition, but if they manage to kill at least eight Byakhee, the few remaining will run away. This may happen over the course of more than one dogfight.

*Per ardua ad astra*; and in the starry skies await the Byakhee.

### PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The Keeper should bear in mind that the number of points allocated are based on the assumption of a six-player game. If the actual number of players is less than four, the Keeper may want to allocate extra Investigative build points to compensate for this.





# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: James Arthur 'Jimmy' Fallon

Drive: Adventure

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

Biology - 1

Medicine - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Military Talk - 2

Reassurance - 2

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 2

First Aid - 7

Health - 7

Firearms - 6

Fleeing - 8

Piloting - 8

Preparedness - 4

Sanity - 8

Stability - 9

Scuffling - 10

Shadowing - 4

Sense Trouble - 4

Stealth - 6

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your father is a doctor who works as a coroner for the Cheshire assizes. He was kept very busy when you were a child, and you followed his career in the papers, keeping notes on all his trials. You saw yourself then as a cross between Sherlock Holmes and Arsene Lupin, catching criminals with a combination of science and swashbuckling. You were determined to follow in your father's footsteps one day, but the war interrupted your plans. Your father managed to pull some strings and kept you out of it for a while, against your wishes. It was only when you left school without telling him and joined up that he finally let you do what you wanted to do. You spent a little time with the Cheshires, but you soon became disenchanted with trench warfare and when the chance came for a transfer, you took it. You've had a few months in the air now, and while you know you're not the sort of chap who becomes an ace you like to think of yourself as a dashing knight of the air.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Richard 'Black Mac' MacDonald

Drive: In the Blood

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

Library Use - 1

Occult - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Credit Rating - 3

Intimidation - 2

Military Talk - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Conceal - 5

Disguise - 5

Firearms - 8

Health - 10

Sanity - 6

Stability - 8

Stealth - 10

Sense Trouble - 6

Piloting - 8

Mechanical Repair - 5

### Technical Abilities

Art - 1

Photography - 2

Outdoorsman - 2

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<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your family have been Forfarshire hill farmers since time immemorial. You're distantly related to the Lindsays and your father always claimed that Affleck Castle was your family's property, by rights, but he's told so many tales over the years that untangling them would be a lifetimes' work. As it happens telling tales is something of a hobby of yours; you've sold six ghostly short stories under the pseudonym 'Arthur Lindsay' and are working on a longer piece. You half believe some of the old goblin tales and know that, once, you saw a ghost in Monikie Parish Churchyard. You enjoy the night more than you do the day; there's something about a stark, moonlit landscape that appeals to your soul. Given half a chance you'd chuck it all in and go back to the hills, perhaps to compose something really memorable. The war is something you endure, not enjoy, and you can't see anything glamorous in it.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: George Albert 'Pinky' Doggart

Drive: Curiosity

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

Biology - 1

Languages - 1

Library Use - 1

Medicine - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Intimidation - 2

Military Talk - 2

Oral History - 1

Reassurance - 2

### Technical Abilities

Pharmacy - 1

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Firearms - 10

Filch - 6

Health - 6

Piloting - 10

Mechanical Repair - 3

Sanity - 7

Stability - 9

Sense Trouble - 4

Stealth - 4

Scuffling - 8

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<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

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<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your family is German, on your mother's side, and you have cousins in Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. You like to keep that quiet; you don't want anyone thinking you've got German sympathies. You play the bluff, hearty type in public, always willing to get stuck in the scrum. In private, you're more reserved, and a bit of a sticky-fingered sort. Your previous job, in a pharmacy, gave you the chance to make a small bit of money on the side selling drugs on the black market, and it didn't take long before you were making a good deal more cash than you'd ever seen before. It was spent as quickly as you had it, and the police were sniffing around, so you joined up before you could get put in front of a Judge. Your problem is, you have to know everything. Gossip is meat and drink to you, and you've been collecting enough incriminating stuff over the last few months to blackmail half a dozen chaps – if only they didn't keep getting shot down, you could have made a tidy sum! Still, you're confident there's a glorious future ahead of you, so long as you survive the War.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold <sup>3</sup>			

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Alphonse 'Alfie' Weber

Drive: Bad Luck

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

Anthropology - 1

Biology - 1

History - 1

Languages 2

Occult - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 1

Interrogation - 1

Military Talk - 2

### Technical Abilities

Photography - 1

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Disguise - 3

Firearms - 8

Health - 9

Piloting - 8

Preparedness - 4

Psychoanalysis - 6

Sanity - 6

Stability - 8

Sense Trouble - 8

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your father is German, a professor formerly of the University of Basel, now not-so-happily settled in Cambridge. He came to England eighteen years ago, just before you were born; prior to that he had worked with a promising student, Carl Jung, and the two still correspond, when they can, on matters relating to occult theory and mythology, subjects that are dear to your father's heart. However your father's nationality, coupled with his correspondence with a Swiss national, have made the British authorities suspicious, and, early in 1915, he was almost arrested on espionage charges. The trouble blew over, but it embittered him, and this bitterness has been passed on to you. You're very sensitive about your German heritage, and quarrel easily on the slightest pretext. To compensate for your father's alleged (though you don't believe it for a moment) treason you've become the epitome of a British officer, willing to do and die for King and Country.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Eric 'Coney' O'Hare

Drive: Follower

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

History - 1

Languages - 1

Physics - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Military Talk - 4

Oral History - 1

### Technical Abilities

Outdoorsman - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Driving - 8

Firearms - 10

Health - 8

Mechanical Repair - 8

Piloting - 14

Stability - 8

Sanity - 7

Sense Trouble - 3

Stealth - 8

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

At the grand old age of 27, you're practically a doddering ancient compared to the fresh-faced youngsters being chucked out of flight training every other week. Before the war you were a racing driver and Brooklands champion, and after 1915 you worked for Vickers Aviation. You were a test pilot for two years, but when your younger brother was killed at Arras your family more or less decided for you that your mission was to avenge him. That wasn't how you saw things, but it was easier to go along with them than it was to fight it. You've developed an unsuspected knack for aerial warfare, but an injury earlier in the year set you back a bit, and you taught young pilots during the summer after your recovery. You hope it won't be long before the war's over for good, and when that happens you want to get back to racing where you belong. Things make sense on the track; they don't out here.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold <sup>3</sup>			

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Robert Andrew 'Porgy' Proteron

Drive: Duty

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

### Academic Abilities

Library Use - 1

Languages - 1

Occult - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 1

Intimidation - 2

Military Talk - 2

Oral History - 1

Reassurance - 2

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1

Outdoorsman - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 6

Disguise - 2

Fleeing - 6

Firearms - 8

Health - 10

Piloting - 12

Stability - 8

Sanity - 8

Sense Trouble - 4

Stealth - 9

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

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<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You're an Anglo-Indian; your father was in Colonial service, and you were born in Simla, India. They're still over there and you haven't seen your parents in years. You were sent back for your education six years ago and have been living with a strict, elderly maiden aunt in Bristol. You idolise the Empire and everything it stands for. You see your war service as the first step in a long career. There will be a place in the army, after the war, for people like you. You deliberately chose the RFC because it is a young service, without the stuffy traditions of established regiments. An ambitious man can go far. Of course it would be much easier if you could rack up a distinguished record, some kills and perhaps a medal or two. It's all good for promotion. Later, of course, you'll get yourself transferred back out to India again where doubtless they'll be developing an air arm of their own. It's the new cavalry, after all, and India has always been cavalry country.

**Weapons:** Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Sopwith Camel Shot Down



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Sopwith Camel



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

SPAD S XIII

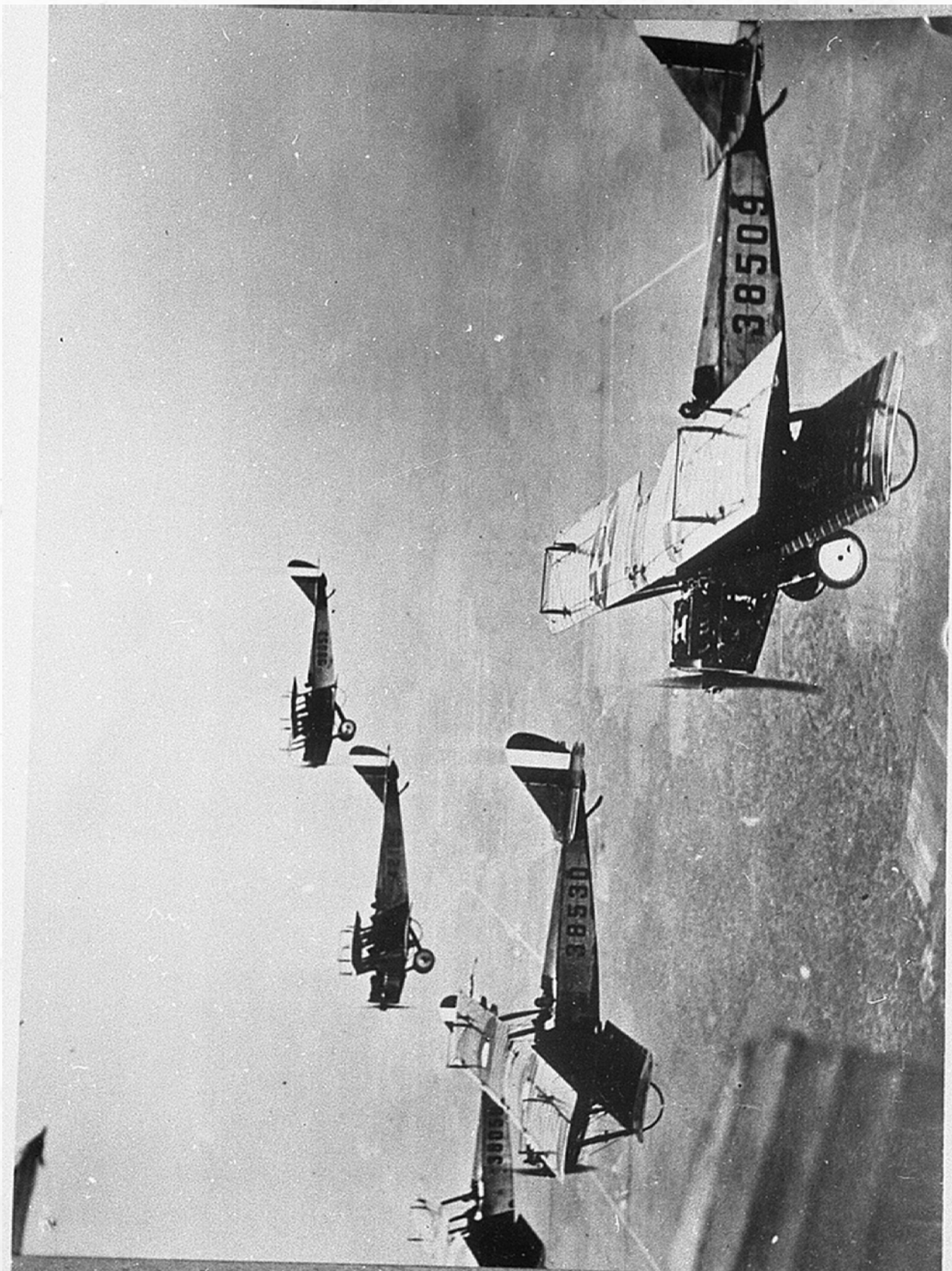


E-3890  
C-362



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Squadron in Formation



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Observation Balloon





# MANY FIRES

Publisher: Simon Rogers

Author: Jason Morningstar

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Artwork: Jérôme Huguenin



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## Many Fires Commentary

by Jason Morningstar

The genesis of Many Fires was an aside in a biography of John Pershing alluding to a deep personal tragedy he suffered in 1915. I dug a little deeper and learned that he'd lost his wife and three daughters in a horrific house fire in August of that year. Only his five-year-old son Warren survived, aided by "an old negro servant".

Pershing was an interesting guy. He'd fought Apaches and Ghost Dancing Sioux, he'd fought Moros, he went on to fight Villistas and Germans.

He traveled around the world, spending time in Japan and the Balkans.

Pershing was a wonderful hub for weirdness. And this terrible, terrible fire - well, he had made many enemies throughout his career.

What if some of them wanted to hurt him, and what if they had access to Fire Vampires?

I've always been fond of Cthugha and wanted to use it as the centerpiece of a Mythos-tinged adventure, so the pieces started to fall into place. But who hated Pershing the most, and why?

He'd fought the Apache in his Sixth Cavalry days all over the southwest and northern Mexico, and they sounded pretty good. The Moro were a good candidate - Pershing had disarmed them after American troops committed brutal massacres at Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak, and the Moro were stone cold badasses and religious zealots. But after a little more reading about the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916, I knew that northern Mexico was the source of all his troubles.

So many weird, fun threads intersected there. Pancho Villa - man of the people,

vicious thug, entrepreneur, husband to many women all at once. Hard-charging George Patton. Anthropologist Carl Lumholtz.

Explorers and bastards Bartolomé de las Casas and Cabeza de Vaca, who both traveled across northern Mexico in the 1500s and had some spooky stories to tell. The further I looked into Chihuahua the stranger it got - Mennonite colonies? Really? It was all grist for the mill.

The elements started to fall into place. It started to have a really two-fisted vibe in my mind at this point. I wanted Pershing's son Warren to be involved, so that set my date pretty firmly. I pulled other people from his personal history (The only character whose history I made up is Anacelto Bracada, and a man of that name was an officer in the Mexican army in 1916). These characters became a team, heading into Chihuahua to finish what Pershing started - or so they thought.

As a GM and game designer I really love player-versus-player conflict, so that drove my decision-making as I put the team together. They would not be aligned in their objectives. One is a cultist, one knows more evil magic than is healthy. Some have seen things no man should see. They are fundamentally at odds, and that's just the way I like it. I know this isn't the usual mode of play for Trail of Cthulhu but I figured it would be challenging and refreshing.

To provide some direct adversity I needed someone that could summon, bind and direct Fire Vampires, and that had a serious bone to pick with Pershing. Given the pulpy dimensions this adventure was starting to take on, an evil cult seemed appropriate. This also gave the adventure parallel threads involving dangerous confrontations - the surviving Villistas,

ostensibly the reason for the expedition, and a crazy fire cult ready to burn interlopers alive. So far, so good, right?

First, I had to give my evil cult some color. Rather than root them in some real group, I made them "a degenerate mountain tribe" in true Lovecraftian tradition and called them the Sháa. I based the words in their language on Chiricahua. Cthugha becomes Kuu la and is otherwise never named in a Mythos context, because that is scarier.

The local Tarahumara get to be good guys, or at least neutrally helpful, across the adventure. I really enjoyed researching them, and digging up all the crazyentheogens and weird plants in their pharmacopoeia. The ones I included are real. Why make stuff up when reality is so intensely odd?

Similarly, all the locations are real (although the Red Castle is only as real as the stories of de las Casas and de Vaca). The details of the post-Villa Villistas are a little fanciful but not much.

Similarly, the German Mennonite colonies did and still do exist across Chihuahua.

And so that's how Many Fires came together - it started with a footnote, expanded into a framework revolving around a revered American General, and blossomed into a pulpy, no-holds-barred fight against Cthugha in the Mexican cordillera. I hope you enjoy playing it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

## Introduction

In the mountains of northern Mexico, something ancient and obscene lies smoldering among ruins older than the Aztecs. In the green valleys beneath the Chihuahuan peaks, the problems are more modern - and they wear gun-belts. Do an unlikely band of Investigators have the courage to tackle the last remnants of Pancho Villa's bandit army? What secrets do they bring to the task? And what will they do when the trail of clues takes them into dangerous territory they cannot even imagine?

Many Fires is an adventure for Trail of Cthulhu. Taking place in the hills and valleys of the Mexican state of Chihuahua, it will introduce the Investigators to a surprising cast of characters and strange new weapons to employ in an epic struggle against an implacable and deadly enemy known as Kuu lá- Many Fires.

As always, abilities necessary for the revelation of various clues should be played flexibly - multiple approaches will work, depending on the situation. Consider those offered as suggestions and adapt as necessary.

### DISCLAIMER ONE

This is a pulp adventure - there will be shooting, and evil magic, and burning men cartwheeling out of windows - it is emphatically not for the fish-hearted or the purist. If your Investigators play their cards right, they may be able to punch an evil god straight back to Fomalhaut.

### DISCLAIMER TWO

Much of the information presented in this adventure is true. The history is factual as far as fact will carry in such a tumultuous time and place. The names of real people, are used extensively. As far as I know, there is no villainous fire cult in the mountains of northern Mexico, nor did anyone on either side of the Mexican Punitive Expedition traffic in the diabolic and unearthly. John Pershing in particular gets his name and reputation dragged through the mud for your entertainment, and his fictional representation here bears no bearing on the real man, who didn't need magic to do amazing things. I also apologize in advance to any Chiricahua speakers.

### THE HOOK

It is late fall, 1928. A ragged band of Investigators with strange ties to General John J. Pershing and the mountains of northern Mexico are returning one last time to the Sierra Madre del Norte. On the surface, their plan is to finish what Pershing started in 1916 - to kill or capture the last surviving Villista commander, "Major" Marcano Chimones. But beneath the surface lie conflicted loyalties and far stranger goals...

### THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

Up in the Sierra Madre del Norte there is an ancient fire cult, active since pre-Columbian times. They worship an unspeakable being and his burning otherworldly servitors.

Then-Lieutenant John J. Pershing, hunting Chiricahua Apache in the Sierra

Madre del Nortes in 1886, stumbled onto the evil band. He witnessed them summoning the terrible entity Kuu lá and forced the cultists to reveal their secrets. He learned their magic, then had his friend Julius Penn return to silence them forever.

Some survived.

Pershing's star rose. He used his magic against the Spanish in Cuba and the Moro in the Philippines. The cult regrouped, gathered strength, and punished Pershing. They burned his family alive.

Pershing returned in 1916 for the Mexican Punitive Expedition, determined to finish destroying the cult, by using their magic against them. It didn't work.

Now the General is an old, broken sorcerer, and his secrets have not been as closely held as he thinks. Obsessed with the terrible failures of his early career but too old, broken and frail to enact revenge or finish what he started, Pershing has dispatched surrogates - some half-knowing the truth and others completely ignorant.

### THE SPINE

The characters must:

- Discover the dark secret of Pershing's past, and confront the forces that would keep it hidden forever
- Defeat the last of the Villista bandits and mount an expedition into the Sierra Madre
- Confront Many Fires, destroy el Castillo Rojo, and break the fire cult forever



## Many Fires

Conflicting loyalties and ambitions will come into play as the Investigators are forced to make difficult choices about their own courses of action. To whom are they most loyal - themselves? The expedition? Pershing? Or something less savory?

### Many Fires as Part of a Campaign

Using established Investigators removes the adversarial element built into the pre-generated set, but will otherwise have no impact on play. Any hook that gets your campaign's Investigators in contact with the ailing General Pershing will be satisfactory. Consider choosing the pre-generated character you find most interesting, who by default has extensive experience in northern Mexico, to be the emissary of the General and a capable guide to the region. His agenda, whatever it is, can provide some interesting spice and confrontation as well.

### Many Fires as a One-Shot

When running this adventure as a one-shot, or for convention play, you'll need to truncate things quite a bit. Begin in media res, starting in San Antonio, and make the cult more aggressive than you would otherwise.

## REASONS TO JOIN PERSHING'S SECRET EXPEDITION

If you aren't using the pre-generated characters, you'll need an excuse for Pershing to assemble your player's Investigators into an expedition. Here are some suggestions.

### Alienist, Doctor, Nurse

Competent medical professionals are an obvious choice for a dangerous trip into lawless, unsanitary places. An alienist would be a somewhat unsettling but prescient addition to the team - the sort of detail Pershing might well want covered.

### Antiquarian, Archaeologist, Professor, Scientist

The troubled history of northern Mexico flows back for thousands of years, and untouched sites and artifacts remain, particularly high in the mountains. Her native people, similarly, follow a lifeway not far removed from their pre-Columbian ancestors. There's research gold in those forbidding mountains, not to mention priceless artifacts. Experience in the region, or in hard travel in remote locations, or perhaps just fluency in Spanish might be all it takes to get Pershing's attention.

### Artist, Author, Dilettante, Journalist

A plausible cover story is essential, and what is more plausible than privileged Americans descending on northern Mexico to plunder, gawp at the beauty, and to make asses of themselves?

### Clergy

Someone with missionary experience - particularly experience in Mexico or Central America - would be an odd but valuable addition to the expedition, provided they were willing to be somewhat liberal in their interpretation of scripture.

### Criminal, Hobo, Military

Pershing knows a lot of soldiers, and not all of them have taken to civilian life successfully. They are still hard men, though, and their experience facing the horrors of the battlefield, combined with a sense of obligation, might get them on the team.

### Police Detective, Private Investigator

Anyone operating along the US-Mexican border will be a treasure to the expedition, and Pershing might seek out a Texas Ranger or border P.I. to join the expedition. It's also possible that old military friends of his have adapted to civilian life in these roles, and would make logical additions to the team.

### Parapsychologist

Although a parapsychologist straddles the line between "plausible cover story" and scientist, Pershing has an open mind and might seek out a specialist in this fringe field - particularly if he knows them from their military service.

### Pilot

Airfields are limited but oat and bean fields abound - getting around by plane makes some sense, and Pershing has always been enamored with air power. Tapping a pilot for the expedition (preferably one with his own plane) is a natural.

### BACKGROUND

The general background to current events in northern Mexico isn't secret. Any interested Investigator can dig up the relevant facts. The application of any appropriate skill (some obvious suggestions follow each below) will yield the pertinent information.

#### About Northern Mexico (History, Geology, Biology, Library Use)

The state of Chihuahua covers nearly a quarter of a million square kilometers and is sharply divided between east and west. In the west lie the Sierra Madre del Norte, rugged mountains reaching as high as 3,300 meters and home to the indigenous Tarahumara and Chiricahua peoples. In the east, Chihuahua is composed of broad desert punctuated by fertile valleys. The climate is temperate and dry - apple orchards aren't out of place in the protected lowlands, for example.

#### About Pershing (History, Library Use)

John J. Pershing was a soldier's soldier, fighting with the American army in every major campaign from 1886 to 1918. He began his career as a horse soldier with the sixth cavalry, being cited for bravery in battles with the Apache in Arizona and northern Mexico. He was present as a Second Lieutenant at the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890. He fought in Cuba and the Philippines, being cited again for bravery, and was a Brigadier General by 1905. During this period he served as an observer and military attaché across the globe, from the Balkans to the Russo-Japanese War. In 1914 he was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas and charged with maintaining security along the Mexican border.

It was at Fort Bliss that Pershing learned of the tragic deaths of his wife and three daughters in a fire in San Francisco. Only his son Warren survived the blaze.

This event marked Pershing, deeply affecting him for the rest of his life. He went on to lead the Mexican Punitive Expedition and serve as Commander of the American Expeditionary Force during the Great War. He retired from active military service in 1924.

#### About the Villistas (History, Bureaucracy, Library Use)

As the tides of Mexican politics shifted in the early twentieth century, Pancho Villa was at various times a cattle thief, murderous outlaw, revolutionary General and political juggernaut. At the peak of his power, Villa was the governor and undisputed ruler of Chihuahua, a Robin Hood-like figure and a brilliant tactician in command of a formidable, US-supplied army. He died a folk hero, assassinated in 1923 after intimating that he might end his retirement and return to the national stage.

Major Marcano Chimones was a key Villa lieutenant, and the last remaining Villista of any import. His "soldiers" have devolved into a large bandit gang that continue to terrorize the Valle de Bustillos and all of southern Chihuahua. He operates out of Villa's old rancho at the northern tip of Lake Bustillos.

#### About the Mexican Punitive Expedition (History, Library Use)

In 1916, furious over what he considered betrayal by the US government for their support of the Carranza regime, Villa ordered attacks on US interests and then on American towns. On March 9, 1916 Villistas raided Columbus New Mexico, killing 18 Americans. This incursion, coupled with continued cross-border attacks, prompted what became known as the Mexican Punitive Expedition.

The Mexican Punitive Expedition was the proving ground for another ambitious young officer, an Army

Lieutenant named George Patton. He endeared himself to the American press by launching a surprise raid by touring car that resulted in the death of Pancho Villa's personal bodyguard, Julio Cardenas. Patton made the most of the ambush, displaying Cardenas' corpse strapped to the hood of his car and taking the man's sword and saddle as trophies. Again the real target - Villa's right hand, "Major" Marcano Chimones, escaped.

Pancho Villa mocked the Americans and escaped justice, a hero to many in hardscrabble northern Mexico. He was finally assassinated in 1923 by parties unknown. The Villa organization disintegrated. Villistas, little more than bandits even under his command, became barbaric packs who answered only to themselves. Marcano Chimones, more powerful than most, still manages a shadowy feifdom in the Valle de Bustillos west of Chihuahua city.

#### About unusual and unexplained events in the Valle de Bustillos (Occult Studies, Anthropology, Library Use)

The forbidding Sierra Madre del Norte Occidental has been feared for centuries by the lowland natives and Spanish conquerors alike - in the steep and difficult terrain, expeditions have been known to vanish without a trace. Rumors of Satanists and other degenerates using the Sierra Madre as a hideout are rife.

## Many Fires

### SECRET BACKGROUND

This is GM-eyes-only material.

#### Secret Disclaimer

The pre-generated characters designed for this adventure represent something of a departure from traditional Trail of Cthulhu play - they begin pointed at each other and each one has secrets; some have very dangerous and troublesome secrets. One of them is a clandestine Sháa cultist, one of them might consider joining the cult, and the opportunity for player versus player excitement is high. You know best whether your friends will enjoy that or loathe it - plan accordingly.

#### About the Cult

The cult that is gaining power in the Valle de Bustillos is as old as the surrounding mountains. Originating with a degenerate tribe called the Sháa, today they embrace all ethnicities and their leader is a Hispanic Mexican - Major Marcano Chimones.

Entry into the cult requires confronting the living flame they worship - the horrific and unimaginable sentient ball of fire they call Kuu lá - who "marks" converts with third-degree burns. Kuu lá appears only during certain unspeakable rituals that occur beneath a notched peak high in the Sierra Madre, at the cult's ancestral home - Castillo Rojo, the Red Castle, a structure older by far than even the Mogollon and the Olmec. He comes to that place when Fomalhaut is high in the night sky. Those who have been touched by dread Kuu lá can sometimes call upon his servants, the incorporeal Yaa Kuu lá, to do their bidding.

The cult is growing, and among both the Mexicans and the newly-arrived Mennonites rumors circulate about "Satanists" high in the mountains. The native Tarahumara know about the Sháa all too well, having lived in the same region for generations.

#### About Pershing

Pershing first came in contact with the Sháa while chasing Geronimo in the late 1880s. He was inducted into the cult (he's hidden the savage burn scars on his back ever since) and learned how to summon the terrible Yaa Kuu lá, a trick he has used all over the world to further his career and destroy his enemies. Pershing tried to exterminate the cult after tapping their secret knowledge, but ultimately failed. They struck back in 1915 and murdered his family. Now Pershing is old and largely insane - and he wants revenge on the cult and the remnant Villistas - who happen to be one and the same.

#### About Sháa Magic

The Sháa have three spells at their disposal. Not every Sháa knows all three; most know only the group ritual to summon Kuu lá. Kuu zááyé, "to make the small fire".

The caster makes a quick motion with both wrists, and droplets of molten liquid materialize from the fingertips and are flung outward, ideally into an enemies face or something flammable. Casting Kuu zááyé permanently scars the fingertips of the caster and causes incandescent pain. Stats for this spell are included in the Magic and Monsters section at the end of this document.

#### Bik'ai Yaa Kuu lá, "to call the Lice of Many Fires".

The caster summons one or more Yaa Kuu lá, which follow his general instructions - provided his general instructions involve killing people in agonizing pain and destroying property. The casting ritual requires the caster to be savagely burnt, which can be accomplished alone or with the aid of other cultists. The number of Yaa Kuu lá summoned, and their attention span, is proportional to the severity

of the injuries inflicted upon the caster. It is entirely possible to burn normally-concealed areas. A truly skilled sorcerer can summon the Yaa Kuu lá to enter our dimension from a point of ingress inside living beings. It is a slow, tortuous process, not nearly as easy as materializing in the open air but invariably deadly. Stats for the summoned Yaa Kuu lá can be found in the Magic and Monsters section at the end of this document.

#### Bik'ai Kuu lá, "to call Many Fires".

Summoning Many Fires is a serious ritual requiring many cultists, proper astronomical conditions, a roaring bonfire, and human sacrifice on a grand scale. What the Tarahumara Know

Any Tarahumara encountered in this adventure (there are three) knows all about the cult. Their name for Kuu lá is Na'á, which means simply "fire" but is better translated as "the incinerating blaze" - it is all in the delivery. His minions, the Yaa Kuu lá, are called Ba'yo Suwé - "Beautiful Death". Their contemptuous name for the Sháa themselves is Na'árami, which means "The Burned Ones". A Brujo or Bruja can use certain plants to escape Na'á's wrath. If anyone asks, they'll relay these facts in a straightforward way. Nobody knows exactly where El Castillo Rojo is - deep in the mountains, beneath a notched peak. The Tarahumara call it the Place of Carnage, Chi'ibú Ichirúami. The red walls, they believe, are regularly painted with the blood of the Sháa's enemies.

#### Kuu What?

In their own language, the thing the Sháa worship is Kuu lá, "Many Fires", which can be approximated by a nasal "Kuu" sound followed by a high-toned, descending "Thaa". The thing's servitors are Yaa Kuu lá, "Many Fires' Lice".



## Out of Space

### About Fire

Fire and its effects - on the environment, on the human body - is a central element of this adventure. As GM it is imperative that you spend a little time thinking about fire and ways to make it genuinely scary. Never describe fire as a strictly visual phenomena. Remember that you can feel its warmth, often before you can see it. You can smell the changes it makes to material (burning human flesh bears a disturbing resemblance to roast pork). You can hear it suck the air out of a room, or race across a floor in an orgy of rapacious combustion. Smoke has an unpleasant, acrid taste, and the smoke of burning chili bushes can be lethal. Strive to include at least two senses beyond sight in every description of fire, and go particularly over the top when describing the alien menaces that are, themselves, living, intelligent spheres of radiant energy.

The Yaa Kuu lá and their terrible master are plainly alien in every aspect. They don't follow the rules of fire. You can understand fire in mathematical terms, assigning variables to the heat

source, local flammability, and so forth. All that is out the window when confronted by these monsters, and that should be skin-crawlingly terrifying if you do your job right.

Investigators whose Sanity is damaged during this adventure may well have fire-related neuroses and illnesses. Phobic individuals may react to the smallest source of flame, or even visual representations of flame, with terror or nausea. They may go to great lengths to "protect" themselves from fire, making elaborate plans to avoid or survive potential fires.

### Antagonist Reactions

The cult is advised of the expedition well in advance. They are waiting in San Antonio, and Schönwiese with operatives, fellow travelers, and summoners. The Chimones compound at Bustillos is a cult satellite in the lowlands.

At each step in the expedition they will harass and intimidate through the use of threats and direct force against the

Investigators and those around them, as well as Yaa Kuu lá when circumstances allow them to be called.

Chimones' gang can be pressed into service as a blunt instrument for violence, working to keep the Investigators out of the mountains.

The Red Castle, a pivotal ceremonial site, is filled with both cultists and gangsters, with Yaa Kuu lá available to set the pine forests ablaze.

### Victory Conditions

There are two threads - the destruction of Chimones' gang and the dispersal of the fire cult. They are tied together and likely to be achieved together if at all. Each Investigator is more or less invested in each of these goals. Some are also invested in recovering Villa's gold or revealing the truth about General Pershing.



## The Trail of Clues

### THE VALLEY

#### Getting Around

The adventure begins on the way from Ciudad Chihuahua, the capitol of the eponymous state, into the Valle de Bustillos. Having arrived by rail from El Paso or Veracruz or by plane from points further afield, transportation in the rugged and somewhat primitive region west of the capitol takes one of three forms.

**By plane:** If the Investigators include a pilot, or someone wealthy enough to charter, say, a lumbering Fokker Tri-motor, Chihuahua's well-tended gravel airfield is convenient and offers modern facilities. Landing in San Antonio or Schönwiese is only possible in a Mennonite oat field, which presents some interesting opportunities for conflict. Landing along the dirt road between Chihuahua and San Antonio, perhaps near the ghost town of Bustillos, is possible but hazardous. Landing anywhere else mentioned in this adventure will be risky and permanent.

**By motor vehicle:** Trucks and private cars are available for hire or purchase in Chihuahua. There is no bus service to San Antonio. The roads are so dreadful that the average speed is fifteen miles per hour, and anything but a motorcycle is useless off the roads and trails. Even motorcycles are stymied by the Sierra Madre.

**By horse:** The most practical way to get around the Valle de Bustillos is on horseback. Excellent horses are available in San Antonio and good horses are available in Chihuahua.

Horses can handle any terrain in this adventure.

The action can skip around between any of the four locations. If this adventure is to be played in convention mode, give the players any information they would have learned in San Antonio or the canyon and focus on Bustillos, Schönwiese and the mountains.

There are four locations of interest in the Valle de Bustillos: The central town of San Antonio, the twin villages of Guerrero and Schönwiese, the ancient ruins in the Cañón el Nogal, and the ghost town of Bustillos. They can be approached and explored in any order, although the main road leads directly to San Antonio and it is a good place to start.

#### The Altkolonier

North and west of San Antonio are sprawling new settlements of German-speaking Altkolonier (Old Colony) Mennonites, only a few years old. The largest, named after the Canadian province from which the settlers recently removed themselves, is called Manitoba. Oats, beans, and corn are already being harvested on land purchased tax-free from the Mexican government. The Mennonites are a deeply religious people who are very thoughtful about incorporating technology into their lives, rejecting most. Their relations with the local Mexicans is collegial, and they've been quick to share their resources in a display of goodwill wherever practical. Anyone traveling from Chihuahua will see signs of the Mennonite colonies - half-finished buildings on the horizon, pale men in straw hats and old-fashioned clothing

hauling freshly-cut lumber in horse-drawn carts, and others bartering in broken, German-inflected Spanish in San Antonio and Guerrero.

The Mennonites themselves are insular and shy, deeply religious and resourceful. They prefer to do their business with the outside world through representatives - Isaac Dyck in San Antonio and Klaas Heide up in the foothills - but won't hesitate to aid a person in distress.

### THE TOWN

#### San Antonio

San Antonio de los Arenales is the commercial center for the Valle de Bustillos region, 50 miles west of the state capitol of Chihuahua. It is a semi-desert region, and where there is no irrigation there is cactus and rocky scrub. The sky is a preposterously vibrant blue. The ridges of the Sierra Madre del Norte dominate the western skyline. Unless the Investigators befriend Dyck and the Mennonites, there is only one place in town for guests to stay - the dilapidated Hotel Colibrí, run by San Antonio's Mayor, Jesús Herrera.

**[Core Clue]** Marcano Chimones and his thugs are operating out of Villa's old rancho north of Lake Bustillos.

**Cop Talk,** the patient application of **Oral History** or **Reassurance** will glean San Antonio's core clue. It can also be learned from Isaac Dyck or Jesús Herrera more directly. A one-point **Streetwise** spend (perhaps over some tequila) will be enough to gather the local gossip: Chimones has Pancho

Villa's last shipment of gold out at the old rancho, taken from his estate at Canutillo at the time of his death. Chimones' bandits have become very dangerous around Guerrero, usually hitting the city on their way into and out of the mountains for purposes unknown.

### The Watcher

San Antonio has many beggars, a common sight all over Mexico. Unlike Chihuahua, Ciudad Juarez or Mexico City, however, San Antonio's beggars invariably bear the keloid scars of severe burns. One in particular will discretely observe the Investigators; Sense Trouble will peg him as a tail; Streetwise or Cop Talk will shed some light on him. His name is Pedro Gaheh, an indigent burn victim and drunkard. A mestizo Chiricahua fallen on very hard times, a little crazy. Although nobody will say this, he is also a cultist and quite mad.

Confronting Pedro Gaheh is possible; play him as a lurching, foul-smelling, combative drunk. If the Investigators well and truly toss him at any time, Evidence Collection will let them find the tattered pages from Pershing's diary and newspaper clippings that he's recently stolen from El Politécnico (see appendix). If Interrogated, Gaheh will laugh and curse the Investigators in broken Spanish, telling them that they should return to America, that they tamper with things they don't understand, that their hands will be burned and they will recoil in agony all the way back to El Paso anyway. Under duress he'll confess everything he knows, which isn't much (everything in the "What the Tarahumara Know" section) before starting a possibly suicidal fire. Ideally, when the time is right, he will try to burn the Investigators alive (See "The Attack" below).



### Jesús Herrera

Jesús Herrera is the Mayor of San Antonio but the position is an honorary one; as a man of privilege and means, Herrera speaks for the town on matters pertaining to state and federal government but wields no real power. He's a friendly, welcoming man who will make rooms available at the Colibrí and express a keen interest in the Investigator's plans in the Valle de Bustillos. He's also an inveterate gossip, so any information passed along to him will be public knowledge in 24 hours.

Anyone interested in Herrera can find out more directly from him (using Flattery or Reassurance), from anyone else in town (Streetwise or Reassurance) or from the little-used library (Library Use). Herrera, the lone surviving member of what was once a prosperous and powerful clan, was Villa's sworn enemy and attempted several times to assassinate him from 1919 – 1923. The Herrera family had been loyal Villa supporters at the outset of the revolution: Maclovio and Luis Herrera had been officers in his army. They betrayed him, however, and joined Carranza. Maclovio and Luis were killed at the Battle of Torreón. Villa captured



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## Many Fires

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José de Luz Herrera in March of 1919 and executed him and his two sons. His hatred for Marcano Chimones runs deep and anyone looking to break the Villista bandit is a fast friend of Herrera.

Should anyone bring up Anthropology or Occult Studies, Herrera will warn the Investigators not to trust the Tarahumara, citing their bloody uprising in 1690. "Go out to Cañón el Nogal," he'll say, "see what they did to Mission San Rafael. They are primitive devil-worshippers and they'll do it again if we let them."

### Isaac Dyck

Isaac Dyck is an elder of the Manitoba colony and the community's point of contact with the outside world. Dyck will be eager to meet Americans or Europeans, who rarely venture into the Valle de Bustillos. "Unless they are chasing Pancho Villa", he'll say with a laugh.

Dyck's primary interest is keeping Manitoba and the other Mennonite settlements safe, followed by growing them economically. While friendly, he's not stupid, and his priorities are firm. He won't hesitate to invite Investigators out to see the colony if impressed by them (Reassurance or the public application of any Technical or Academic skill would do it), and will encourage them to visit Schönwiese, which is lovely (and in need of American capital). He'll recommend Klaas Heide as a guide, should they express any interest in heading up into the Sierra Madre.

The peaceful Mennonites have become a target for Chimone's thugs, and Dyck will be interested in plans to deal with the old Villista. Although he can't condone violence directly, Dyck is more than happy to pass along information, intelligence and tacit encouragement. He's actually a good source of information - the Core Clue for San Antonio could easily be supplied by him.

### El Politécnico

San Antonio boasts a small trade school, specializing in occupations related to agriculture - machining, metalwork, engine repair and construction. El Politécnico was built on the grounds of a Spanish mission, and the old mission building itself - an imposing adobe structure more than two hundred years old - was built for defense. Although two more modern buildings and the adjacent hospital complete the campus, the mission houses the school's library, which includes a treasure trove of Spanish conquest codices and other documents of great antiquity.

### Heriberto Uriarte

The Headmaster of El Politécnico San Antonio is Heriberto Uriarte, a man of arts and letters with a magnificent mustache who laments his position as the overseer of a trade school for carpenters and machinists. Uriarte loves the school's library and will proudly show it off. With Uriarte, Flattery will open any door - including the door to the library.

Should Investigators be interested in the history of the region, Library Use will dig up the Lumholtz snippets (see appendix) almost immediately.

An additional one-point Library Use spend will enlist the assistance of Uriarte in tracking down the Bartolomé de las Casas narrative (see appendix) as well.

Dr. Uriarte also has some Pershing memorabilia, should Investigators ask after him. "His diary from the American invasion in 1916," he'll say, unlocking the wooden case where it is stored and, to his embarrassment, finding it missing. Forensics will reveal scratch marks - the lock was clumsily picked.

### Hospital de San Juan Bautista

The tiny hospital in San Antonio, Hospital de San Juan Bautista, stands next to El Politécnico. It is largely funded by the Mennonites but remains free to all. Unusually for a facility of its size, San Juan Bautista has a dedicated burn unit. The Chief of Quemar la Clínica, the burn unit at San Juan Bautista, is a no-nonsense nurse named Gabriela Pinzón.

Anyone accustomed to rural hospitals will immediately know that the clinic is extremely unusual - there are far too many burn patients for such a small community. Nurse Pinzón is a busy woman and a tough nut to crack. Practicing Medicine and assisting her is the best way to gain her trust, although Pharmacy or even Chemistry could be put to good use in the clinic. An additional one-point spend in any of these areas (or Intimidation perhaps) can persuade the nurse to take a break and talk about her work. She doesn't understand the prevalence of burns in the valley, and she finds it a little frightening. There is talk of devil-worship in the foothills, strange lights in the Sierra Madre. Of her patients, some are farmers, burned in mysterious fires after being threatened by the Villistas. Some are Tarahumara Indians who refuse to discuss the origins of their burns. The only patient willing to talk to Investigators is a Tarahumara named Makúsuwa, and Nurse Pinzón will quietly warn the Investigators that he is not to be trusted - a spinner of tall tales.

### Makúsuwa

Also known as "Carlos", Makúsuwa's name means "finger", assigned to him because he is missing one (Medicine or a little time and Oral History will reveal that Makúsuwa's missing finger is a congenital defect, not an amputation or burn). He is recovering from a wicked set of burns - Medicine shows them to be pinpoint third-degree burns. He says a sorcerer inflicted them upon him for refusing to surrender a pair of goats.

Makúsuwa will speak matter-of-factly about the Sháa. Assess Honesty will, of course, indicate that he absolutely believes what he is saying. They are an ancient tribe of evil villains, and they harass and enslave the Tarahumara. They use magical fire as a weapon. They worship a living ball of fire. (See What The Tarahumara Know). If Investigator's are interested (a one point spend of Reassurance or Oral History), Makúsuwa will open up and urge them to see Alma Rodriguez up in Cañón el Nogal, a genuine Bruja and a powerful one at that. Not a person to be trifled with but a good person nonetheless.

If they really hit it off, it's possible that Makúsuwa can be persuaded to accompany them when they leave San Antonio.

### The Attack

Pedro Gaheh has been instructed to kill the Investigators (after tipping off or excluding Dyo, if Dyo is an Investigator). The very best way for him to do this is to catch them all together in a confined space and then send in Yaa Kuu lá to immolate them. The best place to do this is probably the Hotel Colibrí, but any dramatic location is fine. The library at the polytechnic might be good. See "About Sháa magic").

Summoning them involves ritually charring his own skin. Sense Trouble may reveal the cloying odor of burning meat moments before the attack.

If the Yaa Kuu lá fail Gaheh's own life is immaterial; he will charge in and spray magical fire from his hands in desperation if necessary.

(For Yaa Kuu lá and Kuu zááyé stats, see the Magic and Monsters appendix.)

## THE HIDEOUT

This section is intended to provide some violent action. A shootout at the rancho, mixed up with some menacing cult magic, is not perfect. It's entirely possible to skip this section and, in fact, if it becomes necessary due to time, player inclination, or both, it won't cause a problem. Just move the core clues to Guerrero, Schönwiese, or San Antonio.

### Bustillos

**[Core Clue]** Marco Chimones is up in the Sierra Madre.

Everyone - the Villista lieutenants, the various cult thugs, and the Tarahumara - knows that Chimones is up in the mountains. None of them will be coy about sharing this information (see below).

**[Core Clue]** The Villistas are part of a cult

This clue can be learned through direct experience at the hands of the sorcerer Miguel Navarez, or indirectly through a captured or killed Villista, or from the Tarahumara slaves (see below).

### The Town

Bustillos, the valley's namesake fifteen miles northeast of San Antonio, is a ghost town. History, Architecture or Oral History (the latter applied in San Antonio or Guerrero) will explain the vacant streets - Formerly the center of the Zuloagas clan cattle empire, it was deserted during the revolution.

Bustillos is along the main road (an unpaved, washout-ravaged ribbon of gravel and dirt) between Ciudad Chihuahua and San Antonio. If the Investigators wish to visit Bustillos first, let it be completely deserted the first time around. Chimones usually

has a couple of men on horseback in Bustillos, which is also the gateway to his rancho. Locals know not to linger here. Upon a return visit, perhaps after some investigating in San Antonio or Guerrero, there will be armed lookouts in Bustillos.

The lookouts are Cleto and Jomi, Mexican Sháa cultists. They are armed with rifles and will approach anyone who does anything other than drive through Bustillos without slowing down. They are suspicious thugs and cultists, and will do their best to intimidate and threaten the Investigators into moving along. If that fails, they'll do their best to race to the ranch and raise the alarm. Bustillos isn't the place for a fight if they can avoid it. It's horse country, and Cleto and Jomi can easily outrun a motor car.

If either or both are captured, they will make a great show of their rights being violated, and how they will protest to the Federales and to their Jefe, Major Chimones, who will not be pleased. Interrogation, which will be somewhat time-consuming, will cause them to explain the fundamental banditry of their organization - hitting Guerrero and now Schönwiese, whose wealthy weak-sister Mennonites are no threat to them. Intimidation, with the right incentives, can also be effective.

An additional one-point Interrogation spend, or possibly some Occult Studies name-dropping, will persuade the bandits to explain that a big ceremony is planned up in the mountains, that Chimones has been very busy preparing for it, and that anyone who stands in the way is doomed. Condenado a muerte. They aren't Christians, not any more, not after what they've seen. Fires in the sky, beautiful magic, devilry, the old ways. Medicine or Evidence Collection, if used when searching either man, will reveal the tell-tale keloid scars of the cult.

## Many Fires

### The Shores of Lago Bustillo

A rutted access road skirts the large, shallow Lago Bustillo. Bean fields along the road and around the rancho are worked by Tarahumara who are little better than slaves. They are lazily guarded by pistol-toting Villista cultists, but the Tarahumara here are broken people - far from home with no prospect of escape.

If the lookouts have sounded the alarm, the overseers will block the road with a pair of pine logs before abandoning their charges and retreating to the rancho. Avoiding the impromptu roadblock in a motor vehicle is a Difficulty 5 Driving challenge; failure damages the car a mile from the rancho. A Difficulty 4 Mechanical Repair roll, some cursing, and a few hours can set it right.

Unless the Investigators drive off or kill every last Villista at the rancho, the Tarahumara won't leave. Even if they are freed, they will need transportation, medical care, food and water. The logistics will be daunting and they will require months to recover from the horror they have endured. Anyone caring for the Tarahumara (Medicine, obviously, but even Reassurance or simple acts of kindness) can gain a little information. Their tormentors are Na'árami, the Burned Ones, and they spit magic fire. The cannot be defeated. A one-point Reassurance spend can tease out some practical information - Villa's decapitated head was recently dug up by Chimones, along with "two large and very heavy crates, each of which was all a mule could carry." Chimones and his mysterious load are long gone.

### The Rancho

Chimones' rancho is a low-slung brick-and-adobe structure with thick walls designed to deter furious Apache and Tarahumara, a threat that has long since faded into irrelevance. Regardless, the entire compound is heavily

fortified, and guttering torches burn incongruously. The area is surrounded by bean fields and weathered pine trees that provide almost no cover. A wooden barn is the only outbuilding. Behind the rancho, out of immediate view from the access road, is a small cemetery.

The Major is away - up in the mountains. His three Lieutenants are minding the rancho, and how they react to the Investigators is wildly variable. Their general instructions are to capture, interrogate and then kill any interlopers. If they can't arrange this, just plain killing is perfectly acceptable. They won't have any warning that a fellow cultist (Dyo, if he's being played as an Investigator) is arriving.

Difficulty 5 Stealth or perhaps Disguise tests would allow Investigators to approach the rancho unnoticed.

### Miguel Navarez

Navarez is a Sháa sorcerer and Chimones' second in command. A young and strikingly handsome man, his right hand is a club-like mass of scar tissue from repeated spell casting. He is completely insane and is eager to display his power. Navarez will approach the Investigators, provided they don't come in guns blazing. He's charming and has a brilliant smile beneath a thick black mustache. Assess Honesty will reveal that he's buying time as Jiminez and Silvino get in position. Sense Trouble will certainly set off alarm bells - an ambush is in the offing.

If the Investigators don't force the issue, Navarez will be glad to have a discussion about the cult and its plans. In his mind the Investigators have only minutes to live, and he's proud that they will be performing the great Bik'ai Kuu lá ritual at el Castillo Rojo, actually welcoming the true god to Earth. Major Chimones is up their preparing, and he's got everything needed to complete the ritual beneath their holy notched

peak. Then the shooting will start and he'll do his level best to incinerate them.

(For stats on Navarez and his magic, see the People appendix.)

### Mariano Jiminez and Silvino Vargas

Jiminez and Vargas are prototypical murderous thugs with a cunning streak. Between them they command half a dozen bandits, a few of whom will be on horseback. They are armed with pistols, and a few will have a rifle or shotgun. These will tend to be widely dispersed, so two groups of six might show up at different times, or three groups of four.

(For Jiminez and Vargas' stats, use those of the generic Sháa cultist at the end of this document)

### The Cemetery

The rancho cemetery has an ornamental fence around it. There are a dozen very old graves and one, unmarked, that has been freshly dug up and refilled. Forensics indicates that the digging was very recent exhumation of a ten-year-old grave. Evidence Collection finds the remains of a wooden marker reading "José Doroteo Arango Arámbula", which is the true name of the late Pancho Villa, as History (academic or personal) will tell.

Anyone with the time and inclination can dig up the grave again, finding a desiccated corpse whose missing head has been hacked off. Forensics, again, will reveal that the coffin once sat on top of two large crates, heavy enough to compress the earth beneath them. Crates full of gold, perhaps.



## Out of Space

### THE GATEWAY

**[Core Clue]** Drugs from the Tarahumara pharmacopoeia can counteract Sháa magic.

The Tarahumara shaman Mawiyá is the Investigator's entree into the world of entheogenic plants, and if necessary he will seek them out (see below). Alma Rodriguez,

### La Junta

La Junta is a village that sprung up around the junction of the national highway and the Chihuahua and Pacific Railroad. It has nothing of note beyond a telegraph station, but it is the end of the line for rail passengers heading west in the Valle de Bustillos - Guerrero and Schönwiese are only accessible by road.

### Guerrero

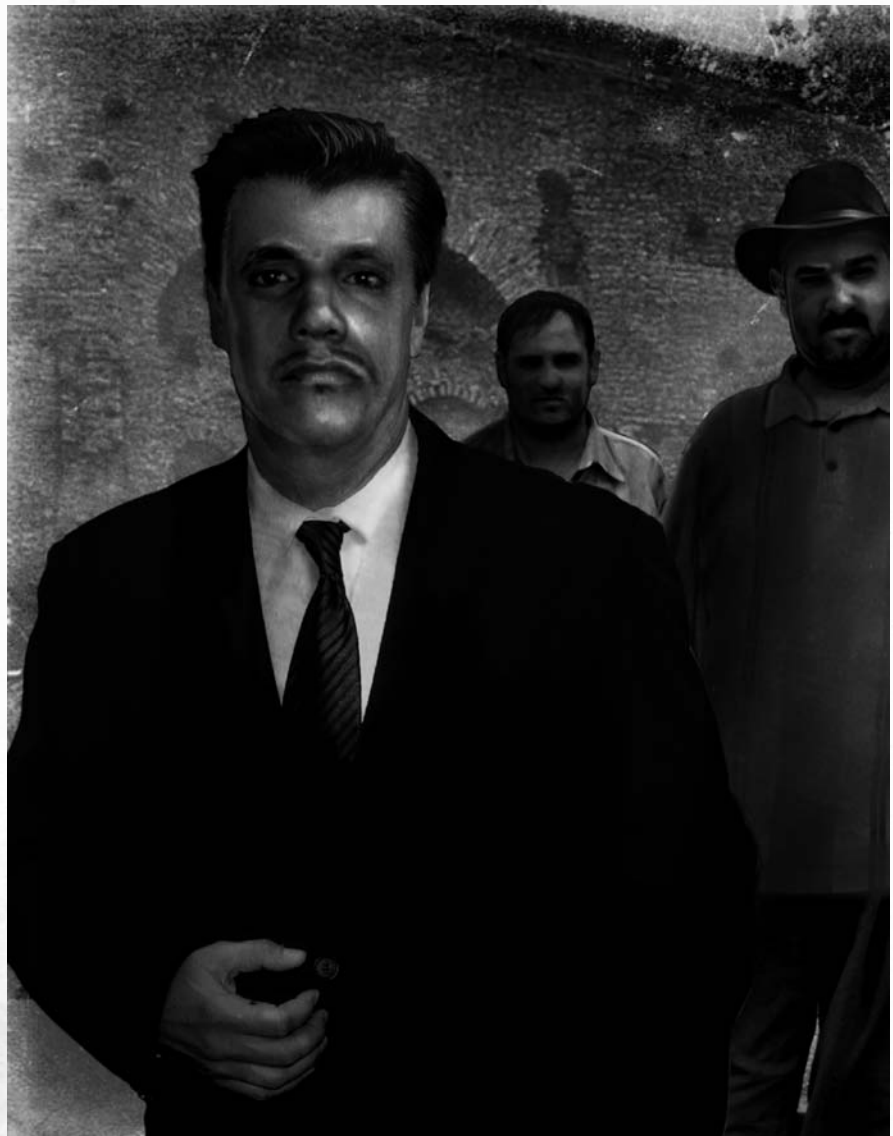
The town of Guerrero is high in the foothills of the Sierra Madre del Norte Occidental, a small and quintessentially Mexican mountain town accessible only by road. A tidy Mennonite village called Schönwiese is being built there - the road leading into Guerrero is dotted on both sides by row after row of apple tree seedlings. It was from Guerrero that Pershing began his fateful trip into the mountains, and if the Investigators want to follow in his footsteps, the journey begins in these twin settlements.

Guerrero, in contrast to the fresh paint and clean yellow pine of Schönwiese, has been torn up a little recently. It's a frequent target of Chimones' thugs, since the stubborn mountain people refuse to pay for "protection". It has the air of a village under siege, and everyone is scared.

### Eduardo Domínguez

Eduardo Domínguez runs the Pino de Montaña cattle ranch and is a big wheel in Guerrero, the man who is indisputably in charge. He rides with a pair of gunmen and has the air of a person who should not be trifled with. His imposing demeanor aside, he's expansive and hospitable, particularly if he learns that the Investigators are after Chimones, who he hates. Credit Rating 5+ is enough to make Domínguez a friend for life, and Flattery will work just as well in securing an invitation to his stately (and secure) home.

Domínguez knows and likes Pershing and acted as a provisioner to the Americans in 1916. A one point Credit Rating or Reassurance spend will get him talking about the old days. He knows, for example, that when the American Army passed through Guerrero, Pershing made a side trip up to Cañón el Nogal to see the ruins and spent "a lot of time" up there. If an Investigator discusses the stranger aspects of their mission - cults, magic, or similar topics - Domínguez will get uncomfortable. An additional one point Reassurance spend will find him quietly talking about the plague of "devil worshipers" that has infected the



## Many Fires

region - Indians deep in the mountains who have resisted contact for centuries have made secret alliances with the Villista bandits and all hell is breaking loose. They worship Satan with fire and burn themselves. Their lair is called "El Castillo Rojo". Some of them follow a witch that lives up in Cañón el Nogal (This is obviously false, but Domínguez believes it).

### Iglesia de San Francisco

Guerrero's principal church boasts a large encampment of Tarahumara (See The Tarahumara, below). They have nowhere to go, having been driven out of their mountain homes by the cult. Iglesia de San Francisco has a disorganized and deteriorating archive that can be accessed through Credit Rating or Theology. The Cabeza de Vaca narrative (see appendix) is in the archive and can be dug up with a one point Library Use spend.

The church archive is also an alternate place for the Pershing and Lumholtz handouts to incongruously turn up.

### Schönwiese

Schönwiese stands out in contrast to the vernacular adobe of its larger neighbor. The Mennonite village could have been plucked from some cheerful river bend in Schlesweig-Holstein. A single, rail-straight street bisects a community of neat little houses, barns, and an austere church. Architecture or Forensics will reveal nothing but fresh paint and green timber - unlike Guerrero, Schönwiese has not been touched by the bandits.

Talking to the Mennonites will be a challenge - many speak only German and all of them will refer Investigators to the leader of the Schönwiese community, Klaas Heide. They are understandably skittish about outsiders. Schönwiese also has a small group of Tarahumara, who do odd jobs or just camp stoically along the main road, living off the charity of the Mennonites (See The Tarahumara, below).

### Klaas Heide

Klaas Heide is the leader of the Schönwiese community, a surveyor by trade and an outdoorsman by inclination. He knows the local mountains very well. Heide is a handsome, cheerful man who walks with a slight limp. He was inducted into the cult on his very first visit to Chihuahua. His legs have been viciously scarred in terrible rituals. He has a good idea why the Investigators are in town.

Heide is reluctant to discuss his limp. Reassurance will tease out a convincing cover story concerning a construction accident that occurred back in Canada. Fact-checking Heide's story, either with a one point Oral History spend locally or a one point Bureaucracy spend back in La Junta with a telegraph, will fail - he was never in an accident in Canada and returned from the initial survey of Schönwiese with it. Obviously Assess Honesty will point to his discomfort with the topic and general lack of truthfulness. This sort of digging will not endear them to Heide in the slightest. If pressed, he will storm off - and the Investigators can expect a visit from Yaa Kuu lá that evening.

In contrast, they can earn Heide's temporary friendship in a number of ways: Pitching in around Schönwiese using a practical skill (Mechanical Repair, Electrical Repair, Medicine), helping him survey (Outdoorsman), or contributing to the building fund (Credit Rating) will all change his attitude. If he's in an expansive mood, he'll talk about the local troubles. Chimnones' thugs and bandits have been terrorizing Guerrero, stealing goods and shooting up the town. They've been kidnaping innocent Tarahumara and enslaving them at the rancho north of Lago Bustillos. Unlike some other Mennonite settlements in the valley they've left Schönwiese alone, and so far Heide's been happy about that.

Of course he's the reason Schönwiese hasn't been touched, and Heide is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

### Hiring a Guide

It's foolish and potentially deadly to head up into the mountains without a local guide. Heide and Mawiyá (See below) are both available and willing to go - Heide for the right price, Mawiyá for aid to the local Tarahumara. The most direct path into the Sierra Madre del Norte begins ten miles to the northwest, in Cañón el Nogal. Provisions for a trip into the mountains will include jerked beef and pinole (finely ground corn meal), carried in simple sacks.

If they don't hire Heide, he'll give them a short head start and follow them anyway.

### The Tarahumara

The Tarahumara have lived in the mountains above the Valle de Bustillos forever, and their remote villages, coupled with a prudent desire not to have much contact with the outside world, have kept them largely untouched by Mexico's calamities. Now they are being driven out of the mountains by the resurgent cult, forced into Guerrero as refugees or marched to Bustillos as field slaves - or worse. A small community of Tarahumara live uneasily in the two towns, not really resident in either but welcomed with compassion in both.

Anyone who needs information of guides in the local mountains would be well served to call upon the Tarahumara. The best local guide, Mawiyá, will be glad to escort outsiders into his ancestral home in exchange for whatever relief the Investigator's can provide their bedraggled, dispirited and physically ill refugee community.

### Mawiyá

Mawiyá is a Tarahumara shaman, also known as "Roberto" among the Mexicans and "Der Puma" among the Mennonites (because his name means

## Out of Space

“cougar”). If his confidence can be gained through Reassurance or even the deft application of Anthropology, Mawiyá is a fantastic guide to the mountains and a useful source of intelligence and local resources, particularly a potent and useful local herb called bakana. (See What The Tarahumara Know). Mawiyá says things like “The moon sometimes has to fight with the sun. If the weather was only dependent on the moon it would rain constantly, which would be of great benefit to us. The sun is not a friend to the Tarahumara.”

Mawiyá knows Makúsuwa, who the Investigators may have met in San Antonio, and will be glad to know that he is all right.

If the Investigators take Mawiyá seriously and explain their purpose, he will offer to help them defeat the Sháa. He'll tell them about Bakana and encourage them to seek out a proper Bruja for more powerful plants.

(For Bakana stats, see the Drugs appendix)

### THE CANYON

[Core Clue] The Red Castle is beneath El Pico Dentado, the Jagged Peak, a 8360 foot massif to the north of Cerro Grande.

The core clue can be learned from the Bruja Alma Rodriguez or by analyzing the paintings in Casa de Largo (see below).

### Cañón el Nogal

It will take a local guide to find the Canyon - Klaas Heide or Mawiyá, or both. It lies a dozen miles west of Guerrero in the foothills, along a path that has been overgrown and abandoned (Outdoorsman will reveal that it isn't entirely abandoned). At the mouth of the canyon is a ruined mission, now the home of an infamous

local Bruja. Deeper in the steep canyon are the ancient ruins known as La Casa de Largo.

### Mission San Rafael

At the mouth of the canyon is the shell of a hacienda, known locally as Mission San Rafael. Archaeology or History will identify it as one of the missions destroyed by the Tarahumara in their 1690 rebellion. The overgrown stone walls are now home to Alma Rodriguez.

### The Bruja

Alma Rodriguez lives in what remains of the hacienda, an unofficial guardian of the canyon's ruins. She is a Chiricahua, a “wild Indian” unrelated to the Tarahumara whose people live deeper in the Sierra Madre. Somehow she was set adrift far from home, but that story is buried in her blurry past. Her Chiricahua name is Izdzáníí Lichíí, which means “Red Woman” - perhaps because she paints her face in lurid vermillion mineral paste, which Anthropology will indicate is the sign of a Chiricahua priestess. Those not in the know will be shocked by her unearthly, blood-red face - something an enterprising GM should keep in mind. The Tarahumara treat her with a mix of respect and unease; Heide will dismiss her as senile.

Alma Rodriguez is very old, very frail, and a little unstable. She will rave in a friendly mish-mash of Chiricahua, Tarahumara and Spanish about the sun and moon, Michá and Rayénari, and offer her visitors tizwm, a potent drink made from fermented green corn. Anthropology will allow an Investigator to recall a quote from the ethnologist Carl Lumholtz: “An intoxicating drink is also made from the shoots of green corn called tshawi which though common on the higher slopes has only recently become known to science. According to tradition it is the first plant God created, and the

liquor made from it is considered by the pagan Tarahumares and Tepehuanes as indispensable to certain ceremonies.” Over her small, smoky campfire she is roasting some round cacti on spits. These are wichuri (see below).

Talking to Alma isn't easy. There's a language barrier, and her innate Stability is seriously eroded. Reassurance or Flattery will at least put her at ease. A one point Reassurance spend will cause her to confess that she's had a dream that she would be visited by men seeking the skull of a great warrior and his treasure of gold, and that Michá would appear on Earth to burn his subjects and all creation soon. She knows where this will take place - in Chiricahua territory, on the dry northern slope of El Pico Dentado, the Jagged Peak, at the Red Castle. Any Outdoorsman can quickly find this on a map - only ten miles away as the crow flies, over very rough terrain.

Alma Rodriguez could use some equipment and supplies, and a one point Bargain spend will see her cherry-picking the group's gear for practical items (choose something they'll be reluctant to part with, like a gun) in exchange for detailed information. She knows a very good route to El Castillo Rojo and can sketch it out, allowing the Investigators to avoid some of the Sierra Madre's hazards.

Most importantly, she'll offer the Investigator's wichuri, as much as they want, already prepared, if they will promise in turn to stop Michá from burning the world to ashes. “Michá knows you are coming,” she says, “Kuu lá knows you are coming.”

(For Wichuri stats, see the Drugs appendix)

### Meeting Alma Elsewhere

The Bruja can be met anywhere - her knowledge is important to share, so



## Many Fires

if the Investigators decline a visit to Cañón el Nogal, have her show up elsewhere - in either of the towns or even chained in the barn at the rancho north of Bustillos.

### La Casa de Largo

La Casa de Largo is a small pre-Columbian ruin. The Long House is a stone structure worked into the cliff wall, deep in the canyon along the Investigator's path into the mountains. It consists of a series of cramped rooms, all roofless and empty.

Architecture makes it obvious from examining the post-holes just below what was once the roof line that at some point in its history La Casa de Largo was burned down. Archaeology reveals the structure to definitely represent the Mogollón culture, circa 1100 AD, a far-southern outpost of the highly developed civilization that flourished in the 12th century and then mysteriously disappeared.

**[Core Clue]** There is a cave hidden behind some scrub behind the Long House.

### The Cave

The cave predates the Long House and the Mogollón era. Inside it are a series of crude pictographs painted with mineral vermillion. Archaeology or Forensics will demonstrate that the cave paintings are no more than one hundred years old, if that - the pigment is practically still wet by archeological terms. They illustrate a series of vignettes.

Panel One: There is a star in the heavens - Astronomy can place it as Fomalhaut. A one point Astronomy spend will put Fomalhaut in contemporary context - this is the month in which it is highest in the Mexican sky, identical to the representation in the panel. Men and women worship the star from a fortified structure - a castle - beneath

a peculiar notched peak. Geology or Outdoorsman (with the aid of a map) can identify this as El Pico Dentado, the Jagged Peak. Lines seem to tie the people to the mountainside.

Panel Two: The star bifurcates and a terrible burning wheel appears - Occult Studies or perhaps Cthulhu Mythos can easily place this as the dreaded Kuu lá, Many Fires. It is connected to Fomalhaut by a long, twisting line of vermillion (the tether, visible when using wichuri).

Panel Three: The people are consumed in flame by smaller versions of Kuu lá - the Yaa Kuu lá, which the Investigators have likely already seen. Their expressions are ecstatic.

Panel Four: A hero carrying a large knife stands with a pair of native priests. One feeds him what Pharmacy or Biology indicates is bakana; the other holds wichuri and pours the pulp mixture into his ear.

Panel Five: The hero approaches the Red Castle and severs the tethers of Kuu lá and his minions, causing the terror to retreat and become one with Fomalhaut again.

Viewing the panel causes a loss of two Stability to anyone who has been attacked by the Yaa Kuu lá. The Mountains Begin

Past the Long House, the true Sierra Madre begin. Before entering the mountains, the investigators should know the location of the Red Castle, know that Marcano Chimones is there, and know (or at least suspect) that the cult is conducting a ritual to summon Kuu lá.

## THE SIERRA MADRE

Dangers abound in the untamed mountains. The route from Cañón el Nogal to the Red Castle is only ten miles in a straight line, but much farther in the difficult, undulating terrain of the Sierra Madre Occidental. The route requires huge, exhausting changes in elevation and treacherous switchbacks over bush-covered slopes.

A guide can significantly ease passage - both Heide and Mawiyá know the area well. Intelligence gained from Alma Rodriguez is also beneficial.

Below are five possible events that can occur during the trip to the Red Castle. The GM can choose as few or as many as circumstances indicate. Pacing may require more or fewer, and if the Investigators are following the advice of Mawiyá or the Bruja a few of the nastier ones should be avoided. If Heide is along he will try to trap and kill the Investigators, and failing that he'll try to warn the cult of their impending arrival. Most of these can be combined in challenging ways as well.

### The Cave

At a campsite next to a clear stream edged with chili bushes and wild gourds, the Outdoorsman or Geology finds a cave with evidence of a wall built into the entrance to fortify it.

Inside are disarticulated skeletons and row after row of stacked, desiccated mummies - Archaeology indicates that this is a mortuary cave of some unknown pre-Mogollón people. The cave has ancient petroglyphs that are clearly the original source of the Long House pictographs, but one thousand years older. This revelation may call for a small Stability loss.

Heide (or the Pinaleños, see below) may choose to make his move at the mortuary cave if he can trap the

Investigators inside. If so, he'll drag up some chili bushes and set them on fire, filling the cave with deadly capiscum smoke. History will recall this technique used with great success by the Aztec against the Spaniards at the siege of Tenochtitlan. Use the rules for suffocation and acid on page 68 for anyone trapped in the cave, giving the burning chilis a -3 modifier for inhalation damage.

### The Forest Fire

Forest fires are a natural occurrence, but they can also be set. Leave the origin unknown but the fire a menace to survival. There are two courses of action - a straight-up Fleeing test at Difficulty five or building a firebreak (a Difficulty five Athletics test, or Difficulty four after a successful Sense Trouble test at Difficulty four). Failure in either course of action results in burning damage with a +1 damage modifier as well as smoke inhalation (see page 68).

### The Pool

To establish the proper air of menace, this simple cut-scene works nicely. A crystal clear drinking pool is discovered after hours of parched climbing and bushwhacking. Moments before an Investigator takes a deep drink, Mawiyá (if he's along) shouts "Chawé!" and waves the Investigators off - the water 's been poisoned by the Sháa. Without Mawiyá, a Sense Trouble test at Difficulty five or an Outdoorsman or Biology test at Difficulty four will give an Investigator pause. Anyone who drinks the neurotoxin-laced water immediately goes into convulsions and will die without the rapid delivery of First Aid (a Difficulty four test). Survivors suffer 3 health damage and are significantly weakened.

### The Betrayal

Heide will certainly try to kill the Investigators before they reach the ceremonial site. Whether he's acting as guide or merely trailing them. He has many options - certainly any of the other hazards listed here can be his doing, and he can complicate them with sniper fire from the thick brush, coordinated attacks by the Pinaleños in his employ, or a raging assault by Yaa Kuu lá. The specific approach is up to the GM, but killing Mawiyá should be high on his agenda.

### The Pinaleños

The Pinaleños, or Piney Apache, are Chiricahua roughnecks who live in the mountains. Known to the Tarahumara as "Ndé'ndai" ("People who make trouble"), they are independent but firmly allied with the Sháa. They may poison pools, start fires, trap people in caves, or otherwise live up to their Tarahumara nickname. They can be tracked (Using Outdoorsman) and dealt with in a civilized way - Bargain and Intimidation are the most useful ways to get their attention and respect, and for the right price they'll be glad to "escort" a group through the mountains all the way to El Pico Dentado, el Castillo Rojo, and certain death.

After various trials, the Investigators should find themselves at the base of 8360 foot el Pico Dentado, to the north of Cerro Grande. At night, from the northern slope, the star Fomalhaut is squarely bracketed by a prominent notch in its summit.

## THE RED CASTLE

A confrontation at the Red Castle is the adventure's culmination, and there are too many variables to outline a particular course of action. The Investigators will have their own agenda at this point, and the cult has other events in motion. Hopefully these will collide in a satisfying and exciting finale.

Before it comes into view, the Red Castle can be smelled - things are burning. It can also be felt - there is an oppressive feeling in the atmosphere, a change in air pressure, an increase in temperature, a dry stillness and complete silence that is deeply unnerving. Occult Studies may intimate - and Cthulhu Mythos may bring back terrible memories - of the sensation of an impending meeting of worlds.

El Castillo Rojo is a sprawling ruin. The remains of an ancient ritual complex, stolid, monolithic stepped pyramids bracket a ceremonial platform aligned with the notched peak that looms above. The pyramids are easily mistaken for scrub-covered hills, eroded by time, wind and rain. Archaeology reveals that this once grand complex must have been demolished in the 12th century. A one-point Cthulhu Mythos spend will hint at a deeper purpose to the terrible geometry of the complex - suggesting that the ancient builders could actually control Kuu lá.

Everywhere, there are fires - a truly enormous bonfire is centered on the platform, torches ring the edge, and other fires burn in the encampment adjacent to the platform. The ground has been scorched for an eighth of a mile in every direction - blackened vegetation lends a nightmarish pall to the setting. The Sháa will be alert to the potential arrival of the Investigators and may have guards hidden in the surrounding scorched area.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Many Fires

### The Platform

The platform is one hundred feet in circumference and has been laboriously scraped down to the bare stone. Burnt corpses have been ominously shoved of the edges - a dozen or more. At the edge of the platform facing the peak is an impressively incongruous pile of gold bars upon which rests a skull - Pancho Villa's skull. Sháa are clustered around the platform at small fires, lost in ecstatic trances. Occasionally one removes a white-hot metal rod from the fire and scores flesh - his own or that of a fellow worshiper. Carefully watching the platform causes a loss of two Stability.

### The Encampment

Clustered around the edge of the platform are canvas tents, native lean-to shelters and an enclosure containing a dozen burros. Lethargic cultists rest here - no one is cooking or repairing equipment, they are merely gathering strength for what comes next. They are a curious mix of Villista bandits and Amerindians - new recruits and lifetime cultists. No one says a word. Marcano Chimones is clearly visible among them, wearing his ragged officer's uniform, unshaven and weak-eyed.

### The Ritual

As the Investigators get a good look at the proceedings, the ritual is finishing. By some unknown cue, all the cultists will congregate around the bonfire on the platform. One will hurl himself onto the fire, screaming in transported agony as he burns to death (witnessing this causes a two point Stability loss). The self-sacrifice closes the unholy circuit the Sháa have built, and three Yaa Kuu lá appear in a dazzling flash of light. They hang in midair for a moment before darting down into the crowd, each immolating another cultist in a vicious orgy of violence. The Sháa prostrate themselves before these creatures, who bob in the air, alive with keen, cruel intelligence, visible only as atmosphere-warping heat sources.

### The Arrival

The terrible Yaa Kuu lá are followed only moments later by Kuu lá himself. Unlike his servants, Kuu lá is clearly visible, an enormous ball of coruscating energy like a miniature sun. He materializes with an almost anticlimactic suddenness, a dozen feet above the platform, his heat roasting his worshipers alive beneath him. Some break and run or crawl, and the Yaa Kuu lá hunt these down and destroy them.

The monstrous being dips down amid screams and Villa's gold melts, dripping off the edge of the platform, his skull blackening, then cracking, then exploding atop it. Chimones will be near it, talking to Kuu lá as his face blisters and his hair smolders. He's trying to make a deal - a futile effort lost on the otherworldly intelligence.

Kuu lá's attention will then be focused on anyone who walks the spirit world in a wichuri-facilitated state. He'll dispatch his minions and, if necessary, pursue them himself. Kuu lá's motivation is impossible to ordain, but he is a destroyer.





## Out of Space

### Fighting the Horror

Investigators using wichuri have the ability to sever the tethers that connect Kuu lá and his minions to their distant home. Doing so will take heroic action and intense cooperation, and it is likely to fail. But it is possible. Remember that these tethers are only visible to spirit walking wichuri-takers.

Cutting the cord of a terrestrial organism is harmful but not immediately deadly. The victim will weaken, and must make a five point regular Stability test. Failure means the victim becomes temporarily shaken (see p. 74 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* Core rulebook) for the remainder of the scene. Even on a success, the unfortunate victim will be generally weakened and prone to

undefined illness for the following year.

Cutting the cord of Yaa Kuu lá is no easy task - it is, in fact, impossible if an Investigator has the minion's undivided attention. Therefore they must be distracted; an exercise left to player creativity with a great potential for self-sacrifice. Once distracted, consider it a Difficulty 5 Athletics test to get into striking position, then a normal Scuffling attack is possible. Any attack success severs the cord and the Yaa Kuu lá immediately retreats to whence it came. The same trick attempted on Kuu lá himself is more problematic. His spiritual tether is twenty feet off the ground (requiring something more inspired than a simple Athletics test) and much thicker than those of his minions

or mere humans. Cutting it is more difficult - the tether itself has 10 Health and, being semi-insubstantial, has -1 armor as well. He's also considerably harder to distract...anyone under the influence of wichuri will stand out like a glowing sign to Kuu lá, who will seek to destroy them.

### The End

Kuu lá might be driven back to Fomalhaut. If not, he'll kill everyone he can and then fly away from the inferno, his Yaa Kuu lá orbiting him like whirling moons, at an impossible speed. He'll head north.



## GM Resources

### PEOPLE

#### Sháa Cultists

They fall into a predictable mold.

Athletics 8, Outdoorsman 10, Filch 2, Firearms 8, First Aid 2, Fleeing 8, Health 10, Sanity 5, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 2, Stability 0, Weapons 8

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Weapons:** As appropriate; ranch hands might have a rifle or shotgun, anyone might have a pistol, all will have knives. Torches are a popular hand weapon, of course.

Raise or lower these stats a few points as appropriate - Pedro Gaheh should be weaker and Klaas Heide stronger.

#### Sháa Sorcerer

Like Miguel Navarez, will be both dangerous and insane. Several of these will haunt the Red Castle.

Athletics 6, Outdoorsman 6, Filch 4, Firearms 4, Fleeing 10, Health 8, Sanity 0, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 5, Stability 0, Weapons 8

**Alertness Modifier:** +0

**Stealth Modifier:** +0

**Weapons:** Weapons: -1 (straight razor), magic (Kuu zááyé, see below)

### HANDY LIST OF MEXICAN NAMES

These can work for anybody; Tarahumara or Chiricahua will have a "Spanish" name and a real name.

### MAGIC AND MONSTERS

Kuu zááyé, "to make the small fire", is a deadly bit of magic taught to important Sháa. The caster mouths certain inhuman syllables and channels the radiant energy of his master, the dreaded Kuu lá. Greasy drops of living fire form on the sorcerer's scarred fingertips, which he can spray by moving his hands. This can only be done once per day, but it tends to be very surprising. Witnessing this calls for an appropriate loss of **Stability**.

The target must be at point blank range. Roll a **Scuffling** attack with +2 damage, or blind the target for the duration of the scene without doing any damage, or it can be used to set flammable material on fire.

For Investigators who know or learn this spell, the **Stability** test difficulty is 4 (3 for those inducted into the cult), Costs 3 **Stability** and 1 **Health**. Casting time is more or less instantaneous. Kuu zááyé is the only Sháa spell within reach of Investigators for the purposes of this adventure. Yaa Kuu lá, "Many Fires' Lice"

These otherworldly monsters are like invisible pinpoints, viewable only by the air they distort and displace with their heat and the singular, unearthly scent and taste they bring to the atmosphere. They can start fires as easily as a child painting on a wall. They consume oxygen and can suck the air out of a closed room, asphyxiating the occupants. When summoned they only remain for a few rounds - one per point of **Health** damage the caster suffers, up to six. Assign the roll a +6 in the presence of a major conflagration. In the presence of Kuu lá they will stay indefinitely.

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Health 10, Scuffling 15

**HitThreshold:** 6 (effectively invisible)

**Weapon:** Burn, +1, one in six chance of setting the target on fire (see p.68 of *Trail of Cthulhu*)

**Stealth modifier:** +0

**Armor:** partially insubstantial, projectile weapons are useless, hand weapons do half damage. More creative attacks using water, sand and the like should be treated like heavy firearms when used against Yaa Kuu lá.

**Stability loss:** +1

#### Male Names

Vincente Enrique

Juan Campos

José Torres

Antonio

Suero

Fernando

#### Female Names

Graciela

María del Rosario

Velentina

Marora

Lucy

Chela Antónia

#### Surnames

López

Míguez de Pestano

Núñez

Pérez

Gamiño Díaz

Antúnez

## Out of Space

### Kuu lá, Dread God of Fomalhaut

Seeing Kuu lá is a four point **Stability** loss. Being attacked by a malign, intelligent ball of fire from the vicinity of Fomalhaut is a seven point **Stability** loss.

Additional **Stability** Pool Point Loss: +3

Additional **Sanity** Pool Point Loss: +1

Scorch: Being at close range to Kuu La hurts; consider it an automatic attack at +0. Being at point blank is +2.

Heat blast: Kuu lá can craft a wall of boiling wind, knocking people of their feet and into nearby objects. Damage modifiers depend on distance from Kuu lá at the time of the attack: point blank or close is +4, near is +2 and long is +0. He can target one person per round.

Immolate: An invisible ray of heat bridges the distance from Kuu lá to its victim and sets them on fire. Roll normal damage with a +0 damage modifier each round automatically until the fire is put out, probably by a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** roll. Kuu lá can immolate one person every other round.

## DRUGS

**Wichuri** is the name for this plant stems from the Tarahumara word *wichuwa-ka*, which means “insane”. Wichuri is a nondescript round cactus with thick spines and a pulpy, latex-rich interior with radiating vascular tissue. It is a potent hallucinogen, prepared by roasting, removing the spines, and splitting it in half. The white pulp is then squeezed into the user’s ear. When absorbed, it allows a properly prepared shaman to fall into a deep sleep. He then has the clear vision to locate witches and sorcerers and destroy them. Improper preparation invariably leads to madness.

**Pharmacy** or **Biology** will identify the unappealing little round cacti with thick spines that the Bruja is roasting are *Mammillaria craigii*. **Chemistry**, given time, could isolate its powerful soporific compounds, volatile and unique to the fertile eastern slope of the Sierra Madre.

With an additional one point **Pharmacy** spend, the investigator has read a colleague’s preliminary notes for an article in *Cactus and Succulent Journal* that describe it. Were it flowering, the purple petals would clinch the identification. It is, apparently, an extremely potent soporific that delivers wonderful opium-like dreams, completely safe and non-toxic.

**Anthropology** or **Oral History** with any Tarahumara will provide ample evidence that they are terrified of wichuri. They firmly believe that “mistreating” the plant by collecting specimens or improperly preparing it will cause great misfortune. They gladly trade with the Chiricahua, who have no such reservations.

**Stability** test difficulty: 2 to prepare, 4 to use. Failing a **Stability** test while using wichuri gains the hapless Investigator a point of **Cthulhu Mythos** knowledge as the implacable cosmos yawns wide.

**Cost:** 2 **Stability**

**Time:** An hour to prepare, 1 round to apply, 1 round to enter the dream state. 10 round duration of drug effect.

An Investigator under the influence of wichuri collapses and leaves his sleeping body in spirit form. The investigator can see “lines of force” connecting living things to the Earth and one another; these energy projections appear as ephemeral strands of solid light. Yaa Kuu lá and Kuu lá possess these lines of force, but theirs do not terminate terrestrially - they writhe among themselves and disappear into nth-dimensional space, presumably tethering them to some

alien homeworld (viewing this costs three **Stability**). These lines of force can be severed, and doing violence to the tethers offers the only chance of confronting Kuu lá.

**Bakana** is another curious plant in the Tarahumara pharmacopoeia. Once a specimen is found living in the Sierra Madre, **Pharmacy** or **Biology** will identify the grass-like herb as *Cyperaceae scirpus* and **Chemistry** can isolate its powerful alkaloid hallucinogen.

The Tarahumara refuse to cultivate or gather the plant for fear of going insane, claiming that while it is growing, the plant’s “song” will drive them mad. Those who cut or harm the plant become sick or cursed, but it is a powerful medicine and they are glad to barter for it. They use it medically, both to allow a shaman to diagnose and treat illnesses in the spirit world and directly, to cure insanity.

Eating bakana tubers induces a sleepwalking state. While unconscious but active, users can make lengthy spirit journeys, speak with the dead, and perceive the invisible world, along with the typical effects of hallucinogens. A minder is essential, because bakana users are drawn to fire and will throw themselves into it at any opportunity.

**Stability** test difficulty: 3 to use

**Cost:** 2 **Stability**

**Time:** 1 round to ingest, several rounds for the drug to reach the central nervous system. Effects last for at least an hour, possibly much longer.

An Investigator under the influence of bakana has **Stability** loss from exposure to Yaa Kuu lá entirely negated and Kuu lá himself halved. These beings can be seem with almost clinical clarity, but the drug buffer’s the user’s mind somehow. The down-side to bakana use is that it makes fire dangerously attractive and causes actual hallucinations.



## Many Fires

Using General skills while in the bakana dream state is considerably more difficult - add one to all Difficulty. Using Investigative skills is impossible. The bakana plant must be used fresh and is much too fragile to be useful outside the Sierra Madre.

### Bakana "Fire Obsession"

Under the influence of bakana, open flames become almost irresistible. In the presence of fire, the Investigator must make a Difficulty 4 Stability test to avoid moving toward - or into - it. A dedicated minder, who can't really do anything but watch and restrain the bakana imbiber, makes the Stability test unnecessary. Should they be distracted, impaired, or choose to take some other action, the Stability tests begin again.

### Bakana Hallucinations

Hallucinations are at the GM's discretion - if only one Investigator uses bakana, the following rule is fun. If the entire group does, it becomes unworkable, and you're better off using narrative flourishes and applying additional difficulty to represent the sensory effects of the drug.

When an Investigator consumes bakana, send him out of the room for a moment. Quietly agree on some aspect of the upcoming scene that will be a product of the hallucinations. Distinctive fire-related phenomena would be good - walls of fire, flowing pools of molten metal, spitting cauldrons, fireballs, whatever seems appropriate and interesting. Once everybody knows what form the hallucination takes, invite the player back into the room and proceed. The GM should narrate the hallucination as fact, and the other players should respond to it, even rolling dice and "taking damage" as appropriate.

The hallucinating Investigator can attempt to disbelieve, of course. This requires a **Stability** test at Difficulty 5. Success effectively suppresses the hallucination, hopefully at the cost of additional **Stability** spent.

## NPCs

### Pedro Gaheh

Pedro Gaheh is a cult operative and minor sorcerer in San Antonio. To portray Pedro Gaheh or other Native cultists:

- Lean forward
- Make unreasonable eye contact
- Behave like a spittle-spewing, raving lunatic

### Mexican Sháa Cultists

Mexican Sháa cultists, like the Bustillos lookouts Cleto and Jomi, can be portrayed in the following ways:

- Rub your arms
- Maintain a flat affect
- Speak slowly and matter-of-factly

### Jesús Herrera

Jesús Herrera is the Mayor of San Antonio and proprietor of the Colibrí Hotel. To portray Jesús Herrera:

- Be cheerful and friendly
- Wave your arms a lot
- Employ gallows humor

### Isaac Dyck

Isaac Dyck is an elder at the Manitoba Mennonite colony outside San Antonio and designated spokesperson. To portray Isaac Dyck:

- Be still
- Lay your hands flat on the table
- Speak thoughtfully, carefully, and with a German accent

### Altkolonier Mennonites

Altkolonier Mennonites may be encountered in San Antonio, along the highway, or in Schönwiese. Many speak only German. To portray Altkolonier Mennonites:

- Avoid eye contact
- Nervously adjust your collar
- Glance around as if looking for someone to rescue you from the conversation

### Heriberto Uriarte

Heriberto Uriarte is the Headmaster of El Politécnico San Antonio. To portray Heriberto Uriarte:

- Wipe the sweat from your brow and sigh a lot
- Scratch your head absent-mindedly
- Occasionally burst out in a shout of enthusiasm

### Gabriela Pinzón

Gabriela Pinzón is the Chief of burn clinic at the Hospital de San Juan Bautista in San Antonio.

- Be calm, collected, and officious
- Purse your lips
- Glance to the side as if considering other duties

### Makúsuwa

Also known as "Carlos", Makúsuwa is a displaced Tarahumara living in San Antonio.

- Nod compulsively
- Occasionally wince in pain and physically reference your burns
- Speak in a low, soft voice

### Tarahumara slaves

The Sháa have forced displaced Tarahumara to work fields at the Bustillos rancho. To portray these unfortunates:

- Don't speak unless spoken to, and then only in a mumbled whisper
- Stare at the ground
- If something is important, hold your hands out in supplication and make direct eye contact. Do this rarely.

### Miguel Navarez

Miguel Navarez is Chimones' second in command and a sorcerer. To portray Miguel Navarez:

- Radiate confidence and power
- Smile expansively

## Out of Space

- Play with your scarred fingers  
- sleight of hand, little touch exercises, drumming on the tabletop

### Mariano Jiminez and Silvano Vargas

Mariano Jiminez are bosses and slave overseers at the Bustillos rancho. To portray Mariano Jiminez:

- Observe laconically, knowing what is coming
- Absently massage your hands, as if preparing them for some hard work
- Speak in a loud, level tone that radiates authority

### Eduardo Domínguez

Eduardo Domínguez is the merchant prince of Guerrero. To portray Eduardo Domínguez:

- Smooth your impressive mustache
- Stand, or sit upright with shoulders back
- Pound the table when making a point

### Klaas Heide

Klaas Heide is a surveyor, guide and cultist who leads the Schönwiese colony adjacent to Guerrero. To portray Klaas Heide:

- Assume a slightly tired, slump-shouldered posture until you assume a ramrod straight, madness-fueled posture
- Be kind and accommodating until you are cruel and imperious
- Speak with a slight German accent

### Mawiyá

Mawiyá is a Tarahumara shaman, also known as “Roberto” among the Mexicans and “Der Puma” among the Altkolonier of Schönwiese, is a displaced Tarahumara living in Guerrero/Schönwiese. To portray Mawiyá:

- Be open and gentle in your words and actions
- Point at and, if appropriate, touch others
- Speak in low tones

### Alma Rodriguez

Alma Rodriguez, or Izdzáníí Lichíí, is a Chiricahua priestess. To portray Alma Rodriguez:

- Shake slightly
- Speak in a loud, uneven voice
- Put both palms on your face and rock back and forth

### The Pinaleños

The Pinaleños are Chiricahua roughnecks and thugs. To portray the Pinaleños:

- Cultivate utter disdain for outsiders
- Snap your fingers and laugh roughly
- Let your eyes dart around as if looking for an opportunity



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:



### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Anacelto Bracada

Drive: Duty

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) I trust in my family to see me through my trials. 2) Jesus will protect me from evil

### Academic Abilities

Geology - 1  
History - 1  
Languages - 2  
- English  
- Spanish  
- Apache  
Theology - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 1  
Bureaucracy - 1  
Cop Talk - 1  
Credit Rating - 1  
Flattery - 2  
Intimidation - 3

### General Abilities

Athletics - 10  
Driving - 4  
Explosives - 2  
Firearms - 6  
First Aid - 6  
Health - 8  
Mechanical Repair - 4  
Preparedness - 4  
Sanity - 7  
Stability - 8  
Scuffling - 4  
Sense Trouble - 4  
Shadowing - 2  
Stealth - 2  
Weapons - 6

### Technical Abilities

Astronomy - 1  
Evidence Collection - 2  
Outdoorsman - 4

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>5</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>6</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>7</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>8</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>9</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>10</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You were a Lieutenant in the Mexican army in 1916, a Carranza loyalist fighting the outlaw Pancho Villa in the Sierra Madre and working as a scout, guide, and interpreter for the American army. You served as aide-de-camp to Pershing and Patton and learned to admire both men. You've seen things no man should see.

**SECRET:** In the last days of the war against Villa Pershing became a Brujo. He had gained power somehow and it made him terrible and strange. There are stories, told from Sinaloa to Sonora, about bad Indians in the mountains, ancestors of the Chiricahuas, sorcerers. Pershing found these people and parlayed with them. God only knows the price that he paid.

- Speaks English, Spanish, and Apache
- Knows northern Mexico
- Goal: Kill or capture Major Marcano Chimones. Uncover Pershing's curious and terrible secret. Get rich off Villista gold.
- Carries the sword Patton took from Julio Cardenas, Villa's personal bodyguard
- Has burn scars from an automobile accident

### Sources of Stability:

- Herve Bracada, your young and beautiful son
- Sally Bracada, your young and beautiful wife



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

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0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
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12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: John Johnson

Drive: Curiosity

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) True loyalty will always be repaid in kind. 2) The Voice of God does not speak falsely to the faithful

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 2  
- English  
- Spanish  
Library Use - 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2  
Bureaucracy - 1  
Bargain - 2  
Credit Rating - 2  
Flattery - 2  
Interrogation - 1  
Reassurance - 4

### Technical Abilities

Craft (Carpentry) - 3  
Evidence Collection - 2  
Outdoorsman - 1  
Forensics - 1

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8  
Driving - 2  
Conceal - 4  
Electrical Repair - 2  
Firearms - 3  
First Aid - 3  
Fleeing - 4  
Health - 8  
Mechanical Repair - 1  
Preparedness - 2  
Sanity - 7  
Stability - 8  
Scuffling - 6  
Sense Trouble - 8  
Weapons - 6

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You were the African-American manservant of Mrs. Frances Warren Pershing for many years.

It was you who saved the life of little Warren Pershing when the family home in San Francisco's Presidio burned down in 1915. It was you who failed to rescue Mrs. Pershing and her three daughters. Now, you have a chance to clear your name - and keep Warren Pershing safe. Whatever he knows, wherever he goes - you owe it to those poor, dead women to see it through.

**SECRET:** The deaths of the Pershing women broke you, ruined you. You were cast out, forgotten, another useless colored man on the streets of San Francisco. But what you saw that night - fire but not fire, living, intelligent, malevolent fire serving an impossible, invincible master - showed you a way forward. Your soul had been taken apart so that it could be re-assembled, with a new purpose and a new master. Nothing happened without a plan. You opened yourself to the fire, and the fire told you to go back to Pershing, to bide your time. And this you did, always waiting, hoping that one day you'd be taken to the fire and its people yourself. That day has come, and you love the boy you saved like your own. But now the boy aches for vengeance, and that is the one thing you cannot allow. Your twin impulses - to join the cult and to keep Warren safe - are deeply at odds.

- Speaks English and weak Spanish
- Goal: Keep Warren safe (this trumps everything). Get rich off Villista gold. Secretly, to join the fire cult.

### Sources of Stability:

- Manuel Reyes, old friend from your Presidio days
- Dr. Archibald Hurst, pastor, Breslow Street African Methodist Episcopal Church

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:



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12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
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8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Warren Pershing

Drive: In The Blood

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) My father is a great man with unimpeachable motives 2) I can rely on my education, upbringing, and strength of character to see me through any challenge

### Academic Abilities

Anthropology - 1

Archaeology - 1

Biology - 1

History - 1

Languages - 1

- English

- Spanish

- French

Library Use - 3

Occult Studies - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Credit Rating - 4

Flattery - 2

Oral History - 2

Reassurance - 2

Streetwise - 2

### Technical Abilities

Chemistry - 1

### General Abilities

Athletics - 10

Conceal - 2

Disguise - 4

Filch - 2

Firearms - 4

First Aid - 4

Fleeing - 4

Health - 10

Mechanical Repair - 3

Sanity - 8

Stability - 9

Scuffling - 7

Sense Trouble - 4

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>5</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>6</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>7</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>8</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>9</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>10</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You are the only son of John J. Pershing You'll attend Yale in the fall, but for now you must avenge the deaths of your mother and sisters, and prove yourself worthy of the Pershing name.

**SECRET:** You know your father's secret and are determined to use it. From some old Apache in the Sierra Madre del Norte he learned a marvelous secret, some kernel of ancient knowledge lost to mankind. He wrote down the technique and you found it easy to duplicate. It is a sort of magic involving fire, calling fire to you and from you, and it is incredibly powerful. Its secret name is Kuu zááyé, "to make the small fire", in a language you don't know. In your heart you know this magic killed your mother and sisters. You've promised to use it only for good, and to seek out and punish those who did otherwise so cruelly. You'll break them. You'll burn them.

- Speaks English and weak French and Spanish
- Knows Kuu zááyé magic
- Goal: On the surface, to follow through on your father's request. In reality, to get revenge on cult that killed your family.

### Sources of Stability:

- John J. Pershing, General of the Armies and your father
- Dr. Alphonse Baldwin, headmaster of your prep school
- Lily Baldwin, your sweetheart

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:



### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

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12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
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8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Julius Penn

Drive: Arrogance

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) First do no harm 2) Good always prevails - this is an immutable truth 3) Nature rights mankind's wrongs.

### Academic Abilities

Biology - 6

Languages - 4

- English

- Spanish

- Apache

Medicine - 10

Theology - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 4

Credit Rating - 4

Reassurance - 3

### General Abilities

Athletics - 4

Driving - 2

Filch - 2

Firearms - 4

First Aid - 10

Fleeing - 6

Health - 6

Psychoanalysis - 4

Riding - 4

Sanity - 10

Stability - 10

Scuffling - 2

Sense Trouble - 8

Shadowing - 2

Stealth 2

Weapons - 1

### Technical Abilities

Pharmacy - 4

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You rode with Pershing in Troop L, Sixth US Cavalry, out of Fort Bayard, New Mexico Territory, in the bad old eighties. Together as Lieutenants, you chased Apaches to hell and beyond. You saw some strange things in the Sierra Madre del Norte and did Pershing's dirty killing work and kept your mouth shut all these years - in fact, the shame of it drove you into medicine, that you might do some good to mankind. Now you are an old doctor with a few things to make right before you die.

**SECRET:** There is a cult. A world-spanning cult, with one diseased pocket high in the Sierra Madre del Norte. You were with Pershing when he stumbled onto their red brick fortress somewhere west of Guerro. You saw him changed when he emerged from that terrible place, eyes alive with possibility and excitement. "They worship fire," he told you, and you knew by the sound of his voice that he now did, too. He sent you back to kill them all and Lord knows you tried. You have never spoken of this to anyone, but you've researched this cult ever since. Your obsession ended your Army career and turned Pershing against you.

- Goal: On the surface, to keep Warren Pershing safe and get rich off Villista gold. But in reality, to root out the cultist in your midst, then locate and destroy the fire cult the traitor serves.
- Speaks English, Spanish, and weak Apache
- Knows history and has researched the region and cult

### Sources of Stability:

- Julius Penn Jr, your successful son
- Karl Lumholtz, anthropologist and friend
- Sarah Alvarez, your mistress



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:



### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

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Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

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12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Tsutomu Dyo

Drive: Duty

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) True obedience to a higher power will deliver you 2) There is nobility in sacrifice, privation, and want

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 1

- English

- Spanish

- Japanese

Occult Studies - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 1

Bargain - 4

Flattery - 1

Reassurance - 1

Streetwise - 6

### General Abilities

Athletics - 10

Conceal - 5

Disguise - 2

Firearms - 2

Fleeing - 6

Health - 10

Sanity - 6

Stability - 8

Scuffling - 8

Sense Trouble - 8

Shadowing - 6

Stealth - 8

Weapons - 8

### Technical Abilities

Craft (jewelry) - 2

Outdoorsman - 4

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<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, +4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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<sup>7</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

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<sup>9</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>10</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

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You were an itinerant peddler in Mexico, part of the tiny Japanese minority, in 1916. With an entree into both Carranza and Villa's camps, you risked your life as an intelligence agent of the American military during the Mexican Punitive Expedition. As a reward for your work, and that of others, you and 526 fellow Japanese were allowed to emigrate to the United States. John Pershing treated you fairly and you love him for it.

**SECRET:** You were brought into the mystery by your wife, one of the Sháa herself. She taught you the rituals and hinted at the power of an ancient connection to something larger and older than mankind. After you unintentionally helped Pershing damage the cult and moved to Texas, she died. In a fire. You didn't remarry, and you never strayed again. Now circumstances have aligned, and you can help prevent any further trouble for your bright master and the ones who feverishly serve Him. You have the scars of ritual obedience - knotted keloid burns scars across both thighs - that you must keep hidden. You know the cult's terrible calling card, a spell whose secret name is Kuu zááyé, "to make the small fire", the very magic that destroyed Pershing's wife and daughters in 1916. You are deeply conflicted - you owe Pershing your life, but the cult will destroy you if you cross it.

- Speaks English, Spanish and Japanese
- Knows northern Mexico
- Goal: On the surface, to kill or capture Major Marciano Chimones. In reality, to discretely prevent damage to the cult - but not at the cost of your loyalty to Pershing.

### Sources of Stability:

- John J. Pershing, General of the Armies
- Takayuki Hamaya, fellow "Pershing Japanese" and friend

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:



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Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

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### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Benjamin Delahauf Foulois

Drive: Thirst for Knowledge

Occupation:<sup>2</sup>

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) The practical always trumps the mystical

2) Deep down, people have goodness in them.

### Academic Abilities

Anthropology - 2

Architecture - 2

History - 2

Languages - 1

- English

- Spanish

- French

Medicine - 2

Occult Studies - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Credit Rating - 3

Oral History - 1

Reassurance - 1

### Technical Abilities

Astronomy - 4

Outdoorsman - 4

### General Abilities

Athletics - 6

Driving - 4

Electrical Repair - 10

Firearms - 4

First Aid - 2

Fleeing - 8

Health - 8

Mechanical Repair - 6

Piloting - 10

Preparedness - 2

Sanity - 8

Stability - 8

Scuffling - 8

Sense Trouble - 6

Weapons - 4

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<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

It's Foo-Loy, you don't care how the damned French pronounce it. Current assistant chief of the US Army air corps, you flew for Pershing during the Mexican Punitive Expedition as leader of the First Aero Squadron (Provisional). Now you are on leave to honor a promise you made 13 years ago high in the Sierras - a promise to end the Villista reign of terror, and perhaps another even darker.

**SECRET:** The devil is real. You saw him first hand, from above. Through the clouds, below you, a pulsing ball of fire the size of a church, alive with sinister intelligence. John Pershing later told you he saw you transit the thing, like Venus in front of the sun. He said it was a god, and you were afraid for him. That was January, 1917, over the Sierra Madre del Norte, and that night has haunted you ever since.

- Speaks English, French, and weak Spanish
- Knows northern Mexico
- Has access to an 8-seat Fokker F-VII aircraft
- Goal: Kill or capture Major Marcano Chimones. Understand Pershing's past, and his true goals for the expedition.

### Sources of Stability:

- Lieutenant Colonel Frank P. Lahm, pilot and friend
- Elizabeth Shepherd Grant-Foulois, your patient and long-suffering wife

## Documents and Handouts

Included in this section are all documents, maps, and handouts for you and your players to use during this scenario.

The order is as follows:

1. Map of Northern Mexico, the Valle de Bustillos.
2. A larger Map of Mexico.
3. Pedro de Castañeda, Narrative of the Expedition of Francisco Coronado, Seville, 1596.
4. Cabeza de Vaca, The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca, 1542.
5. Bartolomé de las Casas, A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies, 1542.
6. Pershing's Journal, 1 January 1917/
7. Snippets from Unknown Mexico, A Record of Five Years Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madre , Carl Lumholtz 1902.
8. Newspaper clipping detailing the fire in the Pershing household and a sketch map of the route of the 10th Cavalry Troops Punitive Expedition.
- 9 & 10. Letters from John J. Pershing.

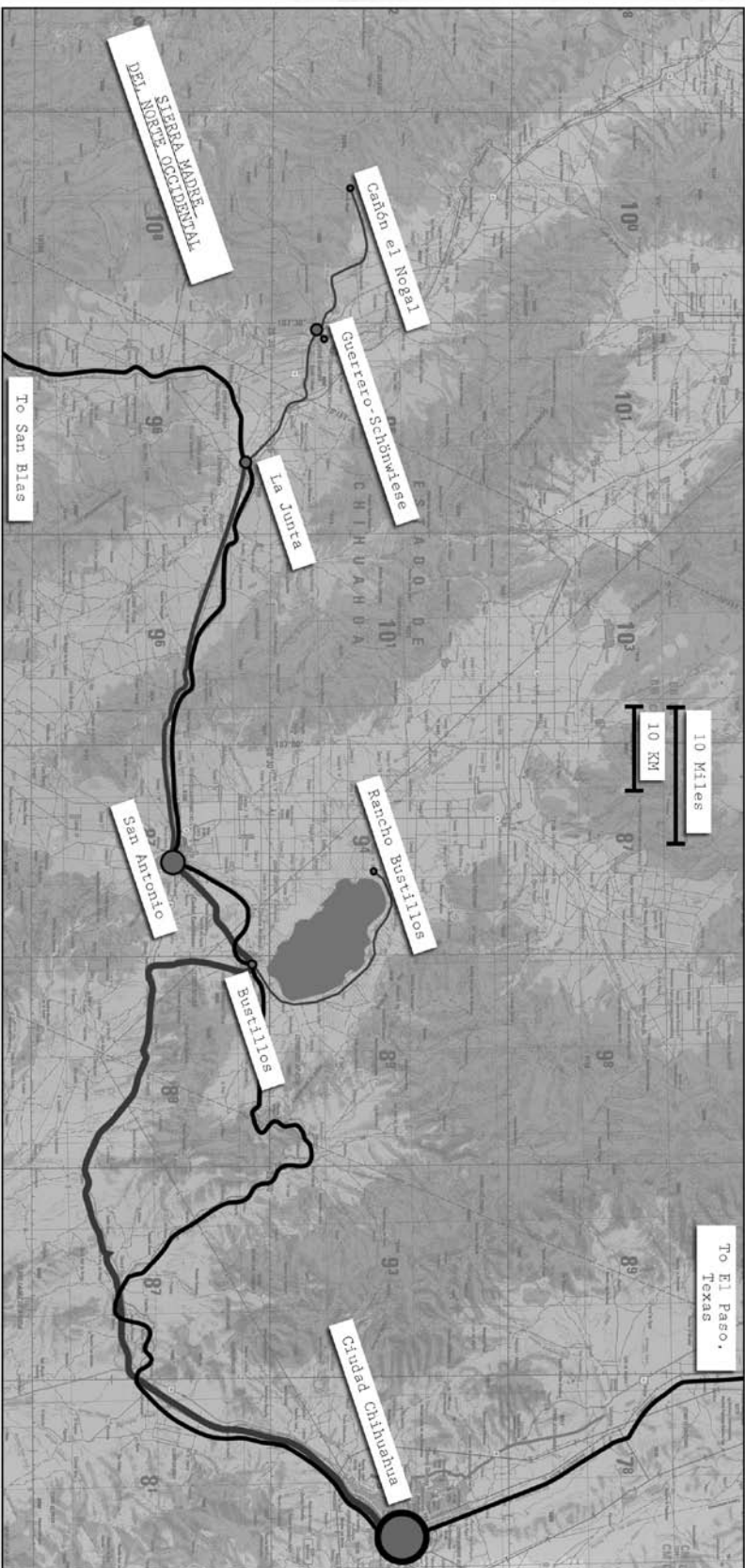
These handouts will also be available to download as PDFs from the Pelgrane Press website.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

### VALLE DE BUSTILLOS, CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO



Ciudad Chihuahua is the state capitol and regional center of commerce, government, and transportation.

San Antonio is the hub of the valle de Bustillos, a large and prosperous market town. It is surrounded by German-speaking Mennonite settlements.

Bustillos is ghost town, abandoned during the revolution.

Rancho Bustillos was Pancho Villa's retirement home, accessible only by road.

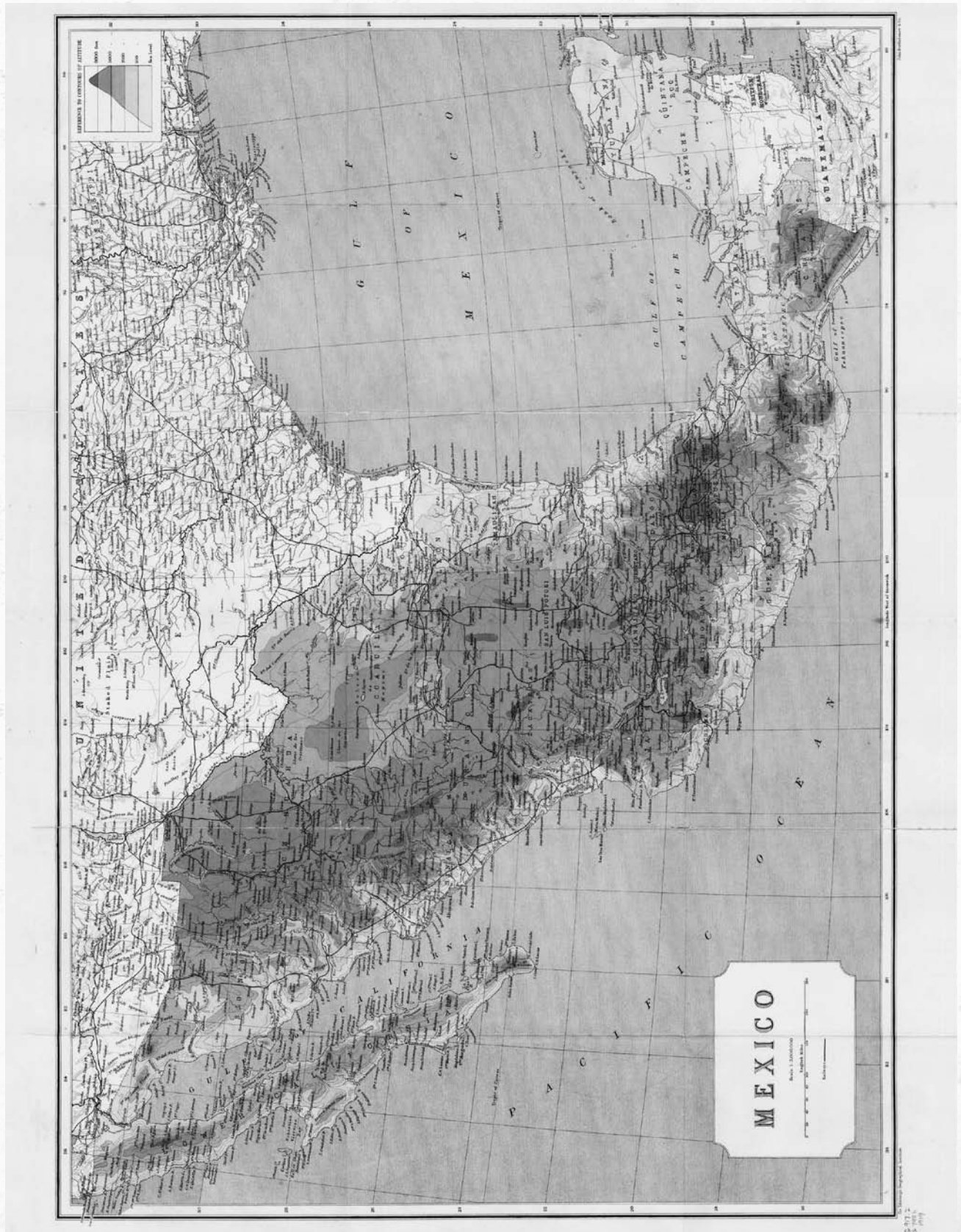
La Junta is a junction town on the Chihuahua-Pacific railroad. It is the end of the line for passengers heading into the Sierra Madre.

Guerrero and Schönwiese are sister communities in the foothills of the Sierra Madre. They are accessible only by road.

Cañon el Nogal is an abandoned rancho with noteworthy archaeological ruins, accessible from Guerrero by rough trail.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Many Fires



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

It was thus that the General met the Indians of the interior, who were greatly feared and unknown in New Spain. He dispatched his slave, Esteban, to meet with them and parley with them while he proceeded to Chichilticalli with the army. This Estaban did, taking a large retinue with him. But as the people in this country were more intelligent than those who followed Esteban, they lodged him in a little hut they had outside their village, and the older men and the governors heard his story and took steps to find out the reason he had come to that country. For three days they made inquiries about him and held a council. The account which the negro gave them of two white men who were following him, sent by a great lord, who knew about the things in the sky, and how these were coming to instruct them in divine matters, made them think that he must be a spy or a guide from some nations who wished to come and conquer them, because it seemed to them unreasonable to say that the people were white in the country from which he came and that he was sent by them, he being black. Besides these other reasons, they thought it was hard of him to ask them for turquoise and women, and so they decided to burn him alive. They did this, but they did not kill any of those who went with him, although they kept some young fellows and let the others, about 60 persons, return freely to their own country. As these, who were badly scared, were returning in flight, they came to Chichilticalli, and told the friars the sad news, which frightened them so much that they would not even trust these folks who had been with the negro, but opened the packs they were carrying and gave away everything they had except the holy vestments for saying mass. They returned from there by double marches, prepared for anything, without seeing any more of the country except what the Indians told them. When the General arrived in Chichilticalli he was greatly vexed by this news. After the General had crossed the inhabited region and came to where the wilderness begins, and saw nothing favorable, he could not help feeling somewhat downhearted, for, although the reports were very fine about what there was ahead, there was nobody who had seen it except the Indians who went with the negro, and these had already been caught in some lies. Besides all this, he was much affected by seeing that the fame of the place was summed up in one tumble-down house without any roof, although it appeared to have been a strong place at some former time when it was inhabited, and it was very plain that it had been built by a civilized and warlike race of strangers who had come from a distance. This building was made of red earth and is called the Castillo Rojo, and it stands beneath a peak the General named miesca, because it was notched at its summit. From here they went on through the wilderness. The first Indians from that country were seen here – two of them, who ran away to give the news. During the night following the next day, about two leagues from the Castillo Rojo, some of his natives were caught in a fire set by the Indians and burnt up. The fire was so great that, although the men were ready for anything, some were so excited that they put their saddles on hind-side before; but these were the new fellows. When the veterans had mounted and ridden round the camp, the Indians fled. None of them could be caught because they knew the country. The army descended for six leagues until it was out of the mountains.

✱ *Pedro de Castaneda, Narrative of the Expedition of Francisco Coronado, Seville, 1596*



The Indians saw that we were determined to go through the mountains to the west of where they wished to lead us, and they at first told us that where we wished to go there were no people, nor prickly pears, nor any other thing to eat. They again beseeched us not to go through the mountains. We refused their counsel, and they then told us the mountains were inhabited by fierce warriors and magicians unlike any we had unto then seen. These they called the people of the sun or of fire, and they were greatly distressed for they believed that we also were children of the sun, and that we had the power to cure the sick and to kill them and other lies even greater than that. Since they saw our determination, they bade us farewell, although with great sorrow, and they returned downriver to their homes. We traveled into the mountains for three days and saw no one, it was a barren land as the Indians had first foretold.

On the fourth day we came upon a red stone ruin. This was perhaps ten leagues inland through very rugged sierras. The Indians of this region were very primitive and were friendly and performed many dances and celebrations as they are accustomed to doing. The women brought us prickly pears and spiders and worms and whatever they could find, because, although the land was barren and many were dying of hunger, they would eat nothing without our giving it to them. Many of the Indians were disfigured, and very wicked, and the coastal people's tales of their cruelty and magic were true. To our shame we did not speak to them of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for we were only four, and the Indians who had accompanied us thusfar refused to treat with these in any way, and hid in the sierra or were lost to us. We were very much afraid and left the ruin with the aim of crossing the mountains to reach Chichilticalli and New Spain.

*Cabeza de Vaca, The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca, 1542*

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

Once saw Four or Five of the most *Powerful Lords* of the North laid on these Gridirons, and thereon roasted, and not far off, Two or Three more over-spread with the same Commodity, Man's Flesh; but the shril Clamours which were heard there being offensive to the Captain, by hindring his Repose, he commanded them to be strangled with a Halter. The Executioner (whose Name and Parents at Sevil are not unknown to me) prohibited the doing of it; but stopt Gags into their Mouths to prevent the hearing of the noise (he himself making the Fire) till that they dyed, when they had been roasted as long as he thought convenient. I was an Eye-Witness of these and and innumerable Number of other Cruelties: And because all Men, who could lay hold of the opportunity, sought out lurking holes in the Mountains, to avoid as dangerous Rocks so Brutish and Barbarous a People, Strangers to all Goodness, and the Extirpaters and Adversaries of Men, they bred up such fierce hunting Dogs as would devour an Indian like a Hog, at first sight in less than a moment: Now such kind of Slaughters and Cruelties as these were committed by the Curs, and if at any time it hapned, (which was rarely) that the Indians irritated upon a just account destroy'd or took away the Life of any Spaniard, they promulgated and proclaim'd this Law among them, that One Hundred Indians should dye for every individual Spaniard that should be slain.

Yet the *King* of the whole Countrey escaped, and betook himself with a Train of thirty or forty of his Sorcerers, to a Temple (called in their Tongue *Quu*) which he made use of as a Castle or Place of Defence, and there defended himself, but the Spaniards who suffer none to escape out of their clutches, especially Souldiers, setting fire to the Temple, burnt all those that were there inclosed, who brake out into these dying words and exclamations. O profligate Men, what injury have we done you to occasion our death! Come, come into *Quu*, where the Lord of our Temple, *Quu Lab* will revenge our cause upon your persons. And such it was that the fire spread and blockd the Spaniard's escape; and they too perished.

*Bartolomé de las Casas, A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies, 1542*

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Many Fires

1 January 1917, Jo. J. Pershing, Private

A New Year. We came upon a ceremony in the mountains among the Chiricahua. It was all very familiar but I had the distinct impression that I was not in a position of strength this time. The last time I'd heard the drums, the funereal chanting, I may well have killed some of these men's fathers.

The Chiricahua orchestra thumped and drummed furiously and the leader began to intone in a gradually increasing loudness of voice and with much vehemence a medicine song of which I could distinguish enough to satisfy me that part of it was words which at times seemed to rudely rhyme and the rest of it the gibberish of medicine incantation which I had heard so often while on the Sierra Madre del Norte campaign in 1883.

The chorus seconded this song with all their powers and whenever the refrain was chanted sang their parts with violent gesticulations. Three dancers in full disguise jumped into the centre of the great circle running around the fire shrieking and muttering encouraged by the shouts and singing of the onlookers and by the drumming and incantation of the chorus which now swelled forth at full lung power. Each of these dancers was beautifully decorated they were naked to the waist wore kilts of fringed buckskin bound on with sashes and moccasins reaching to the knees. Their identity was concealed by head dresses part of which was a mask of buckskin which enveloped the head as well as the face and was secured around the neck by a draw string to prevent its slipping out of place. Above this extended to a height of two feet a framework of slats of the amole stalk each differing slightly from that of the others but giving to the wearer an imposing although somewhat grotesque appearance. Each medicine man's back arms and shoulders were painted with emblems of fire, snake or other powers appealed to by the Apaches. I succeeded in obtaining drawings of all these and also secured one of these head dresses of the Cha-ja-la as they are called but a more detailed description does not seem to be called for just now.

CONT



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

Each of the dancers was provided with two long wands or sticks one in each hand with which they would point in every direction principally towards the cardinal points. When they danced they jumped pranced pirouetted and at last circled rapidly revolving much as the dervishes are described as doing. This must have been hard work because their bodies were soon moist with perspiration which made them look as if they had been coated with oil.

Klashidn, the young man who had led me down, said that the orchestra was now singing to the fires of heaven and I then saw that a fourth medicine man who acted with the air of one in authority had taken his station within. When the dancers had become thoroughly exhausted they would dart out of the ring and disappear in the gloom to consult with the spirits three several times they appeared and disappeared at each return dancing running and whirling about with increased energy.

Having attained the degree of mental or spiritual exaltation necessary for satisfactory communion with the denizens of the other world they remained absent for at least half an hour the orchestra rendering a monotonous refrain mournful as a funeral dirge. At last a thrill of expectancy ran through the throng and I saw that they were looking anxiously for the incoming of the medicine men. When they arrived all the orchestra stood up their leader slightly in advance holding a bunch of burning cedar in his left hand. The medicine men advanced in single file the leader bending low his head and placing both his arms about the neck of the chief in such a manner that his wands crossed he murmured some words in his ear which seemed to be of pleasing import. Each of the others did the same thing to the chief who took his stand first on the east then on the south then on the west and lastly on the north of the little grove through which the three pranced muttering a jumble of sounds which I cannot reproduce but which sounded for all the world like the chant of the Zunis at their Feast of Fire. This terminated the great medicine ceremony of the night and the glad shouts of the Apaches testified that the incantations of their spiritual advisers or their necromancy whichever it was promised a successful campaign.

## Many Fires

From *Unknown Mexico, A Record of Five Years Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madre*, Carl Lumholtz, 1902

On top of a knoll in the mountains, at an elevation of 4,800 feet, well preserved remains of this kind of dwelling were seen. The house, consisting of but one room about ten feet square, was built of large blocks of lava. The largest of these were eighteen inches long, and about half as thick and as wide. The walls measured about three feet in height and one foot and a half in thickness, and there was a sufficient amount of fallen stone debris near-by to admit of the walls having been once four or five feet high. There were the traces of a doorway in the northwest corner of the building. Numerous fragments of coarse pottery were scattered around, some gray and some red, but without any decoration except a fine slip coating on the red fragments.

...About five miles south of our camping place the river turns eastward, and again two miles below this point it receives a tributary from the west. One day I followed the broken cordon on its eastern bank, then turned north and ascended an isolated mountain which rises about fifteen hundred feet high above the river. There is a small level space on top, and on this there has been built at some time a fortress with walls of undressed stones from two to six feet high and three feet thick. It was about fifty paces long in one direction and about half that length in the other. Remains of houses could be traced and inside of the walls themselves a sort of platform could be made out.

...Though this is the only ancient cave dwelling I visited in Ohuivo, I was assured that there were several others in the neighbourhood. The broken country around Zapuri is interesting on account of the various traditions which, still living on the lips of the natives, refer to a mysterious people called the Sha'a, regarded by some Tarahumares as their ancient enemies, by others as their ancestors. They were the first people in the world, were short of stature and did not eat corn. They subsisted mainly on herbs, especially sprouted corn called tshawi. They were also cannibals, devouring each other as well as the Tarahumares. The Sha'a lived in caves on the high cliffs of the sierra, and in the afternoon came down like deer to drink in the rivers. As they had no axes of iron, they could not cut any large trees and were unable to clear much land for the planting of corn. They could only burn the grass in the arroyos in order to get the fields ready. Long ago when the Sha'a were very bad the sun came down to the earth and burned nearly all of them - only a few escaped into the big caves. Here in Zapuri the Sha'a had four large caves, inside of which they had built square houses of very hard adobe. In one of the caves they had a spring. The Tarahumares often fought with them, and once when the Sha'a were together in the largest cave which had no spring, the Tarahumares besieged them for eight days until all of the Sha'a had perished from hunger. From such an event the name of Zapuri may have been derived. Intelligent Mexicans whom I consulted agree that it means *fight* or *contest*. From the same mountainous region I have the following legend about the Sha'a and the serpents:

...Two large serpents used to ascend from the river and go up on the highlands to a little plain between two peaks, and they killed and ate the Sha'a, returning each time to the river. Whenever they were hungry they used to come up again. At last an old man brought together all the people at the place where the serpents used to ascend. Here they dug a big hole and filled it with wood and with large stones and made a fire and heated the stones until they became red hot. When the serpents were seen to make their ascent on the mountain side, the men took hold of the stones with sticks and threw them into the big wide open mouths of the serpents until the monsters were so full with stones that they burst and fell dead into the river. Even to this day may be seen the marks on the rocks where the serpents used to ascend the mountainside.

### FIRE KILLS FAMILY OF GEN. PERSHING

His Wife and Three Little  
Daughters Perish in  
Presidio Fire.

ONLY 5-YEAR-OLD IS SAVED

Aged Negro Servant Rescues Him,  
Aided by Soldiers of San Fran-  
cisco Army Post.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 27.—Mrs. Frances Warren Pershing, wife of Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, U. S. A., and three of her four children—Mary, 6, Anne, 7, and Helen, 8 years old—were suffocated in a fire in their quarters at the Presidio of San Francisco early this morning. Warren, 5 years old, was the only survivor.

General Pershing, commanding troops on the Mexican border, left El Paso when informed of the fire. He will arrive here Sunday.

United States Senator Francis E. Warren, father of Mrs. Pershing, will come from Cheyenne, Wyo.

Warren was being cared for tonight by nurses at the Lettermann General Hospital at the Presidio. He was taken there today when he was picked up unconscious on the floor of his bedroom by rescuers who crawled through the burning house searching for Mrs. Pershing and her four children. Warren revived quickly. The others were dead from suffocation when the rescuers reached them, and their heads, hands, and feet were burned.

Mrs. Walter O. Boswell, a relative, wife of Lieutenant Boswell of the Twenty-first Infantry, and her maid, leaped from the porch roof to the ground, after throwing Mrs. Boswell's two children down to officers and men who had been aroused by her cries and the noise of the crackling wood.

the noise of the crackling wood.

Mrs. Boswell was the first of those in the house to discover the fire. She was aroused by the smoke. She awakened her children and called to Mrs. Pershing. Then she opened the door to the hall. A gust of smoke drove her back, and she saw flames in the hallway. She took her children to the stairway, but found it cut off by fire, and retreated through her room to the roof of the front porch.

The noise of the flames by this time had aroused Lieutenant Eugene Sant-schei, of the Twenty-first Infantry, Private C. J. Hazlitt, and another soldier, who broke in the doors in the house, but were forced back by the flames. Then Mrs. Boswell, from the porch roof, threw her two children, Philip and James, 3 and 6 years old, to the men below, still calling to Mrs. Pershing, and jumped herself. Her maid previously had jumped and been caught. Mrs. Boswell fell in a flower bed, wrenching her back. She was taken to the Presidio Hospital.

Warren Pershing was found unconscious on the floor of his room by Johnson, the Pershings's aged negro servant, who led a rescue party into the house.

In the corner of the house most damaged by the fire the rescuers found Mrs. Pershing dead on the floor, with her arms across one of the children, who was on the bed. On another bed was another child; the third lay on the floor. The bodies of all were considerably burned.

The origin of the fire had not been determined definitely late today. Apparently it started in the dining room on the first floor. It destroyed one corner of the house, burned to the roof, and caused it to collapse.

Major Henry H. Whitney, commanding the Presidio, immediately appointed a board of inquiry to report on the fire.

The business men's camp recently opened at the Presidio was close to the Pershing quarters. Members of the camp rallied to the call for aid in fighting the fire.

The Board of Inquiry found that two grate fires had been burning in the house last night.

Lieutenant Boswell, whose wife escaped, is in Georgia on sick leave.

Mrs. Pershing and her children were to have left here within a week to join General Pershing at El Paso, where a home to receive them had been prepared.

Until General Pershing arrives, or sends instructions, no arrangements will be made for the funeral.

The lives of Mrs. Pershing and her children might have been saved if more fire apparatus at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, the grounds of which adjoin the Presidio, had been summoned immediately, according to Chief Thomas Murphy, of the San Francisco Fire Department, who has issued a statement criticising the Presidio's fire equipment and system as inadequate and antiquated.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Many Fires

quoted.

He said that at a conference which he expected to have tomorrow with Major Gen. Arthur Murray he would insist that the Presidio authorities revoke a standing order to men of the post not to pull a city fire alarm until an effort had been made to subdue the blaze.

In the last three years there have been nine deaths by fire at the Presidio.

### Wife Was Senator Warren's Daughter.

Mrs. Pershing was Miss Frances Warren, a daughter of Senator Francis E. Warren of Wyoming, and she was married to General Pershing in Washington, on Jan. 26, 1905, when he was a Captain in the Fifteenth Cavalry, attached to the General Staff. The romance of their marriage was related by her father one year after, when defending the General from charges of having had a liaison with a native woman in Mindanao. These charges, which circulated at the Capital as gossip, were the result of President Roosevelt promoting Pershing from Captain to Brigadier General for meritorious service, over 257 Captains, 564 Majors, 131 Lieutenant Colonels, and 110 Colonels, a total of 862 officers who ranked him in the service. No other General was promoted over such a number of ranking officers, and the appointment aroused much criticism.

Senator Warren, in speaking of his daughter's marriage, said that she first met General Pershing at a dinner given by Senator and Miss Millard of Nebraska. "We went and there met Captain Pershing for the first time. My daughter was just out of school. She and Pershing were very friendly. The next evening Miss Warren attended a dance at the post at Fort Myer, and there she and Pershing danced together.

That was the beginning of the affair."

When General Pershing's character was attacked at the time he was commanding the Department of Mindanao and was Governor of the Moro Province, his wife stood by him and wrote to her father saying: "If any stories about Jack come to you to his discredit, don't believe them. No matter how circumstantial they may be, nor how well they may seem to be substantiated, they are not true, and you may be sure of it."

General and Mrs. Pershing returned to this country in January, 1914, and when the army was mobilized along the border he was appointed to the command of the Eighth Brigade, with headquarters at El Paso, Tex. More recently he has been on a mission in northern Mexico.

There is a great similarity in the disaster that has befallen him and that which clouded the life of the late General Benjamin F. Tracy, Secretary of the Navy under President Harrison, who lost his wife and daughter, Mary, in 1890, when their home in Washington was burned.

General Pershing's record in the army is that of a fighting officer. He took part in the Geronimo campaigns, and also fought against the Zuni and Cree Indians. He took an active part in preparing the way for civilization in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Western Texas, and was promoted to a Captaincy for gallantry in the action at El Caney in the Spanish-American war. He destroyed the power of the Moros in the Philippines and razed forty forts and killed more than 100 of their warriors with the loss of only two American soldiers. His capture of the Moros under the Sultan of Jolo ended the insurrection.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

Dear Sir,

I began my military career as an Indian fighter. In '86, I commanded Troop L of the Sixth Cavalry, tasked with suppressing the Apache uprising in New Mexico territory, a task for which I was well suited. We chased various Apache bands, including Geronimo's, all across the southwest and well into northern Mexico. I returned to Chihuahua in 1916, in March, to hunt down Pancho Villa and his gang of murdering outlaws. That expedition was not a success as you know and some loose ends yet remain.

The years have taken their toll, Villa was gunned down in '23, and now only one of the great Villista thugs remains - Villa's right hand, "Major" Marcano Chimones. I swore I would kill them all and now old age thwarts this last ambition. This somewhat awkward circumstance has forced my hand, and I must rely on your discretion and patriotism.

Go to Mexico and kill this man.

Chimones is a bandit king. Even under Villa his troops were little more than barbaric packs who answered only to themselves. Chimones still manages a shadowy feifdom in the Valle de Bustillos west of Chihuahua city. Break his power and his bandits will scatter. No one will miss him.

Northern Mexico is in my blood like a fever. I love that rough country and, were I able, I'd ride with you. That is an impossibility in my current condition. I rely on you to end the last of the Villistas and allow an old man to keep his promise.

A retired soldier, even a General, can't hope to pay a man like you what he is worth, but if you need incentive I can offer a slender reed. Villa died a wealthy man, his fortune bound up in cases filled with gold, and Chimones has them. An enterprising man might well return rich from a junket such as this. And it is fascinating country.

Please reply immediately, as the matter is pressing and certain arrangements have already been made. The expedition will depart from El Paso, Texas in 30 days.

I remain,

Very truly yours,



## Many Fires

FROM THE DESK OF  
JOHN J. PERSHING

Dear Friend,

And that I may call you friend is, do not doubt it, one of my greatest pleasures! So few remain.

I'm writing to offer you an opportunity and to urge you to take it. I have some friends, associates of a sort with which you are well acquainted, who are heading down Mexico way on an errand of mine. They are good men and poor company, and they are there to set right some loose ends from '16. They'll be tramping all over Chihuahua state, down in the Valle de Bustillos, looking for a friend of the late Pancho Villa who, in border parlance, needs killing.

Now I don't expect you to jump at the chance to strap on your barking irons like an old cowboy, but southern Chihuahua is interesting country, your sort of country frankly, and your particular expertise would give the whole expedition an air of respectability and purpose. I want you to go - I need you to - and given our history I feel I must insist. Make your excuses, use the enclosed train ticket, and meet my other friends in El Paso, Texas.

I remain,

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pershing". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Pershing".





## HELL FIRE

Publisher: Simon Rogers

Author: Adam Gauntlett

Layout: Beth Lewis

Artwork: Olli Hihnala



**Playtesters:** Gareth Hanrahan, Chris Crofts, Neil Kelly, Mike O'Brien, David Barnard-Wills, Aidan Jewell, Sam Ollins, Rob Wingrove, Frank J. Perricone, Siobhan Perricone, Suri Weinmunson, Richard Creaser, Bethany Creaser, Kaye Winter, Joe Weinmunson.

## London in the Time of King George

An Introduction by Adam Gauntlett

Georgian London has many of the ingredients for a perfect horror game: fabulously rich people battenning on the labours of the poor; a government that is, at best, completely out of touch with the realities of running an Empire; complicated scientific advancements that few people understand, but which are about to change the world; spies intriguing in Parliament and the Palace; and, of course, magic. This was an age when even *The Gentleman's Magazine* could advocate applying a live toad to the kidneys, for relief of urine complaints. Many households still kept books in which it recorded everything the master of the house thought people needed to know, including spells for driving fleas from clothing, remedies for sickness and so on. Magic wasn't just for sex-obsessed nobility; it was everywhere.

If you were a serious magician, there was one thing you wanted above all else: treasure, and the means of finding it. Many grimoires, attributed perhaps to Cornelius Agrippa or Pope Honorius, promised to teach the scholar means by which Devils out of Hell could be contacted and bargained with, so that these netherworld allies could help the sorcerer find buried gold. They also purported to tell treasure hunters how to outwit the salamanders, gnomes and other spirits that had been bound as guardians to these hidden riches. Paris was probably the most famous supplier of dark grimoires, and many of these texts were written either in French or Latin, both of which languages anyone with education could read. French, at the time of the scenario, was the official language of diplomacy; anyone with pretensions to high rank, or who had travelled, would speak it.

Giacomo Casanova (1725-98), whose fraudulent and prurient exploits - recorded in his autobiography - exposed the secrets of the courts of Europe, was one such. His introduction to magic came at a young age; his parents brought him to a witch, to cure him of nosebleeds. Later in his long and duplicitous career he passed himself off as a magician, and attempted to douse for treasure in the cellar of a house in Cesena, Italy, as part of a scheme to defraud his client. He used the threat of magic to silence an Inquisition spy, as part of his escape from the prison under the Doge's Palace in Venice. He played out his final years in Bohemia as guest, and occult librarian, of the Count Waldenstein. In Casanova there's all the hallmarks of the typical magician adventurer of the period: bold, ambitious, totally without scruple, capable of great feats, and well educated. This is the sort of template player characters should be aspiring to when they create occultists; not a dusty scholar, but a crafty rogue.

The spread of magic was helped by the rise of the printing press. Thousands of books flowed out of that city across Europe, and though the scandalous 1682 Affair of the Poisons - in which 36 people were condemned to death for, among other crimes, murder and witchcraft - blunted the trade a little, such unpleasantness was soon forgotten. Everyone wanted wealth, and these books promised treasured beyond the dreams of avarice. Stopping such a trade was like standing against the rising tide.

### Pleasure Gardens

Vauxhall is described as a pleasure garden, and people did go there to enjoy the open air, but it was built, and intended, as more of a theme park. This was where people went to have a grand night out, and the Gardens were at their best at night, when people couldn't see the cracks in the plaster. The cluster of huts and pavilions around the entrance were lit like fairyland each night, the better to show off illustrations by Hogarth and other caricaturists that adorned the walls. "Take care of your pockets," the warning given as the lights dimmed, was the only real concession to security; you could get away with anything at Vauxhall, and many did, though the Gardens strove to prohibit known prostitutes.

One contemporary visitor said "it is certain that [Vauxhall] may be in a certain way good, but then it is certain that it is also in some ways harmful ... Young ladies, also, might not always be improved to the pitch of perfection here."

It was also the sort of place that robbed you blind. In common with many other theme parks, the prices for food, drink and other goods was pitched ridiculously high, in the certain knowledge that you had no choice but to pay. The Gardens did permit you to bring your own supplies, but given the difficulty of travel - the only way to the Gardens before Westminster Bridge was built was by boat - transporting anything substantial would have been a daunting task.

Vauxhall also played host to some remarkable guests. The Prince of Wales could sometimes be seen there, as



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could other notables. In 1762 several Cherokee chiefs, in a mission to the King, paraded at Vauxhall for the entertainment of the masses, shaking hands and getting drunk for London's amusement. Later it was discovered that some of them had been left behind when their fellows left London, and were found to be living in drunken poverty in 1765.

As hinted previously, security at Vauxhall was not the best, and the Gardens were a notorious den of thieves. Patrons were well advised to take care of their pockets, but that wasn't the only threat. On at least one occasion, a boat returning from Vauxhall was boarded by half a dozen pirates, about two hundred yards from Westminster Bridge, "who demanded their money without any hesitation or they would throw them overboard" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*). The thieves got what they demanded.

### The Traffic in Corpses

One aspect of Georgian London that wasn't touched on in Hell Fire, but which Keepers may want to use in other games set in the period, is bodysnatching.

Burke and Hare are the most famous snatchers, but they're 19th Century men. However there were plenty of 18th Century entrepreneurs working quietly in the corpse trade. The human body had become a commodity; anatomists needed a steady supply of human remains to study, and where before they had gamed the system by offering executioners and sheriffs bribes for their cooperation, now those officials demanded regular, high, fees. The public, convinced that - come the Resurrection - their bodies needed to be complete, were very vigorous in their opposition to the trade. Often an impromptu mob would gather at the least hint - perhaps a dropped shovel - that snatchers were about, and they would not be calmed easily.

It became commonplace for snatchers, working quietly after dark, to supplement the paltry supplies offered by the gallows with fresher meat. Typically they batted on the poor rather than the rich, since raiding a poor man's graveyard was easier and usually yielded more corpses. One 1790s observer said, after seeing conditions at St-Giles-In-The-Fields churchyard, that:

*I have observed with horror a great square pit, with many rows of coffins piled one upon the other, all exposed to sight and smell. Some of the piles were incomplete, expecting the mortality of the night. I turned away disgusted at the view, and scandalized at the want of the police, which so little regards the health of the living as to permit so many putrid corpses, tacked between some slight boards, dispersing their effluvia over the parish.* [Thomas Pennant, antiquarian]

Like any other illegal commodity, the price of a corpse varied considerably depending on supply. In lean times as much as twenty guineas (a little over £20) might be paid for a good specimen, but as a rule the price was something closer to eight guineas. As a comparison in modern terms, twenty 18<sup>th</sup> Century guineas would have a buying power of over £12,000. That was the corpse's street value, naturally; the actual value, as trade in corpses was illegal, was effectively zero. This meant that snatchers often left everything else behind, from coffin to grave clothes, on the grounds that taking any of that might bring a charge of theft, whereas taking the valueless corpse would not.

Organized snatchers had the business down to a nicety. One Lambeth gang operating in 1790 only worked winters, and supplied eight surgeons, as well as one person described as an 'articulator'. This gang, fifteen strong, robbed over thirty different London burial grounds in its career.

The snatchers worked in small groups, with the bulk of the work being done at night. A well-organized gang would appoint a look out, in the event of trouble. A canvas was laid on the ground to catch the soil, so as to leave no trace of their activity behind when the grave was filled in again. The gang took care to make sure that if any marker - say a shell, or stone - had been left surreptitiously behind by the dead man's friends, that marker was replaced exactly where it was after the job was done. Using wooden shovels to muffle sound, the snatchers dug down from the head of the grave to the coffin lid. Once at the coffin, sacking was laid to deaden noise, and pry-bars forced the lid open. The earth lying heavy on the rest of the coffin acted as a counter-weight, making forcing the coffin lid that much easier. The body was then extracted, stripped, its clothes flung down into the hole, and the grave filled up again. Tied head and heels together, the corpse was put in a sack for easy transport. A well-organized group could have the job done in a matter of minutes.

Like any other criminal enterprise, competition bred violence and trickery. Often competing bands of snatchers would inform on their rivals, leading the police to make an arrest. More direct methods might have been taken, but little is known about this. Other gangs preferred con-games to get what they wanted, hiring women to pretend to be grief-stricken relatives, thus 'claiming' the body from the poorhouse before it could be buried.

Crime could pay very well. Though many snatchers ended up destitute or dead, that was as much poor luck on their part as anything; some graverobbers used the proceeds of their misdeeds to fund a very satisfactory retirement. One such, Jack Harnett, died in 1840 leaving £6,000 to his family; in modern terms, that was a legacy of over £3 million.



## Hell Fire

### Scenario Seed: The Tradesman

A mob is gathered outside the protagonist's door, baying for his blood. If given any further provocation, they may bust down the doors and run riot through the house, but they could be calmed if approached in the right way. There are enough angry people out there that fighting isn't an option, unless backed up with significant force.

The reason the mob targeted the protagonist is because one of his servants found two shovels and a long hook, all of them caked with soil, inside the protagonist's back garden just behind the gate. Fearing the worst, the servant went to the sheriff, but before he could get there he was spotted with the tools in his possession. The mob soon gathered and fixated on the protagonist, as either being a bodysnatcher, or in league with them.

#### *Possibilities:*

- **Bad Luck.** There is a gang of bodysnatchers working in this parish, and last night they had to make a quick escape. One of them separated from the rest and, lost in an unfamiliar neighbourhood, fled across the protagonist's back garden, eventually hiding in the protagonist's house. He left his tools behind in the process. That graverobber, a sixteen year old boy, is still on the premises. If found, he could be handed over to the mob to appease them. However this will earn the enmity of his friends, one of whom is a semi-skilled necromancer capable of summoning up spirits, which he'll use to harm the protagonist if the boy is hurt. Saving the boy will win the snatchers over, but somehow the mob will need to be dealt with, else they'll trample the house flat.
- **Follower.** One of the protagonist's servants has been reading in the library on the sly, looking at the occult books in hope of finding

a means of summoning devils to help discover buried treasure. The tools are the servant's, who hoped last night to dig up a fortune in someone else's back garden. This same servant is the one who was caught in the street with the tools, and made up a story on the spot about going to the sheriff after finding the evidence in his master's yard. What the servant doesn't realize is that the creature he tried to summon to help him find treasure has yet to arrive, and will be very dangerous when it does turn up ... as it will, soon.

- **Thirst For Knowledge.** The tools belong to a bodysnatcher, a friend of the protagonist, who is interested in corpses less for their scientific than their magical potential. Last night this friend was making his way home after a hard night's work, when he was surprised by the watch and had to make a run for it. He disposed of his tools – and the body he was carrying in a sack – in the protagonist's yard, certain his friend wouldn't mind. He never anticipated this problem, and is very sorry to have caused the protagonist trouble. The problem is, the body's gone missing; but surely it can't have just walked off? All that's left is the sack it was being carried in, and the ropes it was tied with seem to have been chewed through.

### The Still-Vexed Bermooths

A significant portion of Hell Fire takes place in Bermuda, and the town of St George deserves an expanded description.

At the time of the scenario, St George's is the capital of the colony. It is very well defended with over twenty separate fortifications, most of which are small gun emplacements set out on islands near the harbour. They cover the various paths through the reefs that an enemy might use to attack, and mount 80 guns in all, of various calibres. Most

of these forts were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and, by the time of the scenario, are woefully out of date; all the more so because ships were being built much smaller than they had been in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and consequently were more able to nimbly skip past the reefs. In any event they had been built for another age, when the Spanish were a potential threat; Imperial Spain is a paper tiger now, incapable of launching anything like a significant attack.

While the rest of the island might still be built of wood, St George's is made of local stone. The very first buildings were not, and consequently the island's timber reserves were greatly depleted, all the more because Bermuda cedar was also used to build ships as well as homes. However hurricanes devastated wooden houses and fire was always a concern, so from 1693 onwards property in St George, formerly held by the Company that founded the colony, was permanently granted to its inhabitants on condition that they built homes from local stone. The land was free, provided the owner replaced wood with stone within two years of taking ownership.

The State House, built in 1621, was one of the first to be made of stone and is intended as a defensive structure, resembling what might happen if someone decided to make a square keep look decorative. The colony's gunpowder store is kept here; it almost exploded more than once, usually because of carelessly set fires, and in 1775 American Revolutionaries will steal it for their own cannon. The State House is also where local government business is done, and doubles as a Court House when needed.

The Governor maintains a separate house, built in 1722, and this is the centre of social activity in the colony. It is a large – for the colony, at least – and magnificent estate built on a hill overlooking the town. It boasts several

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outbuildings, including two kitchens and a coach house. Here the grand public functions and balls are held, with the governor of the day playing host. It has several bed chambers, a parlour, a study, and an extensive library, all furnished in the height of English fashion. The protagonists may want to finagle an invitation to stay, if their social standing is up to it. It may even be that they share Club interests with the Governor of the day.

Though each garden is surrounded by a wall, the Victorian era has yet to demand high, blank brick walls to block the view; instead Bermuda houses of the period are surrounded with low walls, topped with wooden lattice fences wound with ivy. Privacy is not so much of a concern; people talk to their neighbours here. Streets are narrow and winding, with almost no street names. People are expected to know their way around. The streets are paved with packed earth and limestone, which would have been very dusty in the dry season, and probably messy to navigate in rain.

The only public meeting place, besides the State House, is Saint Peter's Church. The Church is a cruciform building, vestry to the north and a porch to the south of the nave. Spillover business from the State House is usually held here, and in its very early days the Church was also used as a tobacco store. Pews are auctioned off annually to the citizens of St Georges for their use the rest of the year, with some families bidding as much as £14 for prestigious seating.

Very few buildings will be higher than one story. The typical residential house is small and low, with a walled garden for herbs and vegetables. They are built of limestone, frequently quarried on the property the house is built on; some of the oldest Bermuda properties still have old quarries in their gardens, but most householders relied on the limestone they dug out when constructing the cellar. Roofs are gentle pitch, and also made of limestone, cleaned and painted regularly. These roofs collect rainwater which the colony, always in desperate need of fresh water, collects in water tanks. Most residential properties have

a Buttery, a small outdoor storage area, where perishables are kept cool.

Many homes are also businesses and, rather like the English properties after which they are modelled, the house is above the business. However these businesses are operated out of the cellar, which means they are often below ground level. The climate is such that cellars tend not to get as damp as their English counterparts, and in any case would have been well heated by the many fireplaces each house had.

Clubs and Masonic lodges of all kinds proliferated in the colony, as a welcome distraction from day-to-day life. The Freemasons are the oldest of the Clubs, the first St Georges Lodge being established in 1744, but there were any number of other Fraternal Orders, Templars, and similar organizations, serving all needs. Though there is no recorded evidence of it, there's no reason why the Keeper shouldn't assume a Hell Fire club exists in St Georges, perhaps attended by the Governor and other notables.





Hell Fire is a scenario set in 18th century London, with a side trip to the Colonies. The exact date is unspecified, but is assumed to be sometime from 1760 to 1770.

## Hook

The protagonists are members of an exclusive Hell Fire Club, with an interest in fine (pornographic) literature and Rational debate. God is dead, and Man may prosper. One of the Club's most trusted members is involved in a Breach of Promise suit, in which the protagonists are peripherally involved, but before the case can be heard the Club member vanishes and the woman is found dead. Inquiries are being made; Club secrets could be revealed. If that happens, the Club members, and the protagonists, could be socially ruined. Where has their Brother gone? Who – or what – killed his alleged paramour?

## THE AWFUL TRUTH

There are two tracks of inquiry. The first involves another Club whose interests parallel the protagonists, save that this second Club is in the Americas and has its own agenda. They know that war is coming, and can see great benefits for them in remaining politically neutral; pledging allegiance to the Crown while smuggling goods into the Colonies. They were intriguing with the now missing Brother to this end, trying to get him and his fellow Club members to vote their way in Parliament. At the same time, they are also deep in discussions with the French, hoping that if the English plan didn't work out they could switch flags and still make a fortune. The Americans

have as much to lose, socially, as their English brethren, since their Club affiliation won't win them any friends in the Colonies. Untangling this web of intrigue may keep the protagonists occupied, and ultimately lead to a confrontation in the Bermudas with the American branch of the Club.

However the problem goes deeper than simple political intrigue. The missing Brother didn't vanish because he was worried about a lawsuit. In fact, thanks to his Club-inspired sexual experimentation, he became infected with the essence of Y'gonolac. The Old One's psychic assault drove the unfortunate man mad, and he fled, but by that point Y'gonolac had found out a great deal, both about him, and about his activities. Y'gonolac learned about the Americas, and the Club's connection with the Colonies. Nothing would please the Old One more than to establish a new cult in the New World. At first using his initial victim, and later transferring his essence into others, Y'gonolac works towards one goal: using the American Hell Fire Club as a base from which the Old One can establish a Colonial branch of his own.

To achieve success the protagonists must avoid social disgrace, preferably by covering up the crimes committed by their fellow Club members, while at the same time dealing with the threat posed by their American colleagues, and the Old One Y'gonolac.

## THE SPINE

**The Lady Fornicator:** The protagonists are tasked with stealing Mary Protheroe's letters. Once done, they are to return the letters to Bubb

Pearce, their fellow Club member. However by the time they get to Pearce's townhouse, Protheroe is dead and Pearce is nowhere to be found. Clues found in this section lead to **Our American Brethren, The Jezebels and Emergency Meeting.**

**Emergency Meeting:** The protagonists, along with the other Club members, are summoned to an emergency meeting of the Club. Bubb Pearce's disappearance, along with the record books and other important Club papers, is discussed. The journalist John Wakes may have them by now; if he does, the Club could be exposed, to the ruin of its members. Clues found here lead to **Our American Brethren, Muckraker, Pearce's Progress.**

**Our American Brethren:** The protagonists encounter Benjamin Wilcox, leader of the American contingent. He denies all knowledge of Pearce's whereabouts. Clues found here lead to **Muckraker, The Jezebels and French Fancies.**

**Pearce's Progress:** If the protagonists track Pearce, they discover his links to Y'gonolac. This may include the first antagonist reaction, if the Jezebels have not previously been encountered. Clues found here lead to **The Jezebels, American Intrigues and Vauxhall Funeral.**

**The Jezebels:** This all-female Club is Y'gonolac's current cult in London. They are the main London antagonists, and will do their best to mislead (or if necessary kill) the protagonists. Clues found here lead to **Vauxhall Funeral, The Dying Lover.**



### Clubbable Men

The 18th century was an enlightened age. The superstitions and near-medieval beliefs of the previous centuries were cast off, replaced by an age of science and discovery. Man was moving towards his perfected state. Received wisdom was little better than folklore; experience was the only way to true knowledge.

In that age, Clubs of all kinds prospered. Men (and women) of similar tastes, professions or stations in life would gather together to exchange their experiences with one another. Perhaps the club's aim was purely social, or perhaps it was political, or for men of business, or for seekers of antiquarian artefacts. 'An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions,' according to Samuel Johnson, and in a social age, the important thing was that they met, regularly, to exchange ideas. They flourished in the new urban environment, battenning on the Enlightenment precept that happiness was a virtue. They sought as much happiness as possible, in the company of their fellows. There were as many different types of Club as can be imagined, and most who belonged to a Club at all belonged to more than one. Benjamin Franklin, who may or may not have brought Hell Fire to America (certainly he was on close and friendly terms with Sir Francis Dashwood), was a member of three Clubs, not including the Royal Society and the Academe Francaise.

Some Clubs probably did not exist. The Farting Club, whose members 'tuned their arses with ale and juniper water' to speed up the natural process, is probably an invention of the satirist Ward, as is the No-Nose Club, an assembly of syphilis sufferers. However those were perhaps among the least bizarre. The Beggar's Benison of Scotland, whose records and artefacts are held by St. Andrew University, had as its motto 'may your prick and your purse never fail you'; to join, the initiate had to perform a feat of masturbation. The Hell Fire Club of Sir Francis Dashwood had broadly similar philosophies. Though their initiation ceremony was not nearly as forthright as the Beggar's Benison, one of the Club's interests was life studies, for which female models were sought. Sir Francis built himself a garden, the centrepiece of which was a Temple of Venus; the hill or mound represented the female genitals, with the grass being pubic hair, and an ovoid entrance at the base led to a central underground room. The gardens at West Wycombe are currently held by the National Trust.

These Clubs spread, and not merely within the borders of the kingdom. Wherever Englishmen were, there were Hell Fire Clubs; Ireland, the West Indies, colonial America. Wherever the children of Empire went, they took their Club culture with them. There were even rumours of Clubs further afield, in Russia, France, and elsewhere, inspired by the English original.

To outsiders, the Hell Fire Clubmen were blasphemers, men of ill fame who gathered to worship Satan and promote the Devil's philosophies. Truth be told, the Medmenhem Friars (the real name of the original fraternity) were more devoted to their dinners than their devils, and far more interested in pornography than Satan's scriptures. However they were also men of power and privilege, who could ill afford to have their nocturnal activities made public. When a disaffected former Friar, Wilkes, threatened to do just that, it was the beginning of the end. By 1766, the Medmenhem Friars were no more.

Of course, their reputation lived on. Their original name was forgotten, soon replaced by the more fascinating title Hell Fire Club. It was this title that their imitators frequently adopted, spreading like satellite cults all over the known world. Their reputation grew far larger than the reality, and even today Sir Francis Dashwood is more associated with spirits and devils than he is his public roles as Chancellor of the Exchequer, or Postmaster General. In fiction he regularly appears as a warlock-cum-rakehell, ready for any dark deed, whereas in life he was more of a sceptic than believer, who founded his Club as a reaction against the follies and hypocrisies of organized religion.

In game, the protagonists will be much like Sir Francis. They may be accused of wizardry and occult knowledge, but in fact they've nothing to do with such things. Their reputations, however, may be ruined by association, which is why they need to act quickly.

**Muckraker:** This leads to conflict with John Wakes. The protagonists may be able to stop the Hell Fire rumors before they start. Clues found here lead to **American Intrigues**.

**French Fancies:** The American links to French agents, and the cross-dressing Chevalier d'Eon, are revealed. Clues found here lead to **American Intrigues**.

#### American Intrigues:

The protagonists piece together the American plot, to take advantage of revolution in the colonies for their own personal gain. They also discover the Americans' intent to board ship for Bermuda soon. Clues found here lead to **Prospero's Cell**, possibly via the optional scene **Full Fathom Five**.

**Vauxhall Funeral:** The final encounter with Bubb Pearce, the Jezebels and possibly Benjamin Wilcox, set at night in the fantastical gardens at Vauxhall. Clues found here may lead to **The Dying Lover**.

**The Dying Lover:** The protagonists track the Jezebels to their lair, where they discover the scheme to infect

## Hell Fire

the Americas with the Y'golonac cult. Clues found here lead to **Prospero's Cell**, possibly via the optional scene **Full Fathom Five**.

**Full Fathom Five:** In this antagonist reaction scene, the protagonists are attacked while en route to Bermuda. This may not occur, if the protagonists have been successful in eliminating the Y'golonac cult in London.

**Prospero's Cell:** The protagonists arrive in Bermuda only to discover that the Americans have yet to step ashore; their ship is in quarantine, with a suspected infectious disease. However Benjamin Wilcox has found his way ashore, and will be about to spread the Y'golonac cult. Clues here may lead to **The Hell Ship** and **The Tempest**.

**The Hell Ship:** The protagonists sneak aboard the American's ship and find out what's really going on. Clues found here lead to **The Tempest**, but with some added advantages to the protagonists.

**The Tempest:** The final encounter with Benjamin Wilcox, in which the protagonists have a chance to eliminate the Y'golonac cult before it has a chance to take root in the Americas.

## RULE ALTERATIONS

The setting requires several changes to the *Trail* character sheet.

The following skills do not exist and are not replaced by another skill: **Archaeology**, **Cop Talk**, **Driving**, **Psychoanalysis**.

**Anthropology**, **Biology**, **Forensics** and **Geology** do not exist. Their function is taken over by a new Academic ability, **The Sciences**. The Sciences functions as a much-reduced version of the specialist abilities; the user is a dilettante, not a dedicated observer, and while they may attend lectures at the Royal Society and read all the latest books, as well as reports from the New World, ultimately there are many facts of which they are unaware, as well as discoveries that have not yet been made. The Theory of Evolution, to name one, has yet to be formulated. There is also plenty of misinformation posing as established fact. In some cases (eg. Forensics) possession of the requisite knowledge is tainted by association; the Anatomy Act won't be law until 1832, and meanwhile the only corpses allowed to be dissected were

## The Printing Press is for Porn

The explosion of (relatively) cheap, mass produced books and prints meant, among other things, an exponential increase in pornography. Books like Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders* were the least of it; those stories were mildly diverting, but they could be found in anyone's library. On the other hand, there were other, less socially acceptable titles:

*The School of Venus.*

*The Fifteen Plagues of Maidenhood.* This was followed by other books on the same line, viz. *The Fifteen Plagues of a Wanton Wife*, *The Plagues of a Whore*, and so on.

*A Dialogue between a Married Woman and a Maid.*

*Secrets of the Convent.*

*The Rule of Taste.*

*A Complete Set of Charts of the Coast of Merryland.* Beloved of the Beggars Benison, the Charts described female anatomy using nautical terminology.

*Memoirs of a Lady of Pleasure*, also known as Fanny Hill. While Cleland's version is the accepted text, it's likely that there were other versions with that title, written by authors long since forgotten.

Common topics include nunneries, school girls, and flagellation. While they seem positively quaint in the age of hentai, at the time this was the very height of sexual deviancy. Moreover these are just the books; there were thousands of prints published at the same time, with very similar subject matter.

The class system kept the pornography trade flourishing. So long as dirty books could only be afforded by the upper classes, all was well. These were the same upper classes who believed in the Enlightenment, followed scientific advances, and on whom the church had a very weak grip. They couldn't be shamed into abandoning their habits, and they had enough money to indulge them. However as the middle classes became more prominent and powerful, the porn trade began to encounter difficulties. The middle classes, as a rule, were much more devout than their social betters, and more inclined to join Societies for the Suppression of Vice. The 18th century, hedonistic and addicted to sex, would be replaced by the repressed Victorianism of the 19th century; the aristocrat's role in society usurped by the educated middle classes.

The protagonists, as members of the Club, certainly own one or more pornographic books in their personal library, as well as having access to the Club's own extensive collection.

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condemned criminals. Cutting up the human body is still a dubious practice, in an age when religion preached resurrection of the flesh.

In game terms, treat **The Sciences** as an amalgam of the named abilities.

**History** and **Art History** do exist, but the Keeper should interpret these skills as being Europe-specific. Educated and wealthy people go on the Grand Tour, and learn the Classics; they know that China is somewhere far to the East, but know little of its history or culture. What they do know is via exaggerated or distorted Chinoiserie, which bears only superficial resemblance to the original. Similarly only people who have been to the colonies are really going to know much about the American states or the islands of the Caribbean, though they may choose to believe any number of unsubstantiated rumours. See also **Traveller**.

**Photography** does not exist. Protagonists determined to use a camera obscura should use **The Sciences**. The same applies to **Electrical Repair**; the protagonists know that electricity exists and have probably seen scientific experiments that utilize its power, but that's a long way from being able to deal with (or build) complex electrical devices.

**Hypnosis** does not exist. Protagonists interested in Mesmerism should use **The Sciences**. Mesmerism would not be able to replicate any of the effects listed as part of the **Hypnosis** skill.

**Piloting** only refers to boats and ships, not aircraft. While lighter-than-air balloons could theoretically be available, **Piloting** does not cover their use. Nothing does; at this point in history no man has gone aloft. The Montgolfier 1783 flight is slightly after the scenario date. **The Sciences** would allow a protagonist to understand the basic principles, but anyone foolish enough to put them to the test is risking catastrophic, potentially fatal failure.

There is a new Interpersonal skill: **Politics**. The world in which the protagonists operate is rife with political intrigue. Knowing who to talk to in order to get something done, knowing how to manipulate the system, how to further your own career or that of your friends, all fall under politics. Like **Locksmithing**, **Politics** can either be a straight spend or a Difficulty test; this is at the discretion of the Keeper, always bearing in mind that Difficulty tests are reserved for dramatic events rather than clue finding.

There is a new Academic ability: **Traveller**. A well-travelled protagonist has been to many unusual places, far from the usual Grand Tour. Mechanically this is similar to **Languages**, in that each point spent means that the spender has been to, and knows about, a country or colony other than England and the classical world. Only someone who spends the appropriate **Traveller** point can use **Politics** outside their usual zone without penalty. **Traveller** also allows the user to know most things about the places they've been to: the currency, a rough idea of the geography, the languages spoken, the state of trade, the recent history. **Traveller** does not automatically convey a **Languages** benefit; the **Languages** point must be spent separately.

In addition the protagonists each gain a 3 point pool, **Evidence**, which affects each scene after *Emergency Meeting*. This is discussed in more detail in *Muckraker*. **Evidence** is a negative pool; it is 'proof' of their guilt, which Wakes uses to blacken their reputations. So long as this pool exists, the Keeper can at any time call for a penalty to each Contest roll, the penalty being equal to the number of **Evidence** points remaining, (ie. from -3 to -1).





### Duelling

In period, it is quite common for gentlemen to resolve their differences by personal combat, often by swordplay. Most gentlemen will know at least the basics of weapons handling. Duelling by firearm is less common, in period, since there is still a stigma attached to the ungentlemanly flintlock, but it is not unheard of.

The Code Duello is very formal. Some Codes permit the aggrieved to cancel the duel if the instigator repudiates his insult, but not all. The Keeper should always allow a protagonist to back out if the protagonist wants to, but NPCs as a rule won't voluntarily back down.

There are usually three seconds for each opponent. The role of the second is to negotiate on behalf of his principle, either to settle the terms of the duel (location, weapons) or to seek reconciliation, if the Code permits it. There is always a doctor present, to tend the stricken.

On the field of honour, the combatants fight until certain conditions are met. Usually these conditions demand that the fight not end until one combatant is unable, through wounds, to continue. In game terms, any combatant reduced to -6 or lower Health can legitimately claim to be unable to continue, which would end the duel. This surrender is known as giving quarter. If quarter is not allowed in this combat, (this can be announced before the duel begins) then the duel is to the death. The movie *Rob Roy* (1995) features a duel without quarter in its climactic scenes.

To simulate the cut-and-thrust of skilled swordplay, the Keeper should consider using this optional rule: at the beginning of the round, the defender can opt to spend some or all of his remaining Weapons pool points to increase the Hit Threshold. This points spend represents a Parry. However the points spend must be declared before the aggressor's attack roll. At the Keeper's option, to increase tension, the number of points spent by the defender need not be openly declared; only the Keeper needs to know how many points are used. All attacker spends are declared openly.

Example: Warwick and Perthshire meet on the field of honour. Neither has **Athletics** equal to or greater than 8, so both have base Hit Thresholds of 3. Warwick is the aggressor. Perthshire opts to spend 2 Weapons pool points in a Parry; he writes down the number, and hands it to the Keeper. Warwick, not knowing whether a Parry was declared or not, opts to spend no pool points, and rolls a 4. This does not equal or exceed Perthshire's improved Hit Threshold of 5, so Perthshire's Parry was successful. If Perthshire then rolls equal to or greater than 3, he beats Warwick in this contest. Dramatically, this could be described as a parry-riposte.

Now it's Perthshire's turn to be the aggressor. Warwick opts to spend no points in Parry, but hands a note to the Keeper anyway just to keep Perthshire guessing. Perthshire decides to spend 2 points, and succeeds on a roll of 6 (4+2, versus Hit Threshold 3). He may have won the contest, provided Warwick rolls poorly, but of course he's also spent 4 pool points, and the duel isn't over yet . . .

In a duel, one combatant may have a significant advantage over another, due to their superior weapons handling. In game terms, a combatant with **Weapons** score that is 4 or more points above the opponent's **Weapons** pool has the advantage. The combatant with the advantage lowers the Difficulty number needed to succeed.

Example: Warwick has **Weapons** 10, while Perthshire has **Weapons** 6. Warwick therefore has the advantage over Perthshire. In game terms, this means Perthshire's Hit Threshold drops from 3 to 2. Warwick only needs a 2 or better to succeed, while Perthshire still needs a 3 or better.

A rapier or smallsword counts as a +0 weapon for damage purposes. A sword cane, sometimes called a life preserver, is also a +0 weapon. The +1 sword listed in the main rulebook refers to larger weapons, (eg. cavalry sabre, claymore, medieval longsword).

**Firearms** cannot be parried. The advantage rule does apply to **Firearms**, so a duellist with 4 or more pool points in excess of his opponent's pool can gain the advantage, thus lowering the Hit Threshold. This advantage only applies during a duel, which is more formal and mannered than a free-for-all.

Outside of the field of honour combat is handled normally.

## Scenes

### THE LADY FORNICATOR

The scene opens on a dark, cheerless autumn day in London. The protagonists are gathered at a coffee house not far from Lady Mary Protheroe's fashionable home. Most of the other people in the coffee house are connected with shipping in one form or another. Ship captains meet here to exchange information and discuss matters with their merchant customers. Insurance men have their offices here; they wait in the booths with the other customers, for clerks to come bidding for their services, and then go out to the docks to survey the cargoes. All manner of folk, many of them transient, meet here and discuss the day's events, and nobody pays attention to a few new faces.

The protagonists have been asked to meet here by their friend and fellow Club member, Bubb Pearce. Pearce is the last to arrive.

Pearce is a tall, fleshy man. He normally has a ruddy complexion, but today he is pale as cheese. Assess Honesty shows he is deeply troubled, even frightened, but he doesn't say by what. He greets everyone, and sits at table.

*"Tonight's the night," he says. "You all know the position Lady Mary has put me in. The damnable witch thinks she has me by the short hairs! Were I not to do as she bids, she'd have me before the Justices on a Breach of Promise suit — and what's more, she has letters of mine that would prove monstrous difficult to explain. Yet I think I have her cozened. For this very night she has agreed to meet with me at my house in Greenwich, to talk sweet and agreeable, or so she thinks. Gentlemen, I must have those letters. I bid you, as Club members, get me them, whilst I keep Lady Mary tarrying*

*in Greenwich. Her house will be abandoned; you can be in and out before anyone knows you're there. I appeal to you!"*

The protagonists will know that Mary Protheroe has attended Club gatherings several times, as a life model and Pearce's guest. Her claims to be of high birth are politely disbelieved; she's a fashionable woman often seen in high society, whose outgoings are funded by wealthy men. While she's undoubtedly a handsome woman, she's also notorious, and would be a very unsuitable wife. Yet wife she means to be, unless Bubb Pearce can somehow wriggle out of it.

If the protagonists seem unwilling, Pearce tries emotional blackmail (*'surely my friends would not abandon me?'*) and bribery (*'curse you, if loyalty can't be had, perhaps it can be bought!'*) up to 2 **Credit Rating** pool points. An **Assess Honesty** spend shows that Pearce believes everything he says, but is perhaps being overoptimistic in his desperation.

If the protagonists agree, Pearce arranges for them to come to his house after the deed is done. Night or day, it doesn't matter; the sooner Pearce gets his hands on the letters, the better he will like it.

If they don't agree, Pearce leaves the coffee house, very upset. The scene could pass to *Emergency Meeting* (page 132), always remembering that the clue elements (American delegation, Jezebel) need to be dealt with first.

According to Pearce, the only people who live in the house are Mary Protheroe, her maidservant Rose, and 'a Moorish boy', servant to them both. Pearce thinks it unlikely that the boy will be at home, since it is usually his habit

to sneak out of doors when his mistress isn't in. *"That just leaves pretty Rosie, and if you fine gentlemen can't think of a way round her, I feel sorry for you!"* The streets roundabout are quiet. Mary's parlour and rooms are on the first floor, while Rose and the Moor have rooms in the garret. Pearce thinks it likely that the letters are kept in a cedar box in Mary's parlour, but if not, they're bound to be in her rooms somewhere.

While the protagonists talk with Pearce, they notice (**core clue**) three men come into the coffee house, but as soon as they spot Pearce, they walk out again. The men are dressed in fashionable clothes, but not of English cut; **Traveller** or **Politics** (0 point) realizes that they are American merchants, recently arrived, part of a delegation sent out from the colonies to present a petition to Parliament. Bubb Pearce's ships regularly conduct trade in the colonies, which may be how they know Pearce, but if so they don't seem eager to continue the acquaintance.

A 1 point **Politics** spend knows that the American delegation has also been angling for new trade contacts while in London, and the petition was something to do with tax problems in the colonies. They've been talking to all kinds of people, including the French. The spend means the protagonist knows where the Americans are staying.

As Pearce is leaving, the protagonists notice (**core clue**) a young woman, flashily dressed, start shadowing him. She looks like a hardened lady of leisure, her face thickly powdered, and it's impossible to guess at her age. She makes sure to stay several paces behind Pearce, but keeps him in sight at all times.

## Hell Fire

Pearce, if his attention is drawn to her, starts as if he's seen a snake. He claims never to have seen her before, and moves off as fast as he can. **Assess Honesty** realizes that Pearce is lying, possibly out of fear, though why he should be afraid of someone half his size is difficult to make out.

The odd thing about her is her hands, which seem somehow much fatter than might be expected from such a dainty woman. At first it appears she is wearing yellow gloves, but in fact the garish, saffron colour is her natural skin. She rests one hand briefly on the door frame, and leaves behind a mark; a rough blemish, as if stained by acid. **Stability 1.**

If the protagonists attempt to follow her, she soon notices and does her best to give them the slip. She won't engage in violence unless provoked, but if that happens she attacks to kill.

### Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

Any protagonist who sees her could use **Streetwise** or similar to find out more about this striking, odd woman. See further *The Jezebels* on page 139.

Mary Protheroe's house is not far from the meeting place. It is, as Pearce said, on a quiet street. In period, there are no police patrols. Public order is kept by parish constables. There aren't many of those and their stupidity (and cupidity – constable is an unpaid job) is well known.



The house is a red brick town house that probably was built just after the Great Fire. It has a walled garden at the back, and is on the end of a row of houses. The ground floor windows, facing the street, are all shuttered. Entrance is best had either by jimmying the front door lock (**Locksmith** Difficulty 4) or climbing over the garden wall to get at the rear (**Athletics** Difficulty 4). If the protagonists search around, a house two doors down is having work done and the builders have carelessly left a ladder behind, which negates the need for an **Athletics** check.

The back garden is where the earth closets are, and as the protagonists arrive, the house servant, Robert, is unluckily closeted therein, with a bad case of indigestion brought on by overindulging. He has a candle for a light. Robert can be **Intimidated** or bribed (**Credit Rating**) but not **Reassured** or **Flattered**.

### Robert

Athletics 4, Fleeing 6, Health 7, Scuffling 7, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 4, Hit Threshold 3, Damage -2 (fist), -1 (stout stick)



## Out of Space

Robert has recently bought a bulldog, a plucky hound that he intends to train for fights. This dog, as yet a bit unmanageable, is also in the garden, tied to a stake.

### Dog

Athletics 10, Health 6, Scuffling 9, Hit Threshold 4, Alertness Modifier +3, Weapon 0 (bite), Armour -1 vs. Any (fur), Stability Loss 0

The maid, Rosie, is asleep in her rooms in the attic. Though she won't fight (**Fleeing** 6) she has impressive lungs and may scream the house down, if startled. However she is a little weak willed, and can be **Flattered**, **Reassured**, **Intimidated** or bribed.

The letters are, as Pearce predicted, in a cedar box in Mary's parlour, on the first floor. **Evidence Collection** (0 points) if necessary, to get the letters.

If the protagonists unluckily manage to attract the attention of a constable (perhaps Rosie yelled), then bribery (**Credit Rating**), **Intimidation** or **Reassurance** (*'surely, constable, you can see we are all respectable men who'd never dream of breaking into a lady's house'*) may avoid trouble.

### Constable Tugwell

Athletics 2, Fleeing 8, Health 7, Scuffling 6, Sense Trouble 6, Weapons 4, Hit Threshold 3, Damage -2 (fist) -1 (club)

Once the mission has been completed, one way or the other, the protagonists will need to get to Pearce's house in Greenwich. That means crossing the Thames. In period, this is easiest done by boat, and boatmen can be hired at any time of day or night. The Thames will be very busy, a veritable forest of ship's masts, all the way along the dockside. It takes perhaps an hour or so to make the crossing and get to Greenwich.

When they get there, Pearce is not at home, though his front door hangs open.

His house appears to have been abandoned. None of his servants are at home. There is a fire burning low in the grate in his parlour, but that is the only sign of life.

Mary Protheroe lies dead on the bedroom floor. She is half-dressed. Though there are bruises on her arms and shoulders, the main (and probably lethal) damage was done to her face. The flesh is burnt away, as if by strong acid. There are tiny marks in the muscle of her exposed face, which resemble bite wounds. The jaw that made those wounds would have to have been small, perhaps as small as a cat's. Both her eyes are gone, melted in their sockets. **Stability** 3.

**Evidence Collection** (0 points) realizes that some of Pearce's clothing is gone, and his strong box is open. Mary's purse is also missing. This suggests that Pearce fled with some few clothes and as much money as he could quickly lay his hands on.

**The Sciences or Medicine** (1 point) cannot suggest a cause of death for Mary. Corrosive vitriol would seem to have been the weapon used, and the face is so thoroughly destroyed as to suggest a large quantity of the stuff. Yet there are no splash marks, no other dots of damage on her clothes, her body, nor the room. It seems unreasonable to suggest that someone flung that much acid into her face, and hit only her face. However it also seems unlikely that she was killed elsewhere and moved to that spot. The bruises indicate that she struggled with her assailant. Moreover the teeth marks indicate some kind of scavenger, but they do not match any of the obvious suspects – a rat, or domestic animal. Never mind that the marks were made post-mortem; a natural animal would probably avoid the stinking, acid-tainted flesh.

Pearce has not taken any of his papers or books, and that includes the record books and specialist literature that he held on behalf of the Club. That much is clear from a glance at his library (**Library Use** 0), and the protagonists may wish to take them now before anyone else finds them.

**Keeper's note:** Bubb really wanted to cozen Mary Protheroe, and didn't intend for any of this. However he's been ducking the Jezebels for some time, and they've finally caught up with him. Mary was the unfortunate victim, when the Jezebels turned violent, and Bubb fled. Afterward he tried to eliminate all evidence of his connection with the Jezebels, which is why he tries to retrieve the book from Sir George. When that doesn't go according to plan, he goes into hiding. See also *Pearce's Progress*, page 137.

Once the protagonists leave Pearce's house, the scene ends. See further *Emergency Meeting*.

## EMERGENCY MEETING

This follows on *The Lady Fornicator*.

The protagonists are summoned to Eversham Abbey, the usual meeting place, in a letter by the Abbot, as follows:

*"Though it is out of our usual time I pray you attend services at the Abbey this Friday, for reasons which, if you are not already aware of, you will be made so."*

The 'out of our usual time' refers to meeting dates. The Club prefers to meet in the summer, when they can expect warmer weather and enjoy the outdoors. Eversham Abbey is owned by Sir George Somerset, also known to the Club as the Abbot of the Right Worshipful Penitents. The 'Penitents' is a play on words; it can be said, in Latin, as *Peni Tenti*, or *Erect Penis*.

## Hell Fire

The Abbey is Sir George's estate, half a day from London, and in addition to the building itself (neoclassic, with interesting murals by Hogarth) the Abbey has extensive grounds, over 60 acres of gardens and forests, with a stream running through it. The Club usually meets at their Temple of Wisdom (actually a folly built to resemble a pagan shrine, with statues of the ancient philosophers) in the grounds, but when the protagonists arrive Sir George invites them into his home instead.

*'The Temple is not fit; the weather is too chill,'* he says, but **Assess Honesty** indicates that he's stretching the truth. Whether or not the weather's poor, he doesn't want people looking too closely at the Temple.

He invites the Club members to a supper of cold meats and wine, before formally opening the meeting. He tells the assembled Club members:

- Pearce is missing. The protagonists may already know that but the other members don't. Sir George doesn't know where Pearce has gone.
- Government officials are very keen to trace Pearce and have been asking his friends and acquaintances for information. He's suspected of murdering Mary Protheroe.
- Some of the investigators have been asking about the Club; its business, meeting places, activities, and so on. While none of the things the Club has been doing are illegal, they could be very embarrassing if they were publicly known.
- A journalist, John Wakes, seems to have acquired papers which detail Pearce's involvement with the Club, as well as other unsavoury activities. He's threatening to publish. In fact, some of the allegations will already be in a broadsheet published that week: Wakes alleges that 'important men', among them Pearce, meet in an unhallowed Abbey to hold demonic

sabbats. *'He claims outrageous things, but the danger is that the corroborative detail he gives about our meetings may make these devil stories more believable!'*

- For all these reasons, the Club shall be temporarily suspended. All papers, pictures, diaries and other materials concerning the Club's activities should be handed over to Sir George, who will keep them under lock and key. The less Wakes can get his hands on, the better for the Club.

The meeting is then adjourned. Sir George offers a room for the night to anyone who doesn't fancy the long journey back to London.

Potential clues:

- **Core.** Pearce may have fled because of his involvement in Protheroe's murder, but he had other pressing troubles. His businesses in the colonies had suffered and his creditors were becoming impatient. Rumour had it that some arrangement with the Americans recently arrived in London had gone sour. See further *Our American Brethren*, page 125.
- **Core.** Pearce may have been having health problems. One Club member recalls meeting Pearce outside a pox doctor's office. 'Cupid's measles, no doubt!' The Club member does remember where the office was. See further *Pearce's Progress*, page 137.
- **Core.** Wakes has been sniffing around for dirt on more than one Club member. Several others can testify he's been after their secrets as well, bribing servants and talking to former mistresses. The protagonists may be next on Wakes' list. See further *Muckraker*, page 142.
- **Assess Honesty, Reassurance, Evidence Collection, Outdoorsman.** If they talk to Sir George or go out to the Temple, they discover that someone has been there and carried out some kind of ritual sacrifice. There's a bloodstain soaked into the floor, and scattered coal-black feathers. Sir George will be

reluctant to talk, but if persuaded says the event must have happened a day or so ago, while he was in the city. Some of his servants reported seeing Pearce's carriage on the grounds at the time of the incident.

- **Library Use, Evidence Collection, Reassurance, Oral History.** Sir George's library has been recently raided. Someone scattered his papers and books. Either Sir George or his servants can reveal that this happened at the same time as the ritual in the Temple. Extra spend on Sir George gets him to reveal that he thinks it was Pearce, but that nothing was taken. However Pearce did lend Sir George an interesting book, *The Inner Mysteries of Venus*, which Sir George has not had time to read. Sir George had that with him when the break-in happened; he will give it to the protagonists if they ask for it.
- **Reassurance, Politics, Oral History.** The Americans have been very busy, talking to members of Parliament, political fixers, and the like. They were pushing to have new laws passed that reduced taxes on colonial trade, but that didn't work out. Recently they've been talking to agents of the French King, possibly trying to open negotiations for trade with the French colonies in the Caribbean. That would of course be illegal, but smuggling is rife in the colonies.

### OUR AMERICAN BRETHREN

The protagonists may follow up on the American connection.

It doesn't take much digging (**Politics**, **Traveller**, **Oral History**, 0 points) to find out that the Americans are a twelve man contingent, mostly from

Virginia, who claim to represent the colonial government. As a crown colony, Virginia's ultimate authority rests with the King who administers through appointed representatives, but locally appointed councils also exist to put forward the colonists' point of view. These men are important landowners, merchants, and society blades. Though their manners are sometimes peculiar, their social standing is equal to the

protagonists. Some of them are staying at the home of Joseph Morgan, a scientist and theologian with a house in the city. Others are lodging in good quality rented rooms, close to Hans Town (Sloane Square). Their leader is a satirist, inventor and theologian, Benjamin Wilcox. Their chief aim to date has been to try and persuade Parliament to reduce the sugar taxes imposed on colonial trade, but they have been unsuccessful.

The protagonists may try to gather rumours and further information, or may approach the Americans directly.

Gathering rumours:

- **Core.** The Americans are hand-in-glove with broadsheet publishers and gutter press types. Many of them are directly connected to the newspaper trade in their own colony. The broadsheet publisher and satirist Wakes is often seen in their company. (*Muckraker*)
- **Core.** The Americans deny themselves few pleasures. No doubt this is their first experience of a civilized metropolis. They enjoy feasts and entertainment, and are often seen in company with willing women of questionable reputation. Some of them fit the description of the woman seen at the coffee house in Lady Fornicator. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** The Americans are on friendly terms with representatives of the French government. The Chevalier d'Eon, former plenipotentiary ambassador for the French crown, is often seen in their company. (*French Fancies*)
- **Politics.** Rumour has it that the Chevalier d'Eon is more than he seems to be. They say he's a member of a French spy ring that reports directly to Louis XV. Benjamin Wilcox may also be an intriguer; he's well connected in the colonies, and counts many important men as his friends. The Seven Year's War was only a few years ago; perhaps Louis intends to

### The Inner Mysteries of Venus

This is a Mythos text. It can appear at several points in the scenario; once the protagonists have obtained one copy they should not be allowed another.

The book is limp leather bound with a plain cover. The bookbinder left no trade mark. The printing is of fair quality, with some staining that at first glance suggests an indifferent printer. Second glances show the stains seem somehow to move around, on the page and within the text. No matter how long the book is owned, the print always seems slightly wet, or tacky.

The novella is fairly standard lewd literature, and in parts quite dull. It follows the progress of Delight, a young girl who escapes from her overbearing family and, on the prompting of a kind spirit who calls herself Venus, climbs over the wall of Venus' garden to join Venus and her maids, who are having a summer party. The plot proceeds apace. However at times it is difficult to tell whether Venus is female, or male; this gender confusion becomes a major plot element when Venus asks Delight to penetrate to the centre of her/his garden hedge maze. There, Delight is told, she will find Venus' precious wand, which Venus wants returned to her.

Readers who skim the book notice that the mobile ink stains form themselves into pictures, pleasing at first, that disport among the pages. Laughing nymphs curl languorously along the top of a line. A shy creature hides, teasingly, behind the letters. Yet as things progress the pictures become more brazen, and more frightening. Some have teeth sharp as razors. Others have huge hands, that drip either blood or some kind of ichor. The maze of Venus forms itself towards the middle of the book, and dominates the imagery from that point onward. Moreover the images become more familiar. Londoners may recognize some of the landmarks, like St. Paul's; or perhaps the gardens look very similar to those at Eversham Abbey.

Skimming provides a dedicated 2 pool points to **Occult**. Poring over it provides +1 **Cthulhu Mythos**. It includes a ritual magic: Venus' Blessing.

Venus' Blessing: By carrying out a ritual involving blood sacrifice, the petitioner asks and hopefully obtains the blessing of Venus/Y'golonac. The blood sacrifice can be human, but does not have to be. The petitioner daubs the blood on a parchment in the manner proscribed, which parchment he then carries with him. For 3 **Stability**, 1 **Sanity**, and a minor sacrifice, the petitioner gains 1 temporary pool point in any ability. For 4 **Stability**, 2 **Sanity** and a human sacrifice, the petitioner gains 3 temporary pool points in any one ability. Repeated petitions whether major or minor will eventually result in Contacting Y'golonac, whether the caster intends to or not.



## Hell Fire

foment another conflict, this time with his Canadian colonies working together with traitors in the American camp.

- **Flattery, Oral History.** They say the Americans are welcome at Madame Racine's salon. Madame Racine, a Frenchwoman who has lived in London for many years, has many pretty nieces who seem to come and go from France very regularly. Her nieces are very fond of Vauxhall Gardens, whose dubious reputation as a place of assignation is well known.
- **Oral History, Traveller.** The Americans are members of a Club, which they call The Honourable Mariners of Merryland. Though they seek pleasures in London it seems they are no strangers to vice; in many ways their hobbies mirror the protagonists'.
- **Streetwise.** Some of the American contingent are hard men to cross. So far there have been two formal duels and at least as many informal crossing of blades. Though rough-and-ready in their manners, their number includes several ex-military men who seem more accustomed to the battlefield than the salon.

Approaching directly:

- **Core.** The Americans admit to knowing Pearce, but say that they haven't seen him for several weeks. The last time any of them met Pearce, it was at Madame Racine's salon. Note: if the book *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* has already been obtained, the protagonists may spot one of the Americans reading a copy. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** When the protagonists arrive, they spot John Wakes sneaking out a side door. Clearly he doesn't want to meet the protagonists, and will hurry away if they try to force an acquaintance. (*Muckraker*)
- **Core.** When first approached, Benjamin Wilcox is enjoying a quiet luncheon with a woman who he introduces as Mademoiselle de

Beaumont. De Beaumont pays close attention to the conversation, and protagonists who later meet d'Eon will have the uncanny feeling that they've met him before. This is because de Beaumont is actually d'Eon, dressed as a woman. (*French Fancies*).

- **Politics.** The Americans are no longer interested in discussions with Parliament, as they feel there's no chance of changing Parliament's decision. *"Of course, this means trouble for us, gentlemen. You cannot imagine the disdain which these sugar duties are held in Virginia, and elsewhere in the colonies. There will be trouble yet over this short-sighted policy!"*
- **Assess Honesty.** The Americans are telling the truth about their negotiations with Parliament, but probably lying, or at least being circumspect with the truth, about everything else. They claim to have no interest in dealings with the French, and that d'Eon has no status with the French crown anyway; clearly they don't believe it. They also claim to have no interest in striking a deal on the tax issue, and that's also a lie. They'd do a deal tomorrow if they thought they could get one. They claim not to know who Madame Racine is, and that's untrue.
- **Credit Rating.** The Americans are keen to meet men of high standing in London. They want to make investments; as wealthy men, who can see trouble brewing, they want to spread their assets across several jurisdictions. That way, whoever wins the war, they come out on top. They'll ask for investment advice, but they'll also show themselves as Club members with very similar interests to the protagonists.

From this point forward, until American Intrigues, the Keeper should use the Americans as a free-floating group who can be encountered in many different locations. The following should be borne in mind:

- They are men of high society who enjoy having a good time.
- Their numbers include scientists and theologians, merchants and landowners, and colonial militia officers with battlefield experience both in the Seven Years and the Indian wars.
- They can be found staying at the houses of respected and influential men, in places where politics is done (eg. Parliament), around the docks, as well as in houses of dubious repute (eg. Madame Racine's salon).
- If threatened, they may manufacture a reason to fight a duel. They do this to shut up protagonists who might be dangerous. The pretext is that the protagonist somehow insulted the honour (probably their military record) of one of the officers.

### American Scientist

The Sciences 7, Theology 4, Credit Rating 4, Politics 3, Astronomy 3.

### American Merchant

Languages 3, Traveller 4, Assess Honesty 3, Bargain 5, Credit Rating 6.

### American Officer

Athletics 6, Firearms 8, Health 8, Riding 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 6, Shadowing 7, Stealth 7, Weapons 10.

Benjamin Wilcox is their spokesman and leader. In his own country he's a satirist, newsman and inventor. His books have been published in France and England as well as the colonies. He presents himself as a humble man of the people, but enjoys sumptuous living and having well connected friends.

### Benjamin Wilcox

Architecture 4, Assess Honesty 5, Astronomy 2, Bargain 3, Credit Rating 5, Conceal 2, The Sciences 10, Fleeing 7, History 3, Health 6, Languages 3, Library Use 5, Reassurance 4, Theology 4, Sanity 6, Stability 6.

## Out of Space

Encounters in this scene will take place in:

- The homes of respectable and influential men, especially those connected with the sciences. This type of scene can happen most often in Greenwich, near (or in) the Royal Observatory.
- Coffee houses and drinking places associated with the sea and shipping trade.
- Around (or in) the Houses of Parliament, discussing political issues with fixers and important government officials.

## LOCAL COLOUR

This is a form of antagonist reaction.

The Keeper may want to use some interesting scenery in scenes set in London, to give the players a better sense of what life is like there. Consider using any of the following:

- **An Execrable Concert.** 18th century London's answer to the mime, these street musicians perform for pennies and won't take no for an answer. The noise they make is like caterwauling. One has a fiddle, another a viol, a third a washboard, and the fourth claps fire irons together in a kind of rhythm. The fiddler, 'Blind Ned', is the leader of the bunch, and probably the worst musician, though he does have a good line of invective against the French, whom he claims robbed him of his sight in a Seven Years War battle. They work in company with a band of dippers (**Fleeing** 8, **Filch** 7) so protagonists had best keep an eye on their money pouches.
- **Make Way There!** An NPC of interest to the protagonists (American, Jezebel, Wakes or similar) rides through a crowded street in a hackney cab. The cab driver, being London born and bred, is paying very little attention to pedestrians, being beneath his notice. The protagonists see to their horror that a small child is about to be run over; **Athletics** may be needed to save

the child. The cab hurries on without stopping, and the NPC doesn't even look back. **Stability** 1 if the child is run over; it is crushed beneath the wheels and will lose a leg.

- **Silvanus Wildblood's Paving Stones.** Possibly during a chase scene, the protagonists find themselves in a narrow alley. Pavement paving was the responsibility of the property owner and there was no standardization of materials. In this case, Master Wildblood has been particularly scant with his paving, using loose scabble and cinders as a kind of aggregate. On

a hot day the dust blows in every man's face, but on a wet one the ground is particularly boggy and slippery. Wildblood is known to the council and constabulary as a particularly fierce and obdurate man, who reacts angrily to any suggestion that his paving is no good. **Athletics** may be needed to keep upright; Wildblood has **Health** 8, **Scuffling** 10, and can't be Intimidated, though he can be **Flattered**.

- **The Swiney.** Many Londoners keep pigs, which are prone to escaping. The protagonists are confronted by a gang of snuffling pigs, one of whom



is a boar who doesn't much like the look of these preening protagonists. Athletics 8, Health 8, Scuffling 12; Hit Threshold 3; Alertness Modifier +0; Weapon -1 (bite, trample); Armour -1 vs. any (skin); Stability Loss: +0. The pigs' owner is out looking for them, and won't be happy if the protagonists have damaged 'poor John', her prize porker. The constabulary may get involved.

- **The Smoke.** London is a smoggy place at the best of times, but today it is absolutely foul. This black and greasy air leaves smuts of black dust on everything it touches; hopefully the protagonists aren't wearing their best clothes. **Athletics** or catch a very nasty cough which won't go away, penalizing **Stealth** rolls and doing -3 damage. The cough can be cured with **Medicine** and will go away in time (Keeper's discretion as to exactly when). Encounters in the smog are cloaked in mist, making it easier to **Flee** (+1) but penalizing **Shadowing** (-2).
- **Lamplighters.** This is a night-time event. The street lamps of London are lit by oil-fired lamps, filled and lit every day by independent contractors. This particular contractor has decided to supplement his income by shorting his lamp oil, selling the remainder. The result is the lamps gutter and die, at a time least convenient to the protagonists. This penalizes attempts to **Flee** (-1) and **Shadow** (-2), but is good for **Stealth** (+2). A failed Fleeing means the runner tripped over something in the dark and did himself an injury: -1 damage.
- **Contesting the Way.** A carter and a cabman are angrily debating who ought to have the right of passage, and their horses and vehicles are blocking the road. None can pass, and a crowd of angry citizens are gathering. A melee may break out at any moment. This might be an interesting time for a Jezebel or American encounter, sighted on the other side of the obstruction. If the protagonists want to get closer, they'll have to find some way past the roadblock.

## PEARCE'S PROGRESS

The protagonists may try to find out what happened to Pearce.

He has not been seen since that night when he met the protagonists. He's not visited any of his old friends nor has he been seen in his usual haunts. The protagonists may try talking to Pearce's friends and associates, or go to places where Pearce can usually be found and discover what he's been up to.

Talking:

- **Core.** Several of his friends remark that Pearce seemed ill at ease these last few weeks, and some claim he was actually sick. He's been consulting a number of quack doctors, but whatever he had, it didn't seem to be responding to treatment. He may have picked up something nasty from his nocturnal escapades; he was often seen at Madame Racine's salon, which has a questionable reputation. (*The Jezebels*)
- **Core.** Until recently, Pearce was deep in counsels with the American contingent. Nobody knew what it was about, but Pearce has many business interests in the colonies, so they may have had investments to talk about. They were often seen together at an inn in South London, in Greenwich: The Mitre. (*American Intrigues*).
- **Core.** Several sources claim Pearce visited Vauxhall Gardens frequently, in the company of one or more of Madame Racine's nieces. The Gardens are a notorious illicit meeting-place. Some sightings may happen after Pearce goes missing. (*Vauxhall Funeral*)
- **Politics.** Pearce had recently acted as go-between for the Americans, representing their interests in Parliament and attempting to sway votes in their favour. This didn't go at all well, and Pearce went from being one of the Americans' best friends to a pariah in a few short weeks.
- **Flattery, Reassurance.** Pearce's reputation with the ladies, until

recently, was at an all-time high. Despite Mary Protheroe's claim on him, Pearce has been spreading himself around the social circuit, dallying as he pleased. However two or three weeks ago it all stopped. Though he was still seen at Vauxhall Gardens, he no longer played the field.

- **Streetwise.** Most of the quacks Pearce visited were pox doctors of one kind or another. None of them have a good reputation, though they all promise miracle cures. Pearce seems to have visited nearly every quack in London, getting more desperate with each failure.

Places where Pearce can normally be found (business offices, coffee houses, social clubs):

- **Core (Business).** Pearce's financial position was rocky, but not unsalvageable. However his financial records show a lot of outgoings with no real attribution, as though he were paying bribes or owed money to dubious characters. Until recently he was corresponding with members of the American contingent, especially Wilcox, but that seems to have stopped. One of the most recent payments was to a 'Monsieur de Beaumaris', secretary to the Count of Guerchy, the current ambassador of the French King. (*American Intrigues*) Extra spend here (**Credit Rating, Politics, Flattery**) gets de Beaumaris, a languid young man hired for his political connections rather than ability, to admit that Pearce wanted to know more about the connection between d'Eon and the Americans. Since d'Eon is not beloved of the Ambassador (nor the Ambassador of d'Eon), the secretary was happy to tell Pearce that d'Eon was intriguing with the Americans, for 'some grubby financial reasons'.
- **Core (Business or Social).** Among the belongings Pearce left behind are a number of medals from Vauxhall Gardens. These tokens are normally



## Out of Space

used as entry passes. Pearce must have been going to Vauxhall often. (*Vauxhall Funeral*)

- **Core** (Business or Social). Among Pearce's letters are a number of notes, heavily perfumed, from Madame Racine's nieces. Most of them are innocuous, cheerful, flirtatious messages, but the more recent ones are demanding. *'You must pay your respects to Venus, my sweet.'* *'There comes a time in every man's life when he has to pay for his pleasures, my dear.'* *'We know all your sinful little secrets, my baby.'* *'When will you visit us, my jewel? We grow bored here in Venus' garden, all alone.'* **Note:** If the book *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* has not already been obtained, it could be found here among Pearce's private papers.
- **Evidence Collection, Art, Art History.** Among Pearce's possessions are some engravings produced by an anonymous printer. Though pornographic in nature (two gentlemen birching the bared buttocks of a voluptuous woman) the subject is somehow disturbing rather than arousing. This is because the artist got the woman wrong; her hands and head are out of all proportion to her body, and her smile has sharp teeth in it. Keeper's note: a protagonist who looks at the engraving too closely sees the woman turn her head towards the protagonist and leer, before pulling her bodice down to show another pair of eyes in her chest. This is over in a moment, and the picture reverts to its original subject. Stability 2.
- **Library Use, Accounting.** Pearce's financials are all a muddle, but study shows that his American investments were his most significant earners. Everything else was either worth less than Pearce paid for it, or had been lost in the Seven Years War. Two of his ships had been captured by privateers, one had sunk, and there was a lawsuit against him by a warehouse owner for unpaid fees. Pearce was keeping his head above water, but if something

were to go wrong with his American investments he'd have been ruined.

- **Medicine, The Sciences.** Pearce left behind a collection of quack remedies for sexually transmitted diseases. He seems to have dabbled with all of them, stinking ointments and noxious potions. None of them would have been prescribed by a reputable physician. Some of them were positively poisonous, or could have induced hallucinations. If Pearce wasn't a sick man before he took those drugs, he would have been afterwards. The pox doctor, if talked to (extra spend, **Flattery, Oral History, Intimidation**) says, *'Of course, the remedies I gave him could only have delayed the inevitable. When the frenzy is upon a man, what can stop it? He claimed his lesions were talking to him. Clearly he was marked by something greater than himself . . .'* The doctor is referring to a condition known (in his profession) as Buboes Dire, and claims that the disease leads to madness, bodily decay and death. However he hints at something more, though he will not say a word to those he does not know are marked by Y'golonac. (potential **Stability** 1). He does offer to sell Mrs. Phillips' Baudruches Superfines (condoms made of sheeps' gut and decorated with ribbon, which happen to be forgeries based on Mrs. Phillips' famous design) to those who do not wish to catch Buboes Dire.

Encounters in this scene can take place in:

- Pearce's house in Greenwich, an elegant new Georgian building not far from the Royal Naval Hospital. With Pearce missing, his creditors (and there are many) are camped out on his doorstep, awaiting a chance to invade and take his possessions as security against his debts.
- Pearce's favourite coffee house near the warehouses and docks, where he conducted most of his business.

- Aboard one of Pearce's ships, currently in the harbour awaiting orders. The ship is under lien by one of Pearce's creditors and cannot leave; the captain and crew grumble about unpaid wages.
- In dens of ill repute, where people of reputation go for illicit thrills.
- In the crowded offices of a pox doctor, where the shelves are full to toppling with bottles and nostrums of all kinds. The air is sharp and pungent, and the doctor is sly.

NPCs who might be encountered during this scene:

- **Captain Gantry**, a hard-bitten merchant sailor who's fallen, through drink, to working on whatever leaky tub he can find.
- **Emma Knox**, a woman of pleasure whose looks are beginning to fade. Ominous 'beauty spots' cluster on her face, indicative of the diseases that ravage her.
- **Charles Porter**, a fellow Club member who also does business in the Americas, rather more successfully than Pearce. He knows some of the American delegation personally.
- **Poll Waddle**, Bubb's cook and family servant for over twenty years, honest and hard-working but just a little deaf.
- **Rab MacNeil**, a moneylender's muscle who's been tailing Bubb for some time. Tall and sinister, but surprisingly intelligent for a hireling.
- **May Cooper**, a sprightly young woman, new to London, who Bubb met at Vauxhall. She remembers him fondly, but not his Jezebel friends, who were too overfamiliar.

### THE JEZEBELS

In this scene, the protagonists encounter the cult of Y'gonolac, that seeks to spread its influence to the New World.

The protagonists could encounter the Jezebels in the following ways: by trying to find out more about them (cf. *The Lady Fornicator*), by following up on The Inner Mysteries of Venus (various scenes), or by arousing their interest, in which case they may attack. Their base of operations in London is Madame Racine's Salon, described below.

The group can be investigated, can initiate an antagonist reaction, or can be encountered at the Salon.

Investigation:

- **Core** (following from *The Lady Fornicator*). Protagonists who ask further about the mysterious woman seen at the coffee house, perhaps

using Streetwise or similar, are told about Madame Racine's pretty nieces. They're seen at some of the most interesting parties, often found at Covent Garden, often met at Vauxhall. The nieces tend to come and go quite quickly, sometimes staying for as long as a season, other times leaving after a few summer weeks. Nobody's quite sure who Madame Racine is. There are those who swear she's Russian, or Polish, or Italian, though her name suggests French connections. She's lived in London for many years and is never seen outside her salon.

- **Core.** Madame Racine's nieces are most often seen at Vauxhall Gardens these days. They enjoy the pleasant atmosphere, though the Gardens must be chilly now that the weather has turned. (Vauxhall Funeral)
- **Core.** Pearce was last seen with some of Madame Racine's nieces, at Vauxhall. The friend who saw him

says Pearce seemed very ill, but, on questioning, claimed to be better than ever, and promised to take the acquaintance boating on the Thames the week after. (*The Dying Lover*)

- **Streetwise.** Madame Racine and her brood may be involved with some dangerous people. Some of her niece's paramours go missing and are never seen again. One turned up drowned, in the Thames, his face eaten away – presumably by rats.
- **Evidence Collection,** cf. *Pearce's Progress*. The nieces give their love notes to men all over London. If compared with the ones found at Pearce's place of business, the handwriting is identical. In fact, the writing on all the notes is the same, even though the writer must have been different each time. Stability 1
- **Languages, Traveller.** Among themselves, the nieces speak a foreign dialect. Several of their acquaintances

### The Handmaids of Venus

This interpretation of Y'gonolac assumes that the Old One is a sexually transmitted disease of the body and the soul. Keepers who prefer not to use this version of the Old One should alter as necessary.

Y'gonolac has existed in the old world since time immemorial, but his cults tend to have short careers. They engage in orgiastic rituals that numb the mind and induce ecstatic, frenzied behaviour. The Bacchic cults of ancient Greece may well have been inspired by the Old One. However this was the apex of Y'gonolac's influence, and even then his priests were often persecuted. Since those times, the cults have dwindled, their influence diminished. Those who listen to the whispers in their blood, and talk with the pustules growing in their flesh, are denounced as madmen, not revered as touched by the Godhood.

They depend on encroaching urbanization and trade. Small, isolated communities are no good for transmitting infection. The Roman Empire spread their influence far and wide, but the Empire's collapse and the Dark Ages that followed reduced the following to almost nothing. For the longest while, the only extant group of worshippers was in England, where a small splinter group had been left behind by the Romans. They had carried the Godhood there and buried it deep below the earth, in a tumulus that had been raised for a barbarian chief. Since then the Godhood has been moved several times when its location was on the verge of being discovered; its most recent relocation was during the Civil War, when a troop of Parliamentarians was about to destroy it.

The current group in London follow the Bacchanal, with rites handed down to them by the priestesses of old. Madame Racine is the high priestess, who teaches her nieces how to spread the essence of Y'gonolac among their admirers. Through the lumps in Madame Racine's flesh, Y'gonolac speaks to its followers.

So far, Y'gonolac's efforts to spread further have met with mixed success. The new Empire has its uses, but the cult's progress has been consistently thwarted by war, which breaks up its groups and kills its followers. Y'gonolac has its eye on the emerging new world, hoping that re-establishing its Godhood there might avoid the strife that has prevented its spread.

Madame Racine's salon is the main bastion of the cult in London. There are two other groups in England, one in Scotland, and several more scattered across Europe, but communication between groups is difficult thanks to the constant state of diplomatic unrest. Since the Seven Years War things have been a little better, but even now it wouldn't take much to eliminate the cult. This vulnerability is why they want to relocate.

## Out of Space

have overheard it. Some think it Russian, others Greek. In fact it would appear to be no known language.

If provoked into an antagonist reaction, then:

- The Jezebel (with one or two of her sisters in support) meets the protagonist in a public place, to flirt with them. Clues could be obtained in the conversation; the Jezebels aren't particularly security conscious. However at an appropriate moment, a mouth with sharp teeth forms in the young woman's otherwise flawless shoulder. *'Do you like what you see?'* it whispers, and then vanishes. **Stability** 3, and the woman then attempts **Intimidation**, which can be a contested roll if the Keeper chooses. *'Perhaps, sir, you should mind your own affairs,'* she says, and walks away. From that point on, the target is at -2 on all rolls made that directly target a Jezebel (eg. combat). This effect lasts either for the remainder of the adventure (Purist) or until Confidence is restored (Pulp). If **Intimidation** is a contested roll, then the protagonist does not suffer the effect if he wins the contest.
- The protagonist is directly targeted by one or more Jezebels. They prefer to strike from ambush, and may soften a target up by getting a confederate to slip them a sedative (**Health** difficulty 4 or suffer -2 to all rolls for the remainder of this scene). The ideal therefore would be a coffee house, party, or other gathering where there are plenty of people. The Jezebels will wait until their target feels ill, and then **Shadow** them to a convenient ambush location. They strike to kill.

### Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a

Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

Madame Racine's salon is an older building that must somehow have survived the Great Fire. It is a tottering Tudor dwelling on a street that was once fashionable, but has since been passed over. There is a strange, rich stink in the air, as of earth soil. One of the neighbouring properties is a gin house, and there is raucous singing and brawling at all hours.

The house is large and ramshackle. The door is guarded by Shankwell, an enormous bruiser, and his dog Hades. Shankwell is under instruction not to let anyone in who does not bear one of the nieces' notes (found in Pearce's Progress) and will start a fight if need be. He cannot be **Flattered**, **Intimidated** or **Reassured**. Bribes will not be accepted but visitors who seem very respectable (**Credit Rating**) may be asked to leave a visiting card. They won't be admitted and must await a reply, which will probably take a day or so. If Madame Racine then decides to meet with the protagonist, she will send one of her cards to the protagonist's residence. If not, she sends the protagonist's card back to them. The Keeper should decide which it is, taking into consideration the protagonists previous encounters with the Jezebels.

### Shankwell

Athletics 9, Firearms 5, Health 10, Preparedness 3, Riding 5, Sanity 1, Stability 4, Scuffling 12, Sense Trouble 4, Weapons 10. Hit Threshold 4. Weapons available: Knife -1, Heavy Club +0, Pistol +0, Blunderbuss +1. A burly, dangerous man. In addition to guarding the door, Shankwell is sometimes found escorting Jezebels, as driver for their horse-and-trap.

### Hades

Athletics 12, Health 8, Scuffling 10. Hit Threshold 4. Alertness Modifier +3. Weapons: Bite 0. Armour: +1 vs any (hair). Stability Loss: +0

The house is large and, in Tudor fashion, a rabbit warren of corridors and rooms, many of which have no windows and are dimly lit. It feels hot and humid indoors, no matter the weather outside. Madame Racine has sumptuous apartments on the first floor, while her nieces are in much smaller rooms on the second floor and up. The ground floor is where Shankwell has his rooms, but it is also where Madame Racine's callers are entertained, in richly decorated lounges filled with songbirds, expensive artworks, and books of lewd literature. The Inner Mysteries of Venus, if not already discovered, can be found here. The kitchens and cellars are underground. The cook is never seen by outsiders; the Jezebels call her (it?) Old Jessomy.

### Old Jessomy

Athletics 8, Health 8, Scuffling 10; Hit Threshold 4; Alertness Modifier +1 (a multitude of eyes); Stealth Modifier -1 (moves with a glutinous, sucking motion); Weapon 0 (hooked extrusions). A lump of flesh that could be mistaken for a hunched woman, but with far too many eyes and arms.

The gardens at rear are small, dominated by an oak tree that must have been growing here since time immemorial. At night, colourful paper lanterns hang from its branches. There is a design laid out in mosaic in the garden that resembles a Troy Maze. These ringed labyrinths will be familiar to the protagonists; turf mazes, hedge labyrinths and the like are popular, and go back to antiquity. Many of them are intended to be walked through, sometimes as part of May games or meditative exercises. This maze, laid out in coloured tiles, seems small and simple. Madame Racine sometimes challenges guests to run it, or uses it to dispose of unwanted visitors. She can expend 3 magic per target and cause anyone standing in the garden to be transported to a high-walled hedge maze, with the oak tree at the centre. The tree now seems even larger than before, and its branches twist, though there is



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Hell Fire

no wind. A high-pitched giggling can be heard from the Jezebels, who now are pursuing the target through the maze. Contested rolls versus **Architecture** 8, **Art** 6, **Occult** 10 or **Theology** 10 must be made to get out of the labyrinth. **Stability** 4 for being caught in the maze. Failure in a contested roll means that the Jezebels close in, possibly getting close enough to attack (Keeper's choice). Three failures in a row mean that the victim has found his way to the centre.

There Y'gonolac awaits. At first the unfortunate may think the creature is a large tree, somehow pale-fleshed. It reaches a thick branch towards him

that resembles an arm, with a hand and fingers, but a wet orifice opens in the palm of that hand, and a thickened stalk (or tongue) protrudes from it. **Stability** 7 (2) (including the additional pool loss) and **Sanity** +3 (1) for the encounter. Immediately on seeing this entity, the victim is shocked back into the garden, lying, shivering, among the roots of the old oak tree. Some of the low-hanging branches brush the victim's face.

**Madame Racine** rarely shows herself to visitors. Her nieces do most of the entertaining. However she does invite favoured guests to her apartments, where they can gossip in private.

Madame is originally English, from the West Country, but adopted a foreign persona when she first became a courtesan, in the 1660s. She has lived a long life, and could live many years yet, with Y'gonolac's favour. Physically she is a massive, corpulent woman, with a pale, rouged face and oddly delicate hands. She never gets out of bed, and is incapable of doing so, but this is less to do with weight and more to do with the many buboes and pustules that encrust her flesh. They whisper to her at night. Her room is heavily perfumed, to cover the stink of her rotten body.



## Out of Space

### Madame Racine

Assess Honesty 9, Cthulhu Mythos 7, Conceal 5, Flattery 9, Intimidation 6, Health 9, Magic 10, Streetwise 3, Scuffling 10. Hit Threshold 2; Weapons 0 (touch); Armour -1 (unnatural flesh); Stability 0. Anything touched by Madame suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch. She may be able to cast other spells, as the Keeper wishes, but does know Shrivelling, Create Gate. Madame Racine and all the Jezebels communicate with each other in a strange language; it may seem like gibberish, or an unfamiliar tongue.

If questioned, Madame cheerfully admits that she knows 'poor Bubb', and wishes him 'nothing but health and long life. Very, very long life . . .' She does not know where he is.

Jezebels (who use personal names such as Marie, Theresa, Peg, Lizzie, Peonie, Clementina, Rose) can be encountered in the following locations:

- Houses of ill fame, or coffee houses and pubs with poor reputations.
- Any place in the city known to be a place of assignation (eg. Covent Garden) or where fashionable people gather.
- In back alleys and on ill-lit streets, sometimes riding in a horse-and-trap driven by Shankwell.
- In the company of the Americans, particularly Benjamin Wilcox.

### MUCKRAKER

In this scene the protagonists deal with the journalist Wakes, as well as the damage to their own reputations.

In order to protect themselves, they need first to get rid of incriminating evidence. Each of them will have books, items and other things that prove their involvement with the Club. They also may face trumped-up charges from Wakes, who isn't above lying for the sake of a story. The protagonists should be allowed to discuss the nature of the evidence: it could be eyewitness reports of a Club meeting, tales spread by an ex-mistress, a broadsheet that names them as Satanists who attended Sabbath, and so on. Whatever the evidence is, it's important enough to ruin them.

The protagonists will suffer penalties to non-combat Contest rolls in each scene after *Emergency Meeting*, the penalties being equal to the number of pool points remaining in Evidence. If the protagonists want to reduce or eliminate the penalty, they need to get rid of the Evidence. As an option the Keeper can also use Evidence to increase the spend for Investigative abilities, with the proviso that Evidence should never prevent protagonists from getting clues. Make it more difficult, certainly, but never prevent.

Mechanically this can be done in one of three ways:

- On a 1 for 1 basis, spend Academic or Interpersonal ability pool points to eliminate the Evidence. For example, **Law** or **Politics** could be used to threaten to sue, or to use 'pull' to squash a story. **Theology** could be used to demonstrate how pious the protagonist is, thus scotching Satanist rumours. **Credit Rating** could be used as bribes. The points can be spent as the protagonist wishes; not all the points have to come from the same ability.
- On a 1 for 1 basis, use pool points to gather evidence against Wakes. These pool points would have to come from abilities such as **Library**

**Use, Streetwise, Oral History, Evidence Collection** or similar; abilities which would be no good at proving protagonist innocence, but great at proving someone else's guilt. For each point spent, a point of Evidence is negated. People won't know what to believe when the muck is flying thick and fast.

- Perform a public act so stunning that, in the Keeper's judgment, it negates 1 or more points of Evidence. Challenging an American or Frenchman to a duel and winning, performing some act of public service, or succeeding in some great scientific or political endeavour, are three examples. The protagonists may come up with others. Note that Wakes won't accept a duel challenge, and even if he did it would do no good, as Wakes is of a different social station to the protagonists. Fighting with him merely treats him like a gentleman, a status which he is not entitled to either by birth or behaviour.

As far as Wakes is concerned, he'll spend his time spreading scandalous rumours and publishing every scrap of damaging material he can get his hands on. He has the delicate task of avoiding the protagonists' attention while at the same time finding as much out as he can.

However should the protagonists corner Wakes, search his rooms (a dirty garret) or search his offices (a printer's shop in South London) they might learn some interesting information:

- **Core.** The Americans are up to something big. They paid Wakes handsomely to spread this disinformation against the Club, because they were worried that Pearce might spill what he knew about their plans to their political enemies. The protagonists and the Club were merely semi-innocent bystanders in the effort to smear Pearce. The Americans meet regularly with emissaries of the French crown, in Greenwich.
- **Streetwise.** Wakes is familiar with Madame Racine's salon. He's been

warned off from there before. They have powerful friends. Wakes knows that Pearce is in bad health, which he attributes to the salon. Pearce is only one of the men Madame Racine has ruined; Wakes knows of at least six others who, over the years, have crossed Racine's path, and vanished off the face of the earth.

- **Library Use, Evidence Collection, Occult** (searching offices). If the protagonists have not already found a copy of *The Inner Mysteries of Venus*, Wakes has one.
- **Interrogation, Intimidation.** Wakes knows that 'Mademoiselle de Beaumont' is actually the Chevalier d'Eon. He also knows that d'Eon is on bad terms with the current French ambassador, and is blackmailing the French crown, threatening to publish incriminating information about French spy activity in England unless d'Eon's demands are met. Wakes thinks the Chevalier's intrigues with the Americans are part of this same effort; by bringing them to the French, d'Eon proves the French ambassador is incompetent (since it was d'Eon, not the Ambassador, who pulled off the coup) while at the same time being paid handsomely for his efforts.

### John Wakes, Muckraker.

Assess Honesty 4, Bargain 5, Conceal 2, Evidence Collection 4, Filch 4, Flattery 4, Fleeing 8, Health 5, Interrogation 3, Languages 3, Law 1, Locksmith 1, Library Use 3, Politics 6, Sense Trouble 2, Shadowing 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 6, Stability 5, Sanity 3. Weapons: -2 (fists). A tall, gangling man who dresses to ape his betters, but never quite pulls off the effect. He continually takes snuff from a small silver box.

Though Wakes is an inefficient brawler, he may decide to hire some brawny protectors, whose chief attributes are Athletics 4, Health 7, Sanity 4, Stability 6, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 2, Shadowing 4, Weapons 5; Weapon: -2 (fist, kick), -1 (knife, club).

## FRENCH FANCIES

In which the protagonists further investigate the Americans' relationship with the Chevalier d'Eon.

The Chevalier, in his guise as Mademoiselle de Beaumont, is often seen in Greenwich these days. She pretends an interest in Science and attends lectures at the Royal Observatory, but her real objective is to meet clandestinely with the Americans, and Benjamin Wilcox in particular, in Greenwich. They often meet at an inn called The Mitre, not far from St Alfege, a newly built Hawksmoor church. The inn is a rough-and-ready place, frequented by townsmen and sailors alike. It's just rough enough for new faces to be anonymous, while not being too dangerous a meeting place. When the conspirators don't meet at the inn, they can sometimes be found in the church graveyard.

D'Eon is playing a duplicitous game. He isn't on good terms with the French crown right now; plans to invade England, which d'Eon was meant to be obtaining information for, came to nothing. However d'Eon isn't ready to retire just yet, at least not as a man. He wants his de Beaumont persona to be recognized formally by the French crown, something which Louis XVI is reluctant to do. The Chevalier has threatened to publish secret correspondence, hoping to embarrass Louis into doing d'Eon's bidding. However the Americans have presented d'Eon with another option: give Louis a grand military coup, and go back to France a hero.

The American intrigues are simple treachery. The Americans think war is coming, and have promised the French their allegiance if the French will give them military backing. They claim to have agents in all the American colonies and also in several Caribbean outposts, among them Bermuda. In

effect, the conspirators will be giving the French favoured trading status with their own colonies and handing over the Caribbean colonies to the French crown direct. However d'Eon doubts that the Virginians have the popular backing that they claim to have. To commit to a war with England, the French would have to be absolutely sure of their American allies, and d'Eon is demanding proofs. The Americans claim they have letters and documents showing that their allies are in positions of power within the colonies, and thus are able to do as the Americans claim. Hence the secret meetings, for while the Americans don't mind making promises, they won't let the documents out of their sight.

To obtain clues the protagonists will either have to confront d'Eon directly (a risky prospect) or conduct covert surveillance of his meetings with the Americans.

### Covert Surveillance:

- **Core.** Mademoiselle de Beaumont pretends interest in the Royal Observatory, but is often seen in company with the Virginians. The Americans bring her documents – love letters? – which she studies with great interest. Benjamin Wilcox is often seen in her company.
- **Streetwise**, possibly **Filch** 4. The protagonists get a look at one of the documents. It's in some kind of code, clearly not a love letter. Though the code is indecipherable, the way the document is worded strongly suggests a list of some kind. Names, perhaps, or supplies. Perhaps to do with military defences?
- **Cryptography, History.** Only to be gained in conjunction with the above **Streetwise**. The code is based on the Caesar cipher, one of the oldest covert communication techniques. It is a list of men who pledge their allegiance to the French crown, in exchange for military



## Out of Space

help in overthrowing English rule in their colonies. Many important men in several Caribbean colonies are implicated.

Approaching d'Eon directly risks his 'taking offence' on behalf of Mademoiselle de Beaumont. If he chooses, he may challenge a protagonist to a duel, claiming that the protagonist besmirched de Beaumont's honour. He's only likely to do this if the protagonists become offensive, or if they learn too much. Alternatively one of the Americans may do the same, on the same pretext.

The direct approach:

- **Core.** Mademoiselle de Beaumont admits to admiring the Americans, especially Wilcox, whose achievements in the Sciences are well known. She has met with them several times; is that a crime? She takes offence at any suggestion that their acquaintance is improper.
- **Streetwise**, possibly **Stealth 4**. The conspirators are overheard talking about taking ship to Bermuda, 'the next stage', while de Beaumont mentions a number of warships and soldiers that could be made available, if the colony's fortresses were silenced.
- **Assess Honesty**, possibly **Sense Trouble 4**. Mademoiselle de Beaumont may be more than she seems. The protagonist won't be able to put his finger on it, but something seems not quite right.

Chevalier Charles-Genevieve-Louis-Auguste-Andre-Timothee d'Eon, aka Mademoiselle Lia de Beaumont, French spy.

Art History 8, Assess Honesty 6, Athletics 8, Bargain 8, Conceal 8, Cryptography 4, Disguise 10, Evidence Collection 5, Firearms 9, Flattery 8, Health 9, Interrogation 5, Intimidation 5, Languages 3, Locksmith 2, Riding 10, Sanity 8, Stability 6, Scuffling

8, Sense Trouble 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5, Weapons 14; Hit Threshold 4; Weapons: 0 (rapier), +1 (cavalry sabre), 0 (light pistol).

Though d'Eon has little backing from the French Ambassador, his shadier contacts in London can supply him with brainless brawn, when needed. These footpads have Athletics 5, Health 7, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 1, Shadowing 6, Weapons 5; Weapon: -2 (fist, kick), -1 (knife, club).

## AMERICAN INTRIGUES

By this point the protagonists will be aware that the Americans are up to no good, and may even be planning to betray England's colonies to France in exchange for backing in a treasonous rebellion against the Crown.

Protagonists with **Duty**, **Arrogance**, **Adventure** or **Revenge** drives may be especially appalled by this. The Americans are betraying the Empire to its enemies, the hated French (**Arrogance**, **Revenge**), and depriving the Crown, and honest Englishmen, of the chance to explore the last great frontier (**Duty**, **Adventure**). Protagonists who have seen the Americans in close conversation with Jezebels, or who suspect a connection between Pearce's disappearance and their schemes, may be more worried that truly diabolic entities seek to infect the Empire, spreading throughout the colonies.

This scene can begin at any point after the protagonists connect all those dots. By this stage the Americans have done all they can to persuade d'Eon of their bona fides, and now need to get back to the Americas to tell their co-conspirators what transpired. In addition, Wilcox and several of his followers have been entranced by the Jezebels, and will transport some of those cultists back to the new world, where they can spread their infection further.

Ideally this scene will begin with the protagonists attempting to confront the Americans. As an alternative it could begin with the protagonists learning of the Americans' departure. This scene may happen before or after Vauxhall Funeral, with the proviso that if it happens before then Wilcox's role in Vauxhall Funeral will have to be altered or abandoned.

Sequence of events:

Either the protagonists confront the Americans direct or bring their information to the attention of the authorities. Note: the latter is only possible if all protagonists have disposed of the Evidence against them. The authorities will not listen to anyone accused of Satanism or worse.

Alternatively the protagonists do not confront the Americans. If that happens then they read of Wilcox's departure in the broadsheets, possibly published by Wakes. The news reports confirm that 'two fair ladies' embarked with Wilcox and his supporters, presumably emigrants. The ship's destination is Bermuda. This modifies the delivery of the Core clue, but the information is the same.

- **Core.** Wilcox has enough friends in Parliament to (temporarily) defy his critics. Thus he avoids arrest, but slips away and is last seen on a Bermuda-bound schooner, the *Pembroke*. Troubling rumours indicate that among the ship's company were two women – most likely Jezebels, members of the Y'golonac cult. (*Prospero's Cell*)
- **Traveller.** Once in Bermuda, Wilcox and his people would be among friends. The colony is broadly sympathetic to the American cause, and the Royal Navy has a weak presence there. Even if the Governor were to arrest Wilcox, it's likely he'd be helped to get away, probably fleeing to Virginia.

## Hell Fire

- **Occult, The Sciences.** Letting the Jezebels loose in the colonies would be like introducing an infectious agent. The health of the body politic would be at risk; the disease would spread throughout the colonies. Even if the Americans' rebellion failed, the cult plot could still imperil the Empire.
- **The Sciences, possibly Piloting** difficulty 4. The Americans have a head start, and their ship is a fast one. However it might be possible either to catch them en route or to get them in Bermuda, provided the pursuit starts now.

## VAUXHALL FUNERAL

This scene takes place in the scenic pleasure gardens of Vauxhall.

Vauxhall is a private enterprise that grew out of an urbanite desire to get away from city bustle and enjoy a quiet few hours in scenic gardens. This is an age when access to parkland was limited; the Royal Parks, the only other substantial open space in London, became public access in the Victorian era. The other parks (some very small) in London were private. Those without access to such places had to buy their time in arcadia.

In period Vauxhall is open each evening; semi-darkness is part of the attraction. Access is by token, which can be bought at the front entrance. Once inside, the visitor is greeted by an overwhelming array of souvenir sellers, food stalls, magicians, jugglers and performers. The grand rococo Turkish Tent is the largest and most striking structure; a creation of clapboard and painted canvas, designed in a vaguely Arabian Nights style. That is where most of the entertainers are, and the musicians. Often, late in the evening, there are fireworks, and the area close to the entrance is ablaze with gas lighting. However the Gardens are best known for their Walks, the dark tree-lined avenues where young lovers can go

to entertain themselves. The Gardens have a well-deserved reputation for debauchery. People come here to find companionship, or bring companions with them.

Protagonists may come here looking for Pearce or to find out more about Wilcox and the Jezebels. The Keeper should play this scene as an extended chase sequence or flirtation. There are many people here who have come looking for a fleeting romantic encounter. The protagonists may stumble over young couples while chasing someone else, or mistake a Jezebel for a flirtatious woman. **Shadowing, Fleeing, Flattery** and **Disguise** will be important skills.

- **Core.** Garden vendors, food stall merchants and entertainers all recall seeing someone matching Pearce's description in the Gardens that very night, arm-in-arm with a pretty young companion. 'He looked sick as a dog, to be frank, which surprised me. I'd have been happy to be a-wandering in the dark with the likes of her!' (The Dying Lover)
- **Reassurance, Oral History.** Several visitors to the Garden recall seeing Pearce going in the direction of the Dark Walks, beyond the well-lit entrance. They also saw someone matching Wilcox's description hanging around the Turkish Tent, but he's not there now.
- **Outdoorsman, possibly Shadowing** 4. This allows the protagonists to follow Pearce's trail through the Dark Walks. See also the encounters below.

The Dark Walks are paths laid out through the Gardens, surrounded on all sides by trees. Sometimes they lead to small open spaces where there are benches and statues; other times they meander past water features or small ponds. They're intended to be interesting strolls where people can enjoy privacy. They are dimly lit, with the occasional paper lantern, but the moon and stars provide the main illumination.

Potential encounters:

- **Wandering lovers.** A besotted couple walk arm in arm. They go masked, so it's impossible to see their faces. They have eyes only for each other. **Fleeing** 6, if it becomes relevant.
- **Crying girl.** A young woman has been deserted by her lover, and weeps bitterly beside a fountain. If accosted, she **Flees** 4.
- **Drunken lads.** Two merry boys wander the paths, swords drawn, clearly drunk out of their minds. They're looking for trouble, but can be talked down or Intimidated. **Weapons** 3, **Health** 5; **Weapon:** 0 (rapier) if it becomes an issue.
- **Sense Trouble.** The protagonists find themselves in a deserted clearing. Something has happened here. A paper lamp has been smashed and lies smouldering on the ground, the bench has been overturned, and there are drops of blood on the grass.
- **Naked.** A young person suddenly springs out of the undergrowth and runs across the path, before vanishing on the other side. Though stripped naked, it's impossible to tell, in that quick glimpse, whether it was a youth or a girl. Whoever it was, they can't be found.
- **Jezebel.** Having sensed the protagonists' approach, the Jezebels try an assault, perhaps luring them in by pretending to be a lost girl before attacking. This may involve more than one Jezebel.
- **Wilcox.** The American is seen dallying with a woman, the scene lit by a paper lantern hanging overhead. The woman turns her head towards the protagonist; a misshapen lump of flesh suddenly rises out of her neck, hisses through fanged teeth, and vanishes as quickly as it arose. Wilcox and the woman both **Flee** if approached.
- **Statue.** In a moonlit clearing, a young voice whispers love poetry to a statue of Venus, standing in the centre of the space. Whoever is speaking cannot

be seen. Those who look closer see that ‘Venus’ is actually a headless, misshapen creature, and the youthful, high-pitched voice is coming from the thing’s hands. **Stability 5**, as a cloud obscures the moon, throwing the scene into darkness [if the protagonists carry light, it should gutter for a moment]. When the protagonists can see again, the statue is gone. Two empty bottles of wine and scattered parchment, on which someone scrawled indifferent verse, lie in the centre of the clearing.

- **Pearce.** The protagonists spot Pearce on his own, stumbling off the path, perhaps drunk. He doesn’t respond to anyone who calls to him. He mumbles incoherently and staggers away. This can either become a chase at **Fleeing 4**, an **Outdoorsman** spend, or the Keeper can allow them to catch up to Pearce without incident. See further *The Dying Lover*.

### THE DYING LOVER

In this Core scene the protagonists finally catch up with Pearce.

Ideally this happens in the dark at Vauxhall. If the protagonists don’t go that route then the Keeper will need to rearrange the setting. In theory it could also happen at Madame Racine’s salon, or in some hiding place Pearce has run to. If the latter, then Pearce will have to summon the protagonists to his sickbed, probably by sending a message via a courier or servant.

When found, Pearce is in a terrible state. Whatever sickness he contracted is causing his great pain, difficulty in movement, and trouble breathing. His eyes are red and rheumy. His body, (if his clothes are taken off), is covered in weeping sores and buboes.

He says he was forced to do it. What ‘it’ was is left unsaid. *‘They wouldn’t stop. They kept at me and at me until I had to. They want Wilcox next, and after him the world and all its pleasures ...’*

Clues to be had from Pearce:

- **Core.** Pearce’s death is imminent. His body is wracked with disease. Small sores and lesions have opened up. His ramblings indicate that whoever did this to him now wants the Americans, and through them intends to spread to the new world. The colonies could be at risk!
- **Medicine, The Sciences.** No one disease is killing Pearce. He is suffering from several plagues, most of them familiar pox-doctors’ laments: shankers, cordee, buboes, dire, syphilis, the itch. What makes them odd is their sudden cumulative spread, as if his whole body was under assault. Several of the lesions resemble no known disease, and the fully formed teeth that apparently grow in these cavities gives pause for thought. **Stability 3**.
- **Occult, Cthulhu Mythos.** Some of the drawings in *The Inner Mysteries* of Venus take on new meaning when viewed in the context of Wilcox’s afflictions. These strange revelations suggest that Pearce is no longer master of his own body; that something else is trying to break through, using his sickened flesh as a kind of mould, in which it shall shape a form of its own. A Mythos user would know the entity’s name: Y’gononac. **Stability 2**.

Once the scene reaches its conclusion, Pearce begins reciting love poetry. Something – several somethings – join his voice, in chorus. The lesions all over his body have opened up and are chanting with Pearce, his voice getting more and more shrill, until finally a gush of bloody phlegm chokes him, and he dies. The other voices slowly fade away into silence. **Stability 5**.

### FULL FATHOM FIVE

This optional antagonist reaction scene occurs while the protagonists are en route to Bermuda.

If the protagonists were able to destroy or severely disrupt the Y’gononac cult in London, then this scene will not take place. The cult needs a certain amount of power to pull off this stunt, and without the cult’s backing the two aboard the Americans’ ship won’t be able to do it.

The protagonists’ ship, the Falkirk, is three weeks from landfall, by the captain’s calculations. They have a following wind and the weather has been good, almost since the ship left port.

**Keeper’s note:** if the protagonists were able to convince the authorities that the Americans were up to no good, then the Falkirk is an eight-gun sloop with a small compliment of marines, ostensibly sent to assist in the collection of sugar duties but in fact sent to apprehend the traitors. If not, then the Falkirk is an ordinary trading vessel on its way to the colonies with a hold full of manufactures.

The weather picks up dramatically. Dark clouds gather and the wind rises. The captain orders all passengers below decks, out of the way of the crew. Unless the protagonists have sailing skills, they shouldn’t be topside when the attack begins.

The first indication is the irregular, thudding impact of objects on deck. Larger than hailstones, the rain might be mistaken for fish at first, but these creatures have legs, or at least small, misshapen limbs that resemble legs. Many of them die on impact but many more do not, and those which don’t swarm over the crew. The tiny creatures are pale-fleshed with long, wriggling tails, leave a gelid slime as they move,



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Hell Fire

and are eyeless. They have mouths larger than their bodies would seem to support, filled with needle-sharp fangs.

**Stability** 3 for witnessing the unnatural rainfall. The creatures move and attack in much the same way as rat swarms, and there are scores of them. The crew won't be able to defeat the creatures, unaided. However the things are vulnerable to fire, so attackers with

sufficient combustibles can beat them off. There is a risk that the fire will also engulf the ship, of course. The Keeper should call for **Athletics** 3 tests each time fire is used, and failure means the ship catches fire. A further **Athletics** 3 will be needed to put out each fire. Each round a fire burns without being put out lets another fire start, so in round 2 there are 2 fires, in round 3 there could be 4 fires, and so on. 10 fires means the

ship cannot be saved, and at that point the protagonists have 3 rounds to get aboard a lifeboat before flames get to the gunpowder store (even a cargo ship will have some powder) and blows the Falkirk to glory.

If the protagonists don't fancy their chances in combat, they can always try to take to the lifeboats, which means first getting the boat overboard (**Athletics** 6, possibly an assisted roll), then boarding it in high seas without capsizing the boat (**Athletics** or **Fleeing** 4, with two failed rolls indicating a capsized lifeboat). Anyone who gets flung overboard needs to start making **Athletics** 4 to swim, and may need to be rescued, bearing in mind that a fully clothed human can't swim as fast as a boat can move.

### Y'gononac's Swarm

Athletics 5, Health 3/5/7/9, Scuffling 3/5/7/9; Hit Threshold 3; Weapon: -1 (bite); Armour: none, but vulnerable to fire, which does +2 damage to them; Stability: 0

The swarms cap at 40 individual creatures, but there is more than one swarm on board. The protagonists will need to defeat at least two swarms to save the ship. The Keeper may opt to increase the difficulty (number or size of swarms) if the protagonists have too easy a fight (eg. if they can get marines to help them). If not helped, the crew will be overwhelmed in five combat rounds, at which point the ship will be hit by a wave that proves too much for it. The Falkirk heels over, doesn't right itself, and starts taking on water. At that point the lifeboats are the only option. Two rounds after that, the Falkirk capsizes, and the weight of the guns (or cargo), together with the water intake, is enough to sink her. Anyone who isn't aboard a lifeboat at that point goes down with the ship.

Protagonists who take to the lifeboats can either **Pilot** the boat to shore,



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(possibly with **Health** or **Athletics** checks to represent exposure and sunstroke, which may have modified difficulty if they don't have water or food aboard; otherwise difficulty 4), or if the Keeper chooses, they can be rescued a day or two after the sinking of the Falkirk and be taken to Bermuda.

### Royal Naval Marines

Athletics 6, Firearms 6, Fleeing 3, Health 7, Preparedness 1, Sanity 8, Stability 7, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 8; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: 0 (light firearm), +1 (cutlass). Well disciplined and ready for action.

## PROSPERO'S CELL

The protagonists arrive at the port of St. Georges, Bermuda, the chief township of the colony. See also *A Sign of the Times*, page 148.

Most of the rest of the 25 square mile island is devoted to agriculture, and its importance to the Empire is largely positional; it's the last potential landfall for any ship making its way from the colonies to Europe, and the first any ship inbound from Europe can get to, making it a useful resupply point.

If the protagonists did not come to Bermuda with support of their own, then they find that the Governor, George James Bruere, is sympathetic but unwilling to offer help. He hasn't got soldiers to lend them, and even if he had, he knows that local sympathy is with the Americans. If the protagonists do have support then Bruere gives his blessing but little practical aid, except for lending them a local pilot to help their ship navigate the nearby reefs.

The protagonists soon discover that the Americans have not arrived. In fact their ship is at anchor some distance from the port, and is under quarantine, as an infectious disease has broken out. Nobody is allowed to board the Pembroke without the Governor's

express permission, and he won't allow the protagonists aboard unless they have medical expertise.

Protagonists who make a real nuisance of themselves may be threatened with arrest. The Governor may dispatch some of the local militia to put them under lock and key. He would then wait for a Navy ship to come in, put the protagonists on board, and send them back to England. Of course, it could be weeks before a Navy ship arrives.

Potential clues:

- **Core.** The Pembroke is at anchor a short distance from the guns of fort St. Catherine. It can easily be seen from shore. In theory, the protagonists could slip aboard under cover of darkness. (*The Hell Ship*).
- **Core.** Rumours persist that someone (possibly more than one person) came ashore from the Pembroke shortly after it arrived. If anyone's harbouring the Americans, it's probably one of the local merchants, as they're sympathetic to the American cause.
- **Medicine, Oral History.** Whatever struck the crew of the Pembroke down, it must be serious. The pilot who met the sloop as it was on its way into the harbour claimed that half the crew were sick, with fever and noxious boils.
- **Traveller, Medicine.** Someone familiar with the island's history could make a shortlist of the people most likely to be harbouring the Americans, with John Gibbons, an importer of food, at the top of that list. Alternatively someone with medical skills might notice that one household in particular, belonging to the merchant John Gibbons, is ordering a significant amount of medical supplies, as though someone in the household had similar symptoms to Bubb Pearce in London.

### Bermudian Militia

Athletics 3, Firearms 4, Fleeing 5, Health 6, Piloting 5, Sanity 7, Stability 6, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 5, Weapons 4; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons 0 (light firearm), -1 (club), +1 (cutlass). Low morale and low pay makes Jack an unwilling soldier.

## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

This scene describes the Island, and what happens if the protagonists try to find out what is going on in St George's. It includes potential antagonist reaction.

The colony was founded accidentally, by shipwrecked colonists on their way to Virginia, and was initially attractive to get-rich-quick investors who believed that ambergris, valuable to the perfume trade, could be found here in quantity. In period, the colony is small, sleepy, and only remarkable for the sheer number of fortifications that surround it, built to defend the resupply point from enemy attack. Most of the houses in St. Georges are made of wood or stone and the streets are cobbled, which makes the town seem a miniature London, only with far fewer amenities. The Governor has only a very small militia and no ships at his disposal. Only when the Royal Navy has a ship in port does the colony have anything like a military presence, which makes it perfect for the Americans' purposes. They've been intriguing with the prominent people of the colony for some time now, hoping to seize the colony's supplies (particularly gunpowder and shot) as soon as the rebellion starts. The merchants of the colony know their trade depends more on the Americans than the Empire, so they're willing participants in the venture.

St George's is very small, no larger than a modest English market town. It has its own church, St Peter's, a stone-built Parliament house, and the most important merchants all have their

## Hell Fire

homes there. The island is devoted largely to agriculture and fishing; some of the more prominent families have 'country' homes and 'town' houses, and travel from one to the other as the seasons change. Primary transport is by boat, and scores of small craft can be seen on the water each day.

Economically the island relies to some extent on agriculture, fishing, and salt gathering, but its main business for many years has been ship building and privateering. Privateers are often pirates one day and loyal citizens the next, and as the trade is usually very profitable, Bermudians have developed a flexible attitude to high seas lawbreaking. Another habit the locals are known for is wrecking; luring ships onto the reefs with false lights, then murdering anyone who survives and stripping the ship down to the waterline. A wrecked or reef-caught ship, even if not lured there deliberately, is a windfall, as though everyone living nearby just won the lottery, and while survivors can expect a sympathetic welcome so long as it wasn't wreckers who lured them in to begin with, their possessions and everything on board the ship is fair game. Theoretically the Governor is meant to take charge as a representative of the Crown. As soon as he learns about a wreck he'll turn up with militia to 'protect people's belongings' and claim his own share of the booty, so the first few hours or days of a wreck are the busiest, as everyone else tries to strip the ship before the Governor gets there.

Demographically the island is majority black. These slaves tend to be more highly skilled than elsewhere in the colonies, since agriculture here doesn't need a huge amount of manpower. Instead, they are skilled artisans, carpenters, builders, blacksmiths, and also sailors. Historical note: later, when Bermudian privateers start attacking American ships during the War of Independence (business is business, after all), the ship

Regulator, when captured by American forces, was found to be almost entirely crewed by slaves. When offered their freedom, the Regulator's crew refused it, instead capturing the American vessel Duxbury, which they took back to Bermuda as a prize. Protagonists unused to living somewhere where they do not represent the majority view will be further shocked to find how independent – relatively speaking – these slaves are. Though they cannot openly defy the protagonists, anyone who annoys them will have a very rough time of it, since the slaves control almost every aspect of public life, by virtue of being the ones who do all the work.

The people swear allegiance to the crown fervently in public, but in private they have other views. The Americas are their primary trade market, and for many years Bermudians have been emigrating to the significant colonial port towns. There isn't a township on the east coast without a link to at least one Bermudian family. Consequently Bermudians favour an American perspective on politics, but business is business, and the island is divided as to whether to back the growing American consensus for self-determination, or to remain loyal to the Crown.

The protagonists will need to be circumspect. Forceful action will only upset people and probably provoke an antagonistic response. The most likely reaction if the protagonists aren't careful is an assault.

### Tavern Drunks or similar unruly persons

Athletics 6, Firearms 1, Fleeing 5, Health 7, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 6, Weapons 3; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock, bottle), -1 (club), 0 (light firearm).

### Wreckers, sneak thieves and plausible rogues

Athletics 4, Firearms 3, Fleeing 5, Flattery 3, Filch 4, Health 7, Piloting 5, Sanity 6, Stability 6, Scuffling 7, Stealth 4, Shadowing 2, Sense Trouble 1, Weapons 2; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock), -1 (club), +1 (cutlass), 0 (light firearm).

1 point Clues which can be had include:

- **History, Traveller:** The Americans are favourably thought of here, and American views generally get a warm reception. Though everyone is careful not to speak out openly against the Crown, nobody thinks the current tax regime is any good and they all warn the protagonists that unless something is done there will be trouble.
- **Streetwise, Oral History:** Some are looking at the Pembroke with covetous eyes. A ship like that probably has all kinds of valuables aboard. Were it not for the plague, and the Pembroke's anchorage directly under the fort's guns, wreckers would have been aboard long ago. However if the protagonists need someone to help them get aboard, talking to wreckers is the way to do it.
- **Credit Rating, Politics, Assess Honesty:** Nobody admits to having seen Wilcox or any of the American contingent. However the whole island knows him by reputation and it's an open secret that he's hiding somewhere amongst the merchants of St. George's. Nobody wants to be the one to let slip his location, as it will hurt their local reputation, so a certain subtlety is called for. However if approached in the right way, a prominent merchant, local politico or similar might be persuaded to tell what he knows.



## Out of Space

### THE HELL SHIP

This optional scene takes place aboard the quarantined schooner *Pembroke*.

The ship is anchored off of a strong fortification, with guns trained on it. Anyone sneaking out to it will need to make **Stealth** checks (muffled oarlocks) at difficulty 4. Failure means that the attempt was spotted from shore, but it will take a while before any organized response can be made. The colonists won't waste the fort's cannon and shot on anything less than an invasion, so the most likely reaction is a ship coming out from shore to intercept the blockade runners. Treat the crew of that intercepting vessel as 12 Militia (*Prospero's Cell* page 148), and the sloop they are in has a small-bore swivel-gun (damage point-blank +3, Close +2, Near -2, no Long) which can only be used with a **Firearms** check, failure indicating that the fuse blew out before the gun could go off. They will want to arrest rather than kill, but will resort to violence if need be. If this ship is somehow sunk or its crew injured (treat the ship as having 20 **Health** and can only be injured with cannon or similar) the Island will be in an uproar, making the protagonists' job much more difficult.

The *Pembroke* won't respond. Nobody on board is capable.

The ship's crew are below decks, for the most part. Some of the American passengers are lying on deck, trying to get some relief from the heat and smell. All of them are sick, some worse than others, and the symptoms are all very similar to Bubb Pearce. Terrible swellings and growths, fever and delirium predominate, and most of the ship's complement are out of action. Some of the Americans and the ship's officers are sick but not disabled. They warn people off the *Pembroke* and make half-hearted efforts to drive the curious away, but they haven't the strength to organize a resistance. The worst that may happen is a stray gunshot.

Protagonists who inspect the sick see the same odd lesions that Pearce had. The unnatural teeth champ on inquisitive fingers, and the sweat is rank, foul and almost acidic. **Stability** 3.

Clues:

- **Core.** Among the papers in the Americans' cabins is a list (in code) of names, probably co-conspirators. **Cryptography** or **History** will be needed to decipher the list. John Gibbons, a merchant, is the main conspirator in Bermuda, and probably the one harbouring Benjamin Wilcox now.
- **Occult, Cthulhu Mythos.** The Jezebels on board had to leave some of their belongings behind when they fled ashore. In addition to a copy of *The Inner Mysteries of Venus* and an impressive collection of pornography, they also left several unlabeled bottles, possibly containing medication. **Pharmacy** or **Medicine** on the bottles show the contents to be much like the remedies pox doctors use. This could be a cure for the disease, but if so, there isn't nearly enough to treat everyone on the *Pembroke*.
- **The Sciences, Medicine.** The disease is spread by contact with the Jezebels. Clearly they infected the ship's crew during the journey to Bermuda. Given that Bermuda is a significant port, if the pestilence spreads here it could infect thousands of people, spreading throughout the New World. It would be the black death all over again, a miasma spreading throughout the shipping lanes. However there's enough information now to diagnose the disease and as yet no proof that Bermuda has been irreparably contaminated. Keeper's note: anyone using **The Sciences** at this point may be tempted to get a look at the microbes under a microscope or similar, a technology that's over a century old at this point. Those who do get a close look at the infection

that is Y'gononac, minute organisms that somehow resemble the creatures from *Full Fathom Five*. **Stability** 3, **Sanity** 1

In theory, the protagonists could use the information gained here to stop the infection from spreading in Bermuda. Only a very few people have been infected on the island so far. Though there isn't enough medication to save the crew of the *Pembroke*, there's enough to treat the afflicted on the island. There aren't sufficient supplies on the island to duplicate the substance, so no more can be manufactured.

As the protagonists attempt to leave two (or more) of the sick struggle to their feet. Though they seem mobile, they are not in control of their actions; their heads loll to one side, as though their necks are broken. They stretch their hands out towards the protagonists. The lesions in their palms open wide, revealing the teeth inside.

### Servitors of Y'gononac

Athletics 7, Health 7, Scuffling 10; Hit Threshold 3; Weapon: -2 (fist), and on a successful hit the mouths latch on, doing a further -1 damage per round unless the target beats the Servitor in an Athletics contest; **Stability** 1. These creatures cannot last long (only 10 rounds), and require the death of their host body before they can act.

When the protagonists finally leave the *Pembroke*, they do so realizing that unless they act now, what happened to the ship's crew could happen all over the New World. The colonies would be poisoned by the disease, Y'gononac. This insight could shake their self-confidence; **Stability** 4, **Sanity** 1.



### THE TEMPEST

In this final scene the protagonists trace Benjamin Wilcox to his hiding place and confront him and the Jezebels.

Wilcox is hiding in the home of John Gibbons, a respected merchant who lives on Duke of Kent Street, some distance from the centre of the town. His stone house is one of the grander on this quiet street, and he, his wife, two daughters and two servants live there.

The house is a one story structure surrounded by a wall. Within the walls are the main house and a second, separate servant's dwelling, with

an herb garden and water tank in between the two. None of the servants are armed; of the inhabitants of the house, only John Gibbons might put up a struggle (Athletics 3, Firearms 3, Health 5, Scuffling 6, Weapons 6; Weapon damage: 0, light firearm, rapier). He is also the only person infected by the Jezebel's disease, so far.

Benjamin Wilcox is ill, and can only move with difficulty. The Jezebels, if they had brought some of their medicines with them, would be treating him themselves, but the drugs were left behind in the rush to get ashore. This may yet frustrate their plans, since ideally they and Wilcox would travel to a much larger port in America

where the infection could then spread over a wider area. However their own obsessions led them to infect the crew of the *Pembroke*; not having travelled so far before, they did not realize how difficult it would be to keep their urges in check throughout the voyage.

Wilcox's bloated body lies in the second bedroom. Gibbons has been doing his best to keep his guest alive, but he hasn't dared call in a physician. Only the Jezebels have treated him.

If the protagonists openly confront Wilcox, Gibbons yells for his neighbours, hoping to start a riot. He claims the protagonists are murdering Wilcox in his sickbed. Unless the

## Out of Space

protagonists are careful or have powerful support on their side, they could get caught up in a brawl. **Stealth** or overwhelming force are the best two options.

In any conflict, Wilcox stays out of the fight unless the Jezebels are both defeated. If that happens, Y'gonolac takes over Wilcox's body for one last assault. This will probably kill Wilcox, unless the fight ends very quickly. Encountering Wilcox in his Y'gonolac form is a Sanity-shattering experience; **Stability** 5 (2) (including the additional pool loss) and **Sanity** +2 (1) for the encounter.

If the Jezebels are not prevented, they will eventually try to sneak aboard a ship bound for America, preferably with Wilcox, but if they have to they will leave him behind. Once there, they begin establishing a cult of their own.

If the Jezebels and Wilcox are defeated, the sick can be cured with the medicines taken from the Pembroke. Wilcox and Gibbons are the only two the protagonists have to treat; Wilcox's life can be saved, if the protagonists first incapacitate him and then cure him with the drugs.

### Innocent Bystanders

(Gibbons' wife and family, other civilians): Athletics 3, Fleeing 6, Health 4, Sanity 5, Stability 6.

### Rioters

Athletics 5, Firearms 2, Fleeing 4, Health 6, Sanity 6, Stability 6,

Scuffling 7, Weapons 3; Hit Threshold 3; Weapons: -2 (fist, thrown rock), -1 (club), 0 (light firearm)

### Jezebel

Athletics 8, Disguise 3, Intimidation 2, Filch 4, Flattery 6, Fleeing 8, Scuffling 10, Sense Trouble 3, Streetwise 4, Shadowing 5, Stealth 5, Health 9, Hit Threshold 4, Weapon -1 (touch), Armour -1 vs physical (unnatural flesh), Stability Loss 0. Anything touched by a Jezebel suffers -2 damage each round for 3 rounds after the initial blow, due to her corrosive touch.

### Wilcox (Y'gonolac form)

Athletics 6, Fleeing 6, Health 9, Scuffling 14; Hit Threshold 3; Armour -1 (unnatural flesh); Weapons: -1 (fist), and on a successful hit the mouths latch on, doing a further -1 damage per round unless the target beats Wilcox in an Athletics contest.

If obviously overmatched, Wilcox will try to escape, but otherwise makes a fight of it. If he escapes, Y'gonolac will try to force him to board a ship to America as quickly as possible. In this form, the creature can be 'damaged' by the drugs taken from the Pembroke; treat any attack as **Scuffling**, but with +2 damage. The sudden application cures Wilcox's affliction, if his Y'gonolac form is reduced to -6 **Health** with the drugs.

Any rioters will run away (failed **Stability**) the minute Wilcox/Y'gonolac makes an appearance.

## EPILOGUE

Should the protagonists prevail, then Y'gonolac's attempt at poisoning the New World is prevented. Meanwhile the events in Bermuda become a historical footnote, remembered by few. It happened far from London, and the great and the good have little interest in anything that happens in such a backwater. The powers that be, if they remember the event at all, assume that a political crisis has been averted and that the rebellion has failed before it could start.

This is not true. Soon after the events of the scenario the rebellion starts in earnest, and this time there is no stopping it. After a bloody conflict, the American colonies gain their freedom. Meanwhile the trade routes carry people back and forth each year, bringing new goods and wealth, and also spreading diseases. The protagonists may have salvaged their reputations and fought the good fight. Yet their contribution shall go unremarked, and thanks to Wakes and tattling rumour, in the years to come they will be remembered less for what they did than for what they were not: the blaspheming Hell Fire Club, that worshipped devils and put all London to shame.

Some victories are their own reward.





### PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The players may wish to create their own characters, and should be allowed to do so with the proviso that they be provided with a reasonable spread of the new skills. The following skills do not exist and are not replaced by another skill: **Archaeology**, **Cop Talk**, **Driving**.

**Psychoanalysis**, strictly speaking, does and does not exist. The skill is too useful (for regaining **Stability** mid-session) to drop altogether. Though it wouldn't be known under that name, which belongs to the twentieth century, it does exist in-game. The pre-generated protagonists have low **Psychoanalysis** scores; the Keeper may want to allow NPCs to use **Psychoanalysis** on protagonists, in certain circumstances.

**Anthropology**, **Biology**, **Forensics** and **Geology** do not exist. Their function is taken over by a new Academic ability, **The Sciences**.

#### Playtest Notes

Some players resisted the urge to globetrot. Players who wonder why they should go to Bermuda should be reminded that their goal is to save the world – as they know it. To modern eyes, a desire to save the Empire from American conspirators may seem odd, bearing in mind the Revolution a few years later. The point is, none of the protagonists know about the Revolution. As far as they're concerned, the colonies are and will always remain colonies, and it is right and proper that they do so. Moreover some of them have the Empire as pillars of sanity, or have relatives and friends in the Americas. A threat to that part of the world affects the protagonists directly; the players need to bear this in mind.

Timing was another issue that cropped up. The players weren't sure how long they had to complete some scenes, and wondered whether their investigations might be jeopardized if they failed to complete certain objectives by a certain time. The key point for the Keeper to take away is, the action moves 'at the speed of plot.' There isn't a deadline to meet. The Keeper should bear in mind that, as stated in *American Intrigues*, the scene doesn't begin until the Keeper deems it appropriate to begin it. The Americans don't flee London until the protagonists have connected all the clues in previous scenes, and are (presumably) about to shut down the American conspiracy. A similar rule of thumb applies for the other scenes. Any deadline the players impose on themselves is entirely their doing; the Keeper should neither encourage nor discourage it.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Peter Quinell

Drive: Arrogance

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Lawyer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) The Law, 2) The Empire

### Academic Abilities

Accounting - 1

Law - 1

Languages - 1

Library Use - 2

Occult - 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 1

Interrogation - 1

Politics - 2

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1

### General Abilities

Conceal - 3

Firearms - 2

Filch - 4

Fleeing - 6

Health - 7

Preparedness - 3

Riding - 5

Shadowing - 2

Scuffling - 4

Stability - 8

Sanity - 8

Sense Trouble - 4

Weapons - 4

Stealth - 4

<sup>1</sup> In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>5</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>6</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>7</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>8</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>9</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>10</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

### Notes:

You have done quite well for yourself. You are a notable barrister, a member of Clifford's Inn, one of the Inns of Chancery in Holborn, and trust that in the fullness of time you will become a magistrate. Your Masonic contacts have helped there; indeed were it not for your Masonry you would not have much of a career, as your legal knowledge is lamentably poor. However since you know the right people and can be counted on to say the right things when necessary, your career thus far has been exemplary. You are a known 'ambidexter' – that is, you take fees from both plaintiff and defendant - and have been able to make substantial sums this way. Much of your money is spent on your younger brother, Edward, whose Naval ambitions – he currently holds a Captaincy – are incommensurate with the family purse, but you take the longer view. An Edward without position will always be a drain on your fortunes, but Rear Admiral Quinell could be quite a useful man to know. The long view is always soundest, you've found; it pays the greatest dividends.

Sources of Stability - Edward, your brother, and Emily, your wife.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Martin Pinchbeck

Drive: Adventure

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Gamester

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Boxing, a true test of manly skill, 2) Women, the fairest and damnably captivating sex

### Academic Abilities

Art History - 1

History - 1

Theology - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2

Bargain - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Politics - 2

Reassurance - 3

Streetwise - 1

### Technical Abilities

Outdoorsman - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 2

Firearms - 3

Health - 10

Psychoanalysis - 3

Riding - 6

Stability - 9

Sanity - 7

Scuffling - 10

Shadowing - 5

Sense Trouble - 1

Weapons - 5

### Notes:

Odds fish, m'boy, if there's no sport in it, there's nothing. Life is meant to be lived! As it happens you've been doing quite a bit of living. Technically, of course, you're a churchman, a curate, inasmuch as you have a parish with a fat living of several hundred a year, but you pay some of that to the vicar so he reads the sermons for you. The rest is spent on more important things, such as cards, cock-fighting, and especially boxing. You are well acquainted with the gents at John Broughton's boxing academy at Marylebone, and have been known to take a turn or two. Not during the Battles Royale, of course, since those are bare knuckle and damned dangerous, but you know the ways and means, and are a keen judge of fighters. So far your betting hasn't come to the ears of your Bishop; it could mean rather stringent economies, if you were to lose your living. Charity Manning is one of your regular Club guests; she knows almost as many of the gambling fraternity as you.

Sources of Stability - Roger Boddingley, a fellow gamester and your best friend; your mother Faith; Edgar Worthy, your vicar.

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<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold <sup>3</sup>			

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Sarah Farthing

Drive: In the Blood

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Adventuress

Pillars of Sanity: 1) your fighting skill, which has never failed you 2) Horses; which are just as strong and courageous as you - though you have yet to meet one you cannot tame.

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 3

Library Use - 2

Occult - 2

Traveller - 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 1

Credit Rating - 2

Intimidation - 2

Streetwise - 2

### Technical Abilities

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Firearms - 6

Health - 8

Piloting - 4

Riding - 4

Stability - 8

Sanity - 6

Sense Trouble - 6

Weapons - 15

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

### Notes:

You tell people your father's father was hanged for witchcraft, and that might even be true. In Sussex, where you were born, your family are quite notorious, but you ditched all connection with them when you came to London and changed your name. Since then you've done many things, from artist's model to highway bandit, and only two years ago you were 'Jack,' gunner on the privateer Gorgon. However some bad experiences in the colonies, and an encounter with sea-devils, made London a more attractive prospect, and you returned to petticoats and stays for a while. You now earn your way as entertainer (of a dominating sort) for men like Sir Warwick Shaw, treading him under foot like a worm. You're also on good terms with Charity Manning, one of the other regular guests of the Club, who affects a more retiring disposition than you but may be more than she seems. Your sea-devil encounters stirred something in your blood you'd rather not think too much about, but you're using your time in London to learn a little more about such things. Perhaps one day you'll return to settle the score.

Sources of Stability - Captain Richard Waddell, your former commander on the *Gorgon*; bold John Fox, your former road agent partner.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Sir Warwick Shaw

Drive: Scholarship

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Physician

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) The King, 2) The Empire

### Academic Abilities

History - 1  
Library Use - 1  
Medicine - 2  
The Sciences - 3  
Traveller - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2  
Credit Rating - 4  
Politics - 2  
Reassurance - 2

### General Abilities

Fleeing - 8  
Firearms - 6  
First Aid - 8  
Health - 8  
Preparedness - 3  
Psychoanalysis - 3  
Riding - 7  
Scuffling - 6  
Stability - 7  
Sanity - 7  
Weapons - 6

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

### Notes:

You are a founding member of the Right Worshipful Order; you and Sir George Somerset are the oldest of friends. Your income is largely derived from your position at Greenwich Naval Hospital, but you supplement that with several other Government contracts as well as investments in several shipping companies. You also own a small estate in Virginia, managed by your younger son Edwin. Rather a useful thing to have, under the circumstances; Edwin needed somewhere to hide his head, else he might have ended up at Newgate. The colonies were the best place for him. Meanwhile you affect the outward appearance of a jolly former Naval man, all bluff heartiness and heavy drinking, while hiding a secret predilection for vice and submission. You always felt you were capable of something more, some great discovery or advancement, but so far this has eluded you. You are a man of many enthusiasms, and sometimes you find it difficult to focus on one thing when there are so many other, equally interesting pursuits.

Sources of Stability - Sarah Farthing, who has captivated you; Edwin, your scapegrace younger son.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Charity Manning

Drive: Ennui

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Adventuress

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) The supremacy of chance, 2)

Your beauty

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 1

Occult - 1

Traveller - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 3

Bargain - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Flattery - 2

Reassurance - 2

Streetwise - 1

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 3

### General Abilities

Athletics - 4

Conceal - 8

Filch - 8

Fleeing - 8

Health - 8

Stability - 6

Sanity - 7

Scuffling - 6

Stealth - 6

Sense Trouble - 6

### Notes:

Once you were a farmer's daughter, but that was long ago. An old bawd stole your clothes when you first came to London ten years past and your father, fearing the worst, disowned you. Since then you've done many things to make ends meet, and now tell people you're a widow, the former wife of a British East India Company colonel, dead in the Carnatic Wars. You've never been to India, but can bluff your way past most, who've seen no more of the subcontinent than you. You have many friends, and spend a lot of time gambling, particularly at cards, which is how you know Martin Pinchbeck. In his company you've attended several Club meetings. The problem is, it's all so fearfully dull. Not just the Club; all of it, whether cards or public hangings. You've tried opium, hoping it might cut through the gloom, but it just made you ill. If only you could find something really interesting, something worth your time and energy! In the meanwhile you seek out gambling dens and games of chance, hoping to rekindle that familiar thrill. Perhaps you really ought to travel. There might be something more interesting over the horizon.

Sources of Stability - Bessie Hadwick, your former business partner; Roger Martinsdale, a handsome young clerk who knows nothing of your real life and thinks you are a virtuous woman.

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

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<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold <sup>3</sup>			

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Captain Aethlestan 'Toby' Jugg

Drive: Bad Luck

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Middleman

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) The Empire, 2) Your virility and strength

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 1

Traveller - 1

### Interpersonal Abilities

Bargain - 2

Bureaucracy - 1

Credit Rating - 3

Flattery - 2

Politics - 1

Streetwise - 3

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 2

Locksmith - 1

Outdoorsman - 1

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Fleeing - 4

Firearms - 7

Health - 10

Shadowing - 3

Scuffling - 6

Stability - 7

Sanity - 8

Weapons 12

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<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

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### Notes:

Your family are Norfolk squires, and your father intended you for a glorious military career. That ended when you duelled against the son of a Duke, and won. The popinjay came through alive, but that did you no good; you had overreached yourself, and your semi-retirement from your regiment became permanent when your father cut off funds. It's an open question whether you have the right to call yourself Captain, but sometimes you do, depending on the company. Since those days you've done very well for yourself, in a small way, your hearty typical English outward face masking a cunning mind, and you always keep an eye on the best advantage. You take your nickname, Toby, from the Toby Jugs, as you rather resemble the cheerful little things. You're the man who knows everyone and how to get anything, and you've made yourself indispensable to the Club. You can't seem to catch a break, no matter how deserving you may be. Your latest problem is you've suddenly discovered you've been spying for the French. Damnable! You didn't think your contact was connected with the Froggies and you didn't ask questions, just accepted coin for services rendered. Now you find you're up to your neck in conspiracies! You've salted away a little money which you've put into colonial securities; the Empire's always a sound investment, and your holdings in the Americas have earned a reasonable profit. Perhaps you'll retire there one day; it could be your bad luck won't follow you.

Sources of Stability - Pretty Nan, your favourite paramour; Captain Norrys, your old friend from your army days.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## Out of Space

### THE MILLIONAIRE'S SPECIAL

is a *Trail of Cthulhu* mini-adventure set on the RMS *Titanic* written by Adam Gauntlett.

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Based on the **GUMSHOE System** by Robin D Laws

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## The Millionaire's Special

*A Trail of Cthulhu scenario set aboard the Titanic.*

### Hook

The protagonists are invited to a private viewing of one of the world's great curiosities: the mummy of Hettunaway, Priestess of Amun-Ra. Also known as the Unlucky Mummy, its owner, the newspaper magnate Jefferson Shaw, is taking it to New York to donate it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Legend has it that those who look upon her face are doomed, but Shaw laughs at these superstitions.

### THE AWFUL TRUTH

Shaw also has a device intended to contact the spirit of Hettunaway, which he has tried as an experiment. It had no result that he could see, but it did awaken something he can't control. The *Titanic* is about to hit an iceberg and all aboard will be in peril of their lives, but the protagonists face an additional problem: Hettunaway will try to strike them down before they have a chance to escape.

Pre-generated characters are included. If the Keeper would prefer to let players design their own characters, the only necessary stipulation is that they all be First Class passengers. That in turn suggests a Credit Rating of at least 5, and a suitable background.

### SPINE

*Luncheon with the Great and Good (Core):* opening scene. Protagonists are shown mummy, meet Jefferson Shaw, manservant Soames, steward Poulson.

- *Further Inquiry (Optional):* The protagonists may choose to investigate Hettunaway's history, using the *Titanic's* resources or their own.
- *Luxury Accommodation (Optional):* The protagonists may choose to enjoy the delights the *Titanic* has to offer.
- *Hag Ridden (Antagonist Reaction):* Hettunaway makes her move. This can be combined with either of the optional scenes.

*Unwelcome Attention (Core):* While dining in the *Café Parisien* the protagonists witness an uncomfortable scene between Jefferson Shaw and an unknown woman. They also get the first warning of the tragedy that is to come.

- *A Woman of Modest Means (Optional):* The protagonists talk to Mrs Martin, and discover more of Hettunaway's history.
- *Psychical Society (Optional):* The protagonists may attempt mediumistic enquiry, either using their own resources or getting help from Soames or Poulson.
- *Hag Ridden (Antagonist Reaction):* Hettunaway makes her move. This can be combined with either of the optional scenes.
- *Options, People! (Protagonist Action):* In which the players strategize.

*Amuse Yourself (Core):* The *Titanic* has struck the iceberg, but as yet nobody knows how serious the problem is.

- *Priestess of the Black Pharaoh (Antagonist Reaction):* Hettunaway will strike out at those who blasphemed her, first victims possibly including Jefferson Shaw, Soames, Poulson. She will then move on to the protagonists.

*Survival Instinct (Core):* The *Titanic*

founders. The protagonists must try to stay alive

- *Priestess of the Black Pharaoh (Antagonist Reaction):* Hettunaway will strike out at those who blasphemed her, first victims possibly including Jefferson Shaw, Soames, Poulson. She will then move on to the protagonists.

*Aftermath (Core):* The surviving protagonists take stock of their situation.

## THE SHIP THAT NEVER SANK

I don't propose to describe the entirety of the *Titanic* in a few paragraphs, if for no other reason than it would be a wasted effort. There are movies, books and internet sites which do a far better job of that than I could. However I will spend a little time talking about the ship in general terms, in the hope that the Keeper may find the information useful.

The *Titanic* is almost the last gasp of the Edwardian cruise ship era. These magnificent liners had been built to serve a specific purpose: they transported emigrants to America, in an age when immigration restrictions were minimal. Lady Liberty had promised a refuge for the tempest-tossed and Europe was supplying the huddled masses, but in order to get there they first had to cross the Atlantic, which was no easy thing. The liners serviced that trade, at a price.

Third Class passengers paid for everyone else's pleasure; though each Third Class passenger's ticket was

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relatively low in cost (about \$20, which in real terms was a significant sum of money for the working poor) the sheer number of people willing to pay that price more than covered the cost of building and equipping these ocean monarchs, with a healthy profit margin besides. Until more restrictive immigration laws were passed in 1921, the liners transported over one million emigrants per year for over twenty years to New York City alone.

Liners became a significant source not just of revenue but also national pride. Germany was asserting herself in grand style; the *Deutschland*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Vaterland*, *Imperator* and *Kaiser Wilhelm II* lorded it over lesser ships. The Cold War of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw an arms race, and this was a similar contest: an escalating bid to dominate the seas, which promised incalculable financial rewards to the country to manage it.

In a bid to reassert dominance, the British Government subsidised Cunard's *Mauritania* and *Lusitania*, another tragic liner whose sinking during the War was to cause international outrage. The White Star Line, another British company and a chief rival of Cunard, built the *Oceanic*, *Olympic* and the *Titanic*. Rather than compete with Cunard's speedier vessels, White Star intended to beat Cunard in the luxury stakes, principally by offering Third Class passengers modest improvements: reading rooms, smoking rooms, stewards for the cabins and fresh, good food, as well as writing paper with the White Star emblem on it so they could send mail to their relatives at home about their voyage. It was all about competing for that vital Third Class revenue; other liners treated their Third Class passengers appallingly, giving them the worst accommodation and food, not providing for their medical wellbeing or comfort. One reporter even alleged that the staff aboard other liners sexually assaulted female Third Class passengers.

According to the report given to the Immigration Commission of the US Senate, that same reporter, Anna Herkner, said: *'the persons carried are looked upon as so much freight, with mere transportation as their only due . . . Generally the passenger must retire almost fully dressed to keep warm. Through the entire voyage, from seven to seventeen days, the berths receive no attention from the stewards . . . Wash rooms and lavatories, separate for men and for women, are required by law, which also states they shall be kept in a "clean and serviceable condition throughout the voyage." The indifferent obedience to this provision is responsible for further uncomfortable and unhygienic conditions . . . Considering this old-type steerage as a whole, it is a congestion so intense, so injurious to health and morals that there is nothing on land to equal it.'* These were the same passengers the shipping companies relied on for their generous profits. The emphasis on health in the report is no accident; the Senate, and the government as a whole, were deeply concerned that the immigrants they took in be healthy when they arrived, so as not to infect their new home. This was an age when epidemics claimed thousands yearly and antibiotics did not exist. They were terrified of the effect a viral contagion might have, particularly if conditions on board the liners were shown to be fostering a disease-prone environment.

That is why the White Star went the luxury route and applied it across the board. Not for them coughing migrants stuffed into unhygienic steel boxes. Their Third Class passengers would enjoy a pleasant, healthful cruise with amenities that were unheard of on other liners. The *Titanic* was the embodiment of that philosophy, but it was part and parcel of a bid to win revenue for the Line and with that, dominance over Germany and control of the Atlantic migrant trade.

Even so, the Third Class was very carefully segregated from their wealthier fellow passengers. They

might have their own smoking room and access to a lending library, but the Turkish Baths, located on F Deck along with the majority of the Third Class cabins, was off limits to them, as was the gymnasium and other accommodations provided for the enjoyment of First Class passengers only.

This is also reflected in the casualty report. To take one instance: of the children aboard, six were First Class and twenty four were Second Class. Only one of those, a child in First Class, died. Whereas in Third Class there were seventy nine children, of whom fifty two drowned; the rest were saved. This does not represent deliberate policy, whether of the Line or the *Titanic's* crew, but it is a sad testament to the blind spot they shared: to them, Third Class was not as important, and so not as carefully looked after, as the other passengers.

Since its sinking, the *Titanic* has become almost mythic. As if a tragedy wasn't sufficient, conspiracy theories abounded, one of which alleged that the *Titanic* never actually sank at all. Instead it was the *Olympic*, her sister ship, that had foundered. It was all part of a complicated insurance scam in which the ship would be deliberately scuttled at sea and the passengers conveniently rescued by ships that happened to be waiting nearby. Other less insane tales had to do with the luxuries available to the passengers. *Titanic* was already well provided for, what with its barber shops, telephone communication system, gymnasium and squash courts, in addition to its First Class *a la carte* restaurant and *Café Parisien*, a *haute cuisine* establishment run as a concession by Monsieur Gatti. However memories blurred, and in time people began inventing the most fantastic accommodations, including golf courses and a herd of dairy cows to provide fresh milk daily. From a Keeper's perspective, this does mean that you can invent any

amount of decadent facilities, and they will be as 'true' as the survivor's own recollections.

One such story, which has the benefit of being based on a grain of truth, is that of William Thomas Stead. Stead was a pioneering investigative journalist of the Edwardian era, and is credited for being the progenitor of what has become the tabloid press. He was also a world peace advocate and a proponent of women's rights, and wrote *The Truth About Russia!* and *The Americanization of the World*, among others. He was a spiritualist, the editor and founder of *Borderlands* quarterly, in which he propounded his psychical theories. He is one of the more famous victims of the *Titanic* disaster, and according to one report was last seen sitting alone, quietly reading in the First Class smoking room.

Allegedly he was also the owner of the British Museum's unlucky mummy, actually a painted sarcophagus board still on display at the Museum today. According to the myth, Stead bought the mummy that went with that sarcophagus board, a Priestess of Amun-Ra, a relic thought to have malignant properties and which was supposed to have caused the death of at least one person. Mindful of its reputation he smuggled it in with his car, only revealing its presence to some of his fellow passengers when the ship was under way, on the 14<sup>th</sup> April.

By the 15<sup>th</sup>, the *Titanic* was on the bottom of the ocean.

### TITANIC TIMELINE

For the benefit of the Keeper, a sketch outline of the *Titanic's* last hours is included here. All real-world data has been sourced from Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember*. Important scenario events are also included, and those are given in *italic*. All times are given in 24-hour clock. Exact times are not given for some events following the sinking.

#### 10<sup>th</sup> April 1912

**1200:** Leaves Southampton, narrowly avoiding collision with another liner.

**1900:** Stops at Cherbourg for passengers.

**2100:** Leaves Cherbourg bound for Queenstown (now known as Cobh), Ireland.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> April

**1230:** Stops at Queenstown for passengers and mail.

**1400:** Leaves Queenstown bound for New York, with 1,316 passengers and 891 crew.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> April

**1200:** *Luncheon with the Great and Good (Core)*

#### 13<sup>th</sup> April

**1200:** *Unwelcome Attention (Core)*

#### 14<sup>th</sup> April

**0900:** Liner *Caronia* reports ice, latitude 42 degrees North from longitude 49 to 51 degrees West.

**0142:** Liner *Baltic* reports ice.

**0145:** Liner *Amerika* reports ice.

**1400:** Temperature is 43 Centigrade.

**1430:** Temperature is 39 Centigrade.

**1430:** Liner *Californian* reports ice.

**2100:** Temperature is 33 Centigrade.

**2130:** Second Officer Lightoller warns carpenter and engine room to watch fresh water

supply, as the pipes were in danger of freezing. Also warns crews to keep watch for ice.

**2140:** Liner *Mesaba* reports ice.

**2200:** Temperature is 32 Centigrade.

**2230:** Sea temperature is 31 Centigrade.

**2300:** Liner *Californian* reports ice.

**2340:** *Titanic* hits iceberg.

**2350:** *Amuse Yourself (Core)*

#### 15<sup>th</sup> April

**0005:** Orders are given to uncover the boats, muster the crew and passengers.

**0015:** First wireless call for help.

**0045:** First rocket fired. First boat lowered.

**0140:** Last rocket fired.

**0205:** Last boat lowered.

**0210:** Last wireless signals sent.

**0220:** Ship founders.

**0220:** *Survival Instinct (Core)*

**0330:** Liner *Carpathia's* rockets sighted by boats.

**0410:** First boat picked up.

**0830:** Last boat picked up.

**0850:** *Carpathia*, after some deliberation as to best course of action, heads for New York with the survivors.

New York newspaper *Evening Sun* runs banner headline: *All Saved From Titanic After Collision*. The report alleged that the passengers had been taken aboard the *Parisian* and *Carpathia*, and the *Titanic*, still afloat, was being towed to Halifax.

*Carpathia* radio silence keeps spread of news to minimum from this point until its arrival in New York. Several newspapers print accounts of the wreck, most of which were not factual.



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18<sup>th</sup> April

**2037:** *Carpathia* arrives in New York and docks at pier 54, with 498 *Titanic* passengers and 212 *Titanic* crew. The Social Register, which kept track of arrivals and reported them by the name of the ship, listed them as 'Arrived *Titan-Carpath*, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1912.'

*Aftermath (Core)*

## LUNCHEON WITH THE GREAT AND GOOD

The protagonists are gathered in Jefferson Shaw's luxurious suite on A Deck. A Deck is for the exclusive use of First Class passengers; other amenities on this deck include the First Class lounge, reading lounge, smoking room, Veranda Cafe and Palm Court. The children of First Class passengers tend to play in the starboard side of the Palm Court, as it's often deserted; the port side of the Palm Court is next to the smoking room, where the adults go to relax. All the rooms, including the First Class suites, have magnificent views of the sea. As this scene is set during the day, the weather is bright and sunny, if slightly chill, and children's laughter can occasionally be heard.

The room is decorated in high Edwardian style, with some touches of Art Nouveau. The woodwork and panelling is matchless, though it does make the room seem a little dark. It's designed with the same eye to luxury as the finest hotels and there are many modern touches, including an electric fireplace and telephone. The suite has three rooms: a reception area, where the party is being held, a private bedroom area and study for Jefferson Shaw, and a separate, smaller room for his manservant Soames. All of the curtains are drawn, which makes the room seem even darker, and although the weather is

a little cold outside in the suite, inside it feels almost stiflingly warm. Jefferson Shaw has used his charm and influence on the proprietor of the *Café Parisien*, and a selection of excellent appetizers has been arrayed on side tables along with several bottles of chilled champagne. The steward, Poulson, oversees the staff of the *Café Parisien* as the food is brought in, and makes sure that Jefferson Shaw has everything he wants.

What appears to be a packing crate is set against one wall. It's quite large, easily twice the size of a steamer trunk, and must have been difficult to get up onto A Deck never mind into the room.

The following people are here:

- *Jefferson Shaw* [Newspaper Mogul, Assess Honesty 2, Bureaucracy 4, Credit Rating 9, Flattery 4, Health 6, Languages 4, Occult 3, Stability 7, Sanity 5] A well-fleshed man in his middle forties, used to command without question. He believes in the modern world, the world of electricity and science, but ties those beliefs into a spiritualist mind-set. In the past he's put money into devices intended to harness psychic energy and contact the dead, and he recently financed an expedition to Egypt to further investigate what he describes as 'the parapsychological architecture of the Pharaohs.' The protagonists have probably never met him, but will have read his newspapers or heard of his exploits.
- *Soames* [Manservant, Athletics 6, Accounting 2, Bargain 2, Credit Rating 3, History 1, Health 8, Sense Trouble 1, Scuffling 4, Stability 7, Sanity 6] A silent but capable man in his late thirties, Soames is used to making sure his employer gets what he wants. He keeps himself out of the way as much as possible, but will immediately step forward if either his master or his master's guests require anything. He prides himself on being unflappable.
- *Poulson* [Ship's Steward, Athletics 5, Assess Honesty 2, Bargain 3, Flattery 4, Health 8, Reassurance 2, Stability 7, Sanity 5] A cheerful man in his middle forties, grey haired but in remarkably good condition. He's one of life's natural workers, the sort that thinks long hours for little pay is perfectly reasonable so long as his position is respectable. The *Titanic* is a considerable step forward in his career, and he's very proud of his new post.

The Keeper may also wish to include other upper class NPCs, as needed for window dressing, but none of them will have a plot function. Potential NPCs include:

- Mr James Crawley, cousin and presumptive heir of the Earl of Grantham. Effortlessly charming, of the old school of English aristocracy. He is a large landowner in his own right and is perpetually concerned with his tenants and estate.
- Captain Edward Smith, a trim, capable man on the verge of retirement. He has seen out the days of sail and intends to end his career on a high note. He will only pop in briefly while the party is in progress, as he has a ship to command, but Jefferson Smith is a crony of his from previous voyages on other liners and he is happy to oblige a friend by hobnobbing with his guests.
- Richard Ward Sturges, an American who has been living in Europe for many years. He is separated from his wife, and craftily snuck aboard with a steerage passenger's ticket to confront her. He doesn't want her to steal his daughter and son away to America. He has considerable resources in his own right, which is how he was invited to this gathering.
- John Jacob Astor IV, socialite, inventor and author of the science fiction tale *A Journey In Other Worlds*. Like Shaw, Astor is fascinated by technology and boundlessly enthusiastic about its potential. He is also a divorcee –

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scandalous at the time – and took as his second wife an eighteen year old girl, Madeline Talmadge Force. The furore that erupted forced the couple to take an extended honeymoon in Europe and Egypt. This is their journey home.

The Keeper is free to invent others as needed. The essential point to bear in mind is anyone at the party is in danger of death, which is why (for instance) Astor is without his wife Madeline – she survived the sinking, he did not. It's also why James Crawley is present and not his son, Patrick.

Jefferson Shaw is brimming with enthusiasm for his latest project. He intends to give the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art a substantial donation, including artefacts his expedition to Egypt retrieved and other items that he bought from the British Museum, all of which he intends to combine in a display of what he describes as 'parapsychological developments of the first magnitude, as developed by the ancients, which we can now harness with the technology at our disposal!'

He has a slide show presentation prepared; Soames will handle projectionist duties while he expounds his theories. The transparencies are mostly of Egypt and Jefferson Shaw's expedition, as well as architectural diagrams intended to illustrate his theories about the design of the pyramids and their implication for psychic research. Once the slide show is over he directs them to the centrepiece of his exhibit, contained in the packing crate behind them. With a flourish he opens the lid wide, revealing an exquisitely painted sarcophagus board, the inner coffin lid of a member of Egyptian aristocracy, as fresh today as when it was first put in the tomb more than two thousand years ago.

'This, ladies and gentlemen, is the

famous Priestess Hettunaway, of the royal lineage of Amenhoten and Ahkenaten, daughter of Kings and sacred to the God Amun! No doubt you have read about her in my newspaper, but cold print fails to do her justice. You are the very first to see her in the flesh – so to speak! – since my people discovered her tomb, fifteen months ago. But this is only the outer covering; now see the woman herself!'

He removes the coffin lid, to reveal the mummified body of a woman in her twenties, wrapped in sacred linens. The face is delicate and beautiful, if haughty. The desert and careful preparation has perfectly preserved her.

'Once we get her to New York, of course, my people will remove the wrappings so we can study the charms and amulets hidden underneath. The Metropolitan will get the sarcophagus board, while we get the spoils!'

After this presentation the luncheon begins in earnest, with plenty of champagne and food delivered by staff. Jefferson Shaw is more than willing to answer questions, and there are other things in the room that the protagonists may notice.

### 1 point clues include:

- *Archaeology, History*: The mummy is definitely genuine, and of the period. However there are odd markings on the sarcophagus lid, inconsistent with other burials of the period. It's almost as if whoever created the board intended it to keep the mummy imprisoned, with magical wards. It certainly isn't the kind of thing you'd expect to find on a sarcophagus board, and may have been added afterward. That would suggest that the mummy was disinterred and then the markings added; someone really didn't want this one coming back from the Land of the Dead.
- *Occult*: Several of the invocations

written on the sarcophagus board are curses written in the name of Set, the Jackal-Headed, son of Nut and Geb. Set is associated with chaos and darkness, and in mythology murdered his brother, Osiris. He is a demon-god, harbinger of ruin. Curses in his name are supposed to be particularly lethal.

- *Evidence Collection*: There's a very peculiar, sweet-but-musty smell in the air. It's reminiscent of incense, the sort of thing Eastern Orthodox churches use in their ceremonies. Either Soames or Jefferson Shaw can confirm that no incense has been used in the room since they arrived, but agree that they can smell it too. Possibly the mummy is the source of the odour.
- *Electrical or Mechanical Repair*: Though it has been carefully tidied away, there are some electrical wires, clamps, and some kind of energy generating device kept close to the mummy. Close inspection of the mummy shows that the bandages have been slightly disturbed, particularly around the head and face, as if someone attached clamps there.
- *Flattery, Oral History [Jefferson Shaw]*: He hopes to astound the scientific world with another discovery soon. He thinks that his studies of Egyptology have provided a breakthrough in his long-standing project, to develop a device to facilitate communication with the dead. So far he has had no success, but he thinks that is about to change. He has in his possession several manuscripts which he feels will be the key to resolving this problem. He doesn't want to reveal his sources yet, so he won't let anyone see those manuscripts.
- *Oral History, Reassurance [Soames]*: There was a great deal of difficulty getting the mummy out of Egypt. Pressure from the authorities and some local protestors nearly made it impossible, but after several generous donations Jefferson Shaw got his way. Some of the protests

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were 'nonsensical superstitions, the sort of thing you or I wouldn't give a second thought.' Some local mullahs prophesied doom for the 'infidels who dared steal the Priestess from her homeland,' but that's not the sort of thing Soames or his master take seriously.

- *Reassurance, Credit Rating [Poulson]:* The mummy had to be brought aboard in secret to avoid upsetting some of the passengers, and crew. 'People do talk, sir, and what with the reputation that lady picked up in the space of a few short months, well! Unlucky mummy is all very good as a newspaper headline, but it doesn't do to let it be known that this sort of thing is aboard. Still, Mister Shaw is a very generous-minded man, and a good friend of Captain Smith. We were pleased to be able to be of assistance.'

**Stability loss** includes:

- **1-point:** Seeing the mummy is a chilling experience. Other mummified remains seem somehow inert and lifeless, compared to this young woman. Her innate vitality and hunger for life seems to radiate from her even now, several thousand years after her death. Like the Mona Lisa, her gaze, though eyeless, has the uncanny knack of following a person about the room.
- **3-point:** At one stage in the proceedings, one or more protagonists' gaze wanders aimlessly and they catch a glimpse of a mirror that reflects back into the room. In that mirror there appears to be an extra guest at the party: a woman, dark-haired, with a painfully thin face and eyes of ebon black. She glares out of the mirror right at the protagonist. By the time anyone else's attention is drawn, the apparition has vanished.

### Further Inquiry (Optional)

Once the party has broken up, protagonists may wish to carry out further investigations. They may wish

to know more about Jefferson Shaw, his expedition, Hettunaway, or Egyptology and ancient curses.

The most reasonable means of finding out about these things is either by talking to fellow passengers and crew (**Oral History, Reassurance, Flattery**), or by studying in the *Titanic's* well-appointed First Class library (**Library Use, Law**).

If they talk to passengers or crew, the Keeper may need to invent a few likely NPCs. Some of those encountered at the party (Soames, James Crawley, John Jacob Astor, Captain Smith) have known Shaw for years or have encountered him at public events, and can help fill in some of the blanks. People like Soames or Poulson know Shaw through their working relationship; Soames has been with Shaw for many years now, and Poulson has encountered Shaw on more than one White Star liner. These are the people best placed to help the protagonists learn more about Jefferson Shaw and his expedition.

The protagonists may also want to talk to experts, and as luck would have it there are several people aboard the *Titanic* who qualify. These are men and women who have studied Egypt and the Occult extensively, and talking with them can grant pool points as well as information. Pool points can only ever be granted once, to one character; experts cannot be mined for extra pool points.

### 0 point clues:

- Jefferson Shaw's business interests stretch across the globe. His newspapers are read daily all over America and Europe. He is the intimate friend of Kings and Presidents, and his opinion is often sought by the great and powerful.
- Jefferson Shaw's interest in Spiritualism is well known. He has tried several different inventions

based on electric communication with the dead, none of which have worked the way he intended. He is a great friend of Thomas Edison, and has picked the brains of the Wizard of Menlo Park more than once to help Shaw's experiments.

### 1 point clues:

- His Egyptian expedition was controversial. Shaw proposed to take many of the artefacts out of Egypt, a decision that was strongly contested by the authorities. There were allegations of theft, bribery of public officials and other scandals. One young protestor even committed suicide right in front of Shaw's hotel, in a misguided attempt to shame Shaw into backing down. It all blew over after a while, but at the time it looked as if a major embarrassment was brewing.
- Hettunaway, the 'Unlucky Princess' or 'Missing Priestess' as the media came to know her, has been a minor celebrity of the Egyptology world ever since her tomb was discovered. It lacked the burial ornaments common to other tombs of the period, and very little information is known about her. Some alleged that she had been deliberately erased from history by her contemporaries, because she was faithful to a god other than Amun-Ra. According to rumour misfortune follows in her wake, and she is blamed for several inexplicable accidents and one death.

### 2 point clues:

- **Expert, Egyptology [Professor Gottlieb].** Hettunaway is supposed to have been an apostate who worshipped Set, in his guise as the Devourer of Man. These rites were abominable in the extreme, often involving blood sacrifice and the murder of children. This cult was first established by the Black Pharaoh Nephren-Ka, he who was abhorred by Osiris and struck down by Horus, and elements of this superstition are



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still extant today, practiced by a group called the Beloved of Set. Hettunaway was reviled when she was alive but no-one dared act against her; after her death, her body was disinterred and sacred rites performed that ensured she would never escape her tomb.

**Grants 1 pool point Occult.**

- **Expert, Occult [Ichiro Takahashi].** Curses of the type seen inscribed on the sarcophagus board have been credited with more than one death, in modern times. Lord Carnarvon, Howard Carter's backer, is one of the most famous victims. In this particular instance the inscriptions seem to be less curse than warning; they indicate that the mummy interred in the sarcophagus is beloved of Set, and should not be allowed either into the Land of the Dead or the world of the living. Hettunaway is known by some scholars to have been a Priestess of Nyarlathotep, the Black Man of legend, he who was a Pharaoh of Egypt, enemy of Osiris and bane of the lands of the Nile. **Grants 1 pool point Cthulhu Mythos.**

The *Titanic's* First Class library is very well appointed. It includes all the latest periodicals and magazines as well as literature on any number of subjects, including history, recent events, and law.

**0 point clues:**

- Several magazines have extensive articles about Jefferson Shaw's Egyptian expedition. They include a detailed history of the accidents that occurred while the dig took place, which injured or crippled several dragomen, two Europeans, and a noted American Egyptologist. When Hettunaway was first displayed in Cairo, there were riots outside the museum until the authorities locked her away in the museum's vaults, out of sight. Political extremists attempted to assassinate two British officials who spoke in favour of allowing Shaw to remove Hettunaway's mummy from Egypt.

- The woman who committed suicide outside Shaw's hotel allegedly said, before setting herself on fire, *'Plaques shall follow in her footsteps, and the thing that speaks for the Old Ones shall laugh to see her returned to the world of men.'*

**1 point clues:**

- There are several articles about Jefferson Shaw's past exploits, including his electric and mechanical efforts to talk with the dead. According to one of them, Shaw alleges that the ancient Egyptians knew more about this process than modern man, and claims that they used devices like his *'to communicate with entities the like of which we can only imagine. It's said that the very source of the universe was at their disposal, that they had access to power the like of which makes electricity seem like a child's toy. There are studies by men discredited today – men like Ludwig Prinn who was unjustly accused of sorcery, what we would today call chemistry – who draw on the secrets of Atlantean scholarship, preserved by Philetas and other ancients, which were passed on to the Egyptians when that civilization fell. If we could only re-establish communication with these ancient dead, we too could learn the secrets that they have kept so long in silence!'*
- Given the current laws, both international and Egyptian, governing the treatment of artefacts, it is highly unlikely that Jefferson Shaw had permission to remove Hettunaway or the other artefacts he currently possesses. Smuggling is perhaps too strong a word, but something very like it must have happened for him to have her mummy in his possession.

## Luxury Accommodation (Optional)

The protagonists may prefer to enjoy the facilities on offer.

*Titanic* is the most luxurious ship in the White Star fleet, which means it's the last word in decadence afloat. Possible means of enjoying oneself include:

- *Café Parisien*, run by Monsieur Gatti and his team of Italian and French staff and chefs. They serve high level food, as epitomized by the famous Escoffier, magisterial author of *Le Guide Culinaire*. The cooking is French, with delicate sauces and fine wines to accompany the meals.
- Turkish Baths, including Electric Baths, an early and primitive form of tanning bed. Turkish baths are steam baths; patrons are softened up in the warm room, then cooked in the steam room before being cooled off and massaged.
- Swimming pool, or more accurately a heated swimming bath. It wasn't built for Olympic-style exercises, but for a more sedate kind of enjoyment. This is located on G Deck. It was the second such bath to ever be installed on an ocean liner, and may be something the characters have never experienced before.
- Squash Court, for the more athletically inclined. This was down on G Deck, the lowest occupied deck in the ship, which is also where the mail room and Third Class accommodation were located. It will be one of the first areas to flood, after the impact.
- Common Rooms, Smoking Rooms and Reading Rooms were all segregated by class, and First Class passengers didn't have to share with anyone else. The library is extensive, and *Titanic* even has its own newspaper, the *Atlantic Daily Bulletin*. These rooms are all up on A Deck, not far from Shaw's suite.
- Gambling is rife on all the liners,



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and *Titanic* is no exception. It isn't deliberately organized by the crew or the Line, nor is there a casino as such, but those who wish to play gather in the Smoking and Common rooms for cards. When the iceberg struck, the bridge game was only briefly disturbed. One of the more famous stories about the *Titanic's* dead concerns Jay Yates, a professional gambler who, when the ship was sinking, gave a note to one of the women in the lifeboats to send to his sister in Ohio. Gambling should be treated as contests, with the **Gambling General Pool** being equal either to the character's **Sense Trouble** (for someone who isn't cheating) or equal to **Sense Trouble** plus the average, rounded down, of the character's **Filch** and **Athletics** pools (for those who use manual dexterity and unorthodox tactics to get an edge). So a character with **Sense Trouble 2**, **Athletics 6** and **Filch 2** has an initial **Gambling** pool of either 2 (if only using **Sense Trouble**) or 6 (being 2+4). Assume that NPC gamblers have pools from 2 to 8. Should the character lose, they suffer a dip in **Credit Rating** equivalent to the amount of **Gambling** pool points they spent in that contest. If they win, **Credit Rating** rises by the amount of **Gambling** pool points they spent.

- Dining at the Captain's Table is one of the high points of any passenger's shipboard routine, and Captain Smith is a popular and well respected man who has a following among many of the First Class passengers. Dinner is a black tie event, attended by the most influential and famous passengers. Bon Voyage or Get Together dinners are usual at the start of the journey, and Farewell or Landfall dinners are held at the end of the trip. This is the *Titanic's* maiden voyage, so the chefs will do their uttermost to make sure that every dinner is a gala event. There are also dances with live music, 'races' with toy dogs and

horses, cocktail parties (Rum Punch, Dry Martinis, Bronx Cocktails and Champagne Cocktails are all drinks of the period), deck sports like shuffleboard and quoits, deck cricket matches (potential teams include women versus men, First Class versus Second) and any number of other entertainments, usually organized or presided over by the ship's stewards.

If the Keeper chooses to run a subplot, say a shipboard romance, this is a good scene to start it. Allow the protagonists time to get used to their surroundings, subtly reminding them that these accommodations are all their own by showing them stewards and ship's officers keeping Second and Third Class passengers out of these areas.

This can be considered a floating scene, in that it may take place either after *Luncheon With The Great And Good* or *Unwelcome Attention*, but not after *Amuse Yourself* since by that point the *Titanic* is doomed.

This scene is a good means of refreshing General ability pools. If the Keeper wishes, it can also be a means of refreshing Stability mid-session, though if that is the case no more than 2 **Stability points total** can be refreshed in this way. From a narrative point of view, think of it as a successful Psychoanalysis spend by an NPC, as a one-time-only refresh.

### Hag Ridden (Antagonist Reaction)

This is a floating scene that can occur at any point after *Luncheon With The Great And Good*. It can occur in the middle of the scenes *Luxury Accommodation* and *Further Inquiry*. It can also occur after *Unwelcome Attention* or during the subsequent optional scenes *A Woman of Modest Means* and *Psychical Society*. It stops once *Amuse Yourself* has started, and will not occur again after that scene.

Hettunaway's spirit has been contacted by Jefferson Shaw, and though it did not respond to his primitive communication efforts it is active and angry. It will lash out at anyone who has profaned her mummy, which includes everyone present in the *Luncheon With The Great And Good* scene. At the moment its powers are limited, but that will soon change.

It appears either as a shapeless entity of darkness and smoke (perhaps in the Turkish Baths, or in one of the many elevators, or in the Smoking Room), or as a woman in a patterned shawl, much like many of the Third Class passengers. It is always accompanied by an odd, sweet but pungent odor, not unlike incense. That may serve as a **Sense Trouble** trigger, reducing the Difficulty Number of such tests from 4 to 3 once the pattern has been recognized.

Potential attacks include:

- **Intense Gaze:** Her fierce hatred can paralyze a person in their tracks, sending a wave of fear through the intended target. **Stability Loss 3**, **Magic Cost 1**, and if the Stability Test fails then the target is paralyzed for two rounds.
- **Withering Touch:** If a victim is touched or caressed by her mummified brown fingers, the victim's flesh deadens and sears as though burned. The wounds are very similar to the flash burn caused by electric shock. **Stability Loss 5**, **Magic Cost 2**, and **1d6 Damage**. Typically this occurs after the target has been paralyzed by her intense gaze.
- **Nightmares:** She can invade a target's dreams and turn them into soul-shattering nightmares, in which the victim is pursued by ghouls, and worse, through a labyrinth beneath a pyramid, before escaping outside to be confronted by the faceless Sphinx. As this is a Mythos-inspired Stability



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test, the **Difficulty is 5, Stability Loss 3, Magic Cost 1**. If this Stability Test fails then the Difficulty of all subsequent Stability Tests caused by Hettunaway or finding one of her victims' corpses is **increased by 1**.

*General Abilities:* Magic 8, refreshed each night. Cannot be injured by weapons, cannot stand and will retreat from sunlight or bright artificial light. She will vanish into thin air after she has successfully attacked a target, or after her target has successfully made a Stability Test.

### Unwelcome Attention (Core)

This scene has been scripted to occur on 12 noon, 13<sup>th</sup> April. If necessary this can be switched to a different date and time, but in any case it can only occur after the previous core scene *Luncheon With The Great And Good*.

The protagonists encounter Jefferson Shaw again, in the public rooms. This has been scripted for the *Café Parisien* but if need be can take place elsewhere. Jefferson Shaw is holding court, pontificating for a group of his admirers while enjoying a pleasant meal. Monsieur Gatti is positively fawning over him, making sure the service is to his satisfaction and providing him with every amenity. Several characters from *Luncheon With The Great And Good* are also present, (eg. James Crawley, Richard Ward Sturges), asking him about his adventures in Egypt. If the protagonists want to pursue enquiries (as per *Further Inquiry*) they should be allowed to do so.

Partway through the meal Jefferson Shaw is interrupted by a nervous but determined young woman who tries, at first, to persuade him to 'get rid of that horrible creature' and soon begins to yell that Shaw is taking 'an unconscionable risk letting that thing aboard!' Clearly by her dress she is

at best a Second Class passenger (or worse, Third) and Monsieur Gatti is appalled that such a person has been allowed to invade his *Café*. She is turfed out in short order, and told not to return.

**0 point clues** include:

- Though the woman clearly isn't a First Class passenger, she does seem somehow familiar. Perhaps she's notorious for something and has had her picture in the papers.
- She's wearing a wedding ring and mentions her husband at one point in her emotional tirade. Though she's of the lower classes she seems well educated but English is clearly her second language. Perhaps she's French.

**1 point clue** includes:

- **Archaeology, Oral History:** Either the protagonist recognizes her or one of the staff of the *Café Parisien* enlightens him. The woman is Jacqueline Martin, wife of the Egyptologist Renaud Martin and a noted scholar in her own right. Monsieur Martin was part of Jefferson Shaw's recent Egyptian expedition. There was some sort of problem (the protagonist can't remember what, or his contact cannot say) and Renaud was injured. It was a *cause célèbre* for a few days, and then the story was dropped.

Potential **Stability Loss** includes:

- For a brief but shattering moment the protagonists get a glimpse of the tragedy in store. Many people present in the *Café Parisien*, including Monsieur Gatti, all of his staff, Jefferson Shaw and many others, are about to drown in the wreck. The protagonists feel dizzy for a moment, the smell of incense is in the air, and then the air around them seems to thicken, as though they were seeing everything through a green haze. [In fact, it is as though they are deep

underwater, though they may not realize this.] Monsieur Gatti and the rest are still here, but their flesh is pale and bloated, and they drift aimlessly, their eyes milky and dead. The atmosphere is breathtakingly cold, almost painfully so. **Stability Loss 4**

### A Woman of Modest Means (Optional)

The protagonists may choose to follow up with Jacqueline Martin.

She is actually in Third Class, and her cabin (shared with two other women) is on G Deck. If the protagonists don't catch up with her straight after her *Unwelcome Attention* scene she may be difficult to find, as she'll vanish into Third Class accommodation, unfamiliar territory for the protagonists. Without a name (assuming they didn't make a point spend in the *Unwelcome Attention* scene) the *Titanic* crew and stewards will be unable to help the protagonists find her, though they'll try their best. The protagonists' most likely means of finding her is to wander through Third Class public rooms, the open air promenade on C Deck, the Third Class dining saloon on F Deck, or just generally hang around in the corridors where the Third Class cabins are located.

The reaction of Third Class to these well-heeled interlopers is polite but chilly. Third Class passengers know their place and some of them resent it, but whether they do or do not, they won't willingly interact with the protagonists. Some of the children may make fun of them, but nobody else will speak to them unless pressed. Women are segregated from the men, and male First Class passengers seeking out a female Third Class passenger will not be welcome.

Jacqueline Martin is French, and her English is not her best when she is excited or upset. **Language** may be

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useful here, as may **Oral History**, **Reassurance** and **Flattery**. She will fly into hysterics if any attempt at **Intimidation** is made.

**0 point clues** include:

- Jefferson Shaw is a very reckless man. He stole the mummy out of Egypt even after being warned that keeping it was unsafe. He probably bribed several British officers and members of the government to get this done.
- The mummy (she never refers to it by name, as though afraid to say the name aloud) is very, very dangerous and must be put back underground as soon as possible, where it can do no more harm.

**1 point clues** include:

- **Oral History:** When her husband fell ill, at first they thought it was an ordinary fever; serious, but not fatal. Then he began to suffer 'the dreams – those horrible nightmares, that woke him screaming! It was then that he babbled about the demon Pharaoh Nephren-Ka, and the terrible God he served, as though the damnable witch had been whispering terrible secrets in his ear as he slept! It took him five days to die, and each of those days was a prolonged torment. I never believed in such things. I thought curses were children's stories, and then I saw her – once and once only, praise God! It was she, the mummy, come back to claim her due!'
- **Reassurance:** She is able to describe some of Jefferson Shaw's experiments, which he carried out almost as soon as the mummy was discovered. His devices were small at first, and then he built more complicated versions, attaching electrodes to the mummy's head in the hope of improving reception. When one of these machines exploded, it severely injured an American scholar who happened to be present. Each time Shaw conducted another experiment, the

malignant properties of the mummy seemed to grow, as though he were somehow feeding it.

- **Flattery:** She says she has been able to protect herself with a charm obtained at great cost from a wise man she encountered in Cairo. This charm is proof against all evil spirits. She will show it to the protagonists, and anyone with **Cthulhu Mythos** recognizes it as an Elder Sign. She won't part with this at any price, though it can be **Filched** at Difficulty 5.
- **Evidence Collection:** There is an odd, sweet but pungent odour in the Third Class rooms, not unlike incense. Though Jacqueline claims not to notice it, clearly she has and is afraid of what it might mean.
- **Assess Honesty:** Jacqueline Martin believes everything she says, and holds nothing back. She's terrified almost out of her wits and probably would rather be a thousand miles away from Hettunaway, but is determined in spite of everything to get Jefferson Shaw to rebury the mummy before anything worse occurs.

The Elder Sign, if taken, can protect one room against Hettunaway's intrusion if its owner hangs the sign on or above the door. However this only works against her spiritual form as encountered in *Hag Ridden* and otherwise has no effect on Hettunaway. Jefferson Shaw won't take it seriously and will refuse to use it. He may even go so far as to throw it overboard, or have Soames do it for him.

## Psychical Society (Optional)

The protagonists may attempt a mediumistic inquiry, perhaps even going so far as to arrange a séance or use Jefferson Shaw's communication equipment.

Anyone with **Occult** would know how to conduct a séance. If they want to use Jefferson Shaw's device they'll need to get into his suite. That means they'll either have to persuade him (**Flattery** works well) or break in, using a combination of **Locksmith** and **Shadowing** to get in unobserved. *Titanic* stewards like Poulson would never let anyone into another guests' suite, no matter how much financial inducement or **Intimidation** is used. In fact, those tactics are likely to get Captain Smith involved, as the stewards' first reaction will be to alert the officers. **Mechanical** or **Electrical Repair** (Difficulty 4) will be needed to make the device work, but if Jefferson Shaw is willingly helping the protagonists then no roll is necessary.

Anyone inside Jefferson Shaw's suite who makes an **Evidence Collection** spend finds Shaw's copy of Ludwig Prinn's *De Vermis Mysteriis*, German black-letter 1587 edition. Skimming this book gives the reader 2 dedicated pool points for any investigative pool involving Egypt, Arabic lore or the undead. Intensive study adds +1 **Cthulhu Mythos**. This copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis* has a special addition: the binding is wooden board covered with faded red velvet and embossed with silver, including a silver Elder Sign on the front. Shaw has made many marginal notes and some of his schematic drawings are stuffed between the pages as bookmarks. It is clear from these notes that Shaw is relying on some of Prinn's alchemical theories to help create his own devices. This spend can't happen if Shaw willingly let the protagonists into his suite, as either he or Soames will object to people poking around his rooms looking for clues.

Attempting to contact Hettunaway requires a **1 point Occult** spend, or a **Mechanical** or **Electrical Repair** check if using Shaw's device.

At first it seems as though nothing will happen. Then the medium goes into convulsions (*séance*) or the device explodes (mechanical/electrical) in a shower of sparks. At the same moment black smoke pours either from the medium or the device. There is a sweet, pungent odour. Hettunaway has been summoned.

In addition to the powers listed in *Hag Ridden* she can:

- **Reveal Fate:** She can make people see what is about to happen. Just as in the *Café Parisien*, those affected see the drowned *Titanic* and the remnants of her passengers and crew. This time the dead cluster around the protagonists, clutching at their clothes, weighing them down until their lungs begin to burst from lack of oxygen. **Stability Loss 4, Magic Cost 1 per target.**

She now has **Magic 10**, not the 8 listed in *Hag Ridden*, as she has grown stronger.

She will attack indiscriminately for a few rounds, and then vanish as soon as two or more people have successfully made Stability Tests. Alternatively she will vanish immediately if confronted with bright natural or artificial light.

If Shaw was present when this happened then he is shaken by the experience, but refuses to admit that his experiments are misguided. He feels that there is a mechanical fix, and if he can just work out what that is he can make contact with Hettunaway properly. Once that's achieved, he'll be able to stop the attacks. Clearly there's some kind of misunderstanding, which can be cleared up as soon as he opens communication with Hettunaway.

### Options, People!

#### (Protagonist Action)

At some point the players are going to wonder what they can do about Hettunaway. This section attempts to cover some of the more likely options.

Protagonists who go this far may be convinced that the best way of dealing with the problem is to destroy the mummy, perhaps by throwing it overboard. That means they will need to get into Jefferson Shaw's suite, get out with the mummy, get to the promenade and throw. This will be difficult if Shaw is present as Shaw, Soames and the *Titanic* crew will try to stop the protagonists. Whether or not Shaw is present once the protagonists get out onto the promenade they are in a public space, and the people there will instinctively try to stop the protagonists throwing what looks at first glance like a woman overboard. The Keeper should also bear in mind that the promenade is an enclosed space and the windows will be shut (historically this became a problem later when the boats were lowered) so it isn't as simple as rushing to the rail and chucking the mummy overboard. Several **Athletics** tests at increasing difficulty (going up to **+7 Difficulty** or more) may be necessary to throw the mummy over the side. Protagonists who do this whether successful or not may be locked in a holding room down on G Deck while Captain Smith decides what to do with them, and as the iceberg gets ever nearer a G Deck prison may be a death sentence.

They may try to destroy the mummy in other ways, perhaps by fire. Unfortunately the fireplace is electric and won't accommodate a burning mummy. Any attempt to set her on fire inside Shaw's suite will attract attention, on account of the smoke and smell. That will get Poulson involved, and soon after him the ship's crew. This may involve **Athletics** or **Scuffling** tests. Assume all ship's crew have base

**Scuffling 7** and **Health 7**. As before, protagonists who go this route may be locked in a holding room down on G Deck while Captain Smith decides what to do with them.

Any attempt to destroy the mummy may provoke an antagonist reaction, as per *Hag Ridden*.

Destroying the mummy isn't possible during or after *Amuse Yourself* as Hettunaway's mummy won't be in Shaw's suite. See also *Priestess of the Black Pharaoh*.

Elder Signs will help keep Hettunaway's spiritual form at bay, so long as they are placed on or over the door of the room. There are two Elder Signs available, one belonging to Jacqueline Martin and one on *DeVermis Mysteriis*. This only applies to her spiritual form, not her physical one; see further *Priestess of the Black Pharaoh*.

Anyone with **1 pool point Cthulhu Mythos** who retrieves at least one of the protective charms hidden in the mummy's linen bandages, or the painted sarcophagus board, can improvise a ritual to damage her physical form. This ritual can also be attempted by someone with no **Cthulhu Mythos** who has skimmed and has in their possession *DeVermis Mysteriis*, in addition to the protective charm or sarcophagus board. This ritual does **1d6+1 damage** to Hettunaway's physical form, costs **4 Stability**, needs **3 rounds** to complete and requires that the caster be looking at Hettunaway. This ritual will not work with an Elder Sign. If this ritual is used, Hettunaway's Armor rating is ignored for the purpose of calculating damage.



## Out of Space

### Amuse Yourself (Core)

At 2340 hours, the *Titanic* strikes an iceberg.

The impact is barely felt by passengers. A rumbling, scraping noise is the only indication to many that something serious might have happened. Those still up and about, either in the Smoking Room or *Café Parisien*, have a chance to see the berg itself, not much taller than the Boat Deck, slide past, and then it vanishes into the night leaving behind a scattering of ice on deck. The Bridge immediately orders all engines stop followed by reverse, and closes the watertight doors. The *Titanic's* forward momentum carries it on a short distance, and then it comes to a stop. The odd, unfamiliar silence is unnerving.

None of the passengers know what has happened. Captain Smith is busy conferring with his officers, Thomas Andrews, Managing Director of the shipyard that built *Titanic*, and J Bruce Ismay, White Star Line Managing Director. There is word *Titanic* is taking on water on G Deck.

Meanwhile for lack of other diversion some of the Third Class passengers are playing with the ice that crumbled from the berg when it passed, and several other passengers are looking for frozen souvenirs. There is a general sense that nothing very unusual has happened, but the iceberg is extraordinary enough to attract many people's attention. 'Come on out and amuse yourself!' is the general reaction.

There are no plot relevant clues to be had in this scene. **Assess Honesty** on the ship's crew might show that they're all very worried and not telling as much as they know about what happened. However there is no indication how serious the problem is.

This marks the division between the investigative and the action scenes.

From this point on the protagonists will be fighting for their lives, as the ship only has two hours and forty minutes to live. They will not be able to conduct any more researches, hold séances or otherwise investigate Hettunaway. Nor will they be able to refresh General pools or Stability while the ship is sinking. Hettunaway is now in physical form and is looking for victims.

### Priestess of the Black Pharaoh

#### (Antagonist Reaction)

Hettunaway chooses this moment to strike.

She now has enough power to resurrect her physical form, and her mummy will slip out of Shaw's A Deck suite and vanish into the night. She intends to ambush those who profaned her, striking when they least expect it.

*Hettunaway, Priestess of Nephren-Ka*

**General:** Athletics 10, Health 10, Magic 12, Scuffling 14, Weapons 8

**Hit Threshold:** 5 (attacks may hit her, but finding a weak spot is the problem)

**Weapons:** Claw (+0), improvised weapon (ranging from -1 to +1, depending on the weapon)

**Alertness Modifier:** +3

**Stealth Modifier:** +1 (very soft footfall, but the whiff of incense may betray her presence)

**Armour:** -2 vs any (absence of vitals)

**Stability Loss:** +1

**Special:** Hettunaway in her physical form does not have access to the same magical powers as her spiritual form. However she can cast *Shrivelling*, and

she regains Magic pool points by killing victims. In the round immediately after killing her opponent, she can drain her opponent's remaining Stability and add this to her Magic pool, up to a maximum of 12 points. To onlookers, it appears as though she's breathing in the victim's life essence. She has to be within hand-to-hand combat distance for this ability to function.

If in previous scenes the protagonists damaged but did not destroy the mummy, then the Keeper should reduce her Health pool by up to 4 points.

If her physical body is destroyed the spiritual essence of her still remains active for the duration of the scenario, though with a Magic pool of 10 rather than 12. See also *Aftermath*.

She will first lash out at other people (for example Poulson, Jacqueline Martin or Soames) before moving on to the protagonists, and if at all possible the protagonists ought to encounter the corpse of at least one of her victims before they encounter the Priestess herself. Such a discovery comes with a **Stability Loss 1**; the victim is partly seared, as though by electrical burns, and the expression on their face is horrible. Their eyes have been scratched out, or if *Shrivelled* they exploded under pressure and are now gelid fragments that smear across their face like tears.

This is a floating scene. It can happen at any point before *Aftermath*; it can even happen after the *Titanic* has gone down and the protagonists are floating in the icy water. She would then strike from below, dragging her victim underwater and killing at her leisure.

### Survival Instinct (Core)

The *Titanic* founders, and the protagonists must try to stay alive.

The boats are ordered uncovered and start to be loaded about fifteen minutes after *Amuse Yourself*. Passengers will need life preservers, and those are kept in their cabins. They may also want to get personal possessions; one of the last times Monsieur Gatti was seen alive, he was dressed in formal attire complete with top hat, and carried his grip and travelling blanket, for all the world as if he was about to board *le Train Bleu*, not a lifeboat. These possessions can include almost anything. The claim made by Robert Daniel for his lost belongings (Titanic Inquiry Project) included \$750 for a champion French bull dog named *Gamin de Pycombe*, and \$20 for a 'mechanical toy.' Some First Class women went back for jewels or told their menfolk to go. Major Peuchen, a First Class passenger, left behind a tin box containing bonds worth \$200,000 and preferred stock valued at \$100,000. One passenger took a compass and revolver with him, while a steward took four oranges.

If the protagonists do not have *De Vermis Mysteriis* and the Keeper would like to provide it, perhaps the protagonists find Jefferson Shaw in the First Class Smoking Room, with the book open on his knees. At first glance he appears to be reading it, but closer inspection shows that he has been *Shrivelled* to death. There is a potential **Stability Loss 3** for finding his body.

It was organized chaos, and in the first few minutes people didn't know what to think or to do. Generally they kept to their decks while they waited for instructions, which meant that Third Class remained below while First Class were up on A Deck, the closest to the lifeboats. The crew did their best to organize things, chief among them Second Officer Herbert Lightoller (port side) and First Officer Murdoch

(starboard), and when the first boats were lowered they made sure that only women and children were aboard. This encountered a little resistance at first because the passengers still didn't really believe the ship was in danger. This was part of the reason why it took so long to load the first few boats; people didn't want to get in, and had to be cajoled or forced. It was a seventy five foot drop from the boat deck to the ocean, so they had some reason to be concerned. Male protagonists are better off on the starboard side, where Murdoch is allowing a few men into the boats. Lightoller stuck rigidly to the principle of women and children first. Ismay is on the starboard side making a nuisance of himself by trying to do everything at once. By this point the band had been dispatched to play soothing music to calm the crowd, and if the Keeper has access to ragtime music of the period now might be a good time to use it.

If it comes to a conflict between protagonists and *Titanic* crew, assume base **Scuffling 7, Health 7, Firearms 6, Weapons 6, Damage -2 (Fist), -1 (knife) or +0 (firearm)**. Assume ships officers like Lightoller and Murdoch have the same weapons, but **2 more pool points** in all abilities. Other passengers may get involved if it looks as though the protagonists are about to commandeer a boat all to themselves, and the resulting panic may well wreck the lifeboat as well as the protagonists' chances.

Though the ship's crew behaved gallantly under difficult circumstances they had their prejudices. Part of the reason why all of the *Café Parisien* staff and Monsieur Gatti died was because they were Italian and the crew were Anglo Saxon; during the subsequent inquiry the Italian Ambassador to the United States sought and received an apology from Fifth Officer Lowe for using the word 'Italian' as a kind of synonym for 'coward.' Lightoller said at the inquiry that he threw people of

'the broad category known to sailors as 'Dagoes' off of boat #2, at gunpoint. People later assumed that stowaways in the lifeboats were Chinese, or Japanese; those who jumped into the boats from above were Armenians, Frenchmen or Italians. The New York *Sun* later ran an article mourning that along with the others there had been seventy-eight Finn immigrants who might have done the country some good, suggesting implicitly that non-Anglos weren't worth the bother.

The *Titanic* will take about two hours forty minutes to sink, breaking in half before it finally founders. The last boat leaves at 0205, about fifteen minutes before that happens, so it is possible several protagonists will be left aboard the ship at the mercy of Hettunaway before *Titanic* goes down.

It is likely that one or more protagonists will end up in the water. Whether or not they have lifebelts on the sea is bitterly cold, and their best chance of survival is to find some floating bit of wreckage and crawl onto it. Treat all in the water as **Hurt (increases Difficulty by 1)** because of the extreme cold, and **Athletics** tests for drowning should start at **Difficulty 3** (without life preserver) or **2** (with). Even if they have life preservers they still need to make drowning tests each round until they find something to float on, as the water is so cold that if they stay in it they'll lose consciousness and drown. Protagonists who try to fix the odds by drinking heavily should have initial **Difficulty reduced by 2**, but alcohol only helps their chances; they still need to find a raft of some kind. They may well end up competing with other survivors for something to float on. Assume **Scuffling 6, Health 3** for NPC passengers, and there is a potential **Stability Loss 3** (human opponent attacks with intent to kill) as well as **Stability Loss 5** (you kill someone in cold blood). Keepers may also wish to allow **Stability Loss 4** (you see hundreds of corpses) as they

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float through a nightmare scene filled with the soon-to-be dead, moaning and praying for help.

Floatation devices can be anything from deck chairs to bits of wooden paneling from the *Titanic's* elaborate staterooms. The Keeper should rate these from 1 to 3, each point representing a person that can be kept alive on it. There is one capsized lifeboat in the water that should be rated at 35, but everything else is much smaller than that. If more people are on a floatation device than the device can support, then the item sinks and cannot be used until someone gets off.

Throughout this scene Hettunaway is active and will be out to get the protagonists, attacking when they least expect it. See *Priestess of the Black Pharaoh*.

If the protagonists threw the mummy overboard in previous scenes then the physical form of Hettunaway can still attack survivors in the water, but it will not be able to do anything to protagonists while they are on board the *Titanic*.

### Aftermath (Core)

In all probability at least some of the protagonists will be dead. This scene is for the survivors.

Having been rescued by the *Carpathia*, the survivors are taken to New York, where they face an apoplectic media and the shock of a nation. The US inquiry begins on 19<sup>th</sup> April, the day after the *Carpathia* arrives, and the protagonists will be among the witnesses called. They will need to stay in New York for a while, and may do so at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel as that is where the Senate has set up for the hearings. John Jacob Astor IV, one of the dead, is co-owner of this boutique establishment. It's a grand Gothic building, the height of

luxurious living, and is the largest hotel in the world. The protagonists may be uncomfortably reminded of their *Titanic* accommodations; the ship's suites were designed to imitate buildings like these.

Though the protagonists may have forgotten Hettunaway, the Priestess of the Black Pharaoh has not forgotten them. Her mummy may be at the bottom of the Atlantic, but her spiritual form has pursued them ashore. They are unfinished business.

Potential attacks include:

- **Intense Gaze:** Her fierce hatred can paralyze a person in their tracks, sending a wave of fear through the intended target. **Stability Loss 3, Magic Cost 1**, and if the Stability Test fails then the target is paralyzed for two rounds.
- **Withering Touch:** If a victim is touched or caressed by her mummified brown fingers, their flesh deadens and sears as though burned. The wounds are very similar to the flash burn caused by electric shock. **Stability Loss 5, Magic Cost 2, and 1d6 Damage**. Typically this occurs after the target has been paralyzed by her intense gaze.
- **Nightmares:** She can invade a target's dreams and turn them into soul-shattering nightmares, beset by horrible beings in a dream-like version of Cairo in which the Black Pharaoh rules the night. As this is a Mythos-inspired Stability test, the **Difficulty is 5, Stability Loss 3, Magic Cost 1**. If this Stability Test fails then the Difficulty of all subsequent Stability Tests caused by Hettunaway is **increased by 1**.

*General Abilities:* Magic 10. Cannot be injured by weapons, cannot stand and will retreat from sunlight or bright artificial light. She will vanish into thin air after she has successfully attacked a target, or after her target has successfully made a Stability Test.

However now that her mummy is destroyed she can no longer refresh Magic pools. Once her Magic pool is drained, her spiritual form will dissipate, never to return. She will also lose 1 Magic point per night every night after the 19<sup>th</sup> April, so if the protagonists can outlast her eventually they will be safe.

In this form Hettunaway can be kept at bay with an Elder Sign, assuming that the protagonists have one.

Once Hettunaway has been dealt with, the scenario concludes.

## PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

Should the Keeper not want to use the following characters, please bear in mind that most if not all protagonists should be First Class passengers. That means that whatever their investigator build **Credit Rating** needs to be at least **5**. Provided the players agree, there's no reason why an investigator can't be the valet or personal servant of another player. Servant characters can get away with as little as **Credit Rating 3**; any rating lower than that would reflect poorly on their employer.



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Doktor Helena Toepfer

Drive: Thirst for Knowledge

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Archaeologist

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Mankind is essentially good 2) the wisdom of the ancients should be preserved

### Academic Abilities

Archaeology - 4

History - 3

Law - 2

Languages - 2

Library Use - 4

Occult - 4

### Interpersonal Abilities

Credit Rating - 5

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 3

### General Abilities

Athletics - 8

First Aid - 8

Gambling - 4

Health - 8

Riding - 2

Preparedness - 8

Stability - 8

Sanity - 7

Sense Trouble - 4

Shadowing - 7

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<sup>2</sup> Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a \* before assigning points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

<sup>4</sup> Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You are respected in your field, and have conducted many expeditions into the Valley of the Kings. The discovery of three tombs is to your credit, though your fellow researchers have done their best to talk down your achievements. They can't stand to be beaten by a woman in what they see as 'their' field. You have the generous backing of your family, who would prefer never to hear from you again as the scandals of your youth (you ran off with one of your tutors when you were sixteen) are events they would rather not be reminded of. Though you have done your best to put that behind you, marriage — at least, a respectable one — is out of the question for you, unless you find someone willing to see past your youthful indiscretions.

You have worked with Jefferson Shaw before, and offered him advice on his most recent expedition. Several of the people who worked on that dig were good friends of yours.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Arnaud de Saverne

Drive: Artistic Sensibility

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Artist

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Art is the only truth 2) liberté, égalité, fraternité

### Academic Abilities

Architecture - 2  
Art History - 2  
History - 2  
Languages 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 4  
Credit Rating - 5  
Flattery - 4

### General Abilities

Athletics - 4  
Disguise - 4  
Electrical Repair - 5  
Riding - 2  
Fleeing - 8  
Firearms - 4  
Health - 10  
Mechanical Repair - 5  
Stability - 8  
Sanity - 8  
Scuffling - 8  
Weapons - 2

### Technical Abilities

Art - 2  
Craft - 2  
Photography - 2

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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<sup>5</sup> In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

<sup>6</sup> Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You are one of the exponents of Realism in art, and a noted painter of seascapes and ships. Your great painting, Son of Poseidon, a portrait of the Blue Riband winner Lusitania, is your most famous work. As a youth you fought in Napoleon's army against the hated Prussians and the loss of Alsace, your birthplace, is a wound you deeply feel. However it has been many years since your days as a young cavalry subaltern; you no longer ride like a centaur, and as for your saber training, it is completely forgotten. Nowadays your stomach forbids that sort of energetic exercise, as it only upsets the digestion. You hope, while aboard the Titanic, to sketch out and perhaps begin your next masterpiece: Dawn of the Titan.

You know very little about Jefferson Shaw. Of course you have read his newspapers, and a man like that is worth keeping close by; there may be a commission in it for you.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Major Harry Poole

Drive: Arrogance

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Military Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Good men don't show fear 2) man is the highest expression of divine will

### Academic Abilities

### Interpersonal Abilities

### General Abilities

Bureaucracy - 4

Credit Rating 5

Intimidation - 4

Oral History - 4

Reassurance - 4

### Technical Abilities

Outdoorsman - 4

Athletics - 6

Firearms - 8

Gambling - 6

Health - 9

Riding - 2

Stability - 6

Sanity - 6

Scuffling - 8

Sense Trouble 6

Weapons - 8

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You're old enough to remember the Civil War but not to have fought in it. Your wars were in Mexico and Cuba, and you stood with Teddy Roosevelt on San Juan Hill, a proud memory that you will carry to your grave. Since then you've become more of a bureaucrat, a Washington man, and this latest trip to Europe was official business, hammering out a treaty with the French government. You don't speak French or indeed any language other than American English, so much of the actual discussion was beyond you, but your craggy face and medals were sufficiently inspiring that the frog-eaters did what Washington wanted them to do. Now you're homeward bound, and it can't come soon enough for you.

Jefferson Shaw is a well-respected man and a friend of the President. Obliging him can only be good for your career, and you've no intention of retiring while you still have your health. Age be damned!



# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Winnifred Blythe

Drive: Adventure

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Dilettante

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) I live life as it is meant to be lived 2) British people are the best in the world

### Academic Abilities

History - 2

Languages - 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 4

Credit Rating - 6

Flattery - 4

Reassurance - 4

Oral History - 4

### Technical Abilities

Art - 2

Locksmith - 2

### General Abilities

Athletics - 4

Filch - 8

Fleeing - 10

Gambling - 11

Health - 8

Riding - 2

Stability - 9

Sanity - 7

Sense Trouble - 4

Shadowing - 4

Stealth - 6

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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<sup>8</sup> Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You've lived a very active life so far, which is one of the reasons your family wanted you to leave London for New York. You like picking up little treasures here and there, particularly if they're pretty. If you hadn't been born the daughter of a wealthy stockbroker you suppose you might have made a very useful thief, but that's a side of you not many people know. What they do know is that you're a compulsive gambler, more at home at a card table than anywhere else in the world. Naturally you don't play entirely by the rules, but then what sensible person does? New York is the new world, for you; so many people to meet, to charm, so many love affairs you could indulge in. Life is for living, after all! Later on, of course, you'll write your memoirs; The Adventures of Lady X sounds like a good title.

Jefferson Shaw is a very good friend of Daddy, and should be kept sweet. You don't want him telling tales to your parents later on!

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Norton P. Ashe

Drive: Curiosity

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Criminal

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Modern science prevails against all obstacles

2) American ingenuity will beat 'em every time.

### Academic Abilities

Languages - 2

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 4

Bargain - 4

Cop Talk - 2

Credit Rating - 5

Intimidation - 2

Reassurance - 4

Streetwise - 4

### Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 2

Locksmith - 4

### General Abilities

Athletics - 5

Filch - 6

Gambling - 11

Health - 10

Stability - 8

Sanity - 8

Scuffling - 9

Sense Trouble - 6

Shadowing - 6

Stealth - 4

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<sup>3</sup> Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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<sup>7</sup> Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

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<sup>9</sup> You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

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You have at least half a dozen aliases, and are known to cops in most of the capitals of Europe. You're a card sharp by trade, an occasional blackmailer, and a pretty swell guy, if you do say so yourself. You enjoy the best in life, and believe it is your natural due for being cleverer than anyone else. Clever people rise to the top in this world; it's only natural. You consider yourself an aristocrat in your field, and it's only fitting that you associate with the very best people. You have a natural sense of chivalry and hate to see a damsel in distress. Particularly when she might be very grateful to her gallant rescuer!

You know Jefferson Shaw by reputation. He's one of the wealthiest birds on this boat, and you've been watching him very carefully. Maybe he's a gambling man.

# TRAIL OF CTHULHU

## BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

### Sanity<sup>1</sup>

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold<sup>3</sup>

### Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

### Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Beatrice D'Arco

Drive: In the Blood

Occupation:<sup>2</sup> Parapsychologist

Special:

Pillars of Sanity: 1) Italian culture is the finest expression of mankind 2) the sea is like a mother to the world

### Academic Abilities

Anthropology - 4

Cthulhu Mythos - 1

History - 4

Languages 4

Library Use - 4

Occult - 4

### Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 4

Credit Rating - 5

### Technical Abilities

Photography - 2

### General Abilities

Electrical Repair - 4

First Aid - 6

Fleeing - 8

Health - 8

Mechanical Repair - 4

Psychoanalysis - 6

Stability - 9

Sanity - 6

Sense Trouble - 5

Stealth - 4

Shadowing - 4

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<sup>4</sup> These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

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You are a child of Calabria, and love the sea and the sun. It's said that the women of your family have the gift of foresight, and can tell who is about to die. You don't know whether that is true, but you have seen plenty of other strange things since you left the town of your birth and started travelling through Europe, seeking knowledge. You feel as though you are standing on the edge of some great and terrible discovery, and you are frightened of what may happen when you finally tip over. You have tried to write books about your experiences but you don't have the knack; you wish you did. If only you could convince people that there really is something out there, and it's not necessarily friendly.

Jefferson Shaw has been a good friend to you. He shares many of your beliefs. You think he is a very courageous man, though not always wise.